

**THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION
OF THE
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I – NAME

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

ARTICLE II – MISSION STATEMENT, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Mission Statement. The 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 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.

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, 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 Connection.
- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and of parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- f. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God’s Word.
- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.

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

ARTICLE III – DIVISIONS

Section I. The Connectional Lay Organization shall be comprised of the Episcopal District, Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, where organized, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit.

Section II. 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, inclusive of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, to each charge in the district, convene and organize the District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference, where organized, shall bear the same relationship to the Conference Lay Organization as the Conference Lay Organization bears to the Episcopal District Lay Organization.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section I. Membership in this organization is open to all un-ordained members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in good and regular standing, in their local, Conference, and Episcopal District 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 conference, districts of the Annual Conf., and Episcopal District Lay Organization levels.**

Section II. The Connectional Lay Organization membership to the Biennial Session shall be as follows:

- a. all elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization.
- b. all persons holding the designation &/or office of President emeritii.
- c. all Episcopal District Lay Organization Presidents and Directors of Lay Activities.
- d. six (6) elected delegates from each Episcopal District Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-30.
- e. all Conference Lay Organization Presidents.
- f. six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-30.

- g.. **E**ach president or an elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference. A duly organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference shall be an organization reporting to the Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting; or which is recognized by the Conference as an organization.
- h.. Each president or an elected representative of each organized Station or Circuit Organization.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1. The elected Officers of the Connectional Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be:

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

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

Section 2. **The Annual Audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the Connectional 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 Connectional Lay Organization as required by the General Board. Upon approval of the Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the Biennial session.**

Section 3. Terms; Qualifications; Limitations. The terms, qualifications and limitations of elected officers to hold office shall be provided for in this constitution.

ARTICLE VI – NOMINATION and ELECTION PROCEDURES

Section 1. All officers and members of the Connectional 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 Connectional 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 **three (3)** Biennial Sessions 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 Episcopal District President to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The format for the letter of Intent will be provided by the Nominating Committee and must be returned Letter must be returned by certified mail or its international equivalent and 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 Biennial Session.

Section 4. All candidates seeking an elected office must have demonstrated active participation in the Episcopal District, Annual Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference (**where they exist**), and local church levels within the ten (10) year period preceding the election year.

Section 5. **No candidate for office shall hold more than one office above the local level. Should this constitution include something about holding more than one (1) office beyond local level simultaneously?**

Section 6. Members of the Nominating Committee shall be ineligible for nomination by the committee for any elected position to be filled.

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 person appointed from an Episcopal District; and
- b.* Appointments shall be globally inclusive and sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the ages of 18 - 30, one (1) person from Districts 14 - 20, and all persons must have demonstrated experience with the nominating process as outlined in Article VI, section . 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 Biennial Session the committee shall call for nominations through a notice submitted for publication in every official periodical of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, inclusive of but not limited to, the Christian Recorder,(printed and

online versions); the Connectional Lay Organization’s “We Speak”, the Connectional Lay Organization website, and any other 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 Episcopal District 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 Episcopal District Lay President, no later than January 15th prior to the convening of the Biennial Session.

b. The committee shall thoroughly examine any and all necessary information regarding nominees for elected offices being sought. Each nominee must be notified of his/her eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. From those persons found qualified for the offices being sought, the committee shall prepare a slate of nominees, listing the qualifications of the nominees for offices to be elected at the Biennial Session. On or before January 15th or six (6) months prior to the convening of the Biennial Session, (or whichever comes first), the slate will be distributed to the Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Organization for approval prior to being provided to each Episcopal District.

c. No political campaigning, for office shall take place before candidates are qualified as nominees by the Nominating Committee. Campaigning is defined as placing ads in Souvenir Journals or any AME Church Publication at any level as a candidate, distributing campaign literature/paraphernalia or visits to formal functions of the Connectional Lay Organization or its subordinate bodies with the expressed purpose of campaigning. Participation in unapproved campaign activities 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 Biennial Session, 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 one only 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 officers shall assume office immediately upon installation. **The Installation of Officers shall be the final order of business at the closing Business Session of the Biennial Convention.** 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 Connectional Lay Organization.

Section 2. Connectional Lay Organization Officers shall be elected to a four (4) year term at the Biennial meeting following the regular session of the General Conference.

Section 3. Term limitation. The elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization and its

Divisions shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office. Upon completion of eight (8) years of service, an elected officer is prohibited from holding another elected office at that level for one election cycle.

Section 4. If an officer completes a term of office which was vacated by the incumbent due to death, illness, resignation, &/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 8 weeks beginning at the close of a Biennial Session 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 day period.

Section 6. Vacancy in Office of President. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other cause, 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. 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 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 last biennial election, will e used for the election.** All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed &/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 bylaws.

Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President. If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than the that of the 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 fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. **Nominating procedures, approved for last biennial election, will e used for the election.** All

voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed &/ or elected to fill an unexpired term of office shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two full four (4) year terms in accordance with this constitution and bylaws.

Section 8. Removal of Elected Officer. Any elected officer, not performing his/her duties, as outlined in this constitution and bylaw, shall be notified in writing by the President, with a copy to the Chairman of the General Board Commission on Lay Organization, and the Executive Board. If failure to perform his/her duties continue for a period of ninety (90) days after notification, the matter will be referred to the Executive Board for action. The Executive Board, may, in the interim of the Biennial Session remove the elected officer from office for failure to execute his/her duties and responsibilities. The final decision to suspend, expel, or remove from office shall rest exclusively with the Connectional Lay Organization in its Biennial Session.

Section 9. Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers shall be elected quadrennially.

Section 10. Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 11. Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 12. Station or Circuit Lay Organization Officers shall be elected annually.

ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

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

Section 1. The President.

a. Qualifications. The President of the Connectional Lay Organization shall possess:

1. Such qualifications and fitness as shall entitle and qualify the President to sit as a member of the General Conference as a representative of the Connectional Lay Organization.

2. At least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution or equivalent in education and experience.

3. Demonstrated prior service as an elected officer of the Episcopal District, Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference and local church Organization. Leadership experience in working with other nonprofit organizations and **demonstrated leadership experience in other organizations.**

4. At least 5 years of administrative, supervisory, or managerial experience,

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The President of the Connectional 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, an advocate in public policy arenas,

2. Preside over its Biennial Sessions 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 Bylaws 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 Connection through channels of the Episcopal District 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 Biennial Session.

6. Appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Convention, and Ad Hoc Committees.

7. Serve as a member of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by virtue of his/her office.

8. Have the authority to appoint three (3) at large delegates to represent the Connectional Lay Organization at the General Conference with the approval of the Executive Board.

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.

b. Duties and Responsibilities The First Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Membership Recruitment and Retention/coordinate such duties as are assigned by the President.

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.

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.

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

1. Be responsible for Organizational Effectiveness and Evaluation/coordinate such duties as are assigned by the President and the Executive Board.

2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President, shall preside at all the meetings and assume all duties of the office of 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.

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

1. The Third Vice President shall coordinate such duties as evangelism and coordinating those efforts with the appropriate depts. Within the church.

2. In the absence of the President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President, shall reside at the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President.

Section 5. Recording Secretary,

a. Qualifications. All candidates seeking an office of Recording Secretary must

1. Be literate in basic computer technology.
2. Experience in word processing, computer technology or other technology available for recording or retrieving information.
3. Prior secretarial experience or training; and ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.
4. Must demonstrate proficiency in writing and composition of the English language, basic reading competency, and editing.

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Serve as Secretary of the Biennial Session and the Connectional Executive Board.
- 2. Be responsible for recording attendance, accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, and for 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 Biennial Session.
5. Hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

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.

b. 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.

Section 7. Corresponding Secretary

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

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. Insure lay ministry focus though effective communication. This includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about 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 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.

Section 8. Treasurer

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

1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, especially as related to non-profit organizations. .

2. A Bachelor's degree in business and accounting, or Certificate in bookkeeping and/or finance, or

3. At least 5 years experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, and budgeting.

b. 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 biennial. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the Executive Board.

3. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Board meeting and the Biennial Session.

4. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

5. Have the accounts audited, annually, by an Audit/Accounting Firm approved by the President and the Executive Board.

Section 9. Financial Secretary

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

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Maintain an independent set of records of all Financial transactions. Assist the Treasurer if and whenever needed.

2. Serve as member of the Budget and Finance Committee.

3. Receive and record all funds. All funds shall be turned over to the treasurer within a period not to exceed ten (10) days.

4. Write vouchers countersigned by the President that authorize expenditures, pursuant to the budget passed by the biennial, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.
5. Be bonded and said bond shall held by the Recording Secretary

Section 10. Chaplain.

Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the position of Chaplain must have:

1. Any candidate seeking the office of Chaplain must demonstrate a Christian commitment, possess a high level of spiritual maturity, demonstrate effective interpersonal and communication skills.

2. Training and experience in Christian Education;
3. Knowledge of the Bible and the Hymnal
4. Experience in preparing and conducting Bible study and worship;

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The Chaplain shall:

1. Make adequate preparation for each Bible Study and Devotional Service, utilizing creative styles.
2. Provide spiritual leadership to this organization.
3. Maintain effective communication with the Chaplains on the Episcopal District and Conference levels..

Section 11. Historiographer

a. Qualification. Any candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must have:

1. Demonstrated prior archival experience with emphasis in research, writing, and publishing historical information.
2. At least a Bachelor's Degree or the equivalent in education and experience
3. Proficiency in English is essential, and proficiency in other languages is encouraged.
- 4 Ability to use technology for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing;
5. Demonstrated a good sense of history and an appreciation for the need to preserve records **and artifacts** of the organization's founding, operations, projects, and other activities.

b. 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 this organization;
2. Act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the Connectional Lay Organization;
3. Compile a written Biennial history of this organization and submit it as a report to each Biennial Session, and
4. Archives, find place to keep historical records.

Section 12. Parliamentarian

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

1. A registered parliamentarian in good and regular standing of the National Association

of Parliamentarians or an equivalent certification at the time of nomination. Should nominations not be received from person (s) certified in parliamentary procedures, the President, with the approval of the executive board 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.

b. Duties and Responsibilities. The Parliamentarian shall:

1. Advise the President or presiding officer concerning questions of parliamentary procedure when asked to do so **or offer suggestions to facilitate the meeting when necessary.**
2. Be seated next to the President at all meetings.
3. Follow The Constitution and Bylaws of this organization, the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, latest edition, at all meetings.
4. Serve as Consultant to the Constitution and Bylaws, Rules, and other committees as needed.

Section 13. Director of Lay Activities.

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

1. Extensive course work in research and writing, English, Speech, Program planning and development &/or Administration.
2. At least a Bachelor's Degree or the equivalent in *education* and experience.
3. Experience in program planning, designing, and implementation; teaching, training and adult learning.

b. 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 & other activities of this organization at the Biennial Session, **including but not limited to Training Institute, Opening Worship, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards** and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the Executive Board..
3. Maintain a working relationship with Episcopal District 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 Biennial Session.
5. The approved program will be presented at the Biennial session and shall be forwarded from the Connectional Director of Lay Activities to the Episcopal District Directors of Lay Activities within a period not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days after the closing of the Biennial session. Upon receipt, the Episcopal District Directors will immediately forward the course of

study to the Conference Directors of Lay Activities. (**Needs to discuss theme submittal timeline and training curricula approval**),

6. Conference Directors of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study to the 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 Connectional Director of Lay Activities has forwarded same.

7. A full report of progress made in the implementation of the course of study and the work of the Director shall be given at each Biennial Session and Executive Board Meeting as outlined in this constitution.

Section 14. Director of Public Relations

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

1. A working knowledge of journalism, marketing, sales or media technology.
2. At least a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent in education and/ or experience in related fields.
3. Extensive course work in English, speech, and journalism.
4. An understanding of the publication process and current electronic technology.
5. At least 5 years' experience in journalism, or in editing developing and publishing educational materials.
6. Strong interpersonal and communication skills.

b. Duties and Responsibilities. Director of Public Relation shall:

1. Oversee the production of the official magazine 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;
4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation;
5. Prepare an annual &/ or biennial line item budget for the magazine's publication for submission to the Budget Committee.
6. Seek to bring about harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media.
7. Be responsible for all press releases and public relations for and during the any Lay Organization meeting.
8. Shall disseminate news items of interest received from the Episcopal districts through Newsletter and/or multi-media processes.

Section 15: Young Adult Representative.-

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

1. Be between the ages of 18-30 at the time of election. Completion of high school and

pursing 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.

b. 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 other relevant Young Adult Auxiliaries and Ministries within, and outside the AME Church.

2. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee.

3. Advocate for Young Adults concerns to the Connectional Executive Board and beyond

4. Facilitate Lay Organization Young Adults 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 a younger generation of African Methodists.

ARTICLE IX – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. There shall be an Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Organization, composed of the elected officers of the organization, the President of each Episcopal District 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. The Board shall hold two (2) meetings, immediately preceding and at the seat of, the next Biennial Session.

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 Connectional 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 Connectional Lay Organization during the interim of the Biennial Sessions.

Section 6. 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 Biennial Sessions of the Connectional Lay Organization, except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided. Further, the Connectional Lay Organization, in its Biennial Session, 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 Connectional Lay Organization and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.

ARTICLE X – MEETINGS

Section 1. The Connectional Lay Organization shall meet biennially in its regular session.

Section 2. The Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization shall be held during the period July 15 to August 15, with the Opening Worship Service being held on Sunday, except that no Opening Worship Service shall be held on a First Sunday. The first business session will begin on Monday. The site of the next Biennial Session shall be determined six (6) years in advance.

Section 3. The Connectional President and/or a majority of the voting members of the Executive Board may call an emergency meeting of the Connectional 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 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 April 1 of the Biennial year. These names shall be forwarded to the Connectional Director of Lay Activities by the Financial Secretary on or before May 1 of the Biennial year for the expressed purpose of expediting pre-registration for Educational sessions.

ARTICLE XI – VOTING PRIVILEGES

Section 1. Voting privileges in the Connectional 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 Connectional 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 Connectional Lay Organization shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority, power, and supervision over all Episcopal District Lay Organizations established under the provisions of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII – RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS

Section 1. Each Episcopal District, 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 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 Divisions Constitution shall conform to, and harmonize with the Connectional Constitution and By laws. Each of these organizations shall have the authority to establish its own Executive Board, raise funds, and in general perform all duties incident to its existence as an autonomous body except, however, said organization shall not make Constitutions and By-laws, or Rules and Regulations which are in-conflict with, or abridge any part of the Constitution and By laws of the Connectional Lay Organization. Or the template for subordinate divisions.

Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By laws of each Episcopal District organization must be filed with the Constitution and Bylaw Committee of the Connectional Lay Organization for examination and response.

Section 3. Each Episcopal District, 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 Connectional 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 Bylaws of the Connectional 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, latest edition.*

ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES. To insure successful and effective implementation of programs and projects of the Connectional Lay Organization, other than specified duties of elected officers per Constitution and Bylaws, all Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President.

Section 1. Four (4) types of Committees shall exist in the Connectional Lay Organization; Standing, Special, Convention, and ad hoc

Section 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance of, and are vital to the functioning of the Connectional Lay Organization. Each standing committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the president, and approved by the Executive Board. Appointments shall be globally inclusive and age sensitive. The President, in appointing Committee members shall follow these guidelines; at least, one (1) person from Districts 14 - 20; one (1) person between the ages of 18 - 30, and all persons must have demonstrated diversity of experiences in the work assigned to the committee. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.

Section 3. The Standing Committees are **Evangelism**, Budget **Monitoring**, Constitution and Bylaws, Membership, Recruitment and Retention, Organizational Effectiveness, Strategic Planning, Proposed Legislation, Fundraising and Advancement, Higher Education, Global Ministry, **AME V-Alert**, and Disaster and Emergency Relief Fund.

Section 4. The Budget and Finance Committee of the Connectional 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 Biennial Session..

Section 5. **Committees of the Biennial Session.** The Committees of the Biennial session shall be Rules, Registration, Credentials, Budget and Finance, Memorial, Time and Place, Review of the Discipline, Evaluation, Resolution, Review of Job Analysis, CLEDC, Issues facing the Church and Nation, Social Actions, Proposed Legislation, Executive Summary, Kit, and Strategic Planning.

Section 6. The Nominating, Election and **Audit** Committees shall be Special Committees.

ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES

Section 1. Episcopal District Lay Organizations – The Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. all Presidents and Directors of Lay Activities of Conference Organizations;
- c. six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30;
- d. each President or a duly elected representative of each organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;
- e. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30 —of each organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference;
- f. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization who are members of an organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization in the Episcopal District

- g. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18 - 30, from each Station or Circuit.

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

- a. all elected officers;
- b. each President and Director of Lay Activities of duly organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;
- c. six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30, from each duly organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference; and
- d. each President and six (6) elected delegates at least one of whom one shall be a young adult, ages 18-30, from each Station or Circuit.
- e. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization or Episcopal District organization who are members of an organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization in the Annual Conference

Section 3. District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference – The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers; and
- b. the President and six (6) elected delegates from each Station or Circuit where there is a duly organized Lay Organization.
- c. any elected officers of the Connectional, Episcopal District or Annual Conference Lay Organizations who are members of an organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization in the District of the Annual Conference
- a. This organization is amenable to the Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Conference Lay Organization at least annually

Section 4. 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 enroll/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 his/her office.

Section 4. The officers of a Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be those specified in Article 5, Section 1 of this 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.

ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendment of Bylaws. Amendments to the Constitution and By Laws of the

Connectional Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the Connectional President and Secretary. The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at least six months or (180) days prior to the meeting of the Connectional Lay Organization's Biennial Session. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail to each of the Episcopal District Presidents. Two-thirds vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Biennial Session shall be required to effect an amendment. Amendments will take effect at the close of the General Conference ratifying the Amendments.