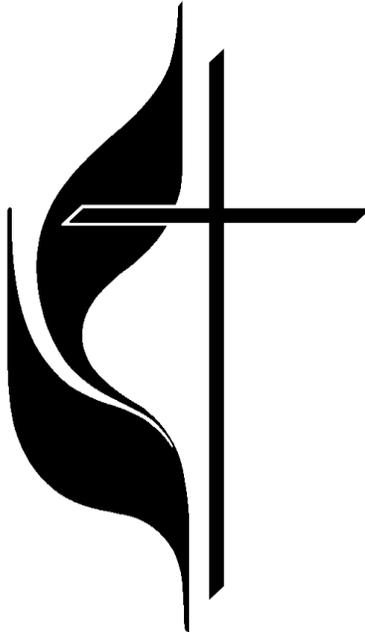


**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SOUTHWEST TEXAS CONFERENCE**

POLICY MANUAL



PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

This manual is a collection of policies that have been set by the Southwest Texas Conference. They are available in a number of different formats.

They can be downloaded off the Conference web site www.umcswtx.org.

They can be faxed upon request by calling 210-408-4500 and asking for this service from any of the personnel in the Treasurer's Office.

They can be mailed by calling 210-408-4500 and asking for this service from any of the personnel in the Treasurer's Office.

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FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES TO CONFERENCE MEETINGS

All boards and agencies are urged to schedule meetings, as far as possible, on dates and places coinciding with other groups in order to affect economy in travel expenses. Travel Expense shall be paid to members going to official in-Conference meetings (between Annual Conference Sessions) **at the rate of 20¢ per mile**. The allowance for meals shall be \$3.00 for breakfast; \$3.50 each for lunch and dinner; **and \$50.00 per night for lodging** necessitated by the meetings. Lodging receipts must accompany Disbursement Request. These allowances are not to cover full cost at all times, simply to assist in the additional expense of attending meetings. When meetings are held at Mt. Wesley the prevailing rates for meals and lodging at the Conference Center shall be paid as allowances.

Childcare expenses per meeting day not to exceed \$15.00 for the first child, not to exceed \$7.50 for each additional child, shall be allowed and included in the meeting expense of the board or agency.

Travel for duly elected delegates or representatives of the Conference to meetings of other organizations or connectional agencies shall be paid as stated above. However, actual air travel, lodging, and other expenses may be paid if funds are available from the board or agency concerned.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
In 2006

BONDING FOR THE CONFERENCE TREASURER AND STAFF

The Bond of the Conference Treasurer and Treasurer's Staff is in the amount of \$1,000,000 and is provided through the General Council on Finance and Administration.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

REIMBURSEMENT OF WORLD SERVICE AND CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCE FUNDS

Payments to the World Service portion of the World Service and Conference Benevolence budgets shall be made monthly to the General Council on Finance and Administration. Payments shall be made on the basis of the percentage which World Service is of the total World Service and Conference Benevolences budget. Each local church is urged to accept and remit monthly its fair share in full. If this is done, our Conference will maintain its historic position of paying its World Service apportionment in full and also support fully its Conference Benevolence. (See Paragraph 259.4b in the 2008 Book of Discipline.)

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

DISBURSEMENT AND REALLOCATION OF CONFERENCE FUNDS

All requests for disbursement of funds must be signed by the chairperson of the board or agency concerned and the staff representative of that board or agency. The chairperson of any board or agency may give authorization in writing to the Conference Treasurer if this authority is granted to the chairperson of any division, committee or task force of the board or agency concerned.

Any program agency may reallocate its own funds within the amount budgeted to that agency as its portion of the World Service and Conference Benevolence Fund.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REQUIRED FOR INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING APPORTIONED FUNDS

Every institution that receives apportioned funds from the Annual Conference shall provide an annual independent audit of its financial statements to the Conference Treasurer. Receipt of audit reports will annually be recorded in the journal. Audits should be received in the treasurer's office within four months after the close of the institution's fiscal year for the year then ended. The Treasurer will not disburse any apportioned funds to any institution not supplying an audit within six months of the end of the institution's fiscal year for the year then ended.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

USE OF ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFERS TO MAKE HEALTH INSURANCE PAYMENTS

The Conference Treasurer shall actively encourage local church treasurers, ordained and diaconal ministers to make their health care insurance payments through the use of monthly electronic fund transfers.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
1992 Annual Conference

LOCAL CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORTING

Local churches are expected to fill out very carefully financial reports to the Annual Conference. They are requested to send remittances to the Annual Conference treasurer rounded off to whole dollar amounts.

Local churches are expected to pay directly the utility costs of the parsonage or to allocate a fair amount which is based on actual usage.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

CLERGY LOAN DEFAULT

It is our understanding that if Ministerial members of the Conference default on loans, financial obligations or debts the Annual Conference is in no way liable or responsible for such default or for any obligation guaranteed by such members. The Board of Ordained Ministry and District Superintendents are urged to be alert to financial problems of Conference members, especially Probationers, in order to prevent serious financial problems.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA
Prior to 1990

CHILD, YOUTH & ADULT SAFETY POLICY
SWTX CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MAY 31, 2002

I. BIBLICAL REFERENCE (MARK 10:13-16)

In so far as God has placed children, youth and adults in the care of our local churches and at the various District and Conference sponsored events, the purpose of this policy is to address their safety at all such church-sponsored events as well as at all local churches.

II. PURPOSE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is intended to provide guidelines and resources for all local churches of the Southwest Texas (SWTX) Conference of the United Methodist Church and for all sponsoring organizations of District and Conference events in order that each prepares a specific plan of implementation.

Each local church, District and Conference entity (including any conference or district owned activity and retreat centers) in the SWTX Conference shall prepare and send to the Conference office a true and correct copy of the procedure it has designed and implemented for its use by the close of Annual Conference on June 2, 2001. Each shall adhere to its plan. Churches, or agencies sponsoring one-time events not otherwise covered shall contact either the District or Conference Office as applicable, to obtain a standing procedure. New churches constituted after June 2, 2001 will have one calendar year from the date of constitution to comply with this policy.

III. TRAINING

Each local church and the sponsors of the District and Conference events will assure that training on the particulars of their procedures is accomplished. In so far as there are persons in the SWTX Conference who have been trained in the "Safe Sanctuary" program or similar programs, or have instructed with these procedures, it is recommended that these persons be utilized as much as possible in the creation of the procedures and in the training thereon.

Once a quadrennium, the SWTX Conference will offer an opportunity for the training of persons on the requisites of this policy. This training session is primarily for any persons the local church or other sponsoring bodies enlist to attend.

IV. REQUISITES OF THE POLICY

A. SCREENING OF ALL PAID CHURCH STAFF MEMBERS, AND PERSONS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(1) General:

For the purposes of this policy, all persons who work with children and youth are those who have direct contact and supervision of children or youth. This does not include those persons who are employees of independent contractors who are involved in youth and child events, such as bus drivers of contracted bus lines and the like.

(2) Background checks:

Background checks on paid staff members (full or part-time) shall be required. Although recommended, whether or not background checks will be required for persons who work with children and youth is at the discretion of the implementing entity, keeping in mind the overriding concern for the safety of our children, youth, and adults. The notification

of these requirements is to be shared with both paid staff and persons who work with children and youth including but not limited to, visitors, nonmember parents of children attending events, members of other denominations, and the like.

Access to the information received from the background check shall be limited; but the information shall be held in confidence. The SWTX Conference will be the agency to obtain police or law enforcement background checks to the extent that any are requested. Only (a) the Episcopal Office, (b) District Superintendent in the appropriate District, (c) the pastor and the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) of the local church, and (d) the person in charge of the District and Conference events, may request and be privy to the information described below or the background check results. The Conference Office will report only relevant information as it pertains to the safety of children, youth, and adults to the requesting party.

All persons required to have a background check must provide the following minimum information:

- (a) Identification of work area/service to be performed;
- (b) Full name including any previous names and nicknames;
- (c) Present address and former addresses for the past 10 years;
- (d) SSN, Date of Birth, and Driver's License number;
- (e) Employment history for the past five (5) years;
- (f) Volunteer work for the past five (5) years;
- (g) Experience and skills specifically related to the position;
- (h) Church membership;
- (i) Personal references (not related to the applicant) with complete addresses and telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, if available;
- (j) Consent (I) to verify all the information, and (II) to obtain a police background check, if lawfully available to the church or sponsored event;
- (k) Statement as to whether the person has ever been convicted or arrested for a criminal sexual offense or a felony of any nature;
- (l) Statement that the information provided is true and correct.

Time frames for rechecks are to be addressed in each procedure. It is recognized that some smaller churches may not need to implement rechecks as often as larger churches in urban settings, which have fluidity in church membership.

B. RESPONSIBLE ADULT SUPERVISION

- (1) General:
It is the requirement of this policy that each local church of the SWTX Conference and all sponsoring organizations of District and Conference events provide adequate adult supervision.
- (2) The requirement of a minimum of two unrelated adults at a children and/or youth event may be a method to provide adequate care. Among the factors that should be considered are the ratio of adults to children or youth, the physical structure of the facilities (whether it lends itself to a roaming adult with one adult in the other rooms, for instance), the duration of the event, etc. It may be that more than two adults would be required for an event to be conducted safely.

- (3) Requiring at least a five-year difference between the ages of the primary on-site supervisor and the supervised is also a method that may be implemented. The five-year difference in ages shall apply between the on-site adult in charge and the oldest age of the supervised. Persons being closer in age to those supervised may be acceptable in assisting the primary on-site supervisor(s).

C. REPORTING ABUSE

(1) State requirements:

The reporting requirements of the State of Texas must be complied with. Each procedure shall reflect this requirement.

(2) Conference Requirement:

- (a) Each procedure for reporting alleged abuse must contain a method by which alleged abuse within the local church or at the sponsored events is reported. This method shall not negate the State's reporting requirements or the "Fair Process in Judicial Proceedings" in Paragraphs 2701-2719 of the 2008 Book of Discipline. There shall be one person, or one office, that has been clearly designated to receive reports of alleged abuse of children/youth. This could include the senior pastor or someone with specialized skills in this area as well as a designated office. This person or office should maintain the confidentiality of the information.
- (b) Each procedure for reporting alleged abuse should include at a minimum the following:
 - Who is making the report and relevant information about that person;
 - The person's responsibility and obligation to report;
 - A clearly written factual basis for making the report, specifically detailing which provision was violated and how;
 - A description of the symptoms and behavior the reporter has observed in the child or youth, (if any);
 - All reports of alleged abuse should be documented in writing and brought immediately to the attention of the persons designated by the church or sponsored event to receive such information;
 - No report should be considered trivial and not reported.
- (c) Each church, district, or conference retreat entity should have forms available for reporting alleged abuse. Sample forms are available in either "Safe Sanctuaries" or "Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in Your Church". The SWTX Conference will provide these two resources to all local churches, districts and conference related retreat entities requesting them.
- (d) IT IS VERY IMPORTANT that sensitivity to the alleged victim and the victim's family as well as to the accused be maintained. Pastoral care should be available to all in the time of crisis.
- (e) Education of the church membership and/or those attending sponsored events concerning the procedures for the protection of children, youth, and adults is essential. The training to recognize and report signs of abuse of all persons who are subject to this policy is crucial.

D. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- (1) All drivers of vehicles for church or other sponsored events described herein must be at least twenty-one years of age and possess a current, valid driver's license, have proof of insurance at the State minimum limits, and not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e., under medication and the like).
- (2) Coed overnight activities require male and female adult leaders without exception.
- (3) Prior written parental (or guardian) permission is required for events requiring transportation to and from the event location.
- (4) The Southwest Texas Conference shall continue to obtain through its resources background checks, actions and events within the state of Texas on all full-time and part-time paid staff members, at the expense of the Conference and, upon request, shall obtain background checks for volunteers at the expense of the local church or other conference entity. If background checks are requested from states other than Texas, there will be an additional charge to be paid by the requesting entity.
- (5) The entity utilizing any facilities controlled by another entity shall abide by the Child, Youth and Adult Safety Policies of both entities. The Child, Youth and Adult Safety Policies of all involved entities shall be shared among them and any difference resolved prior to the scheduled event. The main focus of all policies is on the prevention and reporting of all incidents of alleged or apparent abuse and sharing the information about the incident.
- (6) The Assistant to the Episcopal Office of the Southwest Texas Conference shall be responsible for obtaining background checks, notifying the entity requiring such background checks and the individual subject to such checks that the background check has been completed in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section IV A above. The entity requesting the background check shall be notified that the information obtained from the background check either (a) did not reveal any information which will disqualify the individual from serving in a child/youth activity or (b) it raises a serious question concerning the eligibility of the applicant to serve in the activities. If the information received reveals a serious question concerning the eligibility of an individual to serve in the activity, the applicant will be notified and given the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of the information received from the background check and seek clarification of the information used in making such assessment. The conference office shall act as a resource in the clarification process while maintaining confidentiality.

E. EXCEPTION FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES SUBJECT TO STATE REQUIREMENTS

It is recognized that some churches operate childcare facilities that come within the purview of the State. Nothing in this policy is meant to alter or change any requirements imposed by the State. This policy exempts those facilities from coverage understanding that the State requirements are sufficient.

V. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann Ault
Catherine Babbitt
Ann Beaty

Kenneth Dahlberg
William Duke
Austin Frederick, Jr.

Donald Hand
Lawrence F. Harrison

Adopted by the Annual Conference

**SEXUAL ETHICS POLICY FOR CHURCH PROFESSIONALS
SOUTHWEST TEXAS CONFERENCE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

I. DEFINITIONS

- A) **Church professionals** shall include full, associate, and probationary ministerial members of the Southwest Texas Annual Conference, as well as ordained deacons (full and transitional) and elders, diaconal ministers and local pastors, in both the effective and retired relationships, and other persons serving the Conference or any local church under appointment of the Bishop or under the supervision of a District Superintendent, including persons keeping their membership in another annual conference or in another denomination and persons holding orders issued by these annual conferences while on Honorable or Administrative Location.
- B) **Church leaders** include lay persons elected, assigned, or employed by the church to leadership roles.
- C) **Sexual misconduct** includes sexual abuse and sexual harassment and is a chargeable offense as defined by the 2008 Book of Discipline paragraph 2702 or pertinent paragraphs in subsequent Books of Discipline.
- D) **Sexual abuse** means inappropriate physical conduct of a sexual nature, sexual contact or sexualized behavior and may include, by example, touching, fondling, other physical contact and sexual relations.
- E) **Sexual harassment** is any inappropriate sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.

II. STANDARD FOR CONDUCT

Church professionals and other church leaders exercise their ministry in covenant with God and all persons, especially with those whom they lead and serve in ministry. They are in positions of great trust, power, and responsibility, which provide the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. Therefore, both Church professionals and other church leaders shall meet the requirements of the Child, Youth, and Adult Safety Policy of the Southwest Texas Conference. They shall not engage in sexual abuse, harassment, or misconduct with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member or any other person and shall be guided by the standards outlined in the most recent Book of Discipline.

III. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

From the Genesis stories where human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, we can affirm that God values every person as having worth and dignity. From the incarnation accounts in the Gospels where God becomes flesh in Jesus Christ, we can affirm that God claims all of humanity as deserving salvation. In the resurrection accounts in the Gospels where Christ is raised in bodily form, we can affirm that our

bodies are holy. From the letters of Paul where the church is described as the body of Christ, we can affirm that God intends for us to be partners together in wholeness.

The words and actions of Jesus teach us to forgive others. However, discipline should be distinguished from forgiveness. A church professional or church leader guilty of sexual misconduct needs and may receive forgiveness and be offered avenues for redemption and change, yet the church must still take steps to protect the people of God.

The primary focus of these policies shall be the search for truth to assure justice for the complainant and the accused.

IV. MAKING A COMPLAINT

Persons who believe that they have suffered sexual abuse from any church professional shall report the circumstances of such situation to any District Superintendent or the Bishop. Persons who have knowledge of possible violations of this policy by a church professional related to the Southwest Texas Annual Conference should report the same to any District Superintendent or the Bishop. Church professionals who have knowledge of a possible violation of this policy must report it to a District Superintendent or the Bishop. “A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties.” Par. 362. The complaint will be updated to indicate the status of the situation until its resolution. Upon any complaint, the Conference will take action in accordance with the provisions of the current Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church paragraph 362 and paragraphs 2701-2719.

V. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

These policies shall be printed in the Conference Journal annually. Furthermore, they shall be posted on the Conference web site continuously, printed in the Conference newspaper at least annually, and mailed to each local church and appointment beyond the local church annually, where they shall be prominently displayed in common areas.

VI. TRAINING

At the beginning of each quadrennium, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall provide at least four hours of training in clergy sexual ethics for all church professionals who are related to the Southwest Texas Conference. All church professionals are required to take this training. On a quadrennial basis, those serving outside the bounds of the Southwest Texas Conference shall provide written verification to the Board that they have received equivalent training in the places where they serve. First time church professionals, transfers into our conference, and others must take such training within the first year of their assignment. This training will be provided on an annual basis by the Board at the local pastor’s school or other venue. Records of those who have received training will be kept at the United Methodist Conference Center by the person assigned to work with the Board of Ordained Ministry. The chairperson of the SPR and the Cabinet will be sent notification of the successful completion of this training.

Failure to undergo the training in clergy sexual ethics could have the following consequences:

- A) The failure of any church professional to participate in this training may be shared with the pastor-staff relations committee of any church to which professional may be appointed and/or employed.

- B) If charges of sexual misconduct are ever brought against the accused, the accused documented failure to participate in the required training could be used as evidence against the accused in both church and civil venues.
- C) The documented failure of the accused to participate in the required training will be considered in any decision to commit conference resources to the accused's defense.

VII. RESPONSE

In the event of an alleged act of sexual misconduct, the Bishop shall utilize a process that may involve a support team or individual whose goal is to offer to congregations affected, the complainant, the accused, and their families counseling services, educational tools, communication skills, mediation insights, and other resources to bring about healing.

The Southwest Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church strives to be a vehicle of God's grace even in the midst of difficult situations. While it is recognized reconciliation and healing come through God and in God's time, we commit ourselves to working toward them in all situations. To this end the Conference, under the direction of the Bishop and the Cabinet, will respond to each individual situation in a way intended to promote reconciliation and healing. They will seek to employ strategies and tools to meet the special needs of congregations, victims, and offenders, as well as addressing issues of prevention, justice, and the protection of the rights of the victim or the accused. Reconciliation and healing will be pursued at the same time as a way of witnessing to God's grace which always and in all things is working for good.

ALL COMPLAINTS SHOULD GO TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Resident Bishop of the Southwest Texas Conference	888.349.4191
Austin District Superintendent	512.444.1983
Corpus Christi District Superintendent	361.852.8268
Kerrville District Superintendent	830.896.6400
McAllen District Superintendent	956.428.0200
San Angelo District Superintendent	325.486.1500
San Antonio District Superintendent	210.408.4520
Victoria District Superintendent	361.573.4233

Adopted by the Annual Conference June 4, 2008

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

PUBLICATION OF CLERGY SALARIES

The Annual Conference Journal should continue to contain a salary schedule of the current compensation and housing for the clergy of the conference. The schedule will list all members of the Annual Conference including regular pastoral appointments, district superintendents, conference staff and special appointments, and will show total compensation and expenses listed alphabetically by district and church name.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
on Recommendation of CFA in 1995

CLERGY COMPENSATION

Since accurate comparisons can be made only on the basis of a common understanding of definition of items included, the following terminology is proposed:

Salary is cash remuneration, including allowances (except as noted below), which a pastor receives for appointed responsibilities. The personal portion of MPP is included in salary whether it is tax paid or tax deferred.

Utilities/Parsonage Expenses are amounts paid for utilities at the parsonage, for furniture purchased by the pastor, and for other parsonage expenses which the pastor incurs. They do not include upkeep of the parsonage. Upkeep should be included in another section of the church's budget.

Reimbursable Expenses include travel and business expenses reimbursed to the pastor under an accountable reimbursement plan that meets the guidelines set forth by the Internal Revenue Service.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
on Recommendation of CFA in 1995

POLICY FUND HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN

CLERGY CONTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

The Charge will be responsible for ½ the cost of single coverage for clergy appointed to the charge.

The Pastor participating is responsible for \$1 of the Monthly Premium. (This is legally necessary in order to allow those persons who have military retiree benefits to waive coverage).

Where a clergy person (in any full time status eligible for health benefits) is appointed to a local church and is required to participate in the conference sponsored group health plan, the local church will be responsible for ½ the cost for single coverage (less \$1 per month).

Where there is a multiple point charge, the division of the health benefit expense may be divided among the churches in the charge in any way they elect.

The Conference Board of Pensions will fund ½ the contribution for participation through the pension apportionment.

The church's portion of the premium will be reported on the compensation report as "health benefit paid directly by church".

Health benefits contributions will not be included in compensation used to calculate minimum compensation. They will also not be included in pension plan compensation.

DEPENDENT CONTRIBUTION OPTIONS

How the local church treats the cost of dependent coverage is optional.

OPTION 1

- When eligible clergy appointed to local churches elect dependent coverage in the conference group health plan, the local church may elect to pay all or a portion of that cost as a church expense.
- It is recommended that the church subsidize or pay all the cost of dependent coverage.
- The church's portion of the cost will be reported on the compensation report as "health benefits paid directly by church".
- It will not be included in pension plan compensation.
- It will not be included in the calculation of minimum compensation.
- The church may consider the amount of health benefit expenses paid when it is setting compensation.
- When there is a change in pastors, the church may realign compensation and health benefits paid to reflect the coverage election of the incoming pastor.

OPTION 2

If the local church elects to NOT pay the cost of dependent coverage, that cost will be included in salary and paid as a salary reduction under the flexible spending plan sponsored by the Conference Board of Pensions. (Current system)

Choosing this option will increase the cost of MPP and CPP.

Presented by the Board of Pensions and
Adopted at the 2003 Annual Conference

MINIMUM SUPPORT POLICIES

Minimum Compensation is understood to be the total of the Salary paid by the Church and Utilities which are listed on lines 1 and 2 of the compensation form used by the Southwest Texas Conference. The following minimum compensation levels are recommended for 2011:

Clergy Status	2010 Minimum Compensation	2011 Minimum Compensation	Percent Change
Full and Provisional Members	\$36,100	\$37,100	2.8%
Associate Members	\$33,500	\$34,500	2.8%
Local Pastors	\$30,900	\$31,800	2.8%

A Conference member or approved Local Pastor who is in good standing and who is appointed to full time service shall have a claim upon the Equitable Compensation Fund. (See ¶342.1 and ¶625 of The 2008 Book of Discipline)

A Conference member may be considered for a prorated Equitable Compensation claim for part time service as stipulated under ¶342.2 and 624 of The 2008 Book of Discipline.

Retired pastors shall not have a claim for benefits from the Equitable Compensation Fund. (See ¶358.6 of The 2008 Book of Discipline)

To be eligible for participation each charge must:

Conduct an every member stewardship program each year.

Increase the amount the local church is paying toward the pastor's compensation by at least 10% each year.

Adopt an accountable reimbursement plan for a pastor's professional expenses which is at least 13% of total compensation.

Pay its apportionment for Ministerial Support and World Service and Conference Benevolence in full. Failure to comply with any of these conditions must be explained in writing by the District Superintendent.

Pay the Pastor's health insurance and pension based on compensation paid by church

Include a copy of the budget for the previous two years (and current year if available).

Include church's ministry goals and visions.

Support in the amount scheduled or a lesser amount may be granted to a charge which fails to comply with any of the above with the exception of the payment of World Service, only when approved by two thirds of the Commission at a regular meeting.

Adjustments to Minimum Compensation Base

Total Minimum Compensation equals minimum base compensation plus allowance for years of service, plus allowance for number of churches served in a charge.

The allowance for years of service equals \$75 per year and shall be added to the compensation for each year of service under Episcopal appointment in The United Methodist Church, beginning with the second year of service through the twentieth year for a maximum of \$1,425.

The allowance for number of churches equals an additional \$200 to be paid for the second church, and an additional \$100 for every other church served by the pastor.

A participant shall not receive more than 30% of the approved total minimum compensation support from the Commission. That amount shall be reduced by the percent of Ministerial and World Service apportionment's not paid for the immediate prior year.

Charges with total membership, as of the preceding December 31, of less than 150 members shall not be eligible, except by a two thirds vote of the Commission at a regular meeting upon application in writing by the District Superintendent.

In relationship to the Episcopal Fund and District Superintendents Fund, Charges with pastors receiving Equitable Compensation support shall be apportioned or ratio to the local church's portion of the pastor's compensation.

Special appointments and any other appointments outside the bounds of the Annual Conference shall not be eligible for support from the Commission.

In order to advance the mission of the Church and provide for the most effective use of compensation support, the Commission will consider (but is not required) to fund an associate pastor, if the following conditions are met:

- All requirements listed above for Equitable Compensation are met.
- There must be an indication that the local church will be able to sustain this position after one conference year. These are start-up funds only. Initiative may come from either the local church or the District Superintendents. In a letter of request the local church must state its mission/ministry needs. Procedures follow the Commission's regular process.
- The 30% rule - no more than 30% of minimum compensation will be granted. (See rule #G)
- No more than 20% of the total minimum compensation support for the Commission's Funds can be used for Associate Pastors.
- Priority will be given to churches with growth potential with guidelines from the Office of Congregational Growth being the resource.
- All requests must come to the Commission from the Cabinet after their endorsement.
- Support will be considered only for churches that are paying their apportionment fully.

Occasionally, the Commission on Equitable Compensation is faced with unusual request for transition support for Conference members who are severing his/her relationship with the Annual Conference. In such a circumstance transition support associated with the termination may be granted as shown below.

- Full members: The equivalent of two months of minimum compensation, and \$100 for each year of service to the Conference.
- Probationer: The equivalent of one month of minimum compensation.
- Local Pastor: \$500*

* Must have at least three continuous years of service in this Annual Conference. The support is not automatic and the Cabinet must request the specific amount.

The Commission recommends that to be eligible for minimum compensation support, an accountable reimbursement plan be adopted by the Charge Conference, and that the reimbursement amount set, by the Charge Conference, be at least 13% of total compensation.

The Commission will commit itself to be advocates for the Pastors and the churches. The Commission members will meet with the Pastor and church during the year in order to help them achieve their ministry goal, to move beyond the need for assistance from the Commission, and to be the Gospel in their community.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon Recommendation of The Commission on
Equitable Compensation and Moving Expense in 2010

ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT PLAN

The Accountable Reimbursement Plan is the preferred method by which the expenses that the United Methodist Pastor incurs in providing ministerial services are reimbursed. Every United Methodist Church in the Southwest Texas Conference is urged to include an amount in its annual budget of at least 13% of compensation (line three on the current compensation form), as a budget item for these expenses. The actual amount adopted should be recommended to the charge conference by the Pastor Parish Relations Committee or Staff Parish Relations

Committee after review of the need. The amount may be higher than 13% of compensation. The amount budgeted should be included on the compensation form on line 8.

When this compensation form is adopted at charge conference, the policies relating to the accountable reimbursement plan in this report are being adopted for the pastor.

The church pastor whose compensation and expenses are adopted on the Southwest Texas Conference Compensation Form by the charge or church conference, will be reimbursed for ordinary and necessary business expenses incurred in the performance of his or her responsibilities when he/she substantiates the amount, business purpose, date, and place of the expense.

This substantiation must be provided to the chair of the pastor parish relations committee (or church treasurer) within sixty (60) days of incurring the expense. The individual must return to the church any amounts received in excess of the substantiated expenses within one hundred twenty (120) days of receipt.

The scope of the ministerial duties included in this policy involve all the duties described in the current Book of Discipline and the policies of the Annual Conference, including participation in the Connectional Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Expenses that are normally considered to be reasonable and necessary for a United Methodist Pastor include:

- Travel expenses reimbursed at the standard federal mileage rate, parking and tolls.
- Office supplies and postage
- Office equipment, computer and software
- Books, subscriptions and periodicals such as journals
- Professional dues
- Religious materials, vestments and business gifts
- Continuing education and seminars
- Entertainment required for church business
- Travel fares, lodging, and meals while on business for the church (including annual conference and other connectional meetings)
- Mobile telephone to the extent that it is used for business purposes
- Other reasonable and customary business expenses (as approved by the committee on staff parish relations and/or committee on finance)

Property purchased under an accountable reimbursement plan is the property of the church who provided the reimbursement. This is not an issue for most items because they are either of negligible value after utilization, or of such a personal nature such as robes that the item is not appropriate to be left at the church when the pastor moves. The one item which becomes an issue is computer purchased under an accountable reimbursement plan for the business usage of the pastor. When a pastor moves from one appointment to another, the church will give the pastor the option of purchasing the computer at its current fair market value. The current fair market value can be determined using tax preparation software that is easily available in the marketplace. If the church gives the computer to the pastor, then the gift is a taxable event and the fair market value should be reported by the pastor as taxable income.

No pastor should be reimbursed more than 5/12ths of the total amount budgeted prior to annual conference each year.

Any reimbursement of expenses from other sources should be reported by the pastor and reduce the amount of the expense subject to reimbursement. In no case should the pastor receive total reimbursement for all sources that exceeds the actual cost and/or the IRS approved rate for reimbursement of mileage.

The expenses of attendance at annual conference for a pastor who is moving should be reimbursed from the Accountable Reimbursement Plan of the Charge to which the pastor is appointed prior to the annual conference session.

In order to maintain confidentiality of pastoral calls, it is permissible for the pastor to report a pastoral call in general terms without mentioning the name of the person or persons called upon, or the nature of the call.

The church will not report any properly substantiated reimbursement payments as income on any Form W-2.

This policy becomes effective upon the close of annual conference, 2006. It replaces previous policies adopted by the annual conference and will be printed in future policy manuals of the conference.

This policy is applicable to clergy members of the annual conference. Churches with lay employees should consider adopting a policy that is applicable to lay staff.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the Commission of
Equitable Compensation and Moving Expenses in 2006

USE OF ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT PLANS

Local churches are asked to reimburse their pastors for the expenses that the pastor incurs in providing ministerial services. This should be done under an accountable reimbursement plan. A model plan is available from the Conference Treasurer upon request. This reimbursement can include expenses for travel, entertainment, library, supplies, computer, continuing education, mobile telephone, and other regular business expenses. The amount of the reimbursement is subject to charge conference action upon recommendation of the Pastor/Staff Relation Committee.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the CFA in 1995

MOVING EXPENSE POLICY

A. ELIGIBILITY

Clergy moving to a full time appointment to a Southwest Texas Conference charge and clergy moving to an appointment where the salary is paid directly by the Southwest Texas Conference (district superintendents and conference staff) are eligible.

Clergy entering the retired status or going on disability leave from appointments are eligible.

B. MOVING PROCEDURES

General Process:

- ◆ Upon receiving notification from the Bishop that the Clergy will move, they shall obtain estimates from three moving companies (where possible) and choose the one they wish to use. If three bids are not feasible, contact the Conference Office and an exception can be made. When the clergy chooses a mover that is the more expensive alternative, the Commission may limit payment to the amount of the lower bid. Clergy should expect to negotiate a discount from the maximum allowed a mover by the state, recognizing that it is standard practice to charge approximately 45% of the Texas Tariff.
- ◆ As early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the moving date, Clergy shall send both estimates designating the chosen company to the Commission on Equitable Compensation and Moving Expenses at address of the United Methodist Center for review.
- ◆ When a pastor is moving without the assistance of professional movers, an estimate of expenses must be provided three weeks prior to the move.
- ◆ The pastor should specify that the bids should include a visual inspection, and that the bid should include the words “guaranteed price not to exceed.”
- ◆ The pastor is required to secure a bid from one or more of a list of movers to be provided by the Commission on Equitable Compensation or with whom the Commission has negotiated a contract. Exceptions will be made when it is impossible.
- ◆ The Commission verifies that the move is covered by the policies.
- ◆ The Commission will then notify the clergy of approval.
- ◆ After the move is made, the Conference Treasurer’s Office makes payment directly to the moving company upon receipt of the invoice signed by the relocated pastor.
- ◆ It is recommended that pastoral families move out of the former parsonage two days prior to the official moving date. The sending church would pay for two nights in a motel. This would give the sending church at least a day and a half to do any repair work, painting, etc. in the parsonage before the new pastor moves in.

If the receiving church needs additional time to perform repairs on the parsonage, then the receiving church is responsible for the additional moving expenses incurred, and for the lodging of the arriving clergy family until the parsonage is ready for occupancy.

1. The Pastor/Staff Parish Committee of each charge which is receiving a new pastor will appoint one of its members to serve as Moving Coordinator who will coordinate the move with the incoming pastor and work to facilitate the easiest and most pleasant move possible. At the introductory meeting between the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and the new pastor, the Moving Coordinator will be present in order to be introduced to the pastor.
2. Moving categories
 - a. Local moves - These are moves where the moving company charges an hourly rate for a move across a city or to a neighboring town. The allowance for such moves will be up to \$1,500 (see C. 8. below).
 - b. Long distance moves - The allowance for such moves is up to 14,000 pounds.
 - c. Self-Move - If the clergy elects to move himself/herself, the actual cost of the move will be reimbursed, up to the amount that would be incurred if professional movers were utilized as defined above.

3. The clergy may apply for reimbursement of the purchase of packing materials, packing supplies, and/or packing services up to a limit of \$850. If you are using the services of a mover for packing, please verify with the mover exactly what services will be provided.
4. Change of Appointment with no change in location of home – The clergy will be reimbursed up to \$200 to pay the cost of moving professional material.

C. LIMITATIONS

1. When a move is from a point outside the annual conference boundaries, the Conference will pay under these policies with a limitation of total cost to \$5,000.
2. Clergy entering the retired status or going on disability leave will be relocated under these policies up to a maximum of \$5,000.
3. Clergy appointed or transferring to another Conference shall look to the receiving Conference for moving expense reimbursement.
4. No reimbursement will be made except when there is a change of status or appointment that actually results in a move.
5. When either or both members of a clergy couple are involved in a move, the 14,000 pound limitation will be increased to 17,000 pounds to recognize the additional professional material. The \$850 packing reimbursement limit applies to the entire move. If two houses are involved on either end of the move, each move qualifies for reimbursement independently. When a move includes more than 17,000 pounds, the amount the Conference pays will be reduced by an amount that is determined to be appropriate by the Commission on Equitable Compensation.
6. In no case shall the Conference pay more than the actual documented expense of any eligible move.
7. There is no reimbursement under this policy for automobile expenses, visits to the new appointment, or the cost of food and lodging.
8. Total Payment is limited to:
 - a. Local Move - \$2,350 (\$1,500 for moving and \$850 for packing).
 - b. Long Distance Move - 45% of the applicable Texas Tariff plus the cost of packing materials and or services not to exceed \$850.
 - c. Self-Move - 45% of the Texas Tariff that would be applicable plus the cost of packing materials and or services not to exceed \$850 for packing and moving.
 - d. Move with no change in home location - \$200.
9. The Conference will not provide for replacement value coverage for your household items while in transit up to a limit of \$75,000. If the value of your contents is more than \$75,000, you will need to secure insurance independently and at your cost.

D. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION AND MOVING EXPENSE

1. The Commission on Equitable Compensation and Moving Expense will have the responsibility of implementing and administering this policy.
2. If unusual circumstances arise relating to a move, the Commission may vote to grant an exception by a 60% majority.
3. The Commission will be the final arbiter of any dispute related to the implementation of this policy.
4. Commission is authorized to enter into contracts with moving companies.
5. In order to assist the pastor in the move, the Commission will create a moving package to assist the pastor who moves.
6. The Commission will create and maintain a list of movers who have been responsive to the needs of the Conference and the needs of Conference pastors involved in moves.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of a Task Force on Moving Expense in 2001 and 2003

VACATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

- A. The Annual Conference recommends that each minister in the Conference be allowed the following minimum vacation time: (all weeks include Sundays)
- ◆ 0-7 years under Episcopal appointment
(exclusive of time spent in school): **TWO WEEKS**
 - ◆ 8-12 years of service: **THREE WEEKS**
 - ◆ 13+ years of service: **FOUR WEEKS**
- B. The Commission recommends that each local church and pastor take seriously the continuing education policies adopted by the General Conference which are set forth in ¶351 of the 2008 Book of Discipline, but are printed below for the convenience of the Annual Conference.
- ¶351 “*Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth* - 1. Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. This shall include carefully developed personal programs of study augmented periodically by involvement in organized educational and spiritual growth activities.”
- C. In most cases, the clergy member’s continuing formation and spiritual growth program should allow for such leaves at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of each quadrennium. Such leaves shall not be considered as part of the minister’s vacations and shall be planned in consultation with their charges or other agencies to which they are appointed, as well as the Bishop, District Superintendent, and Annual Conference continuing education committee

Adopted by the Annual Conference
On the Recommendation of the Commission on
Equitable Compensation and Moving Expense
Prior to 1990

HOUSING STANDARDS

The itinerant system remains today as central to Methodism as it was in the days of the circuit riders. However, alongside itinerancy, the Church demands the clergy assume traditional roles as well, such as becoming resident pastors and responsible citizens in the community in which they serve. With the expectation of residency has come the need to provide adequate housing for clergy and their families.

In order to meet these felt needs, and to call men and women to a dedicated ministry, the church must provide living conditions that establish an adequate base from which to operate. It is the privilege and responsibility of the members of the congregation to make every effort to provide the physical setting which will give the parsonage resident or family the maximum comfort and convenience. So that the energies of the pastor may be more concentrated on their task and willing service in the Church of God. Because the parsonage, when provided, like the church buildings reflects upon the congregation and the pastor, it should be in such condition that all concerned can be justifiably proud. Parsonage standards for the Southwest Texas Annual Conference are as follows:

STANDARDS

- A. Location:** The parsonage should be located in a setting that will afford the pastor family comfort, safety and convenience. Reasonable privacy can best be obtained by placing the parsonage in an area other than adjacent to the church. Consideration should be given to the area in which the congregation resides.
- B. Structure:** No less than the following will be required.
 - 1. Three (3) bedrooms with adequate closet space
 - 2. Two (2) baths
 - 3. Living area
 - 4. Dining area
 - 5. Kitchen to include a four element range and oven, refrigerator with freezer compartment
 - 6. Storage space well distributed throughout the house
 - 7. Laundry area with washer and dryer
 - 8. Garage or carport space for two cars
 - 9. Safe outdoors play area for children
 - 10. Water heater
 - 11. Central air and heat
 - 12. Window coverings
 - 13. Floor coverings
- C. Furnishings:** The pastor is responsible for providing all furnishings other than those set out in (B) Structure.
- D. Gifts:**
 - 1. A gift of furniture or furnishings by a member of the charge shall be clearly designated as a gift to the clergy family or a gift for use in the parsonage.
 - 2. Whether a clergy family will use any past or present gifts (furnishings) designated for use in the parsonage shall be entirely at the discretion of the clergy person or family.

3. Any furniture or furnishings donated for use in parsonage and not used by the clergy family occupying the parsonage shall be stored or disposed of at the expense of the church.
4. All gifts to the parsonage must be approved by the parsonage committee.

E. Safety: The parsonage shall be equipped with the following safety features.

1. Fire extinguisher in kitchen with yearly inspection
2. Outdoors lighting
3. Deadbolt locks
4. Smoke and/or heat detectors, Carbon Monoxide detectors.

F. Accessibility: “... In all plans for new church buildings and parsonages and in all major remodeling plans, adequate provisions shall be made to facilitate parking, entrance, seating, restroom facilities, and otherwise make facilities reasonably accessible for person with handicapping conditions.” **(J2544.4 of the 2008 Book of Discipline)**

“Newly constructed parsonages shall include on the ground floor level one (1) room which could be used as a bedroom by a person with a handicapping condition, a fully accessible bathroom and laundry facilities.” **(J2543.3b of the 2008 Book of Discipline)**

In addition, the local church should make reasonable efforts to provide access and safety in those parsonages that will not be involved in major remodeling. This will help enable open itinerancy of all pastors and the comfort of parsonage families.

G. Maintenance:

1. **Utilities:** The local church should pay for the cost of all utilities (except personal long distance telephone calls). Payment may be made either directly to the utility company or as an allowance to the pastor. Cost of utilities is reported to the Annual Conference as part of pastoral compensation.
2. **Upkeep and Repair is Church’s responsibility:**
 - a. The church should annually include in the budget an amount for parsonage repairs. An annual budget item will enable the Trustees and Parsonage Committee to have a consistent, rather than a haphazard program of maintenance and improvement that will be less costly in the long run.
 - b. Painting of inside and outside of parsonage should be done as often as necessary.
 - c. All appliances and equipment should be checked and adjusted regularly.
3. Parsonage families are responsible for repairs as needed for damages done by members of parsonage family or pets.
4. **Decoration:** The church should keep both the interior and exterior of the parsonage in such state of decoration as to preserve its physical condition and aesthetic value. Decorating should be scheduled with the pastor to provide for the convenience of the family.
5. **Privacy:** The parsonage is the pastor’s home. All inspections and repairs should be scheduled with the pastor for the convenience of the family.

H. Insurance:

1. The Trustees should be certain that the church owned house and contents are insured for at least 80% of replacement cost, against fire, wind, and other hazards (preferably all risks). Public liability insurance should be carried on parsonage property.
2. It is the responsibility of the pastor to insure personal property belonging to the pastor or family.

I. Records of warranties and repairs: The parsonage should have a book or folder, which contains all warranties and instruction books for appliances and equipment owned by the church. The folder should also contain a log of purchases and repairs.

J. Ownership of Parsonage:

1. May be owned by a local church, charge or district, and the deed must include an appropriate trust clause as set forth in ¶2503 of The 2008 Book of Discipline.
2. May be leased or rented by a church, charge or district.

K. Clergy couples: General Conference Action provides housing is not compensation for pastors appointed to churches in The United Methodist Church. When two pastors who are married to each other are appointed to neighboring charges where it is reasonable for them to live in the same parsonage, neither pastor is entitled to a housing allowance or rent from the unused parsonage. However, this situation may be considered during the setting of compensation of the pastor.

L. Inventory: The Parsonage Committee and the Trustees shall maintain an inventory of the church owned equipment and furnishings. This inventory will include any gifts to the parsonage, which may or may not be used by the pastor family. The inventory should be updated to show the disposition of these gifts when they are not used in the parsonage. The inventory should be reviewed annually.

M. Procedures at Pastoral change:

1. When moving from the parsonage the pastor shall contact the parsonage committee (Or PPRC) or Trustees if these committees should have the task in that particular charge, to arrange a time to review the parsonage. Care should be taken at this time to insure that the parsonage is left in order as regards to repair and cleanliness.
2. An inventory of the church owned equipment and furnishings should be carefully checked.
3. The same committee(s) shall arrange with the in-coming pastor for a time to review the parsonage for cleanliness, repair and the inventory of the church owned equipment and furnishings.
4. Any grievous disregard to the proper cleanliness, repair or improper inventory shall be reported immediately to the District Superintendent.
5. It is recommended that pastoral families move out of the former parsonage two days prior to the official moving date. The sending church should pay for two nights in a motel. This would give the sending church at least a day and a half to do any repairs, painting, etc., in the parsonage before the new pastor moves in.

N. Annual Parsonage Review: Each year a review to assure proper maintenance shall be made by the pastor with the chairperson of the appropriate committees (**¶258.2g(16) and 2532.4 of The 2008 Book of Discipline**). This review will be completed on a standardized form furnished by the District Superintendent and will be submitted as a Charge Conference Report.

- O. Housing Allowances:** When the housing allowance option is taken by a charge, the housing allowance shall be at least equal to the fair market rental value of the community for a house that meets the minimum housing standards.
- P.** Exceptions to these policies are allowed for associate pastors, multiply point charges, and part-time pastors with concurrence by all parties.
- Q. Time line for implementation:** The safety items of E shall be effective immediately and all the churches are to be in compliance with all housing standards for the Southwest Texas Annual Conference by Annual Conference, the year 2000.

Adopted by the Annual Conference 1995

HEALTH INSURANCE MANDATORY PARTICIPATION

Mandatory participation in the Health Insurance Plan

Any clergy or diaconal minister subject to the mandatory health insurance coverage of the Southwest Texas Conference, may be exempt from such coverage if:

1. By reason of their retirement from military service or the Commission Corps of the United States Public Health Service now have their own health insurance and/or health care:
 - a. For which no premium is paid by or deducted from the income of the insured.
 - b. And which is not subject to cancellation or non-renewal by any change of their status (except death).
2. They desire to be exempted and sign a written waiver and submit documentation of the foregoing conditions.
3. This exemption is applicable only on the basis of one's own retired relationship. Not on the basis of a dependent retired relationship.

Any clergy or diaconal requesting such exemption shall recognize that this may result in a loss of future benefit. It may be impossible to re-enroll in the Conference plan if the government makes future changes or decreases in benefits or if those benefits are less desirable because of age or other factors.

Adopted by the Annual Conference
on the Recommendation of the Board of Pensions in 1992

MISCELLANEOUS

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

United Methodist Student Day is designated as the first Sunday in Advent, with special offering for student scholarship loan purposes (a percentage which remains in this conference for scholarship use by BHECM).

Adopted by the Annual Conference 2001

Report II
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY PROPOSAL
FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

Whereas the focus for the 2010-2011 Annual Conference Year is “Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World,” and; whereas the focus for the 2009-2010 Annual Conference Year was “Calling Forth Younger Clergy,” and; whereas a majority of United Methodist Students leave the Church when they transition to college, proving to be a substantial loss of potential young adult leaders in the church, and; whereas ministry to high school youth as they transition into young adulthood is most effective when initiated by the student’s home congregation, and; whereas the future viability of The United Methodist Church depends in part on retaining the next generation, therefore, be it resolved that The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry proposes the following for immediate Conference action:

Every Local Church in the SWTX Conference shall initiate a means of direct communication and connection with each student entering college that will be shared with the Campus Minister and forwarded to a campus ministry, should one exist, at the School the student will be attending.

Rationale: In order to prevent the loss of one our most valuable resources, our youth and young adults, immediate action needs to be taken to keep them connected to the church.

Mechanism: Every church would report this information at its fall charge conference meeting with an electronic copy forwarded to the BHECM. Information to be included on form should include:

- Student’s name address, phone, email;
- Parent or guardian’s name, address, phone, e-mail;
- Name and Address of School of choice, and,
- Any other information deemed pertinent to keeping student connected to Christ and the church.

Upon approval of this action, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry at its fall meeting will create: 1) a Charge Conference form, 2) an easy-to-use electronic means, possibly via the Conference web site, and, 3) a helpful “Vine and Branches Connexion” tool/resource provided for the local church “Connexion Team” or individual in ministry to college students.

Humbly submitted, Rev. Jack C. Gause, Chairperson
Adopted by the Annual Conference 2010

GUIDELINES TO MEMOIRS

In the Southwest Texas Conference it is the responsibility of the minister who conducts the funeral of a deceased minister, or spouse of a minister, to write the memoir for the Conference Journal. The memoir is not designed to be either a eulogy or a memorial sermon, and is not the place for sentimentality; but this brief and specialized biographical account can be a document suitable as a historical record and a portrayal of personality and spirit.

Certain facts are basic and essential for inclusion in a memoir. The style of writing and the method and order of presentation may differ but a memoir should contain the following information, either within the body of the memoir or listed at the end:

1. **Personal life, early period:** Complete name of the deceased; date and place of birth; names of parents, including mother's maiden name.

2. **Educational background:** Schools and colleges attended, with years noted; degrees and honors received, with dates.
3. **Ecclesiastical data:** First church membership (name of church, location, date); dates of ordination and admission to Annual Conference; appointments served; special areas of service on conference boards and agencies; retirement date; residence following retirement; and any service after retirement. (This paragraph is to be adapted to the spouse.)
4. **Personal life, late period:** Date of marriage and name of spouse (including maiden name of wife); full names of children (including married names); date and circumstances of death; date and place of funeral and burial; names of officiating clergy; and address of surviving partner or nearest relative.

It shall be the responsibility of the Annual Conference Secretary, as editor of the Journal, to see that this basic biographical information is contained in the memoirs that are printed in the Conference Journal. When the Conference Secretary is informed as to who will write a memoir, he/she will send to the writer of the memoir a copy of these guidelines, and instruct the writer to make sure that the memoir that is written is complete with the necessary biographical information. It should not be more than 300 words in length.

Writers of memoirs should present a copy of the memoir to a member or members of the family of the deceased so that it may be checked for accuracy before it is sent to the Conference Secretary. Memoirs should be received by the Conference Secretary within one month after the death of the person who has served the Conference as minister or minister's spouse.

A glossy photograph, preferably black and white, secured if possible from the family, should be made available for publication with the memoir.

Adopted by the Annual Conference Prior to 1990

CONFERENCE STANDING RULES

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1. Lay membership shall equal clergy membership.
2. Clergy members are those defined by The 2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 602.1. The Conference Secretary shall determine the total number of clergy members of the Annual Conference as of the close of Annual Conference Session each year.
3. The lay members of the Annual Conference shall be elected by their respective Charge Conferences annually, with four years of consecutive service suggested.
4. The lay members of the Annual Conference shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election.
5. The lay membership of the Annual Conference shall be:
 - a. A lay member elected by each charge as provided for in ¶ 602.4 of The 2008 Book of Discipline;
 - b. Diaconal ministers, deaconesses, the Conference President of United Methodist Women, the Conference President of United Methodist Men, the Conference Lay Leader, District Lay Leaders, the Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries, the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth

organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) selected by each district, as provided for in ¶ 602.4 of The 2008 Book of Discipline;

- c. An additional lay member assigned to each charge for each additional clergy member who is appointed to the charge as provided for in The 2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 602.4;
- d. Other members as defined by the Annual Conference to include: Chancellor, District Presidents of United Methodist Women, District Presidents of United Methodist Men, the two district youth representatives to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries, Conference Emmaus Lay Director, Conference Associate Lay Leaders, the chairperson of any Conference agency or standing committee that Reports directly to the Annual Conference;
- e. An additional lay member assigned to each church that does not have a lay member as provided for in 5a or 5c above; and
- f. Additional lay members required to equalize lay and clergy membership, selected using the formula:

A is equal to $B * C * (D - E) / F$;

Where A is the number of additional lay members to be assigned to a charge on the basis of membership;

Where B is the total number of lay members to be assigned on the basis of membership, being equal to the total number of clergy members, less the number of lay members already assigned under Standing Rule 5a and 5b and 5c and 5d and 5e;

Where C is a variable required to correct for rounding error;

Where D is equal to number of members in a Charge;

Where E is the total membership of the Conference divided by the total clergy membership;

Where F is equal to the combined membership of only Charges who have more members than the value of E (E= the total membership of the Conference divided by the total clergy membership).

PRE-CONFERENCE PROCEDURES

- 6. Proposals and Reports from Conference agencies shall be compiled in a Pre-Conference Report that shall be mailed to all Conference members at least three weeks prior to the Annual Conference Session. The Editor of the Conference Journal shall notify all Conference agencies of the publication deadline and procedures in consultation with other Conference professional staff. The Assistant to the Episcopal Office shall be responsible for receiving, coordinating and editing the proposals and Reports to be printed in the Pre-Conference Report in consultation with the Editor of the Conference Journal. Mailing the Pre-Conference Report to the local church for delivery to its members is considered adequate compliance with the prior notice requirement.
- 7. Reports to the Annual Conference fall into two classifications: those For Conference Action and those which are For Information Only. When there is more than one Report requiring action, the first Report will be a list of the Reports requiring action and shall be marked "For Conference Action." Each Report shall be marked "For Conference Action" or "For Information Only."
- 8. Reports which have previously been adopted and constitute a continuing policy of the Annual Conference will not be reprinted each year in the Pre-Conference Report or the Journal, but will be published separately as a Policy Manual. The Conference Secretary will make these available in printed form and as an electronic document.

9. When any body or officer shall be responsible for furnishing information in answer to Disciplinary questions, they shall do so on prescribed forms so that the answers fall in proper order. These forms are to be furnished by the Secretary of the Conference.
10. The Pre-Conference meeting of district clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference or the spring session of the District Conference shall have the right to address the Annual Conference following the procedures established in the Standing Rules.
11. The Agenda Committee shall state on its agenda the amount of time to be allowed for each approved Report.
12. No institutional representatives shall be allowed to speak, except within the time allotted to an Annual Conference agency, or as specifically scheduled by the Agenda Committee. Institutional representatives may be presented to the Conference.

CONFERENCE SESSION PROCEDURES

13. The Bishop may appoint a Floor Manager to assist in the handling of the agenda. The Floor Manager will work with the Conference Secretary, the Bishop and the Agenda Committee to respond to changes in the agenda necessitated by agenda items which take more or less time than scheduled.
14. The Conference Secretary shall nominate, and the Annual Conference elect, the persons needed to assist in the proceedings of the Conference. These include the Timekeeper, Tellers, Associate Secretaries, and the Minutes Committee.
15. The Committee on Courtesies shall be made up of the Conference Lay Leader as chairperson, and the host pastor, the Presidents of United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men, and a representative from the Worship Committee. The Committee is responsible for writing a formal recognition for the Journal of those who have assisted in the Conference Session, and to respond to requests for personal greetings of the Conference. The Committee is authorized to respond to such requests without formal action of the Conference.
16. The Conference procedures will be governed by the following in order of precedence: The Book of Discipline, the Standing Rules, any special rules adopted by the Annual Conference, and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
17. Debate on any issue will include not more than three speeches of three minutes each on each side of the question. Additional time may be granted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference.
18. The Standing Rules may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference.
19. Additional or supplementary Reports to the Pre-Conference Report shall be in the hands of the Conference Secretary before the Report is reached on the agenda. The Report shall be typed and double-spaced and shall include the name of the Reporting body and, if applicable, the page of the corresponding Report in the Pre-Conference Report. If the Report contains action items, it must be in the hands of the Conference Secretary early enough to allow for printing and distribution to the Conference twenty-four (24) hours before the Report is considered by the Conference. The Conference Secretary is responsible for ensuring that an announcement is made to the Conference notifying the Conference that the Report has been distributed and when the Report is to be considered. This provision does not include action which is germane to the deliberations of the Conference at the time it is introduced. Motions made from the floor must be presented in writing to the presiding officer and the Conference Secretary at the time the motion is made.

20. Consent Agenda 1 consists of Reports from Conference agencies which are not for action, but are "For Information Only." The Conference acts only to receive these Reports and print them in the Journal.
21. Consent Agenda 2 consists of action Reports about which there is believed to be little or no dissent. The items included in Consent Agenda 2 are determined by a task force composed of the Assistant to the Episcopal Office, the Conference Secretary, and the Floor Manager. The action of the Annual Conference is to adopt these Reports as a group. Any member of the Annual Conference may move the deletion of any of the items from Consent Agendas. With a second, and a one-minute explanation by the maker of the motion, it will be voted on by the Conference without debate. If 20% of the members vote that the item be removed, it will be removed and brought to the floor as a non-consent item at a time to be determined by the Agenda Committee.
22. Resolutions shall reach the floor of the Conference only after consideration and action of the appropriate Conference agency. Proposals may be presented to the Conference floor by minority Report if that minority consists of at least five members or one-third of the total membership of that agency, whichever is less.
23. Any motion being made to the Annual Conference creating a committee, task force, etc., for any purpose which is within the area of concern of any existing agency shall be referred to the proper agency for consideration and action. After due consideration, this agency may request the formation of a special task force or committee. The motion creating a new committee or task force shall include the source and amount of funds necessary to accomplish the task.
24. If a dispute arises regarding the contents of the Journal, the Bishop or the Assistant to the Episcopal Office may appoint a Journal Committee of no more than three persons to resolve the dispute.
25. Should the Annual Conference adopt any Report that approves action or sets policy contrary to the Standing Rules in effect at that Session, unless the Standing Rule is suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the Standing Rule prevails and invalidates the conflicting action.
26. The critical importance of full understanding and participation by all members of Annual Conference is hereby recognized. They are therefore called upon to make known their questions and opinions during its Sessions, and the Bishop and program leaders or Reporting officers shall seek to involve laypersons in the deliberations and to encourage broad participation.

CONFERENCE AGENCIES

27. In accordance with ¶ 657.1 of The 2008 Book of Discipline, the District Conferences will be composed of all members of Annual Conference as set forth in Standing Rules 1-5 who are related to churches within the bounds of their respective districts and currently elected to office. In addition it shall include the chairperson of each District agency or standing committee. Any other members of the standing committees are entitled to voice without vote.
28. An individual member of any agency elected by the Annual Conference shall not serve more than eight consecutive years, no more than four of which shall be as chairperson. Filling a vacancy in an unexpired term of two years or less is considered interim service and is not counted as part of the eight consecutive year limit. Filling a vacancy of an unexpired term of more than two years is considered to be a full term and shall count the same as four years. This rule does not apply to members of the Conference Board of Trustees, Board of Pensions, and Board of Ordained Ministry whose terms are established in The 2008 Book of Discipline (¶ 2512.1, ¶ 639.2, and ¶ 633 respectively).
29. No individual shall be an elected member of more than one Conference agency at a time. The Committee on Nominations may make exceptions to this rule in order to increase inclusiveness.

30. No District Superintendent or Conference staff person shall be eligible to serve as an elective member of any Conference agency. If a member at the time of appointment or hire, he/she shall be considered to have resigned such membership.
31. Unless otherwise provided by The Book of Discipline or by law, the members present at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.
32. Any elected member of a Conference agency who does not attend any meetings of that agency during the Conference year without excused absence shall be deemed to have vacated the membership, and the chairperson of that agency shall Report this to the Annual Conference Committee on Nominations.
33. Any elected position on a Conference agency which is vacant at the end of the Annual Conference Session, or which becomes vacant during the Conference year, may be filled by the Conference Committee on Nominations unless other provision is explicitly made by The Book of Discipline.
34. The Committee on Nominations will seek to provide equitable district representation in the agencies of the Conference as a whole, recognizing that size limitations make it impossible to have district representation on each agency.
35. The Committee on Nominations will work toward the goals of inclusiveness as set forth in ¶ 610.5 in The 2008 Book of Discipline which states: "...special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth (¶ 256.3), young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons, in keeping with policies for general Church agencies. It is further recommended that the membership of such agencies, except for the Board of Ordained Ministry, include one-third clergy, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen, who are professing members of local churches." In the Southwest Texas Conference, the exception for the Board of Ordained Ministry would likewise apply to the Conference Board of Laity.
36. Meetings of the full membership of Conference agencies are limited to two meetings during the year at times other than Annual Conference Session. Any agency that fails to meet during any Conference year is disbanded unless otherwise required by The Book of Discipline.

37. For the sake of economy and efficiency the size of Conference agencies is limited to those listed below:

<u>Conference Agencies</u>	<u>Number of Elected Members</u>
Agenda Committee	(see Rule 46) 19
Board of Church and Society	12
Board of Discipleship (including the Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries).....	18
Board of Global Ministries	21
Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministries.....	18
Board of Laity.....	(see Rule 49)
Board of Ordained Ministry	40
Board of Pensions	16
Board of Trustees	12
Commission on Archives and History.....	10
Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns	14
Commission on Communications.....	8
Commission on Equitable Compensation & Moving Expense	12
Commission on Hispanic Ministries.....	9
Commission on New Church Development.....	16
Commission on Religion and Race.....	16
Commission on Small Membership Church	7
Commission on Status & Role of Women	15
Commission on Stewardship.....	10
Committee on the Episcopacy.....	16
Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns	13
Committee on Investigations.....	17
Committee on Nominations	(see Rule 39) 18
Committee on Standing Rules.....	7
Fund for Peace Committee	9
Futures Committee.....	(see Rule 48) 8
Program Priority Funding Committee	(see Rule 47) 8
Staff Conference Relations Committee	(see Rule 45) 12
Council on Finance and Administration.....	10
Council on Ministries.....	(see Rule 44)
Council on Adult Ministries	16
Council on Older-Adult Ministries	12
Council on Young Adult Ministries.....	12
Council on Children’s Ministries.....	12
Council on Family Ministries.....	8
Council on Youth Ministries	24
Plus ex officio members.	

38. An ex officio member is one who holds membership in a Conference agency by virtue of another office because of provisions in The Book of Discipline or the Standing Rules. They have both voice and vote unless otherwise provided in the paragraph that grants membership. A Conference agency may invite an individual or group to attend their meetings as observer or consultant. Only elected and ex officio members authorized by the Annual Conference are entitled to vote.
39. The Conference Committee on Nominations shall be composed of the Bishop, the District Superintendents, the Assistant to the Episcopal Office, the Conference Lay Leader, one additional clergywoman elected from the floor of the Annual Conference and one layperson elected by each District Conference. If at least two laypersons elected by districts are not women, two laywomen shall be elected from the floor of Annual Conference; if none of the elected members is an ethnic person, an ethnic person shall be elected from the floor of Annual Conference. The Bishop may designate a member of the Conference professional staff to be a member of the Committee on Nominations and to serve as chair or secretary of the Committee at the Bishop's discretion.
40. Lay members of the Committee on Nominations may serve as a consultant group to suggest names for the Conference Lay Leader nomination. The outgoing Lay Leader may convene the lay members of the Committee for this purpose prior to the Committee's consideration of the Lay Leader nomination.
41. When the Committee on Nominations meets for the purpose of selecting lay persons for nomination to the various agencies, they shall invite the Conference United Methodist Women President, Conference United Methodist Men President, and chairpersons of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries, Commission on Religion and Race and Commission on Status and Role of Women to be present for consultation. These leaders are charged with the responsibility of having inclusive lists of persons willing to serve.
42. The Report of the Committee on Nominations will be presented on the second day of the Annual Conference Session.
43. The Committee on Nominations will nominate chairpersons for election by the Annual Conference for all agencies elected by the Annual Conference where The Book of Discipline does not make other provisions for the election of chairpersons.
44. There shall be an Annual Conference Council on Ministries. Its chairperson shall be elected by the Annual Conference upon nomination of the Committee on Nominations. Ex Officio members include: the Bishop, Assistant to the Episcopal Office, District Superintendents, Conference Secretary, Conference Lay Leader, the chairpersons of each of the Conference Program Agencies, the Presidents of the United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Youth, a lay representative from each district, and any member of the General Conference Council on Ministries.
45. There shall be a Staff Conference Relations Committee (SCRC). The Committee shall serve as the personnel committee of the Conference mentioned in ¶ 613.13 of The 2008 Book of Discipline. The SCRC will function as a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, including the responsibilities for multiple staff, and will have similar authority and responsibilities in relation to consulting with the Bishop and Cabinet. The Committee will provide for the annual evaluation of all Conference staff. To the extent any such evaluation relates to or touches on the Conference Treasurer, the SCRC shall consult with and periodically meet with the Council on Finance and Administration, which has personnel responsibilities for that office under ¶ 613.11 of The 2008 Book of Discipline. The SCRC shall be responsible for the drafting and adoption of all personnel policies for all Conference staff. The budget for salaries and other compensation of all Conference staff, unless otherwise dictated by The Book of Discipline, shall be recommended by the SCRC to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. There shall be twelve (12) members

elected to serve a term of four years. The SCRC shall be composed of two members each of the Annual Conference Council on Ministries, the Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Laity and the Board of Ordained Ministry and one member of the Conference Committee on Episcopacy, plus three at large members. At least six members shall be laity.

46. The Agenda Committee (§ 605.2 of The 2008 Book of Discipline) shall be the Bishop, the District Superintendents, the Floor Manager, the Conference Lay Leader, the Conference Secretary, the chairperson of the Annual Conference Council on Ministries, the President of the Conference Youth Organization, the Assistant to the Episcopal Office, the President of United Methodist Women, the President of United Methodist Men, the chairpersons of the Worship Committee and the Music Committee of the Conference Board of Discipleship, and the host pastor of the Annual Conference Session. The Bishop may designate a member of the Conference professional staff to be a member of the Agenda Committee and to serve as chair or secretary of the Committee at the Bishop's discretion.
47. There shall be a Program Priority Funding Committee that shall receive all budget requests from agencies related to the Annual Conference Council on Ministries (ACCOM). It shall prioritize, rank, and approve funding proposals against the Conference priorities of Evangelism and Congregational Vitalization and any annual special emphasis. The Program Priority Funding Committee will include the ACCOM chairperson as chair, the Bishop, Conference Lay Leader, Conference President of United Methodist Women, Conference President of United Methodist Men, and the chairpersons of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Commission on Religion & Race. The Committee serves in an advisory role to the Assistant to the Episcopal Office.
48. There shall be a Futures Committee whose purpose is to examine the overall ministry and outreach of the Conference and make recommendations to the Annual Conference. The Committee is composed of eight members elected to serve a term of four years, with two members elected each year.
49. There shall be a Conference Board of Laity, which shall provide for the ministry of the laity. The Board shall relate to the organized lay groups in the Conference, shall support their work, and shall help them coordinate their activities. The membership of the Board shall be: Conference Lay Leader, Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries, Associate Conference Lay Leaders, Conference President of United Methodist Men, Conference President of United Methodist Women, chairperson of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries, District Lay Leaders, leader of the General Conference Lay Delegation, an additional layman, laywoman, youth, young adult, an older adult and two at large members to be nominated by the Committee on Nominations, a District Superintendent, a staff person assigned by the Assistant to the Episcopal Office, and the Bishop.
50. The term of the Conference Lay Leader shall be four years, beginning with the Annual Conference Session following the meeting of the General Conference. No person shall serve more than two terms or portions thereof.

PERSONNEL

51. The Conference Treasurer is elected by the Annual Conference upon nomination by the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA). The Treasurer will serve as Director of Administrative Services performing such duties as assigned by the CFA and The 2008 Book of Discipline, § 619. The Director shall be directly amenable to the CFA.
52. There shall be an Assistant to the Episcopal Office to provide assistance in the administrative tasks of the Episcopal Office and with responsibility for the programming and administration of the Conference. This clergy position has no tenure limitation.

53. The Assistant to the Episcopal Office shall be the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries with all of the duties and responsibilities set forth in ¶ 608 of The 2008 Book of Discipline. The Assistant to the Episcopal Office has personnel responsibility for all the staff of the Conference. All staff positions except the Assistant to the Episcopal Office can be either lay or clergy and have no tenure limitations.
54. The Secretary of the Conference and the Editor of the Conference Journal shall be a member of the Conference professional staff.

FINANCE

55. For the sake of economy and efficiency the Conference Treasury shall serve as a depository for funds designated for all Conference agencies receiving Conference funds. The Conference Treasurer shall render a complete operating statement of all agencies for the calendar year just ended to the Conference during its Annual Session.
56. The fiscal year of the Southwest Texas Annual Conference shall be January 1 through December 31. However, the books will be held open for funds delivered to the Treasurer's Office by noon on the 11th day of January, or the following Monday if the 11th falls on a weekend. Funds received after this date will be reported in the following fiscal year. Disbursements will be made from the budgets of agencies through December 31. Disbursement requests received after December 31 will be paid from and allocated to the budget of the following year.
57. No Conference fund-raising campaign shall be entitled to the cooperation or assistance of the pastors, laity or the Conference organization until it shall have been first recommended by the Council on Finance and Administration and then placed on the Conference Calendar by the Annual Conference. This shall not preclude emergency appeals pursuant to The 2008 Book of Discipline or appeals by the Bishop or the Cabinet for causes not reasonably foreseeable at the prior session of the Conference. (See The 2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 614.5.)
58. Audited Financial Statements (not reviews) must be reviewed by Council on Finance and Administration for the following agencies: districts; any agency having income or total assets in excess of \$100,000 and receiving any Conference funds; any agency receiving \$20,000 or more of support from Southwest Texas Conference Apportionments or Conference Advance Specials. The Audited Financial Statements must be received by the Treasurer's Office no later than six months after the close of the agency's fiscal year and shall include a Balance Sheet and a Statement of Income, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances. Receipt of each audit shall be noted in the Conference Journal. This rule does not relieve the agency/recipient from its responsibility under civil law. Each agency/recipient must assure its compliance with state and federal tax law. It is the responsibility of the agency to ensure that internal controls, financial statements, etc., meet the requirements of laws governing their 501 (c) (3) status.
59. There will be a line item in the World Service/Conference Benevolences apportionment to fund task force meetings. This will be managed by the Assistant to the Episcopal Office who will determine if the cost of a particular task force is appropriately paid from an agency budget or this line item.
60. Statistical Table II in the Journal shall reflect only those amounts which have been received by the Conference Treasurer, provided that credit may also be given for Advance Special Vouchers issued by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church and sent to the Conference Treasurer by December 31, preceding the Conference Session. This Rule does not apply to purely local matters Reported under "All Other Benevolences."

OTHER

61. Election of General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates shall be by secret ballot. Computerized counting of ballots will be used whenever possible.
62. The Board of Laity will develop a form for persons interested in being elected to General and/or Jurisdictional Conference. This form will be included in the Charge Conference materials at the Charge Conference immediately preceding the Annual Conference Session when delegates are to be elected. Candidate(s) must be endorsed by their local Church in a Church or Charge Conference, or a Church Council or its equivalent. It is the responsibility of the candidate to transmit the completed form to the Conference Secretary no later than February 1 of any election year. Copies of the completed forms will be published by the Conference Secretary and mailed to all Conference members at least three weeks prior to the Annual Conference Session. This procedure is the only way that the Annual Conference will assist in publicizing the lay candidates.
63. Any minister of the Southwest Texas Conference who conducts the funeral or memorial service of a fellow minister or a minister's spouse shall provide the Conference Secretary with a memorial for that person within one month, in accordance with the Guidelines on Memoirs to be furnished by the Conference Secretary.
64. Pastor's Reports shall be in the hands of the Conference Statistician no later than January 20. The Local Church Report to the Annual Conference will be presented by the pastor at a district checkout on a date set by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Conference Statistician.
65. Gifts to retiring District Superintendents shall not be presented in open Conference.

AMENDMENTS

66. The Committee on Standing Rules shall Report to the Annual Conference during the first business Session of each Annual Conference. Any proposed revisions or amendments to the Standing Rules from the Committee must be included in the Pre-Conference Report. Revisions or amendments must be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference. Revisions or amendments become effective immediately upon their adoption, unless otherwise stated in the enabling legislation.

E-MAIL POLICIES, 2010

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO CONFERENCE LEADERS

- A. General:** Electronic mail (e-mail) is an official vehicle for Southwest Texas Conference communication to leaders, both clergy and laity. The conference will exercise the right to send e-mail messages to leaders, and the conference will expect that e-mail communications will be received and read in a timely manner.
- B. Scope:** This policy applies to all Southwest Texas Conference clergy members, others under appointment and laypeople filling elected conference leadership positions. The policy does not apply to elected lay members of the annual conference session or laypeople elected to district or congregational leadership posts. Official communications using e-mail can include a message to a group, such as all members of a conference board, or a message to an individual.
- C. E-mail addresses:** All clergy and laity leaders (as defined by the scope of this policy) will be assigned an official Southwest Texas Conference (umcswtx.org) e-mail address. This address is the location to which all official e-mail communications will be sent. A leader may have e-mail automatically forwarded from the official conference address to another e-mail address.
- D. Expectations regarding frequency of reading e-mail:** Leaders are expected to check their e-mail regularly to stay current with conference-related communications. Recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical, it is recommended that e-mail be checked at least twice a week. Undeliverable messages returned because of either a full inbox or use of a “spam” filter will be considered delivered without further conference action required.
- E. Privacy and confidentiality:** Messages, attachments or other e-mail transmissions are not considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by staff members of the Communications and Public Witness Office. E-mail addresses belong to the conference and are not considered private. The Communications and Public Witness Office is responsible for maintaining the e-mail address directory and determining what information may be released from that directory to the public.
- F. Administration:** The Communications and Public Witness Office is responsible for implementing, administering, reviewing and proposing changes to this e-mail policy. The e-mail policy is part of the Communications and Public Witness Office’s overall responsibility for conference presence on the Worldwide Web and for Internet use.

RATIONALE:

The conference has never established electronic mail as a medium for delivering official conference information. One primary reason was that the conference had no efficient way to deliver e-mail to conference leaders. Currently, the conference has no truly common list of e-mail addresses. Furthermore, leaders often change e-mail addresses without letting the conference know. As a result, many e-mail messages sent to leaders—especially pastors after appointment changes—are returned as undeliverable. Establishing an official directory of e-mail addresses should give the conference a more reliable way to distribute information electronically.

The Commission on Communication reported in 2006 that it was urging the Communications and Public Witness Office to establish permanent e-mail addresses for conference leaders. Those addresses could then be designated as official destinations for conference communication. The Communications and Public Witness Office has put the appropriate technology into place to establish permanent e-mail addresses. Users can access these addresses via Webmail, through the conference Web site or by having messages forwarded to another e-mail address.

This proposal sets forth a policy for administering the e-mail system based on the technology now in place. This proposal was modeled on similar documents at three Texas universities. They use e-mail as a primary means of official communication.

By making e-mail an officially recognized way to send information, establishing an official address list and assigning responsibility for e-mail administration, the conference should be able to save some money. Various offices could replace some routine hard-copy mailings to clergy and laity with electronic messages. Information in such mailings—often done by bulk U.S. Mail—could be delivered more quickly by e-mail. Such messages could carry links to additional information (such as forms, background material or online registration pages) on the conference Web site. Furthermore, e-mail messages could allow for quick feedback, when that is necessary.

E-mail won't replace all communication sent through the U.S. Postal Service. But e-mail may soon become the most common way conference leaders receive conference information.

Adopted by the 2007 Annual Conference
Upon the Recommendation of the Commission on Communications