

**CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS  
OF THE  
EIGHTH DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

*Section 1.* The name of this organization shall be the **Eighth Episcopal District Lay Organization** of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**ARTICLE II – MISSION STATEMENT, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

*Section 1.* Mission Statement. The **Lay Organization of the Eighth Episcopal District** shall teach, train, and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ.

*Section 2.* The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of **the Eighth District** so that each lay person may maximally utilize their God given abilities and skills to improve and extend the kingdom to create happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

*Section 3.* Objectives – To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives are adopted.

- a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for and an appreciation of the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.
- b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, our illustrious founder.
- c. To advocate respect and loyalty at all times to constituted authority and leadership.
- d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the District.
- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and of parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- f. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God’s Word.
- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.
- j. To increase the circulation of church periodicals.
- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service assignments.
- l. To promote activities, which will result in harmonious fellowship for laypersons

throughout the Connection

- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.
- n. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs.

### **ARTICLE III – DIVISIONS**

*Section 1.* The District Lay Organization shall be composed of the Conference Lay Organizations, District Lay Organizations of the Annual Conference and Organizations of a Station or Circuit.

The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference is optional, and shall only be organized where the Conference Lay Organization determines it to be necessary for the efficient conduct of its business. If such a determination is made, the Conference Lay President shall, after giving fourteen (14) days written notice, which shall include the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, to each charge in the district, convene and organize the District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference. The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference, where organized, shall bear the same relationship to the Conference Lay Organization as the Conference Lay Organization bears to the Episcopal District Lay Organization.

### **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

*Section 1.* Membership in this organization is open to all un-ordained members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in good and regular standing, in their local and Conference Lay Organizations. Good and regular standing means every member is governed by the Constitution of the organization and pays required dues as set by his/her local lay organization, attends fifty percent (50%) of the local lay organization meetings, and participates at the District of the Annual Conference, and the Annual Conference Lay Organization levels.

*Section 2.* The Episcopal District Lay Organization membership to the Mid-year and (AGM) shall be as follows:

- a. All elected officers of the Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- b. All Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives from each Conference organization.
- c. Six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-30.
- d. Each President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representative from each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.
- e. Each president or duly elected representative of each organized Station or Circuit Organization. A duly organized Lay Organization of the Districts of the Annual Conference shall be an organization reporting to the Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting or which is recognized by the Conference as an organization.

### **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS, DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Section 1.* The elected Officers of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** and its Divisions

shall be:

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

**a. Duties and Responsibilities.** The President of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** shall:

1. Lead with vision and integrity. This includes serving as a spokesperson for laity in the church, a representative for lay ministry in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings or an advocate in public policy arenas,
  2. Preside over its **Annual Convention** during regular, special, or emergency meetings, the Executive Board, and all other official meetings of this organization,
  3. Be the active head of said organization, and shall be responsible for seeing that the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, as well as the orders and policies of the Executive Board are fully carried out,
  4. Be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the ~~Connection~~ **District** through channels of the **Conference** Lay Organizations,
  5. Be responsible for such other duties as may be usual and customary to the position, and which may be assigned from time to time by the Executive Board, and the directives approved by the **Annual Convention**.
  6. Appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Convention, and Ad Hoc Committees,
  7. Serve as a member of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by virtue of his/her office and
8. **The Episcopal Lay President** or his or her designee shall preside over all the election of officers on the Episcopal District level.

**b. Duties and Responsibilities** The First Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Membership Recruitment, Retention/and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and
2. Assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties.

**c. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Second Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Strategic Planning and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and the Executive Board and

2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President, preside at the meetings and assume all duties of the President.

**d. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Third Vice President shall:

1. Coordinate such duties as Personal Evangelism and coordinating those efforts with the appropriate departments, within the church, and in the absence of the President, First Vice President and Second Vice President preside at the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President.

**e. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Serve as Secretary of the **Annual Convention** and the **Episcopal** Executive Board,
2. Be responsible for recording attendance, accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, including the **Annual Convention** secretary for reading and distributing minutes of any previous meetings and insuring widespread dissemination of pertinent information.

3. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside until a chairperson *pro tempore* is elected.

4. Prepare, for the presiding officer, a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting and a report of the Executive Board meetings to be presented at the **Annual Convention**.

5. Hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

**f. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Assistant Recording Secretary shall:

1. Assist the Recording Secretary in all duties as outlined above.

2. In the absence of the Secretary, shall perform the duties of the Secretary.

**g. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. Insure lay ministry focus through effective communication. This includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about laity.

2. Report pertinent information to the Executive Board, and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the Executive Board.

3. Maintain a network of internal communications between the **Episcopal District** Lay Organization and its subordinate bodies.

4. Compose communication as needed and/or directed by the President. Maintain liaison with the Director of Public Relations to insure publication of pertinent information.

**h. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Treasurer shall:

1. Serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal year.

2. Receive and disburse all funds. Disbursements shall be made, in accordance with the line item budget approved by the **Annual Convention**. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the Executive Board with appropriate justification.

3. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Board meeting and the Biennial Session.

4. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.
5. Have the accounts audited, annually, by an external Audit/Accounting Firm approved the Executive Board.

***i. Duties and Responsibilities.*** The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Maintain an independent set of records of all financial transactions and assist with work in concert with the Treasurer..
2. Serve as member of the Budget and Finance Committee.
3. Receive and record all funds. All funds shall be turned over to the treasurer within a period not to exceed ten (10) days.
4. Write vouchers countersigned by the President that authorize expenditures, pursuant to the budget passed by the **Annual Convention**, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.
5. Be bonded and said bond shall held by the Recording Secretary

***j. Duties and Responsibilities.*** The Chaplain shall:

1. Make adequate preparation for each Bible Study and Devotional Service, utilizing creative styles that motivates and draws participants into the worship experience.
2. Provide spiritual leadership to this organization.
3. Maintain effective communication with the Chaplains on the **Conferences**.

***k. Duties and Responsibilities.*** The Historiographer shall:

1. Be responsible for gathering, assembling, and maintaining a written and pictorial record of the activities and achievements of this organization;
2. Act as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the **Episcopal** Lay Organization;
3. Compile a written Biennial history of this organization and submit it as a report to each Biennial Session, place a copy in the archives to be kept in the headquarters of the AME Church.
4. Archives, find place to keep historical records.

***l. Duties and Responsibilities.*** The Parliamentarian shall:

1. Advise the President or presiding officer concerning questions of parliamentary procedure.
2. Be seated next to the President at all meetings.
3. Follow the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization, *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, latest edition*, at all meetings.
4. Serve as consultant to the Constitution and By-Laws, Rules, and other committees as needed.

***m. Duties and Responsibilities.*** The Director of Lay Activities shall:

1. Maintain a close working relationship with the President and the Young Adult Representative in the planning, developing and implementing of the complete programmatic thrust of this organization.
2. Plan, design, and direct all educational programs and other activities of this organization at the **Annual Convention**, including but not limited to Training Institute, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards and Speakers in consultation with the President and

approval of the Executive Board..

3. Maintain a working relationship with **Conference** Lay Directors.
4. Be responsible for planning and implementing a training program and course of study in accordance with the mission, purposes and objectives of the Lay Organization.
6. Conference Directors of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study to the District of the Annual Conference, Station or Circuit Directors of Lay Activities. The training program and Course of Study shall reach the Directors of Lay Activities within fourteen (14) days after the Connectional Director of Lay Activities has forwarded same.
7. A full report of progress made in the implementation of the course of study and the work of the Director shall be given at each **Annual Convention** and Executive Board Meeting as outlined in this constitution.
8. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee.

*n. Duties and Responsibilities.* The Director of Public Relations shall:

1. Oversee all official publications of the organization, editing, and publishing a monthly periodical containing news of general interest to the laity and news regarding the organization.
2. Solicit and edit articles for the publication on topics that will appeal to, inspire and motivate subscribers;
3. Oversee the entire publication process, including seeking bids from publishers;
4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation;
5. Prepare an annual and **Episcopal District** line item budget for the magazine's publication for submission to the Budget Committee.
6. Seek to bring about harmony of understanding between the church and public through the channeling of information to various media.
7. Be responsible for all press releases and public relations for and during any Lay Organization meeting.
8. Disseminate news items of interest received from the **Conferences** through Newsletter and/or multi-media processes.
9. Oversee the **Episcopal District's** website and any internal or external documents, including all social media networking

*o. Duties and Responsibilities.* The Young Adult Representative shall:

1. Be responsible for implementing teaching and training opportunities for Young Adults in conjunction with the Director of Lay Activities, and establishing working relationships with other relevant Young Adult Auxiliaries and Ministries within, and outside the AME Church.
2. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the Budget Committee.
3. Advocate for Young Adults concerns to the **Episcopal District Lay** Executive Board and beyond
4. Facilitate Lay Organization Young Adult events with approval of the Executive Board.
5. Voice the concerns and visions of a new generation of laity, and serve as a Christian mentor to a younger generation of African Methodists.



## ARTICLE VI – NOMINATION and ELECTION PROCEDURES

*Section 1.* All officers and members of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** and its Divisions shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station or Circuit Organization to participate in elections and voting.

*Section 2.* Any person seeking an elected office in the **Episcopal Lay Organization** must be a member in “good and regular standing” in the organization and must possess the qualifications required for the position being sought. Any candidate for elected office must have registered and attended at least two (2) **Episcopal Lay Conventions** as a delegate, alternate, or observer within the ten (10) year period immediately preceding the election year. Registration shall be confirmed from the official registration records to be provided to the nominating committee upon its appointment.

*Section 3.* All persons seeking an elected office must submit a “Letter of Intent” with qualifications signed by the **Local Lay President** to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The format for the Letter of Intent will be provided by the Nominating Committee and must be returned. Letter must be returned by certified mail or its international equivalent and postmarked on or **before June 15<sup>th</sup> of the year preceding the year of the election.** This deadline date will constitute the close of all nominations submitted to the Nominating Committee. There shall be no nominations from the floor of the **Episcopal District Convention.**

*Section 4.* All candidates seeking an elected office must have demonstrated active participation in the Episcopal District, Annual Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference (**where they exist**), and local church levels within the ten (10) year period preceding the election year.

*Section 5.* No elected officer shall hold more than (1) one additional office beyond the Local organization.

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

*Section 7.* The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) persons appointed by the President with nominees to be confirmed by the Executive Board. The President in selecting committee members shall follow these guidelines:

- a.* There shall be no more than two people appointed from a conference; and
- b.* **Appointments shall be district wide, inclusive and sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the ages of 18 - 30 and all persons must have demonstrated experience with the nominating process. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee’s duties and reporting timelines.**

*Section 8.* Duties of the Committee

- a.* The committee shall thoroughly examine any and all necessary information regarding nominees for elected offices being sought. Each nominee must be notified of his/her

eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. From those persons found qualified for the offices being sought, the committee shall prepare a slate of nominees, listing the qualifications of the nominees for offices to be elected at the **Annual Convention**. On or before **June 15<sup>th</sup>** or six (6) months prior to the convening of the **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**, (or whichever comes first), the slate will be distributed to the Executive Board of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** for approval prior to being provided to each **Conference Lay Organization**.

*b.* No political campaigning for office shall take place before candidates are qualified as nominees by the Nominating Committee. Campaigning is defined as placing ads in Souvenir Journals or any AME Church Publication (where applicable) at any level as a candidate, distributing campaign literature/paraphernalia or visits to formal functions of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** or its subordinate bodies with the expressed purpose of campaigning. Participation in campaign activities prior to being qualified as a nominee will result in valid disqualification for that candidate if confirmed by the Nominating Committee and the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE VII – ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

*Section 1.* Officers shall be elected at the **Annual Convention**, unless otherwise provided for herein. All elections shall be by secret ballot, electronic or paper, except in the case where the office is not contested. When there is only one candidate for office the chair can take a voice vote or declare that the nominee is elected, effecting the election by unanimous consent or acclamation. A majority vote shall be necessary to elect. Elected officers shall assume office immediately upon installation. There should be a ceremony for the Installation of Officers prior to the close of the **Annual Convention**. This shall be the final order of business at the closing Business Session of the **Annual Convention**. The candidate seeking elected office does not have to be present to be voted upon. Any method of election in any division other than by secret ballot, except in the case of uncontested offices, shall be declared null and void by the **Episcopal District Lay Organization**.

*Section 2.* **Episcopal Lay Organization Officers** shall be elected to a four (4) year term at the Annual meeting **preceding** the regular session of the General Conference.

*Section 3.* Term limitation. The elected officers of the **Episcopal District Lay Organization** and its Divisions shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years in the same office.

*Section 4.* If an officer completes a term of office which was vacated by the incumbent due to death, illness, resignation, and/or other conditions approved by the Executive Board, the unexpired portion of the term, will not count as a full term for the purposes of term limitation.

*Section 5.* Transition Period. A transitional period of sixty (60) days or 8 weeks beginning at the close of **an Annual Session** is provided for outgoing officers to reconcile files, records, and make inventories before transferring them to the incoming officers. Outgoing officers shall complete the transfer of all files, records, books, papers and property belonging to the organization to the incoming officers on or before the end of the sixty day period.



*Section 6. Vacancy in Office of President.* If a vacancy occurs in the office of President due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other causes, the First Vice President shall immediately assume the Office of President, for the unexpired term of office; the Second Vice President shall ascend to the Office of First Vice President, and the third Vice President becomes second Vice President, leaving the vacancy to be filled in the office of the lowest ranking Vice President. If the position was contested during election for the office of Third Vice President, the person with the second highest number of votes will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. If the position was uncontested, the president shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office of the third vice president, to fill the vacancy, if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office for The Third Vice President is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty-five (45) days, of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the office of third vice president. Nominating procedures, approved for last Biennial election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed and/or elected to fill an unexpired term of President shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two (2) full four (4) year terms in accordance with this constitution and By-Laws.

*Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President.* If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than that of a President, due to death, resignation, disability or inability to serve, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty-five (45) days, of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. Nominating procedures, approved for last Biennial election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot, electronic or paper. Any person appointed and/ or elected to fill an unexpired term of office shall subsequently be eligible to be elected to two full four (4) year terms in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

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

The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee/ will give guidelines, implementation and corrective actions when deemed necessary.

*Section 9.* Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers shall be elected Quadrennially.

*Section 10.* Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected Biennially.

*Section 11.* Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected Biennially.

*Section 12.* Station or Circuit Lay Organization Officers shall be elected annually.

## **ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS**

**Each officer shall be responsible for understanding and fulfilling his/her duties and those officers with a budget shall prepare and submit an annual line item budget for approval by the Executive Board.**

### ***Section 1. The President.***

**a. *Qualifications.*** The President of the **Episcopal District** Lay Organization shall have a commitment to lay ministry as demonstrated by:

1. Prior management experience, preferably in non- profit organization.
2. Prior service as either an elected officer of the Episcopal District, Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference or local church Organization.
3. Five years of administrative, supervisory, or fiscal management experience.

### ***Section 2. First Vice President***

**a. *Qualifications.*** Any candidate seeking the position of First Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

### ***Section 3. Second Vice President***

**a. *Qualifications.*** Any candidate seeking the position of Second Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

### ***Section 4. Third Vice President***

**a. *Qualifications.*** Any candidate seeking the position of Third Vice President must possess the same qualifications as provided for the President.

### ***Section 5. Recording Secretary***

**a. *Qualifications.*** All candidates seeking the office of Recording Secretary must possess

1. Proficiency in writing and composition of the English language, basic reading competency, editing and record keeping skills
2. Experience in word processing or other technology (electronic media) available for recording, storing, and retrieving information.
3. Prior secretarial experience or training
4. Ability to prepare and present minutes and reports.

**Section 6. Assistant Recording Secretary**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the position of Assistant Recording Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary.

**Section 7. Corresponding Secretary**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the position of Corresponding Secretary must possess the same qualifications as required for the Recording Secretary and have experience in database management.

**Section 8. Treasurer**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate:

1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, preferably in non-profit organizations. .
2. Five years experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, and budgeting.
3. Ability to be bonded
4. Experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.

**Section 9. Financial Secretary**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Financial Secretary must possess the same qualifications as those of the Treasurer.

**Section 10. Chaplain**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the position of Chaplain must demonstrate:

1. A Christian commitment, possess a high level of spiritual maturity, effective interpersonal and communication skills.
2. Training and experience in Christian Education;
3. Knowledge of the Bible and the AMEC Hymnal
4. Experience in preparing and conducting Bible study and worship;

**Section 11. Historiographer**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must demonstrate:

1. Prior experience with emphasis in research, writing, and publishing historical information.
2. Proficiency in English is required.
3. Ability to use technology (electronic media, including video, photos, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing;
4. Knowledge of record and artifact preservation specific to an organization's founding, operations, projects, and other activities.

**Section 12. Parliamentarian**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate:

1. They are a registered Parliamentarian in good and regular standing of the National Association of Parliamentarians or an equivalent certification at the time of nomination. Where there are no qualified candidates, the President, with the approval of the executive board and for

any fee that will be required, may contract for such services to be provided, at a competitive rate to the organization as needed. Preference will be given to members of the AME Church in good and regular standing.

**Section 13. Director of Lay Activities**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Lay Activities must demonstrate:

1. Extensive experience in research, speech, writing and proficiency in the English language, program planning, development, designing, implementation, teaching, training, adult learning, and/or administration, and technology (electronic media, including video, photos, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing.

**Section 14. Director of Public Relations**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Public Relations must demonstrate:

1. A working knowledge of media relations, marketing, sales, prior experience in preparing and distributing press releases.  
2. Strong communication skills and extensive experience in English, speech, and journalism.

**Section 15. Young Adult Representative**

**a. Qualifications.** Any candidate seeking the office of Young Adult Representative shall:

1. Be between the ages of 18-30 at the time of election. Completion of high school and pursuing a post-secondary degree (at the optimum) is required.  
2. Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with Youth and Young Adults within the church or other organizations and  
3. Possess strong abilities to provide training, and demonstrate effective communication skills.

**ARTICLE IX – EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Section 1.** There shall be an Executive Board of the **District Lay Organization**, composed of the elected officers of the organization, the President of each **Conference Lay Organization**, President Emeriti, and chairpersons of standing committees.

**Section 2.** The Executive Board shall meet at least once but no more than twice, annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the Executive Board. The Board shall hold two (2) meetings, immediately preceding and at the seat of, the **next Episcopal District Lay Convention**.

**Section 3.** Teleconference Meetings may be held to address specific matters of concern. Notice of the call with a proposed agenda must be issued by the Corresponding Secretary to members of the Executive Board no later than three (3) days prior to the call. Vacancies of officers may not be filled via teleconference call. (Article VII, section 1)

*Section 4.* The President **of the District Lay** Organization shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Board, and the Recording Secretary shall serve as secretary of the Executive Board.

*Section 5.* The Executive Board shall have the authority to carry on the work **of the Episcopal District Lay Organization** during the interim of the **Episcopal District Lay Convention**.

*Section 6.* The Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The Board shall have power over the supervision and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the **Annual Sessions** of the **Episcopal Lay Organization**, except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided. Further, the **Episcopal Lay Organization**, in its **Annual Lay Convention**, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any action of the Executive Board.

*Section 7.* The Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.

*Section 8.* The Executive Board may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the **Episcopal Lay Organization** and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.

*Section 9.* The Annual Audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the **Episcopal Lay Organization** and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the Connectional Lay Organization as required by the General Board. Upon approval of the Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the Annual Lay Convention; this would include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

## **ARTICLE X –MEETINGS**

*Section 1.* The **Episcopal Lay Organization** shall meet **annually** in its regular session.

*Section 2.* The **Annual Convention** of the **Episcopal Lay Organization** shall be held within the period **January, 20 to January, 31**. The site of the next **Annual Convention** shall be determined six **(6) months** in advance.

*Section 3.* The Episcopal Lay President and/or a majority of the voting members of the Executive Board may call an emergency meeting of the **Episcopal Lay Organization** when such a meeting is deemed necessary. The time, place, and object of such Special or Emergency Meeting shall be clearly set forth in the official call or notice. Only those matters expressly set out in the notice or call shall be deliberated upon, provided however, that no election of officers shall take place at a special or emergency meeting.

*Section 4.* All delegates to the **Annual Convention** must be elected at a regular or properly

convened meeting. The names and addresses of all delegates must be submitted to the **Episcopal** Financial Secretary. These names shall be forwarded to the **Episcopal** Director of Lay Activities by the Financial Secretary for the express purpose of expediting pre-registration for Educational sessions.

## **ARTICLE XI – VOTING PRIVILEGES**

*Section 1.* Voting privileges in the **Episcopal** Lay Organization shall be confined and restricted to persons set out under Article IV of this Constitution.

*Section 2.* No person shall be entitled to more than one (1) vote on an issue or matter in the Connectional Lay Organization, and must be personally present to exercise such privilege. No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted.

*Section 3.* Unless otherwise indicated, the majority vote shall prevail in determining all matters.

## **ARTICLE XII – POWERS AND JURISDICTIONS**

*Section 1.* The **Episcopal** Lay Organization shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority, power, and supervision over all Conference Lay Organizations established under the provisions of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE XIII – RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS**

*Section 1.* Each Episcopal District, Annual Conference, District of the Annual Conference, and Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be vested with the full authority to make its own Constitution and By-laws, Rules and Regulations, as may be deemed necessary for proper and orderly conduct of its affairs and for the governing of its officers and members. Each Divisions Constitution shall conform to, and harmonize with the Connectional Constitution and By-laws. Each of these organizations shall have the authority to establish its own Executive Board, raise funds, and in general perform all duties incident to its existence as an autonomous body except, however, said organization shall not make Constitutions and By-laws, or Rules and Regulations which are in conflict with, or abridge any part of the Constitution and By-laws of the Connectional Lay Organization or the template for subordinate divisions.

*Section 2.* A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of each Episcopal District Organization must be filed with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Connectional Lay Organization for examination and response.

*Section 3.* Each Episcopal District, Conference, District of the Annual Conference, and each Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall have the following inserted in its Constitution and By-laws: “This Organization shall be subject to and governed by the Constitution and By-laws of the Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.”



*Section 4.* This organization and each of its Divisions shall at all times be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization, *The Current Book of Discipline, Laws, Doctrines, and Tenets of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised edition.*

## **ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES**

To ensure successful and effective implementation of programs and projects of the **Episcopal Lay Organization**, other than specified duties of elected officers per Constitution and By-Laws, all Chairpersons shall be appointed by the President.

*Section 1.* Four (4) types of Committees shall exist in the **Episcopal Lay Organization**; Standing, Special, Convention, and Ad Hoc.

*Section 2.* Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance of, and are vital to the functioning of the **Episcopal Lay Organization**. Each standing committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the president, and approved by the Executive Board. Appointments shall be globally inclusive and age sensitive. The President, in appointing Committee members shall follow these guidelines; at least, one (1) person from each **Conference**; one (1) person between the ages of 18 - 30, and all persons must have demonstrated diversity of experiences in the work assigned to the committee. Selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee's duties and reporting timelines.

*Section 3.* Special Committees shall be the following: The Nominating, Elections, and Audit Committee.

*Special Committees are appointed to perform a task that does not fall within the assigned function of a Standing Committee.*

*Section 4.* Committees of the **Episcopal Lay Convention**. The Committees of the **Episcopal Lay Convention** shall be Rules, Elections Commission, Registration, Credentials, Health, Budget and Finance, Memoriam, Time and Place, Review of the Discipline, Evaluation, Resolution, Review of Job Analysis, CLEDC, Issues Facing the Church and Nation, Social Actions, Proposed Legislation, Young Adult, Executive Summary, Kit, Global Ministry, Higher Education Support, Constitution and By-Laws, AME V-Alert, Marshall/Staffers Nominating and Strategic Planning.

*Section 5.* The Credential Committee prepares and presents to the **Annual Convention** a certified list of registered officers and delegates that make up the voting strength of the convention.

*Section 6.* The Rules Committee provides official guidelines of operating procedures specially required for operation of the convening **Annual Convention**.

*Section 7.* The Budget and Finance Committee of the **Episcopal** Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the **Annual Convention**.

*Section 8.* The Budget and Finance Committee is composed of the Treasurer, and other members for a total of no more than seven (7), these members shall be appointed by the President. It shall be the duty of this committee to prepare a two (2) year budget, to be submitted to the President and the Executive Board for approval and the **Annual Convention** for adoption by a majority vote.

*Section 9.* The Constitution and By-laws Committee defines the primary characteristics of the organization, prescribes how the organization functions including all rules that the organization considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to the membership and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the **Annual Convention**.

*Section 10.* The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee shall report annually to Executive Board. The committee will propose and present for the Executive Board the process and tools for the officers evaluation and implement the process. The President has thirty (30) days after the close of the **District Annual Convention** to appoint the Committee Members who will present their findings.

*Section 11.* Ad Hoc Committee is appointed as the need arises to carry out a specific task. It automatically ceases to exist on presentation of its final report to the body.

## **ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES**

*Section 1.* Episcopal District Lay Organizations – The Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. all Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities of Conference Organizations and Young Adult Representative;
- c. six (6) elected delegates from each Conference Lay Organization, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30;
- d. each President or a duly elected representative of each organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;
- e. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30 – of each organized Station or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference;
- f. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization;
- g. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18 - 30, from each Station or Circuit.

*Section 2.* Conference Lay Organization – The Conference Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. each President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representative of duly

- organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;
- c. six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-30, from each duly organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference;
- d. each President and six (6) elected delegates at least one of whom one shall be a young adult, ages 18-30, from each Station or Circuit;
- e. any elected officers of the Connectional Lay Organization or Episcopal District Organization.

*Section 3.* District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference – The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference shall be composed of:

- a. all elected officers;
- b. the President and six (6) elected delegates from each Station or Circuit where there is a duly organized Lay Organization;
- c. any elected officers of the Connectional, Episcopal District or Annual Conference Lay Organizations;
- a. This organization is amenable to the Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Conference Lay Organization at least annually.

*Section 4.* Station or Circuit Lay Organization – The pastor of each Station or Circuit shall, within thirty (30) days after the Annual Conference, call a meeting of the members of the Charge for the purpose of organizing a Lay Organization where none exists. The Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be composed of all members of said Station or Circuit who desire to join. The officers of the organization shall be elected from those enrolled in said organization. The President of the Lay Organization, or a duly elected representative of the local church, becomes a member of the Official Board by virtue of his/her office.

*Section 5.* The officers of a Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall be those specified in Article V, Section 1 of this Constitution. The Station or Circuit Lay Organization shall fix the time for regular meetings, which should not be fewer than ten (10) times per year.

## **ARTICLE XVI– AMENDMENTS**

*Section 1.* Amendment of By-Laws. Amendments to the Constitution and By Laws of the **Episcopal** Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the **Episcopal** President and Secretary. The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at least six months or one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the meeting of the **Episcopal** Lay Organization’s **Annual Convention**. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail to each of the Conference Presidents. Two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the **Annual Convention** shall be required to effect an amendment. Amendments will take effect at the close of the **Annual Convention**. (**Any amendments cannot contradict the Connectional By-Laws**)

The following shall constitute the By Laws of this organization.

*Section 1.* The Order of Business shall be:

- a. Devotion

- b. Bible Study
- c. Roll Call of Officers
- d. Report of Credentials Committee
- e. Registration of Delegates
- f. Reading of Minutes of the Executive Board
- g. Reading of Communications
- h. Reading of Committee Reports
- i. President's Message
- j. Reports of Officers
- k. Reports of Episcopal District Presidents
- l. Unfinished Business
- m. New Business
- n. Report of Committees
- o. Memorial Service
- p. Installation of Officers
- q. Adjournment

*Section 2.* A majority of delegates present from the Episcopal Districts of the AME Church with voting delegations at the **Annual Convention** shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business.

*Section 3.* The members shall conform to all the rules and regulations of this organization; any member (s) guilty of an infraction or violation of the rules, or for conduct or decorum unbecoming a member, may be removed from membership herein.

*Section 4.* The order of business herein before outlined may be changed by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of the delegates present at the **Annual Convention**.

*Section 5.* All reports of Presidents and other officers shall be in writing and submitted in triplicate copies, one to be left with the President of the organization, one to be left with the Secretary of the organization, and one to be retained by the officer making the report.

*Section 6.* Any officer failing to perform his or her official duties shall be accountable to the Executive Board.

*Section 7.* No officer, nor standing or special committee, shall incur any obligation, which shall be binding, unless such action was authorized in its inception, or subsequently ratified and approved by the organization.

*Section 8.* The President shall be authorized to appoint and deputize, with sufficient power and authority, as many Marshals as may be deemed necessary to maintain order and decorum in the meeting. It shall be the duty of the Marshals to maintain strict order, see that only members are seated within established bounds of the meeting, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the President in keeping with the duties of their office.

*Section 9.* Any provision or condition not expressly covered in the Constitution and By-Laws of

this Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long established policy, customs, tenets, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, and *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised edition*.

## **COLORS**

*The official colors of the Connectional Lay Organization are: Royal Blue and White or Navy Blue and White.*

## **THE LAY HYMN**

Laymen now have thus assembled,  
In Thy blessed name O God.  
Guide us in our true endeavor,  
Light the pathway that we trod;  
Give us strength to ever labor for Thy cause  
Give us strength to ever labor for Thy cause.

We are banded one in union,  
To fulfill Thy just command.  
May we be Thy true disciples,  
Holding to Thy mighty hand;  
Give us blessings from the fountain of Thy love  
Give us blessings from the fountain of Thy love.

As we walk this Christian journey,  
Let us keep our armour bright.  
Let our works be pure and holy  
That we stand within Thy sight;  
Laymen soldiers, strong in unity and love  
Laymen soldiers, strong in unity and love.

May we stand before Thine altar,  
Pledging, Lord, to work for Thee.  
In the vineyard, in the pastures  
Let us Lord Thy pilgrims be;  
Let us lift the cross forever to the skies,  
Let us lift the cross forever to the skies.

**Tune:** “Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah”  
written by Frances A. Walston

## **THE LAY BENEDICTION**

“May God bless us with the true spirit of Christianity. That we may live together, not as man

over man, but as lay persons working with God. Amen”

## **CONNECTION LAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CLEDC)**

### **Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC)**

The purpose of the CLEDC is to provide financial assistance to the Connectional institutions and projects; a financial base for lay ministries, outreach missions, and long-term financial programs for the denomination.

The CLEDC is a not-for-profit corporation under the auspices of the Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The CLEDC is a continuation of the legacy of Richard Allen, the founding father, who preached a message of religious freedom, political empowerment, and economic self-determination.