

# XI. STANDING RULES

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# STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

These standing rules are composed of three parts: 1) structure of the North Texas Annual Conference (“Annual Conference”); 2) policies of the Annual Conference; and 3) rules of procedure for the conduct of Annual Conference sessions.

## I. STRUCTURE OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. *Primacy of Book of Discipline and Standing Rules.* These General Provisions apply to all Agencies except where the current version of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (“*Book of Discipline*”) or specific Standing Rules otherwise provide.

2. “Agency” In these Standing Rules, the word “Agency” means a conference-level group that performs the work of the North Texas Annual Conference, whether that group is called a Council, Board, Division, Commission, Committee, Team, Group or Task Force. It does not include boards of trustees or boards of directors of Annual Conference related institutions.

3. “Conference Year; Conference Fiscal Year.” “Conference year” means the period from the close of one regularly scheduled session of the Annual Conference through the close of the following year’s regularly scheduled session of the Annual Conference. “Conference Fiscal Year” means January 1 through December 31.

4. *Election of Members.* Members and Chairs of the Agencies shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. There shall be an opportunity for additional nominations from the floor. When persons are nominated from the floor of the Annual Conference, the nominator will indicate which person from the Conference Nominating Committee’s report is to be replaced by the nominee. Substitute nominations should be in the same category of inclusivity as the person in the Conference nominating Committee’s report. Votes on substitute nominees will be made individually prior to the vote on the full report.

5. *Membership Diversity.* Except where the *Book of Discipline* or these Standing Rules otherwise provide, membership on all Agencies shall include one third clergy, one third laywomen, and one third laymen insofar as possible. In addition, special attention shall be given to inclusive representation from the ethnic churches, districts, small membership churches, and town and country churches.

6. *Terms.* Persons shall be nominated to serve a four year term on an Agency. No person shall be nominated for a position without previously agreeing to serve if elected. Persons elected shall begin their terms of office at the close of the Annual Conference session at which they are elected. In the event of new agencies being formed, shorter terms may be permitted to allow for rotation of members to maintain agency continuity.

7. *Failure to Attend Meetings.* Persons who are absent without cause for half or more of an Agency’s meetings during the Conference Year will thereby automatically remove themselves from the membership of the Agency and shall be replaced by the Conference Nominating Committee.

8. *Vacancies.* The Conference Nominating Committee is authorized to fill any Agency vacancies between sessions of the Annual Conference, unless the *Book of Discipline* otherwise provides. Persons appointed to fill vacancies shall serve only the remainder of the Conference year in which they are appointed. They may be elected to that position at the first regularly scheduled Annual Conference session following their appointment, in which case they will serve the remainder of the term of the person they replace. If the term of the person they replace would normally expire at the Annual Conference, then they may be elected to a full term either as member or chair without the partial year they served filling the vacancy counting toward the term limit as covered in Provision 9 and Provision 10 below.

9. *Term Limits for Members.* No elected person may serve more than eight successive years on any one Agency. A person may, however, be re-elected to an Agency on which that person has previously served his or her term limit after non-membership for four years.

10. *Term Limits for Agency Chairs and Team Representatives.* No person may serve as Chair or Team Representative of any Agency for more than four consecutive years, nor may any person chair or be a team representative on any combination of Agencies for a total of more than six years in any eight year period.

11. *Limits on Multiple Agency Membership.* No person shall serve on more than two Agencies at the same time, except as an *ex officio* member. In computing these limits, membership which occurs by virtue of holding some other Agency position shall not be counted. In applying these limits, the nominators shall be guided by the policies of diffusing power throughout the Annual Conference and limiting the agency workload required of any particular individual. Therefore, both the responsibilities and the workload of the various Agencies shall be taken into consideration in making Nominations.

12. *Coordination of Nominations.* All nominations of persons to Agencies shall be reported to the Assistant to the Bishop/Director of Missional Outreach and the Core Leadership Team in order to promote inclusivity and compliance with the Standing Rules on Limits on Multiple Agency Membership.

13. *Record Keeping.* In order to assist the Annual Conference in enforcing these General Provisions, each Annual Conference *Journal* shall indicate after the name of each Agency member the year in which the person's current term expires and whether it is the person's first or second consecutive term with that Agency. Each Annual Conference *Journal* shall also indicate member ethnicity after the name of each Agency member. The report of the Annual Conference Nominating Committee shall indicate member ethnicity after the name of each person in its report.

14. *General Agencies.* Members of the general agencies of the United Methodist Church from the Annual Conference will be *ex officio* members of the corresponding Agency.

15. *Appeals.* Any Agency has the right to appeal to the Annual Conference regarding a decision affecting its work made by any other Agency, except where otherwise provided in the *Book of Discipline*.

16. *Clergy.* In these Standing Rules, the word "clergy" refers to the following members of the North Texas Annual Conference unless some specific Standing Rule otherwise provides: (1) elders in full connection; (2) deacons in full connection; (3) probationary members; (4) commissioned ministers; (5) associate members; and (6) local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge.

## B. SPECIFIC AGENCIES

### 1. Mission of the Annual Conference

#### a. *Core Leadership Team*

The Core Leadership team will oversee the implementation of the decisions of the Annual Conference, working through four Centers: the Center for Leadership Development, the Center for New Church Development & Congregational Transformation, the Center for Missional Outreach, and the Center for Connectional Resources. The priorities of the Core Leadership Team will be accountability, advocacy, goal-setting, planning, coordination, communications and making decisions between annual conference sessions as permitted by the *Book of Discipline*.

The Core Leadership Team will develop measurable outcomes for being and becoming an anti-racist, multi-cultural church, where racial and cultural differences are viewed and utilized as assets. It will be responsible for integrating anti-racist thinking into our process and structure. The Core Leadership Team will provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationships required by ¶643.1 (Commission on Religion and Race), ¶644 (Commission on the Status and Role of Women) and ¶654 (Commission on Native American Ministries) of the *BOD*.

The Core Leadership Team will also provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationship required by ¶646 (Commission on Communications) of the *BOD*.

The Core Leadership Team will consider recommendations from the Directors of the Four Centers for any additional work groups needed to address the priorities of their Centers, requesting that those approved be “populated” initially during the 2010-11 conference year by the new Conference Nominating Committee and thereafter elected by the Annual Conference upon nomination by the Conference Nominating Committee.

The Core Leadership Team will be convened by the Bishop and will include the Conference Lay leader, one lay member elected by each district, three at-large members appointed by the Bishop, one District Superintendent and the four Center Directors.

#### b. *Center for Leadership Development*

The Center for Leadership Development will address the priority of developing young, diverse, lay and clergy principled Christian leaders. It will encourage faith development and discipleship and provide a system that creates, empowers and supports a culture of principled Christian leaders.

It will include the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) which is required by *BOD* ¶635.1, the Committee on Administrative Review which is required by *BOD* ¶636, the Committee on Investigation which is required by *BOD* ¶2703.2, and other BOM Sub-Committees as determined by BOM. It will include the Board of Laity (¶631.1), the Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries (¶631.6), the United Methodist Women which is required by *BOD* ¶647, and the United Methodist Men which is required by *BOD* ¶648. It will also include the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) (¶649.1).

The Center for Leadership Development will also provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationships required by ¶625.1 (Commission on Equitable Compensation), ¶630 (Board of Discipleship), ¶650 (Council on Young Adult ministry), and ¶634.1 (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry).

**c. Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation**

The Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation will address the priority of starting new faith communities and transforming existing congregations.

It will also provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationships required by BOD ¶645 (Commission on the Small Membership Church).

**d. Center for Missional Outreach**

The Center for Missional Outreach will address the priorities of ministry with the poor and improving global health.

It will also provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationships required by BOD ¶632.1 (Ethnic Local Church Concerns), ¶642 (Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns), ¶653 (Committee on Disabilities), ¶629.1 (Board of Church and Society), ¶633.1 (Board of Global Ministries), and ¶633.5 (Committee on Parish Community Development).

**i. Board of Church and Society**

The Board of Church and Society (BOD ¶629.1) shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline* to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationship between the General Board of Church and Society and the conference, district, and local church.

The Board of Church and Society shall be composed of eight members elected by the annual conference (clergy, laywomen, and laymen, with intentional effort to include clergywomen, youth, young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons [BOD ¶610.5]) and, by virtue of their offices, the mission coordinator for social action of the conference United Methodist Women and member(s) of the General Board of Church and Society from the annual conference (BOD ¶629.2). The elected members shall serve for a quadrennium. Initially, the elected members shall be divided into two classes (four persons for a 2-year term; four persons for a 4-year term) in order to provide for the rotation of participation while maintaining board continuity. Work and funding of the Board shall be coordinated through the Center for Missional Outreach.

The Board of Church and Society shall name a conference Peace with Justice Coordinator (BOD ¶629.2) and shall develop and promote programs on church and society within the bounds of the conference that include prison ministry and reform concerns. The Board may divide its membership into committees which shall cooperate with one another to advance the respective and mutual concerns of their respective areas in social education, service, witness, and action (BOD ¶629.3). Programs shall be developed that provides education and action on

issues confronting the Church consistent with the Social Principles and the policies adopted by the General Conference. (§629.4), with primary attention to empowering the local church and to implement the missional priorities and focus areas of the North Texas Conference.

ii. ***Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns***

The Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

The Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns shall be composed of eight members elected by the annual conference (clergy, laywomen, and laymen, with the majority of the membership being representative of racial and ethnic people, reflecting the racial and ethnic constituencies and local churches of the annual conference. Care shall be taken, where feasible, to ensure balance of membership with clergy and laity, men and women, youth and young adults (*BOD* ¶632.3). The members shall serve for a quadrennium. Initially, the elected members shall be divided into two classes (four persons for a 2-year term; four persons for a 4-year term) in order to provide for the rotation of participation while maintaining board continuity. Work and funding of the Committee shall be coordinated through the Center for Missional Outreach. Additionally, the Center for Leadership Development and the Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation are available to partner with the Committee in the development and implementation of the Committee's goals and priorities.

The Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns shall provide for (a) keeping the vision of the ethnic local church concerns before the annual conference; (b) providing guidance and resources to churches in the annual conference as they minister with and to ethnic constituencies; (c) coordinating annual conference strategies related to ethnic local church concerns, including general church emphases and initiatives; (d) providing a forum for dialogue among the ethnic constituencies, as well as with annual conference agencies; (e) providing training for annual conference and congregational leaders; (f) promoting and interpreting ethnic local church concerns to the annual conference; (g) working to identify and nurture leaders, lay and clergy, of ethnic communities (*BOD* ¶632.2); and (h) maintaining primary attention to empowering the local church to implement the missional priorities and focus areas of the North Texas Conference.

iii. ***Board of Global Ministries***

The Board of Global Ministries shall maintain the connectional relationship and provide for global ministry responsibilities related to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Global Ministries (*BOD* ¶¶1302–1303) in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

The Board of Global Ministries shall be composed of twelve members elected by the annual conference (1/3 clergy, 1/3 laywomen, and 1/3 laymen, with intentional effort to include clergywomen, youth, young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons [*BOD* ¶610.5]) and, by virtue of their offices, the Mission Coordinator of Education and Interpretation of the conference United Methodist Women and

member(s) of the General Board of Global Ministries from the annual conference (*BOD* ¶633.2). The elected members shall serve for a quadrennium. Initially, the elected members shall be divided into two classes (six persons for a 2-year term; six persons for a 4-year term) in order to provide for the rotation of participation while maintaining board continuity. Work and funding of the Board shall be coordinated through the Center for Missional Outreach.

The Board of Global Ministries shall designate the necessary committees, individual secretaries, coordinators, and other leaders to carry out the policies and promote all phases of the work

**iv. *Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns***

The Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns shall provide for the functions and maintain the connectional relationships with the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

The Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns shall be composed of eight members elected by the annual conference [with the recommendation of two United Methodists from each district (also complying with (*BOD* ¶610.5), one of whom shall be the district coordinator for Christian unity and interreligious concerns]. Laypersons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. Membership shall also include any United Methodists residing within the conference bounds who are members of the following: the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, the governing board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist delegation to the most recent World Council for Churches Assembly, and the United Methodist delegation to the most recent plenary meeting of the Churches Uniting in Christ (*BOD* ¶642.2). The elected members shall serve for a quadrennium, initially, one person from each district for a 2-year term and one person from each district for a 4-year term in order to provide for the rotation of participation while maintaining board continuity. Work and funding of the Commission shall be coordinated through the Center for Missional Outreach.

**e. *Center for Connectional Resources***

The Center for Connectional Resources will provide the necessary services to leverage our resources and support our efforts to address the priorities of the Annual Conference.

It will include the Council on Finance and Administration (¶611), the Board of Trustees which is required by *BOD* ¶640, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits which is required by *BOD* ¶639.1, and the Committee on Archives and History which is required by *BOD* ¶641.1.

2. Administrative Oversight Responsibility

a. ***Council on Finance & Administration***

The Council on Finance and Administration shall be constituted and shall function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*. The Director of the Center for Connectional Resources shall be accountable to the Annual Conference through the Council on Finance and Administration and shall have responsibilities and rights accorded by the *Book of Discipline* to the Conference Treasurer. No member of the Council on Finance and Administration shall be a member of any other Agency, or a trustee or member of the board of directors of a conference institution that is supported either partially or totally by the Council on Finance and Administration

b. ***Board of Trustees***

The Board of Trustees shall function and be constituted in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*. The Board of Trustees will provide for the administrative oversight functions previously performed by the Property and Liability Insurance Committee, the Bridgeport Camp & Conference Center Board of Directors, and the Prothro Center at Lake Texoma Board of Directors.

3. Special Concerns of the Laity

a. ***Board of Laity***

The Board of Laity shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

The Board of Laity consists of a Chair plus eleven members. The Chair of the Board of Laity is the Conference Lay Leader. The members of the Board of Laity are: the District Lay Leaders; the President of United Methodist Women; the President of United Methodist Men; the President of the Council on Youth Ministries; the Chair of the Conference Lay Speakers Committee; and the Lay Leader Elect.

*Selection of Annual Conference Lay Leader:* The Board of Laity shall nominate a Lay Leader Elect who will serve as the Associate Lay Leader for a four year term. The Associate Lay Leader will help with the duties of the Lay Leader as set forth in the guidelines established by the Board of Laity. On the expiration of the term of the incumbent Lay Leader, the Lay Leader Elect will become Lay Leader and will serve a four year term.

Duties: In addition to the duties and responsibilities as determined by the *Book of Discipline* and other sections of the Annual Conference Rules, the Conference Lay Leader shall be part of the non-appointed cabinet (or equivalent) and represent the Laity during the Ordination Service of the Annual Conference.

b. ***Conference Lay Speaking Ministries Committee***

The Conference Lay Speaking Ministries Committee will develop and administer the Certified Lay Speakers Program, including recruiting, training, certifying, and re-certifying lay speakers. The Conference Lay Speaking Ministries Committee will also work to promote the use of lay speakers to fulfill the purposes and functions described in the *Book of Discipline*.

The Committee consists of a Chair plus twenty-one members. The Chair will be the Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries. The members will be the Director of Lay Speaking Ministries from each district, a clergy person from each District appointed by the respective District Superintendent, and three at large members from each district appointed by the respective District Director of Lay Speaking Ministries. The Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries, the District Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries and the at large members must be current certified Lay Speakers.

c. ***United Methodist Women***

The Annual Conference United Methodist Women shall be constituted and function according to the *Book of Discipline*. Representatives from United Methodist Women shall also be designated to other Agencies of the Annual Conference as recommended by the *Book of Discipline* or as provided by these Standing Rules.

d. ***United Methodist Men***

The Annual Conference United Methodist Men shall be constituted and function according to the “Manual for Annual Conference and District Boards of Discipleship.” Representatives from United Methodist Men shall also be designated to other Agencies of the Annual Conference when these Standing Rules so provide.

e. ***Council on Youth Ministries***

The Council on Youth Ministries shall be constituted and function according to the *Book of Discipline*. Representatives from the Council on Youth Ministries shall also be designated to other Agencies of the Annual Conference when these Standing Rules so provide.

Connect to the Kingdom (C2K) shall be a self-sustaining ministry of the North Texas Conference related to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. A board of directors shall be composed of youth members of the CCYM, adults in ministry with youth, pastors and other persons whose knowledge and expertise inform the ministry and leadership of Connect to the Kingdom (C2K). There shall be an ex-officio board member (a pastor or professional staff member) from each United Methodist church where Connect to the Kingdom (C2K) programs reside. The board of directors shall be nominated and elected by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries.

4. **Ministerial Training, Certification, and Discipline**

a. ***Board of Ordained Ministry***

The Board of Ordained Ministry shall fulfill the functions described in the *Book of Discipline*. It shall study and interpret the ministerial resources and needs of the Annual Conference with due regard to the church as a united, multi-cultural, and anti-racist institution in consultation with the Bishop and the Cabinet. Duties shall be those assigned to it in the *Book of Discipline*. The Board of Ordained Ministry will discuss and take action as it deems appropriate regarding proposals from its divisions and committees. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall inquire of each District Superintendent about the life and official administration of each member of the Annual Conference in his or her District and report to the Annual Conference as to whether all clergy members are blameless in their life and official administration.

The Board of Ordained Ministry consists of a Chair and up to sixty-three members. They shall be nominated and elected according to the *Book of Discipline*. At the beginning of each quadrennium there shall be at least one member from each district on the Board of Ordained Ministry. Persons shall not be added to the Board of Ordained Ministry or its divisions during the quadrennium except to fill vacancies or new divisions. However, when for any reason a district no longer has a representative on the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall designate one of its members to be a liaison with that district, pending the appointment of a new district representative in accordance with ¶635(1)(a) of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*. The Board of Ordained Ministry may assign additional duties to each division.

The Board of Ordained Ministry shall organize itself into divisions and committees so as to carry out its responsibilities effectively and to fulfill the requirements of the *Book of Discipline*.

**b. *Committee on Administrative Review***

The Committee on Administrative Review shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

**c. *Committee on Joint Review***

The Committee on Joint Review shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

**d. *Committee on Investigation (Clergy)***

The Committee on Investigation (Clergy) shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

**e. *Committee on Investigation (Diaconal)***

The Committee on Investigation (Diaconal) shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

**5. Episcopal Support**

**a. *Committee on Episcopacy***

The Committee on Episcopacy will function as provided in the *Book of Discipline*. It will meet at least annually. The Committee on Episcopacy shall be convened by the Bishop and shall elect a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary. The Bishop and the Chair are authorized to call additional meetings when desired.

The Committee on Episcopacy shall be elected at the Annual Conference session following the General Conference. The Committee on Episcopacy consists of three lay women, three laymen, three clergy members, and three at-large members nominated by the Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. One of the lay members must be the Conference Lay Leader. The Bishop will appoint three additional members of the Committee on Episcopacy. The lay and clergy members of the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy serve as *ex officio* members with vote.

b. ***Episcopal Residence Committee***

The Episcopal Residence Committee will function as provided in the *Book of Discipline*. It will consist of the Chair of the Committee on Episcopacy, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Chair of the Council on Finance and Administration.

6. Personnel Matters

a. ***Board of Pension and Health Benefits***

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*. It will provide for and contribute to the support, relief, assistance and pensioning of clergy and their families, other church workers and lay employees, except as otherwise provided by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. It will also provide to all clergy who qualify and other persons who qualify the best life, hospital, accident, and disability insurance coverage possible as a group with the funds available for that purpose. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall discuss and take action as it deems appropriate regarding proposals under its jurisdiction.

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits should consist of twenty-one members: one-third laywomen, one-third laymen, and one-third clergy. They will be elected for terms of eight years and arranged in classes. A vacancy in the membership of the board may be filled by the board for the remainder of the conference year in which the vacancy occurs. At its next session, the Annual conference shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term. The Director of Administration/Treasurer/Benefits Officer, a representative of the cabinet, and a representative of the Council on Finance and Administration also serve as ex-officio members.

7. Conference Structure and the Annual Conference Session

a. ***Conference Nominating Committee***

The Conference Nominating Committee is responsible for developing and implementing a plan to identify persons who are willing, qualified, and able to serve as members of the Agencies of the annual conference, with attention given to representing the cultural and ethnic diversity of conference membership, in order to have available the knowledge of all cultures within the conference. The Conference Nominating Committee nominates members and Chairs of Agencies for election by the Annual Conference except where otherwise provided in the *Book of Discipline* or these Standing Rules. The Conference Nominating Committee will also maintain a list of persons willing to serve on Agencies, thus acting as a resource for the Core Leadership Team and the Bishop.

The Conference Lay Leader will chair the Conference Nominating Committee, which will also include the four District Superintendents and four at-large lay members nominated by the districts and elected by the Annual Conference.

Prior to the nomination of the at-large lay members by the districts, the District Superintendent will remind the district meeting of the need for inclusiveness in the election of the members of the Conference Nominating Committee. The District Superintendent will also remind the district meeting of the limits on multiple agency membership contained in these Standing Rules. At-large lay members of the Conference Nominating Committee will be elected for a four-year term. A person so elected may serve only one four-year term,

and will be eligible to be elected again only after being off the Conference Nominating Committee for at least two years.

For the conference year 2010–11, the Conference Nominating Committee will be empowered to “populate” any additional work groups requested by the Core Leadership Team. Thereafter, in 2011–12 and following, the Conference Nominating Committee will make nominations to the Annual Conference, which will elect members of the work groups.

**b. *Memoirs Committee***

The Memoirs Committee shall ensure the publication in the Conference *Journal* of suitable memorials for deceased professional members of the Annual Conference and their spouses.

The Memoirs Committee consists of a Chair, a retired member of the Annual Conference, and the Conference Secretary.

**c. *Courtesy and Resolutions Committee***

The Courtesy and Resolutions Committee is responsible for the amenities of the Annual Conference, including presenting the Bishop’s spouse to the Annual Conference, introducing special guests, and writing formal statements of gratitude for services rendered to the Conference.

The Courtesy and Resolutions Committee consists of a Chair plus four members.

**d. *Commission on Archives and History***

The Commission on Archives and History shall be organized and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline* and shall relate to the General Commission on Archives and History. It consists of a Chair plus ten members. The Commission on Archives and History may, if necessary, select up to three additional members.

**e. *Standing Rules Committee***

The Standing Rules Committee oversees and recommends structural changes in the standing rules of the Annual Conference. The Standing Rules Committee consists of a Chair and seven members.

## **II. POLICIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **A. FINANCIAL PRACTICES**

1. *Conference Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year of the Annual Conference is January 1 through December 31.
2. *Apportionments to be made based on Conference Fiscal Year.* The apportionments to the local churches shall be made on the basis of the Conference Fiscal Year.
3. *Conference Books.* The Conference Treasurer’s books shall be closed annually at 12:00 noon on January 11 (or the next working day, if January 11 falls on a weekend or holiday), and no funds received by the Conference Treasurer after that time shall apply toward Conference Apportionments of the year just completed.

4. *Disposition of Interest.* Interest earned on any funds (excluding designated trusts) managed by the Conference Treasurer shall be declared general funds of the North Texas Annual Conference and administered by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

5. *Agency Spending.* No Agency shall incur financial obligations that exceed current appropriations, and beginning balances where applicable, for any reason except by specific approval of the Core Leadership Team and the Council on Finance and Administration. New items must be submitted first to the Core Leadership Team and, if approved, must also be submitted to the Council on Finance and Administration for appraisal and consideration for the current year. No Agency shall include requests for funds other than those required for its own operation or program, except that Teams and Groups may request funds for the benefit of their own Task Forces. Requests for funds for the same cause or concern shall be granted to only one Agency.

6. *Conference-Wide Appeals.* When application is made to the Annual Conference for the privilege of special conference-wide financial appeal, whether by special collection, campaigns, or otherwise, the application shall be referred to the Council on Finance and Administration before final action is taken thereon. The Council on Finance and Administration shall investigate the application and its possible relation to other obligations of the conference, and in light of the facts make recommendations to the Annual Conference.

7. *Auditing.* The Council on Finance and Administration shall nominate to the Annual Conference an auditing firm which shall audit the Conference Treasurer's books annually. All institutions receiving financial support from the Annual Conference, either by direct apportionment or by special offerings, shall, if requested, submit an annual auditor's report acceptable to the Council on Finance and Administration reflecting the receipt and disbursement of the financial support received from the Annual Conference. Such reports shall be provided to the Council on Finance and Administration by October 1 of each year for the previous fiscal year. Each District shall retain an auditing firm to audit the District books annually, and shall submit such annual auditor's report to the Council on Finance and Administration by October 1 of each year for the previous fiscal year.

8. *Apportionments.* The Conference Treasurer, with the assistance of the District Superintendents, shall annually compute the apportionment decimal for each church. By September 1, the Conference Treasurer shall provide the amounts for each church's apportionments for the following year.

9. *Ethical Fiscal Principles.* The following ethical principles apply to the appropriation and disbursement of funds by the Annual Conference:

a. Funds contributed for a designated purpose should be used strictly for the purpose designated, and administered efficiently, without waste or duplication, in order to obtain maximum effect from the use of available funds.

b. Net proceeds from the sale of Annual Conference property are capital funds and should be appropriated to the use which the property was intended to serve. If this is not feasible, priority should be given to the most similar purpose for which the funds can be used effectively or to capital improvements within reasonable geographical proximity; but district lines should not be controlling and the entire community or metropolitan area should be considered. Likewise, funds received by way of indemnity for loss or destruction of any capital assets of the Annual Conference should be treated as capital assets and should be used for similar purposes if restoration of the property is feasible.

10. The salary of a district superintendent shall be adjusted annually by the average percentage change in the base compensation of all full-time pastors appointed to serve local churches or appointments for which the conference is responsible as calculated by the conference treasurer. This adjustment shall begin in 2008, using the 2007 base compensation level as the initial base. In addition, the compensation level is to be evaluated by the Council on Finance and Administration every five years in relationship to North Texas Conference pastoral salaries and other annual conferences.

11. The effective date for Annual Conference moves and clergy retirements is July 1. Thus when a pastoral change comes at Annual Conference, the salary of the previous appointment shall be paid through June 30, and the salary in the new appointment shall begin July 1.

## **B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

1. *Death Records.* The minister who is in charge of the funeral services of any clergy member of the Annual Conference, or the spouse, widow, or widower of a clergy member of the Annual Conference, will supply the Conference Secretary with a memoir containing the date of birth, date of death, date of final rites, and place of burial of the deceased. To the extent possible, the minister will also supply a recent photograph of the deceased and date of entrance into the Annual Conference. For clergy members who transferred into the Annual Conference, the minister will, if possible, inform the Conference Secretary the deceased's date of transfer into the Annual Conference, the conference from which transferred, and appointments in other conferences. If the minister in charge of the funeral cannot supply this information, the Conference Secretary will use his or her best efforts to supply the missing information. All of this information should be sent to the Conference Secretary immediately following the funeral.

2. *Biographical Information.* Each member of the clergy and each diaconal minister shall file with the Conference Secretary a historical sketch of his or her life on a form to be furnished by the Conference Secretary. This document will become that person's record.

3. *Legal Descriptions of Conference Property.* Each District Superintendent shall furnish to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees a legal description of each piece of property in his or her District on or before December 1 of each year. The District Superintendents shall also provide a statement as to where the deeds evidencing ownership of these properties are kept. The information provided annually shall be accurate as of December 1.

4. *Statistics.* Each District Superintendent shall furnish the required district statistics to the Conference Statistician. In order to facilitate these reports, the following procedures will be followed:

a. Each church and pastor shall submit the Annual Conference report for auditing on the Check-Out Day specified by the Cabinet. Check-Out Day is the date when local churches turn in statistical information for the preceding year on forms provided by the Conference Statistician. The Annual Conference report shall be submitted to the District Statistician (see below).

b. Each District Superintendent shall appoint a District Statistician. The District Statistician shall check each Annual Conference report for accuracy, consistency, and completeness. The District Statistician then forwards the Annual Conference reports to the District Secretary, who in turn forwards them to the Conference Statistician.

c. Each pastor in charge shall also report to his or her District Superintendent on Check-Out Day any money borrowed necessary to pay current church obligations for the Conference Fiscal Year, or any delinquent church bills which have not been paid by the close of the Conference Fiscal Year.

## C. VACATION STANDARDS

The following are minimum vacation standards for clergy and diaconal ministers of the North Texas Annual Conference.

### 1. Method of Calculation

The vacation is calculated according to the number of years of service, using the following formula:

- 1–4 years of service—two weeks (two Sundays )
- 5–9 years of service—three weeks (three Sundays)
- 10+ years of service—four weeks (four Sundays)

### 2. Further Guidelines

In applying the standards:

- a. “years of service” shall be determined by years served as a full-time United Methodist commissioned minister, probationary member, diaconal minister, local pastor, associate member, deacon in full connection, or elder in full connection. In computing a person’s “years of service,” time spent in all categories shall be cumulated and all shall count toward the person’s total “years of service.”
- b. The length of vacation is set by the Annual Conference, but the most suitable time for both the employing entity and the clergy or diaconal ministers and their families must be determined by consultation between the clergy or diaconal minister and the employing entity.

## D. CLERGY DIVORCE

“Where marriage partners, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, are estranged beyond reconciliation, we recognize divorce as regrettable, but recognize the right of divorced persons to remarry. We express our deep concern for the care and nurture of the children of divorced and/or remarried persons. We encourage that either or both of the divorced parents be considered for custody of minor children of the marriage. We encourage an active, accepting, and enabling commitment of the church and our society to minister to the members of divorced families,” (*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 1984)

The *Discipline* rightly makes no distinction between divorce occurring among the laity or clergy. We recognize the possibility of congregations being nurturing communities, and, thus for Christian love to grow in the midst of the painful circumstances surrounding a clergy or layperson’s divorce.

The North Texas Conference also can be a caring and nurturing community for the clergy at divorce. The conference recognizes its responsibility to respond to divorcing clergy in as pastoral a manner as possible. To this end, the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church suggests the

following for our clergy as well as their spouses in the event of divorce.

1. The clergy member will have taken every action possible toward reconciliation within the marriage. This shall include extensive counseling with a reputable marriage counselor, preferably with both partners to the marriage participating but, where impossible, with at least the clergy member's participation.
2. In consultation with the District Superintendent, the divorcing clergy and/or spouse may request a meeting of the following persons:
  - a. The Chairperson of the Division of Conference Relations, presider.
  - b. The District Superintendent of the clergy member's district.
  - c. The district member of the Division of Conference Relations.
  - d. Two peers chosen by the clergy member involved.
3. This meeting will:
  - a. Pastorally respond to the divorce
  - b. Offer help/guidance, if requested, to:
    - 1) The clergy member
    - 2) The divorcing spouse
    - 3) The clergy member's peers, and/or
    - 4) The respective Pastor-Parish Committee
  - c. Refer divorcing persons to special seminars and workshops on divorce which are available periodically in the community.

## **E. CLERGY HOUSING**

1. In the event of the death of a member of the clergy occupying a parsonage, the surviving spouse and family shall be granted the privilege of using the parsonage for a period of time not to exceed sixty (60) days.
2. Housing Standards for Elders in Full Connection.

In this section on Housing Standards for Elders in Full Connection, including Housing Allowances and Parsonage standards, the word "clergy" means "elders in full connection." The standards on Housing Allowances and parsonages apply to those churches that have elders in full connection and that are not receiving an equitable salary support.

The size and make-up of clergy families, and the size, location, and type of housing provided for clergy families by local churches is a major factor in the well-being of clergy families. As such, it has an impact on the effectiveness of clergy.

Although it is clear that no one single provision for housing will completely satisfy all the needs of every clergy family and every local church, the goal is to best satisfy the needs of all.

### **Housing Allowances**

While parsonages have been the traditional means of providing housing for clergy families, there are those local church settings and situations where a housing allowance can be an effective and efficient means of providing housing for clergy families.

However, it must be understood that if a house is purchased by a clergy family, there is the potential for financial hardship and difficulties related to the sale of a house when an appointment change is made.

It must also be understood that a housing allowance will have no effect on the tenure of a pastor, neither increasing nor decreasing the potential length of a pastorate.

1. If a housing allowance is provided by a local church, the amount shall be sufficient to allow for the rental\lease\purchase of housing that meets the parsonage standards of the annual conference.
2. A utility allowance shall be paid in addition to the housing allowance.
3. The amount of the housing allowance and of the utility allowance shall be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the amount is adequate.
4. The District Superintendent, in consultation with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, shall be responsible for ensuring that these standards are met.

### **Parsonages**

1. Size
  - a. In order to accommodate all family sizes as reasonably as possible, and to allow for the greatest flexibility in meeting the needs of clergy families, the parsonage shall contain at least three bedrooms, with four recommended.
  - b. There shall be at least two full baths.
  - c. There shall be at least one large living area, with two living areas recommended.
  - d. There shall be at least one dining area.
  - e. There shall be a garage or covered carport adjacent to the house.
  - f. The total area of living space shall be approximately 2,000 sq. ft. or more.
2. Location
  - a. The parsonage shall be located in a residential neighborhood. (It should not be on a major thoroughfare, nor adjacent to commercial businesses.)
  - b. The parsonage shall be located where it will allow for adequate privacy for the clergy family.
3. Interior
  - a. The kitchen shall include all standard modern appliances (oven, cooktop, dishwasher, disposal, and refrigerator).
  - b. There shall be a washer and dryer for laundry.
  - c. There shall be adequate heating and cooling, with central air and heat whenever possible.
  - d. The parsonage shall have window treatments in every room (e.g., blinds, drapes, or shutters).

- e. The clergy family shall be responsible for all other furnishings.
- f. All interiors of newly built parsonages shall be accessible for persons with disabilities, including a minimum of (1) one bathroom that has an accessible shower, commode, and lavatory, (2) passageways, garage, rooms, and entrances that are accessible, and (3) consideration is given to the landscaping of the yard.
- g. When an appointment is made in which a member of the parsonage family has a disability, the District Superintendent shall see that the existing parsonage be fitted with aids that will enable it to be suitable for persons with disabilities to the extent that the structure of the existing parsonage can be renovated. Consideration for grant moneys from conference agencies shall be given to these churches.

#### 4. Exterior

- a. The outside of the parsonage shall be landscaped to complement the house, with adequate shrubs, bushes, and trees.
- b. A safe, fenced area shall be provided in the backyard for children and/or pets.
- c. The mowing and the upkeep of the yard are to be negotiated between the pastor and the Board of Trustees.

#### 5. Utilities

- a. The local church shall pay for the cost of all utilities, including basic television access, except for personal long distance phone calls.
- b. In order to minimize fees and deposits, the utilities, including the telephone, shall be in the name of the local church, unless this results in a higher rate schedule.

#### 6. Maintenance

- a. The local church Board of Trustees is responsible for the upkeep and repair of the parsonage, including the appliances, and there shall be an annual inspection of the parsonage and property by the Trustees, with a written report made at the local church's annual Charge Conference. It is suggested that all parsonages have an inspection by an engineering or contracting inspector every five years, starting ten years after they have been purchased or built.
- b. The clergy family is responsible for minor upkeep and repairs, and for any damage done to the parsonage by a member or pet of the clergy family, including that caused by smoking.

#### 7. Change of Pastors

- a. When there is an impending change of pastors, the pastor shall notify the local church Board of Trustees, and the clergy family and Trustees shall ensure that the parsonage is as clean as possible. Major repairs should be made before the new clergy family arrives.
- b. The Trustees shall contact the new clergy family before any painting or refurbishing is done, in order to have their preferences, needs, and suggestions incorporated into any work done on the parsonage.

8. Disposition of Church Owned Furniture
  - a. Following the 1994 Annual Conference, churches will begin the process of providing unfurnished parsonages, except for the items listed above in C.
9. Compliance
  - a. The Board of Trustees of each local church shall make a written report on or before its Charge Conference in 1996, demonstrating either compliance with these standards or specific plans to come into compliance with these standards.
  - b. The District Superintendent, in consultation with the pastor, the Board of Trustees, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that these standards are met.
  - c. Lay member(s) of Annual Conference is(are) responsible for taking these standards back to every local church Board of Trustees.

## **Annual Conference Moving Fund**

1. Funding
  - a. The North Texas Conference shall establish a “Moving Fund” to be assessed through a Conference apportionment. This fund shall be of sufficient amount to pay for the number of qualifying moves in any given year. In this section on Annual Conference Moving Fund, “clergy” refers to those entitled to funding from the moving fund, as described more specifically in section 2 below.
  - b. For eligible full-time moves, payment will be made as follows:
    - (1) for the actual cost up to 45% of the Texas Max 3 Tariff as stated in the “Moving Allowance Chart” (which shall automatically reflect any changes in the Texas Max 3 Tariff);
    - (2) Replacement Cost Insurance for an estimated value of the shipment up to \$50,000 will be provided for all full-time moves. (The additional cost of a shipment value of \$50,001-100,000 may be taken out of the stipend);
    - (3) A \$300 stipend is also available which may be used for other documented moving expenses the clergy family incurs.
  - c. For eligible part-time moves, payment up to a total of \$500 will be made for a moving company and personal expenses.
2. Eligibility for Funding
  - a. Those elders in full connection, probationary members, commissioned ministers preparing for ordination as elders in full connection, associate members, or full-time local pastors, who are appointed to a local church in the North Texas Annual Conference, and other elders in full connection, probationary members, commissioned ministers preparing for ordination as elders in full connection, associate members, or full-time local pastors for whom the North Texas Annual Conference is the salary paying unit (such as District Superintendents, Conference Council Directors, Wesley Foundation Directors, etc.) shall be eligible to receive funds.
  - b. Retiring elders in full connection, probationary members, commissioned ministers preparing for ordination as elders in full connection, associate members, or full-time local

pastors shall be eligible to receive funds for one move into housing not already owned or supported by a local church after retirement, up to the maximum amount allowable. Retired elders in full connection, probationary members, commissioned ministers preparing for ordination as elders in full connection, associate members, and local pastors who are appointed by the Bishop to serve active, full-time appointments shall be eligible for moves up to the maximum amount allowed. In circumstances in which a clergy member planning to retire moves prior to the retirement date, reimbursement for a move made within one year prior to the retirement date shall be made upon retirement, contingent upon the presentation of documentation of costs incurred.

c. Less than full-time appointments to local churches with parsonages will be allocated up to the \$500 per move.

d. If an elder in full connection, probationary member, commissioned minister preparing for ordination as elder in full connection, associate member, or full-time local pastor from another Conference is to be appointed to a local church in the North Texas Annual Conference, the North Texas Annual Conference will pay the cost of the move from the border of the North Texas Conference, up to the maximum amount allowed.

e. If an elder in full connection, probationary member, commissioned minister preparing for ordination as elder in full connection, associate member, or full-time local pastor of the North Texas Annual Conference transfers to another Conference, and the receiving Conference does not pay the full cost of the move, the North Texas Conference will pay the cost of the move up to the border of the North Texas Conference, up to the maximum amount allowed.

f. Those elders in full connection, probationary members, commissioned ministers preparing for ordination as elders in full connection, and associate members, or full-time local pastors who go on Leave of Absence, or who surrender their credentials, either voluntarily or involuntarily, will not be eligible to receive any North Texas Annual Conference moving funds, except in the case of those going on disability leave or the family of an elder in full connection, a probationary member, a commissioned minister preparing for ordination as an elder in full connection, an associate member, or a full-time local pastor who dies while under appointment who shall be eligible to receive funds for the initial move into housing not already owned or supported by a local church, up to the maximum amount allowable.

g. Those persons who change or move houses, but who do not change appointments, will not be eligible to receive any North Texas Conference moving funds.

h. Those persons who change appointments, but who do not change houses, will not be eligible to receive any North Texas Conference moving funds.

i. If either or both clergy or a clergy couple living in one house change appointments, and move to one house, they will be eligible to receive funds for only the cost of the one move, up to the maximum amount allowable. If two houses are involved, at either the beginning point or ending point, they will be eligible to receive funds for both moves, each up to the maximum amount allowable.

j. In no case shall the Conference pay more than the actual documented expense of any eligible move.

### 3. Method of Payment

- a. A list of movers that will bill the Annual Conference directly will be provided by the receiving District Superintendent. All expenses that are within the Annual Conference Allowance will be billed directly to the Annual Conference by those moving companies. The receiving church and moving clergy/family will not be responsible for any part of the expense that is within the Annual Conference Allowance. If a moving company is used that will not bill the Annual Conference directly, then the moving clergy/family is responsible for the bill and will be reimbursed by the Annual Conference for all documented expenses that are within the Annual Conference Allowance. Any documented expenses paid by the moving clergy/family are to be submitted to the receiving District Superintendent. The receiving District Superintendent shall then submit these documented expenses to the Annual Conference Treasurer. The Annual Conference Treasurer will be the final arbitrator concerning any question about moving costs, documentation, or payments. The Conference Treasurer shall issue payment to the moving company or the entity that incurred the expense.
- b. A written estimate must be submitted to the receiving District Superintendent by June 15 for moves in July, and within one week of the announcement of a midyear move. The District Superintendent will then give approval to the moving company or the entity incurring the expense for the move. Arrangements for payment of any expenses in excess of the Annual Conference Allowance must be made prior to the move.

### 4. Moving Procedures

- a. **Receiving DS** gives to the clergy the Moving Packet which includes Moving Procedures, moving companies that will bill the Annual Conference, and the current Moving Allowance sheet
- b. **Clergy gets estimates from at least two moving companies** of his/her choice and chooses the one he/she wishes to use. He/she can work out payment with the Annual Conference, if the company is not on the list, by having the mover call the Conference Treasurer at 972-526-5000.
- c. **Clergy submits the estimates** (including his/her choice) to the **receiving DS** for approval with an estimate of any other expenses that may be incurred.
- d. **Receiving DS approves the move and calls the moving company** with that approval by **June 15** or as soon as the clergy gets the estimate with a mid-year move.
- e. **Receiving DS mails** copies of chosen estimate, DS Check Sheet and Moving Insurance Information Sheet to Conference Treasurer.
- f. **Receiving DS mails** Conference Treasurer copies of any expenses incurred by clergy or receiving charge.
- g. **Conference Treasurer** reimburses those expenses and pays moving companies.

MOVING ALLOWANCE (based on 12,000 pounds)		
Miles	Texas Tariff Max 3	2012 Allowance 45% of Max 3
All moves under 40 miles will receive a 40 mile rate.		
40 or less	\$5,986	\$2,694
41-60	\$6,215	\$2,797
61-80	\$6,445	\$2,900
81-100	\$6,674	\$3,003
101-120	\$6,903	\$3,106
121-140	\$7,132	\$3,209
141-160	\$7,332	\$3,299
161-180	\$7,561	\$3,402
181-200	\$7,790	\$3,505
201-220	\$7,905	\$3,557
221-240	\$8,021	\$3,609
241-260	\$8,136	\$3,661

## F. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT FOR DEFINING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church affirms the *2000 Book of Resolutions*, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment Within the Church, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the Church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with the current *Book of Discipline*, ¶161(F), we affirm that all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26 states all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation or gender.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender (2008 *Book of Discipline* ¶161(I)).

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue.

Misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the Church interferes with its moral **MISSION**. The North Texas Conference stands in opposition to the sin of misconduct of a sexual nature in the Church and society at large and commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any charge of sexual misconduct within the Church and to take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the *Book of Discipline*. Further, the Conference bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

Because experiencing sexual abuse or harassment, and reporting such misconduct, can be difficult and frightening, we believe that the availability of trained advocates or support teams to assist victims of sexual misconduct is important, and we are committed to continuing support for the training and availability of such advocates or support teams.

We recognize that in any incident of sexual misconduct there may be many victims, including the family, friends, and congregation of the direct victim and of the person who has engaged in the misconduct. We therefore affirm as continuing goals for the Conference not only the resolution of complaints and the reconciliation of persons directly involved, but also the healing of all such indirect victims of the misconduct.

Sexual misconduct involving a clergy person should be reported to the clergy person's district superintendent or the presiding bishop. Misconduct involving paid staff, volunteers or other non-clergy persons should be reported to the pastor-in-charge, if any, or to other appropriate persons in accordance with guidelines and procedures that may be adopted by the Conference, by local churches or by other appropriate bodies within the Church.

The North Texas Conference is committed to the continuing, broad dissemination of this Policy Statement and of any guidelines and procedures adopted by the Conference, and to the continuing education of clergy and lay persons within the Conference for the purpose of preventing sexual misconduct and increasing awareness and understanding of the Conference's relevant policies and procedures.

## **2. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INTRODUCTION**

The North Texas Conference will not tolerate and is committed to the eradication of sexual misconduct by its clergy. The ministerial office is a position of great trust, power and responsibility, offering the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. Sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust.

These Procedures provide a process for reporting incidents of clergy sexual misconduct within the North Texas Conference. They seek to create a safe, non-threatening environment in which aggrieved persons will feel comfortable revealing allegations of sexual misconduct. It is a continuing goal

of these Procedures to provide an opportunity for a reconciliation and resolution that respects and protects the rights of all parties and that acknowledges the sacred trust between clergy and the persons they serve. They are not intended to supplant or substitute for the formal complaint process set forth in the 2008 *Book of Discipline*. The use of these Procedures is voluntary, and the failure to utilize or follow them is not a chargeable offense nor can it be used as grounds for an appeal of the result of any formal complaint, review, investigation, or trial process.

The implementation of these Procedures shall be under the supervision and control of the Bishop and District Superintendents, who shall have the authority to interpret and apply the Procedures.

### STANDARDS OF PASTORAL CONDUCT

Pastors are accountable for their behavior with respect to the emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Breach of this pastoral relationship through sexual misconduct is unethical and abusive, even when sexual activity is initiated by the person to whom the pastor is ministering. Because of the trust and imbalance of power in such relationships, the person being ministered to must be presumed to be unable to give meaningful consent to any sexual activity with the pastor.

Because pastors often deal with individuals who are emotionally fragile and vulnerable, it is imperative that pastors:

1. be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually themselves;
2. have adequate preparation and education for helping individuals under their care;
3. have continued supervision in dealing with the inherent risks caused by dependency and/or transference; and
4. have the information necessary to make appropriate referrals.

Pastoral self-discipline requires self-awareness and takes the Christian standards and ordination vows seriously. Personal integrity and mature professional conduct must be brought to all relationships by every pastor in the North Texas Conference. The highest ethic of the pastor similarly prohibits any sexual behavior with a parishioner entrusted to his or her sacred care.

All clergy, single or married, have the responsibility of developing healthy personal relationships. Married clergy have covenanted to nurture and maintain their marriage relationship. When relational or sexual difficulties are present in a pastor's life, appropriate measures to address the difficulties should be taken.

Pastors who are appointed to parishes where there has been alleged sexual misconduct of their predecessor find themselves burdened with the inevitable consequences arising from the misconduct of a colleague. There is a tension between caring for a colleague and caring for the covenant of the pastoral ministry. By "protecting" a colleague, we risk perpetuating a relationship or pattern of abuse and victimization. This compromises the credibility and practice of Christian faith and ministry. Thus the present pastor should take immediate steps, consistent with these Procedures, to address the alleged misconduct.

The procedures for dealing with clergy sexual misconduct place an unfair and unavoidable burden on the victim of such misconduct. It is in the best interest of the church to empower the laity through education and open discussion about what standards of conduct they may expect from their pastors.

## DEFINITIONS

For purposes of these Procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

“Sexual misconduct” includes sexual abuse and sexual harassment, as such terms are defined in the Policy Statement. Sexual misconduct may include inappropriate physical contact or verbal behavior, including, for example, behavior that creates a hostile or intimidating environment and the explicit or implicit use of power or authority to coerce someone into sexual contact. Because of the imbalance of power inherent in ministerial relationships, sexual contact between a pastor and someone with whom he or she has a ministerial relationship constitutes sexual abuse even if the other person consents to or initiates the contact. More subtle behavior not involving physical contact may also constitute sexual misconduct. Further discussion and examples of sexual misconduct are included in the brochure entitled “*Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct*,” prepared and distributed by the Division of Conference Relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry of the North Texas Conference.

An ‘allegation’ is an initial report, either verbal or written, of an alleged incident of clergy sexual misconduct.

A “complaint” is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct, as set forth in ¶361.1(a) of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.

An “aggrieved person” is a person who has experienced sexual misconduct by a pastor.

The terms “clergy” and “pastor” shall refer to all persons described in ¶361.1(a) of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, which includes “local pastors, associate members, probationary members, and full members” of the North Texas Conference, “including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement.”

A “Resource Person” is a trained lay volunteer person made available by the North Texas Conference to assist and support aggrieved persons in bringing an allegation or complaint of sexual misconduct, as more fully described in the North Texas Conference Procedure for Reporting Incidents of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.

The Core Leadership Team is the group given responsibility by the bishop to maintain the Resource Person program and lend guidance and accountability to the North Texas Conference in regards to abiding by the Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND REPORTING

Allegations of sexual misconduct should be kept in the strictest of confidence and disclosed only at the times and under the circumstances specifically provided in these Procedures. The spread of such allegations or accusations between colleagues in ministry or within congregations is harmful to the aggrieved person, the accused and to the integrity of the processes outlined in these Procedures and in the current *Book of Discipline*.

However, when clergy sexual misconduct occurs, the protection of victims, both past, present, and potential, requires that the misconduct be reported. Because of the covenant with the church which is an integral part of the pastoral office, it is a pastor’s responsibility to call an offending pastor into account by immediately reporting information about sexual misconduct to his or her District Superintendent, the District Superintendent of the accused or the Bishop.

Pastors who become aware of an alleged incident of sexual misconduct by another pastor are to do their utmost to encourage and support aggrieved persons and to assist in the initiation of an allegation as provided in these Procedures. Every allegation of sexual misconduct must be taken seriously, and in no case should a pastor judge the validity of the allegation.

The requirement of confidentiality shall not prevent the Bishop or the District Superintendents from discussing allegations and related information with affected congregations, Staff Pastor-Parish Relations committees or others to whom it is necessary to make such disclosure, in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*, in order to protect actual or potential victims, to promote healing or for other appropriate purposes.

Although truth-telling is essential, respect must also be given to the role of pastors in receiving confessions and the sanctity of confidential relations. Nothing in these Procedures shall be deemed to require or permit a pastor to report or reveal information received in confidence as contemplated by ¶341.5 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline* and relevant decisions of the Judicial Council.

## PROCEDURES

When sexual misconduct is alleged against a pastor, persons bringing allegations will be received in a respectful and caring manner. All allegations will be considered worthy of full investigation, with due respect for the presumption of innocence. Care will be taken to deal fairly and promptly with all those involved. This includes the aggrieved and his/her family, the accused and his/her family and the congregation or other institution.

The following procedures are established to facilitate the reporting of allegations of clergy sexual misconduct:

1. Aggrieved persons are encouraged to contact a District Superintendent, the Bishop or the designated representative of the Core Leadership Team. Any of these contacts may refer the aggrieved to a Resource Person. An allegation may be brought by the aggrieved person or by anyone who has verifiable knowledge or reasonable indication of sexual misconduct and is willing to pursue a resolution. This may include, for example, a pastor or lay person in whom the aggrieved person has confided or who has reliable information from other sources about the misconduct.
2. The District Superintendent, the Bishop to whom the allegation is brought or the Resource Person to whom the aggrieved has been referred shall explain these Procedures to the aggrieved person or other person bringing the allegation and advise them that use of the Procedures is not a prerequisite to an aggrieved person's ability to bring a formal complaint.
3. If an allegation is brought initially to a District Superintendent, the District Superintendent shall advise the Bishop that the allegation has been received. If the aggrieved person has not requested a Resource Person and desires one, the Bishop may assign one to assist and support the aggrieved person.
4. The Resource Person assigned shall provide full assistance to the aggrieved person throughout the process, including the following:
  - a. confirming that the aggrieved person understands these Procedures and the procedures contained in the *Book of Discipline*;

- b. verifying and clarifying the allegation with the aggrieved person; and
- c. requesting the aggrieved person to prepare, with the assistance of the Resource Person as needed, a written statement of the allegation, which shall include a description, in reasonable detail, of the alleged sexual misconduct and related events, circumstances, and dates.

5. If a complaint is forwarded to the Bishop or a District Superintendent, ¶361 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline* shall determine the process to be followed. These Procedures are not intended to limit in any way the actions the Bishop or District Superintendents may take in connection with their supervisory response to a complaint of sexual misconduct or to impose any duties on them inconsistent with the 2008 *Book of Discipline* or relevant decisions of the Judicial Council. The Resource Person may continue to assist and support the aggrieved person throughout the complaint process and may attend all meetings held in connection with the process.

6. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained before, during and after the conduct of the process outlined in these Procedures, and information regarding allegations shall be disclosed only in such manner and to such persons as specifically provided herein.

7. Because of the pain and disruption that necessarily accompany sexual misconduct, it may be necessary for certain actions to be taken following the conclusion of the processes outlined in these Procedures and in the 2008 *Book of Discipline*. The Bishop and District Superintendents are encouraged to take or require such actions as they deem necessary and appropriate in their best judgment, which actions may include, for example, processes for healing within the affected congregation or institution, further resolution of unresolved conflicts and support or counseling for aggrieved persons or accused pastors.

These Procedures establish a process for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct by any pastor (as defined above). They are not designed to address allegations or complaints of sexual misconduct by the Bishop or a District Superintendent. Persons who believe they have been affected by sexual misconduct by the Bishop or a District Superintendent may contact one of the Resource Persons for information and assistance in bringing a complaint in accordance with procedures contained in the current *Book of Discipline*.

### **RESOURCE PERSONS ON THE ISSUE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Resource Persons are volunteer laypersons who have been trained to provide assistance to persons who believe they have been victims of clergy sexual misconduct. Resource Persons represent the interest of aggrieved persons at all times and shall support the aggrieved persons throughout the process. Resource Persons are expected to work cooperatively with the Bishop, the district superintendents and the Core Leadership Team.

Resource Persons shall be the initial point of contact with those procedures for any persons who desire to use them. A Person who believes that she/he may have been the victim of clergy sexual misconduct need not register an allegation or complaint and does not have to identify her/himself when requesting a Resource Person and making an initial contact.

Functions performed by Resource Persons shall include:

1. Explaining the church's processes and procedures
2. Providing resources and referrals
3. Helping the aggrieved person prepare a written summary of the allegation and if necessary, a formal complaint when requested by the aggrieved person.

4. Accompany the aggrieved person to meetings held in connection with the Procedures or in connection with the complaint process as allowed in the current *Book of Discipline*.
5. Calling to attention of the Bishop and the Core Leadership Team any hostile, vindictive, or insensitive situations that arise during the process or any failure to properly follow the Procedures or the complaint process outlined in the current *Book of Discipline*.
6. Giving feedback to the Core Leadership Team regarding the process.

### **CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Under the direction of the Bishop or persons acting at the Bishop's direction, the Core Leadership Team shall have the authority and responsibility for administering the Resource Person Program, to recruit volunteers to serve as Resource Persons, to provide training and continuing education for Resource Persons, to provide annual training for the chairpersons of Staff Parish Relations Committees of the North Texas Annual Conference, and to broadly disseminate and make readily available information about the Resource Person Program.

### **RECRUITING AND TRAINING OF RESOURCE PERSONS**

The Core Leadership Team recruits individuals to become Resource Persons who are known to have the qualities needed for this sensitive volunteer role. The Core Leadership Team delegates one of its members to speak with the district Superintendent of the applicant's home church prior to discussing the invitation with the individual. Then the Core Leadership Team invites the individual to complete an application form, which includes education, work history and an authorization for a criminal background check. All applicants are interviewed by a subcommittee of the Core Leadership Team prior to being recommended to the Bishop, who writes a letter appointing the Resource Person.

The North Texas Conference is committed to the continuing education and proper training of Resource Persons. Initially, Resource Persons shall attend training recommended and planned by the Core Leadership Team, which will include the following areas:

1. roles and expectations of the Resource Person(s);
2. local organization of the United Methodist Church;
3. leaders and their leadership positions in the North Texas Conference;
4. church and community resources;
5. the North Texas Conference Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct and Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Clergy Sexual Misconduct; and
6. The *Book of Discipline* and relevant Judicial Council rulings.

The Core Leadership Team will maintain contact with the Resource Persons and offer periodic education and training.

## **3. EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONFERENCE RELATING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **DISSEMINATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Bishop, District Superintendents, and Resource Person(s) shall each have a copy of and thoroughly know the Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Procedures for Reporting Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the North Texas Conference and be responsible for distributing such Policy and Procedures to clergy and local church chairs of Staff Parish Relations Committees, Administrative

Councils, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Women annually as these persons are elected. The clergy and the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee of every local church in the North Texas Conference shall have a copy of and be familiar with the Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Procedures for Reporting Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the North Texas Conference and the complaint process outlined in the current *Book of Discipline*.

The Policy and Procedures of the North Texas Conference will be available to anyone who requests a copy.

Local churches will make available to their congregations copies of the brochure entitled “Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct” and publish the name and telephone numbers of the District Superintendents and Core Leadership Team contact (s). Throughout the year, copies of the brochure will be placed in accessible locations within local churches. (An electronic copy of the brochure can be found on the North Texas Conference website at <http://www.ntcumc.org> under Clergy Ethics.)

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The North Texas Conference shall provide annual training to educate the clergy and laity about the complaint process in the event of allegations of sexual misconduct and to heighten awareness of the clergy and laity about the seriousness of the problem of sexual misconduct, thereby aiding in the prevention of this problem in our local churches.

The goals of the training include the following:

1. to explain the abuse of power and dynamics of trust in abusive relationships;
2. to provide behavioral definitions of sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
3. to describe the impact on the victim, the perpetrator, the families, and the church;
4. to explain the Policy and Procedures of the North Texas Conference and the United Methodist Church regarding sexual misconduct;
5. to explain legal responsibilities regarding minors;
6. to introduce the Resource Person(s) and clarify their role;
7. to define the risk to church vitality, attendance and giving, liability to individuals, congregations, and the annual conference;
8. to discuss the importance of healing and how the church is an agent in the healing process;
9. to explain the need for preventative measures;
10. to discuss the importance of local church policies and procedures addressing issues of sexual misconduct;
11. to distribute copies of the brochure entitled “Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct,” and to explain its purpose and educational use; and
12. to provide resources for local churches

Training will be provided separately for clergy and laity. Professionals from the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and/or others trained and knowledgeable about the issues of sexual misconduct will conduct the training.

The Board of Ordained Ministry, specifically the Committee on Conference Relations and the Residency Committee (who may choose to seek help from the chairs of the Order of Deacons, Order of Elders, Fellowship of Local Pastors, Fellowship of Diaconal Ministers, the Core Leadership Team and/or the Cabinet), will be responsible for planning and organizing the training for clergy and diaconal ministers. Pastors and diaconal ministers from every local church or charge in the North Texas Conference and those in extension ministries and the District Superintendents will receive

an announcement regarding the clergy training. Clergy and diaconal ministers will be expected to attend training a minimum of once every four years. Particular attention will be given to insuring the training of new pastors in the conference (through the residency program and district training events).

With the help of the Board of Laity, and the District Superintendents, the Core Leadership Team will offer training to the laity through the District Training events in January.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Each local church shall establish its own policy statement on sexual misconduct, consistent with the *Book of Discipline* and the policy statement of the North Texas Annual Conference, and shall establish guidelines and procedures for resolving incidents of sexual misconduct by persons other than clergy, including paid staff, counselors, lay volunteers and others.

#### **5. PRIORITY OF THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

If any provision of these Procedures is in conflict with the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, the current *Book of Discipline* shall prevail.

## **G. MINISTRYSAFE SAFETY SYSTEM**

### **MINISTRYSAFE SAFETY SYSTEM FOR ALL CONFERENCE AND DISTRICT EVENTS NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

#### **Introduction to Annual Conference Policy**

**OUR CALLING AND OUR MANDATE IS TO ENSURE A SAFE HAVEN FOR ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE.**

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary. Scriptures provide examples of how sanctuary is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony (Psalms 20:1-2, 27:4-5).

As Christians, we are called to create a protective environment in our churches. They must be holy, safe and protective communities for all of God's children, regardless of age or ability. The purpose of this policy is to address the communal responsibility of our children, youth, and vulnerable persons at all local churches, and at all District or Annual Conference sponsored events. The North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy with procedures in place (1) to help prevent the opportunity for the occurrence and/or the appearance of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable persons, (2) to help provide safeguards for workers from false accusations and/or suspicions and (3) to hold accountable all those who minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, vulnerable persons, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

### **Scope of Annual Conference Policy**

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid persons, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and/or its Districts.

This Annual Conference policy is effective as of July 1, 2012 for all Conference and District Events. The North Texas Annual Conference policy shall be applicable at all Conference and District activities. The local congregation's policy may expand the Conference policy, but may not/should not alter the minimum standards established by the Conference or those standards mandated by the State of Texas' licensures.

### **Supervision**

An adult is defined as anyone 18 years of age or older.

A youth assistant is anyone under the age of 18 who may work with children and youth only when supervised by at least two adults over the age of 18 years. Youth assistants cannot be in charge of, nor left alone with children and youth. Background checks on youth under the age of 18 are inaccessible, so choose youth with great care. If using youth assistants, ensure the following is completed: 1) Application, 2) six-month volunteer history and 3) verify references. Also note, with using youth assistants, MinistrySafe training will need to be adapted for age-appropriateness.

To achieve compliance with the MinistrySafe policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event. It is also strongly encouraged that there be present at least one adult who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

Observation of activities in rooms is essential, whether it is done by windows, open doors, glass doors, electronic technology, etc.

All volunteers seeking to work with children, youth and vulnerable persons, shall have at least 6 months involvement in a local church or provide a written recommendation by a senior pastor or appropriate designee.

For the sake of outreach, evangelism, and family involvement in our ministries, Parents, Grandparents, and Legal Guardians who have not met these criteria may volunteer as guest, so long as 2 or more properly MinistrySafe trained staff or volunteers are on site and in charge. Any such individuals who intend to be a guest on an ongoing basis shall be subject to all MinistrySafe guidelines and screenings.

Supervision for Nursery/childcare at Conference and District events:

- There shall be a minimum of two (2) adults per room or within line of sight.
- The State of Texas Childcare Minimum Standards ([http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care)) must be followed, particularly in relation to the number of adults to child ratio.

Supervision of children and youth at Conference and District events:

- Conference and District events shall observe the—"2 Adult Rule" (2 adults per classroom, 2 adults within line of sight). -OR-
- Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting shall be conducted in sight of another adult. -OR-
- Understanding that there is safety in numbers, one adult can be in contact with multiple youth (6th–12th grades) so long as they are in line of sight of other adults.

### **Overnight Accommodations**

At events that require overnight accommodations:

- At least (2) adults are present in every room/cabin. -OR-
- When staying in a hotel, adults shall sleep in an adjoining room with the same gender of the children/youth; or if necessary for children/youth to share a room with an adult, adults shall sleep in separate beds from children/youth so long as any one adult shall not be alone with any one child/youth.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

**Verbal Abuse**—Any verbal act that humiliates degrades or threatens any child or youth.

**Physical Abuse**—Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to physical health of a child or youth.

**Sexual Abuse**—Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) incest, 2) rape, 3) prostitution, 4) romantic involvement with any participant, 5) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in sponsored activities of this church, 6) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content.

Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse.

**Emotional Abuse**—Exposing a youth or younger child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the youth or child that she or he is worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Emotional abuse may include being locked in closets or other confining spaces, being incessantly told they are bad, or being forced to abuse alcohol or illegal drugs.

**Neglect**—Endangering a child or teen's health, welfare, and/or safety through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, affection to destroy the child or teen's sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

**Ritual Abuse**—Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a child or youth, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility for the victim's welfare. Typically the perpetrator appeals to some higher authority or power to justify his or her abuse. Examples of ritual abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the youth or child victim or to people related to the victim.

### **Screening for Adults**

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children and youth and vulnerable persons. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of those who can provide safe and caring supervision in a safe environment. All screening shall be done in accordance with guidelines to be established by the Conference Ministry Safe Awareness and Training Task Force.

Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:

- Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful
- Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.
- Drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application.
- Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.

If there are questions regarding an individual's background check or screening, due to special circumstances (acquittals, discharges, exonerations, pardons, etc.), please notify the District Superintendent or appropriate Conference Staff before making those decisions.

### **Training**

The North Texas Annual Conference shall develop and implement training for all persons in leadership who work with children, youth and vulnerable populations at the District and Conference level. None of these persons shall, after July 1, 2012, have any direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth until they have completed the MinistrySafe Safety System. We recommend that at the beginning of each Conference/District event a review of this policy be conducted. As of January 1, 2013, all congregations shall implement this same training standard.

The MinistrySafe Safety System must be reviewed and renewed annually.

### **Reporting of Incidents**

1. When an adult leader of an event or activity suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Texas Penal Code is taking or has taken place, he or she shall call 911 when needed and report the abuse to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (800-252-5400). The adult leader shall contact the administrator or event leader immediately, and cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.
2. Address any needs the child or youth may have, medical or otherwise. Report to the parent(s) and/or legal guardians(s).
3. The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well-being of the children or youth, be removed with dignity from further contact with the children and youth until an appropriate investigation has taken place. The matter shall remain confidential. If the adult event leader is the respondent, then the report should be made to that person's supervisor.
4. Following the report of an incident, the adult event leader, or supervisor in charge shall speak with the alleged victim, and document the report, according to Section 5.
5. All such conversations shall be documented. Careful and confidential documentation is essential. The documentation should include the following:
  - a. The name of the adult leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
  - b. The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
  - c. Any statement made by the alleged victim.
  - d. Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
  - e. Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.

- f. Date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
  - g. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
  - h. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
6. Notify the Conference/District authorities immediately.
  7. It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system, provisions of the current Book of Discipline, appropriate counseling referrals and continued pastoral visitation.
  8. Confirmed reports of proven incidents of abuse shall be retained in a confidential file for future screening purposes.

### **Media Response**

The Bishop shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from the Office of the Bishop.

**Do not give out any information, simply state that all inquiries will be answered through the Office of the Bishop.**

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Appropriate Discipline**

Children and youth should be made aware that appropriate behavior is expected at all events. Gentle reminders are always necessary when dealing with children and youth. When these reminders don't work, then discipline needs to move to the next step. In cases where behavior has to be addressed, designated event adults should handle it. In no case is physical discipline an appropriate measure to deal with problems. A reasonable response might include a period of "time out" for the child or youth. This should be done with necessary supervision keeping MinistrySafe guidelines in mind.

Keeping parents involved is important. They need to be kept up-to-date on their child's behavior. For serious offenses, the appropriate response will be to send the child or youth home immediately. Parents and the leaders will help make proper arrangements.

#### **Appropriate Physical and Emotional Boundaries**

Physical boundaries are most important in dealing with children and youth. Persons working with children and youth have to understand and respect those boundaries. Obviously these boundaries change as children grow older. A young child sitting in the lap of a caregiver is most appropriate, whereas an older child or youth sitting in an adult's lap would not be acceptable. Hugs and kisses from a toddler to an adult are entirely different than the same from a youth.

Emotional boundaries are also important. As a child grows older it is important for the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships. It is important for those working with children and youth to not step outside of those lines and allow the younger person to become too attached to them. It is important for the older person to be careful where conversations might lead and to steer clear of inappropriate talk. When an adult recognizes that there might be an issue with these boundaries, great space should be allowed to come between them and the child or youth in question. If that does not solve the problem, then the event leadership should address the issue.

**Leader Misconduct**

It is a privilege to work with youth. Great responsibility is required. Those who violate this policy shall immediately be removed from contact with children and youth and appropriate authorities shall be notified immediately.

**Spiritual Boundaries for Ministry Safe**

As we seek to lead young people in the development of their faith story, it is essential that we guide them and do not manipulate their emotions. This is especially true at longer youth/children's events. The attendees may be exhausted by longer and more active days than they are accustomed to and thereby more susceptible to emotional manipulation. It is therefore necessary that, as we present the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity to follow Jesus in a life-long journey, we present the invitation with "no strings-attached." We must allow each person involved to make their own decisions without stigma, coercion, or pressure in any form. As we do this faithfully, we will see more fruitful commitments in the lives of all our participants.

**H. MISCELLANEOUS**

1. *Conflict of Interests.* In order to avoid conflicts of interest, the following rules shall apply:
  - a. No one shall be a voting member of an Agency who is in the salaried employment of an institution that receives support from that Agency.
  - b. No member of an Agency shall participate in that Agency's deliberation of or vote on a proposed grant to his or her local church.
  - c. Each member of an Agency shall disclose to all other members of that Agency all potential conflicts of interest in which they find themselves placed because of church, business, or personal relationships with persons affected by the decisions of the Agency.
  - d. No clergy member or diaconal minister member of this Annual Conference who is a salaried employee of any institution to which this conference contributes shall be a member of the board of trustees of the institution by which that person is employed.
2. *Local Church Officers.* The term of office of local church officials elected by the Fall Charge Conference shall begin on January 1 and run for the length of their term.
3. *Amending or Suspending Standing Rules.* It shall require a two-thirds vote of all lay and clergy members present and voting to suspend or to amend any of these Standing Rules.

**III. PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE****A. PRE-CONFERENCE PROCEDURES**

1. *Lay-Clergy Equalization.* The following formula is the procedure used to determine the number of lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference.
  - a. Subtract the total number of lay members prior to equalization from the total number of clergy members. In making this calculation, the lay members required by section III(A) (1)(c) below shall be included. These people are described in section (c) below. The remainder is the Lay Equalization Factor (LEF).

b. Compute the District Membership Percentage (DMP) for each district as follows. If a district has *more* lay members than clergy members prior to equalization, subtract the number of local church members in this district from the total of local church members for the Annual Conference. Such districts will not compute a DMP. The resulting number is the Adjusted Lay Membership (ALM). Next, for each district that has *fewer* lay than clergy members, divide the total number of local church members in each district by the ALM. The resulting quotient is the DMP for that district.

c. The *Book of Discipline* provides that certain persons shall be lay members to Annual Conference. According to ¶32 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, these are: Conference President of United Methodist Women; Conference President of United Methodist Men; Conference Lay Leader; District Lay Leaders; President of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries; and one youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen and one young adult between the ages of eighteen and thirty from each district. In addition, Deaconesses, Home Missioners, all Diaconal Ministers, all members of the Core Leadership Team not otherwise provided for, and all elected Chairs of Agencies of the Annual Conference not otherwise provided for are lay members of the Annual Conference with voice and vote. These persons shall be elected to the lay membership of the Annual Conference by the District Section.

d. For each district with fewer lay than clergy members, multiply the LEF by the DMP. The product is the District Adjusted Lay Equalization Factor (DALEF). The DALEF is the number of additional lay members to be elected by the District Section to achieve lay/clergy equalization. Districts with more lay than clergy members do not calculate a DALEF.

e. The DALEF shall be computed as of January 1. The equalization lay members shall be elected by the lay members present at the District Conference from nominations made by the District Lay Leader, the District Superintendent, and the Lay members of the District Nominating Committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor of the District Section.

f. If the actual number of clergy in the Annual Conference increases after January 1, the District Lay Leader of a district in which the imbalance occurs shall select lay member(s) from within the district to equalize the increase of clergy members.

g. If the formula fails to compute the exact number of additional lay persons per district to equalize lay and clergy numbers (due to the use of fractions in calculations), the Board of Laity shall be authorized to correct the imbalance through negotiation.

h. After the DALEF has been determined, the Board of Laity as a courtesy may rearrange among districts the number of lay members to be elected, in order that a district that has more lay members than clergy prior to equalization may elect additional lay members in its District Section.

i. Lay members elected under an equalization process by the District Section shall take office immediately and shall serve until the District Section elects lay members for the succeeding year.

2. *Election of Local Church Lay Members to Annual Conference.* The lay members to the Annual Conference may be elected annually or quadrennially at the Charge Conference preceding the regular quadrennial meeting of the General Conference. The term of office of lay members to Annual Conference shall begin on January 1 after their election at the Fall Charge Conference. If, for any reason, the Charge Conference is delayed until after January 1, their term of office shall begin immediately upon election.

3. *Notice of Legislative Items.* Agencies shall submit reports and legislation to the conference office in the form requested no later than April 1 for inclusion in the *Conference Workbook*. Any Annual Conference member or Agency may initiate legislative items at Annual Conference

concerning matters which are not part of the *Conference Workbook* only if they are duplicated and distributed to Annual Conference members by the beginning of the day they are to be considered. This rule shall not be construed so as to preclude proper subsidiary motions or privileged motions.

4. *Proposed Amendments to Standing Rules.* In order that the Standing Rules Committee have time to consider proposals and forward them to the conference office by the April 1 deadline, proposed new standing rules and proposed changes in existing standing rules shall be submitted to the Standing Rules Committee no later than March 1.

5. *Notice of Procedural Rules.* Each year, the charts entitled “Common Motions: Ranking and Requirements (by function)” and “Motions: Ranking and Requirements (by rank)” shall be included in the Pre-Conference Workbook.

## **B. RULES OF ORDER FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

1. *Purpose of Rules of Order.* These rules of order are intended to allow the orderly consideration of the business of the Annual Conference, extend courtesy and fairness to all, ensure the right of the majority, protect the rights of the minority, and defend the rights of individual members.

2. *Definitions.* As used in these Standing Rules, the following definitions shall apply.

a. *Adjourn.* End a meeting officially. Adjournment is accomplished either by direct majority vote or by unanimous consent.

b. *Agenda.* List of items of business that the members of Annual Conference will consider. An agenda has a specific arrangement and content.

c. *Amend.* Change a resolution or motion by adding, striking out, or substituting a word or phrase.

d. *Appeal.* A question that occurs when a member of Annual Conference questions (appeals) a decision by the presiding bishop because the member believes that an error in procedure has occurred. An appeal must have a second. The decision of the presiding bishop is sustained by a majority vote or a tie vote.

e. *Call for orders of the day.* A motion that brings to the presiding bishop’s attention the fact that a specific item of business was due to come up in the meeting at a specified time.

f. *Dividing the question.* Separation of the parts of a motion to be considered and voted on as if they were separate motions.

g. *Floor.* The right of a person to address the Annual Conference and have the members’ undivided attention.

h. *Main motion.* Method of introducing new business to the Annual Conference session. Only one main motion can be under consideration at a time.

i. *Majority.* More than half of the members present and voting on an issue. Those who do not vote are not counted in the final tally.

j. *Motion.* Proposal for action by the Annual Conference. A motion is introduced with the words, “I move that \_\_\_\_\_,” (with the wording intended to become the Annual Conference’s official statement of action taken if the motion is passed).

k. *Parliamentary inquiry.* A request for an immediate answer to a question concerning the rules of procedure. It is directed to the presiding bishop.

- l. Point of information. A request directed to the presiding bishop for an immediate answer to a question concerning the background or content of a motion or resolution. The information requested does not pertain to procedure.
- m. Point of order. A point raised against any proceeding or motion that the member believes is a violation of the rules. It must be raised at the time of the alleged infraction. The presiding bishop rules on the validity of the point of order. This ruling can be appealed.
- n. Precedence of motion. Claim of a motion to the ‘right of way’ over another motion. The attached charts summarize the precedence of various motions.
- o. Presiding bishop. The Bishop of the North Texas Annual Conference, or another bishop designated by that Bishop, shall preside over sessions of the Annual Conference.
- p. Previous question. Motion to close debate and vote immediately on a motion. Moving the previous question requires a second, is not debatable or amendable, and needs a two-thirds vote for adoption.
- q. Question of privilege. If there is something wrong with the physical surroundings or a situation arises that affects the rights of the entire assembly, any individual member can interrupt the motion under consideration to bring the matter to the attention of the presiding bishop. If the situation cannot be resolved informally, then the presiding bishop rules on whether the matter is a question of privilege and should be considered before business is resumed.
- r. Reconsider. Motion to review a previous decision and vote on it again. It must be made by a person who voted on the prevailing (winning) side, and it requires a majority vote. Reconsideration may not be moved more than once on the same motion.
- s. Second. Indication that a member wants a motion discussed by the members. The member says, “I second the motion” or “Second.”
- t. Table. Motion to place a main motion and all pending amendments aside temporarily, with the intention of bringing them back at a later time for action. Tabling a motion requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.
- u. Take from the table. Motion to bring a previously tabled motion back before the Annual Conference. It requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote.
- v. Two-thirds vote. This occurs when there are twice as many people voting “Yes’ as those who are voting “No.”
- w. Withdraw a motion. Take back a motion one has made. A person may withdraw a motion by merely requesting to do so up until the time it is stated by the presiding bishop. After the presiding bishop has stated the motion, the person who made it can withdraw it only by the consent of the members.

3. *Order of Business.* The order of business of the meeting of Annual Conference shall be determined by the Annual Conference Planning Committee, which shall set an Agenda. The session shall open with a period of devotion, followed by a call of the roll, including the roll of the local pastors.

4. *Authority of the Presiding Bishop.*

*Calling the Conference to order.* When the presiding bishop stands in his or her place and calls the Annual Conference session to order, no member shall speak, address the chair, or stand while the presiding bishop stands.

*Raising points of order.* Any member of Annual Conference may raise a point of order. In order to do so, the member must cite specifically the rule he or she judges to have been violated.

*Ruling on points of order.* The presiding bishop shall decide points of order, whether raised by a member or by the presiding bishop, as necessary to conform to these Standing Rules.

*Appealing a ruling on a point of order.* Any member may appeal a decision on a point of order to the Annual Conference. In the event of such an appeal, there shall be no debate. However, the presiding bishop shall have five minutes to make a statement in support of his or her position, and then the person appealing shall have five minutes to make a statement in support of his or her position. Following the statements, the Annual Conference shall vote on the appeal; a tie vote shall sustain the presiding bishop.

*Recessing the session.* The presiding bishop shall have the right to recess a session of the Annual Conference at any time at his or her discretion and to reconvene at such times as he or she shall announce.

5. *Opening a Question for Debate.* Before any subject is open to debate, three things must happen. First, a member must actually make a motion that the Annual Conference consider a particular issue. Second, in most instances, the motion must also be seconded. (Calls for orders of the day, calling a member to order, Agency recommendations, nominations, parliamentary inquiries, points of information, and withdrawal of motions do not require a second.) Third, the presiding bishop must restate the motion. For example, the presiding bishop may say, “A motion has been made and seconded that \_\_\_\_\_. The motion is open to debate.”

6. *Obtaining the Floor.* When a member desires the floor, he or she shall proceed to a microphone and wait to be recognized by the presiding bishop. Each speaker should begin by stating his or her name and the church, charge, or other entity he or she represents. A member with the floor may be interrupted only to call for orders of the day, a point of order, a point of information, a parliamentary inquiry, or an appeal of the decision of the chair. A person who cuts off another speaker must state the reasons for the interruption. It is the sense of the Annual Conference that a speaker with the floor should not be interrupted, even for these listed reasons, unless the issue cannot wait until the speaker yields the floor.

7. *Limits on Speakers.* A member may speak for up to five minutes at one time on any question under discussion and only twice on the same question. No member shall speak for the second time until all members seeking recognition have had the opportunity to speak. The Annual Conference, by two-thirds vote, may change the rules about how often and how long members can speak during a debate.

8. *Types and Precedence of Motions.* There are four main types of motions: (1) main motions; (2) subsidiary motions; (3) incidental motions; and (4) privileged motions. Each type of motion accomplishes a different purpose and is treated differently.

a. *Main motions.* A main motion introduces a new item of business. Only one main motion can be considered at a time. Generally, main motions are secondable, debatable, amendable, require a majority vote, and can be reconsidered.

b. *Subsidiary Motions.* Subsidiary motions are motions applied to other motions to help the members dispose of the main motion. Here are the five subsidiary motions: table; previous question; postpone to a certain time; refer to Agency or committee; amend. These subsidiary motions fit into an order of precedence. This means that some subsidiary motions take precedence over others, and all subsidiary motions must be decided before the members can act on the main motion. This is the order of precedence for the subsidiary

motions: 1) to table; 2) to move the previous question; 3) to postpone to a certain time; 4) to refer to committee; and 5) to amend. You can make any of these subsidiary motions when a lower order motion is on the floor, but you cannot make a subsidiary motion if a higher order one is being considered.

c. *Incidental Motions and Inquiries.* Incidental motions must relate directly to the business on the floor. Incidental motions take precedence over all other motions except privileged ones. They are: appeals; divisions of the question; and suspending the rules. In addition, incidental inquiries are proper and have precedence over main and subsidiary motions. Parliamentary inquiries, points of order, and points of information fall into this category. All three are answered by the presiding bishop.

d. *Privileged Motions.* Privileged motions are different from subsidiary and incidental motions, because they do not deal with business on the floor. Rather, they deal with special matters of pressing importance. The three privileged motions (in order of precedence) are: adjourning, questions of privilege, and orders of the day.

The attached charts set out the precedence of motions and specify which motions need a second, which can be debated, which can be amended, and what vote is necessary for passage.

9. *Tabling Related Motions.* No motion which adheres to another motion, or has another motion adhering to it, can be laid on the table by itself. Such motions, if laid on the table, carry with them the motions to which they respectively adhere, or which adhere to them.

10. *Referring Matters to Agency.* It shall be proper for the Annual Conference to refer to an Agency or specially created committee a motion, resolution, report, or a part of a motion, resolution, or report which is before the Annual Conference for consideration, or any amendment offered thereto.

11. *Substitutes.* When a motion, resolution or Agency report is properly before the Annual Conference for consideration and action, even if amendments have been proposed, a substitute motion, resolution, or report may be offered by any member moving that the same be substituted for the report or resolution under consideration. The Annual Conference shall then proceed first to perfect the original motion, resolution or report, including consideration and action upon any amendments which may be offered to it. The same perfecting process shall then be followed with respect to the substitute. The question shall then be put first on the motion to substitute, followed by the motion to adopt the motion, resolution, or report. However, a motion for the previous question shall not be in order on the adoption of the report or recommendation or on making the proposed substitution until opportunity has been given for at least two members to speak on each side of the question of substitution or adoption.

12. *Moving for a Vote on the Previous Question.* No member may call for a vote on the previous question until at least three members have been given the opportunity to speak on each side of a question. When any member moves the previous question (that is, that the vote be now taken on the motion or motions pending), that member shall indicate the question to which they intend it to apply. If the movant does not so indicate, the motion shall apply only to the immediately pending question. A motion for a vote on the previous question is not debatable. It requires a vote of two-thirds of those present and voting for its adoption. If the motion for a vote on the previous question passes, the vote shall be taken on the previous question without further debate.

13. *No Motion After Speech.* It shall not be in order for a member immediately after discussing a pending question, and before relinquishing the floor, to make a motion whose adoption would limit or stop debate.

14. *Reconsideration.* A motion to reconsider an action of the Annual Conference shall be in order at any time, but only if offered by a member who voted with the prevailing side. If the motion proposed for reconsideration is non-debatable, the motion to reconsider may not be debated.

15. *Voting Generally.* Voting rights shall be governed by the *Book of Discipline*. Voting procedures shall be determined by the Annual Conference Planning Committee, depending on the technology available at the site of the Annual Conference session. If the method generally used is not already secret, a vote by secret ballot may be ordered on call of any member, supported by one-third of the members present and voting. No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken or when the previous question has been called until the voting process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself, or business that can be appropriately fitted into the time while waiting for the report on the vote.

16. *Dividing the Question.* Before a vote is taken, any member shall have the right to call for a division of any question, if it is subject to such division as they indicate. If no member objects, the division shall be made. If any member objects and is seconded, the presiding bishop shall put the question of division to vote.

17. *Robert's Rules of Order.* Questions of procedure not answered by these Standing Rules shall be determined in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (2000)*, except when they are inconsistent with these Standing Rules or the *Book of Discipline*.

### ***Common Motions: Ranking and Requirements (by function)***

<i>Motion</i>	<i>What to say</i>	<i>Second?</i>	<i>Debate?</i>	<i>Amend?</i>	<i>Vote?</i>
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adopt a report	"I move that the report be adopted."	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Amend a motion on the floor	"I move to amend by [describe]."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Complain about air conditioning, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	No	No	No	No vote. Chair rules
Divide motion into parts to be voted on separately	"I move that we divide the question to consider separately [specify]."	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Introduce a main motion	"I move that . . ."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Give closer study	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Protest a breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	No	No	No	No vote. Chair rules
Reconsider an action	"I move to reconsider the vote on [specify]."	Yes	same as original motion	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	No	No	No	No vote. Chair responds
Suspend an issue	"I move to table the motion."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Suspend the rules	"I move to suspend the rules so that [specify]."	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Take up a tabled matter	"I move to take from the table [specify]."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Vote on a chair's ruling	"I appeal from the decision that [specify]."	Yes	No	No	Majority

### *Motions: Ranking and Requirements (by rank)*

<p><b>Ranking Motions</b> The ranking motions are listed in order of rank. When any one of these motions is immediately pending, those above it are in order and those below it are not in order.</p>	<p><b>Principal Requirements</b></p>
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<i>Privileged Motions</i>	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Required
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Raise a question of privilege	No	No	No	No vote. Chair rules
Call for order of the day	No	No	No	No vote. Chair rules
<i>Subsidiary Motions</i>				
Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Move the previous question	Yes	No	No	2/3
Refer to committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
<i>Main Motions</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

<p><b>Non-Ranking Motions</b> Whether these non-ranking motions are in order depends upon the business already under consideration and what purpose they may serve when introduced.</p>	<p><b>Principal Requirements</b></p>
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<i>Incidental Motions</i>				
Appeal	Yes	No	No	Majority
Divide the question	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Parliamentary inquiry	No	No	No	No vote
Point of order/ point of information	No	No	No	No vote. Chair rules/responds
Suspend the rules	Yes	No	No	2/3
Withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority
<i>Motions that Bring a Question Back</i>				
Reconsider	Yes	per original	No	Majority
Take from the table	Yes	No	No	Majority