NEW ENGLAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE RULES
ADOPTED JUNE 2019

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PREFACE
These Rules of the New England Annual Conference are in keeping with the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (¶604.1, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016, hereinafter referred to as the Discipline.) which states, “The Annual Conference for its own government may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline.” Citations of the Discipline in these Rules will be accompanied by paragraph numbers, indicated with ¶ sign. (Citations of these Rules shall be accompanied by the appropriate article numbers.) This Annual Conference is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as The New England Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. All references to "Conference" or "Annual Conference" shall mean The New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Prepared for 2018 Annual Conference Session by the Conference Committee on Rules, members including: John Blackadar, Lourey Savick, Kenneth Mantler, Zelda Garrison-Desany, and Rich Hughen.
I. **ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE**

A. **Vision:** Transformed by the Holy Spirit, united in trust, we will boldly proclaim Christ to the world.

B. **Mission:** To equip, connect, and support local, regional, and global ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve all in his name.

C. **Organization**
   1. In order to carry out the New England Annual Conference Vision and Mission the Conference is organized into agencies (boards, committees, commissions, etc.)
   2. The organization, composition, character, powers, duties, and business of the Annual Conference shall be in accordance with the current issue of the *Discipline*.
   3. The process for recruiting, appointing, and electing Conference leadership is found in Articles II, III, and VII of these Rules, Conference Policies and Procedures, and the *Discipline*.
   4. The **Connectional Table** is the center of leadership for the New England Conference, and is charged with the implementation of the vision. This group will operate according to the example of the General Conference Connectional Table, following the spirit of what is laid out for that body in paragraphs 903 and 904 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*. The Connectional Table will elect co-chairs, one laity and one clergy, from among its membership:
      a) Six (6) at-large non-staff seats to help ensure diversity, elected by the Annual Conference. The Committee on Leadership/Nominations will nominate six people from a pool of twelve: six clergy recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and six laity recommended by the Board of Laity.
      b) Bishop (non-voting)
      c) Lay Leader
      d) Dean of Cabinet
      e) Treasurer
      f) BOOM Chair (co-chairs will decide among themselves who will represent)
      g) Chair of Conference Trustees
      h) Director of Connectional Ministries
      i) Representative of the Conference Commission on Religion and Race

D. **Rules of Order:** *Roberts Rules of Order (11th Edition)* shall govern all matters not specifically covered by the current issue of the *Discipline* and the following Conference Rules.

II. **CONFERENCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL:** Policies, procedures, and ministry descriptions for Conference officers, committees and positions, which complement and expand upon these Rules, shall be maintained by the Conference Secretary and published annually.

III. **CONFERENCE OFFICERS**

A. **Conference President:** (¶603.6) The Bishop assigned to the New England Annual Conference is the President.

B. **Conference Secretary:** (¶603.7) The Conference Secretary shall be nominated by the Committee on Leadership Nominations, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected as the Secretary-Elect at the last Annual Conference session preceding the General Conference, to take office at the opening of the first Annual Conference following General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.

C. **Conference Statistician:** (¶603.7)
   1. The Conference Statistician shall be nominated by the Committee on Leadership Nominations, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected Statistician-Elect at the last Annual Conference session preceding General Conference, to take office at the opening of
the first Annual Conference following General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.

2. The Conference Statistician shall report to the Bishop and to the Annual Conference.

D. Conference Treasurer: (¶619) The Conference Treasurer shall be nominated by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected at the first Annual Conference following the General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.

E. Conference Chancellor: (¶603.8)
   1. The Conference Chancellor shall be nominated by the Bishop and elected at the first Annual Conference following the General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.
   2. She/he shall serve as legal advisor to the Bishop and to the Annual Conference.

F. Lay Leader (¶607)
   1. The lay persons of the Nominating Committee, after consultation with the District Lay Leaders, may nominate a Conference Lay Leader and two or more Associate Lay Leaders. Nominating biographies for the Conference Lay Leaders and Associate Lay Leaders shall be announced by the Conference Secretary. Submission of a biography by April 1 of the year of General Conference constitutes nomination. Additional nominations may be made from the floor, but no speeches will be permitted. Nominating biographies shall be no more than 100 words, with nominations being made by laity. The election shall be for a quadrennium and shall be elected by laity at the first Conference session following General Conference. Nominees must meet the relevant provisions of current issue of Discipline.
   2. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the Conference Lay Leader, shall be elected by the Conference in the same manner as the Conference Lay Leader. The District Lay Leaders shall be nominated by the lay persons of the District Committee on Leadership after consultation with the District Superintendent and elected at the District Conference.

G. Vacancies. (¶603.7) The Bishop shall be authorized to fill any vacancy of a Conference Officer arising between Annual Conference sessions, with the exception of the positions of:
   1. Conference Treasurer which shall be filled by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration
   2. Conference Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leaders which shall be filled by majority vote of the District Lay Leaders.
   3. Any conference officer vacancies filled shall be until the next Annual Conference when an election can be held.

IV. CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

A. Members
   1. The members of the Annual Conference, both clergy and lay, are determined by the Constitution of the United Methodist Church, found in the current issue of the Discipline.
   2. Clergy membership in the Annual Conference shall be as indicated in the current issue of the Discipline.
   3. Lay membership and their method of election shall be in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline and Conference Policies and Procedures.
   4. There shall be a balance between clergy and lay members of Annual Conference in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline. ¶602.4 The procedure shall be as published in the Conference Policies & Procedures.

B. Attendance: All members are expected to attend Annual Conference sessions in accordance with the rules of the current issue of the Discipline. Petitions for excuse from attendance must be written and submitted to the Secretary of the Conference. Alternate Lay Members shall notify the Secretary of the Conference of their presence.
C. **Voting:** Lay members shall be expected to vote their conscience on the floor of Annual Conference. Judicial Council Ruling No. 11 prohibits any official body of the local church from ordering or instructing lay or reserve members to vote in any prescribed manner on issues expected to come before the Annual Conference.

V. **CONFERENCE REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS**

A. **Reporting Responsibility:** As an expression of its accountability to the Annual Conference, each agency of the Annual Conference shall report annually to the Annual Conference in a manner to be prescribed in the Conference Policies & Procedures.

B. **Pre-Conference Reports & Resolutions:** Pre-Conference Reports shall be considered preliminary in nature. Local churches are encouraged to discuss the contents; however, they shall not instruct their lay members as noted in Article III of these Rules.

C. Resolutions and Reports submitted to NEC requiring action by the Annual Conference will be reviewed by the Agenda Committee before publication of the Pre-Conference Reports based on the following criteria:

1. **Does the Resolution set out the action taken to present this matter for consideration?** The petition should set out:
   a) What body is submitting the resolution
   b) The number of members present and voting on the petition’s submission;
   c) The number of “yeas” and the number of “nays”, the number of members abstaining and the number of members absent.

2. **Will the Resolution proposed conflict with, or create a conflict, with the Book of Discipline, or with an Annual Conference Rule or policy?** Areas of perceived conflict shall be justified in the petition, and referred to the Conference Committee on Rules.

3. **Does the proposal impact the work in progress by another New England Conference entity?** If yes, the submitting group shall notify all parties for possible consultation which may lead to a revised or substitute resolution. The Agenda Committee may recommend a consultation to clarify or improve the resolution. The results of that process should accompany the proposed Resolution for publication.

4. **The Agenda Committee will assign a petition complying with criteria above, to one of the following categories:**
   a) The 100s category contains repeating and ongoing resolutions;
   b) The 200s category contains proposed Resolutions which involve new significant change for the New England Conference or where explanatory information may be needed for clarity of purpose.
   c) The 300s category contains items related to the General Conference.

5. **The Agenda Committee will then submit their work to the Conference Secretary for publication.**

D. **Reports during Conference Session**

1. **Timeliness:** To be eligible for action by the Conference, any report or resolution by a Conference agency, District, local church/es, or individual/s not included in the Pre-Conference Reports, must first be submitted in writing to the Conference Agenda Committee for approval. Upon receiving approval, the submitting group or individual must provide a written copy to all Annual Conference members at least twenty-four (24) hours before being considered.

2. **Minority reports of committees, adopted with a view to their being offered as substitutes for majority reports, shall likewise conform to the above rule.**

E. **Conference Journal**
1. The printed Minutes of the Annual Conference sessions shall be the official report of the Annual Conference and shall be printed in the Conference Journal.
2. All information which the Secretary is authorized to publish in the Minutes shall be submitted to her/him within fifteen (15) days of the close of adjournment of the Conference.

VI. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION
A. Time: The time of the Annual Conference shall be fixed by the Bishop.
B. Organization: The Annual Conference Sessions Team shall be responsible for selecting the location, ordering worship, and carrying out such other duties as outlined in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
C. Agenda
   1. Subject to amendment by the Conference, the Agenda Committee, working in conjunction with the Conference President, shall be responsible for preparing the official agenda of the Annual Conference and for adjusting the agenda during the Annual Conference to make the best use of available time.
   2. The Agenda Committee will be made up of:
      a) Conference Secretary
      b) Sessions Agenda Chair or designee
      c) Conference Lay Leader
      d) Conference Parliamentarian
      e) Director of Connectional Ministries.
      f) The Sessions Team may appoint up to an additional three at large members.
3. The meetings of the Agenda Committee may be conducted in person or electronically.
D. Voting Area: The Voting Area of the Conference shall be fixed by the Conference upon recommendation of the Conference Sessions Team Chair, in consultation with the Conference Secretary. The bounds of the Conference shall be clearly defined and voting members shall be seated within those bounds.
E. Offerings: Offerings will be received during the session only with approval of the Annual Conference Sessions Team in consultation with the Bishop.
F. Distribution of Materials on the Floor of Conference
   1. Materials regarding pending action may be distributed only with permission of the Conference Sessions Team Chair and the Conference Secretary.
   2. Other material which may be of interest to the Conference may be placed in a convenient location, designated by the Conference Sessions Team Chair, upon recommendation by the Conference Secretary.
   3. All material properly distributed on the floor of Annual Conference shall contain the name of the individual and/or organization that assumes responsibility for its origin.

VII. DECISION-MAKING
A. Building Understanding: Although decisions shall be arrived at by vote of the body, each session may include one or more ways of coming to an understanding and building agreement:
   1. Holy listening
   2. Rules of order
   3. Consensus
   4. Debate
B. Visitors Addressing the Conference: Visitors may address the Conference during decision-making at the invitation of the Bishop, and are accountable to Conference Policies and Procedures.
C. Debate Procedures for Conference Action
1. **Establishing the Motion**
   a) Motions are requests for Conference action presented by any member of the Conference during a Plenary Session of the Conference.
   b) A member makes the motion (mover) on forms provided by the Secretary before a vote on the matter is taken (for those not included in the Pre-Conference Reports booklet).
   c) The mover may preface by a few words of explanation, which must not become a speech.
   d) Another member second the motion.
   e) Chair states the question on the motion (what we are voting on).

2. **Requests for Funds**
   a) A motion or resolution calling for Conference funds not included in a Conference budget must be referred in writing to the proper agency on or before the date established each year for submitting budget requests to the Conference Connection Table and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.
   b) Any legislation enacted by the Conference requiring the expenditure of funds shall be implemented only after the Conference has enacted enabling legislation naming the source and amount of funding.

3. **Considering the Motion**
   a) Members debate the motion.
   b) A member may not address the Conference until recognized by the President. A member may speak only on a pending matter until all have spoken who desire.
   c) No speaker shall speak for more than 3 minutes without the consent of the Conference.
   d) Mover has the right to first speech.
   e) In the discussion of a controversial matter, the President shall, so far as possible, recognize speakers alternately to present both sides of the question.
   f) It shall not be in order to “move the previous question” until 3 speeches on each side of the motion has been provided.
   g) Chairs of Conference agencies or their representatives shall be entitled to three (3) minutes to close debates on reports presented. This right shall not be forfeited by a motion to "move the previous question" or to "lay on the table."

4. **Secondary Motions**
   a) Only one question (vote on a motion) can be considered at a time before any other business can be introduced, except “privileged questions”, which is permitted to interrupt pending business to state an urgent request or motion. Therefore, the need for secondary motions arises.
   b) Secondary Motions are in the order of precedence as follows (1a – 2c are undebatable)
      1) Privileged
         a) Fix the time to which adjourn
         b) Adjourn
         c) Recess
         d) Raise a question of privilege
         e) Call for the orders of the day
      2) Subsidiary
         a) Lay on the Table (move motion to the side till such time as a majority so decides)
            i) When a resolution or motion is presented to the Conference, a motion to lay on the table shall not be in order until the mover shall have had three (3) minutes to explain the resolution or motion.
5. Substitution
   a) When a resolution or committee report is properly before the Conference for
      consideration and action (even if amendments to the resolution or report are pending),
      a substitute may be offered by any member moving that it be considered in place of the
      main resolution or report. However:
      (1) The motion to substitute may not be considered until the original report or
          resolution is perfected, including consideration of and action on any amendments
          to it which may have been offered. The Conference may end debate on this
          perfecting process by "ordering the previous question" on the motion to adopt the
          report or resolution. If so, the vote shall immediately be taken on any amendments
          to the report or resolution then pending.
      (2) The vote shall not be taken on the adoption of the report or resolution or on
          making the substitution until the substitute is also perfected.
      (3) The main question, or report, or resolution, having been perfected, the substitute
          shall be considered, which consideration may be terminated at any time by
          "ordering the previous question," in which case, after action on any amendments to
          the substitute then pending, the vote shall be taken on the motion to adopt the
          substitute motion for consideration in place of the main resolution or report.
      (4) In the course of the perfecting process in the case of either the main question or
          the substitute, or both, the amount of time for presenting, considering and acting
          on amendments may be limited by action of the Conference. If so, the previous
          question may not be "moved," "ordered," or "put" on the adoption or on
          substitution until two members (including the chairperson of the committee
          presenting the report and the member presenting the substitute, if the pending
          question originated in a committee) shall each have spoken on the side of the
Proposal either to substitute or adopt after action on any motions to amend, if there be those who desire to speak.

b) It shall not be in order to offer a substitute for an amendment, but it shall be in order to offer a substitute for a section of a committee report or a resolution which is being considered "seriatim (paragraph by paragraph)."

6. **Division of 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. If no member objects, the division shall be made, but if there is objection, the Chair shall put the question of division to a vote, not waiting for a second.

7. **The Chair Puts the Motion to a Vote**
   a) A member who is not within the Voting Area of the Conference at the time when such question is put by the President shall not be allowed to vote on any question, except by leave of the Presiding Officer when such member has been necessarily outside the Voting Area. Every member who is in the Voting Area of the Conference at the time the question is put shall vote, unless excused by the Conference for good reason.
   b) All votes shall be taken either by voice, a show of voting cards or hands, a standing vote, or a written ballot.
   c) A "count" vote, or standing vote, may be ordered on call of any member of the Conference supported by one third of the members present and voting, in which case the members shall rise from their seats and stand until counted.
   d) A written ballot may be ordered on call of any member of the Conference supported by a petition of 10 conference members and delivered to the chair or by a vote of 40 of the members present and voting, in which case the tellers shall deliver and collect ballots from the entire voting membership.

8. **Voting Process**
   a) No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken or when the previous question has been called, until the process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself, or that which can be appropriately fitted into the time while waiting for the report of the Secretary on a standing vote by "yeas" and "nays."
   b) The Chair announces the result of the vote.

**VIII. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS**

A. **General Responsibility:** The Committee on Leadership Nominations shall nominate, for election by the Annual Conference for a two-year term with a maximum of eight consecutive years, the chairs of all Conference agencies and groups established by the Annual Conference, including the Conference Committee on Leadership Nominations itself, except where these nominations are governed either by the Discipline or these Rules. All other members of the Conference agencies and groups shall be appointed in a manner prescribed in the Conference Policies and Procedures.

B. **Specific Responsibilities:** The specific duties of the Conference Committee on Leadership Nominations shall be defined in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.

C. **Members**
   1. Conference Lay Leader or designee
   2. One UMW representative
   3. One UMM representative
   4. One member from each District Leadership Nominations Committee, appointed by the Connectional Table from two names submitted by the District Leadership Nominations Committee, so as to increase diversity and inclusiveness
   5. One or two youth
6. One or two District Superintendents  
7. Conference Secretary  
8. Director of Connectional Ministries  
9. One representative of each of the identified ethnic groups functioning within the Conference structure  
10. Additional people needed for technical assistance, as identified by the Leadership Committee.  
11. Any non-chair member serving neither as a representative nor ex oficio shall be elected by the Conference upon nomination by the Connectional Table.  

D. **Term:** Members shall serve for two (2) years with a maximum of eight (8) consecutive years unless otherwise mandated by the Discipline. Vacancies shall be filled according to the procedures set forth in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.

IX. **ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE**

A. The election shall be held in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline.

B. **Nominations of Delegates:** Persons shall have the freedom to vote for any person who is able and eligible, according to the laws of the Church, to serve as a delegate to the General and/or Jurisdictional Conference(s).

1. **Requirements:** Persons whose names are on the ballot must meet the requirements for election established in the current issue of the Discipline.

2. **Biographies:** Nominating biographies for both clergy and laity shall be announced by the Conference Secretary. Submission of a biography by May 1 of the year in which the election is held, constitutes nomination. Additional nominations may be made from the floor, but no speeches will be permitted. Nominating biographies shall be no more than 100 words with nominations being made by persons of the same class (clergy and laity).

3. **Additions:** Voters may write any number of names on a ballot that does not exceed the number of persons to be elected. More names on a ballot than the number of persons to be elected will render the ballot defective.

C. **Voting in the Election of Delegates**

1. Only the official ballot form (provided by the Secretary of the Conference) will be accepted by the tellers.

2. All members who wish to exercise their franchise must be seated within the Voting Area of the Conference at the time of the election in which they wish to vote.

3. Write-in votes are valid at any time during the voting process, provided the number of names on the ballot does not exceed the number of persons to be elected.

D. **Delegation Organization:** The General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation shall meet at the seat of the Annual Conference session at which they are elected. They shall be convened by the Bishop or a designee (a person who is not a delegate or reserve delegate). They shall elect, by written ballot without nomination, a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and a Secretary; the first person to achieve a majority for each office is elected. Lay and clergy shall alternate each quadrennium in eligibility to be chairperson of the delegation. Consideration shall be given to inclusiveness.

X. **ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOMINATIONS FOR EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS**

A. The Annual Conference, in the session immediately preceding a regular Jurisdictional Conference, shall set aside time for consideration of nominees for Episcopal election. Nominations shall be made in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline.

XI. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

A. The Conference Policies and Procedures Manual, maintained by the Conference Secretary, shall include, but not be limited to:
1. Policy decisions arising from actions of the Annual Conference or any of its agencies and groups
2. Procedures and practices of Conference agencies and groups of interest to and affecting the larger Conference
3. Written ministry descriptions and expectations of Officers and committees; and structure and standards for the work of the Conference.
4. It also shall reference and point to other types of policies which may be maintained separately, such as:
   a) Financial Policies
      (1) The Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall be the repository for all funds received from local churches, and shall perform the central treasury function for all agencies incorporated under the Annual Conference.
      (2) CFA shall prepare and recommend to the Annual Conference an annual budget as well as policies, procedures, and timelines for requesting Conference funds, which may be found in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
      (3) CFA shall recommend an apportionment formula to the Annual Conference with its proposed budget annually.
      (4) Reserve funds shall be maintained in order to facilitate the work of the Annual Conference. A description of all funds created by Conference action shall be listed in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
      (5) Between annual conference sessions, CFA shall determine a payout of conference funds commensurate with anticipated receipts.
   b) Archival Policies
      (1) The Annual Conference shall maintain, preserve, and itemize historical records, including but not limited to the records of the Annual Conference and its agencies and of discontinued and abandoned churches.

XII. SUSPENDING AND AMENDING CONFERENCE RULES
A. Suspension: The operation of any of the provisions of these rules of order may be suspended at any time by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting.
B. Amendments: These rules may be amended or changed by two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, provided the proposed change or amendment has been presented to the Annual Conference in writing and referred to the Conference Committee on Rules, which Committee shall report thereon not later than the day following. No amendment shall be offered later than the second day of the Conference session.
   1. To this Committee shall be referred all proposed changes or additions to the Conference Rules or the Conference Policies and Procedures.
   2. All suggested amendments of Conference Policies and Procedures presented to the Conference Committee on Rules shall be submitted by a conference board, agency, committee or task force or signed by five (5) members of the Conference.
   3. Attachments to the Conference Policies and Procedures will be reviewed by the Annual Conference every six years. The Conference Rules Committee will draw this to the attention of the annual conference on the fifth anniversary of adoption of each individual appendix. The Rules Committee will make a recommendation on those attachments not reviewed by the assigned body of the Annual Conference.
C. Posting: These rules shall be available online and included in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual. They also shall be printed in the Conference Journal.