

Constitution and Bylaws of the The Baltimore Conference Lay Organization



Chair:

Jacqueline H. Thomas – 1st Vice President

Members:

Thomas A. Gross, Sr. – 3rd Vice President

LeOtha N. Hull, Past President

Charles E. Jones, II - Historiographer

Cynthia Bryant Pitts, - Advisor

Jean Wilson Richie, President Emerita /Advisor

Approved 11/13/21

Introduction

This Constitution and Bylaws establishes the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization's organizational management structure, policies and procedures, and assist with any conflict resolution processes it may encounter.

Organizational structure, systems, policies and procedures exist to advance the viability and sustainability of organizations and institutions. These functions aid the church as it secures advancement and efficiency for the spread of the gospel.

Therefore, this legally binding document serves as an operating tool for the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization and was developed by its Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

The Baltimore Conference Lay Organization
The Second Episcopal District of the African Methodist
Episcopal Church
Constitution and Bylaws

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization, Second Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Article II - Purposes and Objectives

Section 1 - Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to utilize and maximize the talents, skills and abilities granted by God to improve and expand God's kingdom, and to promote discipleship, happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

Section 2 - Objectives

To achieve the purpose of this organization the following objectives are adopted:

- a. To instill in the membership the love for and appreciation of the history, tradition, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating lay persons of the significance and relationship of each to the church.
- b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of our Founder, Richard Allen, and the other early leaders of the Church.
- c. To advocate respect and loyalty to constituted authority and leadership throughout the church.
- d. To engage the Laity in a regular assessment of the Lay Organization's purpose and objectives to insure its relevance to the Church and community.
- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of the Biblical principles of leadership, Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).
- f. To foster, influence and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- g. To provide training in Christian stewardship which causes lay members to realize that their time and talents must be utilized along with their commitment to contribute tithes and offerings
- h. To promote personal evangelism through words and actions.

- i. To provide systemic training of lay persons so that they will effectively fulfill their role and responsibilities of Christian Leadership as officers and committee chairs.
- j. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons, of all ages, throughout the Local Church, Conference, Districts and the Connection.
- k. to encourage participation in the general functioning of the organization.

Article III – Membership

The membership of the Baltimore Annual Conference Lay Organization shall consist of the following:

- a. All persons from each Station, Circuit and Mission who have paid annual dues to the organization and have received confirmation of payment by membership card or receipt.
- b. Each Station, Circuit and Mission shall certify to the Baltimore Conference Membership Chairperson, the number of members of that Local Lay Organization by providing one (1) copy of its membership roster, to include name, address, phone number and e-mail address and the required membership payment amount for each member listed.
- c. A copy of the membership roster of each local lay organization will be distributed to the Financial Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and the Treasurer.
- d. A copy of the membership roster of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be forwarded to the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Article IV – Officers

The elected Officers of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be:

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

Article V – Election Process for Baltimore Conference Lay Officers

Section 1 – Membership Qualification

All officers and members of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be members in good and regular standing in their local Station, Circuit and Mission and must have paid the required annual membership dues to participate in the election process.

Section 2. Nominating Process

- a. All members seeking an office in the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization must submit a "Letter of Intent" to include experiences related to the position sought, to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by the closing date specified by the Nominating Committee to be approved by both the Nominating Committee and the Executive Board.
- b. The format for the “Letter of Intent” will be provided by the Nominating Committee. All “Letters of Intent” must be returned to the Nominating Committee, via USPS or Electronic Mail by January 30th of the election year.
- c. In the event of a special election, the returned date for the “Letter of Intent” will be specified by the Nominating Committee and the Executive Board.
- d. There shall be no nominations from the floor.

Section 3. Letter of Intent

- a. The duties and responsibilities of Officers, as detailed in Article VII, Sections 1-15 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be given, in writing, to each person who submits a Letter of Intent for an office.
- b. Signature on the Letter of Intent will indicate that the person seeking the position understands and will accept the duties and responsibilities as outlined. The signature of the Local President is required on any “Letter of Intent” submitted, whereas an electronic signature shall be acceptable.

- c. Local Presidents seeking office will have the signature of the President of the BCLO Presidents Council, on the Letter of Intent.
- d. All members seeking an office must have attended at least fifty percent (50%) of the conference meetings during the previous twelve months.
- e. Meeting attendance shall be confirmed from the official registration records, to be provided to the nominating committee, by the 3rd Vice President.

Section 4. Election

- a. All officers and members of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station, Circuit and Mission organizations to participate in any type of election and voting.
- b. Election of officers shall be by ballot, and a majority vote shall elect.
- c. In the event of a no contest election, the Recording Secretary shall cast a vote, for the slate that is presented.
- d. Any method of election other than by ballot shall be declared null and void by the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization
- e. Officers of the Baltimore Conference Lay shall be elected to a two-year term at the designated Conference meeting.
- f. The SEDLO President or his/her designee shall conduct the Baltimore Conference Lay Elections.
- g. The elected officers of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years (no more than four terms) in the same office.
- h. A newly elected officer shall assume the duties of the office upon installation.
- i. The expected transitional period to reconcile files, records, and check inventories before transferring them from the outgoing officer to the incoming officers shall not exceed a period of thirty (30) calendar days. Extended time determined by the Executive Board may be granted per request, giving consideration to extenuating circumstances approved by the Executive Board.

Section 5. – Removal of An Officer

If after election and installation, any Elected and Installed Officer who fails to perform his/her duties, as detailed in the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization Constitution & Bylaws, he/she shall:

- a. receive a verbal warning of unsatisfactory performance from the President and two (2) members of the Executive Board, and
- b. the Secretary will be present to record minutes of those proceedings, to present to the Executive Board, and
- c. If the President is the Officer to receive a verbal warning of unsatisfactory performance, the same action will come from the Executive Board, led by the First Vice President.
- d. Within sixty (60) days should the Officer's performance fail to meet the prescribed standards presented to the Officer necessary to improve his/her deemed unsatisfactory performance(s), the officer will be removed from the position.
- e. The President, shall appoint a person to fill the position until the next election. The President shall seek approval from the Executive Board.
- f. Should the President be the Officer to be removed, the 1st Vice President shall assume the Office of President, and the Executive Board will examine the roles and then make a decision on the Officer rotations.

ARTICLE VI – Election of Delegates to the Biennial Convention

Section 1 – Recruitment of Delegates

- a. At least two (2) months prior to the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization Biennial Elections, the Election Committee, shall call for a Letter of Intent, from the Corresponding Secretary through a notice given at a regular meeting.
- b. This notice shall contain information on how, when and where members can obtain Letters of Intent and when and how the Letter will be returned to the Election Committee.
- c. Once received, the Election Committee shall determine eligibility.

Section 2 – Delegates Election Process

- a. The date of the election shall be set by the President, with the approval of the Executive Board.
- b. All officers and members of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station, Circuit and Mission organizations to participate in any type of election and voting process.
- c. Election of delegates shall be by ballot, and a majority vote shall elect.
- d. Any method of election other than by ballot shall be declared null and void by the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization.

Section 3 – Delegates Requirement

- a. All members who desire consideration as a delegate must be active members of an organized local Station, Circuit and Mission.
- b. Members must have attended 50% of the Conference meetings during the year prior to the election.
- c. Members must have paid the required annual dues for the year in which the election is held.

Section 4 – Delegation

- a. There shall be a maximum of nine (9) delegates to serve at the Biennial Convention.
- b. The President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representative (18 - 35 years of age) are automatic delegates.
- c. There shall be six (6) elected delegates from the Conference Organization, one of which will serve as the Second Episcopal District Delegate. If there are no members available, in the age range of 18 - 35, then there shall be only five (5) members elected delegates.
- d. At least one elected delegate must be age 18-35, and more than one in this age group can be a delegate included in the total of the six delegates
- e. A written report from each Biennial Delegate shall be submitted to the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization to be retained in its archives.

ARTICLE VII - Duties of Officers

Section 1- The President of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall:

- a. preside over its sessions during regular, special or emergency meetings.
- b. be Chairperson of the Executive Board.
- c. be responsible for ensuring that the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, as well as the orders and policies of the Executive Board are fully carried out.
- d. be responsible for expanding and developing the lay work throughout the Baltimore Conference through channels of the Local Church Lay Organizations.
- e. be responsible for such other duties customary to the position or which may be assigned by the Executive Board and other directives approved by the Conference Organization.
- f. provide direction to each officer and committee chair to ensure that the goals and objectives of the organization are met and in sync with the approved timelines and with approved budget support where necessary.
- g. appoint all Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.
- h. represent the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization at all meetings of the Second District Lay Organization.

The President of the Lay should have a commitment to lay ministry as demonstrated by:

- 1) Prior management experience, preferably in a non-profit organization.
- 2) Prior service as either an elected officer of the Annual Conference or local church Organization.
- 3) Three (3) years of administrative and supervisory experience.
- 4) Demonstrated capacity and commitment to develop and nurture emerging leaders.

Section 2 - The First Vice President shall:

- a. assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when the Executive Board determines that the President can no longer perform the duties.
- b. coordinate all programs assigned by the President
- c. assist the President in overseeing the work of offices and committees.
- d. Provide oversight and development of a Course of Study, in conjunction with the Director of Lay Activities.
- e. provide oversight for the following committees/functions
 - 1) Lay Activities
 - 2) Training Teams,
 - 3) Officer Training
 - 4) oversee the development and execution of Constitution and Bylaws
 - 5) coordinate development of budget in conjunction with the Financial Secretary and Treasurer
 - 6) Strategic Planning

Any candidate seeking the position of 1st Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

Section 3 -The Second Vice President shall:

- a. Assume the duties of the President in the absence of the President and First Vice President.
- b. Provide oversight to offices and committees as assigned by the President including:
 - 1) Transportation
 - 2) Social Justice
 - 3) Evangelism
 - 4) Economic Development
 - 5) Educational Empowerment

Any candidate seeking the position of 2nd Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the 1st President.

Section 4 - The Third Vice President shall:

- a. Assume complete duties of the President in the absence of the President, First Vice President and Second Vice President.
- b. Provide oversight to the offices and committees as assigned by the President and shall include:
 - 1) Membership Committee to be responsible for recruitment strategies and means for sustaining membership
 - 2) Membership records established and maintained in accordance with requisites of the Second Episcopal District utilizing the District forms. Maintain an accurate official roster to include all required contact information in a minimal of an excel spreadsheet.
 - 3) Ensure that the information is accurate and complete.
 - 4) Development of ways and means in support of the organization.

Any candidate seeking the position of 3rd Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the 2nd Vice President.

Section 5 - The Recording Secretary shall:

- a. Record attendance
- b. Record and maintain accurate minutes of all business transacted during the regular meetings and any special meetings that become necessary.
- c. Read the minutes of previous business session or at any time when called upon by the President.
- d. Prepare, for the presiding officer, a statement of any unfinished business that may have been tabled at a previous meeting, and/or for action by the Executive Board.
- e. Preside over the meeting, in the absence of the President and the Vice Presidents, until a chairperson "pro tem" is elected.

All candidates 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.

Experience in word processing or other technology (electronic media) available for recording, storing and retrieving information.

Prior secretarial experience or training.

Ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.

Section 6 - The Assistant Recording Secretary shall:

- a. Assist the Recording Secretary by keeping accurate records, and
- b. In the absence of the Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Secretary.

Any person seeking the office of Assistant Recording Secretary should demonstrate the ability to accurately record the proceedings of the meetings. A knowledge of current word processing techniques will be helpful.

Section 7 - The Corresponding Secretary shall:

- a. Review all correspondence, report pertinent information to the Executive Board
- b. Prepare/reply to correspondence, as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board.
- c. Provide notification of meetings, activities, and other items of interest to the Officers, Local Lay Presidents, Committee Chairpersons, Pastors and the lay organization at large as directed by the President.
- d. Keep a record of the names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, etc., of Officers, Committee Chairpersons, Local Lay Presidents and Pastors. for the purpose of communicating information about meetings, workshops, activities or other items of interest.

Any person seeking the office of Corresponding Secretary must:

Demonstrate the ability to accurately record the proceedings of the meetings.

A knowledge of current word processing techniques will be helpful.

Section 8 - The Treasurer shall:

- a. Receive all monies from the Financial Secretary, providing the Financial Secretary a receipt for the amount received.
- b. Disperse all monies upon authorization of the President as approved by the body.
- c. Keep an accurate record of funds dispersed.
- d. Provide an itemized written report at each meeting.

Any person seeking the office of Treasurer should have:

Knowledge of current financial procedures and banking techniques.

Section 9 -The Financial Secretary shall:

- a. Receive all monies from members and others and provide a receipt for each transaction.
- b. Submit all monies to the Treasurer with a detailed statement of the transaction.
- c. Ensure that a receipt of all monies deposited with the Treasurer is maintained.
- d. Give an itemized report at each Board meeting and Business Session of the Lay Organization.
- e. Prepare vouchers, countersigned by the President, authorizing expenditures which are paid by the Treasurer.

Any person seeking the office of Financial Secretary should have:

Knowledge of current financial procedures and banking techniques.

Section 10 - The Chaplain shall:

- a. Make adequate preparation for each Devotional Service.
- b. Provide spiritual leadership for the Organization.

Section 11 - The Historiographer shall:

- a. Keep written and pictorial records of the activities and achievements of the organization

- b. Provide records upon request.
- c. Shall act as custodian of all photographs, citations, awards, documents, trophies and other memorabilia.
- d. Engage the Organization in periodic recognition and ceremonial activities, memorial services and installation of officers, etc. that cite the accomplishments of the Organization over the course of its history.
- e. Upon completion of the Historiographer term of service, all records will be placed in possession of the new Historiographer.

Preferably, proficiency in writing and research and the ability to use technology for data gathering, record keeping and knowledge of record and artifact preservation specific to the BCLO founding, operations, projects and other activities.

Section 12 - The Parliamentarian shall:

- a. Advise the President or the Presiding Officer on questions of parliamentary procedure when necessary.
- b. Follow the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, at all meetings.
- c. Be the recognized authority on this Constitution.
- d. Serve on the Constitution and Standing Rules Committees.
- e. Function as a consultant to other committees as needed.

Preferably, be a registered Parliamentarian or have demonstrated knowledge, experience and efficacy in parliamentary procedure.

Section 13 - The Director of Lay Activities shall:

- a. Be responsible for planning a training program and course of study in accordance with the purposes and objectives of the Conference, Episcopal District, and Connectional Lay Organizations, respectively
- b. Prepare, with the President, reports for the Second Episcopal District. collaborate with the Chairperson of the Local Presidents Council, to conduct an assessment to identify the training needs of the constituent member organization of the BCLO
- c. Prepare training programs, based on the identified needs.

- d. Obtain approval from the President and 1st Vice President for all the training programs.
- e. In collaboration with the Strategic Planning Committee, identify areas of training and development needs, gathered from the Strategic planning process.
- f. At the close of the Biennial Session, the Director of Lay Activities may request copies of the Lay Study Guide, published by the Connectional Lay Organization.

Any person seeking the position of Director of Lay Activities should possess:

The ability to plan and conduct training and instructive seminars, workshops, and other interactive sessions for the information and improvement of the membership.

Section 14 - The Director of Public Relations shall:

- a. Seek to enhance the relationship between the church and public through the releasing of information via various media outlets.
- b. Be responsible for all press releases or public relations announcements for the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization
- c. Disseminate items of interest received from the Local Churches, i.e. activities, accomplishments, etc., through newsletter and/or multi-media processes, and other appropriate forms of communication.

Any person seeking the position of Public Relations Director should: Have knowledge and experience in disseminating information between an organization, its constituency and the public. The individual must also possess strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Section 15 - The Young Adult Representative shall:

- a. be between the ages of 18 and 35 at the time of appointment.
- b. survey the spiritual, social, economic and educational needs of persons age 18 to 35, for approval by the executive board.

- c. Report participation in all activities and all YAR accomplishments to the Executive Board and Conference meetings.
- d. Prepare and present to the Executive Board strategies to attract and retain young adults in the Church and in the lay organization.
- e. Organize a committee of Young Adults between the ages 18 to 35, for the purpose of identifying issues in relationship to the church in their personal lives.
- f. Serve as a member of the Training Team to provide Young Adults information, inspiration, and encouragement to become active workers within the Church.
- g. Inspire and inform transitioning Youth and Young Adults from the Youth Church to the Adult Church by providing pathways/potential roles for them to pursue in active participation in all levels of the Church (local Church, Presiding Elder Districts, Annual Conference, Episcopal District, and Connection).

Any person 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 is required.

Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with Youth and Young Adults within the church, community or other organizations and;

Possess strong abilities to provide training and demonstrate effective communication skills.

ARTICLE VIII - The Executive Board

There shall be an Executive Board of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization.

Section 1 – Composition

- a. It shall be composed of the elected officers and the Presidents of each Local Church Lay Organization in the Baltimore Conference.
- b. The Executive Board shall meet, at least quarterly, at the time and place designated by the President and the members of the Executive Board.
- c. The President of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Board, and
- d. the Secretary of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall serve as secretary of the Executive Board.

Section 2 – Role of the Executive Board

- a. The Executive Board shall have the authority to set the agenda for the work of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization.
- b. The Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed.
- c. The Executive Board shall have governing authority between regular meetings of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization.
- d. The Executive Board shall have the authority to make recommendations as to the official conduct of any elected officer. However, the decision to suspend, expel or remove from office shall rest exclusively with the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization.
- e. The Executive Board shall pass upon the Constitution and Bylaws of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization mission, to ensure their compliance with or conformity to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Connectional Lay Organization.
- f. The Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.

- g. Other than the Office of President, if a vacancy occurs among the elected officers, this vacancy shall be filled by the President with confirmation from the Executive Board.
- h. The Executive Board, in its discretion, may establish an Advisory Council to act in an advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past President(s) of the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.
- i. The Executive Board shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided.
- j. Furthermore, the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization, in its business meetings, may nullify, abrogate or rescind any actions of the Executive Board, by majority vote of members in attendance, at the meeting.

ARTICLE IX - Meetings

Section 1 – General Meetings

- a. The Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall meet monthly at the time and place designated by the President and the Executive Board.
- b. No meeting will take place during the month of July.

Section 2 – Emergency Meetings

- a. The President shall have the authority to call emergency meetings when necessary.
- b. Elected Officers, Local Presidents and the Chairperson of standing committees shall be notified by appropriate means as soon as possible.
- c. Only those matters expressly set out in the notice or call shall be deliberated at the special/emergency meeting.
- d. No election of officers shall take place at the emergency meeting.

ARTICLE X – Voting Credibility

Section 1 -Voting privileges in the Baltimore Conference Lay Organization shall be granted to those persons who have been verified to be active members of the Station, Circuit, or Missions of the Baltimore Annual Conference.

Section 2 -The Membership Chairperson must verify that said persons have paid the required annual membership dues.

Section 3 - All voters must be present in order to exercise said privilege. Each person shall be permitted one vote on the stated issue.

Section 4 -No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted.

Section 5 - Unless otherwise indicated, the majority vote shall prevail in determining all matters.

ARTICLE XI – Reserved and Implied Powers

Section 1 - The President shall have the authority, with the Executive Board, to establish the required Standing and/or Ad Hoc Committees and to appoint the Chairperson to the same.

Section 2 -The President, with the Executive Board, shall determine the scope and function of said Committees.

Section 3-The President, Membership Chairperson and all active officers and members shall encourage the establishment of a Local Lay Organizations at each Station, Circuit and Mission.

Section 4- This Organization and all of its divisions shall at all times be subject to Biblical principles, the Discipline and Doctrine of the African Methodist Episcopal Church as well as the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization.

ARTICLE XII - Committees

Section 1. - The following standing committees are approved:

- a. Constitution and Bylaws
- b. Budget and Finance
- c. Nominations
- d. Election
- e. Scholarship
- f. Membership
- g. Social Action
- h. Annual Conference Worship Program
- i. Ways and Means
 - a. Sales and Promotions
 - b. Marketing
- j. Strategic Planning
- k. Local Presidents Council
- l. Hospitality
- m. Health and Well Being
- n. BCLO Speaks

Section 2. - All Committee Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 3 – Any additional Standing Committees must be presented to the Constitutional and Bylaws Committee for recommendation to the organization for approval or non-approval.

Section 4 – Ad Hoc Committees shall be called at the discretion of the President; approved by the Executive Board; and to serve for the duration deemed necessary by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE XIII - Amendments

Section 1.

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws may be made by submitting the proposed amendment to the President and the Secretary in writing.

Section 2.

The President shall then refer the proposed amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, for action. Upon action of the committee, the President shall present the proposed amendment to the Executive Board for discussion and approval, and subsequently to the Organization for action.