

2010 Parliamentary Resource Guide

edited by Dr. Verda Bradley



Parliamentary Handbook

***“Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance”
Ps.1:5***

Introduction

This booklet has been compiled from The Book of Discipline of the AME Church 2008, Roberts Rules of Order 10th Edition, Lay Study Guide, Fifth District Constitutions & Bylaws and the Southern California Conference Lay Constitutions and Basic Principles of Protocol and Etiquette, and the Bible. It is intended to provide insight into a few parliamentary rules.

It is not a substitute for any of the above mentioned documents. It does not answer all questions but it may spur you to read further on your own.

It is a very simplistic way to expedite the business of the Fifth District Conference Lay Organization. It is my hope that you will find it useful as a reference guide.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Parliamentarian.

May God Truly Bless you!

Dr. Verda Bradley

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What Is the Mission of Our Church

The Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people. The Vision is at every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is to seek out and save the lost, and to serve the needy. It is also the duty of the Church to continue to encourage all members to become involved in all aspects of church training.

The ultimate purposes are: 1. make available God's biblical principles 2. spread Christ's liberating gospel and 3. provide continuing programs which will enhance the entire social development of all people.

Objectives: In order to meet the needs at every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall implement strategies to train all members in 1. Christian discipleship, 2. Christian leadership, 3. current teaching methods and materials, 4. history and significance of the AME Church 5. God's biblical principles and 6. Social development to which all should be applied to daily living.

The Book of Discipline of the AME Church 2008

Purpose of the Lay

The purpose of the Lay Organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church so that each lay person may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's kingdom and creating happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

The Book of Discipline of the AME Church 2008

Authority

The Book of Discipline of the AME Church 2008 seeks to treasure and reaffirm our faith in the fundamental doctrine and polity of our Methodist tradition and heritage. At the same time it sets forth and recommends the new laws and structural changes as enacted by the recent General Conference, keeping faith with both our yesterday and today as we attempt to explore the mission of Jesus Christ for our Church. To do so means that we take a hard look at the political, economic and educational systems, which affect the very existence and life of our people.

Any provision or condition not expressly covered in either the Constitution or Bylaws of the organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long established policy, customs, tenets, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

The Book of Discipline of the AME Church 2004/ 2008

Need To Know

“The Teaching of the wise is a fountain of life. Pr. 13:14”

In the Church, we are provided representative form of government, through the Episcopacy, laws are enacted through deliberative discussion, debate, and action. Furthermore, almost every man, woman, and youth at some time belongs to at least one organization in which decisions are made and action taken following deliberative discussion. Those who wish to participate effectively either as governing citizens or active organization members need at least basic knowledge of the principles and procedures by which decisions may properly and fairly made.

Many people feel that only officers or those who aspire to office need to understand parliamentary law and procedures. This is almost like saying traffic lights are only for drivers of cars. However it is important for pedestrians to know how to follow the signs as well. Think of a computer. Without knowledge of how to operate the software such a valuable tool is useless. Knowing the finer points of different software enables the user to develop wonderful documents. Or think of sports. Few people want to participate in any game, from golf to bridge, without at least some knowledge of the rules. Spectators, too, receive far more enjoyment from a game when they understand what is going on and why. The same can be said about members in a meeting.

No one should be content to be “just” a member. To contribute his best to, and to gain the most from, his organization, every member should have some insight into the methods of transacting business in its meetings. As with any sport or game, learning and following the “rules” of proper parliamentary procedure will make for greater enjoyment of any meeting.

Parliamentary law

Parliamentary law is actually the rule of the game of democracy. Its aims are to expedite business, to maintain order, to ensure justice and equality, and to accomplish the purpose for which the organization was formed.

Rules fall into two classes - general and special. General rules are those generally used in all assemblies. They are found in any standard text on parliamentary law. For years, the AME Church has accepted Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised as an authority.

Special rules are those which have been composed and “standard rules.” Special rules supersede any general rules with which they may conflict. When a question of procedure arises, the special rules should be considered first. If they do not contain an answer, then is the time to turn to the organization’s officially adopted parliamentary authority.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

THE PRINCIPLES

Parliamentary law is founded on seven basic principles. These are:

- Courtesy To All** Every member has equal rights to propose motions, debate and vote. A member is not only guaranteed these rights, but is obligated to repeat them for other members.
- Justice For All** Every action item must receive full debate unless suspended by a two-thirds vote. Every member has the right to express his or her views completely within the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- Majority Rule** The entire membership seldom agrees on all issues. A majority vote decides questions and issues except where basic rights of members are involved; then, a larger vote is required.
- Respect For The Rights Of The Minority** The rights of the minority to be heard, to discuss, and to oppose are valued and protected by parliamentary procedure.
- Partiality For None** Only issues are under discussion, never the person who introduced the issue.
- Protect The Absentee** Business can only be conducted when a quorum is present. The by-laws specify how many members constitute a quorum.
- One Item At A Time** Orderly procedure requires that only one question may be before the assembly at a time. This avoids confusion and ensures that all issues are given proper consideration.

Again basic fundamentals of parliamentary law include: 1. Courtesy to all, 2. One item at a time 3. Majority rule 4. Respect for the rights of the minority 5. Justice for all 6. Partially for none. ***“Let us not become weary in doing good. Gal.6:9”***

Robert's states that “American Parliamentary Law is built upon the principle that rights must be respected: rights of the majority, of the minority, of individuals, of absentees, and rights of all of these together.” In brief, parliamentary law is the application of the ***“Do unto others what you would want done to you”***

THE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to promote efficient, organized meeting. To accomplish this, parliamentary procedure has four objectives.

Expedite Business

The meeting should not be longer than it needs to be to accomplish the goals of the organization.

Maintain Order

The rules of parliamentary procedure require that only one member may speak at a time. The presiding officer must recognize an individual before speaking.

Ensure Justice And Equality For All

All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations. The rules allow for debate and vote by each member.

Accomplish The Group's Objectives

Members should know the by-laws and rules. Unnecessary techniques and procedures cause confusion of the membership, waste time, and should not be presented.

Basic principles include the following;

1. The organization is paramount. Its wishes supersede those of any individual or small group of individuals. The power of any meeting is in the hands of the voting members.
2. All members are equal. Every member has the same rights to introduce business, to participate in deliberation, and vote.
3. An established minimum number of voting members must be present in order to transact business legally. If the bylaws of an organization do not otherwise define this number (the quorum), the general rule is that the majority of the entire membership must be present in order to transact business legally.
4. Only one main proposition or topic may be before the assembly at a time; and only one member may have the floor at any one time.
5. Full debate before action on a main proposition is a right that can be suspended only by a two-thirds vote.
6. A proposition or issue is the item under discussion, **never the person** who

introduced it; personal remarks are always out of order.
"For our struggle is not again flesh and blood... Eph.6:12"

7. A question once settled may not be presented again in that same form in the same session. This is to avoid waste of time. The only way to bring it back in the same meeting is to move to reconsider the vote (and some motions may not be reconsidered).
8. A majority vote decides a question except in cases where basic rights of members are involved; then a larger vote is required.
9. A two-thirds vote is necessary for any motion that deprives a member of his rights in any way such as changing the rules of debate, cutting off debate, closing nominations, closing the polls, rescinding action without notice. (To facilitate counting a standing vote is best.)
10. Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote when the vote is taken, by their silence agree to go along with the decision of the majority.

Motions

A motion is a tool by which all business is introduced to assembly. The term "motion" means a formal proposal that certain action be taken. Motions help members accomplish what they come to the meeting to do. There are five classes of motions. They are classified according to their nature:

Five Classes of Motions

1. Main	II. Subsidiary III. Privileged IV. Incidental	V. Motions that bring a question back before the assembly
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Motions have rank and there is one designed to meet every situation. The first class of motions-**main motions** is used to present new business. The secondary motions **subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions** -can either help adopt the main motion or help business move forward according to the members' desires.

Eight steps necessary to obtain action of the assembly on a motion include:

1. Obtaining the floor. A member rises and addresses the Chair (presiding officer), "Mister (or Madam) President."
2. Assigning the floor. The Chair recognizes the member and assigns him the floor by calling his name or bowing to him. *The AME way is to identify yourself, name your conference if it is a 5th district meeting or local church if it is a Southern California Conference meeting.*

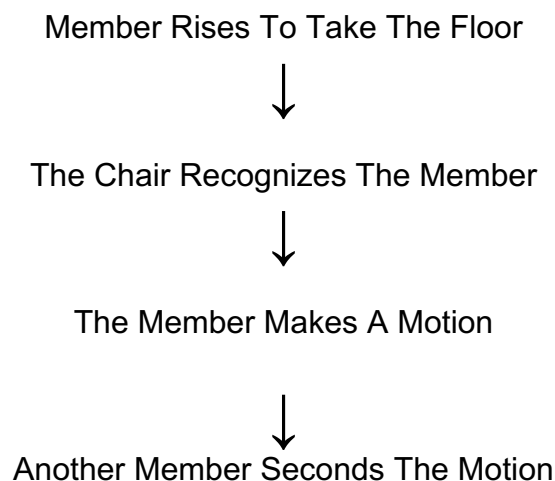
3. Making the motion. The member introduces the motion by saying “I move that...”
4. Seconding the motion. Another member says without rising, “I second the motion.”
[AME’s usually rise to second the motion and state name, conference or local church. However, Robert’s Rules indicate in small assemblies rising is not required. Pg 34.](#)
5. Stating the motion. The Chair states the motion: “it has been moved and seconded that....”
6. Debate. The Chair opens the discussion by saying: “Are there any remarks? - “is there any discussion?” - “Are there any questions?” - or - “Are you ready for the question?”
7. Putting the question. The Chair puts the question - that is, takes the vote - by stating: “The question is on the motion that ... (repeating the motion). Those in favor will say “yes” Those opposed will say “No.” The Chair pauses for each vote and evaluates it.
8. Announcing the vote. The Chair states the result of the vote.

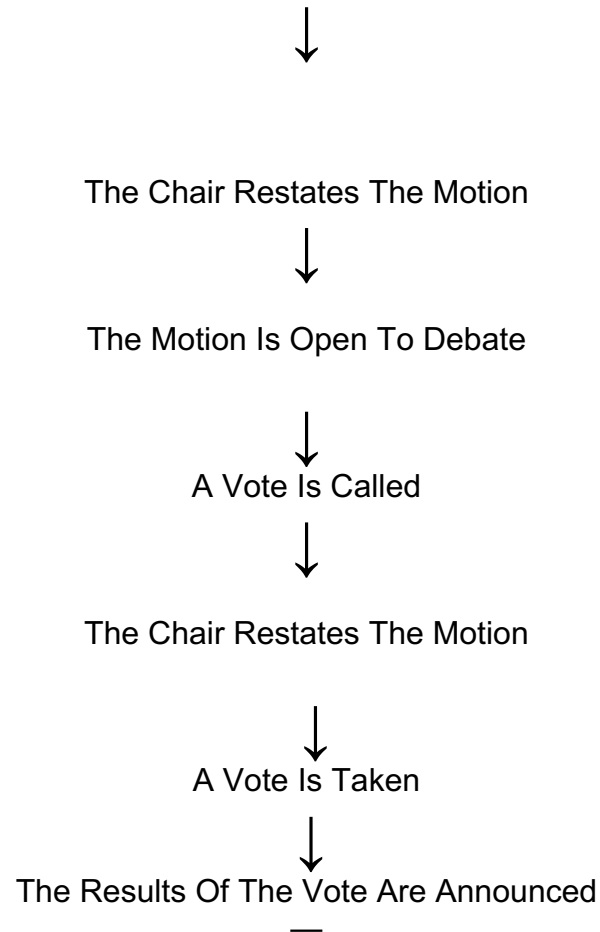
“The ‘yes’ have it, the motion is carried, and (repeating the content of the motion).”

No’s have it, the motion is lost, and (repeating the content of the motion in the negative).”

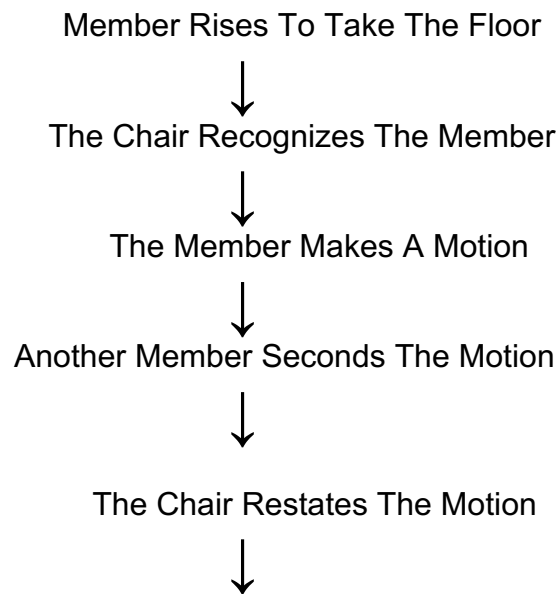
Action is not complete until the Chair has stated the result of the vote.

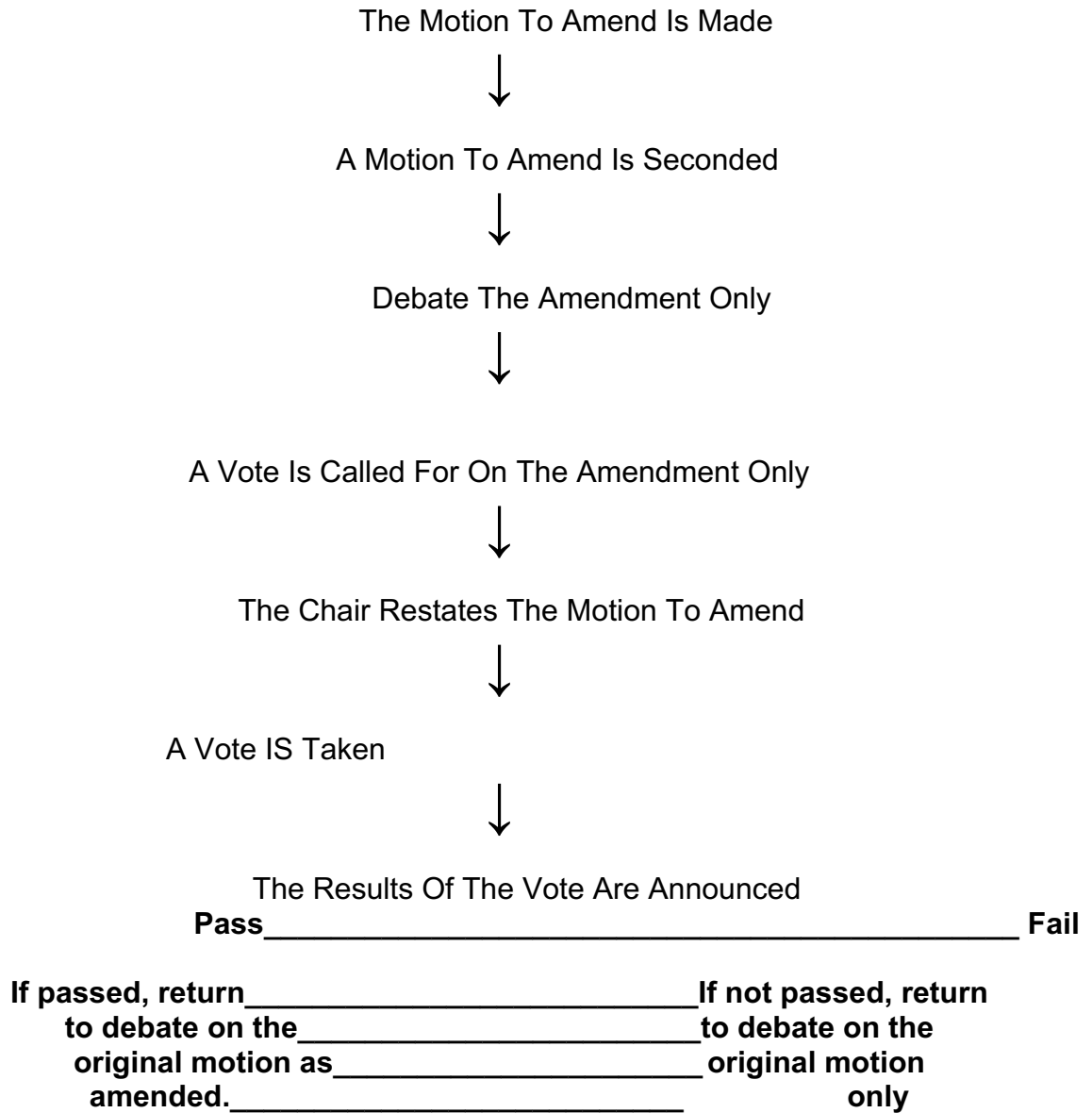
PROGRESS OF A MAIN MOTION





PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE TO AMEND MAIN MOTION





WHAT IS A LEADER

*A leader is committed to the cause of Jesus Christ. God's calling to lead (purpose) should bring forth a full commitment to the gospel.

*A leader believes in himself or herself. A leader believes he or she can accomplish something.

*A leader believes in others. A leader encourages those who are uncertain of their own abilities. A leader believes others are capable of doing more than they think they can. A leader affirms others.

*A leader pursues excellence in work, in planning, in relations with others. Little things are important.

*A leader admits mistakes and is not afraid to do so either. A leader may fail. A leader learns from mistakes. A leader risks.

*A leader is creative. Ideas fuel the flame of creativity. A leader looks for new better ways to do things.

*A leader is a worker. A leader is willing to do what needs to be done in order to get the job done, even if it includes dirty hands, some sweat!

*A leader is a dreamer. The church needs leaders who can dream dreams, see visions, and act upon them. God still tells us to do what is beyond the grasp of the ordinary.

*A leader is an educator. A leader helps all members of the group to understand what you are about. A leader also trains, stretches, encourages individual growth.

*A leader is a student. Church leaders must always continue to learn from God's revelation. They should also continue to learn how to manage, how to get results, how to relate, how to listen and observe - how to lead.

*A leader is a communicator. A leader communicates in order to be understood, as well as not to be misunderstood. A leader works at communication.

*A leader is ambitious. The church needs ambitious leaders who understand the gospel and are never quite satisfied with things as they are.

Duties of Officers
Constitution and Bylaws 5th District and Southern CA Conference Lay Org

THE DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

The President shall preside over its sessions during its regular, special or emergency meetings and shall also be Chairperson of the Executive Board. The President shall be the active head of said organization and shall be responsible for seeing that the constitution and Bylaws of the organizations as well as the orders and policies of the Executive Board are fully carried out. The President shall also be responsible for expanding and developing the lay work throughout the Conference through channels of the local Lay Organizations.

The president calls a meeting to order and makes sure a quorum is present. He or she then announces business before the assembly in proper order according to the agenda. During the meeting, members who are entitled to the floor must be recognized by the president before they may speak. It is the duty of the president to restate all motions after they are properly presented, put the motion to a vote and announce the results of the votes. He or she must be sure the entire assembly understands the pending motions and their effects. The president also has the responsibility to enforce rules of debate and order.

In order to expedite business, the president must restrict discussion to matters before the assembly and refuse to recognize frivolous or senseless motions. When committees are needed, the president assigns them.

Other duties of the president include: declaring the meeting adjourned; signing all orders, acts, and proceedings of the organizations; and, representing the organization to others.

THE DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president presides over meetings when the president is absent, incapacitated, or has retired. In the event the vice president is also absent, the secretary presides over the meeting until a temporary president can be elected. If the president steps down to debate an issue, the vice president takes over the meeting until the debate is finished.

When acting as presiding officer, the vice president has the same privileges, duties, and responsibilities as the president. The vice president may also be assigned other duties by the president, such as chairing a committee.

The First Vice President shall assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties. The First Vice President shall coordinate such programs as are assigned by the President. Section 4

The Second Vice President, in the absence of the President and first Vice President, shall preside at all the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The second Vice President shall coordinate such programs as are assigned by the President. Section 5.

The Third Vice President, in the absence of the President, First Vice president, and Second Vice President, shall preside at the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The Third Vice President shall coordinate such programs as are assigned by the President. Section 6.

Section 7. **The Recording Secretary** shall be responsible for the recording of attendance and accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings and shall read the minutes of any previous meetings, when called upon to do so by the President. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the recording Secretary shall preside until a chairperson "pro tern" is elected. The recording Secretary shall prepare for the presiding officer, a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting and a report of the Executive Board meetings to be presented at the Annual Session. The Recording Secretary shall hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

Section 8. The assistant Recording Secretary shall assist the Recording Secretary in keeping accurate records and, in the absence of the Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Secretary.

Section 9. The Corresponding Secretary shall review all correspondence, report pertinent information to the Executive Board, and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board.

THE DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary keeps all records for the organization. These records should be open to inspection by all members.

It is the secretary's duty to keep a list of all members and call roll at meetings, either to check attendance or to take a roll call vote.

The constitution and by-laws, a list of committee members, and copies of the minutes of previous meetings should be kept on hand at all meetings by the secretary. Another duty is to send out notices of called meetings and prepare a typed agenda for each meeting.

The secretary takes notes during the meeting and should be able to read back to the assembly the exact wording of a motion pending before the assembly. It should be recorded who presented the motion and whether it passed or failed. After the meeting, this record is signed and filed by the secretary and becomes the minutes.

Often members may want to dispense with reading of the minutes because they do not feel that the minutes are important to hear. However, it must be

remembered that the minutes are a legal document for the organization. By approving the minutes, the members are agreeing that “ this is what happened at the meeting” Reading aloud of the minutes may be waived if each member of the organization is sent a copy of the minutes in advance and if no member objects.

The chair then asks”Are there any corrections to the minutes” and pauses. Corrections, when proposed are usually handled by unanimous consent. It is generally smoother to do the approval of minutes also by unanimous consent although a formal motion to approve them is not out of order. (Roberts - Page 343)

THE DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

The treasurer is responsible for the money of an organization. He or she collects dues and other money and makes the bank deposits. The treasurer is also responsible for paying out money when directed to do so by the organization.

The treasurer must keep accurate records, along with copies of all bills, receipts and statements. A treasurer’s report should be made at each meeting. These reports usually do not contain details such as specific dates and payments. Total amounts are easier for the assembly to understand when the report is being read aloud.

The treasurer’s records should be reviewed by an audit committee and an annual auditor’s report made to the organization. The members must either accept or revise this report.

The Treasurer shall receive all monies and disburse same upon authorization of the President, as approved by the body. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Board meeting and Biennial Session... The Treasurer shall be bonded and said bond be held by the Recording Secretary. Section 10.

The Financial Secretary shall assist the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall write vouchers countersigned by the President that authorize expenditures, which are to be paid by the Treasurer. Monies received by the Financial Secretary shall be turned over to the Treasurer within thirty (30) days. The Financial secretary shall be bonded and said bond be held by the Recording Secretary. Section 11

Some organizations may choose to elect the following officers also.

Sergeant-At-Arms

This person acts as a doorkeeper and helps keep out unruly members. He or she is also responsible for putting the room in order before a meeting.

Parliamentarian

This person serves as advisor to the president on matters of parliamentary law. This person does not make decisions, but presents information taken from Robert's Rules of Order. The parliamentarian must be knowledgeable about parliamentary procedure. The Parliamentarian shall be the recognized authority on this Constitution and shall serve on the Constitution and standing Rules Committees and shall serve as a consultant to other committees as needed.

Director of Public Relations

This person seeks to bring about a harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media. Usually serves as chair of the publicity committee and is responsible for media events.

Historiographer

shall keep a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of the organization and make it available upon request. The Historiographer shall also act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies and other mementos.
Section 13.

Chaplain

This person prepares devotions, consulting with members for inspirational themes and shall make sufficient preparation to lead each Worship Service and give spiritual leadership to the organization Section 12

Photographer

This person takes photographs of organizational activities. It is also this person's responsibility to take care of the organization's photographic equipment.

The Director of Lay Activities

shall be responsible for planning a training program and course of study in accordance with the purposes and objectives of the Lay Organization. The proposed training program and course of study shall be presented to the Executive Board for approval at the first meeting following the close of the Annual or Biennial Session.

The Young Adult Representative

shall be responsible for coordinating teaching and training opportunities for Young Adults and Youth in conjunction with the Director of Lay Activities,

PRESIDENTIAL PROTOCOL

1. After installation a President makes a short acceptance speech, if possible announces committees, and adjourns meeting.
2. The incoming President should offer a choice of some important assignment to the runner-up in election.
3. The incoming President should secure all files and club material from the predecessor--see Protocol for Officers.
4. The President should not appoint the same members to important posts constantly--all members should have equal opportunity to shine.
5. The President should prepare the agenda and provide before the meeting a minimum copies to the Secretary and the Parliamentarian and to the Vice President.
6. Prepare a timetable for each meeting and try to stick to it.
7. A President always opens the meeting on time. A grace period of ten minutes is all that can be allowed.
8. The President opens the meeting with one tap of the gavel, uses it to maintain order when necessary and hands to the next President when elected or installed. At all other times the gavel is laid on the table.
9. The President stands to state a motion, to put it to vote and to announce the vote. The President may sit when listening to reports and debate.
10. The President avoids the use of "I" when in the Chair, says "The Chair" when speaking and when reporting says, "Your President" or "Your Chairman."
11. Avoid leaning on the table—stand erect and speak slowly and distinctly.
12. Remember that the member who rises first is the one you grant the floor.
13. Do not say, "You are out of order"--say, "The motion is not in order"—make it the

rule not the person.

14. Do not say, "Those contrary to, just call for the no votes"--members may be opposed to but they are not contrary.
15. Do not say, "vote by the usual sign"--tell the membership how the vote will be taken. See methods of voting.
16. Do not introduce business from the Chair but your pet projects may be introduced by a member.
17. Call the Vice President to the Chair when you report or debate.
18. A presiding officer never "wise-cracks."
19. Deliberate pauses at times give the slow thinking members time to catch up.
20. Presiding Officers can and should make frequent use of "General Consent" if sure of the feeling of the assembly and no objection is made--this saves valuable time.
21. If the assembly is hesitant to speak ask, "What is your pleasure?"
22. Consult with the Parliamentarian on a technical question or problem--a solution is always available.
23. The presiding officer may allow the Parliamentarian to explain or interpret, thus educate the members.
24. Do not rush the business meeting or it may appear that action is being "railroaded."
25. Do not let a business meeting drag or it may appear you are unsure of yourself or of a situation.
26. The President has brought to the assembly information as issued by superior bodies of the organization--if VERY important in complete form; or by distribution to chairmen or by recap.
27. A President achieves esteem and fame by sharing honors and by inspiration to all.
28. A seating chart at a special meeting is almost a "must" for the presiding officer that the Chair knows where to look when introducing honored officers and guests.

29. When introducing be sure you pronounce names correctly — check this carefully.
30. The President should invite all Board of Director members to all Board meetings and to include the Parliamentarian always and Committee Chairmen as the occasion requires.
31. The President, even if ex-officio of all committees should not attend all committee meetings but should allow the committee to go its own way.
32. A President should never be ex-officio of the Nominating Committee or even contact that committee after election or appointment.
33. The President personally or through an appointee should be sure that new members feel they belong and, if possible, give them some work to do.
34. In issuing instruction, the President should do so in simple terms, repeat them exactly as outlined originally and as often as necessary with the same tactful enthusiasm.
35. The President in making decisions should be kind yet firm and should never vacillate, think things through for the President had better be right in the decision as it is most difficult to retract a statement. This holds good for Committee Chairmen, too.
36. During the term, check graciously on committee functioning.
37. At the end of the term, the President notifies officers and chairmen regarding reports for the Annual Meeting.
38. At the end of the term, the President by note or telephone call should thank each officer and chairman who contributed to the work of the term.
39. Consult with the President-elect for choice of installing Officers; however, if installation is held at the same meeting as the election, this cannot be done.
40. Collect all files and material and turn it over at once to your successor.

OFFICER PROTOCOL

1. Obtain any books or files of your office from the outgoing officer. This officer should graciously see that you receive all promptly and that they come to you in perfect condition and intact.
2. Obtain copies of and learn your organization's By-Laws, National Laws if you belong to a National association and your own Standing Rules. Check on

accepted precedent, the unwritten law of your organization. Obtain a book by your accepted Parliamentary Authority and whatever other reference books you may desire. Make use of all the above as the occasion demands.

3. If you desire to change accepted precedent in your office, do it slowly and courteously.
4. Committees are interdependent upon each other and should cooperate willingly and graciously upon every occasion.
5. Officers and chairmen seated at a head table should be attentive, should not fidget or dream.
6. An officer, who will miss a meeting or be away for a short while should call the President, explain why and have available all necessary records for the pro-tem officer.
7. When an officer will be absent for an extended time, a resignation should be presented rather than to create work for another without a permanent office.
8. If you belong to a national organization do immediately notify headquarters after an election of new officers.
9. The Secretary sends to the President, several days in advance of a meeting, an advance copy of the minutes of the preceding meeting for assistance in preparing the Agenda.
10. Be sure your reports are properly presented and are in correct form. Make them brief, write in the third person, date them and sign them.
11. Officers should not feel they are above the membership, they are the servants of the membership.

MEMBER PROTOCOL

1. Members have rights and obligations--see basic rights of members.
2. Protocol demands that members arrive on time for a meeting and that they do not leave until the meeting is adjourned unless for a special reason and they obtain special permission.
3. Always address the Chair before you speak.
4. Be prompt in seconding motions to bring business to the point of discussion.

5. Address the Vice President or any person serving temporarily as “Mr. Chairman” or “Madam Chairman.”
6. Never walk between the chair and the assembly.
7. Develop the art of listening. Members should be well—mannered and attentive at all times.
8. A rap of the gavel from your President should bring you to instant attention.
9. Do not stand waiting for recognition when another already has the floor.
10. Do not fail to be seated at once if someone rises to a point of order while you have the floor.
11. Never interrupt another speaker, unless the Law gives you that right.
12. Do not try to compete with the speaker by chit-chat with your neighbors.
13. In speaking avoid personalities and be brief. Be courteous as well as correct.
14. Do not call “Question”—let silence indicate that the assembly is ready to vote.
15. Avoid cliques—they break up clubs.
16. Do not sleep in meeting, do not doodle and do not whisper.
17. Do not sit on your hands when applause is in order.
18. Good manners of the assembly demonstrates knowledge of Protocol.
19. Be a contributing member and serve on committees.
20. Be prompt in paying dues as well as prompt at meetings.
21. If you accept an assignment, then complete the work as quickly and as capably

References

Parliamentary Procedure

Historical View

Parliamentary procedure is a means of conducting an organized meeting. The process used today is based on the rules of the English Parliament. These rules were compiled by Thomas Jefferson in 1801 in his "Manual of Parliamentary Practice." This manual was adopted by the US Senate and House of Representatives — and used when it applied. Jefferson's Manual began to undergo changes as each colony or state interpreted the rules in their own manner. For example, motions did not have the same rank in the Senate as they did in the House.

These problems of conflicting practice led General Henry Robert to study parliamentary law in the 1860s. Robert realized that although the rules of Jefferson's Manual were appropriate for any type of meeting, it needed to be written so that all the principles could be adapted for use in ordinary society without changes of differing interpretations. Robert's book, "Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies," was published in 1876.

Henry Robert published the first book at his own expense, and it was so widely accepted that it soon became the only book associated with questions of parliamentary procedure. Robert's Rules Of Order Newly Revised, as it is titled today, was revised by Robert four times and has sold over two million copies.

Unanimous or General Consent

In cases where there appears to be no opposition in routine business or on questions of little importance, time can often be saved by the procedure of unanimous consent or as it is also call general consent or general consensus. Action in this manner is in accord with the principle that rules are designed for the protection of the minority and generally need not be strictly enforced when there is no minority to protect. Under these conditions, the method of unanimous consent or general consensus can be used to either to adopt a motion without a formal vote. Unanimous consent does not necessarily imply that every member is in favor of the proposed action, it may only mean that the opposition simply acquiesces (Page 51-52.)

If formal vote is necessary:

Example To Introduce Motions

Any business to be brought before the organization must be presented in the form of a motion. Only one motion may be considered at a time. In most circumstances, the steps involved in presenting and considering a motion are:

1. A member makes the motion
2. Another member seconds the motion
3. The chair restates the motion
4. The motion is debated by members
5. A vote is taken on the motion
6. The results of the vote are announced by the chair

Certain motions do not require nor permit a second, a debate, and or a vote. These can be identified in the in Robert's Rules of Order.

Before a member can make a motion, he or she must obtain the floor and be recognized by the chair. The member should rise, when the floor is available, and address the chair, saying, "Mr. (Madam) President," The chair must then recognize the member before he or she can state the motion.

	_____ President." Chair recognizes Fred Palmer."
Mr./Madam President	_____

The motion should state the words, "I move that," never, "I make a motion," "I would like

to make a motion,” or “I suggest.” A brief statement concerning the motion can be made, but debate should not be made until after the motion has been seconded.

“I move that we hold a banquet in December”

A second merely indicates another member is in favor of discussing the motion. the member simply says,” I second the motion,” or “Second.” It is not necessary for the member to stand or be recognized.

“I second the motion.”

The president must now repeat the motion so that all members understand the question before the assembly and state that the motion is open for discussion.

<u>“The motion has been made and seconded to hold a banquet in December. Is there any discussion?”</u>

All members of the organization are entitled to debate the motion. The member who introduced the motion may speak first.

This member may not speak against the motion, but may vote against it if so persuaded during the debate. After this member has spoken in favor of the motion, the next person to be recognized by the chair must be against the motion.

Debate alternates between those in favor and those opposed until all members have had the opportunity to speak. No person may speak twice until all members have had the opportunity to speak once on the same question.

**THE FIFTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION
OF THE
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Fifth District Lay Organization
(5th
EDLO) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE II - Purpose and Objectives

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of
the

African Methodist Episcopal Church, so that each layperson may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God, in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's Kingdom. Each member shall also utilize their God given abilities and skills to create happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

Section 2. Objectives - To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives are adopted:

A. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of the history,

traditions, and principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all laypersons.

B. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, our illustrious founder.

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

D. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Conference, Episcopal District and Connection.

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

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

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

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

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

J. To increase the circulation of church papers.

in K. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of laypersons, especially officers, order that they might more effectively perform their service assignments.

L. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for laypersons. throughout the Fifth District.

M. To help in the support of A.M.E. educational institutions.

N. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs and to the Fifth Episcopal District Economic Development Fund in support of the Fifth District programs.

ARTICLE III - Divisions

Section 1. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be composed of Conference Lay Organizations, District Lay Organizations of the Annual Conference*, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit.

Section 2. The Local Lay Organization of the seven (7) Conferences shall be organized for the efficient conduct of its business. All Local Lay Organizations shall bear the same relationship to the Conference Lay Organization as the Conference Lay Organization bears to the Episcopal District Lay Organization.

*The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference is optional, and shall only be organized where the Conference Lay Organization determines it to be necessary for the efficient conduct of its business. If such a determination is made, the Conference Lay

President shall, after giving fourteen (14) days written notice, stating date, time and purpose

of the meeting, notify each charge in the Presiding Elder District. The purpose of said meeting will be to convene and organize the District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference, where organized, shall bear the same relationship to the Conference Lay Organization as the Conference Lay Organization bears to the Episcopal District Lay Organization.

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ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section 1. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization membership to the Annual Session shall be as follows:

A. All elected officers of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

B. All Conference Lay Presidents and Conference Directors of Lay Activities.

C. Six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, of which one (1)

shall be a young adult (ages 18-30).

D. Each President or a duly elected representative of each duly organized Station or Circuit

Lay Organization (Local). A duly organized Lay Organization of a Station, Circuit, or

Districts of the Annual Conference, shall be an organization reporting the Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting, or one that is recognized by the Conference as an organization.

E. Six (6) elected delegates from each Local Lay Organization, of which one (1) shall be a young adult (ages 18-30).

F. Chairpersons of all Standing Committees.

G. All Connectional and District Officers who belong to the Fifth Episcopal District of the

African Methodist Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE V - Officers

Section 1. The elected officers of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be:
(*Elected at discretion of Divisions)

- A. President
- B. First Vice President
- *C. Second Vice President
- *D. Third Vice President
- E. Recording Secretary
- *F. Assistant Recording Secretary
- *G. Corresponding Secretary
- H. Treasurer
- *I. Financial Secretary
- J. Chaplain

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- *K. Historiographer
- *L. Parliamentarian
- M. Director of Lay Activities
- *N. Director of Public Relations
- O. Director of Youth and Young Adults

Section 2. The records of all officers handling finances of the Fifth Episcopal District

Lay Organization shall be audited by an external auditing entity, which shall report its findings to the Executive Board. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

ARTICLE VI - Qualifications of Officers and Members

Section 1. All officers and members of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be members in good and regular standing in their Local Lay Organization. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall possess such qualifications and fitness as shall entitle and qualify him/her to sit as a member of the Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board.

Section 2. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall have the right at all times to pass upon the qualifications of its own members and may reject or accept the membership of any person.

Section 3. All candidates seeking an office in the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization must be registered and must have attended at least four (4) Annual Sessions within the ten (10) year period immediately preceding the election year.

ARTICLE VII - Election of Officers

Section 1. All elections shall be by ballot, and a majority vote shall elect. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall declare any method of election in any division other than by ballot null and void.

Section 2. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers shall be elected to a four (4) year term at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. The elected officers of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office and the newly elected officers shall assume duties of the office upon installation at the site of the election.

Section 4. Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

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Section 5. Station or Circuit Lay Organization Officers shall be elected annually.

ARTICLE VIII - Delegates to Biennial Sessions

Section 1. The President, the Director of Lay Activities, and six (6) elected delegates, one of whom shall be a young adult (18-30) from the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization

shall be the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization representatives to the Connectional Biennial Sessions.

Section 2. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall have as its representatives to the Connectional Lay Organization Biennial Meeting its President, and six (6) elected delegates, one (1) of whom shall be a young adult (ages 18-30).

Section 3. Each election shall be by ballot and shall be held the year prior to the Connectional Lay Organization Biennial Session.

ARTICLE IX - Duties of Officers

Section 1. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall preside over its sessions during its regular, special or emergency meetings, and shall also be Chairperson of the Executive Board. The President shall be the active head of said organization, and shall be responsible for seeing that the Constitution and the By-Laws of this organization, as well as the orders and policies of the Executive Board, are fully carried out. The President shall also be responsible for expanding and developing the Lay work throughout the District through channels of the Conference Lay Organizations. The President shall also be responsible for such other duties as may be usual and customary to the position, and which the Executive Board may assign from time to time and the directives approved by the Annual body.

Section 2. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall represent the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization at the bi-annual Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board meetings.

Section 3. The President shall appoint Chairpersons of all Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.

Section 4. The First Vice President shall assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties. The First Vice President shall coordinate such programs as are assigned by the President.

Section 5. The Second Vice President, in the absence of the President and First Vice President, shall preside at all the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The Second Vice President shall coordinate such programs as assigned by the President.

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Section 6. The Third Vice President, in the absence of the President, the First Vice President, and the Second Vice President, shall preside at all the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The Third Vice President shall coordinate such programs as are assigned by the President.

Section 7. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for the recording of attendance and accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, and shall read the minutes of any previous meetings when called upon to do so by the President. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside until a Chairperson “pro-tem” is elected. The Recording Secretary shall prepare for the presiding officer, a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting. The Recording Secretary shall hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

Section 8. The Assistant Recording Secretary shall assist the Recording Secretary in keeping accurate records, and in the absence of the Recording Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Recording Secretary.

Section 9. The Corresponding Secretary shall review all correspondence, report pertinent information to the Executive Board, and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board.

Section 10. The Treasurer shall receive all monies from the Financial Secretary and disburse it upon authorization of the President as approved by the body. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records and give itemized report at each Board or Regular Meeting. The Treasurer shall be bonded and said bond be held by the Recording Secretary.

Section 11. The Financial Secretary shall assist the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall receive vouchers countersigned by the President that authorizes expenditures, which are to be paid by the Treasurer. Monies received by the Financial Secretary shall be turned over to the Treasurer within thirty (30) days. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded and said bond be held by the Recording Secretary.

Section 12. The Chaplain shall make sufficient preparation to lead each Worship Service and give spiritual leadership to the organization.

Section 13. The Historiographer shall keep a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of the organization and make it available upon request. The Historiographer shall also act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos.

Section 14. The Parliamentarian shall advise the President or presiding officer, when necessary, concerning questions of parliamentary procedure. The Parliamentarian shall follow the A.M.E. Discipline and Robert’s Rules of Order, latest revised edition, at all meetings. The

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Parliamentarian shall be the recognized authority on this Constitution, shall serve on the Constitution and Standing Rules Committees, and shall server as a consultant to other committees as needed.

Section 15. The Director of Lay Activities shall be responsible for planning a training

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program and course of study in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the Connectional Lay Organization. The approved program shall be received from the Connectional Director of Lay Activities, and in turn shall forward the course of study to the Conference Directors of Lay Activities. The training program and course of study shall reach the Directors of Lay Activities within thirty (30) days after the District Director of Lay Activities has forwarded it. A full report of progress made in implementation shall be given at each Annual Session.

Section 16. The Director of Public Relations shall seek to bring about a harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media. The Director of Public Relations shall be responsible for all press releases and public relations for and during the conference year, and shall disseminate news items of interest to the Fifth District Newsletter.

Section 17. The Director of Youth and Young Adults shall seek to organize a youth component (ages 13-17 years) The Director of Youth and Young Adults shall be responsible for formulating specific programs geared towards the young adults of the Fifth Episcopal District. They shall design studies, guides, and /or workshop patterns and/or training manuals for the young adults. Books of reference to be used by the Director of Young Adults shall be the Bible, Know Your Church Manual, the AME Discipline (latest edition), the Catechism, Black Methodist Basic Belief, and Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

ARTICLE X - Executive Board

Section 1. There shall be an Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, composed of the elected officers of the Organization and the President of each Conference Lay Organization and Chairpersons of all Standing Committees.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet at least monthly at the time and place designated by the President and members of the Executive Board.

Section 3. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Board, and the Secretary of the Fifth District Lay Organization shall serve as Secretary of the Executive Board.

Section 4. The Executive Board shall have the authority to carry out the work of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization during the interim of the Annual Sessions.

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Section 5. The Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The Board shall have power over the supervision and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the Annual Sessions of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions

herein set forth and provided. Further, the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, in its Annual Sessions, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any actions of the Executive Board.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall have the authority to make recommendations as to the official conduct of any elected officer, provided however, that any decision to suspend, expel, or remove from office, shall rest exclusively with the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall pass upon the Constitution and By-Laws of the Conference Lay Organizations to determine their compliance with or conformity to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Section 8. The Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.

Section 9. The Executive Board, in its discretion, may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past Presidents of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization and such other distinguished Lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.

Section 10. If a vacancy occurs among the elected officers other than the office of president, this vacancy shall be filled by the Executive Board upon the recommendation of the President.

ARTICLE XI - Meetings

Section 1. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall meet annually in its regular session.

Section 2. The Fifth Episcopal District President and/or the Executive Board may call an emergency or special meeting of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, when such a meeting is necessary.

Section 3. The time, place and object of such special or emergency meeting shall be clearly set forth in the official call or notice. Only those matters expressly set out in the notice or call shall be deliberated upon, provided, however, that no election of officers shall take place at a special or emergency meeting.

Section 4. All delegates to the Annual Session must be elected at a regular or properly convened meeting at least six (6) months prior to the Annual Meeting. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization's Secretary must submit the names and addresses of all delegates to the

Financial Secretary of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization five (5) months before the meeting.

ARTICLE XII - Voting Privileges

Section 1. Voting privileges in the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be confined and restricted to persons set out under ARTICLE IV of this Constitution.

Section 2. No persons shall be entitled to more than one (1) vote on an issue or matter in the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, and must be personally present to exercise such privilege. No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted.

Section 3. Unless otherwise indicated, the majority vote shall prevail in determining all matters.

ARTICLE XIII - Powers and Jurisdiction

Section 1. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority, power and supervision over all Local Lay Organizations established under the provision of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIV - Reserved and Implied Powers

Section 1. Each Local Lay Organization shall be vested with the full authority to make its own Constitution, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, as may be necessary for proper and orderly conduct of its affairs and for the governing of its officers and members. Each of these organizations shall have the authority to establish its own Executive Board, raise funds, and in general perform all duties incident to its existence as an autonomous body except, however, said organization shall make no Constitution, By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations which shall conflict with or abridge any of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District and Connectional Lay Organizations.

Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of each Local Lay Organization must be filed with the Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization for examination and response.

Section 3. Each Presiding Elder District and Local Lay Organization shall have the following provisions inserted in its Constitution and By-Laws: "This Organization shall be subject to and governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."

Section 4. This Organization and each of its Divisions shall at all times be subjected to

and governed by the Discipline, Laws, Doctrine and Tenets of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE XV - Committees

Section 1. All committees shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 2. The President, Executive Board, or the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization may appoint Ad Hoc committees; however, when an Ad Hoc Committee is appointed, its function must be specified, and procedures established for its functioning.

Section 3. The Finance Committee of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the regular meeting not later than the second meeting.

ARTICLE XVI - Subordinate Bodies

Section 1. Conference Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- A. All Conference elected officers
- B. All Chairpersons of Standing Committees
- C. Each President and six (6) elected delegates of whom one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-30, from each Station or Circuit.
- D. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Conference Lay Organization must conform to and harmonize with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, and with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization.
- E. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of each Conference Lay Organization must be filed with the Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Section 2. Station or Circuit Lay Organization. The Pastor of each Station or Circuit shall, within thirty (30) days after the close of the Annual Conference, call a meeting of the members of the Charge for the purpose of organizing a Lay Organization where none exists. The Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be composed of all members of said Station or Circuit who desire to enroll. The officers of the Organization shall be elected from those enrolled in said Organization. The President of the Lay Organization, or a duly elected representative of the local church, shall be a member of the Official Board of the church by virtue of office. The officers of a Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be those specified in ARTICLE V, Section 1 of the Constitution. The Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall fix the time for regular meetings, which should not be fewer than eleven (11) times per year.

Section 3. Any provision or condition not expressly covered in either the Constitution or By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long established policy, customs, tenets, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the AME Discipline, and Robert's Rules of Order, revised edition.

Section 4. There shall be a Youth Component of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization composed of Youth between the ages of 13-17 established on all levels.

ARTICLE XVII - Amendments

Section 1. Proposed Constitution and By-Law amendments shall be submitted twice a year by the Conference Lay Presidents to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee for compilation only. Conference Lay Presidents shall send any proposed changes to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee Chairperson two (2) weeks prior to the Bishop's Planning and Mid-Year meetings. The Chairperson shall forward the proposed changes to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay President, Recording Secretary, and committee members.

Section 2. Any proposed amendments can be submitted by either a Conference or individual as long as the submission meets the deadline.

Section 3. All proposed Constitution and By-Law amendments that are to be considered at the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Annual Meeting must be submitted to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay President and Recording Secretary sixty (60) days prior to the meeting.

**BY-LAWS
of the
LAY ORGANIZATION OF THE FIFTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
of the
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

- SECTION 1. The order of business shall be:
- a. Devotions
 - b. Roll Call of Officers
 - c. Report of the Registration Committee
 - d. Report of the Credentials Committee
 - e. Seating of the Delegation
 - f. Reading of the Minutes
 - g. President's Message
 - h. Executive Board Report
 - I. Reading of Communications
 - j. Reading of Officers' Reports
 - k. Reading of Standing Committee Reports
 - l. Reports from Conference Presidents
 - m. Unfinished Business
 - n. New Business
 - o. Adjournment

SECTION 2. Representation from a majority of registered delegates from Conferences shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

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

SECTION 4. The order of business herein before outlined may be changed by a majority vote of the members present.

SECTION 5. All reports, President's and other officers to the Organization shall be in writing and submitted in triplicate, copies one (1) to be given to the President, one (1) to be given to the Secretary, and one (1) to be retained by the officer making the report.

SECTION 6. Any officer failing to perform their official duties shall be accountable to the Executive Board.

SECTION 7. No officer, nor Standing Committee, shall incur any obligation which shall be binding, unless such action was authorized in its inception or subsequently ratified and approved by the Organization.

SECTION 8. The President shall be authorized to appoint and deputize, with sufficient power and authority, as many Marshals as may be deemed necessary to maintain order and decorum in the meeting.

A. It shall be the duty of the Marshals to maintain strict order, see that only members are seated within established bounds of the meeting, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President, in keeping with the duties of their office.

SECTION 9. All elected officers and chairpersons of all Standing Committees, all Conference Presidents, Conference delegates, Local Presidents, Local Church delegates, and life members shall register at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 10. All elected officers and Standing Committee Chairpersons shall not miss three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse. This applies to Annual Meetings and Executive Board meetings. Officers failing to attend meetings shall be removed from office by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Board and a report of their actions shall be made to the body stating the reasons for said actions.

SECTION 11. The President shall fill any/all vacancies with the approval of the Executive Board within sixty (60) days of said vacancy.

SECTION 12. The Election Committee shall be responsible for preparing all ballots for any duly authorized election of officers and/or delegates to meetings. Names of persons shall be submitted to this committee no later than ninety (90) days prior to the time of such elections.

SECTION 13. For the purpose of certification, the Credential Committee shall receive from each person who is an elected officer/or a delegate to the Fifth Episcopal District or Connectional Convention document of certification signed by the Conference Lay President and/or the local Lay President and the local pastor of their church.

SECTION 14 Life Membership

A. Life membership designation will be established for those members of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization who have served the District as officers and/or Standing Committee chairpersons for a period of not less than eight (8) years,

OR

B. Life members, recommended by the Local Lay Organization and the Conference Lay Organization who have provided outstanding leadership or have made outstanding contributions to their Conference Lay Organization, and who have been active members of their Local and Conference Lay Organizations for a period of not less than four (4) quadrennial (16 years). Said recommendation shall be accompanied by documentation of such outstanding service.

C. All such recommendations shall be reviewed by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Life Member Committee prior to consideration by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay President and Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Executive Board, and shall be subject to approval by a majority vote of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay membership present at the time of voting.

Subsection 1. Life members must continue to be active in their Local and Conference Lay Organizations as long as their health permits.

Subsection 2. Life members must register for the Fifth Episcopal District Lay meetings through their Local Lay Organization.

Subsection 3. Life members must keep their membership active by registering at the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization conventions at least every two (2) years.

Subsection 4. Life members shall be extended all the rights and privileges of other active members of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Subsection 5. Any provision or condition not expressly covered in either the Constitution or By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long established policy, customs, tenets and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the AME Discipline, and Robert's Rules of Order, revised edition.

