

**CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS
OF THE
FIFTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

ARTICLE I – Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

ARTICLE II – Mission, Statement, Purpose and Objectives

Section 1. Mission Statement. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ.

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

Section 3. Objectives – To accomplish 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 lay persons.
- b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, the illustrious founder of the AMEC,
- 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 parliamentary procedure, to the 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,
- h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare Lay members for appropriately conveying God's Word,
- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than the giving of money,
- j. To increase the circulation of church periodicals,

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- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service responsibilities.
- l. To promote activities that will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the 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 the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, District Lay Organizations of the Annual Conference, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit.

Section 2. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference is optional and shall only be organized where the Annual Conference Lay Organization determines it to be necessary for the efficient conduct of its business. If such a determination is made, the Annual Conference Lay President shall, after giving fourteen (14) days written notice, stating date, time and purpose of the meeting, notify each charge in the **District of the Annual Conference**. 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 Annual Conference Lay Organization as the Conference Lay Organization bears to the Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Section 3. Each level of the Fifth District Lay Organization shall operate within the framework of the Executive Board and Constitution and Bylaws as implemented by the Fifth Episcopal District's Lay Organizational, following ratification by the General Conference.

ARTICLE IV – Membership

Section 1. Membership in this organization is open to all Lay (un-ordained) members of the Fifth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in good and regular standing, in their Local, District of the Annual Conference and Annual Conference Lay Organizations. Good and regular standing means every member is governed by the Constitution of the organization and pays required dues as set by his/her local lay organization, attends fifty percent (50%) of the local lay organization meetings, and participates at the District of the Annual Conference, and the Annual Conference Lay Organization levels.

Section 2. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization membership to the District 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 and Young Adult Representative,
- c. Six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a Young Adult (ages 18 to 35),

- d. Each President or a duly elected representative of each duly organized Station or Circuit or Local Lay Organization. A duly organized Lay Organization of a Station Circuit, or District of the Annual Conference, shall be an organization reporting to the Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting, or one that is recognized by the Conference as an organization,
- f. Six (6) elected delegates from each Local Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a Young Adult (ages 18 to 35),
- g. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization who are members of an organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization in the Episcopal District

ARTICLE V – Officers, Duties and Responsibilities

Section 1. The elected officers of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be:

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

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

- a. **Duties and Responsibilities.** The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall:
 - 1. Lead with vision and integrity. This includes serving as a spokesperson for laity in the church, a representative for lay ministry in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings or an advocate in public policy arenas,
 - 2. Preside over its Annual Meetings during regular, special, or emergency meetings, the Executive Board, and all other official meetings of this organization.
 - 3. Be the active head of said organization, and shall be responsible for seeing that the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, as well as the orders and policies of the Executive Board are fully carried out,
 - 4. Be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the Fifth District through channels of the Conference Lay Organizations.
 - 5. Be responsible for such other duties as may be usual and customary to the position, and which may be assigned from time to time by the Executive Board, and the directives approved by the Annual Meeting.
 - 6. Appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Convention, and Ad Hoc Committees,
 - 7. Serve as a member of the Biennial and the Connectional Lay Organization Executive

- Board meetings by virtue of their office and,
8. The Fifth Episcopal District President or their designee should preside over all the election of officers on the Conference level.

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The First Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Membership Recruitment, Retention/and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and
2. 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.

c. Duties and Responsibilities. The Second Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Strategic Planning and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and the Executive Board and
2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President, preside at the meetings and assume all duties of the President.

d. Duties and Responsibilities. The Third Vice President shall:

1. Coordinate such duties as Personal Evangelism and Coordinating those efforts with the appropriate departments, within the church, and
2. Serve in the absence of the President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President presiding at the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of the President.

e. Duties and Responsibilities. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Serve as Secretary of the Annual Meeting and the Fifth District Executive Board,
2. Be responsible for recording attendance, accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, including the reading and distributing minutes of any previous meetings and **insuring** widespread dissemination of pertinent information,
3. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside until a chairperson *pro tempore* is elected,
4. 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 Meeting,
5. Hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

f. Duties and Responsibilities. The Assistant Recording Secretary shall:

1. Assist the Recording Secretary in all duties as outlined above,
2. In the absence of the Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Secretary.

g. Duties and Responsibilities. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. **Insure** lay ministry focus through effective communication. This includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about the laity,
2. Report pertinent information to the Executive Board, and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board,
3. Maintain a network of internal communications between the Connectional Lay Organization, the Fifth District Lay Organization and its subordinate bodies,
4. Compose communication as needed and/or directed by the President. Maintain liaison with the Director of Public Relations to insure publication of pertinent

information.

h. Duties and Responsibilities. The Treasurer shall:

1. Serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal year,
2. Receive and disburse all funds. Disbursements shall be made, in accordance with the line item budget approved by the Annual Meeting. Expenditures not reflected or listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the Executive Board with appropriate justification,
3. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Executive Board meeting and the Annual Meeting,
4. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary,
5. Prepare the accounts for all audits, including an annual external Audit by an Accounting Firm approved by the President and the Executive Board.

i. Duties and Responsibilities. The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Maintain an independent set of records of all financial transactions and assist with work in concert with the Treasurer,
2. Serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee,
3. Receive and record all funds. All funds shall be turned over to the Treasurer within a period not to exceed ten (10) days,
4. Write vouchers countersigned by the President that authorize expenditures, pursuant to the budget passed by the Annual Meeting, which are to be paid by the Treasurer,
5. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

j. Duties and Responsibilities. The Chaplain shall:

1. Make adequate preparation for each Bible Study and Devotional Service, utilizing creative styles that motivates and draws participants into the worship experience,
2. Provide spiritual leadership to the Lay Organization and
3. Maintain effective communication with the Chaplains on the Connectional and Conference levels.

k. Duties and Responsibilities. The Historiographer shall:

1. Be responsible for gathering, assembling, and maintaining a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of the Lay Organization,
2. Act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization,
3. Compile a written Fifth Episcopal District history of the Lay Organization and submit it as a report to each Annual Meeting, place a copy in the archives to be kept in the headquarters of the Fifth Episcopal District,
4. Shall research a location to house the histological records of the Lay Organization.

l. Duties and Responsibilities. The Parliamentarian shall:

1. Advise the President or presiding officer concerning questions of parliamentary procedure.
2. Be seated next to the President at all meetings,
3. Follow the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, *The Book of Discipline of*

the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Newly Revised, latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, at all meetings,

4. Serve as consultant to the Constitution and By-Laws, Rules, and other committees as needed.

m. Duties and Responsibilities. The Director of Lay Activities shall:

1. Maintain a close working relationship with the President and the Young Adult Representative in the planning, developing and implementing of the complete programmatic thrust of this organization,
2. Plan, design, and direct all educational programs and other activities of this organization at the Annual Meeting, including but not limited to Training Institute, Banquets, Scholarships, Awards and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the Executive Board,
3. Maintain a working relationship with Connectional and Conference Lay Directors,
4. Be responsible for planning and implementing a training program and course of study in accordance with the mission, purposes and objectives of the Lay Organization. The proposed training program and course of study, inclusive of proposed theme and outline for the study guide, shall be presented to the Executive Board for approval at the Executive Board Meeting immediately preceding the next Annual Meeting,
5. The proposed Connectional Lay Organization's (CLO) theme and program will be presented by the Director of Lay Activities at the next called meeting of the Executive Board for implementation. Upon receipt from the CLO, the Fifth Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities will immediately forward the course of study to the Annual Conference Directors of Lay Activities.
6. Annual Conference Directors of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study to the District of the Annual Conference, Station or Circuit Directors of Lay Activities. The training program and Course of Study shall reach the Directors of Lay Activities within fourteen (14) days after the Fifth Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities has forwarded the same,
7. A full report of progress made in the implementation of the course of study and the work of the Director shall be given at each Annual Meeting and Executive Board Meeting as outlined in this constitution,
8. Prepare an annual line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee.

n. Duties and Responsibilities. The Director of Public Relations shall:

1. Oversee all official publication of the organization, editing, and publishing a monthly periodical containing news of general interest to the laity and news regarding the organization,
2. Solicit and edit articles for the publication on topics that will appeal to, inspire and motivate subscribers,
3. Oversee the entire publication process, including seeking bids from publishers/printers,
4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation,
5. Prepare an annual line item budget for the magazine's publication for submission to the Budget Committee,
6. Seek to bring about harmony of understanding between the Lay Organization and public through the channeling of information to various media,

7. Be responsible for all press releases and public relations for and during any Lay Organization meetings,
8. Disseminate news items of interest received from Connectional and Conference through newsletter and/or multi-media processes and
9. Oversee the Fifth Episcopal District website and any internal or external documents, including all social media networking.

o. Duties and Responsibilities. The Young Adult Representative shall:

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

Section 2. The Annual Audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the Fifth District Lay Organization and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the District Lay Organization as required by the Connectional Lay Organization. Upon approval of the Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the Annual Session which will include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

ARTICLE VI – NOMINATION and ELECTION PROCEDURES

Section 1. All officers and members of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station or Circuit Organization to participate in elections and voting.

Section 2. Any person seeking an elected office in the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization must be a member in “good and regular standing” in the organization and must possess the qualifications required for the position being sought. Any candidate for elected office must have registered and attended at least two (2) Annual Meetings as a delegate, alternate, or observer within the ten (10) year period immediately preceding the election year. Registration shall be confirmed from the official registration records to be provided to the nominating committee upon its appointment.

Section 3. All persons seeking an elected office must submit a “Letter of Intent” with qualifications signed by the Annual Conference President, District of the Annual Conference (where they exist), and local church Presidents to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The format for the Letter of Intent will be provided by the Nominating Committee and must be returned by certified mail, its international equivalent and/or electronic communications postmarked on or before January 15th of the election year. This deadline date will constitute the close of all nominations submitted to the

Nominating Committee. There shall be no nominations from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

Section 4. All candidates seeking an elected office must have demonstrated active participation in the Annual Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference and Local Church levels within the ten (10) year period preceding the election year.

Section 5. No elected officer shall hold more than two (2) elected offices beyond the Local Organization.

Section 6. Members of the Nominating Committee shall be ineligible for nomination by the committee for any elected position to be filled (where applicable on the local level).

Section 7. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) persons appointed by the President with nominees to be confirmed by the Executive Board. The President in selecting committee members shall follow these guidelines:

- a. There shall be no more than one (1) person appointed from an Annual Conference; and
- b. Appointments shall be sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the ages 18 – 35, and all persons must have demonstrated experience with the nominating process. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.

Section 8. Duties of the Committee.

- a. At least nine (9) months prior to the Annual Meeting the committee shall call for nominations through a notice submitted for publication in appropriate printed or online communication. Such Notice shall inform members when, how and where nomination forms can be obtained. Nomination forms shall also be sent to Executive Board members and Annual Conference Presidents for distribution to interested persons. The nomination form shall request biographical data and other pertinent information which will aid in the qualifying of candidates. Such forms shall be returned to the chair of the nominating committee by prospective nominees, bearing the signature of the Annual Conference President, District of the Annual Conference (where they exist), and local church Presidents, **no later than** January 15th prior to convening of the Fifth Episcopal District Annual Convention.
- b. The committee shall thoroughly examine any and all necessary information regarding nominees for elected offices being sought. Each nominee must be notified of their eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. From those persons found qualified for the offices being sought, the committee shall prepare a slate of nominees, listing the qualifications of the nominees for offices to be elected at the Annual Meeting. On or before January 15th, or 6 months of the Fifth Episcopal District Annual Convention (or whichever comes first) the slate will be distributed to the Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization for approval prior to being provided to each Annual Conference.
- c. No political campaigning for office shall take place before candidates are qualified as nominees by the Nominating Committee. Campaigning is defined as placing ads in any AME Church Publication (where applicable) at any level as a candidate, distributing

campaign literature/paraphernalia or visits to formal functions of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization or its subordinate bodies with the expressed purpose of campaigning. Participation in campaign activities prior to being qualified as a nominee will result in valid disqualification for that candidate if confirmed by the Nominating Committee and the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting, unless otherwise provided for herein. All elections shall be by secret ballot, (electronic or paper), except in the case where the office is not contested. When there is only one (1) candidate for office, the chair can take a voice vote or declare that the nominee is elected, effecting the election by unanimous consent or acclamation. A majority vote shall be necessary to elect. Elected officer shall assume office immediately upon installation. There should be a ceremony for the Installation of Officers prior to the close of the Annual Meeting. It shall be the final order of business at the closing Business Session of the Annual Meeting. The candidate seeking elected office does not have to be present to be voted upon. Any method of election in any division other than by secret ballot, except in the case of uncontested offices, shall be declared null and void by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

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

Section 3. Term Limitation. The elected officers of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization and its divisions shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office.

Section 4. If an officer completes a term of office which was vacated by the incumbent due to death, illness, resignation, and/or other conditions approved by the Executive Board, the unexpired portion of the term, will **not** count as a full term for the purposes of term limitation.

Section 5. Transition Period. A transitional period of sixty (60) days or eight (8) weeks beginning at the close of an Annual Meeting is provided for outgoing officers to reconcile files, records and make inventories before transferring them to the incoming officers. Outgoing officers shall complete the transfer of all files, records, books, papers and property belonging to the organization to the incoming officers on or before the end of the sixty (60) day period.

Section 6. Vacancy in the Office of President and/or Vice Presidents. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other causes, the First Vice President shall immediately assume the Office of President, for the unexpired term of office; the Second Vice President shall ascend to the Office of First Vice President, and the third Vice President becomes second Vice President, leaving the vacancy to be filled in the office of the lowest ranking Vice President. If the position was contested during election for the office of Third Vice President, the person with second highest number of votes will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. If the position was uncontested, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office of the Third Vice President, to fill the vacancy, if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office for the Third Vice President is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty-five (45) days

of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the office of Third Vice President. Nominating procedures, approved for the last Annual Meeting election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed and/or elected to fill an unexpired term of President shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two (2) full four (4) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice Presidents. If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than that of a President, due to death, resignation, disability or inability to serve, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty-five (45) days of the vacancy date, to this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. Nominating procedures, approved for the last Annual Meeting election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed and/or elected to fill an unexpired term of office shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two (2) full four (4) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 8. Removal of Elected Officer. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee shall give its findings annually. Any elected officer not performing their duties, as outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws, shall be notified in writing by the President, of their failure to perform designated duties, with a copy forwarded to the Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization. If failure to perform their duties continues for a period of ninety (90) days after notification, the matter will be referred to the Executive Board for action. If the President is not performing their duties as outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws, they shall be notified in writing by the Executive Board through the Corresponding Secretary of their failure to perform designated duties. The Executive Board, may in the interim of the Annual Meeting, suspend the elected officer. The final decision to expel or reinstate from/to office shall rest exclusively with the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization in its Annual Meeting. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee will give guidelines, implementation and corrective actions when deemed necessary.

Section 9. Annual Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 10. Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 11. Station or Circuit Lay Organization Officers shall be elected annually.

ARTICLE VIII – Qualifications

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

Section 1. The President.

a. Qualifications. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall have a commitment to lay ministry as demonstrated by:

1. Prior management experience, preferably in non-profit organizations.
2. Prior service as either an elected officer of the Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference or Local Church Organization.
3. Five (5) years of administrative, supervisory, or fiscal management experience.

Section 2. First Vice President.

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

Section 3. Second Vice President.

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

Section 4. Third Vice President.

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

Section 5. Recording Secretary.

a. Qualifications. All candidates seeking the office of Recording Secretary must demonstrate:

1. Proficiency in writing and composition of the English language, basic reading competency, editing and record keeping skills,
2. Experience in word processing or other technology (electronic media) available for recording, storing, and retrieving information,
3. Prior secretarial experience or training,
4. Ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.

Section 6. Assistant Recording Secretary.

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

Section 7. Corresponding Secretary.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the position of Corresponding Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary and have experience in database management.

Section 8. Treasurer.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate:

1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, preferably in non-profit organizations,
2. Five (5) years' experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, and budgeting,
3. Ability to be bonded,
4. Experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.

Section 9. Financial Secretary.

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

Section 10. Chaplain.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the position of Chaplain must demonstrate:

1. A Christian commitment, possess a high level of spiritual maturity, effective interpersonal and communication skills,
2. Training and experience in Christian Education,
3. Knowledge of the Bible and the AMEC Hymnal,
4. Experience in preparing and conducting Bible study and worship.

Section 11. Historiographer.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must demonstrate:

1. Prior experience with emphasis in research, writing, and publishing historical information,
2. Proficiency in English is required,
3. Ability to use technology (electronic media, including video, photos, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing,
4. Knowledge record and artifact preservation specific to an organization's founding, operations, projects and other activities.

Section 12. Parliamentarian.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate:

1. They are a registered Parliamentarian in good and regular standing of the National Association of Parliamentarians at the time of nomination.

Where there are no qualified candidates, the President, with the approval of the Executive Board and for any fee that will be required, may contract for such services to be provided, at a competitive rate to the organization as needed. Preference will be given to members of the AME Church in good and regular standing.

Section 13. Director of Lay Activities.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Lay Activities must demonstrate:

1. Extensive experience in research, speech, writing and proficiency in the English language, program planning, development, designing, implementation, teaching, training, adult learning, and/or administration, and technology (electronic media, including video, photos, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing.

Section 14. Director of Public Relations.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Public Relations must demonstrate:

1. A working knowledge of media relations, marketing, sales, prior experience in preparing and distributing press releases,
2. Strong communication skills and extensive experience in English, speech and journalism.

Section 15. Young Adult Representative.

a. Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Young Adult Representative shall:

1. Be between the ages of 18-35 at the time of election. Completion of high school and

- pursuing a post-secondary degree (at the optimum) is required,
2. Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with youth and young adults within the church or other organizations and
 3. Possess strong abilities to provide training, and demonstrate effective communication skills.

ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. There shall be an Executive Board of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, composed of the elected officers of the organization, the President of each Annual Conference Lay Organization, President Emeriti, and chairpersons of standing committees.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet at least once but no more than twice annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the Executive Board.

Section 3. Teleconference Meetings may be held to address specific matters of concern. Notice of the call with a proposed agenda must be issued by the Corresponding Secretary to members of the Executive Board no later than three (3) days prior to the call. Vacancies of officers may not be filled via teleconference call. (Article VII, section 1).

Section 4. The President of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Board, and the Recording Secretary shall serve as secretary of the Executive Board.

Section 5. The Executive Board shall have the authority to carry on the work of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization during the interim of the Annual Meetings.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The Board shall have the power over the supervision and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the Annual Meeting 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 Meeting, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any action of the Executive Board.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.

Section 8. The Executive Board 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.

ARTICLE X – MEETING

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

Section 2. The Annual Meeting of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be held at the time and place per a four (4) year scheduled selected at the meeting, with the Opening Worship Service being held on Wednesday night. The first business session will begin on Wednesday morning.

Section 3. The Fifth Episcopal District President and/or a majority of the voting members of the Executive Board may call an emergency meeting of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization when such a meeting is deemed necessary. The time, place, and object of such Special or Emergency Meeting shall be clearly set forth in the official call or notice. Only those matters expressly set out in the notice or call shall be deliberated upon, provided, however, that no election of officers shall take place at a Special or Emergency meeting.

Section 4. All delegates to the Annual Meeting 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 Recording 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. These names shall be forwarded to the Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities by the Episcopal District Financial Secretary and Registration Chair (5) months before the meeting for the expressed purpose of expediting pre-registration and educational sessions.

Section 5. All delegates to the Biennial Session must be elected at a regular or properly convened meeting. The names and addresses of all delegates must be submitted to the Connectional Financial Secretary on or before January 1 of the Biennial year.

ARTICLE XI – 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 person 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 XII – POWERS AND JURISDICTIONS

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

ARTICLE XIII – RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS

Section 1. Each Annual Conference, District of the Annual Conference, and Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be vested with the full authority to make its own Constitution and By-Laws, Rules

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and Regulations, as may be deemed necessary for proper and orderly conduct of its affairs and for the governing of its officers and members. Each Division's Constitution shall conform to, and harmonize with the Fifth Episcopal District and Connectional Constitutions and By-Laws. Each of these organizations shall have the authority to establish its own Executive Board, raise funds, and in general perform all duties incident to its existence as an autonomous body, except, however, said organization

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shall not make Constitutions and By-Laws, or Rules and Regulations which are in conflict with, or abridge any part of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District or Connectional Lay Organization or the template for subordinate divisions.

Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of each Annual Conference and District of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations must be filed with the Constitution and By-Laws Committee of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization for examination and response.

Section 3. Each Annual Conference, District of the Annual Conference, and each Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall have the following inserted in its Constitution and By-Laws: "This Organization shall be subject to and governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the 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 governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization, The *Current Book of Discipline, Laws, Doctrines, and Tenets of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised Edition*.

ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES

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

Section 1. Four (4) types of Committees shall exist in the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization: Standing, Special, Convention and Ad Hoc.

Second 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance it and are vital to the functioning of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization. Standing committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, AMEV – Alert, Budget and Finance, Social Action and, Organizational and Officers Effectiveness. Each Standing Committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the President, and approved by the Executive Board. Appointments shall be Annual Conference inclusive and age sensitive. The President, in appointing committee members shall follow these guidelines: at least one (1) person from every Annual Conference; one (1) person between the ages of 18 – 35, and all persons must have demonstrated diversity of experience in the work assigned to the committee. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.

Section 3. Special Committees shall be the following: The Nominating, Elections and Audit Committee. Special Committees are appointed to perform a task that does not fall within the assigned function of a Standing Committee.

Section 4. Committees of the Annual Meeting. The Committees of the Annual Meeting shall be: Rules, Elections Commission, Registration, Credentials, Health, Budget and Finance, Memoriam, Time and Place, Review of the Discipline, Evaluation, Resolution, Review of Job Analysis, CLEDC, Issues Facing the Church and Nation, Social Action, Proposed Legislation, Young Adult, Executive Summary, Kit, Global Ministry, Higher Education Support, Constitution and By-Laws, AME V-Alert, Marshall/Staffers, Nominating and Strategic Planning.

Section 5. The Credential Committee prepares and presents to the Annual Meeting a certified list of registered officers and delegates that make up the voting strength of the convention.

Section 6. The Rules Committee provides official guidelines of operating procedures specially required for operation of the convening Annual Meeting.

Section 7. The Budget and Finance Committee of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the Annual Meeting.

Section 8. The Budget and Finance Committee is composed of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and other members for a total of no more than seven (7), these members shall be appointed by the President. It shall be the duty of this committee to prepare a two (2) year budget, to be submitted to the President and Executive Board for approval and the Annual Meeting for adoption by a majority vote.

Section 9. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee defines the primary characteristics of the organization, prescribes how the organization functions including all rules that the organization considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to the membership and a two-thirds (2/3's) majority vote of the Annual Meeting.

Section 10. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee shall report annually to the Executive Board. The committee will propose and present for the Executive Board the process and tools for the officers evaluation and implement the process. The President has thirty (30) days after the close of the Annual Meeting to appoint the committee members who will present their findings.

Section 11. Ad Hoc Committee is appointed as the need arises to carry out a specific task. It automatically ceases to exist on presentation of its final report to the body.

ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES

Section 1. Annual Conference Lay Organization – The Conference Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. each President or a duly elected representative of each organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;

- c. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35 – of each organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference;
- d. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization who are members of an organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization in the Episcopal District
- e. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35, from each Station or Circuit.

Section 2. District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference – The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. the President and six (6) elected delegates at least one (1) of whom shall be a young adult; age 18-35, from each Station or Circuit where there is duly organized Lay Organization;
- c. any elected officers of the Connectional, Episcopal District or Annual Conference Lay Organizations;
- d. this organization is amenable to the Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Conference Lay Organization at least annually.

Section 3. Station or Circuit Lay Organization – The pastor of each Station or Circuit shall, within thirty (30) days after 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 join. 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, becomes a member of the Official Board by virtue of their office.

Section 4. The officers of a Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be those specified in Article VI, Section 1 of this Constitution. The Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall fix the time for regular meetings which should not be fewer than ten (10) times per year.

ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to the Constitution and By Laws of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the Fifth District President and Secretary.

The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment(s) to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at least two (2) weeks prior to the Bishop’s Planning and Mid-Year Meetings.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendment(s), by certified mail and/or electronic communication to each of the Annual Conference Presidents. Two-thirds (2/3’s) vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Annual Convention shall be required to effect a proposed amendment to the Constitution be submitted to the Connectional Lay Organization. Two-thirds (2/3’s) vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Annual Convention shall be required to effect an amendment to the Fifth Episcopal District’s By-Laws. Proposed amendments to the Constitution will be voted upon for approval at the Biennial and upon approval, will take effect at the close of the General Conference ratifying the amendments.

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**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. Bible Study
- c. Roll Call of Officers
- d. Report of the Registration Committee
- e. Report of the Credentials Committee
- f. Seating of the Delegation
- g. Reading of the Minutes
- h. Reading of Communications
- i. Reading of Committees Report
- j. President's Message
- k. Reports of Officers
- l. Reports of Annual Conference Presidents
- m. Unfinished Business
- n. New Business
- o. Report of Committees
- p. Memorial Service
- q. Installation of Officers
- r. Adjournment

SECTION 2. A majority of registered delegates present from the Annual Conferences with voting delegations at the Annual Meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business.

SECTION 3. The members shall conform to all the rules and regulations of this Organization. Any member(s) guilty of an infraction or violation of the rules, or 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 two-third (2/3's) majority vote of the delegates present at the Annual Meeting.

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 or Special Committee, shall incur any obligation which shall be binding, unless such action was authorized in its inception or subsequently ratified and approved by the Organization.

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

- 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 two (2) consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse. This applies to Annual Meetings and Executive Board meetings.

SECTION 11. The Election Committee shall be responsible for preparing all ballots for any duly authorized election of officers and/or delegates to meetings.

SECTION 12. For the purpose of certification, the Credentials 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.

SECTION 13: The Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC). The purpose of the CLEDC is to provide financial assistance to the Connectional institutions and projects; a financial base for lay ministries, out-reach missions, and long-term financial programs for the denomination.

- a. The CLEDC is a not-for-profit corporation under the auspices of the Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

- b. The CLEDC is a continuation of the legacy of Richard Allen, the founding father, who preached a message of religious freedom, political empowerment, and economic self-determination.

- c. Money contributed to the CLEDC will be handled by the Fifth Episcopal District's CLEDC Finance Committee. All the members of the CLEDC Finance Committee shall be fully bonded.

- d. The checks and balances shall include full financial reporting on a quarterly basis; an annual external audit; availability of all financial records for inspection upon written request; and a six-part receipts system for every contribution received.

SECTION 14: Living Legends will be granted to any Lay Member meeting the qualifications and who are in good and regular standing with the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

A. Living Legend designee will be established for those members of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay

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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. Living Legend designee must have served sixteen (16) years of continuous/meritorious service in the Lay Organization, they have provided outstanding leadership, have made outstanding contribution to the Lay Organization, and they are an active member of their Local and Conference Lay Organizations for a period of not less than four (4) continuous quadrennials. Upon recommendation, all of the requirements must be met and the recommendation must be submitted through the Living Legend nomination form, accompanied with the resume/bio and enrollment fee.

C. All such recommendations shall be reviewed by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Living Legend Committee prior to consideration by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay President, 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 during the annual Fifth District Convention.

D. Once the Living Legend nominee is approved by the Fifth District Lay Organization Life Member Committee, Fifth District Lay President, Fifth District Lay Organization Executive Board and by the majority vote of the Convention body, the nominee becomes a Life Member.

E. All newly nominated Living Legends will be responsible to pay a one-time enrollment fee.

Subsection 1. Living Legends should continue to be active in their Local and Conference Lay Organizations as long as their health permits.

Subsection 2. Living Legends, who are not elected delegates, will receive a 25% discount on registration to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Conventions. This discount does not pertain to any other District meetings or events.

2a. When a Living Legend is elected as a delegate to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization or is an elected officer serving at the Fifth Episcopal District Lay level, then the status and privileges associated with being a Living Legend to the District Lay Organization is suspended.

Subsection 3. Living Legends shall remain a member in the Conference where nominated even through he/she moves to a different Conference within the Fifth Episcopal District.

Subsection 4. Any provision or condition not expressly covered in 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 A.M.E. Discipline, and Robert's Rules of Order, latest revised edition.

SECTION 16: LIVING LEGENDS PROCESSING PROCEDURES

- Subsection 1. Any member of a Local Lay Organization can make a nomination to their Conference for Living Legends status.
- Subsection 2. Applications are available from the Fifth District Lay Chairperson.
- Subsection 3. All application forms must have the required signatures such as Local and Conference if they are being presented as a nominee for consideration as a Living Legend and must be accompanied by the one-time enrollment fee as stated on the application form. (See Section 15E) All monies go directly to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Financial Secretary.
- Subsection 4. Members requesting Living Legend status will have to apply no later than one month (30 days) prior to the Annual Convention Meeting of the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- Subsection 5. Application form, a one (1) page resume/bio, and a copy of the one time enrollment fee for the person desiring Living Legend status to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Living Legend be sent to the Fifth District Lay Chairperson.
- Subsection 6. Living Legend will be granted only once during the conference year.
- Subsection 7. A Conference cannot have more than a total of seven (7) Living Legends per Conference.
- Subsection 8. No additional Living Legend applications will be approved or accepted if the Conference has more than a total of seven (7) members unless the death of one (1) of the Living Legends has occurred during the conference year and before the thirty (30) day Annual Convention Meeting rule. (See procedure number four (4).)

SECTION 17: LIVING LEGEND BENEFITS

- Subsection 1. Living Legends shall have special seating status at all Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Conventions and worship services. (No cost to the District.)
- Subsection 2. Living Legends shall be responsible for purchasing decorum, such as Life Member jacket. (No cost to the District.)
- Subsection 3. Living Legends will march in together at the worship services behind the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers. (No cost to the District.)
- Subsection 4. Living Legends shall have discounts on registration fees not to exceed 25% to the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization Conventions if not a delegate or Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization officer.

Subsection 5. Living Legends will receive a small plaque showing the year of inauguration paid for by the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization from the Life Member Program Guidelines budget. (No cost to the District since the fee is included in the membership one- time enrollment fee.)

Subsection 6. Living Legends will receive a special Living Legend pin. (No cost to District)

Subsection 7. The Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization will only be responsible for the benefits as specifically stated on line items number four (4) and number five (5) under Living Legend Benefits.

COLORS

The official colors of the AME Church Lay Organization are: Royal Blue and White or Navy Blue and White.

THE LAY HYMN

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

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

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

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

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

THE LAY BENEDICTION

“May God bless us with the true spirit of Christianity, that we may live together, not as man over man,
but as Lay persons working with God. Amen.”

Revised: 02/15/2022 and Submitted by, Simeon P. Rhoden, Chair – PNWC
Committee: Nona Simpkins, MO, Walter Mitchell-CA, Destinee Williams – DMC, Maria Thompson –
PNWC, John Brown – SCC, Cedric Patton - MWC