

encourage  
each other  
& build each  
other up  
1 THESS 5:11

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES

## INTRODUCTION

In order to make our organization more nimble and adaptive, the 2011 Annual Conference session adopted the following 3 reports, “Guiding Principles and Best Practices”, Annual Conference Organization and a Policy and Procedures manual.

The “guiding principles and best practices” are foundational to the understanding of our mission and ministry. They represent our new understanding and way of doing ministry as flexible and adaptive. Our annual conference and the individual churches are in a time of transition, we must continually be on the move, initiating, facing, and adapting quickly to changing realities. The “guiding principles and best practices” require a two-thirds vote of the annual conference to amend or suspend.

The Annual Conference Organization and the Policy and Procedure manual are administrative in nature and changes are to be handled at the appropriate organizational level.

The intent is that each document continues to be more organic and less institutional. They are living and breathing organism that adapt and change as necessary to do the work of God in the world.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- ✚ We embrace and celebrate the mission of the United Methodist Church of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”
- ✚ We believe that the churches of our conference are “mission stations,” outposts for the work of God in the world.
- ✚ We believe that mission at all levels of the church should be well defined, laser focused, with measurable outcomes.
- ✚ We believe that the Conference and its local congregations are called to be good stewards of the resources God provides for our work.
- ✚ We believe that we are called to be faithful to the five core values of Evangelism, The Wesleyan Tradition, Spiritual Growth, Mission, and Inclusiveness.
- ✚ We embrace the four focus areas of the United Methodist Church of: 1) Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world, 2) Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones, 3) Engaging in ministry with the poor, and 4) Stamping out killer disease by improving health globally.
- ✚ We believe that each local church can become a “Fruitful Congregation” by practicing Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission, and Extravagant Generosity.
- ✚ We believe in the inevitability of change, that it’s God’s gift, and it is our task to manage change in efficient and creative ways.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE BEST PRACTICES

- ✚ The Central Texas Conference shall be organized according to the current Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. In accordance with the Discipline, it shall meet annually at a time appointed by the Bishop at the location chosen by the Annual Conference. Adjourned or special sessions shall be called in a manner set forth by the Discipline.
- ✚ The business of the Annual Conference shall be conducted by the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order.
- ✚ A Preliminary Report of matters for consideration by a session of the Annual Conference shall be made available to the members of the Annual Conference at least one month prior to the session of the Annual Conference.
- ✚ Lay members and alternate lay members of the Annual Conference shall be elected at their local church charge conference for a one-year term following their election, subject to the provisions of the Book of Discipline.
- ✚ There shall be an equal number of lay and clergy members on the Annual Conference. The procedure for the equalization of lay and clergy members in the next Annual Conference will be presented as part of the report of Center for Mission Support.
- ✚ The procedures for handling matters to be presented to Annual Conference that were not in the Preliminary Report can be found in the Policy and Procedure Manual of the Annual Conference.
- ✚ Any of the Best Practices and Guiding Principles of the Annual Conference may be amended or suspended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a session of the Annual Conference provided that any such motion to amend the Best Practices must be laid on the table at least one day before the Conference can vote to amend.
- ✚ Vacancies in membership on Annual Conference bodies that occur between sessions of the Annual Conference shall be filled by the appropriate bodies following the procedures outlined in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the Annual Conference.
- ✚ General Church and Annual Conference apportionments shall be apportioned to each local church on a conference wide basis. The details of the formula shall be part of the report of The Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration. (§615.1-6)
- ✚ There shall be a Manual of Conference Policies and Procedures that outlines policies and procedures related to Financial Matters, Clergy Benefits, Change of Appointment and other issues related to the functions of the Church.
- ✚ There will be a team to record, read and approve the proceedings of the Annual Conference after the final session. The team will be nominated by the Center for Mission Support and approved by the Core Leadership Team.
- ✚ The Districts of the Annual Conference will organize in such a way to reflect the offices/tasks required by the Book of Discipline and the Annual Conference. Beyond the basic Disciplinary and Conference requirements, Districts may organize in the best way to accomplish the mission of the Annual Conference and support the mission of their local churches.

## FINANCIAL BEST PRACTICES

- ✚ The fiscal year of the Annual Conference shall be from January 1 to December 31, and the salaries of clergy members (appointed as pastors, District Superintendents, Executive Center Directors) and lay employees shall be paid accordingly.
- ✚ The Council on Finance and Administration shall present the proposed budget for the purpose of clarification and correction only at the first business session of the Annual Conference each year. Changes in the proposed budget shall be reported by the committee, board and/or Center making the request at the time they report to the Annual Conference. Approval or disapproval of the financial request shall be voted as an amendment to the proposed budget at the final presentation of the budget by CFA at the last session of the Annual Conference.
- ✚ Any proposal to create a new apportionment or to change the purpose for an existing apportionment shall be presented during a regular or called session of the Annual Conference, and shall not be voted on until the next session of the Annual Conference.
- ✚ Any proposed change of the decimal formula shall first be studied by the Council on Finance and Administration. CFA shall then report its recommendation to the Annual Conference (2016 *Book of Discipline* ¶615).
- ✚ The auditing firm approved by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall audit all books of treasurers of boards whose auditing is not provided in the *Book of Discipline*, and report the results to the CFA. A statement of these accounts will be sent to the Conference Secretary for inclusion in the minutes.
- ✚ The Council on Finance and Administration shall recommend the mileage reimbursement for necessary travel to Conference meetings for members of all Conference entities.
- ✚ The Conference Treasurer, after the close of the fiscal year, shall transfer into the Operating Reserve all unexpended balances of the annual appropriations for the year just closed (excepting only items specifically exempted by the Council on Finance and Administration). The Conference Treasurer will honor the requisitions for all necessary expenses of the new fiscal year within the limits of the appropriations.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

1. The Annual Conference is to be organized to accomplish the stated mission of the United Methodist Church. “The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”
2. There shall be a **Conference Core Team** that will ensure the work of the conference aligns with its mission, vision, values, and core strategies. From a broad perspective, the core team reviews: the conference budget before it is sent to the council on finance and administration, the deployment of resources,

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major policy issues, and the outcomes produced by the three conference centers. The core team creates a culture of accountability against the outcomes and direction laid out by the annual conference and makes sure we are faithful to the *Book of Discipline* and the “Guiding Principles and Best Practices” of the conference. In addition, the team leads long-range planning and recommends policies and direction including possible changes to the “Guiding Principles and Best Practices.” Finally, the core team advises the bishop concerning executive staffing for the three centers. To facilitate its work, the core team may name and oversee temporary task groups for special projects. The team will be convened by the bishop or, in the absence of the bishop, by the clergy assistant to the bishop.

- a. The membership of the Conference Core Team will include:
  - I. The bishop (voice but not vote)
  - II. The conference lay leader or associate conference lay leader
  - III. One lay person and one clergy person elected by each of the five geographical districts
  - IV. One lay person chosen from the New Church Start District
  - V. Four at-large members appointed by the bishop
  - VI. The dean of the cabinet
  - VII. The clergy assistant to the bishop
  - VIII. The executive director of the Roberts Center for Leadership
  - IX. The executive director of the Smith Center for Evangelism & Church Growth
  - X. The executive director of the Center for Mission Support
3. There will be a clergy assistant to the bishop who will serve as support and resource for the bishop, cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, Conference Core Team, conference communications and information technology team, committee on episcopacy, and conference executive staff. The clergy assistant to the bishop will carry the portfolio for complaints, work with the bishop and the annual conference planning team to develop the annual conference agenda, work with recruitment, transfers, leadership development, as well as any other projects assigned by the bishop.
4. There will be the **Connectional Table** of the annual conference. Its purpose is to provide for the diversity of voices and interests of the conference to be heard in conversation about the mission and ministry of the Church. The group is collaborative, inclusive and may change as ministry needs change. The Connectional Table is to enable the flow of information and communication among the various interests and ministries within the conference. The Table is where the representative areas required by the *Book of Discipline* reside.
  - a. The membership of the Connectional Table includes:
    - I. Conference lay leader
    - II. Associate conference lay leader
    - III. Archives and history representative
    - IV. Conference board of pension and health benefits representative
    - V. Conference board of trustees representative
    - VI. Center executive leadership teams and boards representatives
    - VII. President of Conference United Methodist Women
    - VIII. President of Conference United Methodist Men
    - IX. Conference council on youth ministry representative, age 12-18

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- X. Council on finance and administration representative
  - XI. Coordinator of Disaster Response/UMVIM
  - XII. Division of Ministry with Young People Representative, age 12-30
  - XIII. Emmaus board of director's representative
  - XIV. Inclusiveness Umbrella Team representing:
    - 1) Health and welfare leadership team
    - 2) Church and society leadership team
    - 3) Christian unity and interreligious concerns leadership team
    - 4) Disability Concerns
    - 5) Native American
    - 6) GCORR
    - 7) Status Role of Women
  - XIV. Conference lay ministry team
  - XV. New Church Starts representative
  - XVI. Renewal of Eastern Mexico Covenant representative
  - XVII. Members of general and jurisdictional bodies who reside in the annual conference
  - XVIII. Strategic groups invited
  - XIX. Ex officio: clergy assistant to the bishop and executive directors of the three centers
- b. The Connectional Table will be convened by any of the center executive directors. It meets twice each year, typically in March and October.
5. There will be a **Roberts Center for Leadership**.
- a. The center will be responsible for the following functions:
    - I. Higher education and campus ministry
    - II. Identifying and recruiting new clergy and lay leaders, especially those who are young and those who add diversity
    - III. Developing and equipping new and existing clergy and lay leaders
    - IV. Professional and ethical behavior for clergy and lay leaders
  - b. The center will be the organizational home of the following:
    - I. The Board of Ordained Ministry (§635.1)
      - 1) Those in intentional interim ministry
      - 2) Those in extension ministries (§316)
      - 3) The Order of Elders (§306)
      - 4) The Order of Deacons (§306)
      - 5) The Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members (§635)
    - II. The administrative review committee (§636)
    - III. The committee on investigation (§2703)
    - IV. The conference lay ministry team (§631)
    - V. The committee on episcopacy (§637)
    - VI. Conference nominations and leadership development team
6. There will be a **Smith Center for Evangelism and Church Growth**. The center will be responsible for the following functions:
- a. Small membership and rural church transformation.
  - b. Ethnic local church concerns
  - c. Resourcing Churches.
  - d. Evangelism and witness

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- e. Establishment of new faith communities
- f. Transformation of Existing Congregations.
- g. Parish and Community Development
- 7. There will be a **Center for Mission Support**. The Center will be responsible for the following functions:
  - a. The Administrative Functions of the Annual Conference
    - I. Finance
    - II. Health Insurance
    - III. Pensions
    - IV. Minutes of the Annual Conference
    - V. Archives and History
    - VI. Episcopal Residence
    - VII. Equalizing of Annual Conference Membership
    - VIII. Conference Center Facility
    - IX. Glen Lake Camp
    - X. Equitable Compensation and Clergy Benefits
    - XI. Housing for Retired Ministers
  - b. The Missional Outreach of the Annual Conference
    - I. Conference Mission Ministries
    - II. Disaster Response
    - III. Mission Experience (CTCYM & VIM)
    - IV. Conference Council on Youth Ministry
    - V. Risk Taking Mission and Service
    - VI. Intentional Faith Development
    - VII. Engaging in Ministry with the Poor
    - VIII. Global Health
    - IX. Safe Sanctuary Policy
  - c. It will be the organizational home of the following:
    - I. Committee on Counseling (financial)
    - II. Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center Board
    - III. Committee on Finance & Administration
    - IV. The Board of Pensions & Health Benefits
    - V. The Board of Trustees
    - VI. The Committee on Episcopal Residence
    - VII. The Commission on Equitable Compensation & Clergy Benefits