



**REPORTING GUIDE FOR LAY MEMBERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HOLSTON CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JUNE 11-14, 2017**

**GEORGE R. STUART AUDITORIUM
LAKE JUNALUSKA, NORTH CAROLINA
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Guidelines for Holy Conferencing – What God Expects of Us

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:12-16a,17

- Every person is a child of God. Always speak respectfully. One can disagree without being disagreeable.
- As you patiently listen and observe the behavior of others, be open to the possibility that God can change the views of any or all parties in the discussion.
- Listen patiently before formulating responses.
- Strive to understand the experience out of which others have arrived at their views.
- Be careful in how you express personal offense at differing opinions. Otherwise dialogue may be inhibited.
- Accurately reflect the views of others when speaking. This is especially important when you disagree with that position.
- Avoid using inflammatory words, derogatory names, or an excited and angry voice.
- Avoid making generalizations about individuals and groups. Make your point with specific evidence and examples.
- Make use of facilitators and mediators.
- Remember that people are defined, ultimately, by their relationship with God--not by the flaws we discover, or think we discover, in their views and actions.

We believe Christians can discuss important issues without the acrimonious debate and parliamentary maneuvering that can divide a group into contending factions. We see too many examples of that in secular society.

We believe the Holy Spirit leads in all things, especially as we make decisions. We want to avoid making decisions in a fashion that leaves some feeling like winners and others like losers.

We can change the world through honest conversation on matters about which we are passionate.

We offer our thanks to the participants at The Global Young People’s Convocation and Legislative Assembly, sponsored by the Division on Ministries with Young People, through the General Board of Discipleship, held in January, 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa, for inspiring the framework of these guidelines. They adopted similar guidelines for Christian Conferencing at the convocation. This work is based on guidelines for “Holy Conferencing” that emerged from the United Methodist “Dialogue on Theological Diversity” in February 1998.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORTING GUIDE

- To encourage lay members to keep a record of their experiences and perceptions during the annual conference session by recording both the facts and their feelings;
- To help lay members discover for themselves the heart and soul of the annual conference session;
- To assist lay members in reporting and interpreting the actions and business of the annual conference session by suggesting topics, methods, and information to include.

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN FOR:

- Reports indicating the state of the church;
- Dedication and hard work reflected at all levels of Conference leadership;
- Decisions made in small group sessions compared to decisions made in plenary sessions (business sessions attended by all conference members);
- Decision-making process:
 - How does it work?
 - When was there consensus and commitment?
 - When was there disagreement, tension, or frustration?
- Decisions affecting individuals, local congregations, districts, and the entire conference.

THERE MAY BE DISAGREEMENT

Whenever concerned Christians meet to make decisions, disagreements sometimes occur.

How were disagreements handled at Annual Conference? Look for the following points:

- Were all the issues presented fairly and openly? If not, why?
- Was the process impartial? Did all have a chance to be heard?
- Did the agreement center on different interpretations of the facts?
- Did the disagreement concern a difference of beliefs?
- Was the matter resolved to everyone’s satisfaction?
- What were the issues? How were they resolved?
- Were creative methods used to resolve differences?
- Are any of the issues raised by the disagreements of sufficient concern to warrant reporting to local congregations?

“The lay members of the annual conference shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all measures except on the granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full conference membership, or any question concerning the character and official conduct of ordained ministers, except those who are lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and committee on investigation. Lay members shall serve on all committees except those on ministerial relations.”

ROLE OF THE LAY MEMBER OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session. These persons shall report to the local church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible, but not later than three months after the close of the conference.”

- *Book of Discipline (2016)*, ¶ 251.2

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LAY MEMBER

The two primary responsibilities of the Lay Member of Annual Conference, stated in general terms, are:

- Interpreting the actions and programs of the Annual Conference and the general church to the local church.
- Communicating the vision and needs of the local church to the Annual Conference and the general church.

Fulfilling the general responsibilities of Lay Member of Annual Conference involves specific responsibilities that fall into three areas:

- **Prepare** for Annual Conference.
- **Participate** During Annual Conference.
- **Serve** After Annual Conference.

PREPARE FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- Study the Book of Reports and other materials provided to you before Annual Conference.
- Attend any pre-conference district or cluster meetings.
- Learn about the Annual Conference’s process for conducting business, including the Holston Conference Standing Rules and Robert’s Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure).
- Develop a general knowledge of the Book of Discipline.
- Meet with the Pastor, Lay Leader, and congregation members to discuss issues that will be part of the Annual Conference business.

PARTICIPATE DURING ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- Attend the Annual Conference Laity Session.
- Participate and listen carefully in all business sessions.
- Participate in all worship experiences and Bible study sessions.
- Record your experiences throughout Annual Conference (Reporting Guide).
- Explore all resource displays to gather information and ideas for ministry in your local church.

SERVE AFTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- Report to the congregation in the week following the Annual Conference session and to the church council at its next meeting after the close of the conference session (no later than 3 months after).
- Interpret, along with the Pastor, the actions of the Annual Conference session to the congregation.

- Interpret for the local church the programs, mission, structure, ministry and finances (including the budget, the Fair Share, and Advance Specials) of the Annual Conference.
- Serve as a member of:
 - Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
 - Finance Committee
 - Church Council

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- *Guidelines: Lay Leader/Lay Member*
- *Book of Discipline* (esp. ¶ 602)
- Pastor and District Superintendent
- Conference and District Lay Leaders

PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

- Always bring all materials with you — agenda can change and amendments can be made to the contents of the Book of Reports.
- Become familiar with acronyms listed in Program Book — First time Members can easily get lost with so many acronyms.

“MEMBER”

- You are a Member of the Annual Conference — not “delegate”
- You are not an observer; you are a “participant”
- All members, lay and clergy have equal voice and equal vote.

PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION

- Be an active participant in the proceedings. We encourage you to participate actively in the proceedings — “Let your voice be heard.”
- In order to be recognized, to speak and to vote, you must be seated within the Legal Limits for Voting and Business, sometimes referred to as the “Bar of the Conference” - “. . . the stage area, Sections One (1) through Ten (10), and pews behind Sections 1B and 3 of the George R. Stuart Auditorium.”
- To gain the floor
 - Raise hand (hold paper to be visible).
 - Stay where you are until Bishop Taylor recognizes you.
 - Bishop Taylor will direct you to a specific microphone.
- At the Microphone
 - Say quiet prayer that what you will say will glorify God and further His kingdom

- Then, clearly state:
 - Name
 - That you are a "Lay person" or "Laity"
 - Name of your church
 - Your District
- Then address the Chair or the house

ON THE FLOOR OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- Types of things we can do:
 - Make a Motion
 - Move to Amend a Motion or Report
 - Move to Substitute a Motion
 - Make a Point of Order (to address a matter of order or procedure)
 - Move to Reconsider (only if you voted for the prevailing side)
 - Ask a Question
 - A Question is almost always in order (but be brief)
 - If you do not understand something, get recognized and ask
 - Do not sit still if you do not understand something
- If you want to take some action, but do not know the proper procedure:
 - Get recognized
 - At the microphone, explain to the Chair what you want to do, and Chair will advise you
- If making a Motion -- *Please write it out on the form in the Book of Reports*
- Things to Watch Out for:
 - Motion to limit Debate
 - Motions to limit number and length of speeches
 - Motion to cut off or limit Debate (*e.g.*, "Call for the previous question")

General Conference Parliamentary Procedure Chart

To Do This:	You Say This:	(See Key Below)					
		I	S	D	A	Vote	R
SECONDARY MOTIONS IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE							
Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Maj	
Call an intermission	"I move we recess until . . ."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj	
Suspend further consideration of an issue, especially in an emergency	"I move we table the motion . . ."	No	Yes	No	No	Maj	
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question . . ."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	R
Limit or extend the limits of debate	"I move the debate be limited (or extended) to . . ."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj*	R
Postpone debate to a specific time	"I move to postpone this matter until . . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj	R
Have the matter studied further	"I move that this matter be referred to . . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj	R
Amend a motion, including amend by substitution	"I move to amend by . . ." or "I move to substitute . . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj	R
Postpone indefinitely (Kills the main motion)	"I move to postpone indefinitely."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj	R
MAIN MOTION (Introduction of a Petition)							
Introduce New Business	"I move that . . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj	R
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (Pertaining to the business under consideration)							
Correct an error in parliamentary procedure	"I rise to a point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Rules	
Obtain advice on parliamentary procedure	"I raise a parliamentary inquiry"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Rules	
Request information	"Point of information." (must be in form of a question)	Yes	No	No	No		
Question the ruling of the presiding officer	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maj	R
Suspend the rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that . . ."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	
BRING A MATTER BACK BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY							
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move that we take from the table . . ."	No	Yes	No	No	Maj	
Reconsider previous action (May be made only by a member who voted previously on the prevailing side)	"I move to reconsider the vote on . . ."	No	Yes	**	No	Maj	

I = Interrupt Speaker?; S = Second Needed?; D = Debatable?; A = Amendable?; R = May be Reconsidered.

*See GC rule 9.4 (an exception to usual 2/3 vote parliamentary procedure).

** See GC Rules 21 and 30.

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017

Important events of the day:

- Registration process
- Laity Session
- Opening worship

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2017

Important events of the day:

- Morning Worship, Teaching, and Holy Communion
- Blessing of Hands-On Mission Kits
- State of the Church address – Bishop Taylor
- Conference Lay Leader’s address
- Memorial Service
- Reports
 - Rules & Order
 - CFA – initial budget report
 - Conference Strategy Team
 - Cabinet
 - Discipleship Team
 - Holston Conference Foundation
 - Holston Home for Children
- Petitions & Resolutions
- Harry Denman awards
- Evening worship: *Africana Live*

TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2017

Important events of the day:

- Run/Walk
- Morning Worship, Teaching, and Holy Communion
- Retirement recognition
- On-Site Mission Project
- Higher Education & Ministry
 - Francis Asbury award
 - Emory & Henry
 - Tennessee Wesleyan
 - Wesley Foundations
- Reports
 - Leadership Holston
 - Trustees
 - Discipleship Team
 - Congregational Development
 - Personnel Resources
 - Nominations
 - UMW
 - Pensions
 - Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Equitable Compensation
 - Task Force on Lay Abuse of Clergy
 - CFA – budget debate and vote
- Presentation from the Commission on a Way Forward
- Constitutional Amendments
- National Council of Churches
- Evening worship: *Mission Celebration*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

Important events of the day:

- Lake Junaluska Singers
- Service of Commissioning & Recognition and Sending Forth

REPORTING THE ACTIONS OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

How to report:

- Use a panel of persons who attended Annual Conference;
- Have a discussion/dialogue between lay and clergy members;
- Interview by a congregation member;
- Write an article for the church newsletter.

What to report:

- Items that impact individuals, local congregations, districts, and the conference;
- Overall impression of the spirit of Annual Conference;
- Program ideas that generated enthusiasm;
- Information local congregations may find useful.

When to report:

- Sunday morning or evening worship services;
- Sunday School classes;
- Administrative Board/Church Council meetings;
- United Methodist Men/Women/Youth meetings;
- Special all-church meetings (dinners, picnics, etc.).

NOTES