

1 GREAT LAKES ANNUAL CONFERENCE
2 GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

3 Article I

4 **Section 1. Introduction**

5 These Bylaws constitute the regulations adopted by the Great Lakes Provisional Annual
6 Conference, Inc. (the “annual conference”) of the Global Methodist Church, Inc. (the “GM
7 Church”).

8 **Section 2. Powers**

- 9 **A.** The Great Lakes Annual Conference, Inc. shall have the purposes and powers as may be
10 stated in its **Articles of Incorporation**, and such powers as are now or may be granted
11 hereafter by the **Indiana 2019 Code, Title 23, Article 17, Nonprofit Corporations (the**
12 **“Act”), or any successor legislation.**
- 13 **B.** The Great Lakes Annual Conference, Inc. is subject to the provisions and governance of
14 the GM Church’s *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (the “BDD”), as amended from time to
15 time, and any subsequent *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (the “BDD”) adopted by the GM
16 Church’s General Conference. The BDD shall take precedence over these bylaws in the
17 event of a conflict or the silence of these bylaws on any topic.

18 **Section 3. Purposes**

19 The Great Lakes Annual Conference, Inc. is an association of congregations, clergy persons, and
20 laity within the GM Church denomination. It is organized exclusively for religious purposes,
21 which purposes include, but are not limited to, the following, as defined by the GMC BDD:

- 22 **A.** The mission of the GM Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural
23 holiness across the globe.
- 24 **B.** As a Wesleyan expression of Christianity, the GM Church professes the Christian faith,
25 established on the confession of Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God, and Resurrected Lord of
26 heaven and earth.
- 27 **C.** Remain rooted and grounded in the Scriptures and in the historic teachings of the
28 Christian church as defined in our *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* and
29 understood through the Wesleyan lens of faith.
- 30 **D.** Aspire to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the
31 mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences. We are committed to carrying
32 out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples
33 of Christ, teaching and baptizing in His name.
- 34 **E.** Lead all those who experience the new birth in Jesus to deepen and grow in their
35 relationship with Him, inviting the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit within their lives
36 as they similarly manifest the gifts of that Spirit. We encourage all to participate in
37 discipleship and accountability groups, such as Wesleyan classes and band meetings, and
38 to utilize all the other means of grace to achieve this end.
- 39 **F.** Model the love of God in order to respond to the summons to love the Lord our God with

- 1 all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. To this
2 end, we are committed to fulfilling the commandment in John 21 of lovingly feeding and
3 tending to the flock of God and others, worshiping God in spirit and in truth, and watching
4 over one another in love. This the church does until, perfected in love, it experiences the
5 fullness of God's restored Kingdom with Christ.
- 6 **G.** Recognize the laity as the people of God and a royal priesthood, chosen and empowered
7 for the work of God in this world in full partnership with our clergy. We affirm the
8 participation and leadership of those of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexes, and ages
9 in the Body of Christ.
- 10 **H.** Encourage and affirm the call of God in the lives of clergy who are grounded in the
11 authoritative witness of the Scriptures, set apart by the church, and recognized to possess
12 the necessary gifts and graces for ministry in alignment and accountability with our
13 settled doctrines and discipline.
- 14 **I.** Display a "catholic spirit" to the church universal, cherishing our place within the greater
15 Body of Christ through mutual respect, cooperative relationships, and shared mission
16 with others wherever possible. We envision a global church in which all work together,
17 resourcing and learning from one another, to fulfill the tasks of the church given to it by
18 God.
- 19 **J.** Provide an organization and structure that is able to accomplish its primary functions of
20 support with a connexional polity that can empower and multiply the gifts of all for the
21 sake of Christ's work in the world.
- 22 **K.** Additional general purposes and powers are:
- 23 1. To solicit, collect, receive, acquire, hold and invest money and property, both real
24 and personal, including money and property received by gift, contribution,
25 bequest, or devise; to sell and convert the property, both real and personal, into
26 cash, and to use the funds of the annual conference and the proceeds, income,
27 rents, issues, and projects derived from any property of the annual conference for
28 any of the purposes for which the annual conference is formed;
 - 29 2. To purchase, acquire, own, hold, sell, assign, transfer, dispose of, mortgage, pledge,
30 hypothecate, or encumber shares, bonds, notes, debentures, or other securities or
31 evidence of indebtedness of any person, firm, corporation, or association and,
32 while the owner or holder of them, to exercise all rights, powers, and privileges of
33 ownership;
 - 34 3. To purchase or acquire, own, hold, use, lease (either as lessor or lessee), sell,
35 exchange, assign, convey, dispose of, mortgage, hypothecate, or encumber real and
36 personal property;
 - 37 4. To enter into, make, perform, and carry out contracts of every kind for any lawful
38 purpose without limit on amount with any person, firm, association or corporation,
39 municipality, county, parish, state, territory, government, or other municipal or
40 governmental subdivision;

1 election of equaling laity. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district
2 conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed.

3 **Section 4.**

4 If not otherwise a voting member of the annual conference, the conference attorney shall be
5 seated in the annual conference and shall be given the privilege of the floor without a vote.

6 **Article III**
7 **Meetings**

8 **Section 1.**

9 The bishop or conference superintendent shall appoint the time and place for holding the annual
10 conference in coordination with whatever committee or group is tasked with planning and
11 organizing the conference.

12 **Section 2.**

13 Where necessary, due to local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, the
14 bishop may, with a two-thirds vote of the cabinet, authorize the conducting of the conference via
15 electronic or other digital means.

16 **Section 3.**

17 A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall
18 have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop or by the
19 bishop with the concurrence of three- fourths of the presiding elders. A special session of the
20 annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call unless the annual
21 conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

22 **Section 4. Quorum**

23 When the annual conference is in session, it shall require the presence of a majority of the whole
24 number of members of the annual conference to constitute a quorum for the transaction of
25 business; but a smaller number may take a recess or adjourn from time to time in order to secure
26 a quorum, and at the final session may approve the journal, order the record of the roll call, and
27 adjourn with no appointed date for resumption.

28 **Section 5.**

29 The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall
30 arrange for another bishop, bishop emeritus, or the conference superintendent to preside. In the
31 absence of a bishop or appointed conference superintendent (see Article VI, Section 1), the
32 conference shall by ballot, without debate, elect a conference superintendent from among the
33 ordained elders. The conference superintendent thus elected shall discharge all the duties of a
34 bishop except ordination during the annual conference session in which they are elected.

35 **Section 6.**

36 The annual conference shall elect a secretary (see Article VI, Section 4) and such other officers as
37 it may determine.

1 **Section 7.**

2 When at any time a lay member is unable to attend the session, the alternate lay member, if
3 present, shall be seated. The lay member or the alternate, whichever is seated, has the
4 responsibility of the lay member to report to the local church on the actions of the annual
5 conference.

6 **Article IV**
7 **Annual Conference Powers and Duties**

8 **Section 1. General Powers**

9 Annual conferences shall connect clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a
10 geographical region. It shall gather for edification, fellowship, and inspiration, as well as to plan
11 and implement its purposes.

12 **Section 2. Specific Powers and Duties**

13 The annual conference is charged with the following responsibilities:

- 14 **A.** Create a program of ministry within its area that can fulfill the church's mission and
15 enhance its witness.
- 16 **C.** Determine a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work
17 and mission of the church in its region.
- 18 **D.** Encourage and facilitate the planting of new churches, including the authorization of
19 sponsorship by existing congregations, and charter such new congregations.
- 20 **E.** Establish the number of districts upon recommendation from the bishop, cabinet, and
21 conference leadership.
- 22 **F.** Form such boards, committees, and agencies as may be required to further its mission,
23 specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof.
- 24 **G.** Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula
25 determined by the Connectional Council or the General Conference of the GM Church.
26 Clergy delegates to the General Conference shall be members in full connection in good
27 standing with the GM Church, or its predecessors, who have served a minimum of two
28 years preceding their election. Lay delegates to the General Conference shall have been
29 professing members of the GM Church, or its predecessors, for at least two years. Both
30 clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a minimum of fifty percent of votes cast plus
31 one, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.
- 32 **H.** Following the adoption of a constitution for the GM Church, vote on all constitutional
33 amendments as approved by the General Conference and distributed to the annual
34 conferences for ratification.
- 35 **I.** The ordained clergy meeting in the executive session is to approve the ordination of the
36 clergy as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry and to approve clergy
37 status changes as recommended by the board of ministry.
- 38 **J.** Establish minimum standards for parsonages and other ministry housing, as well as

- 1 minimum compensation standards for clergy, if desired.
- 2 **K.** Approve by a simple majority vote the transfer of a congregation into or out of the annual
3 conference to or from another annual conference and approve by a simple majority vote
4 the departure of a local church from the GM Church.
- 5 **L.** Maintain the records of the annual conference, including the records of closed churches
6 and annual statistical reports from all local churches.
- 7 **M.** Adopt rules for its own governance, provided they do not conflict with the requirements
8 of the BDD.

9 **Article V**

10 **Councils, Boards, and Committees**

11 Annual Conferences shall create the following councils, boards and committees. Each council,
12 board, or committee shall adopt its own governance rules consistent with the BDD.

13 **Section 1. Conference Connectional Council**

14 The Conference Connectional Council shall meet at least once per year face-to-face (absent
15 exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) for the purpose
16 of communication and coordination of ministry among the boards and committees. The
17 Conference Connectional Council shall serve as the Board of Directors of the Annual Conference
18 as provided under the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation's Code.

19 **A.** Membership of the Conference Connectional Council shall consist of the following:

- 20 1. The chair from each annual conference board or committee;
- 21 2. The conference superintendent;
- 22 3. One presiding elder as a representative of the cabinet;
- 23 4. The annual conference secretary;
- 24 5. The annual conference lay leader, if any;
- 25 6. Any other conference officers elected by the annual conference, if any;
- 26 7. Any members at large elected by the annual conference to obtain specific gifts,
27 skills, or expertise, if any, upon nomination by the Nominations and Leadership
28 Committee; and
- 29 8. The conference operating officer (COO), if any, and other appropriate conference
30 staff persons, as the COO determines, shall serve as council members with a voice
31 but without a vote.

32 **B.** The Conference Connectional Council shall have the following specific authority and
33 responsibilities:

- 34 1. To engage in proactive strategizing, including a strategic plan for growth in
35 discipleship and mission and to implement the priorities established by the annual
36 conference, making recommendations to the boards and committees for

- 1 implementation.
- 2 2. To adjust the annual conference budget between sessions with published
- 3 rationale, as long as it is within the total amount of the budget.
- 4 3. To hire, with the consent of the bishop or president pro tempore conference
- 5 superintendent, the conference operating officer and evaluate his/her work
- 6 annually.
- 7 4. To approve the staffing levels for all boards and committees, consistent with
- 8 budget limitations, such staff to be hired by and responsible to the conference
- 9 operating officer.
- 10 5. To adopt policies and procedures, subject to annual conference approval,
- 11 applicable to the annual conference, its boards and committees, and its other
- 12 entities in alignment with the TBD&D and the BD&D BDD and the priorities set by
- 13 the annual conference.
- 14 6. To coordinate proposals coming from the advisory boards and committees to the
- 15 annual conference, including the proposed budget, to assure congruence with the
- 16 church's mission and strategy, as well as congruence with each other.
- 17 7. To initiate, staff, and set parameters for task forces dealing with issues beyond the
- 18 scope of an individual board or committee.
- 19 8. Any other responsibilities or authorities assigned by the annual conference, not in
- 20 conflict with the BDD.

21 **Section 2. The Board of Ministry**

22 The Board of Ministry shall be responsible for overseeing the recruiting and credentialing of
23 clergy for the furtherance of the mission of the GM Church. The Board shall also oversee all
24 clergy changes in clergy conference relations. The composition of the board and its powers and
25 responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

26 **Section 3. Superintendency Committee**

27 The Superintendency Committee shall be responsible to support the conference superintendent
28 in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the annual conference. The composition of
29 the committee and its powers and responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

30 **Section 4. Finance and Administration Committee**

31 The Finance and Administration Committee shall be responsible for developing, maintaining, and
32 administering a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies,
33 budgets, procedures, pension and benefits plans (to the extent the annual conference is
34 authorized to develop, maintain, and administer such plans by the General Conference), and
35 management services for the annual conference. The committee's composition and its powers
36 and responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

37 **Section 5. Nominations and Leadership Committee**

38 The Nominations and Leadership Committee shall nominate clergy and laity to serve on annual

1 conference committees and boards, as provided in the BDD. The committee’s composition and its
2 powers and responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

3 **Section 6. Committee on Investigation**

4 The Committee on Investigation shall be responsible for considering judicial complaints against
5 clergy as set out in Part Eight Judicial Administration of the BDD. The committee’s composition
6 and its powers and responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

7 **Section 7. Administrative Review Committee**

8 The Administrative Review Committee shall ensure that the disciplinary procedures for
9 resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as required by *Judicial*
10 *Practices and Procedures* and fair process. The committee’s composition and its powers and
11 responsibilities shall be those set by the BDD.

12 **Section 8.**

13 The annual conference may create additional boards and committees to accomplish its work as it
14 deems appropriate.

15 **Article VI**
16 **Officers**

17 **Section 1. Conference Superintendent.**

18 The annual conference, its churches, and its clergy shall receive oversight from a conference
19 superintendent who is chosen and assigned in the manner set by the GMC BDD adopted by future
20 GM Church General Conferences. The conference superintendent shall have such powers and
21 responsibilities as set by the BDD.

22 **Section 2. Presiding Elder**

23 As an extension of the office of the bishop, the presiding elder shall oversee the total ministry of
24 the clergy and churches in the district’s communities in their missions of witness and service in
25 the world. The presiding elder shall have such powers and responsibilities as set by the BDD. The
26 presiding elder is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the bishop, assuming such
27 leadership responsibilities as the bishop determines for the health and effectiveness of the local
28 churches in the district and annual conference.

29 **Section 3. The Cabinet.** Presiding elders, although assigned to districts, also have conference-
30 wide responsibilities. Presiding elders become through their selection members first of a cabinet
31 before the bishop subsequently assigns them to service in districts. The cabinet shall have such
32 powers and responsibilities as set by the BDD. The cabinet under the leadership of the
33 conference superintendent is the expression of superintending leadership in and through the
34 annual conference. In consultation with the Connectional Council, it is expected to speak
35 pastorally to the conference and for the conference to the spiritual and temporal issues that exist
36 within the region encompassed by the conference. When the cabinet considers matters relating
37 to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program and other matters
38 as the cabinet may determine, the conference lay leader and other conference staff, as
39 appropriate, shall be invited to be present.

1 **Section 4. Secretary**

2 The annual conference shall elect a secretary who is responsible for maintaining the records and
3 proceedings of the annual conference, making reports as needed, and fulfilling the
4 responsibilities assigned by the annual conference. Paid staff persons may assist the secretary at
5 the discretion of the annual conference. The secretary shall be considered an officer of the
6 conference.

7 **Section 5. Lay Leader**

8 The annual conference may elect a lay leader from among the lay members of the annual
9 conference to promote and make visible the ministry of the laity as equal partners with clergy
10 and fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the annual conference. If elected, the lay leader shall
11 be considered an officer of the conference.

12 **Section 6. Other officers**

13 The annual conference, at its discretion, may elect other officers to serve in such capacity and
14 fulfill such responsibilities as assigned by the annual conference.

15 **Article VII**

16 **Districts**

17 The annual conference shall establish the number and boundaries of districts upon
18 recommendation from the bishop, cabinet, and conference leadership. The districts, their
19 churches, and their clergy shall receive leadership from the presiding elder assigned by the
20 conference superintendent.

21 **Article VIII**

22 **Books and Records**

23 **Section 1. Records**

24 The annual conference shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall
25 also keep minutes of all annual conference, board, and committee meetings. The annual
26 conference shall gather such district and congregational statistics as necessary to fulfill its
27 purposes or are required by the BDD.

28 **Section 2. Right to Review Books and Records**

29 Any member shall have the right to examine the books and records of the annual conference,
30 except for confidential personnel records, and may do so only at a reasonable and convenient
31 time as established by the annual conference. In any event, no member shall have the right to
32 examine any personnel, financial, or medical information that would violate the personal privacy
33 rights of staff, members, contributors, or guests as determined by the Annual Conference Finance
34 and Administration Committee.

35 **Article IX**

36 **Limitations of Liability and Indemnification**

37 In the event a board or committee member, officer, employee, member, or agent of the annual
38 conference, who is serving at the request of the annual conference, is made a party to a suit or

1 proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, other than an action by or in
2 the right of the annual conference, by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a board or
3 committee member, officer, employee, member, or agent of the annual conference, the annual
4 conference will indemnify or reimburse him or her against expenses, including reasonable
5 attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably
6 incurred by him or her in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding if he or she acted in
7 good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best
8 interests of the annual conference, and with respect to any criminal proceedings, if he or she had
9 no reasonable cause to believe that any conduct was unlawful.

10 **Article X**
11 **Amendment of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws**

12 The **Articles of Incorporation** and Bylaws may be amended, repealed, or new Articles of
13 Incorporation or Bylaws may be adopted by the affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of
14 the annual conference members at a meeting held for such purpose if a quorum is present.

15 **Article XI**
16 **Accounting Provisions**

17 The annual
18 accounting period for this corporation shall begin on the first day of July and shall end on the last
19 day of June. All accounting procedures shall follow generally accepted accounting principles and
20 be consistent with the requirements established by the GM Church Connectional Commission on
21 Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits.

22 **Article XII**
23 **Dissolution**

24 The dissolution of the annual conference corporation shall be governed by the actions of the GM
25 Church General Conference in accordance with the provisions of the BDD. Upon dissolution or
26 winding up of the Corporation, all assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of
27 all debts and liabilities of the Corporation shall revert to the GM Church or be distributed for one
28 or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or, as otherwise
29 specified in the BDD. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such
30 exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office
31 of the Corporation is then located.

32 **Article XIII**
33 **Miscellaneous**

34 **Section 1. Inspection of Certificate of Formation and Bylaws**

35 The annual conference shall keep in its principal office the original or a copy of its **Articles of**
36 **Incorporation and Bylaws**, as amended to date, which shall be open to inspection by the
37 members at all reasonable times during normal office hours. Digital copies of these documents
38 shall be made available upon request.

1 **Section 2. Construction of Definitions; Choice of Law; Mediation & Binding Arbitration and**
2 **Venue**

3 Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction, and
4 definitions contained in the **Indiana Nonprofit Act** shall govern the construction of these
5 Bylaws. The laws of the **State of Indiana** shall be controlling in any legal dispute related to the
6 construction and/or implementation of these Bylaws.

7 Any claim or dispute arising from or relating to these Bylaws, including, but not limited to, the
8 construction and/or implementation of these Bylaws, involving the annual conference, any of its
9 officers or board or committee members, and/or its congregational, clergy, or lay members shall
10 be settled by recourse to the processes provided in the BDD.

11 The venue for all disputes involving the annual conference, its officers and board or committee
12 members, and/or its congregations, clergy, and lay members shall be in **Howard County,**
13 **Indiana.**

14 **Section 3. Choice of law; Venue**

15 Any and all claims that are not precluded by the internal religious organizational discipline, the
16 BDD are subject to the state law of **Indiana** with venue in a court of competent jurisdiction in
17 Howard County, Indiana or in the **Southern District of Indiana.**

18

19 Dated: _____

20

21 By: _____
22 Secretary

23