

**BYLAWS OF THE NORTHWEST TEXAS CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

I. The Northwest Texas Conference shall structure itself in such a manner so that all areas are in compliance with the Book of Discipline.

**II. Lay Membership**

Bylaw 2.101 Additional Lay Members

In addition to the lay members provided by the Book of Discipline the following shall be lay members of the Northwest Texas Conference:

1. The district president of United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men in each of the districts of the Conference
2. A lay member from the additional churches where there is more than one church on a pastoral charge
3. Each Associate Conference Lay Leader
4. Two youth from each district to be selected by the District Youth Coordinator or District Superintendent
5. The executive officer or president, if a member of a local United Methodist Church within the boundaries of the Conference, of the following Methodist institutions:
  - Butman Methodist Camp and Retreat Center, Merkel
  - Ceta Canyon Camp and Retreat Center, Happy
  - King's Manor Methodist Home, Hereford
  - Lubbock Methodist Hospital System, Lubbock
  - McMurry University, Abilene
  - Sears Methodist Retirement System, Inc., Abilene
  - Wesley Community Center, Amarillo
6. One representative from each United Methodist Campus Ministry unit located within the boundaries of the Conference
7. Lay persons who serve as chairs of Conference agencies or officers of the Conference (if not a local church lay member or alternate to the Annual Conference)
8. One additional lay member above those otherwise authorized for the churches with large membership, beginning with the church with the most members and proceeding down the list of churches arranged in order of membership as far as necessary to make the total number of lay members equal to the total number of clergy members

Bylaw 2.102 Determination of Additional Lay Members

The Statistician shall determine which churches are entitled to an additional lay member for the next year under Bylaw 2.101, item 8. The Statistician shall notify the churches of their entitlement, and provide the information to the district superintendents.

Bylaw 2.103 Terms of Office

Lay members shall be elected annually. Lay members shall take office on the first day of January following their election, and they shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected.

**III. Officers**

Bylaw 3.101 List of Officers

The officers of the Conference shall include the Bishop, the Director of Mission and Administration, the District Superintendents, the Chancellor, the Lay Leader, the Secretary, the Statistician, and the Treasurer.

Bylaw 3.102 Director of Mission and Administration

There shall be a Director of Mission and Administration who shall serve the Conference by coordinating and facilitating the discharge of its various functions. The Director shall serve as the executive officer of the Conference and of the Personnel Committee. The duties and functions of the Director shall be those assigned to him/her by the Bishop and the Personnel Committee. After consultation, the presiding Bishop and the Personnel Committee shall name the Director. In naming the Director, the Bishop and the Personnel Committee shall observe the provisions of Bylaw 4.102. The Director shall be amenable to the Bishop and the Personnel Committee.

Bylaw 3.103 Chancellor

The Chancellor shall be elected annually during a business meeting of the Annual Conference. The Chancellor shall take office upon adjournment of the Annual Conference session at which the election of the Chancellor was held. The Chancellor shall remain in office until his or her successor is duly elected.

Bylaw 3.104 Lay Leader

The Lay Leader shall be elected annually during a business meeting of the Annual Conference. The Lay Leader shall take office upon adjournment of the Annual Conference session at which the election of the Lay Leader was held. The Lay Leader shall remain in office until his or her successor is duly elected.

Bylaw 3.105 Secretary

In addition to the responsibilities provided in the Discipline, the Secretary shall record the minutes of each session of the Annual Conference, produce and distribute such minutes, and keep the annuals of Annual Conference activities. The Secretary shall be elected during a business meeting of the first regular session of the Annual Conference that follows a regular session of the General Conference. The Secretary shall take office upon the adjournment of the Annual Conference session at which the election of the Secretary was held. The Secretary shall remain in office until his or her successor is duly elected. The Secretary shall have the authority to nominate his/her assistants, whose term of office shall begin with their election and continue until the opening of the next session of the Annual Conference. If the Secretary is an employee of the Conference, the tenure rule, Bylaw 5.401, shall not apply.

Bylaw 3.106 Statistician

The Statistician shall compile and record the statistical reports of the local churches and the Conference. The Statistician also shall fulfill the requirements of Bylaw 1.102. The Statistician shall have the authority to nominate his/her assistants, whose term of office shall begin with their election and continue until the opening of the next session of the Annual Conference. The Statistician shall be elected during a business meeting of the first regular session of the Annual Conference that follows a regular session of the General Conference. The Statistician shall take office upon the adjournment of the Annual Conference session at which the election of the Statistician was held. The Statistician shall remain in office until his or her successor is duly elected. If the Statistician is an employee of the Conference, the tenure rule, Bylaw 4.501, shall not apply.

Bylaw 3.107 Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in the office of Chancellor or Lay Leader between sessions of the Annual Conference, the Cabinet shall have authority to fill that vacancy until the next regular session of the Annual Conference is adjourned.

**IV. Staff**

Bylaw 4.101 Duties and Accountability

If staff is provided by the Conference, the duties and functions of the staff shall be defined by the Director of Mission and Administration. The staff shall be amenable to the Director of Mission and Administration and the Personnel Committee.

Bylaw 4.102 Employment of Staff

Employment of staff shall be governed as follows:

- a. As much as possible, employees of the Conference shall include women, racial and ethnic persons, lay, and clergy, at every level.
- b. Ordained ministers shall be subject to appointment to the Conference staff by the presiding Bishop in consultation with the Personnel Committee. The Conference shall pay ordained ministers appointed to the staff their actual moving expense, up to \$1,250.00.
- c. The appointment and/or employment of executive, administrative or program director(s) and associate directors of the councils and boards of the Conference shall be reviewed annually.

**V. Agencies of the Conference**

**A. The Conference Leadership Team**

Bylaw 5.101 The Conference Leadership Team

There shall be a Conference Leadership Team which shall provide servant leadership:

- a. The Conference Leadership Team will assume authority for developing and maintaining the focus of the Conference by refining and implementing the values, mission, vision, structure, and strategies.
- b. The following shall be members of the Conference Leadership Team:
  1. Presiding Bishop
  2. Director of Mission and Administration
  3. Conference Lay Leader
  4. Eight at large members, nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference
  5. A representative of the Council on Finance and Administration (ex-officio without vote)
- c. At least one half of the Conference Leadership Team shall be laity.
- d. At least one member of the Conference Leadership Team will represent the Conference Leadership Team on each of the Ministry Teams
- e. The Conference Leadership Team shall meet at least quarterly
- f. The Conference Leadership Team will inform the Conference Committee on Nominations of positions that need to be filled on any of the Ministry Teams, Boards, or Agencies
- g. The Conference Leadership Team will structure the Ministry Teams, ensuring that the functions and connections required by the Book of Discipline are maintained.

Bylaw 5.102 Access to the Conference Leadership Team

Task Forces created by the Conference Leadership Team shall have access to the Conference Leadership Team for the purpose of requesting personnel and funding to carry out their respective responsibilities.

**B. Ministry Teams Amenable to the Conference Leadership Team**

Bylaw 5.201 Deploy Ministry Team

The Deploy Ministry Team exists to send called persons to engage the culture inside and outside the church.

Bylaw 5.202 Invite Ministry Team

The Invite Ministry Team exists to develop meaningful relationships with others and incorporate them into the church.

Bylaw 5.203 Nurture Ministry Team

The Nurture Ministry Team shall be to connect people to Jesus Christ and care for people so they can care for others.

Bylaw 5.204 Equip Ministry Team

The Equip Ministry Team exists to identify spiritual gifts, provide tools and knowledge, and teach and train to lead.

**C. Agencies Amenable Directly to the Conference (in alphabetical order)**

Bylaw 5.301 Board of Ordained Ministry

In addition to the ex-officio members mandated by the Discipline, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall have the following members:

1. Fifteen clergy members as defined by the Discipline elected by the Annual Conference
2. Four lay members elected by the Annual Conference.

Bylaw 5.302 Board of Pension and Health Benefits

There shall be a Board of Pension and Health Benefits, which shall be governed as follows:

- a. The Board shall have charge of the interests and work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance, and pensioning of clergy and their families, other church workers, and lay employees of The United Methodist Church, its institutions, organizations, and agencies within the Conference.
- b. The Board shall provide oversight for the Conference health insurance program.
- c. The Board shall have not less than twelve members elected by the Conference in addition to the ex-officio members mandated by the Discipline.

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- d. Members shall serve a term of eight years. A new person who serves an incomplete term of less than three years is eligible to serve an additional eight years.

Bylaw 5.303 Board of Trustees

In addition to the members mandated by the Discipline, the Conference Chancellor shall be an ex-officio member without vote.

Bylaw 5.304 Commission on Equitable Compensation

The Commission on Equitable Compensation shall have the following members:

1. At least four clergy
2. At least four laypersons
3. One District Superintendent, named by the Cabinet, with vote, as mandated by the Discipline
4. One Conference Service Center Staff Member, as designated by the Director of Mission and Administration, without vote

Bylaw 5.305 Committee on Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions

There shall be a Committee on Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions, which shall be governed as follows:

- a. The responsibilities of the Committee on Bylaws, Rules and Resolutions shall include:
  1. Making editorial changes in the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Rules of Order that reflect decisions of the Annual Conference
  2. Publishing such editorial changes in the next edition of the Conference JOURNAL
  3. Receiving suggestions for bylaws, rules of order, and changes in the bylaws and rules of order from the agencies of the Conference
  4. Receiving and referring petitions addressed to the Annual Conference to the appropriate Conference agency
- b. The Committee on Bylaws, Rules and Resolutions shall have six members, elected by the Annual Conference.

Bylaw 5.306 Committee on Nominations

There shall be a Nominations Committee, which shall be governed as follows:

- a. The responsibility of the Nominations Committee shall include making nominations for all non-salaried officers and members of Conference agencies, except when the Discipline or the Bylaws of the Conference provide otherwise.
- b. The membership of the Nominations Committee shall be as follows:
  1. Presiding Bishop, as chair
  2. District Superintendents
  3. Two laypersons and one clergy elected annually from each district by nomination as the District Conference determines
  4. The President and the Vice President of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (or their designated representatives)
  5. The Director of Mission and Administration, with vote
  6. Conference Service Center Staff Member, as designated by the Director of Mission and Administration, without vote
  7. The Lay Leader
  8. The President of United Methodist Men
  9. The President of United Methodist Women
- c. The Nominating Committee shall meet at least once a year.
- d. At the end of each calendar year the Director of Mission and Administration shall prepare for the Nominating Committee and District Ministry Teams lists of vacancies on Conference agencies. For help in selecting nominees, the District Ministry Teams shall prepare for the Nominating Committee a resource pool of persons who could serve on Conference agencies.
- e. Nominees for agencies shall be consulted by a member of the Nominating Committee and shall agree to serve before the nomination is placed before a meeting of the Annual Conference.

Bylaw 5.307 Committee on Personnel

There shall be a Personnel Committee, which shall be governed as follows:

- a. The responsibilities of the Personnel Committee shall include the management of employee relationships with the Director of Mission and Administration and any other staff of the Conference.

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- b. Members of the Personnel Committee shall be:
1. Bishop, as chairperson
  2. Chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry
  3. Chairperson of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits
  4. Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
  5. Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team
  6. Conference Lay Leader
  7. Dean of the Cabinet
  8. President of the Council on Finance and Administration

Bylaw 5.308 Council on Finance and Administration

In addition to the ex-officio members mandated by the Discipline, the Council on Finance and Administration shall have thirteen elected members.

**D. Membership in Agencies of the Conference**

Bylaw 5.401 Tenure

Except for Ex Officio Members, persons serving as members of Conference agencies shall serve for no more than eight consecutive years in a particular office. Service of one year or less in an unexpired four-year term shall not be considered as a part of the four-year term.

Bylaw 5.402 Commencement of Term in Office

The term in office for elected members of Conference agencies shall begin upon adjournment of the District Conference Session, or Annual Conference Session at which the election of those members was held.

Bylaw 5.403 Extension of Term in Office

Upon taking office, elected members of Conference agencies shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected.

Bylaw 5.404 Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in the membership of an Conference agency between sessions of the Annual Conference, the Cabinet, Conference Leadership Team, or the DINE Ministry Teams shall have authority (unless the authority is otherwise assigned by the Discipline) to fill that vacancy for the remaining part of the term; however, in the case of terms exceeding one year, the Cabinet shall not fill the vacancy beyond the adjournment of the next regular session of the Annual Conference. If the Cabinet fills a vacancy under this bylaw, the Cabinet shall report its action to the next regular Annual Conference session.

Bylaw 5.405 Restriction on Simultaneous Membership

A person shall not serve simultaneously on more than one of the following Conference agencies: Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Commission on Equitable Compensation, and Council on Finance and Administration. This bylaw shall not apply if simultaneous service is the ex officio result of membership in a Conference, general, or jurisdictional agency.

Bylaw 5.406 Unexcused Absences

If a person who has been elected to serve on a conference level position has not attended any meeting in two years without a justifiable reason, that person may be replaced by the Conference Nominating Committee or the Cabinet.

**VI. Administration**

Bylaw 6.101 Budget Requests

All requests from program agencies for allocations from the Conference Ministries budget shall first be referred to the Conference Leadership Team for study and inclusion in Conference Leadership Team budget recommendations to the Council on Finance and Administration.

Bylaw 6.102 Financial Administration

The finances of the Conference shall be administered as follows:

- a. The Treasurer's office shall be the central accounting office for the Northwest Texas Conference. All funds received by the agencies of the Conference for or on the behalf of the Conference shall be deposited with the Treasurer for distribution as directed by the Conference. The agencies authorized to expend Conference funds shall certify to the Treasurer a responsible person or persons, authorized to draw vouchers against funds to the credit of said agencies. The Treasurer shall issue checks to the designated payee(s) upon receipt of properly executed vouchers covering authorized expenditures.

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- b. All institutions and agencies receiving apportioned financial support from the Northwest Texas Conference shall deposit copies of their audit, made by a certified public accountant or other auditor acceptable to the Council on Finance and Administration, with the Treasurer for the Council on Finance and Administration. Funds to an institution or agency shall be withheld until its audit is filed with the Treasurer.

Bylaw 6.103 Tax-Exempt Provisions

In order to maintain the tax-exempt status of Conference property, the Conference shall be governed as follows:

- a. The Northwest Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, Incorporated, shall not engage in activities or use its assets in manners that are not in furtherance of one or more exempt religious purposes, as set forth in Internal Revenue Code Section 501c(3), Section 170c(2), and related regulations, rulings, and procedures as amended from time to time.
- b. Upon dissolution of the above-named corporation, all of the Corporation's assets shall be distributed to the State of Texas or an organization exempt from taxes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501c(3) for one or more purposes that are exempt under the Texas franchise tax.
- c. The Northwest Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, Incorporated, shall not operate in such a manner as to permit the accrual of profits, the distribution of profits, or the realization of any other form of private gain.

**VII. Districts of the Conference**

Bylaw 7.101 District Conference

The District Conference of each district shall be governed as follows:

If a District Conference session is held, the membership of the District Conference shall be composed of:

- a. All commissioned, licensed, ordained, and diaconal ministers, and ministers in extension ministries to United Methodist institutions within the bounds of the district
- b. District Lay Leader(s)
- c. District President of the United Methodist Women
- d. District President of the United Methodist Youth
- e. District Ministry Team Chair(s)
- f. Chair of the Church Council of each local church within the district
- g. Local Church Lay Members of Annual Conference elected by the Charge Conference of each local church in the district.

Bylaw 7.102 District Nominations Committee

In each district, there shall be a District Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee of each district shall be governed as follows:

- a. The responsibilities of the Nominations Committee shall include nominating, at the District Conference sessions, persons for such places of leadership in the District as the District Superintendent of the district and the Conference deem advisable for the ministries of the district.
- b. The Nominations Committee shall have the following members:
  - 1. District Superintendent of the district as chair
  - 2. Nine elected members divided into three rotating classes. The elected members shall be elected for three-year terms and shall be composed of:
    - a. Three clergy
    - b. Six lay persons
- c. The District Superintendent of the district shall set the date and time for meetings of the Nominations Committee.

**VIII. District Superintendents**

Bylaw 8.101 Financial Report

District superintendents shall file with the Treasurer, by April 1 of each year, a financial report of the receipts and expenditures of the District Administration and Programming Fund.

Bylaw 8.102 Limitation on Membership on Quadrennial Committees

No district superintendent shall be a voting member of any Conference quadrennial agency except when the Discipline provides otherwise. This bylaw shall not apply to membership on boards of trustees of any of our United Methodist-related institutions.

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Bylaw 8.103 Moving Expenses  
Actual moving expenses of the incoming district superintendents shall be paid out of the District Superintendents Fund, up to \$1,250.00 (Effective January 1, 2006).

Bylaw 8.104 Representation of the Cabinet  
The Cabinet shall designate from its membership one representative to be assigned to each of the following areas: the Council on Finance and Administration, the Commission on Equitable Compensation, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the Board of Ordained Ministry. These representatives shall serve in a liaison capacity and on the respective executive committees. These representatives shall have voice but not vote, unless otherwise provided in the Discipline or these Bylaws.

**IX. Local Church**

Bylaw 9.101 Consultation Prior to Relocation or Creation of a Church  
Before any person or group of persons establishes or relocates a church, that person or group shall consult with the Commission on Church Extension and Revitalization in order to determine:

1. The procedures required by the Conference in establishing or relocating a church, and
2. The assistance available from the Conference in establishing or relocating a church.

Bylaw 9.102 Moving Day for Pastors  
There shall be an annual moving day for the pastors of the Conference. Moving day for pastors shall be determined annually by the Cabinet.

**X. Local Financial Administration**

Bylaw 10.101 Credit on Statistical Reports  
The Council on Finance and Administration shall set the date that all monies will be in the hands of the Treasurer to be counted on a given year's statistical report.

Bylaw 10.102 Debt for Benevolences or Pastor's Salary  
If money has been borrowed by a church to pay either benevolences or the pastor's salary, the pastor shall submit to the Secretary a statement of the amount involved. This statement shall be published in the Conference JOURNAL.

Bylaw 10.103 Group Health Insurance  
The group health insurance program of the Conference shall be governed as follows:

- a. Premiums for all participants shall be remitted monthly by the local church or the salary-paying unit to the Benefits Officer of the Conference.
- b. The group health insurance apportionment to the local church shall be considered as a mandatory item as are all apportioned items.
- c. Churches which are in three months arrears in payment of the Conference group health insurance apportionments shall be reported to the church's district superintendents. The district superintendent, the pastor, and the Staff Parish Relations Committee shall explore the reasons for lack of payment. The district superintendent shall report these findings to the Board of Pension and Health Benefits as soon as possible with a recommendation as to corrective action.

Bylaw 10.104 Moving Expenses  
All churches shall pay the actual moving expense of an incoming pastor, up to \$1,250.00.

**XI. The Ministry**

Bylaw 11.101 Memoir of Deceased Clergy Members of the Conference  
The clergy in charge of the funeral of a deceased clergy member of the Conference, or of the funeral of a clergy member's spouse, shall be responsible to prepare and send a memoir to the editor of the Conference JOURNAL, at the request of the editor.

**XII. Amendments to the Bylaws**

Bylaw 12.101 The Amendment Process  
The Bylaws of the Conference shall be subject to amendment. An amendment to the Bylaws shall be void unless:

- a. Submitted to the Annual Conference for information at least one business session prior to the business meeting in which the proposed amendment is to be considered, discussed, and voted upon, and
- b. Adopted by simple majority of the voting members of the Annual Conference casting votes on the amendment.

**RULES OF ORDER  
FOR THE NORTHWEST TEXAS CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**I. Special Rules of Order**

Rule 1.01    Copies of Motions and Amendments

Persons offering motions or amendments to a business meeting of the Annual Conference shall immediately provide the chair and secretary of the Annual Conference with legible copies of said motion or amendment.

Rule 1.02    Gifts to Individuals

Gifts to individuals that do not represent an expression from the whole Annual Conference shall not be presented during a meeting of the Annual Conference.

Rule 1.03    Resolutions

Proposed resolutions of the Annual Conference, and petitions to the Annual Conference, shall be governed as follows:

- a. Resolutions and petitions that are proposed by Conference agencies acting within the scope of their jurisdiction shall be eligible for consideration by a session of the Annual Conference without prior submission to the Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions Committee.
- b. Resolutions and petitions not proposed by Conference agencies acting within the scope of their jurisdiction shall be eligible for consideration by the Annual Conference only if submitted to the Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions Committee at least 14 days prior to the opening of an Annual Conference session, unless this provision is waived by suspension of the Rules.
  1. A resolution or petition shall be deemed “submitted to the Resolutions Committee” when it is received by the office of either the Director of Mission and Administration or the Chair of the Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions Committee.
  2. The Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions Committee shall receive, combine, and refer such resolutions and petitions to the appropriate agencies of the Conference.
  3. The Bylaws, Rules, and Resolutions Committee shall report at the first business meeting of an Annual Conference session:
    - a. the name of the maker of each resolution or petition,
    - b. the nature of each resolution or petition, and
    - c. the committee to which the resolution or petition is referred.
  4. All agencies that receive resolutions or petitions shall work with the author of the resolution or petition if they wish changes made. If a difference of opinion remains between the author and the agency, the agency shall permit the author to move the adoption of his/her resolution or petition during the agency’s first report to the next Annual Conference session.

**II. General Rules of Order**

Rule 2.01    Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

Except as provided in the Bylaws and Rules of Order of the Annual Conference, business meetings of the Annual Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

**III. Suspension of the Rules of Order**

Rule 3.01    Suspension of the Rules of Order

The Rules of Order of the Annual Conference shall be subject to suspension of the rules by a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Annual Conference casting votes on the suspension. Suspension of a Rule of Order shall not continue beyond the close of the session of the Annual Conference that voted for the suspension.

**IV. Amendment of the Rules of Order**

Rule 4.01    Amendment of the Rules of Order

The Rules of Order of the Annual Conference shall be subject to amendment. An amendment to the Rules of Order shall be void unless:

- a. submitted to the Annual Conference for information prior to the business meeting in which the proposed amendment is to be considered, discussed, and voted upon, and
- b. adopted by simple majority of the voting members of the Annual Conference casting votes on the amendment