

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization



Constitution and By-Laws

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ARTICLE I - NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization (WNCCLLO) of the Second Episcopal District (SED) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE II- MISSION STATEMENT, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Mission Statement: The Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization of the Second Episcopal District (SEDLO) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ.

Section 2. Purpose: The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, so that each layperson may maximally utilize their God-given abilities and skills to improve and extend the kingdom to create happiness, peace and harmony among its members.

Section 3. Objectives: To accomplish the mission and purpose, the following objectives are adopted:

a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for and an appreciation of the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.

b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, our illustrious Founder of the AME Church.

c. To advocate respect and loyalty at all times to constituted authority and leadership.

d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Conference.

e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

f. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.

g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God's Word.

i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.

- j. To increase the circulation of church periodicals.
- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service responsibilities.
- l. To promote activities that will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Conference.
- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.
- n. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs.

ARTICLE III - DIVISIONS

- Section 1. The Western North Carolina Lay Organization shall be composed of all Presiding Elder Districts of the Annual Conference Lay and Organizations of a Station, Mission or Circuit.
- Section 2. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference is optional and shall only be organized where the Annual Conference Lay Organization determines it to be necessary for the efficient conducting of its business. If such a determination is made, the Annual Conference Lay President shall, after giving fourteen (14) days written notice, inclusive of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, to each charge in the district, convene and organize the District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference, where organized, shall bear the same relationship to the Annual Conference Lay Organization as the Annual Conference Lay Organization bears to the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. Membership in this organization is open to all Lay (un-ordained) members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in their Local Presiding Elder District of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, which is a member of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organizations. He/she pays required dues as set by his/her local lay organization and the WNCCLC. In the event a person belongs to a church that does not have an organized lay organization, that person can become a member by paying the WNCCLC dues directly to the membership chairperson.
- Section 2. The membership of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization for the purpose conducting business shall be composed of:
 - a. All duly elected officers of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization.
 - b. All persons holding the designation of President Emeritus and past conference lay presidents.
 - c. All persons holding an office in the Connectional Lay Organization.
 - d. All Local Lay Organization Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization.
 - e. Each President of each organized Station Church, Mission or Circuit Lay organization where there is a duly organized Lay Organization,

f. Members from the general body, also known as members-at-large must meet the requirements of a member found in Article IV, Section 1.

g. A member must; 1) be at least 18 years of age; 2) have completed a lay membership form; 3) pay the annual membership dues through their local church or be listed on the Western North Carolina Annual Conference Membership Roll.

h. Voting privileges are granted to persons meeting the requirement of membership as stated in Article IV, section 1.

Section 3. The membership of the Western North Carolina Conference to the Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) shall be composed of:

- a. The President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization.
- b. Six (6) elected delegates from the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization, at least one (1) shall be a young adult, age 18-35.
- c. All Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Local Lay organization of the Western North Carolina Conference.
- d. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized Local Lay Organization of the Western North Carolina Conference.
- e. Each president or duly elected representative of each organized Station, Mission, or Circuit Organization. A duly organized Lay Organization of a Station, Mission, Circuit, or Presiding Elder Districts of the Annual Conference, shall be an organization reporting to the Annual Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting, or which is recognized by the Annual Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting; or which is recognized by the Annual Conference as an organization.

Section 4. The membership in the SED Lay Organization, for the purposes of conducting its business including the SED Lay Convention, shall be composed of:

- a. All elected officers of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- b. All persons holding the designation of President Emeritus.
- c. All persons holding an office in the Connectional Lay Organization.
- d. All Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities, Young Adult Representatives of Annual Conference Organization.
- e. Six (6) elected delegates from each Annual Conference Lay Organization, at least (1) one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
- f. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.

- g. Each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least (1) one of whom shall be a young adult, age 18-35, of each organized Station Church, Mission or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized Lay Organization.
- h. All members of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization must meet the requirements of members found in Article IV, section 1.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS, DUTIES, and RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. The elected Officers of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be:

- a. President
- b. First Vice President
- c. Second Vice President*
- d. Third Vice President*
- e. Recording Secretary
- f. Assistant Recording Secretary*
- g. Corresponding Secretary*
- h. Treasurer
- i. Financial Secretary*
- j. Chaplain
- k. Historiographer*
- l. Parliamentarian*
- m. Director of Lay Activities
- n. District Coordinators*
- o. Director of Public Relations*
- p. Young Adult Representative

(*Elected at discretion of Divisions, see Article III of this Constitution)

Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities of Elected Officers

- a. The President of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization shall:
 - 1. Lead with vision and integrity. This includes serving as a spokesperson for laity in the church, a representative for lay ministry in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings or an advocate in public policy arenas.
 - 2. Preside over its sessions during regular, special, or emergency meetings, the WNCCLC Executive Board, and all other official meetings of this organization.
 - 3. Be the active head of said organization and shall be responsible for seeing that the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, as well as the orders and policies of the WNCCLC Executive Board are fully carried out.
 - 4. Be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization through channels of the Local Lay Organizations.
 - 5. Be responsible for such other duties as may be usual and customary to the position, and which may be assigned from time to time by the WNCCLC Executive Board, and the directives approved by the SEDLO Lay Convention.

6. Appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Convention, and Ad Hoc Committees.
 7. Serve as a member of the Second Episcopal District Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by virtue of his/her office.
 8. The President or his or her designee shall preside over Election of officers on the Annual Conference level.
- b. The First Vice President shall:
1. Be responsible for Membership Recruitment, Retention/and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President.
 2. Assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the WNCCLO Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties.
- c. The Second Vice President shall:
1. Be responsible for Strategic Planning and coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and the WNCCLO Executive Board.
 2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President. Preside at the meetings and assume all duties of the President.
- d. The Third Vice President shall:
1. Coordinate such duties as Personal Evangelism and coordinating those efforts with the appropriate departments, within the church.
 2. Serve in the absence of the President, First Vice President and Second Vice President. Preside at the meetings and assume all the duties of President.
- e. The Recording Secretary shall:
1. Serve as Secretary of the WNCCLO Executive Board meeting.
 2. Be responsible for recording attendance of all Conference Roll Calls and membership registrations.
 3. Record accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, including reading and distributing minutes of any previous meetings and insuring widespread dissemination of pertinent information.
 4. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside until a chairperson pro tempore is elected.
 5. Prepare, for the presiding officer, a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting and a report of the WNCCLO Executive Board meetings to be presented at the WNCC Lay Convention.
 6. Hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.
- f. The Assistant Recording Secretary shall:
1. Assist the Recording Secretary in all duties as outlined above.
 2. In the absence of the Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Secretary.
- g. The Corresponding Secretary shall:
1. Ensure lay ministry through effective communication; this includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about laity.

2. Report pertinent information to the WNCCLO Executive Board and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the WNCCLO Executive Board.
3. Maintain a network of internal communications between the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization and its subordinate bodies.
4. Compose communication as needed and/or directed by the President. Maintain liaison with the Director of Public Relations to insure publication of pertinent information.

h. The Treasurer shall:

1. Serve as a member of the WNCCLO Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal years.
2. Provide financial oversight for the WNCCLO in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
3. Receive and disburse all funds.
 - a. Disbursements shall be made in accordance with the line item budget approved by the WNCCLO.
 - b. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the WNCCLO Executive Board with appropriate justification.
4. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each WNCCLO Executive Board meeting and scheduled meetings.
5. Have the accounts reviewed, bi-annually, by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Accounting Firm approved by the WNCCLO Executive Board.
6. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

i. The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Maintain an independent set of records of all financial transactions and assist with the work in concert with the Treasurer.
2. Serve as member of the Budget and Finance Committee.
3. Receive and record all funds. All funds shall be turned over to the treasurer within a period not to exceed fourteen (14) days.
4. Receive vouchers that authorize expenditures, pursuant to the budget passed by the WNCCLO, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.
5. Be bonded and said bond shall held by the Recording Secretary.

j. The Chaplain shall:

1. Make adequate preparation for each Bible Study and Devotional Service, utilizing creative styles that motivate and draw participants into the worship experience.
2. Provide spiritual leadership to this organization.
3. Maintain effective communication with the Chaplains in the Local Lay Organizations.

k. The Historiographer shall:

1. Be responsible for gathering, assembling, and maintaining a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of this organization.
2. Act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the WNCCLO.
3. Compile a written WNCCLO history and WNCC Lay Convention history and submit it as a report to each WNCC Lay Convention Session, place a copy in the determined archives.
4. Securely store historical records.

l. The Parliamentarian shall:

1. Advise the President or presiding officer concerning questions of parliamentary procedure.
2. Be seated next to the President at all meetings.
3. Follow the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition, at all meetings.
4. Serve as consultant to the Constitution and By-Laws, Rules, and other committees as needed.

m. The Director of Lay Activities shall:

1. Maintain a close working relationship with the President, Eastern District Coordinator, Western District Coordinator and the Young Adult Representative in the planning, developing and implementing of the complete programmatic thrust of this organization.
2. Plan, design, and direct all educational programs and other activities of this organization at the WNCCLO Annual Conference and business meeting, including but not limited to Training Institute, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the WNCCLO Executive Board.
3. Maintain a working relationship with the SED and Local level Directors of Lay Activities.
4. Be responsible for planning and implementing a training program and course of study in accordance with the mission, purposes and objectives of the Lay Organization.
5. The proposed training program and course of study, inclusive of proposed theme and outline for the study guide, shall be presented to the WNCCLO Executive Board at the first meeting following the close of the CLO Executive Board Meeting which approved the course of study. The approved program shall be forwarded from the Connectional Director of Lay Activities to the Second Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities. Upon receipt, the Western North Carolina Conference Director of Lay Activities will immediately forward the Course of Study to the local church level Directors of Lay Activities.

6. The Annual Conference Director of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study to the District of the Annual Conference, Station or Circuit Directors of Lay Activities. The training program and Course of Study shall reach the Station Director of Lay Activities within fourteen (14) days after the WNCCLO Director of Lay Activities has forwarded same.
 7. A full report of progress made in the implementation of the course of study and the work of the Director shall be given at each WNCC Annual Conference.
 8. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the WNCCLO Budget & Finance Committee.
- n. The District Coordinators (WNCCLO) shall:
1. Under the leadership of the Director of Lay Activities, distribute training materials and general information concerning the operation of the local Lay Organizations.
 2. Be responsible for seeking out local Churches without a Lay Organization.
 3. Assist local Churches with organizing its membership to elect officers.
 4. Coordinators must reside in the district that they represent.
- o. The Director of Public Relations shall:
1. Oversee all official publications of the organization, edit, and publish a periodical containing news of general interest to the laity and news regarding the WNCCLO.
 2. Solicit and edit articles for publication on topics that will appeal to, inspire and motivate subscribers.
 3. Oversee the entire publication process, including seeking bids from publishers.
 4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation.
 5. Prepare an annual line item budget for the publication for submission to the WNCCLO Budget & Finance Committee.
 6. Seek to bring about harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media.
 7. Be responsible for all press releases and public relations for and during any WNCCLO meeting.
 8. Disseminate news items of interest received from the local churches and Annual Conferences of the Second Episcopal District through the Newsletter and/or multi-media processes.
 9. Oversee the creation & maintain the WNCCLO website and any internal or external documents, including all social media networking.

p. The Young Adult Representative shall:

1. Be responsible for implementing teaching and training opportunities for Young Adults in conjunction with the Director of Lay Activities and establishing working relationships with other relevant Young Adult Auxiliaries and Ministries within, and outside of the AME Church.
2. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the WNCCLC Budget & Finance Committee.
3. Advocate for Young Adults' concerns to the WNCCLC Executive Board and beyond.
4. Facilitate Lay Organization Young Adult events with approval of the WNCCLC Executive Board.
5. Voice the concerns and visions of a new generation of laity and serve as a Christian mentor to a younger generation of African Methodists.

Section 3. The annual review shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the WNCCLC and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured auditor or Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the WNCCLC Executive Board for review and approval. This review Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the WNCCLC as required by the WNCCLC Constitution and By-laws. Upon approval by the WNCCLC Executive Board, the review is then presented at the WNC annual conference which will include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

ARTICLE VI - NOMINATION and ELECTION PROCEDURES

Section 1. All officers and members of the Western North Carolina Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station or Circuit Organization to participate in elections and voting, per Art IV, Sect 1.

Section 2. Any person seeking an elected office on the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization must be a member in "good and regular standing" in the organization and must possess the qualifications required for the position being sought. Any candidate for elected office must have registered and attended 50% of Business Sessions within the two (2) year period immediately preceding the election year. Registration shall be confirmed from the official registration records to be provided to the nominating committee upon its appointment.

Section 3. All persons seeking an elected office must submit a "Letter of Intent" with qualifications signed by the Local Lay President to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The format for the Letter of Intent will be provided by the Nominating Committee and must be returned by certified mail or email correspondence and postmarked on or before the date specified by nominating committee. This deadline date will constitute the close of all nominations to be submitted to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will send an electronic or paper reply acknowledging receipt to all Letters of Intent received by email or paper correspondence.

- Section 4. All candidates seeking an elected office must have demonstrated active participation in the Western North Carolina Conference and must be a member in good and regular standing, as defined by Article IV, sect 1.
- Section 5. No elected officer shall hold more than (2) two additional offices beyond the local lay organization.
- Section 6. Members of the Nominating Committee shall be ineligible for nomination by the committee for any elected position to be filled. Upon the initiation of the nomination process, a member of the Nominating Committee is prohibited from withdrawing from the Committee to run for an elected office within the WNCCLO.
- Section 7. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7) persons appointed by the President with nominees to be confirmed by the WNCCLO Executive Board. The President in selecting committee members shall follow these guidelines:
- a. In addition to the YAR, there shall be an equal number of persons appointed from each Presiding Elder District.
 - b. Appointments shall be sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the ages of 18 – 35 and all persons must have demonstrated experience with the nominating process. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee’s duties and reporting timelines.
- Section 8. Duties of the Nominating Committee
- a. At least six (6) months prior to WNCCLO Annual Conference, the committee shall call for nominations through a notice submitted for publication in the WNCCLO Newsletter, the WNCCLO website, and any other appropriate printed or online communication. Such Notice shall inform members when, how and where nomination forms can be obtained. The nomination form shall request biographical data and other pertinent information which will aid in the qualifying of candidates. Such forms shall be returned to the chair of the nominating committee by prospective nominees, bearing the signature of the Local Lay President, by the date specified by the nominating committee.
 - b. The committee shall thoroughly examine any and all necessary information regarding nominees for elected offices being sought. Each nominee must be notified of his/her eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. From those persons found qualified for the offices being sought, the committee shall prepare a slate of nominees, listing the qualifications of the nominees for offices to be elected at the designated WNCCLO meeting. Thirty (30) days prior to the convening of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization’s designated election meeting, the slate will be distributed to the Executive Board of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization for approval. Once approved the slate shall be provided at the designated WNCCLO meeting.
 - c. No political campaigning for office shall take place before candidates are qualified as nominees by the Nominating Committee. Campaigning is defined as placing ads in Souvenir Journals or any AME Church Publication (where applicable) at any level as candidate, distributing campaign literature/paraphernalia or visits to formal functions of the WNCCLO or its subordinate bodies with the express purpose of

campaigning. Participation in campaign activities prior to being qualified as a nominee will result in valid disqualification for that candidate, if confirmed by the Nominating Committee and the WNCCLO Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII -ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Section 1. Officers shall be elected at a designated WNCCLO meeting unless otherwise provided for herein. All elections shall be by secret ballot, electronic or paper, except in the case where the office is not contested. When there is only one candidate for office the chair can take a voice vote or declare that the nominee is elected, effecting the election by unanimous consent or acclamation. A majority vote of members, present and voting, shall be necessary to elect. Elected officers shall assume office immediately upon installation. There should be a ceremony for the Installation of Officers prior to the close of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference and shall be the final order of business at the closing Business Session of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference. The candidate seeking elected office does not have to be present to be voted upon. Any method of election in any division other than by secret ballot, except in the case of uncontested offices, shall be declared null and void by the WNCCLO.
- Section 2. The Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization officers shall be elected to a two (2) year term at the designated WNCCLO Meeting.
- Section 3. Term limitation. The elected officers of the WNCCLO and its divisions shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office.
- Section 4. If an officer completes a term of office which was vacated by the incumbent due to death, illness, resignation, and/or other conditions approved by the WNCCLO Executive Board, the unexpired portion of the term, will not count as a full term for the purposes of term limitation.
- Section 5. Transition Period. A transitional period of sixty (60) days or (8) eight weeks beginning at the close of the WNCCLO Annual Conference is provided for outgoing officers to reconcile files, records, and make inventories before transferring them to the incoming officers. Outgoing officers shall complete the transfer of all files, records, books, papers and property belonging to the organization to the incoming officers on or before the end of the (60) sixty-day period.
- Section 6. Vacancy in Office of President. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other causes, the First Vice President shall immediately assume the Office of President, for the unexpired term of office; the Second Vice President shall ascend to the Office of First Vice President, and the third Vice President becomes second Vice President, leaving the vacancy to be filled in the office of the lowest ranking Vice President. If the position was contested during the election for the office of Third Vice President, the person with the second highest number of votes will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. If the position was uncontested, the president shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office of the third vice president, to fill the vacancy, if the remainder of the term is less than one (1) year. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office for The Third Vice President is greater than one (1) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within

forty-five (45) days, of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the office of third vice president. Nominating procedures, approved for last Conference Lay Organization's election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed and/or elected to fill an unexpired term of President shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to four (4) full two (2) year terms in accordance with this constitution and By-Laws.

Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice President. If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than that of a President/ Vice President, due to death, resignation, disability or inability to serve, the President shall, with confirmation of the WNCCLC Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than one (1) year. A majority vote of members, present and voting, by the WNCCLC Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than one (1) year, a special election shall be held by the WNCCLC Executive Board within forty-five (45) days, of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. Nominating procedures, approved for last District Lay Convention election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot, electronic or paper. Any person appointed and/ or elected to fill an unexpired term of office shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two full four (4) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 8. Removal of Elected Officer. The Organizational and Officers' Effectiveness Committee shall give its findings annually. Any elected officer, not performing his/her duties, as outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws, shall be notified in writing by the President, of his/her failure to perform designated duties, with a forwarded copy to the WNCCLC Executive Board. If failure to perform his/her duties continues for a period of ninety (90) days after notification, the matter will be referred to the WNCCLC Executive Board for action. If the President is not performing his/her duties, as outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws, he/she shall be notified in writing by the WNCCLC Executive Board through the Corresponding Secretary of his/her failure to perform designated duties. The WNCCLC Executive Board, may, in the interim of the WNCCLC Meeting, suspend the elected officer. The final decision to expel or reinstate from/to office shall rest exclusively with the WNCCLC.

Section 9 WNCCLC Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS

Section 1. The WNCCLC shall have the right at all times to pass upon the qualifications of its own members and may reject or accept the membership of any person.

- a. Each officer shall be responsible for understanding and fulfilling his/her duties and those officers with a budget shall prepare and submit an annual line item budget for approval by the WNCCLC Executive Board.

Section 2. The President.

- a. Demonstrated commitment to lay ministry
- b. Prior successful service as either an elected officer in the Second Episcopal District, Western North Carolina Conference, or local church lay organization.
- c. Demonstrated successful leadership skills such as president or director in a nonprofit organization
- d. Excellent Listening Skills
- e. Excellent oral and written communication skills
- f. Be able to give speeches to small and large audiences
- g. Be able to conduct business meetings
- h. Be able to plan, prioritize organize and operate within the approved budget
- i. Have a basic understanding of the AME Church Discipline and Roberts Rules of Order

Section 3. First Vice President

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of First Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

Section 4. Second Vice President

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of Second Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

Section 5. Third Vice President

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of Third Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

Section 6. Recording Secretary

- a. All candidates seeking the office of Recording Secretary must possess
 1. Proficiency in writing and comprehension of the English language, editing and record keeping skills
 2. Experience in word processing or other technology (electronic media) available for recording, storing, and retrieving information.
 3. Prior secretarial experience or training is desirable but not required
 4. Ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.

Section 7. Assistant Recording Secretary

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of Assistant Recording Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary.

Section 8. Corresponding Secretary

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of Corresponding Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary.

Section 9. Treasurer

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate:
 1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, preferably in non-profit organizations.
 2. Experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, bookkeeping, economics and budgeting.
 3. Be bondable.
 4. Experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.

Section 10. Financial Secretary

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Financial Secretary must possess the same qualifications as those of the Treasurer.

Section 11. Chaplain

- a. Any candidate seeking the position of Chaplain must demonstrate:
 1. A Christian commitment, possess a high level of spiritual maturity, effective interpersonal and communication skills.
 2. Knowledge of the Bible and the AMEC Hymnal.
 3. Experience in preparing and conducting Bible study and worship.

Section 12. Historiographer

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must demonstrate:
 1. Prior experience in research, historical writing, publishing and archiving historical information.
 2. Ability to use technology (electronic media, including video, photography, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing.
 3. Knowledge of record and artifact preservation specific to an organization's founding, operations, projects, and other activities.

Section 13. Parliamentarian

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate:
 1. Prior Experience as a parliamentarian
 2. Demonstrated working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order
 3. Working knowledge of the AME Church Discipline

Section 14. Director of Lay Activities

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Lay Activities must demonstrate:
 1. Extensive experience in research, speech, writing and proficiency in the English language, program planning, development, designing, implementation, teaching, training, adult learning, and/or administration, and technology (electronic media, including video, photography, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing.
 2. Must demonstrate knowledge of the AME Church, AME Doctrine & Discipline, AME culture and traditions.

Section 15. District Coordinators

- a. Knowledge in the roles and responsibility of the Laity in the AME Church

- b. Experience as a trainer
- c. Capability to travel to churches with the district assigned
- d. Willingness to Follow and Lead

Section 16. Director of Public Relations

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Public Relations must demonstrate:
 - 1. A working knowledge of technology, media relations, marketing, sales, prior experience in preparing and distributing press releases.
- b. Have strong communication skills and extensive experience in English grammar, public speaking, and journalism.

Section 17. Young Adult Representative

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Young Adult Representative shall:
 - 1. Be between the ages of 18-35 at the time of election.
 - 2. Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with Youth and Young Adults within the church or other organizations.
 - 3. Possess strong abilities to provide training and demonstrate effective communication skills.

ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Section 1. There shall be an Executive Board of the WNCCLO, composed of the elected officers of the organization, elected officers of the SEDLO Connectional Lay Organization, Presidents of each Local Lay Organization, Presidents Emeriti, and past presidents of the WNCCLO.
- Section 2. The WNCCLO Executive Board shall meet at least once, annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the WNCCLO Executive Board.
- Section 3. Teleconference Meetings may be held to address specific matters of concern. Notice of the call with a proposed agenda and previous minutes of prior WNCCLO Executive Board meetings must be issued by the Corresponding Secretary to members of the WNCCLO Executive Board no fewer than two (2) days prior to the call. Vacancies of offices may not be filled via teleconference call (Article VII, section 1).
- Section 4. The President of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the WNCCLO Executive Board, and the Recording Secretary shall serve as secretary of the WNCCLO Executive Board.
- Section 5. The WNCCLO Executive Board shall have the authority to make recommendation regarding the official conduct of any elected officer, provided however, that any decision to suspend, expel or remove from office shall rest exclusively with the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization.
- Section 6. The WNCCLO Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The WNCCLO Executive Board shall have authority, supervision

and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the Conference Sessions of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided. Further, the general body in its Lay Convention, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any action of the WNCCLO Executive Board.

- Section 7. The SEDLO Executive Board shall pass upon the Constitution and By-Laws of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations to determine their compliance with or conformity to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization.
- Section 8. The WNCCLO Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.
- Section 9. The WNCCLO Executive Board may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the WNCCLO and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.
- Section 10. The Annual Financial Review shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the WNCCLO. The Annual Review should be reported annually, to the WNCCLO Executive Board for review and approval. This Review Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the WNCC Lay Organization. Upon approval of the WNCCLO Executive Board, the Annual Review is then presented to the WNCC Annual Conference session that would include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

ARTICLE X - MEETING

- Section 1. The Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization shall meet bi-monthly in its regular session.
- Section 2. All meeting Roll Calls and membership attendance records shall be maintained by the Recording Secretary.
- Section 3. The WNCCLO President and/or a majority vote of the WNCCLO Executive Board members present and voting may call an emergency meeting of the WNCCLO when such a meeting is deemed necessary. The time, place, and object of such Special or Emergency Meeting shall be clearly set forth in the official call or notice. Only those matters expressly set out in the notice or call shall be deliberated upon, provided however, that no election of officers shall take place at a special or emergency meeting.
- Section 4. All delegates to the Connectional and SED Lay Convention must submit a letter of intent to the Nomination Committee named by the President of the WNCCLO and be elected at a regular or properly convened meeting. The names and addresses of all elected delegates must be submitted to the Episcopal District Financial Secretary on or before April 1st of the Convention year. These names shall be forwarded to the District Director of Lay Activities by the Financial Secretary on or before May 1st of the Convention year for the express purpose of expediting pre-registration for Educational sessions.

ARTICLE XI - VOTING PRIVILEGES

- Section 1. Voting privileges in the WNCCLCLO shall be confined and restricted to persons set out under Article IV of this Constitution.
- Section 2. No person shall be entitled to more than one (1) vote on an issue or matter in the WNCCLC Lay Organization and must be personally present to exercise such privilege. No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted.
- Section 3. Unless otherwise indicated, the majority vote shall prevail in determining all matters.
- Section 4. Voting privileges are restricted to those delegates who have registered for the meeting and have attended at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled Conference meeting within two (2) years prior to the election of officers as defined by Article IV.

ARTICLE XII - POWERS AND JURISDICTIONS

- Section 1. The WNCCLCLO shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority and supervision over all Local Lay Organizations established under the provisions of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII - RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS

- Section 1. Each Local Lay Organization, shall be vested with the full authority to make its own Constitution and By-laws, rules and regulations, as may be deemed necessary for proper and orderly conduct of its affairs and for the governing of its officers and members. Each division Constitution shall conform to and harmonize with the WNCCLCLO Constitution and By-laws. Each of these organizations shall have the authority to establish its own Executive Board, raise funds, and in general perform all duties incident to its existence as an autonomous body except, however, said organization shall not make Constitutions and By-laws, or rules and regulations which are in conflict with, or abridge any part of the Constitution and By-laws of the WNCCLCLO or the template for subordinate divisions.
- Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of each Annual Conference must be filed with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the SEDLO for examination and response.
- Section 3. Each local Lay Organization shall have the following inserted in its Constitution and By-laws: "This Organization shall be subject to and governed by the Constitution and By-laws of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."
- Section 4. This organization and each of its divisions shall at all times be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization, The current *AME Book of Discipline, Laws, Doctrines, and Tenets of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES

To ensure successful and effective implementation of programs and projects of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization, other than specified duties of elected officers per Constitution and By-Laws, all Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President.

- Section 1. Four (4) types of Committees shall exist in the WNCC Lay Organization: Standing, Special, Convention, and Ad Hoc.
- Section 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance the mission of the WNCCLO and are vital to the functioning of the Organization. Each standing committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the President and approved by the WNCCLO Executive Board. Appointments shall be locale inclusive and age sensitive.
- Section 3. The President, in appointing Committee members, shall follow these guidelines: at least one (1) person from each of the presiding elder districts, at least one (1) person between the ages of 18 - 35, and all persons must have demonstrated diversity of experiences in the work assigned to the committee. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.
- Section 4. Special Committees shall be: The Nominating, Elections, and Audit Committee.
Special Committees are appointed to perform a task that does not fall within the assigned function of a Standing Committee.
- Section 5. The Budget and Finance Committee is composed of the Treasurer, and other members for a total of no more than seven (7): these members shall be appointed by the President. It shall be the duty of this committee to prepare a two (2) year budget, to be submitted to the President and the WNCCLO Executive Board for approval and the WNCCLO for adoption by a majority vote.
- Section 6. The Constitution and By-laws Committee defines the primary characteristics of the organization, prescribes how the organization functions including all rules that the organization considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to the membership and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the WNCCLO .
- Section 7. The Ad Hoc Committee is appointed as the need arises to carry out a specific task. It automatically ceases to exist on presentation of its final report to the body.
- Section 8. All Committees shall be appointed by the President and approved by the WNCCLO Executive Board.

ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS

- Section 1. Amendment of By-Laws. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Western North Carolina Conference may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the WNCCLO President and Secretary. The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at least six months or one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the meeting of the WNCCLO where proposed changes will be presented for approval. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, to each member of the WNCCLO for review. Two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and eligible to vote shall be required to affect an amendment.

By-Laws of the Western North Carolina Lay Organization

The following shall constitute the By- Laws of this organization.

Section 1. The Order of Business shall be:

- a. Devotion
 - b. Bible Study
 - c. Roll Call of Officers
 - d. Reading of Minutes
 - e. Reading of Communications
 - f. Reading of Committees Reports *
 - g. President's Message
 - h. Reports of Officers
 - i. Unfinished Business
 - j. New Business
 - k. Adjournment
- * When necessary

Section 2. A majority of delegates, present and voting, from the Local Lay Organizations of the WNCCLO and WNCCLO officers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business.

Section 3. The members shall conform to all the rules and regulations of this organization; any member(s) guilty of an infraction or violation of the rules, or for conduct or decorum unbecoming a member, may be removed from membership herein.

Section 4. The Order of Business herein before outlined may be changed by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of the members, present and voting, at the WNCCLO meetings.

Section 5. All reports of Presidents and other officers shall be in writing and submitted in triplicate copies, one to be provided to the President of the organization, one to be provided to the Secretary of the WNCCLO, and one to be retained by the officer making the report.

Section 6. Any officer failing to perform his or her official duties shall be accountable to the WNCCLO Executive Board.

Section 7. No officer, nor standing or special committee, shall incur any obligation, which shall be binding, unless such action was authorized in its inception, or subsequently ratified and approved by the organization.

Section 8. The President shall be authorized to appoint and deputize, with sufficient power and authority, as many Marshals as may be deemed necessary to maintain order and decorum in the meeting. It shall be the duty of the Marshals to maintain strict order, see that only members are seated within established bounds of the meeting, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President in keeping with the duties of their office.

Section 9. Any provision or condition not expressly covered in the Constitution and By-Laws of this Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long-established policy, customs, tenets, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, and *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

COLORS

The official colors of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization are: Royal Blue and White or Navy Blue and White.

THE LAY HYMN

Page 582 The AMEC Hymnal

Laymen now have thus assembled,
In Thy blessed name O God.
Guide us in our true endeavor,
Light the pathway that we trod;
Give us strength to ever labor for Thy cause
Give us strength to ever labor for Thy cause.

We are banded one in union,
To fulfill Thy just command.
May we be Thy true disciples,
Holding to Thy mighty hand;
Give us blessings from the fountain of Thy love
Give us blessings from the fountain of Thy love.

As we walk this Christian journey,
Let us keep our armour bright.
Let our works be pure and holy
That we stand within Thy sight;
Laymen soldiers, strong in unity and love
Laymen soldiers, strong in unity and love.

May we stand before Thine altar,
Pledging Lord to work for Thee.
In the vineyard, in the pastures
Let us Lord Thy pilgrims be;
Let us lift the cross forever to the skies,
Let us lift the cross forever to the skies.

Tune: "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah"
written by Frances A. Walston

THE LAY BENEDICTION

"May God bless us with the true spirit of Christianity. That we may live together, not as man over man, but as lay persons working with God. Amen