

# African Methodist Episcopal Church

## The Washington Conference Lay Organization



# Constitution and By-Laws

Glen White, President

The Constitution & By-Laws Revision Committee:

Selerya Moore (Capital District), Chairperson

Lillie Hill (Potomac District)

Janice Murray (Potomac District)

Margaret Smith Perkins (Capital District)

Frederick Wallace (Potomac District)



**WASHINGTON CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION  
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS REVISED AND ADOPTED ON JANUARY 20, 2026**

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) of the Second Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

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

Section 1. Mission Statement. The Lay Organization of the Washington Conference of the Second Episcopal District (SEDLO) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following tenets of Jesus Christ.

Section 2. Purpose. This organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, so that each layperson 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 the mission and 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 of the AME Church.

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 Connection.

e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and 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.

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k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service responsibilities.

l. To promote activities that will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Connection.

m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.

n. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Empowerment Foundation (CLEF) in support of Connectional programs.

**ARTICLE III - DIVISIONS**

Section 1. The Washington Conference District Lay Organization shall be comprised of the District Lay Organizations of the Annual Conference\* (formerly called Presiding Elder Districts) Lay and Organizations of a Station, Mission or Circuit. The divisions shall mirror the responsibilities of the Connectional Organization.

Section 2. \*The District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference is optional and shall only be organized where the Annual Conference Lay Organization determines it to be necessary for the efficient conduct of its business. If such a determination is made, the Annual Conference Lay President shall, after giving fourteen (14) days written notice, inclusive of 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 Annual Conference Lay Organization as the Annual Conference Lay Organization bears to the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.

**ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Membership in this organization is open to all Lay (un-ordained) members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in good and regular standing, in their Local and District of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations. Good and regular standing is defined as every member being governed by the Constitution of the Lay Organization, 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 Annual Conference Lay and Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organization levels.

Section 2. The membership of the Washington Conference Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. All elected officers of the Washington Conference Lay Organization.
- b. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.
- c. Each President, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives (YAR) of each organized Station Church, Mission or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized Lay Organization.
- e. Members from the general body, also known as members-at large must meet the requirement of membership found in Article IV, Section 1.
- f. A member must be at least 18 years of age; 2) has completed a lay membership form; 3) paid the annual membership dues from their Annual Conference District (where one exist) and/or

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local Lay Organization or is listed on their District and/or local Lay Organization Membership Roll.

i. Voting privileges are granted to persons meeting the requirement of membership as stated in Article IV, section 1.

Section 3. The membership of the Washington Conference Lay Organization to the Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization shall be composed of:

- a. The President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Washington Conference Lay Organization.
- b. All Presidents, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Washington Conference Lay Organization.
- c. Six (6) elected delegates from the Washington Conference Lay Organization, of at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
- d. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized Conference Lay Organization of the Washington Annual Conference.
- e. Each President, Director of Lay Activities, and Young Adult Representative of each organized Station or Circuit Organization; and
- f. Six (6) elected delegates from each organized Station or Circuit, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, aged 18-35.

Section 4. The membership of the Washington Conference Lay Organization to the Biennial Session of the Second Episcopal District Lay convention be composed of:

- a. The President, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Washington Conference Lay Organization.
- b. Six (6) elected delegates from the Washington Conference Lay Organization, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, aged 18-35.
- c. Each President, Director of Lay Activities, and Young Adult Representative of each organized Station or Circuit Organization; and
- d. Six (6) elected delegates from each organized Station or Circuit, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult, aged 18-35.
- e. Each president or an elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference (where one exists). A duly organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference shall be an organization reporting to the Annual Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting (if there is one) or which is recognized by the Annual Conference as an organization;
- f. Each President, Director of Lay Activities, and Young Adult Representative of each

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organized Station or Circuit Organization; and

**ARTICLE V - OFFICERS, DUTIES, and RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 1. The elected Officers of the Second 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, see Article III of this Constitution)

Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities

- a. The President of the Washington Conference 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 sessions during regular, special, or emergency meetings, the WCLO 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 WCLO Executive Board are fully carried out.
  4. Be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the Washington Conference Lay Organization through channels of the local 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 WCLO Executive Board, and the directives approved by the Washington Conference Lay Organization Lay Convention.
  6. Appoint chairpersons of all Standing, Convention, and Ad Hoc Committees.
  7. The President or his or her designee shall preside over election of officers on the local Lay Organization level.

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b. 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 WCLO Executive Board that the President can no longer perform the duties.

c. The Second Vice President shall:

1. Be responsible for Strategic Planning and coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and the WCLO Executive Board and
2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President, shall preside at the meetings and assume all duties of the President.

d. 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, shall preside at the meetings and assume all the duties of the office of President.

e. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Serve as Secretary of the Washington Conference Lay Organization and the WCLO Executive Board meeting.
2. Be responsible for recording attendance, accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, including the lay convention secretary and for reading and distributing minutes of any previous meetings and insuring widespread dissemination of pertinent information when called upon to do so by the President.
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 monthly Session.
5. Hold the bond of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

f. 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. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. Ensure lay ministry through effective communication. This includes sharing congratulations, well wishes, condolences and other news about laity.
2. Report pertinent information to the WCLO Executive Board and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the WCLO Executive Board.
3. Maintain a network of internal communications between the Second Episcopal 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.

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**h. The Treasurer shall:**

1. Serve as a member of the WCLO Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal year.
2. Provide financial oversight for the WCLO in accordance with general accepted accounting principles.
3. Receive and disburse all funds.
  - a. Disbursements shall be made in accordance with the line item budget approved by the Conference body.
  - b. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the WCLO Executive Board with appropriate justification.
4. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each WCLO Board meeting and the Business session.
5. Have the accounts audited, annually, by an external Audit/Accounting Firm approved by the WCLO Executive Board.
6. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

**i. The Financial Secretary shall:**

1. Maintain an independent set of records of all financial transactions and assist with the 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 Conference body, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.
5. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

**j. 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 in the Annual Conferences.

**k. 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 WCLO.
3. Compile a written WCLO history and submit it as a report the WCLO annually, and place a copy in the determined archives.
4. Securely store historical records.

**l. The Parliamentarian shall:**

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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*, current edition, at all meetings.
  4. Serve as consultant to the Constitution and By-Laws, Rules, and other committees as needed.
- m. 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 WCLO business meeting, including but not limited to Training Institute, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the WCLO Executive Board.
  3. Maintain a working relationship with Local Directors of Lay Activities.
  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. The proposed training program and course of study, inclusive of proposed theme and outline for the study guide, shall be presented to the Executive Board for approval at the Executive Board Meeting.
  5. The proposed theme and program will be presented upon receipt from the Connectional Lay Organization.
  6. The Washington Conference Lay Organization's Director of Lay Activities shall forward the course of study to the District of the Annual Conference (where one exists), Station or Circuit Directors of Lay Activities. The training program and Course of Study shall reach the Station Director of Lay Activities within fourteen (14) days after the SEDLO 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 Washington Conference Lay Annual Meeting (if there is one).
  8. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the WCLO Budget & Finance Committee.
- n. The Director of Public Relations shall:
1. Oversee all official publications of the organization, edit, and publish a periodical containing news of general interest to the laity and news regarding the WCLO.
  2. Solicit and edit articles for publication on topics that will appeal to, inspire and motivate subscribers.
  3. Oversee the entire publication process, including seeking bids from publishers.

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4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation.
5. Prepare an annual WCLO line item budget for the publication for submission to the WCLO Budget & Finance 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 WCLO meeting.
8. Disseminate news items of interest received from the local Lay Organizations through the Newsletter and/or multi-media processes.
9. Oversee the creation & maintain the WCLO website and any internal or external documents, including all social media networking.

o. 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 of the AME Church.
2. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the WCLO Budget & Finance Committee.
3. Advocate for Young Adults' concerns to the WCLO Executive Board and beyond.
4. Facilitate Lay Organization Young Adult events with approval of the WCLO 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.

Section 3. The annual audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the WCLO and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the WCLO Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve the basis for the Annual Report of the Washington Conference Lay Organization as required by the WCLO Constitution and By-laws. Upon approval of the WCLO Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the designated WCLO Executive Board meeting which will include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

**ARTICLE VI - NOMINATION and ELECTION PROCEDURES**

Section 1. All officers and members of the Washington Conference Lay Organization its Divisions (where they exist) shall be members in good and regular standing in their Station or Circuit Organization to participate in elections and voting, per Art IV, sect 1.

Section 2. Any person seeking an elected office on the Washington Conference 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 (50%) fifty percent of all Business Sessions within the three (3) year period immediately preceding the election year. Registration shall be confirmed

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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 by certified mail or email correspondence and postmarked on **or before January 15<sup>th</sup> of the election year. This deadline date will constitute the close of all nominations submitted** to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will send an electronic or paper reply acknowledging receipt to all Letter of Intents received by email or paper correspondence.
- Section 4. All candidates seeking an elected office must have demonstrated active participation in the Districts of the Annual Conference (where they exist), and local church levels within the one (1) year period preceding the election year and must be a member in good and regular standing, as defined by Article IV, sect 1.
- Section 5. No elected officer shall hold more than (2) two additional offices beyond the local lay 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). Upon the initiation of the nomination process, a member of the Nominating Committee is prohibited from withdrawing from the Committee to run for an elected office within the WCLO Executive Board.
- Section 7. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) persons appointed by the President with nominees to be confirmed by the WCLO Executive Board. The President in selecting committee members shall follow these guidelines:
- a. Appointments shall be sensitive to age diversity, at least one (1) person between the ages of 18 – 35 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 Nominating Committee**
- a. At least sixty (60) days prior to the election, the committee shall call for nominations through an email notice and/or any other appropriate printed or online communication. Such Notice shall inform members when, how and where nomination forms can be obtained. Nomination forms shall also be sent to WCLO Executive Board members for distribution to interested persons. The nomination form shall request biographical data and other pertinent information which will aid in the qualifying of candidates. Such forms shall be returned to the chair of the nominating committee by prospective nominees, bearing the signature of the Annual Conference Lay President, no later than 45 days before the election.
  - b. The committee shall thoroughly examine any and all necessary information regarding nominees for elected offices being sought. 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. Each nominee must be notified of his/her eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. The slate will be distributed to the WCLO members during the meeting that the election is held. Executive Board of the Washington Conference Lay Organization for approval prior to being provided to each local

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Lay Organization.

- c. 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 Washington Conference Lay Organization or its subordinate bodies (where they exist) 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 WCLO Executive Board.

**ARTICLE VII -ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Section 1. Officers shall be elected at the WCLO meeting that immediately precedes that year's Annual Conference, 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 of members, present and voting, 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 Washington Annual Conference. 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 WCLO.
- Section 2. The Washington Conference Lay Organization officers shall be elected to a two (2) year term at the designated WCLO meeting that immediately precedes that year's Annual Conference, unless otherwise provided for herein.
- Section 3. Term limitation. The elected officers of the WCLO 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 WCLO 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 a maximum of sixty (60) days beginning at the close of the Washington Annual Conference 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 (60) sixty-day period.
- Section 6. Vacancy in Office of President and/or Vice 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 during the previous WCLO Election will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. If the position was uncontested, the president shall, with confirmation of the WCLO 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,

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present and voting, by the WCLO 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 WCLO 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 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 one (1) full two (2) year term in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice President If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than that of a President/ Vice President, due to death, resignation, disability or inability to serve, the President shall, with confirmation of the WCLO Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than one (1) year. A majority vote of members, present and voting, by the WCLO Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than one (1) year, a special election shall be held by the WCLO 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. 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 one full two (2) year term 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 forwarded copy to the WCLO 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 WCLO 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 WCLO Executive Board through the Corresponding Secretary of his/her failure to perform designated duties. The final decision to expel or reinstate from/to office shall rest exclusively with the WCLO Executive Board. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee will give guidelines, implementation and corrective actions when deemed necessary.

Section 9 Washington Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 10. Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organization Officers shall be elected biennially.

Section 11. Station or Circuit Lay Organization Officers shall be elected annually.

**ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS**

Section 1. The WCLO shall have the right at all times to pass upon the qualification of his own members and may reject or accept the membership of any person.

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 WCLO Executive Board.

Section 2. The President.

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- a. The President of the Washington Conference 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 Washington Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference (where it exists) or local church organization.
  - 3. Five years of administrative, supervisory, or fiscal management experience.

**Section 3. First Vice President**

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

**Section 4. Second Vice President**

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

**Section 5. Third Vice President**

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

**Section 6. Recording Secretary**

- a. All candidates seeking the office of Recording Secretary must possess
  - 1. Proficiency in writing and composition of the English language, basic reading comprehension, 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 7. Assistant Recording Secretary**

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

**Section 8. Corresponding Secretary**

- a. 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 9. Treasurer**

- a. 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 of experience working in accounting, finance, bookkeeping, economics and budgeting.
  - 3. Experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.
  - 4. Ability to be bonded.

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Section 10. Financial Secretary

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

Section 11. Chaplain

- a. 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 12. Historiographer

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Historiographer must demonstrate:
  1. Prior experience in research, historical writing, publishing and archiving historical information.
  2. Proficiency in English grammar is required.
  3. Ability to use technology (electronic media, including video, photography, 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 13. Parliamentarian

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate:
  1. They are preferably 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 WCLO 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 14. Director of Lay Activities

- a. 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, photography, and other graphics) for data gathering, organizing, record keeping and writing.
  2. Must demonstrate knowledge of the AME Church, AME Doctrine & Discipline, AME culture and traditions.

Section 15. Director of Public Relations

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Director of Public Relations must demonstrate:
  1. A working knowledge of technology, media relations, marketing, sales, prior experience in preparing and distributing press releases.
  2. Strong communication skills and extensive experience in English grammar, public speaking, and journalism.

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Section 16. Young Adult Representative

- a. Any candidate seeking the office of Young Adult Representative shall:
  1. Be between the ages of 18-35 at the time of election.
  2. Demonstrate visionary leadership skills through work experience or volunteer opportunities, especially with Youth and Young Adults within the church or other organizations.
  3. Possess strong abilities to provide training and demonstrate effective communication skills.

**ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE BOARD**

- Section 1. There shall be an WCLO Executive Board, composed of the elected officers of the organization, Presidents of each District of the Annual Conference (where one exists), President Emeriti, Chairpersons of Standing Committees.
- Section 2. The WCLO Executive Board shall meet at least once annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the WCLO Executive Board.
- Section 3. Teleconference Meetings may be held to address specific matters of concern. Notice of the call with a proposed agenda and previous minutes of prior WCLO Executive Board meetings must be issued by the Corresponding Secretary to members of the WCLO Executive Board no fewer than two (2) 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 Washington Conference Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the WCLO Executive Board.
- Section 5. The WCLO Executive Board shall have the authority to make recommendation regarding the official conduct of any elected officer, provided however, that any decision to suspend, expel or remove from office shall rest exclusively with the Washington Conference Lay Organization.
- Section 6. The WCLO Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The WCLO Executive Board shall have authority, supervision and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the monthly Sessions except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided. Further, the general body in its regular meeting, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any action of the WCLO Executive Board.
- Section 7. The WCLO Executive Board shall pass upon the Constitution and By-Laws of the local Lay Organizations to determine their compliance with or conformity to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connection Lay Organization.
- Section 8. The WCLO Executive Board shall have such other authority as may be necessary to carry out the general purposes and intent of this Constitution.
- Section 9. The WCLO Executive Board may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the WCLO and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.

**ARTICLE X- MEETING**

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- Section 1. The Washington Conference Lay Organization shall meet monthly.
- Section 2. All meeting Roll Calls and membership attendance records shall be maintained by the Recording Secretary.
- Section 4. The WCLO President and/or a majority vote of the WCLO Executive Board members present and voting may call an emergency meeting of the WCLO 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.

**ARTICLE XI - VOTING PRIVILEGES**

- Section 1. Voting privileges in the WCLO 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 WCLO 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.
- Section 4. Voting privileges are restricted to those delegates who have register for the meeting and have attended at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled WCLO meeting within one (1) year prior to the election of officers as defined by Article IV.

**ARTICLE XII - POWERS AND JURISDICTIONS**

- Section 1. The WCLO shall exercise prudent and appropriate authority and supervision over all local Lay Organizations established under the provisions of this Constitution.

**ARTICLE XIII - RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS**

- Section 1. Each District of the Annual Conference (where one exists), 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 division 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 WCLO or the template for subordinate divisions.
- Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of each District of the Annual Conference (where one exists) and local Lay Organizations must be filed with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Washington Conference Lay Organization for examination and response.
- Section 3. Each Districts of the Annual Conference (where one exists), 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 Washington Conference Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."

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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 *AME Book of Discipline, Laws, Doctrines, and Tenets of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

**ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES**

To ensure successful and effective implementation of programs and projects of the Second Episcopal District 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 Washington Conference Lay Organization; Standing, Special, Convention, and Ad Hoc.

Section 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance the mission of the WCLO and are vital to the functioning of the Organization. Each standing committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the president and approved by the WCLO Executive Board. Appointments shall be locale inclusive and age sensitive.

The President, in appointing Committee members, shall follow these guidelines: no more than (7) seven members, one of which much be (1) person between the ages of 18 - 35, 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 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. 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 SEDLO Executive Board for approval and the SED Lay Convention for adoption by a majority vote.

Section 5. 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 those present and voting.

Section 6. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee shall report annually to WCLO Executive Board. The committee will propose and present for the WCLO Executive Board the process and tools for the officers' evaluation and implement the process. The President has thirty (30) days after the election of officers to appoint the committee members who will present their findings.

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- Section 11. The 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.
- Section 12. All Committees shall be appointed by the President and approved by the WCLO Executive Board.

**ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES**

- Section 1. District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference (where they exist) – 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.
  - d. This organization is amenable to the Annual Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Annual Conference Lay Organization at least annually.
- Section 2. 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 purposes 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 3. 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 Washington Conference Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the Conference President and Secretary. The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at least two months or sixty days prior to the meeting of the Washington Conference Lay Organization. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail, to each of the Districts of the Annual Conference Presidents, where they exist. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee(s) of the Districts of the Annual Conference, where they exist, shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail, to each of the Station Church or Circuit Presidents. If there are no Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Washington Conference Lay Organization shall send a copy of the amendments by certified mail and/or electronic communication to each of the Station Church or Circuit Presidents. Two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Washington Conference Lay Organization meeting shall be required to affect an amendment. Amendments will take effect at the close of the WCLO meeting ratifying the Amendments.

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**By-Laws of the Washington Conference Lay Organization**

The following shall constitute the By- Laws of this organization.

Section 1. The Order of Business shall be:

- A. Call to Order
- B. Sign-in/Roll Call
- C. Devotions
- D. Director of Lay Activities
- E. Adoption of the Agenda
- F. Reading & Approval of the Minutes
- G. Officer's Reports
- H. Committee Reports
- I. Unfinished Business
- J. New Business
- K. Program: Guests, Presentations, Conference Updates and Reports, Presentations, etc.
- l. Announcements
- m. Adjournment & Lay Benediction

Section 2. A majority of members, present and voting, 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 and voting.

Section 5. All reports of Presidents and other officers shall be in writing and submitted in triplicate copies, one to be provided with the President of the organization, one to be provided with the Secretary of the WCLO, 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 WCLO 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 *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

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**COLORS**

The official colors of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization are: Royal Blue and White or Navy Blue and White.

**THE LAY HYMN**

**Page 582 The AMEC Hymnal**

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

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

This *GLOSSARY* is provided for informational purposes, convenience, and quick reference. In general, the definitions are based on language from the *Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. In instances where no specific legislation could be found, the terminology is based on historical and cultural usage and accepted practices. Not all terms in this glossary will be found in the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization Constitution and Bylaws.

**2nd Episcopal District of The African Methodist Episcopal Church (SEDLO)**: An administrative subdivision of the A.M.E. Church on the Connectional Level. It consists of five (5) annual conferences: Baltimore, Washington, Virginia, North Carolina, and Western North Carolina.

**Absentee Ballot**: A ballot cast during an election when the voter cannot be present at the place of voting. This practice is not allowed by the Washington Conference Lay Organization.

**African Methodist Episcopal Church**: connectional church founded by Richard Allen, whose mission is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberation gospel through word and deed.

**Annual Conference**: A geographical grouping of congregations in a specified geographical area to form the legal entity of Methodist polity. This is where mission resource personnel clergy and lay and property or administered and where a bishop is the president.

The annual conference shall be composed of all traveling elders and deacons (including chaplains), all local elders and deacons, and the presidents of the Conference Lay Organization and Women's Missionary Society, and the Conference directors of Christian Education, MCAM, Women in Ministry, Sons of Allen, YPD, RAYAC, CONN-M-SWAWO, CDMC, and all other conference level leaders of connectional organizations together with one (1) elected lay member and at least one (1) elected lay person between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five (18-35), when possible, from each charge within its bounds.

The Washington Conference Lay Organization of the Second Episcopal District, is presently comprised of 2 Districts of the Annual Conference: Capital District and Potomac District.

**Ballot**: The official printed slate of names to be used by members of an organization in casting their written votes during an election of officers.

**Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization**: The biennial business meeting of the Connectional Lay Organization.

**Biennial Session of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization**: The biennial business meeting of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.

**Christian Stewardship**: The practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, influence, ability, and material possessions based upon the conviction that these are a trust from God, to be used in His service for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ's redeeming love. It is also the use of one's time, treasure, talents, health, relationships, property, and the gospel in a partnership with God.

**Church Papers**: Periodical publications produced by the connection for sale or subscription.

**Circuit**: Two or more churches under the supervision of a single pastor.

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**Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:** The doctrine, laws, rules and regulations governing the conduct of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, its divisions, subdivisions and commissions, revised and published by Order of the General Conference (held every 4 years).

**Election Committee:** The committee, appointed by the president of the WCLO, with the responsibility to guarantee that elections are conducted in a fair and Christian manner in accordance with the Washington Conference Lay Organization's governing documents.

**Executive Board:** The Executive Board of the WCLO shall be composed of the elected officers of the organization, Presidents of each District of the Annual Conference (where one exists), Presidents of the Station or Circuit, President Emeriti, and Chairpersons of Standing Committees.

**Good and Regular Standing:** Regular attendance, participation and dues payment in a Station Church Lay Organization. (Article IV, Section 1.)

**Laity:** The members of a local church who have not been ordained as deacons or elders.

**Lay Organization:** An organization of lay persons whose mission is to further the ministries of the church.

**Lay Persons:** Members of a local church who have not been ordained as deacons or elders.

**Nominating Committee:** The committee, appointed by the President of the WCLO, with the responsibility to guarantee that the nomination of candidates to be officers of the body is conducted in a fair and Christian manner in accordance with the WCLO Constitution and By-Laws.

**Proxy Voting:** The practice of one authorizing another to cast his/her vote during an election. This practice is not allowed in the WCLO.

**Richard Allen:** The founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, (current edition):** The generally accepted written authority on the subject of parliamentary procedures.

**WCLO Lay Membership Year:** January through December of the current (i.e. fiscal) year.

**Station Churches:** Local churches in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**Young Adult Component:** A subdivision of the WCLO composed of Young Adults ages 18-35.

**Young Adult Representative:** An elected officer who is responsible for coordinating teaching and training opportunities for Young Adults and Youth in conjunction with the Director of Lay Activities. This officer is expected to establish working relationships with other relevant Young Adult Auxiliaries and Ministries within Metropolitan; advocate for Young Adults' concerns to the Executive Board; facilitate Kelly Lay Organization events with the approval of the Executive Board; voice the concerns and vision of a new generation of laity; and serve as Christian mentor to a younger generation of Metropolitan members. The Young Adult Representative shall be a young adult, age 18-35.