

**THE EAST CONFERENCE OF THE ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
OF THE
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME

SECTION 1 The name of this organization shall be the East Conference Lay Organization of the Eleventh Episcopal District 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 laity of the 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 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 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 parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- f. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God's Word.

- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.
- j. To increase the circulation of church periodicals.
- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service responsibilities.
- l. To promote activities that will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the East Conference of the Eleventh Episcopal District.
- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.
- n. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs.

ARTICLE III – DIVISIONS

SECTION 1 The East Conference Lay Organization shall be composed of the Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit. The divisions shall mirror the responsibilities of the East Conference Lay Organization.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

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

SECTION 2 The East Conference Lay Organization membership to the East Conference Lay sessions shall be as follows:

- a. All elected officers of the East Conference Lay Organization, as well as any elected Officers of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay or Connectional Lay Organization who are a member of a local Church in the East Conference.
- b. All persons holding the designation and/or office of President Emeritus.
- c. All Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities, and Young Adult Representatives of Lay Organizations located within the Districts of the East Annual Conference.
- d. Six (6) elected delegates from Lay Organizations within the Districts of the East Annual Conference, of which at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
- e. Each President of the Lay Organization or a duly elected representative of the local Station, Churches or Circuits Lay Organization located within the Districts of the East Annual Conference.

- f. Six (6) elected delegates from each local Station, Churches or Circuits Lay Organization located within the Districts of the East Annual Conference, of which at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION 1 The elected Officers of the East Conference Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be:

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

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

- a)** **The President** of the East Conference Lay Organization shall lead with vision and integrity. This includes serving as spokesperson for laity in the church, a representative for lay ministry in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings, or an advocate in public policy arenas. They shall preside over the East Conference Quarterly meetings, special, or emergency meetings, the Executive Board, and all other official meetings of this organization. The President shall 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.

The President shall be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the East Conference through channels of the Districts of the East Annual Conference Lay Organization. They shall 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 members of the Conference Lay members at their regular Quarterly meetings. The President shall appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Special, Convention, and Ad

Hoc Committees. The President or his/her designee shall preside over all election of officers on the Districts of the East Annual Conference level.

- b) **The First Vice President** shall assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties. The First Vice President shall be responsible for Membership and Recruitment, Retention/and Coordinate such other duties as assigned by the President.
- c) **The Second Vice President** in the absence of the President and First Vice President shall preside at all meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The Second Vice President shall be responsible for Strategic Planning and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and the Executive Board.
- d) **The Third Vice President** in the absence of the President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President shall preside at all meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President. The Third Vice President shall coordinate such duties as Personal Evangelism and coordinating those efforts with the appropriate departments and within the church.
- e) **The Recording Secretary** shall serve as the secretary of the East Conference Quarterly meetings and the East Conference Executive Board. They shall be responsible for all the recording of attendance and accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings and shall read and distribute the minutes of any previous meetings, when called upon to do so by the President ensuring widespread dissemination of pertinent information. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside over the meeting until a chairperson pro tempore is elected. The Recording Secretary shall prepare for the presiding officer a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting and a report of the Executive Board meetings to be presented at the East Conference Quarterly Lay Meetings. The Recording Secretary shall hold the bonds of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary. Serve in this capacity during all East Conference Quarterly meetings and Executive Board Meetings.
- f) **The Assistant Recording Secretary** shall assist the Recording Secretary in all of the duties outlined. In the absence of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary shall perform the duties of the Recording Secretary.
- g) **The Corresponding Secretary** shall ensure lay ministry focus through effective communication. This includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about laity. Report pertinent information to the Executive Board, and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board. Maintain a network of internal communications between the Conference Lay Organization and its subordinate bodies. Compose communication as needed and/or directed by the President. Maintain liaison with the Director of Public Relations to ensure publication of pertinent information.

- h) **The Treasurer** shall serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal year. The Treasurer shall disburse all funds. Disbursements shall be made in accordance with the line item budget approved. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the Executive Board with appropriate justification. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Executive Board meeting and East Conference Lay Quarterly meetings. The Treasurer shall be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary. Have the accounts audited (annually), by an internal audit committee, and prior to change in office.
- i) **The Financial Secretary** shall maintain an independent set of records of all financial transactions and assist with work in concert with the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee. They shall receive and record all funds. The Financial Secretary shall write vouchers countersigned by the President that authorize expenditures which are to be paid by the Treasurer. Monies received by the Financial Secretary shall be turned over to the Treasurer within ten (10) days. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.
- j) **The Chaplain** shall make adequate preparation for each Bible Study and Devotional Service, utilizing creative styles that motivates and draws participants into the worship experience. The Chaplain provides spiritual leadership to this organization, and should maintain effective communication with the Chaplains on the Districts of the East Annual Conference Lay Organizations.
- k) **The Historiographer** shall be responsible for gathering, assembling and maintaining a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of the organization and make it available upon request. The Historiographer shall also act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the East Conference Lay Organization. They shall compile/maintain a written history of this organization and submit it as a report to the Executive Board and the East Conference Quarterly meetings. The Historiographer shall maintain an archive of the historical record and other documents of the organization.
- l) **The Parliamentarian** shall advise the President or presiding officer, when necessary, concerning questions of parliamentary procedure. The Parliamentarian shall follow the Constitution and By-Laws of this Organization, The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order latest revised edition, at all meetings. The Parliamentarian shall serve as consultant to the Constitution and By-Laws, Rules and other committees as needed.
- m) **The Director of Lay Activities** shall 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. This training program and course of study

shall be presented to the Executive Board for approval prior to implementation. The Director of Lay Activities shall 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. The Director of Lay Activities shall maintain a working relationship with District Directors of Lay Activities of the East Annual Conference. The Director of Lay Activities shall plan, design, and direct all educational programs and other activities of this organization, including but not limited to Training Institutes, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards, and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the Executive Board. Conference Directors of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study from the Connectional and Episcopal level to the District of the Annual Conference. This shall be done within thirty (30) days after receipt. All full reports of progress made in the implementation of the course of study and the work of the Director of Lay Activities shall be given at the East Conference Quarterly meetings and Executive Board Meetings as outlined in this constitution.

The Director of Lay Activities shall prepare an annual line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee to be included in the proposed budget for the fiscal year.

- n) **The Director of Public Relations** shall seek to bring about harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media. The Director of Public Relations shall be responsible for all press releases and Public Relations, and shall disseminate news items for interest received from the District, Conference, and Episcopal Districts. Oversee the Conference Lay Organization website and any internal or external documents, including all social media networking. The Director of Public Relations shall prepare an annual line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee to be included in the proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- o) **The Young Adult Representative** shall 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. The Young Adult Representative shall advocate for Young Adults concerns to the East Conference Lay Executive Board and beyond. The Young Adult Representative shall also plan and facilitate Lay Organization Young Adult events with approval of the President. They shall voice the concerns and visions of a new generation of laity, and serve as a Christian mentor to a younger generation of African Methodists. The Young Adult Representative shall prepare an annual line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee to be included in the proposed budget for the fiscal year.

- p) **The Director of Lay Benevolent** shall be primarily responsible for overseeing the disbursement of funds and sending of cards/flowers for active lay members and their significant others who have illness, death, or other debilitating circumstances. The Director of Lay Benevolent is also responsible for ensuring that the information is passed on to the Episcopal District Director of Lay Benevolent. They will also serve on the Benevolent Committee for the Episcopal District Annual Convention Program.

SECTION 2 The Annual Audit shall include records of all officers handling finances of the East Annual Conference Lay Organization and shall be conducted by an internal auditing committee. The Committee shall report it's finding at the East Conference Quarterly meeting.

ARTICLE VI – NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

SECTION 1 All officers and members of the East Conference Lay Organization and its Divisions shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station or Circuit Lay Organization to participate in elections and voting.

SECTION 2 All persons seeking an elected position in the East Conference Lay Organization must be a member in “good and regular standing” in the organization and must possess the qualifications required for the position being sought. Any candidate for elected office must have demonstrated active participation by attending at least 50% of the meetings on the Conference and District level of the Lay Organization within the two (2) year period preceding the election year. Registration shall be confirmed from the official registration records provided to the nominating committee upon request.

SECTION 3 All persons seeking an elected office must submit a “Letter of Intent” with qualifications signed by the District President, and then sent to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The format for the Letter of Intent will be provided by the Nominating Committee. Letter shall be sent by certified mail, fax or electronic mail, and postmarked or delivered on or before the date designated by the Nominating Committee. This deadline date will constitute the close of all nominations submitted to the Nominating Committee. All qualifications are subject to verification. All verifications must be received prior to placing an individual's name on the voting ballot. There shall be no nominations from the floor.

SECTION 4 All candidates seeking an office must have demonstrated active participation on the Conference-and Districts of the East Annual Conference levels within the two (2) year period preceding the election year.

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

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

SECTION 7 The East Conference Lay President shall appoint a Nominating Committee who shall be approved/confirmed by the Conference Executive Board to serve in this capacity. Those nominated must be in good and regular standing in their Station, Church or Circuit Lay Organization, and District Lay Organization. The Nominating Committee shall consist of no fewer than three persons. Representation should be from each of the three Districts of the East Conference. Appointments should be sensitive to age diversity, at least one person between the ages of 18-35. All persons must have demonstrated experience and/or willingness to learn the nominating process. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.

SECTION 8 Duties of the Nominating Committee

At least ninety (90) days prior to the election of officers, the committee shall call for nominations through a notice to each of the churches within the East Conference, and notice shall be submitted on the East Conference Lay website along with 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 District Presidents and Executive Board members for distribution to members. Such forms shall be returned to the Chair of the Nominating Committee by prospective nominees, bearing the signature(s) of the person being nominated and the District Lay President, along with biographical data and other pertinent information which will aid in the qualifying of credentials, no later than the date outlined by the Nominating Committee.

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 qualification of the nominees for offices to be elected. On or before December 31st, the slate will be distributed to the Executive Board of the East Conference Lay Organization for approval prior to being provided to each District of the East Annual Conference.

No political campaigning for office shall take place before candidates are qualified as nominees by the Nominating Committee. Campaigning is defined as placing ads in Souvenir Journals or any AME Church Publication (where applicable) at any level as a candidate, distributing campaign literature/paraphernalia or visits to formal functions of the East Conference 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** The East Conference Lay Organization officers of the Annual Conference shall be elected biennially beginning in February 2006. All elections of offices shall be by secret ballot, electronic or paper, except in the case where the office is not contested. A majority vote shall elect said officers. When there is only one candidate for an office the chair can take a voice vote or declare that the nominee(s) 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. There should be a ceremony for the Installation of Officers prior to the close of the meeting. This shall be the final order of business at the close of the meeting. The candidate seeking elected office does not have to be present to be voted upon. Any method of election other than the aforementioned methods, except in the case of uncontested offices, shall be declared null and void by the East Conference Lay Organization.
- SECTION 2** The East Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected to a two (2) year term beginning in February 2006.
- SECTION 3** **Term Limitation.** The elected officers of the East Conference Lay Organization and its Divisions shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office. The newly elected officers shall assume duties of the office after the close of the East Conference Lay election.
- 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 8 weeks beginning at the close of the meeting wherein the election was held 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 President. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other causes, the First Vice President shall immediately assume the Office of President, for the unexpired term of office; the Second Vice President shall ascend to the Office of First Vice President, and the Third Vice President becomes Second Vice President, leaving the vacancy to be filled in the office of the lowest ranking Vice President. If the position was contested during election for the office of Third Vice President, the person with the second highest number of votes will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. The President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office of the Third Vice President, to fill the vacancy, if the remainder of the term is less than one (1) year. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office for the Third Vice President is greater than one (1) year, 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 from the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee to each person who wishes to be a candidate for the office of Third Vice President. Nominating procedures, approved for last Conference Lay election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed and/or elected to fill an unexpired term of President shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to four (4) full two (2) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

SECTION 7 Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice 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 as defined in Article IV, Section 1, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than one (1) year. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than one (1) year, 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 Conference Lay 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 four full two (2) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

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

SECTION 9 Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

SECTION 10 Districts of the East 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 his/her duties and those officers with a budget shall prepare and submit an annual line item budget for approval to the Stewardship and Finance Committee to be considered in the Annual Budget of the Organization.

- SECTION 1** **The President** of the East Conference Lay Organization shall have a commitment to lay ministry as demonstrated by prior management experience, preferably in non-profit organization. They should have prior service as either an elected officer of the Episcopal District, Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference or Local Church Organization. They should possess administrative, supervisory, or fiscal management experience.
- SECTION 2** **The First Vice President** candidate seeking the position of First Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.
- SECTION 3** **The Second Vice President** candidate seeking the position of Second Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.
- SECTION 4** **The Third Vice President** candidate seeking the position of Third Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.
- SECTION 5** **Recording Secretary** candidate seeking the office of Recording Secretary must possess proficiency in writing and composition of the English language, basic reading competency, editing and record keeping skills. Have experience in or a willingness to learn word processing or other technology (electronic media) available for recording, storing, and retrieving information. Possess prior secretarial experience or training and have the ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.
- SECTION 6** **Assistant Recording Secretary** candidate seeking the position of Assistant Recording Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary.
- SECTION 7** **Corresponding Secretary** 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** candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, preferably in non-profit organizations. They should have experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, and budgeting. Ability to be bonded. Possess experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.
- SECTION 9** **Financial Secretary** candidate seeking the office of Financial Secretary must possess the same qualifications as those of the Treasurer.
- SECTION 10** **Chaplain** candidate seeking the position of Chaplain must demonstrate a

Christian commitment, possess a high level of spiritual maturity, effective interpersonal and communication skills. Should have training and experience in Christian Education, and possess knowledge of the Bible and the AMEC Hymnal. They should also have experience or a willingness to learn in preparing and conducting Bible study and worship.

SECTION 11 **Historiographer** candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must demonstrate prior experience with emphasis in research, writing, and publishing historical information. Proficiency in English is required. Possess ability to use technology (electronic media, including video, photos, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing. Have the knowledge or willingness to learn of record and artifact preservation specific to an organization's founding, operations, projects, and other activities.

SECTION 12 **Parliamentarian** candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate a working knowledge of Parliamentary Law and a willingness to learn more about the process.

SECTION 13 **Director of Lay Activities** candidate seeking the office of Director of Lay Activities must demonstrate an 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** candidate seeking the office of Director of Public Relations must demonstrate a working knowledge of media relations, marketing, sales, prior experience in preparing and distributing press releases. Possess strong communication skills and extensive experience in English, speech, and journalism.

SECTION 15 **Young Adult Representative** candidate seeking the office of Young Adult Representative shall 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. Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with Youth and Young Adults within the church or other organizations and possess strong abilities to provide training, and demonstrate effective communication skills. Be able to maintain a working relationship with the Director of Lay Activities.

ARTICLE IX– EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 1 There shall be an Executive Board of the East Conference Lay Organization composed of the elected officers of the organization, the Presidents of each Districts of the East Annual Conference, President Emeriti, and chairpersons of Standing Committees.

SECTION 2 The Executive Board shall meet at least once, 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 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 East Conference Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Board, and the Secretary of the East Conference Lay Organization shall serve as Secretary of the Executive Board.
- SECTION 5** The Executive Board shall have the authority to carry on the work of the East Conference Lay Organization during the interim of its Quarterly Meetings.
- 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 directions of all affairs of the Organization, except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions, herein set forth and provided. Further, the East Conference Lay Organization, at its Quarterly 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 purpose and intent of this Constitution.
- SECTION 8** The Executive Board, at its discretion, may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the East Conference 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 East Conference Lay Organization shall meet quarterly.
- SECTION 2** The East Conference Lay quarterly meetings are rotated between the Districts of the East Annual Conference. A schedule for the meeting places are given out immediately after the Annual Conference. Meetings are held at 3:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.
- SECTION 3** The East Conference Executive Board meets monthly on the 2nd Saturday of the month unless otherwise noted. The East Conference Lay Organization President and/or a majority of the voting members of the Executive Board may call an emergency or a special meeting of the East Conference Lay Organization when it is deemed necessary.

The time, place, and objective 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 Conference must be elected at a regular or properly convened meeting. The names and addresses of all delegates must be submitted to the Conference Lay Organization Registrar by the Conference Lay Organization Secretary by the deadlines given by the Registrar.

ARTICLE XI – VOTING PRIVILEGES

SECTION 1 Voting privileges in the East Conference 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 East Conference 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 JURISDICTION

SECTION 1 The East Conference Lay Organization shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority, power, and supervision over all Districts of the East Annual Conference (Alachua-Central, Suwannee-North, and South) established under the provisions of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII – RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS

SECTION 1 Each District of the East Annual Conference, 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 Division's 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 East Conference Lay Organization or the template for subordinate divisions.

SECTION 2 A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of the Districts of the East Annual Conference Lay Organization (Alachua-Central, Suwannee-North, and South) must be filed with the Constitution and By Laws Committee of the East Conference Lay Organization for examination and response.

SECTION 3 Each District of the East 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 Eleventh 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 Connectional Lay Organization, The Current Book of Discipline, Laws, Doctrines, and Tenets of the 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 East Conference Lay Organization, other than specified duties of elected officers per Constitution and By-Laws, all Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President.

SECTION 1 Four (4) types of Committees shall exist in the East Conference Lay Organization: Standing, Special, Convention, and Ad Hoc.

SECTION 2 Standing Committees are appointed to implement special goals, objectives, and programs to advance programs that are vital to the functioning of the East Conference Lay Organization. These Standing Committees shall have no more than six (6) members appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. The President in appointing these members shall follow these guidelines: (1) there shall be no more than one person appointed from any District of the Annual Conference unless needed by virtue of their position, (2) appointments shall be sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the age of 18-35, (3) All persons have demonstrated experience and/or a willingness to learn the committee's duties and timelines. Standing Committees shall be as follows: V-AME Alert, Proposed Legislation, Budget and Stewardship, Constitutional and By-Laws, Organizational and Officers Effective Committee, and other committees as deemed necessary for function by the President, Executive Board, or the East Conference Lay Organization.

SECTION 3 Special Committees shall be the following: Nominating, Elections, and Auditing and other such committees are appointed to perform duties and tasks that does not fall within the assigned function of the Standing Committees.

SECTION 4 Convention Committees shall fall under the following Commissions: Statistics and Finance, Organization and Structure, Personnel and Procedures, and Programs and Activities. Each Commission will be made up of two (2) members from each District of the Annual Conference that makes up the East Conference Lay Organization (Alachua-Central, Suwannee-North, and South Districts), to be appointed by the President. The local Presidents and/or Presidents of the Districts of the Annual Conference may nominate these persons. All Commission meetings shall be open to the members of the East Conference who may take part in the deliberations but will not be able to vote on issues before the Commission. Directors of the Commissions may appoint subcommittees to execute any of its functions using any members of the organization. Committees, when appointed by the Directors of Commissions, will make their reports to the appointing Commission unless a request is approved to have the report presented before another group.

- SECTION 5** The Credentials Committee prepares and presents to the East Conference Lay Organization a certified list of registered officers and delegates that make up the voting strength of a meeting and/or convention for voting purposes.
- SECTION 6** The Rules Committee provides specific guidelines for the operating procedures specifically required for operation of the Organization.
- SECTION 7** The Budget and Stewardship Committee is composed of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, President of each District of the East Annual Conference, and other members as for a total of seven. 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 review and later presented to the East Conference Lay Organization for approval by a majority vote.
- SECTION 8** The Budget and Stewardship Committee of the East Conference Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the Regular Session of the Organization at the last meeting of the Conference Year.
- SECTION 9** The Constitution and By-Laws Committee defines the primary characteristics of how the organization functions including all rules that the organization considers so important without previous notice to the membership and two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the East Conference Lay Organization membership at their Regular Session.
- 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 shall appoint the members at the first Conference Meeting after the Annual Conference. The committee will be responsible for presenting any findings that they find.
- SECTION 11** The Ad Hoc Committee shall be 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** District Lay Organizations of the East Annual Conference – The District Lay Organization shall be composed of:
- a. All elected officers.
 - b. The President and six elected delegates at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35, from each Station or Circuit.
- A. This organization is amenable to the East Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Conference Lay Organization quarterly.
- SECTION 2** Station or Circuit Lay Organization- The Pastor of each Station or Circuit shall within thirty (30) days after the Annual Conference, shall 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 duly elected representative of the local church becomes a member of the Official Board by virtue of office.

- SECTION 3**
- a. The Officers of a Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be those specified in Article V, Section 1 of this Constitution.
 - b. 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 East Conference Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the President, Secretary and Constitution and By-Laws Committee Chair at least sixty (60) days prior to the meeting of the East Conference Lay Organization in which the Constitution and By-Laws are scheduled to be amended. The Chair shall send a copy of the proposed amendment(s) to each District of the East Annual Conference Lay President and the Stations or Circuit Lay Organization Presidents at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting in which action will be taken on the proposed amendment. A two-thirds (2/3) vote shall be required to effect an amendment.

ARTICLE XVII – BY-LAWS OF THE EAST CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION

- SECTION 1** The Order of Business shall be:
- a. Call to Order
 - b. Laymen’s Hymn
 - c. Prayer and Bible Study
 - d. Greetings and Welcome
 - e. Approval of the Agenda
 - f. Roll Call of Officers
 - g. Reading of the Minutes
 - h. Treasurer’s Report
 - i. President’s Message
 - j. Officers Reports
 - k. Reports of District Presidents
 - l. Reports of Committees
 - m. Lesson by the Director of Lay Activities
 - n. Membership Speaks
 - o. Introduction of Guests
 - p. Registration of Delegates
 - q. Unfinished Business
 - r. New Business
 - s. Elections
 - t. Installation of Officers
 - u. Lay Benediction
 - v. Adjournment

- SECTION 2** A majority of delegates present from each of the Districts of the East Annual Conference shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting the business of the organization.

- SECTION 3** The members shall conform to all rules and regulations of this organization. Any Member(s) guilty of an infraction or violation of the rules, or for conduct or decorum unbecoming a member, may be removed from membership.
- SECTION 4** The order of business herein before outlined may be changed by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of the members present.
- SECTION 5** All reports of Presidents and other officers shall be in writing and submitted, at least, in triplicate copies: one for the President, one for the Secretary, and one to be retained by the officer making the report.
- SECTION 6** Any officer failing to perform his or her official duties of the office to which elected or assigned shall be accountable to the Executive Board.
- SECTION 7** No officer, member, nor standing or special committee shall incur any obligation, which shall be binding on the organization, 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 meetings.
- a. It shall be the duty of the Marshals to maintain order and see that only members are seated in the established bounds of the meetings.
 - b. The Marshals shall distribute materials and perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President in keeping with the duties of their office.
- SECTION 9** Any provision or condition not expressly covered in either the Constitution or By-Laws of the Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long established policy, customs, tenets, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, and *Roberts Rules of Order latest revised edition*.

COLORS

The official colors of the East Conference 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 me 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 armor bright,

Let our words 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: [ZION] "*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 laypersons working with God." Amen

5/2018

Amended/Adopted 7/29/2018