

GOVERNANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION
and Special Rules of Order

APPROVED

Great Lakes Annual Conference, June 2026

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline (most recent version)

A. Denominational Affiliation

Great Lakes Annual Conference (GLAC) is established as a continuing entity within the denomination of The Global Methodist Church. We exist to support our constituent churches in carrying out the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

The Global Methodist Church's governing document is the most recent version of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

Succeeding regular sessions of the annual conference may, as part of the regular course of business, amend, replace, and add to the documents approved at previous conference sessions. All GLAC processes, procedures, and positions must be consistent with the contents of the most recent *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (BDD).

Documents, reports, policies, and resolutions approved at the most recent annual conference session will be published on the conference website and remain in force until either they sunset, or until and unless specifically altered at succeeding regular sessions of the annual conference.

B. Conference Committees and Teams

Great Lakes Annual Conference is structured into various teams and groups in order to better focus our work on the Mission of the Church. The following committees and teams are seated in accordance with BDD requirements, and are tasked with encouraging, equipping, and supporting specific structural aspects of the overall Mission.

Progressing toward a structure of rotating classes, Nominations and Leadership Committee will propose chairs and members for the following conference committees and teams.

A list of chairs and members will be presented to the annual conference for formal election.

1. Conference Connectional Council

Composed of: Conference Superintendent (Chair); Vice Chair; Annual Conference Secretary; Board of Ministry Chair; Superintendency Committee Chair; Finance and Administration Chair; Conference Sessions Lead; Dean of the Cabinet; Conference Lay Leader; Conference Prayer and Intercession Coordinator; Nominations and Leadership Vice Chair; Multiplication Lead; Church Planting Lead; Missions Lead; NextGen Lead; Discipleship Lead; Senior Status Connector; 3 At Large Members

2. Board of Ministry
3. Superintendency Committee
4. Finance and Administration Committee
5. Conference Sessions Team
6. Nominations and Leadership Committee
7. Multiplication Team
8. Church Planting Team
9. Discipleship Team
10. Missions Team
11. NextGen Team

C. Nominations Process

The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee (Nominations) nominates clergy and laity to serve in appropriate positions within the annual conference structure. Primary consideration should be based on gifts and abilities, with additional consideration for demographic representation. Any committee procedural or composition requirements expressed in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* must be met.

Nominations may enlist a process whereby clergy and laity self-identify as willing to serve and provide specific gifts and abilities which may be helpful for leadership.

The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee's report to annual conference will list all committee and board positions requiring annual conference approval. All people listed on the nominations report must have approved their own nomination prior to inclusion on the report. When possible, the nominations report should be provided in pre-conference reports, and no later than Day 1 of the conference session, for consideration and action later in the session.

Persons elected or appointed to an office at an annual conference session will assume their duties immediately following session adjournment. Persons selected to fill vacancies in between conference sessions will assume their duties immediately.

D. Annual Conference Sessions

Great Lakes Annual Conference gathers in accordance with *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* as a representative body to conduct the business of the conference once each year. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the presiding elders (§ 708.7).

A registration fee may be assessed for annual conference attendance, so long as voting members may request a fee waiver to prevent cost from prohibiting participation by all eligible members.

E. Voting Members

The voting membership of an annual conference is defined in ¶ 708.1 of the BDD. Voting members of Great Lakes Annual Conference include:

1. “Those elders, deacons, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited elsewhere in the BDD) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520”
 - a. Clergy status for each annual conference session will be determined based on the individual’s status as of January 1 of that session year.
 - b. Clergy and voting status for those being ordained will be updated at the conclusion of the clergy session where approved, even before the ordination takes place.
2. Lay members duly elected by GLAC charge conferences.
3. Lay members elected for the purpose of equalizing the number of clergy and lay members. (See process below)

NOTE

All voting members may vote on all matters, except where prohibited by *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

F. Equalizing Lay and Clergy Membership

The voting membership of the annual conference shall include clergy “...as well as at least an equal number of lay members...” (¶ 708.1)

Equalizing members must meet the same eligibility requirements as lay members of the annual conference prescribed in BDD ¶ 442.2 (“professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessor for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election, except in a newly organized church”).

Process for Electing Equalizing Members

After the deadline for senior clergy intent to vote notification (90 days prior to annual conference session), the Conference Sessions Team shall determine the number of voting clergy members and the number of lay members elected by charge conferences. Lay members from the following categories will be added for equalizing the number of voting clergy:

1. Lay members duly elected by GLAC charges awaiting clergy appointments
2. Lay members of the current GLAC General Conference delegation
3. Lay members of Conference Connectional Council
4. Lay chairs, officers, and members of other Conference Committees and Teams listed in Section C above

5. Lay Conference Staff meeting eligibility requirements

If the number of lay members necessary for equalizing clergy voters is not met or exceeded by adding the above lay conference leadership, remaining equalizing members will be elected by the largest local charges, based on worship attendance, who have only one elected lay member of annual conference. The charge's alternate lay member to annual conference may be used, or they may call a special charge conference to elect a second lay member as an equalizing member.

G. Special Session Voting Members

At any special session of the annual conference, the same lay members who served at the previous regular session will serve. In cases of inability to serve or cessation of professing membership by those laypersons, the affected charge shall elect a new lay member.

H. Rules and Special Rules of Order

In the absence of any Special Rules of Order, sessions of the annual conference will be conducted using *Robert's Rules of Order*. The following Special Rules of Order have been established to supersede *Robert's Rules*.

1. The voting bar is to be determined and described by the presiding officer prior to any voting.
2. A member must be within the bar to vote.
3. A member must be within the bar to be recognized to speak.
4. All main motions, amendments, and procedural motions made from the floor must be presented in writing on forms provided by the conference secretary, signed by the person submitting the motion, and placed in the hands of the conference secretary immediately after being moved.

5. Petitions and Resolutions

DEFINITIONS

Petition — request for Great Lakes Annual Conference to take action, make a change, or formally express a position on a particular issue.

Resolution — request for Great Lakes Annual Conference to support a proposed petition to the Global Methodist Church General Conference.

Note: If a resolution is affirmed, the conference secretary will submit the resolution on behalf of the Annual Conference. A resolution may still be submitted directly to the General Conference by an individual if the Annual Conference does not affirm.

Petitions and Resolutions must be submitted by April 1 for the subsequent annual conference session. Submissions must include the name, address, phone, and email (if available) of the

submitter, and an electronic signature. If the submission originates from a committee, board, team, or agency, that group's name should be included.

- a. Petitions and Resolutions (main motions) may be submitted by any clergy member of Great Lakes Annual Conference; any professing member of a constituent church; or any conference church, committee, board, team, or agency.
- b. Once properly submitted, Petitions and Resolutions become the property of the annual conference and may not be withdrawn without conference approval.
- c. Petitions properly submitted will be published in pre-conference materials.
- d. Petitions must deal with only one issue or disciplinary paragraph.
- e. Items with financial implications will be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Committee for review prior to annual conference action.
- f. Items needing prior consideration by a conference committee, board, team, or agency will be referred for review prior to annual conference action.
- g. Petitions and Resolutions inconsistent with the BDD will be ruled out of order.

6. Consent Calendars

A consent calendar may be employed to handle legislation a) requiring only a simple majority vote, b) having no financial implications, and c) having no need for any conference committee, board, team, or agency's prior consideration.

- a. The Conference Organization and Special Rules of Order may not be included in a Consent Calendar.
 - b. Presentation of any consent calendar must include opportunity for objections to any individual items' inclusion in the calendar.
 - c. Any item receiving a single objection will be removed from the consent calendar for individual consideration later in the session.
 - d. The final version of the consent calendar is then to be presented as a single item for a simple majority vote.
7. No person or group may distribute material by any means within the voting bar without prior approval of the Conference Sessions Team.
8. Floor debate on all legislative items will be limited to three 2-minute speeches in support and three 2-minute speeches opposed, after which the vote shall be taken.

I. Conference Budget Approval

The Conference Budget must be approved annually at the regular annual conference session. In order to facilitate transparency, budget approval should use the following process:

- 1. The formal budget proposed by the Conference Finance and Administration Committee shall be presented either pre-conference online, in writing on Day 1 of any regular session, or both.
- 2. Allowing for questions, discussion, and consideration, the Conference Budget is to be presented for vote no sooner than Day 2 of the regular session.

J. Election of Delegates for General Conference

An equal number of lay and clergy delegates will be elected prior to each General Conference. Unless prohibited by *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the Great Lakes delegation for General Conference will consist of the following categories:

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
Delegate	Elected to serve as seated delegate.
Alternate	Elected to serve as an alternate. Alternates will travel to General Conference and be credentialed to be seated by the delegate head when needed.
Reserve	Elected to serve as a part of the delegation but not credentialed to travel to General Conference. Reserves will be expected to attend delegation meetings in preparation in case they are called upon. Reserves are entitled to full participation in delegation meetings.

Any delegate or alternate unable to serve will be replaced by the next same-type (lay or clergy) delegation member in order of election.

The number of delegates and alternates to be elected will be allocated by the General Conference Commission and approved by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church “based upon the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments ... and other factors” (§ 703.11). Great Lakes Annual Conference will elect a number of reserves (equal laity and clergy) as recommended by Great Lakes Conference Connectional Council, and approved by the annual conference prior to the election of delegates, alternates, and reserves.

The Conference Sessions Team shall provide general oversight of the election process. In addition, the team shall develop and manage a process whereby clergy and laity may self-nominate for election to the delegation.

A Bishop of the Global Methodist Church must preside over General Conference delegate elections.

- Individuals nominated prior to the annual conference session will be announced to the annual conference session. Individuals may be nominated or may self-nominate prior to the annual conference session through a process prescribed by the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or by the Great Lakes Conference Connectional Council.
- Nominations from the floor will only be permitted if the number of current nominations is fewer than the allocated number of delegates, alternates, and reserves plus one.
- If any nominated individuals withdraw their nomination prior to voting, nominations from the floor will be permitted only to restore the number of current nominations to equal the allocated number of delegates, alternates, and reserves plus one.
- Then voting may commence.

General Conference Delegate Voting Process

1. Authorized clergy members will vote only for clergy, and lay members will vote only for laity.

2. Legal ballots will indicate a vote for the number of candidates needed or fewer in each category (delegate, alternate, and reserve).
 - a. Any ballot indicating too many candidates or selecting a candidate more than once will be considered an “illegal ballot” and will not be credited to any candidate.
3. Candidates must receive votes totaling a majority of the total ballots cast (including illegal ballots) in order to be elected.
 - a. If more candidates receive such a majority vote than the number needed, the chair shall declare the candidates elected in the order of their vote totals until all available positions are filled.
4. Balloting will continue until the allotted number of delegates, then alternates, then reserves have been elected.

K. Senior Status Clergy Housing

Great Lakes Annual Conference determines that the entire pension amount of senior status clergy, both active and inactive, shall be designated as their Excludable Housing Allowance for tax purposes.

APPROVED BY GREAT LAKES ANNUAL CONFERENCE, JUNE 2026