

# **STANDING RULES AND STRUCTURE OF THE SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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## 1. OPENING STATEMENT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

“The purpose of the Annual Conference is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.” (§601)

The Powers and Duties of the Annual Conference are given in §604. “The Annual Conference for its own government may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church....” (§604.1)

“The Annual Conference shall provide for the connectional relationship between the general boards and commissions and the conference, district, and local church.

An Annual Conference shall provide for the functions and General Conference connections of all boards and agencies provided by *The Book of Discipline*. In doing this the Annual Conference may organize units so long as the functions of ministry are fulfilled and the connectional relationships maintained.” (§610.1)

“The Annual Conference may appoint additional committees for the purpose of promoting the work of The United Methodist Church within the bounds of the said Annual Conference and may prescribe their membership and their powers and duties.” (§610.2)

“Each Annual Conference may make its agencies of such size as its work may require...” (§610.3)

In keeping with *The Book of Discipline* and the principles listed in 1.2, the following document, as approved by the Conference, will be the official Standing Rules and Structure of the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

### 1.2 PRINCIPLES

1. The basic organizational form of the South Georgia Annual Conference structure shall be designed to maximize our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We agree that the local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs (§201). Therefore, Conference and District structures should assist each local church to fulfill their mission.
2. The structure should provide optimum alignment with the Conference’s vision to enhance implementation of its action plan.
3. The Annual Conference structure should focus on three essential priorities: first, providing effective clergy leadership for every local church; second, providing adequate training and equipping resources to help local churches make disciples and to develop lay leadership; and third, providing dynamic connections for mission and ministry beyond the local church.
4. We desire an interactive structure that encourages dialogue and shared decision-making between the various leaders in our conference.
5. We desire flexible and innovative structures that are both connectional and contextual.
6. We affirm the timely use of many short-term task groups, ad hoc groups or networking groups, which exist to fulfill certain functions and cease when the task is completed.
7. We desire transparency and accountability in financial matters at every level. The attitudes and practices of our committees, leaders, and staff are where transparency and accountability take root.
8. The South Georgia Annual Conference structure will be faithful to *The Book of Discipline* where it provides guidance and to its principles where no specific legislation directs us.

### 1.3 STRUCTURE

In accord with the above listed principles, our District and Annual Conference structures shall be designed to advance the mission of making disciples in the most strategic means, while maintaining connectional relationships with all organizational segments of The United Methodist Church.

*The Book of Discipline* provides organizational flexibility to local churches. The parameters of local church structure are found in ¶¶243-259. While it is impractical to have matching organizational structures at the Conference, District and Local Church levels, there will be corresponding persons or committees at the Conference level from which local church officers may receive support.

## 2. LEGAL

### 2.1 CONFERENCE OFFICERS

#### 2.1.1 CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

The Bishop shall be the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Conference, and shall, with the assistance of the Conference Secretary, implement and execute any actions or orders of the Annual Conference.

The implementation and execution of actions shall be reported by the Bishop, and/or Conference Secretary, at the next session of the Annual Conference.

#### 2.1.2 CONFERENCE LAY LEADER (¶ 603.9, 607)

The Conference Lay Leader is the elected leader of conference laity and is an officer of the Annual Conference. The Lay Leader shall be a professing member of a local church in the Annual Conference. The Conference Lay Leader shall participate in Annual Conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the Bishop.

#### 2.1.3 CONFERENCE CHANCELLOR

The Chancellor shall be nominated by the Bishop, in keeping with ¶603.8, and elected by the Annual Conference, and shall serve as legal advisor to the Bishop and to the Annual Conference.

#### 2.1.4 CONFERENCE SECRETARY (¶603.7)

The Conference Secretary shall be elected quadrennially by the Conference upon nomination of the Committee on Nominations. Assistant Secretaries shall be elected annually on nomination of the Conference Secretary.

#### CONFERENCE JOURNAL

The Annual Conference Secretary shall have responsibility for the Annual Conference *Journal*. The Secretary may nominate one of the Assistant Secretaries as *Journal* Editor, who shall be elected by the Annual Conference. The Treasurer of the Conference is instructed to pay for publishing the *Journal*. Funds collected from the sale of the *Journal* shall be remitted to the Conference Treasurer.

#### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

There shall be an Editorial Committee for the *Journal*, composed of five members: Editor (Chair), Conference Secretary, Conference Statistician and two members-at-large to be named by the Committee itself.

#### 2.1.5 CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

The Director of Administrative Services shall be the Conference Statistician. The Statistician may nominate Assistant Statisticians, as needed, who will be elected annually by the Annual Conference.

#### PASTOR'S REPORT

The pastor shall be responsible for submitting the reports of Local Churches of the South Georgia Conference. Reports shall be mailed to the Conference Statistician or filled in online as the Conference Statistician shall direct, by the date designated by the Conference Statistician.

### 2.2 RELATIONSHIPS (¶2517)

The Annual Conference and each ministry, agency, and institution which claims a relationship with the Annual Conference shall enter into an Agreement which sets forth such legal and/or financial relationship as may be agreed upon between the Conference and the agency, provided however, that no such Agreement shall impose

any obligation upon The United Methodist Church or any of its Jurisdictional and General Church institutions and agencies. Only upon approval and adoption of an Agreement between the Conference and the agency or institution shall the relationship defined in the Agreement exist between the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and that agency or institution.

### **3. ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

#### **3.1 RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE**

##### **3.1.1 RULES**

*The Modern Rules of Order*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, American Bar Association shall govern procedure in the Annual Conference.

##### **3.1.2 INVITATIONS**

The Annual Conference Program Committee will issue a Request for Proposal no less than 18 months prior to the session of Annual Conference to be planned. Churches, institutions, or communities wishing to host the Annual Conference should respond with a proposal. The Annual Conference Program Executive Committee will receive proposal and report a recommendation to the Annual Conference. A Committee on Local Arrangements shall work with the Annual Conference Program Committee in the planning, executing, and evaluating of the Annual Conference session.

##### **3.1.3 BOOK OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS**

*A Book of Recommendations and Reports* will be prepared for distribution no less than three (3) weeks before the opening session of the Annual Conference. Recommendations and Reports shall be in electronic format and sent before the established deadline to the Secretary of the Annual Conference. (See 3.3.3 for additional information.) The deadline shall be publicized in January.

##### **3.1.4 RESOLUTIONS AND PETITIONS**

Resolutions from individuals or churches to the Annual Conference shall be referred to the Committee on Resolutions and shall be signed by at least five persons unless coming from an Administrative Board/Council.

Petitions to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church from individuals, churches and Annual Conference Committees/Commissions/ Boards/Agencies, etc., which desire Annual Conference endorsement shall be referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Electronic versions of the resolutions and petitions shall be sent by the established deadline to the Chair of the Committee on Resolutions and the Secretary of the Annual Conference. (See 3.3.3 for more information.) The deadline shall be publicized in January.

##### **3.1.5 DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL**

All materials including the *Book of Recommendations and Reports* will be made available online on the conference website in an electronic format.

##### **3.1.6 MOTIONS**

Motions from the floor, including amendments, shall be presented in writing when requested by the Secretary and shall, when necessary, be printed in the Journal of Daily Proceedings.

##### **3.1.7 FUNDING PROPOSALS PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

No proposal which may result in costs to the Annual Conference may be presented to the Annual Conference for its approval without an accompanying estimate of the costs associated with its implementation. The purpose of this Standing Rule is to identify to Annual Conference delegates the costs, both one-time and ongoing, of proposals which they are asked to approve during a session of the Annual Conference. (§613.2)

### **3.1.8. PROVIDE FOR A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

Under circumstances necessitated by emergency conditions involving public health or safety, the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Conference Officers\* listed in Standing Rule 2.1—2.5 may elect, in their sole discretion, and subject to such guidelines and procedures as they may adopt, to hold the South Georgia Annual Conference by means of remote communication in lieu of holding a physical meeting provided that they establish procedures to enable verified delegates not physically present to:

- A. Participate in the meeting;
- B. Be deemed present in person; and
- C. Permitted to vote on matters submitted to the Annual Conference.

*(\*Those conference officers are: Conference President (Bishop); Conference Lay Leader; Conference Chancellor; Conference Secretary; Conference Treasurer; and Conference Statistician)*

## **3.2 MEMBERSHIP**

### **3.2.1 MINISTERIAL**

Membership, voting rights and responsibilities are defined in ¶602.1,3.

### **3.2.2 LAY**

- A. Membership is defined in ¶602.2,4,5 Lay members of the Annual Conference may be elected quadrennially or annually.
- B. Lay membership shall be composed of the Lay Members elected by their charges, the Conference Lay Leader, Conference President of United Methodist Men, Conference President of United Methodist Women, Conference President of the Council on Youth Ministries, Lay Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference, Diaconal Ministers, Conference Lay Staff who are United Methodists, Lay Chairpersons of Conference Committees, Commissions, Councils, Teams or Boards, District Lay Leaders, District Presidents of United Methodist Men, District Presidents of United Methodist Women, District Presidents of United Methodist Youth, and one youth and one young adult by each District. A Vice-President may be seated in place of the President of a District Lay Organization who cannot attend.
- C. Should an imbalance prevail between lay and clergy members, the District Superintendent and District Lay Leader shall name the additional required lay members as needed from each district. Such additional lay members shall be selected as evenly as possible between youth, young adults, men and women. In case the formula in 3.2.2.B. (above) still results in an imbalance between the lay and clergy membership, the Conference Board of Laity will determine the method to equalize the lay membership with the clergy.

## **3.3 ORGANIZATION**

### **3.3.1 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

The Annual Conference Session Program Committee shall be composed of the resident Bishop, host District Superintendent, Local Arrangements Coordinator, Secretary of the Annual Conference, Dean of the Cabinet, Director of Connectional Ministries, Director of Communications, Director of Administrative Services, Conference Lay Leader, Conference President of United Methodist Men, Conference President of United Methodist Women, a representative of United Methodist Youth, Chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry, Chairperson of the Committee on Conference Worship, Chairperson of the Committee on Memoirs, Chairperson of the Committee on Courtesies and Introductions, Chairperson of the Committee of Resolutions, and up to five at-Large members to provide inclusiveness, and adequate representation. The Committee is responsible for the coordination of all plans for the Annual Conference session and shall supervise the various sub-committees listed below. The Committee shall prepare the agenda for the Annual Conference, which shall be submitted to the Conference for its amendment and adoption.

### **3.3.2 LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

A Local Arrangements Committee will be formed by the host District Superintendent, in consultation with the Annual Conference Session Program Committee. The Local Arrangements Committee will carry out the many logistical details associated with hosting the Annual Conference session. The Local Arrangements Committee will work in conjunction with and be accountable to the Annual Conference

Session Program Committee. The Local Arrangements Committee will work with the other committees having responsibilities for the Annual Conference session.

The Local Arrangements Committee Coordinator will be a member of the Annual Conference Session Program Committee. The Annual Conference Worship Committee will have a representative on the Local Arrangements Committee. The Director of Administrative Services and the Director of Communications will be staff representatives attending the Local Arrangements Committee meetings.

### **3.3.3 COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS**

A Quadrennial Committee on Resolutions shall be named for the Annual Conference. It shall be composed of seven persons: three clergy and three laity, and a District Superintendent as Chairperson. The Committee on Nominations shall nominate the Committee, and the Conference shall elect. All resolutions from individuals or churches to the Annual Conference shall be referred to this Committee and shall be signed by at least five members unless coming from an Administrative Board/Council. Petitions going to General Conference through the Annual Conference shall be referred to this Committee. Action by the Conference upon the report of the Committee shall come no later than the next-to-the last day. Copies of resolutions shall be sent by the established deadline to the Chair of the Committee on Resolutions and the Secretary of the Annual Conference. The Committee shall receive, study and report on each Resolution to the Annual Conference with a recommendation to: "Concur," "Non-concur," "Revise," or "Refer." Resolutions coming to the conference after the established deadline will require the suspension of the rules to be properly before the conference. Also, the resolution presenters are responsible for printing 1,200 copies for distribution. These late resolutions shall be distributed after the rules have been suspended and no later than the day before action is to be taken. (See 3.1.4 for more information.)

### **3.3.4 COMMITTEE ON COURTESIES AND INTRODUCTIONS**

There shall be a Committee on Courtesies and Introductions composed of five persons nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. Duties shall include the presentation of special guests to the Conference, special matters of privilege, and such complimentary resolutions as occasion may demand. The Committee on Courtesies and Introductions is accountable to the Annual Conference Session Program Committee.

### **3.3.5 COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE WORSHIP**

There shall be a Committee on Conference Worship composed of nine persons nominated by the Conference Nominations Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. The Committee shall work with the Annual Conference Session Program Committee in arranging the various worship services at each Annual Conference session. A member of the Local Arrangements Committee will serve as a liaison with the Conference Worship Committee. The Conference Worship Committee will work in partnership with the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Committee on Memoirs in planning, coordinating, and implementing the worship services. This committee is expected and empowered to create as many short-term task groups as needed to carry out its work. The Committee on Conference Worship is accountable to the Annual Conference Session Program Committee.

### **3.3.6 COMMITTEE ON MEMOIRS**

There shall be a Committee on Memoirs composed of nine persons nominated by the Conference Nominations Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. The Committee shall work as a sub-committee of the Committee on Conference Worship in relationship to the Memorial Service for deceased clergy and clergy spouses. The Memoirs Chair or designee will serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee on Conference Worship. The Committee shall provide a Memoir for each deceased clergy and clergy spouse to be printed in the *Conference Journal*. The Committee on Memoirs is accountable to the Committee on Conference Worship.

## **3.4 EXPENSES**

### **3.4.1 CLERGY**

The expenses of the Clergy Members of the Annual Conference shall be paid by their salary paying unit, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Retired clergy members and/or clergy on incapacity leave who do not serve appointments and who attend are to receive assistance with their expenses from the Annual Conference, provided by the Council on Finance and Administration.

### **3.4.2 LAITY**

The expenses of Lay Members of the Annual Conference who attend because of election in the local charge shall be paid by their local charge. Diaconal ministers who are employed shall have their expenses paid by their salary paying unit. The expenses of Lay Members of the Annual Conference who attend as a

representative from an organized group shall request expenses from the budget of that group. The expenses of all other Lay Members of the Annual Conference who attend and who do not have a sponsoring group with a budget shall receive assistance with their expenses from the Annual Conference, provided by the Council on Finance and Administration, on the same basis as retired clergy members.

## **4. MISSION AND MINISTRY**

### **4.1 CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES (§608)**

#### **4.1.1 PURPOSE**

Connectional Ministries is the entity within our Annual Conference having responsibility to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within our boundaries by:

- A. Envisioning the ministries necessary to live out the mission of the church in and through the Annual Conference.
- B. Creating and nurturing relationships and connections among the local, district, annual conference, and general church agencies.
- C. Providing encouragement, coordination, and support for the ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness in the districts and congregations for the transformation of the world.
- D. Ensuring the alignment of the total resources of the Annual Conference to its mission.
- E. Developing and strengthening ethnic ministries, including ethnic local church concerns.
- F. Providing for advocacy and monitoring functions to ensure that the church is consistent with its stated values.

#### **4.1.2 STAFF**

##### **4.1.2.1 DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES (§608)**

- (1) The Bishop, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, shall appoint a Director of Connectional Ministries to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within the Annual Conference. The director may be lay or clergy. The director shall serve as an officer of the Annual Conference and sit with the Cabinet when the Cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine.
- (2) In partnership with the Bishop and Cabinet and the elected leadership of the Annual Conference, the Director of Connectional Ministries shall have the following primary responsibilities:
  - (a) To serve as steward of the vision of the Annual Conference, including the development, clarification, interpretation, and embodiment of the vision;
  - (b) To serve as leader of the continuous process of transformation and renewal necessary for the Annual Conference to be faithful to our Christian identity in a changing world;
  - (c) To ensure alignment of the total resources of the Annual Conference to its vision;
  - (d) To ensure the connections among the local, district, Annual Conference, and general church ministries for the purpose of networking, resourcing, and communicating their shared ministry.
- (3) The Director of Connectional Ministries shall be:
  - (a) The Executive Officer of Connectional Ministries and shall convene the semi-annual meetings of the Connectional Ministries Council.
  - (b) The supervisor of all Connectional Ministries program and support staff.
  - (c) The person responsible for selecting, hiring, and terminating all support staff.

##### **4.1.2.2 CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES STAFF**

- (1) The number of persons on the Connectional Ministries program staff shall be determined by the Annual Conference upon recommendation of the Conference Personnel Committee. The Associate Director(s) shall be hired by the Conference Personnel Committee, after consultation with the Connectional Ministries Director and subject to the Bishop's appointment if the designated person is clergy.
- (2) The Conference Personnel Committee shall review the responsibilities and duties of the Associate Director(s) and adjust the position descriptions to achieve maximum flexibility and effectiveness.

### 4.1.3 ORGANIZATION

Connectional Ministries shall be organized around four major components:

- A. Discipleship Teams
- B. Missional Priorities
- C. Connectional Services

#### 4.1.3.1 DISCIPLESHIP TEAMS

The Discipleship Teams will offer primary assistance and resources to local churches as they seek to fulfill their disciple-making mission. There will be four discipleship teams with the following areas of responsibility.

##### 4.1.3.1.1 Nurture Team

The Nurture Team will be responsible for assisting churches in areas of Christian formation, education, small group ministries, worship, stewardship, membership care, age-level and family ministries, and outdoor ministries (§§630.2, 4, 5, 6; 651).

##### 4.1.3.1.2 Outreach Team

The Outreach Team will be responsible for assisting churches in equipping growing Christians to express their discipleship by being in mission beyond the walls of their church. This includes opportunities like global and local missions, mission personnel recruitment and initial screening, disaster response and the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Volunteers in Missions, The Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty, Hope for the Children of Africa, HUMBLE Place, and ministries through our health and welfare agencies (§§633, 656).

##### 4.1.3.1.3 Witness Team

The Witness Team will be responsible for assisting churches to train and motivate growing Christians to share their faith and lead others to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The Witness team will sponsor training in witnessing, lay speaking, and specific events to equip our congregations to reach the unchurched in our communities with the gospel (§§630.3; 631.6).

##### 4.1.3.1.4 Advocacy Team

The Advocacy Team will give coordinated effort to help the Annual Conference, districts and local churches reflect the best of Christian community as we value awareness, respect, trust, equality, and acceptance of our diversity. This team will oversee ministries related to Religion and Race, Ethnic Local Church Concerns, Status and Role of Women, Persons with Disabilities, Native American Ministries, Church and Society, and Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (§§629, 632, 642, 643, 644, 654, 657).

##### 4.1.3.1.5 Composition of Discipleship Teams

Each of the four discipleship teams will be composed of 4 primary members and a staff member. The Conference Nominations Committee is asked to select the team members primarily on gifts, graces, interest, availability, and commitment to the conference's vision, while reflecting diversity and representation. While geographical representation is ideal, this approach replaces the former process of naming district directors.

One of the team members will be nominated as Chairperson by the Conference Nominations Committee.

Teams are expected and empowered to create as many short-term task groups, ad hoc groups or networking groups as needed to carry out its work. These groups will work under the supervision of the particular discipleship team. Each sub-group will be evaluated annually to determine whether it is to be continued.

Teams will be expected to consider prayerfully the full range of ministry possibilities within its scope of responsibility and to design and implement the most strategic plans in light of the Conference's mission, vision and action plan. The four teams are expected to collaborate to maximize the potential benefits of resources offered to the local churches. The Connectional Ministries Council will conduct annual evaluations of each Discipleship Team to determine whether each team's strategy and work should be affirmed or adjusted to maximize the making of disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Bishop may assign one District Superintendent to each of the Discipleship Teams.

#### 4.1.3.2 MISSIONAL PRIORITIES

Several missional priorities may be established as a strategy for implementing the Conference's action plan in fulfillment of the Conference's vision. The Leadership Forum may recommend the establishment of missional priorities to the Annual Conference session. Once established, a missional priority team will do its work under the auspices of the Connectional Ministries office.

A missional priority team will begin with a four-year life span. The Leadership Forum will conduct a periodic evaluation to determine whether each missional priority team should be affirmed, adjusted, renewed or discontinued. The Annual Conference will receive recommendations regarding the establishment, continuance or discontinuance of a missional priority team.

##### 4.1.3.2.1 Composition of Missional Priority Teams

The design and scope of each missional priority team will be contained in the initial recommendation made by the Leadership Forum to the Annual Conference. The membership number will be based on the scope of the team's assignment and may vary among missional priority teams. All missional priority teams will have laity and clergy members. Members will be nominated by the Conference Nominations Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. One of the team members will be nominated as Chairperson by the Conference Nominations Committee.

Missional priority teams are expected and empowered to create as many short-term task groups, ad hoc groups or networking groups as needed to carry out its work. These groups will work under the supervision of the particular missional priority team. Each sub-group should be evaluated annually to determine whether it is to be continued.

The Bishop may assign one District Superintendent to the missional priority teams.

#### 4.1.3.3 CONNECTIONAL SERVICES

The Connectional Ministries Office provides several services for the Annual Conference, which are intended to make the connection a reality for all constituents. These services fall into at least three categories:

- A. Connecting Local Churches to the general church by sharing information and resources (§608.2).
- B. Consulting and Training in local churches, sub-districts, clusters, and districts.
- C. Offering Support Services to the conference through such projects as assisting in the preparation of the *Conference Journal*, and The Book of Recommendations and Reports and completing projects related to the Annual Conference session.

#### 4.1.3.4 TASK FORCE ON HISPANIC MINISTRIES

The work of Hispanic Ministries shall be under the umbrella of the Office of Connectional Ministries, in coordination with the Cabinet.

- C. The Nominations Committee may nominate up to 9 persons to serve on the Task Force on Hispanic Ministries. These nominees will include at least one person from each district and shall include Hispanic persons and persons from other congregations which support or host Hispanic congregations. Hispanic pastors who are nominated shall be ex officio members of this task force, and have voice, but no vote. District Superintendents whose districts host Hispanic congregations shall be ex officio members of this task force, and have voice and vote. The Chair of this Task Force will be nominated by the Nominations Committee.
- D. Persons asked to serve as paid Coordinators of Hispanic Ministries shall be appointed as part-time Associate Directors of Connectional Ministries, and come under the supervision of the Director of Connectional Ministries and the Conference Personnel Committee. Such persons will serve as staff persons relating primarily to the Task Force on Hispanic Ministries and other duties as assigned by the Director of Connectional Ministries.

## 4.2 CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 4.2.1 PURPOSE

The Congregational Development Committee will bring district and representative leaders together from across the conference to pray about, discuss, and implement new congregational development and church revitalization in order to more effectively reach the diverse populations throughout the South Georgia Annual Conference. The committee will meet at least twice each year. (§633.5.e)

### 4.2.2 DIRECTOR

#### 4.2.2.1 SELECTION

In consultation with the Personnel Committee, the Bishop shall appoint a Director of Congregational Development to provide focus and leadership within the Annual Conference for the work of new congregational development and church revitalization. The Director may be lay or clergy. The Director shall be a contributing member of the non-appointing, extended Cabinet in matters that pertain to new congregational development.

#### 4.2.2.2 DUTIES

In partnership with the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the South Georgia Annual Conference, the Director of Congregational Development will support the Bishop, the District Superintendents, and District groups charged with the responsibility of planning and implementing new congregational development and church revitalization.

The Director of Congregational Development will have the following duties:

1. To cast a vision for new church development in the South Georgia Annual Conference.
2. To develop a supportive climate for the planting of new churches through strategic planning, the building of networks and teams, and promotion in the South Georgia Annual Conference.
3. To assist the South Georgia Conference in developing policies and programs to further the cause of church development.
4. To design and oversee a process of identifying and training persons who might serve effectively as new church pastors and to advise the Bishop and the Cabinet about those who might be considered for appointment to a new church plant.
5. To explore and develop methods of financially underwriting the efforts of new church development.
6. To serve as a source of information to the conference concerning policies, procedures, methodologies, and trends in new church development.
7. To network with leaders in church development in other United Methodist conferences, other denominations, and para-church agencies.

#### 4.2.2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Congregational Development Committee is accountable to the South Georgia Annual Conference.

#### 4.2.2.4 MEMBERSHIP

##### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

The Bishop  
The Director of Congregational Development

##### REPRESENTATIVE LEADERSHIP

One layperson from each district shall be nominated by the District Superintendent  
Three pastors nominated by the Bishop

##### CONFERENCE STAFF

Two District Superintendents appointed by the Bishop  
The Director of Connectional Ministries

##### AT-LARGE MEMBERS

The Bishop and the Director of Congregational Development will confer to appoint up to six additional persons for purposes of making the committee more balanced in terms of race and gender. Special consideration will be given to persons who have gifts, which can be utilized by the committee in implementing its mission.

#### 4.2.2.5 OFFICERS

The Bishop will appoint the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee will appoint a secretary for the committee.

#### 4.2.2.6 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There will be an executive committee made up of the Chair, the Director, and four persons appointed by the Chair. The executive committee is empowered to act for the committee between meetings in matters of the use of funds. The executive committee reports to the full committee and is accountable to the full committee.

#### 4.2.2.7 USE OF TASK GROUPS

The Congregational Development Committee is expected and empowered to create as many task groups as needed to carry out its work. These groups will work under the supervision of the Congregational Development Committee. Each task group will be evaluated regularly to determine whether it is to be continued.

### 4.3 HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY (§634)

#### 4.3.1 PURPOSE

South Georgia Annual Conference partners with the North Georgia Annual Conference to fulfill responsibilities defined in §634 through an organization known as The Georgia United Methodist Commission on Higher Education and Collegiate Ministry.

#### 4.3.2 MEMBERSHIP

There shall be a Georgia United Methodist Commission on Higher Education and Collegiate Ministry. The Commission shall have twenty-three (23) voting members, ten (10) elected by the North Georgia Conference and eight (8) elected by the South Georgia Conference. Proposed members shall be nominated by the Committees on Nominations from the two annual conferences after receiving input from the Commission regarding possible nominees. Half of the elected members from each annual conference shall be laypersons. The presiding Bishop of each annual conference shall designate one district superintendent from that annual conference to be a voting member of the Commission. The director of Connectional Ministries of each annual conference shall designate one staff member from the Office of Connectional Ministries to be a voting member of the Commission. The Executive Director of the Commission shall be a voting member of the Commission.

Presidents and chaplains (or position equivalent to chaplain) of United Methodist colleges and universities in Georgia, the Dean of Oxford College, and the Directors of Wesley Foundations/Fellowships in Georgia shall all be ex officio members of the Commission without vote. Members of the Division of Higher Education from the North and South Georgia conferences, if any, shall be ex officio members of the Commission without vote.

Leadership positions of the Commission shall be held by members from both annual conferences.

The South Georgia members may create as many short-term task groups, ad hoc groups or networking groups as needed to carry out its work.

#### 4.3.3 CONNECTIONS

One South Georgia representative will be invited to participate in the Nurture Discipleship team to share the Commission's work and to maintain communications with Connectional Ministries.

### 4.4 OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS (§ 646)

#### 4.1 PURPOSE

The Office of Communications is a key component in our efforts to maintain connectional relationships at all levels of the Church. The Office of Communication shall be a service agency to meet the communication, publication, multimedia, public and media relations, interpretation, and promotional needs of the Annual Conference. The ministry provided will enhance our disciple-making mission by strengthening our sense of connection, by strategically focusing our presentation of the gospel, and by offering training and support to district and local church communicators.

#### 4.2 DIRECTOR (§ 609)

The Director of Communications will coordinate the dissemination of information within the Annual Conference and externally to the secular society. The Director will be hired by the Conference Personnel Committee, pending the Bishop's appointment if the individual selected is clergy. The Director of Communications shall be a contributing member of the non-appointing, extended Cabinet in matters pertaining to Communications.

### 5. LEADERSHIP

#### 5.1 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

The Conference Committee on Nominations and Personnel will consist of the following persons:  
Clergy Members: The Resident Bishop, who shall serve as Chair; the District Superintendents; the Conference Secretary; 2 clergy nominated and elected from the floor on the Annual Conference in the year preceding the General Conference; 2 clergy chosen by the Nominations Committee.

Lay Members: The Conference Lay Leader; the Conference President of United Methodist Men; the Conference President of United Methodist Women; the Conference President of the United Methodist Youth; 6 lay persons nominated and elected from the floor of the Annual Conference in the year preceding the General Conference; and 6 lay persons chosen by the Nominations Committee.

Ex-officio (voice without vote): Connectional Ministries Director and Administrative Services Director.

Persons shall serve on the Nominations and Personnel Committee while they hold the specific offices listed above, or for the years remaining until the next election of the at-large members (i.e., the year preceding the General Conference.)

The Nominations and Personnel Committee shall be inclusive and representative of our Annual Conference in every clearly observable way (age, race, persons with disabilities, and geography.)

##### 5.1.1 QUADRENNIAL BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS/ ETC.

The Committee on Nominations and Personnel shall present nominations for quadrennial Boards, Commissions, Councils, Teams and Committees (hereafter referred to as Committees). The report will be provided to conference delegates in electronic format prior to annual conference and perfected by the Conference Secretary on the first day of plenary sessions. No action will be taken on the Nominations Report until the second day of plenary sessions. Interim vacancies are filled as *The Book of Discipline* directs.

When a member of a quadrennial Committee is appointed to the District Superintendency, his/her membership on such Committee shall terminate. District Superintendents will be considered a member with vote of all committees to which they are appointed as Cabinet Representative, unless specified by *The Book of Discipline*.

No person shall be eligible for membership on the same Committee more than eight years out of 12 unless elected as Executive Officer (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, or Treasurer), in which case the person may serve out the Quadrennium. All Committees of the South Georgia Conference with lay representation will comply with ¶603.4.

The District Superintendent of the district in which the nominee resides shall be responsible for notifying the Nominees of the Nominations and Personnel Committee's intention to nominate them for service on an Annual Conference Committee prior to the session in which they are nominated. The Conference Secretary will inform conference leaders of who is being nominated to serve under their leadership. After the Annual Conference session, the Conference Secretary shall notify persons of their election and term of office.

The Nominations Committee will nominate the chairpersons for each Committee, unless otherwise directed by *The Book of Discipline*. The Annual Conference will elect these persons in plenary session during the Nominations Report. Other nominations for committee membership or for chairpersons, if any, will be accepted from the floor. Committees will elect other executive officers at their first organizational meeting of the quadrennium.

A quadrennial Committee may request the Committee on Nominations to consider person(s) with special expertise and interest as nominees for At-Large Members of that Committee.

Nominating persons elected an Executive Officer of another committee is strongly discouraged.

A committee member's position will be declared vacant after one year non-attendance and non-communication to the group's leadership. The Committee on Nominations will nominate a replacement for election at the next Annual Conference session.

The Cabinet may act for the Committee on Nominations in emergency situations when the Committee on Nominations cannot be convened.

### **5.1.2 CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES STAFF**

The Connectional Ministries staff shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee of the Teams, Committees, Boards and Agencies for which they have program responsibility. They shall not be voting members.

### **5.1.3 GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL BOARDS (§ 710.6)**

Members of General and Jurisdictional Boards and Committees shall be members of corresponding Annual Conference Boards and Committees.

## **5.2. COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE PERSONNEL**

### **5.2.1 PURPOSE**

There shall be a common Personnel Committee for all Conference Staff. The Committee shall provide oversight to the strategic deployment of Conference Staff to enhance the Conference's mission to make disciples and to support local churches in their disciple-making ministries. The committee will seek to coordinate the personnel policies and provide a connecting link between the various structural components employing Conference Staff.

### **5.2.2 AUTHORITY (§§ 612.5; 613.13)**

The Committee on Conference Personnel shall:

- 5.2.2.1 Establish the annual compensation for all conference staff within the budgets approved by the Annual Conference, unless the exceptions are negotiated with the Conference Council on Finance and Administration;
- 5.2.2.2 Recommend to the Annual Conference session the need for additional professional (non-administrative) conference staff. Any ad interim professional staff position additions will be considered "temporary" until such time as the Annual Conference session can take action on the recommendation for the new staff position.
- 5.2.2.3 Include in its budget recommendations the adequate administrative (support) staff positions needed to provide the services necessary for carrying out the work of the Annual Conference. Any positions added before a budget year begins must be negotiated with the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.
- 5.2.2.4 Exception: This committee has authority to recommend personnel action to the Council on Finance and Administration in regards to the Director of Administrative Services, but can not usurp the authority/responsibility given by *The Book of Discipline* or the Standing Rules to the CFA. (Specifically, see § 619 as it relates to the Director of Administrative Services/Conference Treasurer.)

### **5.2.3 MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee shall serve for the quadrennium (or the balance thereof) and shall be composed of the following persons:

The Resident Bishop

The Conference Lay Leader

One lay and one clergy member of:

- The Council on Finance and Administration
- The Board of Pensions and Health Benefits

- The Connectional Ministries Council
- The Board of Ordained Ministry

In addition, there shall be 3 members of the Committee selected at-large by the Conference Nominations Committee, with sensitivity to our desire for inclusiveness.

One of the at-large members shall serve as Chair of the Personnel Committee and shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. The chairs shall rotate quadrennially between a lay member and a clergy member.

The Director of Connectional Ministries, the Director of Administrative Services, and the annual conference personnel officer shall be ex-officio members of the Committee, without vote.

Vacancies among at-large members will be filled through the normal Nominations process. Vacancies from among the representative groups will be filled by the group.

### **5.3 COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY FOR SOUTH GEORGIA AREA**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶637.

### **5.4 BOARD OF THE LAITY**

#### **5.4.1 CONFERENCE LAY LEADER**

There shall be a Conference Board of the Laity. Membership and responsibilities are designated in ¶631.

The Conference Board of the Laity shall nominate the Conference Lay Leader who shall be elected by the Annual Conference. The Conference Lay Leader shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The Conference Lay Leader will be limited to two terms. The presidents of the lay organizations will be the Conference Associate Lay Leaders. Other duties of the Conference Lay Leader are elaborated in the disciplinary paragraph following ¶607.

#### **5.4.2 UNITED METHODIST MEN**

The United Methodist Men of the Conference will be organized according to a Constitution for the United Methodist Men's Fellowship of the South Georgia Conference and ¶648.

##### **5.4.2.1 SCOUTING**

A Committee on Scouting will be composed of the ~~six~~ District Directors of Scouting. These district directors will be nominated by the Nominations Committee of the Annual Conference and elected by the Annual Conference. One of the district directors or another individual will be selected by the Nominations Committee will serve as Conference Coordinator. This group will be a sub-committee of the Conference United Methodist Men.

#### **5.4.3 UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

The Constitution is defined in ¶647.

#### **5.4.4 UNITED METHODIST YOUTH**

The Board of Laity will support the establishment of a Youth Council or other structure to fulfill the responsibilities of ¶649.

### **5.5 CLERGY**

#### **5.5.1 BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶¶635 and 636. The minimum number of members will be twenty-seven (27) with the provision of additional members as needed to give representation from each district. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall be responsible for the duties of the former Board of Diaconal Ministry.

#### **5.5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶636.

#### **5.5.3 COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE RELATIONS**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶635.1.d

**5.5.4 COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶2703.2, *2008 Book of Discipline* (restored by Judicial Council #1296).

**5.5.5 COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION - DIACONAL MINISTRY**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶2703.2.

**5.5.6 JOINT COMMITTEE ON CLERGY MEDICAL LEAVE**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶652.

**5.5.7 FUND FOR SPECIAL RELIEF**

The purpose of the Fund for Special Relief (“The Fund”) shall be to provide supplementary financial assistance in times of crisis to clergy and/or their survivors of the South Georgia Annual Conference. “The Fund” shall be administered by nine Trustees who shall be nominated by the trustees and elected by the Annual Conference and shall serve terms of three years and may serve a maximum of six years out of nine.

**5.5.8 COMMISSION ON PASTORAL COUNSELING SERVICES**

The purpose of the Commission on Pastoral Counseling Services is to support the Conference Pastoral Counselor as she/he oversees a system providing pastoral counseling, training, and crisis prevention and interventions involving clergy, diaconal ministers and their families, as well as the local church leadership within our Conference. The membership of the South Georgia Commission on Pastoral Counseling Services is composed of no more than 10 persons, half of whom are lay, and one from the Cabinet and the Connectional Ministries staff as ex-officio members. The Conference Personnel Committee will employ and supervise the Pastoral Counselor in consultation with the Bishop. The Conference Pastoral Counselor, in consultation with a representative from the Conference Personnel Committee, will develop the annual administrative and program budget and submit it to the Council on Finance and Administration.

**5.5.9 COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION**

The Commission on Equitable Compensation is composed of a lay and a clergy person from each district and a representative from the Cabinet and the Connectional Ministries staff. *The Book of Discipline* empowers the Commission to recommend standards for clergy compensation, administer funds for salary supplements, and provide counsel and materials to District Superintendents and Pastor/Staff Parish Relations committees. Requests for salary supplements must be a joint effort of the District Superintendent, pastor and charge conference and must be in the hands of the Committee before December 1 of each year (¶625).

**5.5.10 MINISTERIAL CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Every clergy member of the Annual Conference not engaged in educational requirements to satisfy a status being sought (i.e., Local Pastor, Probationary Membership, Associate Membership, or Full Conference Membership) shall receive continuing education annually. This shall be done in accordance with the guidelines and standards adopted by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Churches shall provide pastors under appointment (and diaconal ministers) with financial assistance and adequate time off (a minimum of 5 days per year) for such continuing education. This shall not be considered vacation time.

**5.5.11 MINISTERIAL VACATION**

During the course of the Annual Conference year, each clergy person (Elder, Deacon, Provisional Elder, Provisional Deacon, Local Pastor) and Diaconal Minister under full-time appointment shall be entitled to receive the following minimum vacation time based on years of service rendered:

YEARS OF SERVICE	NUMBER OF WEEKS
1 - 6 Years	2 (including 2 Sundays)
7 - 14 Years	3 (including 3 Sundays)
15+ Years	4 (including 4 Sundays)

In this schedule, “Years of Service” is interpreted to mean effective years served as indicated by the Minister’s Service Record of the General Board of Pensions. Vacation time for ordained clergy and diaconal ministers under “less than full time” appointment, or part-time local pastors, or lay speakers serving a local church shall be determined through negotiation between the pastor and his/her Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Vacation is interpreted to mean freedom from any responsibility in the local church or charge, district, conference, jurisdiction or general conference. Time spent receiving continuing education is not to be considered vacation time. The pastor’s vacation is to be scheduled in consultation

with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Cost of pulpit supply during the pastor's vacation is the responsibility of the local church or charge.

#### **5.5.12 JUNE COMPENSATION**

The entire month's salary and all benefits (including pensions and health benefits) for the month of June shall be the responsibility of the charge from which a pastor moves.

#### **5.5.13 MOVING EXPENSE**

The receiving District will pay the moving expenses of the in-coming District Superintendent. The receiving Charge will pay the moving expenses of the in-coming pastor. Care should be exercised to keep the moving expenses at a minimum. Persons moving from beyond the Conference bounds shall bear their moving expenses to the boundary of the Annual Conference.

#### **5.5.14 MINISTERIAL RECORDS**

The Director of Ministerial Services is named as the administrative officer who shall keep complete service records of ordained and diaconal ministry personnel in the Annual Conference, in accordance with ¶606.6,9 on behalf of the Annual Conference and in conformity with guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

### **5.6 LEADERSHIP FORUM**

#### **5.6.1 PURPOSE**

The Leadership Forum will bring representative leaders from our Conference structure to the same table for prayer, dialogue, discernment, and stewardship of God's vision for our common ministry as it is expressed through the South Georgia Annual Conference. This group of leaders will model the interactive spirit of partnership. The insights gained from all around the table will help each leader develop a more holistic view of our mission, resources, and challenges for making disciples.

#### **5.6.2 ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Leadership Forum is accountable to the Annual Conference.

#### **5.6.3 MEMBERSHIP**

The Membership of the Leadership Forum shall consist of:

**A. Ex-officio Member (without vote) (1)**

The Bishop

**B. Ex-officio Members (with vote) (6)**

The Conference Lay Leader

The Conference Secretary

Chair, Conference Personnel Committee

The Conference President of United Methodist Men

The Conference President of United Methodist Women

A Representative from the Conference Youth Leadership

**C. Representative Leadership (with vote) (12 + Missional Priorities)**

One representative from the each of the Discipleship teams.

One representative from each of the Missional Priority teams.

One representative from the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Two representatives from the Conference Trustees.

Two representatives from the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits

The Council on Finance and Administration will have two representatives on the Forum who will serve without vote or reimbursement of expenses from the Forum so as to avoid violation of the Conflict of Interest guidelines for CFA members.

Representatives will be named by their groups. Each group is asked to give intentional attention to racial, sex, and lay/clergy inclusiveness and balance of representation.

D. At-Large Members (9)

The Bishop and Conference Lay Leader will confer to appoint up to nine additional persons for purposes of lay/clergy balancing and for making the Forum more gender, age, racially and theologically inclusive.

E. Conference Staff (12)

Director of Connectional Ministries  
Director of Administrative Services  
Director of Communications  
Director of Congregational Development  
Director of Ministerial Services  
Conference Pastoral Counselor  
District Superintendents

F. Conference Agencies (2)

Two representatives from among the Conference Agencies will be members of the Leadership Forum on a rotating two-year basis. Agencies included in the rotation will be: Epworth By The Sea, The Georgia United Methodist Foundation, Magnolia Manor, The Methodist Home, Wesley Glen, and the Georgia Commission on Higher Education and Campus Ministries. The agencies will name their representative to the Leadership Forum. The representative may be a staff member or a governing board member. (Note the following rotation schedule: July 2015-June 2017 - Magnolia Manor, The Methodist Home; July 2017-June 2019 - Wesley Glen, Georgia United Methodist Commission of Higher Education and Campus Ministry; July 2019-June 2021 - Epworth by the Sea, The South Georgia United Methodist Foundation)

G. Adjunct Members

The Forum may add other adjunct members to serve temporarily because of their specific relationship to issues before the Forum. Adjunct members have voice, but no vote.

**5.6.4 FORUM LEADERSHIP**

The Bishop and Conference Lay Leader will co-chair the Forum.  
The Forum will elect a Secretary.

**6. ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS**

**6.1 COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in ¶611-619.

The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall be composed of eighteen (18) elected members: ten (10) lay persons and eight (8) clergy persons.

**6.1.1 FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Council on Finance and Administration shall prepare a Report on Receipts and Disbursements during the previous Conference Fiscal Year, and shall furnish it to the members of the Annual Conference prior to the opening session of the Annual Conference.

**6.1.2 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

1. Budget proposals and all financial requests shall be filed with CFA at the time and in the detail as CFA may request by the deadline placed on the Annual Conference calendar.
2. The proposed budget for each year of the Annual Conference shall be presented to the members of the Annual Conference prior to the opening session of the Annual Conference.

**6.1.3 AUDIT**

All agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils, and foundations, not a part of the annual CFA audit, shall file with CFA an annual audit report.

**6.1.4 DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

1. The Director of Administrative Services shall be the Conference officer with responsibility for the financial operation of the Annual Conference; the administrative services for Annual Conference officers and agencies; the property management with respect to property owned or leased by the

Annual Conference; and the office management of the Administrative Services office. The Director may be present when the Cabinet considers matters relating to conference administration, and other matters as the Bishop may determine. (§618)

2. The Director of Administrative Services shall be the Conference Treasurer and shall be the custodian of all funds collected from local churches, unless otherwise specifically designated by the Council on Finance and Administration.
3. He/she shall be the custodian of the Conference Board of Pensions funds and shall function as the administrative officer for the Conference Board of Pensions.
4. He/she shall be the custodian of all insurance funds and shall be the administrative officer for the Annual Conference insurance program(s).

He/she shall be the Conference Statistician.

5. All funds allocated to the various agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils and foundations by the CFA shall be credited by the Director of Administrative Services in separate accounts to the agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils and foundations. Disbursements of funds shall be made upon issuance of a request for check duly authorized by designated representative of the agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils and foundations.
6. The Director of Administrative Services reports directly to the CFA, and employment is based on the recommendation of the CFA to the Annual Conference for election.
7. The Director of Administrative Services shall accept additional areas of responsibility as determined by the CFA in consultation with the Conference Personnel Committee.
8. The Director of Administrative Services shall be
  - (a) The supervisor of all Administrative Services office staff.
  - (b) The person responsible for selecting, hiring, and terminating all support staff.

#### **6.1.5 CONFERENCE-WIDE APPEALS**

Conference-wide appeals or campaigns for funds shall be made in accordance with §613.2 and §614.5.

#### **6.1.6 BONDING**

Treasurer(s) of Local Church funds, District funds, Annual Conference funds, and any other funds held in the name of The United Methodist Church, shall be bonded to an amount, as determined by the Council on Finance and Administration, commensurate with their responsibilities.

#### **6.1.7 WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Every Charge shall provide Workman's Compensation Insurance coverage for clergy and all other staff members.

Charges shall have such coverage verified by the District Superintendent at each Charge Conference. Other salary paying units shall have such coverage verified by the appropriate supervising unit.

### **6.2 BOARD OF PENSIONS AND HEALTH BENEFITS**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in §639.

### **6.3 PROPERTY (§640.)**

#### **6.3.1 TRUSTEES OF THE SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in §2512.1-8.

#### **6.3.2 GUIDELINES FOR DISCONTINUED OR ABANDONED LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY**

Procedures shall be followed as defined in §2549.

#### **6.3.3 EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE COMMITTEE**

Membership and responsibilities are defined in §638.

#### **6.3.4 PARSONAGES**

Reference should be made to the most recent publication of *The Parsonage Guidelines*, which was approved by the 2005 Annual Conference session, and amended several times since. These policies serve as the guide for the standards, furnishings, maintenance, and care of parsonages. These most current Guidelines appear as an appendix to the Standing Rules.

### **6.4 ARCHIVES/HISTORY AND MUSEUM COMMITTEE**

#### **6.4.1 PURPOSE**

The Archives/History and Museum Committee will carry out the Commission on Archives and History functions of the South Georgia Annual Conference (§641). The Committee is expected and empowered to create as many short-term task groups, ad hoc groups, or networking groups as needed to carry out its work.

#### **6.4.2 ARTHUR J. MOORE METHODIST MUSEUM**

This committee will have stewardship and oversight of the Arthur J. Moore Methodist Museum. The Museum is the repository for the South Georgia Conference archives; it collects and preserves local church records and artifacts related to the history of the South Georgia Conference, the Wesleys and the early beginnings of Methodism in America; and it serves as a research library and a Museum interpreting Methodism, The South Georgia Conference and St. Simons Island history.

#### **6.4.3 COMMITTEE:**

The Archives/History and Museum Committee shall be composed of nine persons nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. In addition, the Committee will include the Chairs of The Friends of the Museum and the Historical Society. Four non-voting ex-officio members will include the Epworth by the Sea President/CEO, the Museum Director, and the Conference Historian.

#### **6.4.4 CONFERENCE HISTORIAN**

The Conference Historian shall be elected for the quadrennium at the Annual Conference following the General Conference upon nomination of the Conference Committee on Nominations in consultation with the Archives/History and Museum Committee. The Conference Historian will work in cooperation with and be accountable to the Archives/History and Museum Committee. (§641.3)

## **7. DISTRICT STRUCTURE**

### **7.1 NUMBER OF DISTRICTS**

There shall be six districts in the South Georgia Annual Conference.

### **7.2 DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

A District Conference may be held annually in each District. (See §§658-659.)

### **7.3 DISTRICT CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP**

If held, a District Conference shall be composed of the following persons:

- all Clergy (appointed and retired),
- all Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses (appointed or retired),
- the District Lay Leader,
- all Presidents of District Lay Organizations,
- the District Board of Missions,
- the District Trustees, and
- the District Leadership Team.

Each local church shall be entitled to representation based on its professing membership. The local church may select its representatives using whatever method it chooses.

Professing Members	District Conference Lay Delegates
100 and less	6
101 - 150	7
151 - 200	8
201 - 400	9
401 - 750	10
751 - 1000	11

1001 - 1500	12
1501 and more	13

## **7.4 DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS (¶ 661)**

### **7.4.1 DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM** *(Notation: The creation of the District Leadership Team and the details that follow below are taken from the Transition Report approved by the 2014 session of the Annual Conference. Effort has been made to include those aspects of district organization that are structural and administrative. For details that are more programmatic in nature, district leadership is referred to the entire Transition Report. In both administrative and programmatic areas, the principles of transparency (1.2.7) and of flexibility and innovation (1.2.5) will guide district leadership as it lives into the ideas and opportunities provided for in the Transition Report.)*

The District Leadership Team, in consultation with the District Superintendent, is responsible for the mission, ministry, and administration in the district. The entire District Leadership Team will serve as the:

- District Connectional Ministries Team (¶661)
- District Committee on Nominations
- District Committee on Superintendency ¶669)

#### **7.4.1.1 DISTRICT CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES (¶661)**

The District Superintendent will chair the District Leadership Team as it fulfills its Connectional Ministry responsibility, including the program areas listed below. (These program areas are more fully described in the Transition Team document approved at the 2014 Annual Conference.)

- Children’s Ministries
- Clergy Ministries
- Disciple Plan Ministries
- Mission Ministries
- Evangelism Ministries
- Finance Ministries
- Lay Ministries
- Trustee Ministries
- Men Ministries (including District United Methodist Men)
- Women Ministries (including District United Methodist Women)
- Youth Ministries (including District United Methodist Youth Fellowship)

#### **7.4.1.2 DISTRICT NOMINATIONS**

The District Superintendent will chair the District Leadership Team in its function as the Nominating Committee of the District. The current District Leadership Team will nominate the succeeding District Leadership Team and other leaders necessary for the mission and ministry of the District, and present those nominations to be voted upon at Annual Conference. The members of the District Leadership Team may serve a maximum of eight years in a particular leadership capacity unless the Book of Discipline provides otherwise. Care will be given in the makeup of the District Leadership Team to represent the above program areas and to consider gender, age, ethnicity, church representation (small, large, etc.) and clergy status in order to have a diverse representation of the district. The District Superintendent may act for the Nominations Committee in emergency circumstances when the entire Team cannot be convened.

#### **7.4.1.3 DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON SUPERINTENDENCY (¶669)**

The District Leadership Team, in its function as the Committee on Superintendency, shall elect a chairperson other than the District Superintendent to fulfill the responsibilities in ¶669.

### **7.4.2 DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY (¶666)**

There shall be a Committee on Ordained Ministry nominated annually by the District Superintendent as specified and described in ¶666. All members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry residing in that district shall be members of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. It is recommended that the Chair of the District Committee be a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

#### **7.4.3 TRUSTEES MINISTRIES/DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Trustees Ministries is a ministry area under District Connectional Ministries that includes but is not limited to the duties of the District Board of Trustees (§2518.2) and the duties of the District Board of Church Location and Building (§2519. Duties are listed in §2520-2524.)

#### **7.4.4 DISTRICT APPORTIONMENTS AND BUDGETS**

In order to provide for adequate funding for the district parsonage, office, programs, and other district expenses, recommendations concerning District Apportionments shall be made either by 1) Finance Ministries, functioning as a District Committee on Finance, or 2) in the absence of a District Committee on Finance, by the District Board of Trustees. In either case, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the District Conference for final approval. No budget shall be apportioned with a District that has not been approved by a District Conference.

#### **7.4.5 DISTRICT MISSIONS**

Mission Ministries and its work will include but not be limited to the work of the District Board or Committee of Missions already functioning in each district. Mission Ministries will also include interpreting the district, conference, and global nature of the church and its missionaries, and also carry out responsibilities for church extension. The following functions are suggested:

- a. Give guidance and support to all mission ministries within the District.
- b. Assist in evaluating programs of mission ministries within the District.
- c. Recommend and promote new mission ministries and programs within the District in coordination with the District Connectional Ministries Team.
- d. Provide guidance and support in planning for church extension and the establishment of new churches in conjunction with the Conference Office of New Congregational Development.
- e. Make recommendations for District apportionments to provide for adequate funding for the work of the District Board/Committee on Missions.

#### **7.4.6 DISTRICT LAY LEADER/LAITY MINISTRIES**

Each District shall have a Lay Leader as specified in §660, who will serve as the elected leader of the district laity. Laity Ministries will include but not be limited to education and resource support for lay leaders, lay members of the local church, lay servant ministries, and all lay leadership within the local church. Laity Ministries will seek to educate and provide information as it relates to the ministry of all Christians within the life of the church and the world.

#### **7.4.7 DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES**

There may be a Director and Committee on Lay Servant Ministries in each district as described in §668. The District Director will relate to the Conference's Witness Discipleship Team, which will coordinate Lay Speaking training.

### **8. AMENDMENTS**

#### **8.1 EFFECTIVE DATE**

The Standing Rules and Structure go into effect upon passage.

#### **8.2 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

The Annual Conference Secretary may make such editorial changes as the need occurs: e.g., *The Book of Discipline* references and paragraphs which do not change the intent and meaning of the document.

#### **8.3 AMENDMENTS**

These Standing Rules and Structure may, by a majority vote, be amended on the next day after an amendment has been presented, provided that a change in the number of Districts may not be made later than the second morning of the Annual Conference session.

### **APPENDIX TO THE STANDING RULES**

Following are major policy statements approved by the South Georgia Annual Conference. They are placed in this appendix to the Standing Rules for the convenience of all laity and clergy.

Appendix A: Policy on Church Professional Sexual Misconduct

Appendix B:	Parsonage Guidelines
Appendix C:	General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation Elections Policy
Appendix D:	Safe Sanctuaries Policy
Appendix E:	When Divorce Comes to a Clergy Family
Appendix F:	Regarding Proceeds from Sale of Abandoned or Discontinued Church Property
Appendix G:	Conflict of Interest Policy

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## **Appendix A: Policy on Church Professional Sexual Misconduct**

Adopted: June 2005; Amended: June 2006; June 2008; June 2011; June 2013; June 2017

### I. Purpose

Church professionals work in a covenant of sacred trust characterized by great power and even greater responsibility. Sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust. This breach of relationship threatens not only those immediately affected, but also wounds the church itself. The South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church states unambiguously that sexual misconduct, on the part of any church professional, is an unacceptable breach of sacred trust representing a tragic breakdown of character and commitment. The intention of this policy is to define sexual misconduct, establish procedures by which a complaint can be made and acted upon, provide appropriate support to all persons involved in a complaint, and delineate an educational requirement related to sexual ethics.

### II. Theological Foundation

Jesus Christ is Lord. Living in Christ's grace we have life, health and hope. Jesus shows us the way to live before and with one another. In Christ, God has shown love for all persons (men, women, youth, and children) and intends that all persons should relate to one another in love and justice. In Christ, God values all human life and intends that in all relationships the dignity and worth of everyone be respected. Therefore, sexual misconduct is an offense against God, our neighbor and ourselves. The church must clearly discipline those who violate God-given sexual boundaries. One who repents of sinful behavior is promised forgiveness; all persons are both in need of and should receive forgiveness and should be offered avenues for redemption. Nevertheless, forgiveness does not cancel the need for church discipline, which has also been clearly practiced in the church from its inception.

### III. Definitions

- A. **Sexual Misconduct** occurs within the professional relationship when a church professional engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a parishioner, client, employee, student, or staff member (adult, teen, or child), whether or not there is consent from the individual. Beyond the professional relationship, sexual misconduct includes any inappropriate sexual conduct or sexualized behavior on the part of a church professional.

Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, the use or possession of pornography, and any form of criminal sexual conduct. (§2702.1, *The Book of Discipline 2016*)

This definition excludes relationships between spouses. It is not intended to restrict church professionals from healthy, mutual, social relationships with parishioners. Dating relationships, however, between church professionals and their parishioners, clients, students, or staff members are never appropriate because of an imbalance of power.

- B. **Sexual Harassment** is the attempt to coerce any person into a sexual relationship, or the subjection of any person to unwanted sexual attention. Behaviors considered in determining whether or not sexual harassment has occurred include: unwanted sexual advances or demands either verbal or from exploitation of a position of power. Such actions may include sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference. Other actions include unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearances, or repeated

requests for social engagements when there is an employment, mentor, or collegial relationship between the persons involved.

- C. **Pornography** is sexually explicit material utilized for the purposes of sexual excitement and erotic satisfaction. This includes but is not limited to material that portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation for the purpose of arousal. In addition, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornographic and is a criminal act to access, possess and/or distribute.
- D. A **Complaint** is a written, dated, and signed statement claiming sexual misconduct.
- E. A **Church Professional** is a clergy person, diaconal minister, or layperson in any status or relationship with the Annual Conference whose appointment is set or approved by the Bishop. (This includes, but is not limited to, retired clergy not under appointment and those approved as local pastors, but not appointed.)
- F. A **Complainant** is a person who submits a written, signed allegation of sexual misconduct. A complainant may be a parent or responsible party in the case of minors or in the case of an adult incapable of self-reporting.

#### IV. Sexual Ethics Support Team

##### A. TEAM PURPOSE:

The Bishop of the South Georgia Annual Conference may, at his/her discretion, create and deploy on a case-by-case basis, a Sexual Ethics Support Team. The team purpose shall be to offer support for any party involved in a complaint of sexual misconduct including: the complainant, the accused church professional, and/or a congregation affected by such a complaint.

##### B. TEAM MAKEUP:

The South Georgia Annual Conference Sexual Ethics Support Team shall consist of persons chosen by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Crisis Team, Cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, and/or the Conference Pastoral Counselor. The Bishop shall be sensitive to issues of race, gender, and the inclusion of persons who will advocate appropriately for potential victims of sexual harassment, misconduct, and abuse. The Conference Pastoral Counselor is accountable for coordinating, training, and supporting the work of this team as directed by the Bishop.

##### C. TEAM FUNCTION:

1. The Bishop may offer one or more persons in response to the needs of a complainant, an accused church professional, or a congregation experiencing a sexual misconduct complaint.
2. When deployed, a support team member(s) will:
  - a. Explain the procedures available within the structures of the church for addressing a complaint and for following fair process as defined in *The Book of Discipline 2016*.
  - b. Offer resources and consultation to the accused church professional, the complainant, and/or the congregation and assist in any appropriate manner.
  - c. Accompany the person(s) to whom they are assigned (either complainant or accused) to meetings with church authorities if the person(s) so desires.

#### V. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

- A. A person desiring to report an alleged incident of sexual misconduct by a church professional may contact a Sunday school teacher, choir director, or any other trusted person including their pastor, another United Methodist pastor, a District Superintendent, or the Bishop. If a pastor is contacted with such a report, that pastor shall personally notify his or her Superintendent or another member of the Cabinet within 24 hours. Regardless of who receives the report, the Bishop and/or Conference Crisis Team shall be notified immediately thereafter.

The South Georgia Conference urges any clergy to consider it a moral obligation to act as a legally mandated reporter when the alleged victim is a minor or adult incapable of self-reporting. (See *Book of Discipline 2016*, ¶341.5)

- B. The provisions of ¶363 and ¶2701-2719 of *The Book of Discipline 2016* shall determine and in all ways define the process of appropriate response.
- C. In all cases of complaint involving sexual misconduct, great care shall be taken to explain to both the accused church professional and the complainant their rights to fair process as provided in *The Book of Discipline 2016*.

#### VI. Prevention Education: Developing Boundary Awareness

Every church professional or lay person in any status or relationship with the Annual Conference whose appointment is set or approved by the Bishop, and lay speakers serving as supply pastors, shall be required to attend a five-hour seminar on sexual ethics every three years. The Conference Pastoral Counselor or other designated persons will offer seminars on sexual ethics across the conference on a regular basis throughout each three-year cycle. *Note: Any person newly assigned, appointed, or serving ad-interim shall be required to complete a training workshop within the first conference year of active service. Afterwards, these persons will assume the three-year training cycle.* Audits for compliance are conducted based on the Annual Conference year. The cost for the Sexual Ethics Workshop will be \$35.00 per participant. Local churches are encouraged to reimburse the pastor for this expense.

For ministers who serve outside the bounds of the Annual Conference, a comparable course on sexual ethics approved by the Conference Pastoral Counselor will satisfy the requirement. In such cases, the minister is responsible for sending certification of course participation to the Conference Pastoral Counselor.

South Georgia Annual Conference clergy who serve outside the bounds of the annual conference are also required to be in compliance with this policy. There are two ways for these clergy to complete the requirement every three years:

1. The clergy may attend a comparable five-hour sexual ethics seminar sponsored by another United Methodist Annual Conference. In such case, the clergy person is responsible for sending certification of course participation to the Conference Pastoral Counselor. The content of the seminar must be similar in content to the course in South Georgia.
2. The clergy may contact the Conference Pastoral Counselor and request an electronic or hard copy of the course material. Attached to the packet is a one-page statement that must be signed and returned verifying that the clergy has read and understands the course content.

Because of the intimate nature of ministry, relationships can be sexualized. Therefore, seminars on sexual ethics will be designed to help church professionals do the following: gain a clear understanding of what is best practice; become boundary sensitive; be alert to situations that place them at risk in pastoral ministry; and become aware of the power differential accorded to them by virtue of their role as minister.

Because sexual ethics is a serious matter, failure to comply with the continuing educational requirement will generate an administrative complaint (See Book of Discipline ¶363a). Retired ministers are exempt from the continuing education requirement related to ethics unless they are serving a full-time or part-time appointment in a local church or extension ministry; however, all retired ministers remain under all other provisions of this Sexual Ethics Policy.

## VII. Regarding Local Church Staff Parish Relations Committees

Local church staff parish committees are encouraged to develop and implement a policy on sexual misconduct and polices that require members of their church staff (not included in the above requirements) to receive training in sexual ethics. At least once per quadrennia, the Conference Pastoral Counselor will conduct seminars designed specifically for church staff hired and supervised by the local church staff-parish relations committee. Professional staff members (youth directors, music directors, and children's directors) are encouraged to attend.

## ENDNOTES

1. The subject of dating a parishioner, client, student, or staff member, and the suitable steps that can be taken to help protect persons in this situation shall be part of the curriculum in the Sexual Ethics Seminar.

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## **Appendix B: PARSONAGE GUIDELINES**

Adopted June 2005; Amended: June 6, 2006; Amended June 2008; Amended June 2009

....THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the South Georgia Annual Conference adopt the revision of "The Parsonage Home 2005" as the new guidelines for the care, maintenance, and updating of parsonages.

....FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the education of the new guidelines is the responsibility of each District Superintendent.

## **2005 Parsonage Initiative**

### **“Happy the home when God is there...”**

Parsonages within the South Georgia Conference have been greatly improved during the past years. Our churches should be commended for the splendid manner in which they have provided their pastors' families with attractive and comfortable homes.

In the South Georgia Conference, housing for appointed pastors have traditionally been parsonages. However, upon mutual consent, a church may provide a housing allowance in lieu of the parsonage. It is suggested that ample funds to purchase a parsonage quickly or a substantial down payment is held in escrow, in case another pastor needs a parsonage at a later time.

In 2004, Bishop B. Michael Watson established a Parsonage Task Force for the South Georgia Conference. The Task Force has determined that the primary issues involving parsonages are accountability and communication between the pastor, the parsonage family, the Parsonage Committee, and/or the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Therefore, an effort to improve the communication and relationships between the church and the parsonage family utilizing these guidelines is necessary.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **The Church Should Provide:**

The Church should provide adequate furnishings for livable occupancy leaving room for some of the pastor's personal possessions. If the pastor and church agree that some of the parsonage furnishings be stored to allow for use of the pastor's personal belongings, storage shall be the responsibility of the pastor. The following items should be provided:

1. All heavy furnishings, including cooking range, refrigerator with a large freezer and ice maker, adequate hot water heater, washer, dryer, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner.
2. Bedroom, dining room, den, and living room suites.
3. Good mattresses, pillows, floor coverings, shades or blinds, curtains or drapes in all rooms.
4. Some floor and table lamps, occasional tables, and bookcases.
5. Stepladder. Power lawnmower.
6. Smoke alarms and fire extinguisher.

### **The Pastor Should Provide:**

1. Linen, blankets, baby beds.
2. Dishes, china, crystal, silverware.
3. Pots, pans, cooking utensils.
4. Other personal items which he/she desires, such as radio, television, pictures.

### **Parsonage Grounds:**

Parsonage grounds should have foundation shrubbery, shade trees, adequate yard space for children, and a riding lawn mower where there is a large lawn. Fenced in back yard for the safety of small children and pets, if possible. Also, garden space, if possible.

### **Insurance:**

An amount of insurance equal to at least 80% of the replacement value of the parsonage and furnishings should be carried by the church (fire and extended coverage). The pastoral family should carry adequate insurance to cover their own personal belongings and furnishings.

### **Care of Property:**

The parsonage family should take care of the house, furnishings, and property making it a policy to leave them in good condition. Best results will be obtained as the parsonage family and committee work together, feeling free to discuss the needs with each other. It is understood that there will be a natural depreciation of property and furnishings which calls for repairs and replacements periodically.

### **Recommendations for Parsonage Upkeep:**

1. The Church's annual budget should include a parsonage fund equivalent to at least 3% of the value of the property for the purpose of repairs, maintenance, and insurance.
2. The parsonage family should be consulted in the selection of furnishings, color schemes, curtains, and equipment.
3. The parsonage should be kept well painted inside and out.

4. The parsonage should be periodically checked for pest control.
5. The pastor's family should change the air conditioner and heating filters as recommended with filters provided by the church.
6. The pastor should keep the "Parsonage Folder" updated. In the case that one does not exist, begin one. This folder should include all guarantees, repair parts lists, instructions for use of equipment, and also the "Parsonage Book." The "Parsonage Book" is an inventory of all parsonage furnishings, dates of when and from whom items were purchased and who to call for repair of various items, when and by whom various improvements were made, and any other information helpful to future parsonage families. A pictorial record, preferably video, should be taken as soon as possible on or after each moving day. This pictorial record will be invaluable for insurance purposes in case of a fire or other catastrophe. It also would serve as a record of the parsonage's initial condition. An extra copy of the pictorial record and the "Parsonage Book" should be stored in a secure place away from the parsonage. The District Superintendent can provide a sample Parsonage folder and "Parsonage Book."

#### **Guidelines for Pets:**

Keeping animals outside is highly recommended. It is understood, however, that family pets kept inside the home bring much comfort and joy. Therefore, if they are kept inside the parsonage, the following guidelines must be met:

1. The church trustees must be kept informed of any pet inside or outside the parsonage.
2. Only a domestic pet, which will be defined as a small dog, cat, caged bird, or aquarium fish can be kept in the parsonage. Guide animals are not considered pets. Any other animal requires the approval of the church trustees. Also, more than one pet requires the approval of the trustees.
3. All damages incurred by any pet will be the responsibility of the pastor. Flea and tick management is strongly advised.
4. If pets are kept inside, the parsonage family must make an extra effort to thoroughly clean the parsonage to eliminate any evidence of pets having been present, which includes fleas, ticks, pet hair, pet dander, stains, excrements, etc.
5. Damage to the parsonage incurred by pets is the pastor's responsibility and should be reported to the Trustees and assessed. Payment should be immediate, but no later than moving day.

#### **Guidelines for Smoking:**

With the understanding that smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc., cause a residual odor to remain in carpets and walls, it is recommended that there be no smoking inside a parsonage. Any damage that is incurred will be the responsibility of the pastor.

#### **Recommendations for Updates**

All parsonages should be updated or renovated to conform as nearly as possible to the suggested minimum standards in these guidelines.

#### **General Suggestions for Updating Parsonages:**

1. To enhance the relationship between the congregation and parsonage family, it is suggested that "Open House" be observed occasionally.
2. Periodic meetings with the Parsonage Committee should be held in the parsonage to discuss needed updates. Dates should be agreed upon by the committee and the pastor. This is the suggested time to update "The Parsonage Book." Copies of "The Parsonage Book" and a pictorial record should be kept by the Pastor, Parsonage Committee Chairman, and on file in the church or a safety deposit box.
3. Discarded furnishings from church members should not be placed in the parsonage.
4. When a gift of furniture or furnishings is made, it should be designated whether the gift is for the pastor's family or for the parsonage. Many pastors' families mark parsonage items so that there is no confusion on moving day.
5. The pastor's family is responsible for thoroughly cleaning the parsonage and grounds when he/she is moving. This is not the responsibility of the church.

#### **Mandatory Parsonage Review Guidelines:**

1. A meeting concerning the parsonage will be conducted each year prior to charge conference.
2. This meeting will be held in the parsonage and will include a mandatory review of the entire parsonage – inside and out.
3. The attendance of the following individuals is expected: the pastor, the Trustees Chair, the Parsonage Committee Chair (if one exists), and Pastor Staff Relations Committee Chair. (*The Book of the Discipline*, ¶2532.4) If the pastor has a spouse, he or she should also be included.
4. The specific date can be set any time during the year, but it must be set at least two weeks prior to

- the church's annual Charge Conference with all parties agreeing to the date set.
5. Even though this mandatory meeting takes place to satisfy a disciplinary requirement, it is recommended that other separate Parsonage Committee meetings be held to consider parsonage improvements and other concerns.
  6. A special form, called the Parsonage Report, will be filled out and signed off by all in attendance at the Parsonage Review. This report will be submitted to the District Superintendent during Charge Conference.
  7. Any concern by either pastor or charge may be addressed at a later meeting. The District Superintendent may become involved, if deemed necessary by either party.
  8. Continual patterns of parsonage abuse will be documented and stored in each pastor's file.

## **PARSONAGE STANDARDS**

### **Housing, Furnishings, and Equipment.**

**BEDROOMS:** Minimum of three, preferably four with either carpeting or hardwood floors and with ample lighted closet space in each. Walk-in closets are preferred. Also, the master bedroom and bath should be located on the first floor.

**BATHROOMS:** At least two. In a two-story house, at least one bedroom and one bathroom (master suite) should be on the first floor.

**KITCHEN:** Built-in cabinets, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, range, oven, disposal, large enough for family eating space, or a breakfast nook.

**LIVING ROOM/GREAT ROOM:** Large enough for necessary parsonage entertaining with either carpeting or hardwood floors.

**DINING ROOM:** A dining room with carpeting or hardwood floors is desirable because of necessary entertaining.

**STUDY:** It is advantageous to have a study at home as well as at the church. Preferably, the study should be on the first floor away from family activities with a separate outside entrance and adequately equipped.

**DEN or FAMILY ROOM:** Very desirable, situated away from main living room and study, with either carpeting or hardwood floors.

**GARAGE or CARPORT:** Preferably connected to house and large enough for two cars. Extra small metal storage building for the safe storage of lawnmower fuels away from the house.

**SCREEN and/or STORM WINDOWS:** In all windows and outside doors to conserve energy.

**WIRING and PLUMBING:** Provide for present and future needs in order that all appliances and computer equipment may be used safely. All receptacles must be grounded.

**TELEPHONE:** Private line with extensions in at least the study, living area, and master bedroom.

**TELEVISION:** Provide cable access. Where cable is not available, an antenna should be mounted on a pole or pipe to protect the roof of the house.

**HEATING/COOLING:** Provide central air conditioning and heating with insulation to meet present day building codes.

**STORAGE:** Outdoor storage for lawnmower, tools, fuel, etc. Inside storage, preferably an attic and extra closets, other than those in bedrooms.

**UTILITY AREA:** Space for the washing machine, dryer, shelves, cabinets, etc. For security reasons, this space should be under the roof of the parsonage rather than in the garage or in a building away from the house.

## **CHECK LISTS**

### **Checklist When Vacating a Parsonage**

1. Inform the Parsonage Committee about the items that need attention.
2. Clean windows inside and out.
3. Draperies cleaned, if there were inside pets. Otherwise, clean as needed.
4. Rugs and carpets vacuumed. These should also be shampooed, especially if there were inside pets. Otherwise, clean as needed.
5. All hard surface floors (tile, linoleum, wood) cleaned.
6. Walls, woodwork, and baseboards cleaned.
7. Refrigerator is defrosted and cleaned.
8. Range and oven are cleaned.
9. All cabinets and furniture are cleaned outside, inside, underneath, and behind.
10. Closets and shelving are cleaned.
11. Vacuum mattresses, springs, and bed frames.
12. Light fixtures cleaned, and blown bulbs are replaced.
13. Bathrooms thoroughly cleaned, including fixture, tile grout, shower doors, curtains, medicine cabinet, walls, and floors.
14. Clean exhaust fans, hot and cold air vents, install new filters in AC/H system. (Filters are supplied by church.)

15. Attic, garage, carport, basement, and outside buildings are swept and left orderly.
16. Lawn mowed and shrubbery trimmed within week of the move.
17. Damage done by pets and/or parsonage family is reported to the Parsonage Committee or Trustees.
18. Assessments for damage are paid to Chairperson of Parsonage Committee or Trustees.
19. All trash is properly disposed, preferably not in the parsonage's trash receptacle.
20. Make arrangements with appropriate companies to prorata all utility bills up through moving day. Do not have the utilities turned off.
21. Professional extermination.

**Checklist When Moving Into a Parsonage**

1. Rate the following as excellent, satisfactory, or poor:

**Interior of the Parsonage**

Windows  
 Draperies  
 Rugs  
 Floors  
 Walls, Woodwork, Baseboards  
 Kitchen  
 Appliances  
 Cabinets  
 Furniture  
 Bathrooms  
 Mattresses  
 AC/Heating System  
 Attic, Closets, and Other Storage Areas  
 General Cleanliness

**Exterior of the Parsonage**

Driveway  
 Shrubby  
 Lawn  
 Trash or Garbage Condition  
 Outside Storage  
 General Appearance

2. Report any evidences of pet damage.
3. Report any needed repairs.

When moving, your current District Superintendent will provide the "Check-Off List for Vacating a Parsonage" and your new superintendent will provide the "Check-Off List for Moving Into a Parsonage." Completed copies of each should be turned into the respective Parsonage Committee or Trustees and District Superintendents within one month.

**PRIVACY ISSUE**

Although the parsonage is the property of the church, it must be understood that it is also the pastor's family's private home. Courtesy dictates that the parsonage is visited only upon invitation by the parsonage family. Even the Annual Mandatory Parsonage Review and Parsonage Committee meetings must be scheduled with the pastor.

**FYI:** The Parsonage Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Trustees.

**Appendix C: General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation Elections Policy**

APPROVED: June 7, 2005; AMENDED: June 4, 2018

**Intent of Policy**

Every four years, the members of the annual conference elect the delegates that will represent them at General Conference and the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. The intent of the Elections Policy of the South Georgia Conference is to level the playing field for all candidates and create an atmosphere of fairness, respect, collegiality, and mutual trust that is in keeping with our rich, diverse, covenantal life together. We also want to provide the

means for candidates to share information that allows members of the annual conference to make informed decisions.

### **Elections Website**

Each election year, in the months leading up to annual conference, an Elections Website will be opened to facilitate open communications, fairness, and informed decision-making. Through the Elections Website, candidates will be able to share, in a statement of up to 300 words, their interests, issues, concerns, convictions, qualifications, and other information to aid the annual conference in electing a representative delegation. Also, members of the annual conference, within a designated time period, will be able to submit through the Elections Website questions that candidates may choose to address in their statement.

The Elections Website is an attempt to bring all of us together, level the playing field, make the process public and fully transparent, and help us stay in covenant together. Any mass communication conducted outside the website, through printed or electronic means, undermines this covenant. To be clear: the questions and statements entered through the website are to preclude candidates, supporters, or caucus groups from disseminating other forms of campaign materials, letters of endorsement, slates of candidates, or lists of questions.

Hopefully, the desire to stay in covenant will be all that is needed to comply with these procedures. Any infraction should be reported to the Conference Secretary. Candidates are required not to respond to lists of questions submitted outside the official website.

### **Other Information to be Gathered on the Website**

- Name, Email, Main Phone Contact, Gender, Race/Ethnicity
- List of Leadership Positions Served in the Conference and District
- A Picture of the candidate

#### Clergy

- Current Appointment, Appointments Served

#### Laity

- Church Membership, District, Occupation, Positions served in local church
- Identification as a Youth, Young Adult, Adult

### **Required Communications**

Several months prior to the Annual Conference session in which elections are to take place, communications will go out explaining the process and encouraging diversity in the delegations.

### **Eligibility for Election, according to The Book of Discipline**

- Clergy Delegation: All clergy members in full connection (Full Elders and Full Deacons), whether or not they declare their interest to serve or furnish information on the conference elections website. The Presiding Bishop and/or Conference Secretary frequently will remind that all eligible persons may be elected whether or not they have declared their candidacy.
- Lay Delegation: Professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years, and active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years. There is no age requirement as long as membership and participation requirements are met. Although it is recommended that lay candidates declare their desire to stand for election through the conference website before the announced deadline, this recommendation does not preclude candidates from introducing themselves during the Laity Orientation Session in an election year.
- Lay and Clergy: Must be willing to devote three weeks of their time to attend these conferences plus other days to attend meetings of the delegation, and should expect that they will bear a portion of the cost of being a delegate, since the per diem rates often do not cover all costs.

### **Lay and Clergy Gatherings**

In the election year, a gathering of laity and a gathering of clergy will be held prior to voting during the Annual Conference session. Attendance at these sessions will be optional, of course, but they will allow time to visit with one another, know one another better, and possibly discuss each other's beliefs, convictions and concerns. These gatherings may be held in conjunction with the Clergy Executive Session and the Laity Orientation Session, each to be designed by the Orders of Elders and Deacons and the Board of Laity respectively. We also believe that a great responsibility in this process should rest upon the voter to find out information on potential candidates either prior to or during breaks in Annual Conference sessions.

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## Appendix D: Safe Sanctuaries Policy

APPROVED: June 5, 2007

### I. Preamble

Children hold a special place in God's family. Jesus taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. When the crowd tried to devalue children and keep them away from Jesus, he was quick to respond, "Let the children come to me for to such belongs the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16).

Children hold a special place in our Church's family. In the Baptismal Covenant, professing members assume a holy responsibility "to so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, page 44). Our promise places solemn responsibility on each person to help children grow in the knowledge of God's love and as whole persons.

As Christians, we take our responsibility to nurture children very seriously. We acknowledge the "sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God's love. Sexual misconduct in the church and ministry settings impedes the mission of Jesus Christ. Leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words that hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words which cause harm" (Resolution 36, *The Book of Resolutions*, 2004).

The spiritual consequences of doing harm are significant. The victim's physical and emotional pain and suffering as well as a loss of trust and faith are barriers to the abundant life Christ desires to give. Jesus took these negative consequences so seriously that he warned against impeding the faith of others by saying, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Neglecting to take adequate precautions against child abuse in our churches is one of the ways we fail in our nurturing responsibilities. While it is unlikely that we can completely prevent child abuse in every situation, it is possible for us to greatly reduce the risk by following a thorough, practical policy of prevention and supervision. This policy attempts to do just that for the Conference and District entities that offer ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (see definitions Section III).

It is the purpose of this policy to:

- A. protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults that participate in the ministries of the church;
- B. protect our staff, both paid and volunteer, from potential false allegations of abuse; and
- C. protect all the various ministry assets of the church for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

This policy presents a comprehensive plan that includes the areas of: Screening, Supervision, Reporting, and Response. The policies we have delineated are the **MINIMUM** necessary precautions for protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Your local church, agency, or organization may need to provide additional precautions in some circumstances.

### II. Scope of the Policy

- A. This policy and its provisions shall apply to all adults, volunteer, or staff persons, whether laity or clergy, who have any direct or indirect contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the South Georgia Conference and/or its Districts.
- B. This Conference policy will be implemented immediately following its adoption, with full compliance required by July 1, 2008, for all Conference and District events.
- C. The South Georgia Conference policy shall be applicable at all Conference and District activities involving children, youth and vulnerable adults.
  1. Conference events are those events sponsored, promoted or financially supported by the Annual Conference. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: the Connectional Ministries sponsored summer camps and retreats (such as KidzQuest, Encounter Youth Retreat, Confirmation Retreats) conducted at Epworth By The Sea; the children and youth components of the School of Christian Missions; the P.K. Retreats sponsored by the Commission on Pastoral Counseling Services; and nursery care provided at the Annual Conference session or other conference sponsored events where a nursery is provided.
  2. District events are those events sponsored, promoted or financially supported by the District. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: children and youth camps associated with a

District Camp Meeting or a nursery provided at a District sponsored event.

3. The South Georgia Annual Conference strongly urges other agencies and groups sponsoring ministries for children, youth, or vulnerable adults to fully implement Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures that meet or exceed those outlined in this policy by July 1, 2008. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: Chrysalis and Journey.

4. The South Georgia Annual Conference strongly urges all Conference agencies to insist that outside groups using their facilities comply with Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures that meet or exceed those outlined in this policy by July 1, 2008. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: outside groups using the facilities of Epworth By The Sea or District-owned Campgrounds.

D. Further, each local church is required to adopt a Safe Sanctuaries policy for their church by December 31, 2008, and submit the policy to their District Superintendent. Each church will be expected to fully implement their policy by January 1, 2009, if not sooner.

E. Also, it is strongly recommended that every local church include a Sexual Abuse and Molestation rider in its insurance coverage.

### III. Definitions

The following terms are defined for the specific purpose of this document.

A. "Adult" ... The adult definition is used to define an adult as it relates to supervision, screening, reporting, and responding within the conference policy. "Adult" means a person 18 years of age or older, who engages in supervisory responsibility. The term does not apply to program participants.

B. "Adult Monitor" is an adult who frequently moves in and out of rooms or activity areas adding additional supervision where two adults (not spouses) are not available to care for the children.

C. "Assistant Who is a Minor" are persons under 18 years of age who help with activities (e.g., crafts or recreation) but are not in a supervisory role. An "Assistant Who is a Minor" does not satisfy the two unrelated adults rule.

D. "Certifying Officer" is the individual who receives applications, conducts background checks, assesses results, verifies requirements are met, and certifies a person for supervision of children. For Connectional Ministries sponsored summer camps, the Certifying Officer is the Associate Director for Life Span Ministries. For events like the P.K. Retreat and the School of Missions Children's Camp, the Certifying Officer will be the designated camp director. For all other events, the local church is responsible for appointing and supporting a Certifying Officer.

E. "Child abuse" is a harmful act against any person under 18 years of age that presents themselves in the following forms or types:

1. Verbal Abuse - Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades, or threatens any child or youth.

2. Physical Abuse - Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical and mental health.

In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a child or youth.

3. Sexual Abuse - Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of minors for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) incest,

b) rape,

c) prostitution,

d) romantic involvement with any participant,

e) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in Conference or District sponsored activities,

f) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples of sexualized behavior include, but are not limited to: "displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse" (Resolution 36, *The Book of Resolutions 2004*).

4. Ritual Abuse – Any act of physical, sexual, psychological violence or manipulation inflicted on a minor, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone or multiple people that appeals to a higher authority or power to justify the abuse.

NOTE: This includes any acts utilizing electronic means that could be construed as verbal, physical, sexual, or ritual abuse.

F. "Child abuse" in this policy also includes abusive acts against vulnerable adults. "Vulnerable adults" are

any person 18 years of age or older with diagnosed diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities.

G. "Child" or "Children" or "Minor" means any person(s) under the age of 18.

H. "Children's activities" means any activity or program in which persons under the age of 18 are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

I. "Conference" means the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

J. "Conference Crisis Team" is composed of the Resident Bishop, the Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Director of Communications. Others will join the consultation process depending on the situation (i.e., the Conference Chancellor, the District Superintendent in whose district the incident occurred, the Conference Pastoral Counselor, etc.). The Conference Crisis Team will assist in determining and implementing a comprehensive response to a crisis.

K. "Safe Sanctuaries" is the name commonly given by United Methodist Annual Conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference, district, and local church programs welcoming and safe for children and youth.

L. "Staff person" means any person employed by the Conference who is responsible for children's activities (as defined above).

M. "Staff person in charge of a children's activity" means the Conference employee responsible for the supervision of this activity, such as the Conference's Connectional Ministries Associate Director of Life Span Ministries in the case of a Conference-wide children's event, or the designated camp director for the event in the case of programs like the

P. K. retreats and the youth and children's components of the School of Missions.

N. "Supervisor" means any staff person or volunteer who leads, directs, counsels, teaches, mentors, chaperones, transports, or assists in programs and activities related to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

O. "Volunteer" means a person 18 years of age or older who assists in conducting children's activities.

P. "Vulnerable adult" means any person 18 years of age or older identified by a caregiver, staff person in charge or him/herself as an individual unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation due to diagnosed diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities.

Q. "We" means the South Georgia Annual Conference.

R. "Youth" means persons 20 years of age or younger who are strictly participants, holding no supervisory responsibility, in a conference or district sponsored activity.

#### **IV. Screening Procedures**

A. Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. While screening will consume time, raise questions of trust, and cost money to implement, screening is well worth the effort. Parents, congregational leaders and participants can rest assured that the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteers are in place for every program that involves children, youth and vulnerable adults. Leaders who willingly submit to the screening process demonstrate the high value they place on the protection of children, the protection of all who offer supervision, and the protection of ministry assets for disciple-making.

1. Conference Summer Camps

The Associate Director of Life Span Ministries will conduct the screening process for staff working in the Connectional Ministries sponsored summer camps conducted at Epworth By The Sea.

2. Conference Retreats

Each local church will conduct the screening process for the adult counselors or chaperones who accompany the participants from their church. Conference retreats require each church to provide at least one (1) adult counselor/chaperone for every six (6) children to actively supervise the participants from their church. These events include, but are not limited to the following: KidzQuest, Encounter Youth Retret, and Confirmation Retreats. After July 1, 2008, each church will be required to certify to the Camp Director that their chaperones meet the minimum screening standards and will practice the prevention procedures outlined in the policy prior to that volunteer's service at the event. For events like the P. K. retreats and the children/youth components of the School of Missions, the designated Camp Director will certify that the volunteers/staff working their event are in compliance with Safe Sanctuary screening, training, and supervising requirements. This certification of compliance will be made to the Director of Connectional Ministries at least two weeks prior to the event. In cases where enough certified workers are not available, event leaders will need to recruit, train, and screen additional volunteers or cancel the event.

3. District Events

Each local church will conduct the screening process for the adult counselors or

chaperones who accompany the participants from their church or who serve as a counselor at a District event. After July 1, 2008, each church will be required to verify the certification to the designated Camp Director that their chaperones meet the minimum screening standards and will practice the minimum supervisory procedures outlined in this policy.

B. We propose these **MINIMUM** screening standards:

All adults, volunteer or paid persons, whether laity or clergy, who have any direct or indirect contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the South Georgia Conference and/or its Districts shall be required to submit an application that includes:

1. Standard contact information.
2. Experience and qualifications for the position.
3. Documentation of an active relationship with the local church for whom they will be offering leadership of at least six months before being allowed to be in a supervisory role in children's activities (summer camp staff will be expected to have at least six month active relationship with a local church or a campus ministry).
4. Signed voluntary disclosure of past criminal history and allegations of criminal history.
5. Listing of 3 non-related personal references. This list shall have complete contact information for all references. This portion of the application process is considered incomplete if full contact information for the references is not provided.
6. Waiver of confidentiality allowing the criminal background checks necessary for the position. The criminal background check should include a local, state and national search of the applicant's criminal record. (In the case of the Conference Summer Camps, the Associate Director of Life Span Ministries will conduct the search. In the case of Conference Retreats or District Events, each local church will conduct the search for applicants. See Certifying Officer in Section F below).

C. If any of the reports raise questions about the fitness of the applicant to serve, the application will be disapproved and the person will not be placed in service. For example, persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

1. If the applicant (paid or unpaid) is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children, youth, or vulnerable adults, the applicant shall not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall disqualify any applicant.
2. Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, neglectful or ritual shall disqualify any applicant.
3. Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc., shall disqualify any applicant.
4. Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to the application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
5. Persons having a criminal history of a drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to the application shall not be allowed to directly or indirectly supervise children, youth or vulnerable adults.

D. During the first year of this policy's implementation (from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008), all current staff persons and volunteers will begin submitting to the screening procedures prescribed by this policy.

E. After July 1, 2008, no person will be allowed to supervise children without being completely screened, trained, and having agreed to follow the minimum supervisory standards. After July 1, 2008, the following persons will submit to screening: any new volunteer or staff person; any volunteer or staff person with a break in service of one year or more; and any person for whom it has been five (5) or more years since their last criminal background check.

F. Great care shall be taken in establishing the protocols for conducting the review of the application, the reference checks, reviewing the criminal background check, verifying the required training, and maintaining the personnel records for each applicant. The certifying officer for Conference sponsored summer camp staff will be the Annual Conference Connectional Ministries Associate Director of Life Span Ministries. He/She shall verify the certification of all summer camp staff to the Director of Connectional Ministries prior to the first camp each summer. The certifying officer for each local church should be carefully selected and assisted in establishing the process they will use to certify persons working with their children, youth and vulnerable adults. Results of screens shall be kept under lock and key and revealed on a "need-to-know" basis. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's secured

personnel file maintained by the certifying officer. The certifying officer is responsible for reviewing and following up on each application prior to service. All applications, related forms, and requirements must be completed prior to service. In the event that a reference follow up is accomplished by phone, detailed notes of the conversation should also be included in the personnel file.

- G. When the Conference is hosting an event for which the local church is responsible for chaperones, we recommend that all brochures and other written material contain language specifying these policies and procedures as **MINIMUM BASIC GUIDELINES** for all adults serving as chaperones at the event. (Each church will be expected to certify that all their chaperones and counselors supervising their children meet or exceed these minimum requirements and will follow the preventive practices outline in this policy.)

## V. Minimum Supervisory Standards

Conscientious and intentional supervision of participants and adults is the second step for providing a holy place of safety for children, youth and vulnerable adults. These supervisory procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse to the children, youth, or vulnerable adults and to protect staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations. Again, these are **MINIMUM** Supervisory Standards. Each children's activity may adopt more stringent requirements as necessary. **MINIMUM** Supervisory Standards require:

- A. All staff persons and volunteers working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in Conference activities receive an annual Safe Sanctuaries orientation. This orientation will include information regarding the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, the minimum standards of supervision, the signs of possible abuse, and the process for reporting suspected child abuse. This training may be received at one of the Conference-sponsored training events held across the Annual Conference or may be conducted locally following the training outline provided by the Conference. (This outline will be available on the Conference Website).
- B. All children's activities utilize the "two-adult rule" when supervising children. The two-adult rule requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be two adults (not spouses) present. It is expected that there will be at least one male and at least one female adult supervisor when there are male and female participants. This may include the presence of an adult monitor who frequently moves in and out of rooms to supervise the activities. An assistant who is a minor shall not supervise other children regardless of age differentiation and therefore would not satisfy the two-adult rule.
- C. No adult (age 18 or older) shall supervise an age group unless he/she is AT LEAST 5 years older than the children or youth with whom he/she is working.
- D. Each room or space where children are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open. All indoor activities should occur in open view. Should the children's activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to adapt practices and procedures to the setting so all are properly supervised.
- E. Registration materials for activities in which children are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed written permission forms, which include pertinent health information, in order to participate.
- F. All participants who can understand a covenant shall sign a participation covenant wherein each person states their understanding of the rules and their agreement to follow the rules. Adult staff and volunteers will have a covenant that includes a reminder of the Safe Sanctuaries minimum supervisory requirements that serve as a protection for all involved.
- G. The screening and supervisory requirements outlined in this policy shall be followed when a nursery is provided at Conference or District sponsored events.

### Additional considerations:

- To achieve compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event.
- Recognizing that there is safety in numbers, children and youth will be instructed to use the "buddy system" wherein children are required to remain with at least one other partner at all times for help and protection.
- It is also strongly encouraged that there be present at least one leader who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR at all Conference and District events.
- Any one-to-one mentoring, consulting, or counseling involving children, youth or vulnerable adults shall be conducted in sight of another leader.

- At events that require overnight accommodations, participants will be supervised by an adults. We strongly recommend that at least two (2) leaders be present in every room be occupied by a participant. If necessary for participants to share a room with a leader, leaders shall sleep in separate beds from participants, so long as any one leader shall not be alone with any one participant. Recognizing lodging accommodations may be restricted in some situations, one leader is adequate, so long as any one leader shall NOT be alone with any one child, youth or vulnerable adult.

## **VI. Reporting**

A. Once an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it is crucial that it be dealt with promptly and in a clearly outlined manner. We will take seriously all allegations received. The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported shall report the incident immediately to the staff person in charge of the children's activity. The staff person in charge of the children's activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall provide immediate care to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim. Further, the staff person in charge of the children's activity will obtain necessary information such as, the name of the alleged victim, his or her address and family contact information, the nature of the allegation, and the name of the alleged perpetrator. Also, the staff person in charge of the children's activity will contact his/her supervisor or the next person in the supervisory chain immediately. (In the case of Conference-sponsored events the Director of Connectional Ministries would be contacted. In the case of District-sponsored/supported events, the District Superintendent would be contacted.)

B. The staff person in charge of the children's event and the supervisor will consult to determine the appropriate next steps of response. The Conference Crisis Team will be contacted to join in the consultation to support a comprehensive response to this incident.

C. Following the consultation, the staff person in charge of the children's activity will implement a response plan formulated in the consultation. If the allegations fall within the list of child abuse offenses found in the Georgia code 19-7-5, which requires mandatory reporting, the staff person shall make a report to the proper authorities. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will cooperate fully with the investigation. The parents of the child shall be contacted and informed of the alleged incident and appropriately assisted by the staff person in charge of the children's activity.

D. The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well-being of all involved, be removed with dignity from further contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults until an appropriate investigation has taken place. In the event that the respondent is the staff person in charge of the children's activity, the report should be made to the Director of Connectional Ministries who will place the staff person on leave of absence during the investigation, will ensure the safety of the camp participants and leaders, and will provide for the administration of the event.

E. If the allegation concerns activities or persons outside any supervisory relationship to a Conference related event or activity, the staff person in charge of the Conference activity will consult with his/her supervisor immediately. If the allegations fall within the list of child abuse offenses found in the Georgia code 19-7-5, which requires mandatory reporting, the staff person in charge of the children's activity will make the initial contact with the Department of Family and Children's Services in a timely manner. For example, if a child tells a Conference camp counselor about being abused by a relative during the prior year, the counselor receiving the statement will make a report to the staff person in charge of the children's activity. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will report this incident to his/her supervisor and a report will be filed with the proper authorities as the situation dictates.

F. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will carefully and contemporaneously document all information received and all actions taken in follow-up of the allegation.

## **VII. Response Plan**

A. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in a children's activity, the entire staff of that activity shall cooperate with all official investigating agencies and appropriate conference officials.

B. The staff person in charge of the children's activity will immediately contact one of the members of the Annual Conference Crisis Team (Bishop, Director of Connectional Ministries, or Director of Communications). The staff person in charge of the children's activity and the Conference Crisis team will consult to assess the incident, offer support to the staff person in charge of the children's activity, and

determine the appropriate comprehensive response to this situation. This consultation will continue as the response is implemented.

C. The Conference Crisis Team will designate the official spokesperson for this incident. This designated person is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Conference Communications Director, who will provide access to the spokesperson. Those answering phones or receiving in-person inquiries for information will politely refer all those seeking information to the Conference Director of Communications.

D. Pastoral care and support will be available to all persons involved with the incident. The Conference Pastoral Counselor may be called to assist in providing care. The Conference Sexual Ethics Response Team may be deployed by the Bishop if it is determined that their service would be helpful.

### **VIII. Accountability**

Because we highly value protecting the children, youth, and vulnerable adults that participate in the ministries of the church, protecting our staff both paid and volunteer from potential false allegations of abuse, and protecting all the various ministry assets of the church for making disciples of Jesus Christ, we expect full implementation of this policy.

A. The Director of Connectional Ministries will be held accountable for fully implementing this policy for Annual Conference events sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries by July 1, 2008.

B. Each District Superintendent will be held accountable for fully implementing this policy for events sponsored by the District by July 1, 2008.

C. Each District Superintendent will hold local church pastors and congregational leaders accountable for developing and adopting a Safe Sanctuaries policy by December 31, 2008. The pastor of a church failing to comply with this requirement will be subject to an Administrative Complaint (§362.2, *The Book of Discipline, 2004*) being filed against him or her.

D. Local church pastors will be held accountable to the Annual Conference for the full implementation of the local church policy after it is adopted.

E. After July 1, 2008, children and youth from churches who do not comply with the Annual Conference policy will not be permitted to participate in Conference and District children/youth events.

F. The Office of Connectional Ministries will be accountable to offer periodic Safe Sanctuaries training for volunteers and staff, for local church certifying officers, and for local church staff persons in charge of children's activities. Additional resources will be developed and made available to local churches (e.g., sample policies for local churches, sample forms, sources for conducting criminal background checks, etc.).

### **IX. Amendments**

Following adoption of this policy by the Annual Conference session:

A. Editorial changes that clarify the policy without changing its requirements may be made by the Conference Secretary in consultation with the Safe Sanctuaries Team.

B. Substantive changes that alter the requirements outlined in this policy must be presented to the Annual Conference for approval.

Note: The policies were developed utilizing the resources developed by the Reverend Joy Thornburg Melton available through Cokesbury or Discipleship Resources.

*Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*

*Safe Sanctuaries for Youth: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in Youth Ministries*

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### **Appendix E. When Divorce Comes to a Clergy Family** Approved June 10, 2008

#### **I. God's Plan for Marriage**

The United Methodist Social Principles expresses our understanding of God's plan for marriage and the sad reality that some marriages will end in divorce.

*God's plan is for lifelong, faithful marriage. The church must be on the forefront of premarital and post*

*marital counseling in order to create and preserve strong marriages. However, when a married couple is estranged beyond reconciliation, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, divorce is a regrettable alternative in the midst of brokenness. We grieve over the devastating emotional, spiritual, and economic consequences of divorce for all involved and are concerned about high divorce rates. (The Book of Discipline, 2004, ¶ 161 G.)*

## II. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline a procedure for clergy facing divorce because their marital relationship has become estranged beyond reconciliation.

A. Prevention and Intervention: We encourage families to seek pastoral counseling as a first resort, not as a last resort. Individual, couple or family counseling is available through the conference health benefits package provided to every full-time clergy, and on a limited basis from the Conference Pastoral Counselor. While we encourage and expect the parties involved to exhaust all efforts to restore the relationships through marital and/or family counseling, this policy does not outline any requirements for preventive counseling. (See *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2004, R22.* "Support for Clergy Families," which addresses the pressures and concerns for the pastoral family.)

B. When a Divorce Process Begins: Our goals are informed by *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2004, R23, "Caring for Clergy Spouses, Children, and Youth During Divorce"*:

- To support all members of the family while they are going through the stress and pain that accompany a divorce.
- To maintain the integrity of the pastoral office held in sacred trust within the congregation and the covenant community of all clergy.
- To assess and facilitate (where possible) the clergy person's fitness for ministry.\

## III. Procedure

A. The Church shall be as proactive as possible in maintaining the integrity of the role of the clergy person and of the pastoral family. The District Superintendent is charged with maintaining the integrity of the Church when conversations or accusations from individuals or church leadership indicate there are known or highly suspected marital problems, including but not limited to infidelity. The District Superintendent has a responsibility to confer, suggest, and even pursue appropriate action with the pastoral family instead of waiting until legal civil action has been started.

One way District Superintendents fulfill this proactive assignment is by monitoring each clergy person's compliance with the requirement to attend at least one conference-approved Sexual Ethics Seminar every three years.

B. Once the clergy person or the clergy's spouse informs the District Superintendent of an impending separation or divorce the following steps should be taken:

1. The District Superintendent notifies the Bishop and the Cabinet.
2. The District Superintendent meets with clergy and spouse as soon as possible. If there appears to be no possibility of reconciliation, the District Superintendent chooses a co-District Superintendent and together they meet with the clergy and spouse for guidance and exploration of the procedures to follow. [While we desire the cooperation of the non-clergy spouse so we can know more fully the issues involved in the divorce and can offer appropriate care, we are clear in understanding that we cannot require anything of the non-clergy spouse.]
3. Once divorce petition(s) have been filed, the clergy person is required to provide legal copies of the divorce petitions within 10 calendar days. We request the spouse to do the same. This will also inform the District Superintendent of the initial concerns between both parties leading to the divorce.

The following church process will be followed regardless of the timing of a civil process:

If the petition reveals:

- a. Abuse, neglect, adultery, or any chargeable offense, ¶2702 and ¶362 will be followed.
- b. "Irreconcilable differences" or "mutually agreed upon reasons for divorce":
  - i. Prior to filing for divorce – Unless counseling is currently ongoing by a conference-approved counselor, counseling sessions will be required for the clergy and recommended for the spouse, with the possibility of an involuntary leave of absence if the clergy refuses or neglects counseling. The purpose of counseling is to ensure *both* parties have sought to redeem and repair the relationship and/or the integrity of *both* individuals and other family and church members before civil action is taken, if possible. Counseling is necessary as the clergy person works toward wholeness and healing so as to continue the effective work of ministry with the people of God.

ii. After filing for divorce – If both parties are amicable and willing to participate in counseling at the time of the filing of the civil petition and notification of the District Superintendent, a minimum of six (6) sessions by an approved conference counselor is recommended to the couple, required for the clergy person, with additional sessions allowed as determined by the same approved conference counselor.

- The purpose of such counseling will be to aid both parties in dissolving the marriage and adjusting to the changes that a divorce will bring to the couple, family members, and to the church body.
- If the non-clergy spouse is unwilling to participate in this counseling, the clergy will still be required to engage in a minimum of six sessions by an approved conference counselor.
- When the required number of sessions are completed, the clergy will make an appointment with the Conference Pastoral Counselor who will assess the clergy person's readiness to continue in ministry. The Conference Pastoral Counselor will make a recommendation to the Appointive Cabinet.
- Clergy are required to sign appropriate releases of information with all counselors to permit their communication with the Conference Pastoral Counselor. This sharing is necessary to understand the scope of issues addressed and the readiness of a clergy person to continue in ministry with integrity and effectiveness. Appropriate professional confidences will be maintained.

4. As soon as practical after notification of an impending divorce, the District Superintendent will schedule a meeting with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson and the clergy person. This meeting is to discuss the impending separation/divorce and to develop a strategy for informing the PPR Committee and the congregation at-large.

a. If a grievance is filed, then ¶360 takes full effect.

b. If no grievance is filed, then the PPR Committee and the congregation are informed and prepared for all partners to deal with grief, anger, hurt and other emerging feelings.

5. When the divorce decree is completed and filed, the clergy person is to provide legal copies of the decree within 10 calendar days to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent shall compare the decree to the previously filed petition(s) to confirm that no further corrective action or church judicial/administrative process is required in determining the clergy person's fitness to carry duties associated with the clergy's sacred office. A copy of the divorce decree is to be placed in the clergy person's personnel file.

6. The District Superintendent, clergy person, PPR Chair and, when possible, the Bishop will meet and consider options open to both the local church and the pastor. The options are listed in ¶362.4.a :

- i. Retaining current appointment
- ii. An appointment to another parish
- iii. Leave of Absence (voluntary or involuntary)
- iv. Sabbatical Leave
- v. Honorable Location
- vi. Retirement
- vii. Withdrawal
- viii. Voluntary Termination
- ix. Transfer to another conference
- x. Continued Counseling
- xi. Administrative Complaint
- xii. Judicial Complaint

If the clergy person is unwilling to engage in the outlined policy or if the Appointive Cabinet feels a change of status needs to be recommended, a complaint may be filed with the Board of Ordained Ministry and may result in one of the preceding options.

7. To facilitate the wholeness and healing of the clergy and spouse after the divorce decree is final, both parties are requested to meet with a Conference-approved counselor once a quarter for the first year. The clergy person is required to participate in this pastoral after-care for the first year. The clergy person is required to have the Conference-approved counselor submit a report noting compliance with this requirement to the Conference Pastoral Counselor. Appropriate release of information agreements shall be signed to permit this consultation.

8. When the process is followed to completion and the clergy is in good standing, a statement to such effect will be entered into their permanent file of record. The Conference Pastoral Counselor will report compliance to the clergy person's District Superintendent.

9. When a clergy person's marriage dissolves in divorce, and when that divorce is the second or more in the clergy person's lifetime, the District Superintendent will bring this to the attention of the Appointive Cabinet for evaluation. The clergy person will be required to participate in psychological testing and evaluation with the Conference-approved testing agency paid for by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Appropriate releases will be signed to permit the testing results to be sent to the Conference Pastoral Counselor for assessment and for making a recommendation to the Appointive Cabinet as they determine the clergy person's fitness for continued service as a clergy. While this may appear to be stringent and/or judgmental, we believe these procedures are necessary for the healing of broken persons and the integrity of the sacred ministerial office.

#### IV. After Care of Divorced Clergy and Their Families

The District Superintendent will continue to offer pastoral and practical care for the clergy person and their family. The form of practical assistance needed will vary depending on the specific circumstances. The practical assistance offered will be determined by the resources available.

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### **Appendix F:            Regarding Proceeds from Sale of Abandoned or Discontinued Church Property**

Approved: June 2006, Amended: June 2007

In order to comply with Paragraph 2548.3 of *The Discipline of The United Methodist Church* that church property which has been discontinued or abandoned be dealt with "...in keeping with the annual conference policy", the New and Revitalized Congregational Development Committee of The South Georgia Annual Conference proposes the following to establish an annual conference policy that honors our adopted Vision Statement for The South Georgia Annual Conference:

In accordance with Paragraph 2549 of *The Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (2012), be it resolved that if the Bishop, Cabinet, and District Board of Church Location and Building make a decision to sell the property and assets of discontinued or abandoned United Methodist churches in the South Georgia Annual conference and if there are no deed restrictions, then the proceeds be distributed as follows to expand the Kingdom of God:

- First, pursuant to ¶ 2553 approved by the 2019 session of the General Conference, that portion of the total liability for the Pre-82, MPP, and CRSP pension plans pertaining to the South Georgia Conference that is allocated to the local church under the Conference's approved procedure must be paid.
- Second, any unpaid debt to the South Georgia Conference for pensions and/or health benefits already paid by the Conference on behalf of the church will be repaid from the proceeds of the sale. This shall not include unpaid apportionments. If there are other monetary assets from which to pay this debt, they shall be exhausted first, before using proceeds from the sale of the property.
- 50% of the remainder shall go to the District Board of Missions (or comparable body) which shall be used for birthing new congregations or officially designated revitalized congregations within the district or outside the district in partnership with one or more other districts. In accordance with paragraph 2549.7 in *The Discipline*, if a discontinued or abandoned church is located in an urban center with more than 50,000 population (determined by the last official U.S. census), these district funds will be used for new and revitalized congregations within that urban center.
- 50% of the remainder shall go to the South Georgia Annual Conference Committee on Congregational Development for the purpose of starting and revitalizing congregations. In accordance with paragraph 2549.7 in *The Discipline*, if a discontinued or abandoned church is located in an urban center with more than 50,000 population (determined by the last official U.S. census), these *Congregational Development* funds will be used for new and revitalized congregations within that urban center.

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### **Appendix G:            Conflict of Interest Policy**

Approved: June 2017

### **Article I -- Purpose**

1. The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church's (the "Conference") interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of an interested person, as defined below.
2. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

### **Article II -- Definitions**

1. Interested person – Any director, principal or officer of the Conference, any member of the Board of Trustees of the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Inc., any member of the appointive Cabinet and extended Cabinet, any member of a standing committee of the Conference, any member of a special committee or ad hoc task force of the Conference any member of the Georgia United Methodist Foundation, Inc., and Conference staff, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
2. Financial interest –
  - (a) A person has a Financial Interest if: the individual or a member of his/her family has, directly or indirectly, any actual or potential ownership, investment, or compensation arrangement with the Conference or with any entity that conducts transactions with the Conference; or the individual has a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Conference is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
  - (b) Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
  - (c) A Financial Interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest in all cases. A conflict of interest will be determined by the procedure set forth in Article III below.
  - (d) Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

### **Article III -- Procedures**

1. Duty to Disclose – In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the board or committee.
2. Recusal of Self – An interested person may recuse himself or herself at any time from involvement in any decision or discussion in which the interested person believes he or she has or may have a conflict of interest, without going through the process for determining whether a conflict of interest exists.
3. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists -- After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining members of the board or committee shall decide if a conflict of interest exists pursuant to the procedures set forth below.
4. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
  - a. An interested person may make a presentation at a board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
  - b. The Chairperson of the board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - c. After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether the Conference can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested interested persons whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Conference 's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
  - e. The minutes of the board or committee shall contain:
    - i. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board or committee decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
    - ii. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.
5. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
  - a. If a board or committee has reasonable cause to believe an interested person has failed to disclose actual or

possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the interested person of the basis for such belief and afford the interested person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

- b. If, after hearing the interested person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board or committee determines the interested person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action.

#### **Article IV – Compensation**

1. A voting member of a board or committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that interested person's compensation.
2. A voting member of a board or committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that interested person's compensation.
3. No voting member of a board or committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.
4. Notwithstanding the above, nothing in this policy shall prohibit the clergy members of the Conference from voting on such reports as are presented to the entire Annual Conference during duly called sessions of the Annual Conference (such as voting on the report of the Commission on Equitable Compensation which sets minimum salaries, or voting on the Conference budgets which contains the salaries of all Conference staff).

#### **Article V - Dissemination of Policy**

The Director of Administrative Services shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of this Conflict of Interest Policy is provided to each employee of the Conference on an annual basis. A signed statement of adherence shall be a requisite of continued employment.

The Conference Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of this Conflict of Interest Policy is provided to each elected member of the boards and committees of the Conference on an annual basis. A signed statement of adherence shall be required before a person may serve on a board, committee, or task force.

#### **Article VI - Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the Conference operates in a manner consistent with its charitable and religious purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

1. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
2. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations, if any, conform to the Conference's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.
3. When conducting the periodic reviews the Conference may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Conference of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.