

African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Second Episcopal District Lay Organization



Constitution and By-Laws

Brother Dwight Patterson, President

The Constitution & By-Laws Revision Committee:

Starr L. Battle, Chairperson
Chenay Saunders, Co-Chairperson (YA)
Alvin White (BCLO)
Janice Murray (WCLO)
Lawrence Buckner (VA)
Emma Devine (WNCC)
Bernetta Ghist (NCC)

ARTICLE I - NAME

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

ARTICLE II- MISSION STATEMENT, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Mission Statement. The Lay Organization 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.

- 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 Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs.

ARTICLE III - DIVISIONS

- Section 1. The Second Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be composed of Annual Conference 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, District of the Annual Conference, Annual Conference and Second Episcopal District 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, Districts of the Annual Conference Lay, and Second Episcopal District Lay Organization levels.
- Section 2. The membership of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be composed of:
 - a. All duly elected officers of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organizations.
 - b. All persons holding the designation and/or office of President Emeritus.
 - c. All persons holding an office in the Connectional Lay Organization.
 - d. All Annual Conference Lay Organization Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives.
 - e. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.
 - f. Each President of each organized Station Church, Mission or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized Lay Organization.
 - g. Members from the general body, also known as members-at large must meet the requirement of membership found in Article IV, Section 1.

- h. 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 or is listed on their Annual Conference 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 Second District 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 Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- b. Six (6) elected delegates from each Second Episcopal District Lay Organization, at least one (1) shall be a young adult, age 18-35.
- c. All Presidents, Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representatives of the Annual Conference Lay Organization.
- d. Six (6) elected delegates from each Annual Conference Lay Organization, of at least one (1) shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
- e. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.
- f. Each president or duly elected representative of each organized Station, Mission, or Circuit Organization. A duly organized Lay Organization of a Station, Mission, Circuit, or Districts of the Annual Conference, shall be an organization reporting to the Annual Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting, or which is recognized by the Annual Conference Lay Organization's Annual Meeting; or which recognized by the Annual Conference as an organization.

Section 4. The membership of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization, for the purposes of conducting its business including the SED Lay Convention, shall be composed of:

- a. All elected officers of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- b. All persons holding the designation and/or office of President Emeritus.
- c. All persons holding an office in the Connectional Lay Organization.
- d. All Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities, Young Adult Representatives of Annual Conference Organization.
- e. Six (6) elected delegates from each Annual Conference Lay Organization, at least (1) one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
- f. Each president or a duly elected representative of each duly organized District Lay Organization of an Annual Conference.

- g. Each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least (1) one of whom shall be a young adult, age 18-35, of each organized Station Church, Mission or Circuit Lay Organization where there is a duly organized Lay Organization.
- h. All members of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization must meet the requirements of members found in Article IV, section 1.

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 of Elected Officers

- a. The President of the Second 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 sessions during regular, special, or emergency meetings, the SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board are fully carried out.
 - 4. Be responsible for expanding and developing lay work throughout the Second Episcopal District Lay Organizations through channels of the Annual Conferences 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 SEDLO Executive Board, and the directives approved by the SED Lay 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.
 8. The President or his or her designee shall preside over Election of officers on the Annual Conference level.
- b. The First Vice President shall:
1. Be responsible for Membership Recruitment, Retention/and Coordinate such duties as assigned by the President.
 2. Assume the complete duties of the President during an absence or when it has been determined by the SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board.
 2. Serve in the absence of the President and First Vice President. 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.
 2. Serve in the absence of the President, First Vice President and Second Vice President. Preside at the meetings and assume all the duties of President.
- e. The Recording Secretary shall:
1. Serve as Secretary of the SED Lay Convention and the SEDLO Executive Board meeting.
 2. Be responsible for recording attendance of all District Roll Calls and membership registrations.
 3. Record accurate minutes of all business transacted during meetings, including the reading and distributing minutes of any previous meetings and insuring widespread dissemination of pertinent information.
 4. In the absence of the President and Vice Presidents, the Recording Secretary shall preside until a chairperson pro tempore is elected.
 5. Prepare, for the presiding officer, a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting and a report of the SEDLO Executive Board meetings to be presented at the SED Lay Convention.
 6. 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 SEDLO Executive Board and reply to correspondence as directed by the President and/or the SEDLO 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.
- h. The Treasurer shall:
1. Serve as a member of the SEDLO Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization's budget for the fiscal year.
 2. Provide financial oversight for the SEDLO 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 District body.
 - b. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the SEDLO Executive Board with appropriate justification.
 4. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each SEDLO Board meeting and the Business session.
 5. Have the accounts audited, annually, by an external Audit/Accounting Firm approved by the SEDLO 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 District body, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.
 5. Be bonded and said bond shall 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 SEDLO.
3. Compile a written SEDLO history and SED Lay Convention history and submit it as a report to each SED Lay Convention Session, place a copy in the determined archives.
4. Securely store historical records.

l. 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*, 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 SED Lay Convention and business meeting, including but not limited to Training Institute, Banquets, Luncheons, Scholarships, Awards and Speakers in consultation with the President and approval of the SEDLO Executive Board.
3. Maintain a working relationship with Annual Conference Director 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.
5. The proposed training program and course of study, inclusive of proposed theme and outline for the study guide, shall be presented to the SEDLO Executive Board at the first meeting following the close of the CLO Executive Board Meeting which approved the course of study. The approved program shall be forwarded from the Connectional Director of Lay Activities to the Second Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities. Upon receipt, the Second Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities will immediately forward the Course of Study to the Annual Conference Directors of Lay Activities.
6. The Annual 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

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 SED Lay Convention.
8. Prepare an annual and biennial line item budget to reflect the work of this office for submission to the SEDLO 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 SEDLO.
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.
4. Provide for promotion, circulation, subscription fulfillment, and advertising solicitation.
5. Prepare an annual and SED Lay Convention line item budget for the publication for submission to the SED 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 SEDLO meeting.
8. Disseminate news items of interest received from the Annual Conferences through the Newsletter and/or multi-media processes.
9. Oversee the creation & maintain the SEDLO 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 SEDLO Budget & Finance Committee.
3. Advocate for Young Adults concerns to the SEDLO Executive Board and beyond.
4. Facilitate Lay Organization Young Adult events with approval of the SEDLO 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 SEDLO and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the SEDLO Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve the basis for

the Annual Report of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization as required by the SEDLO Constitution and By-laws. Upon approval of the SEDLO Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the designated SEDLO 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 Second 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, per Art IV, sect 1.
- Section 2. Any person seeking an elected office on the Second Episcopal District 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 as a delegate, alternate, or observer within the three (3) 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 Annual Conference 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 March 15th 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 Second 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 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 SEDLO Executive Board.
- Section 7. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) persons appointed by the President with nominees to be confirmed by the SEDLO Executive Board. The President in selecting committee members shall follow these guidelines:
- a. There shall be at least (1) one person appointed from each Annual Conference. *
 - b. 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 nine (9) months prior to SED Lay Convention, the committee shall call for nominations through a notice submitted for publication in the SEDLO Newsletter, the SEDLO website, and 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 SEDLO Executive Board members and Annual Conference Presidents 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 March 15th prior to the convening of the SED Lay Convention.
- 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 at the District Lay Convention. Each nominee must be notified of his/her eligibility which signals authorization to campaign for the designated office. On or before March 15th or six (6) months prior to the convening of the SED Lay Convention, (or whichever comes first), the slate will be distributed to the SEDLO Executive Board of the Second Episcopal Lay Organization for approval prior to being provided to each Annual Conference District.
- 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 Second 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 SEDLO Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII -ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Section 1. Officers shall be elected at the SED Lay 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 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 SED Lay Convention and shall be the final order of business at the closing Business Session of the SED Lay 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 SEDLO.
- Section 2. The Second Episcopal District Lay Organization officers shall be elected to a four (4) year term at the designated SED Lay Convention.
- Section 3. Term limitation. The elected officers of the SEDLO 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 SEDLO 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) eight weeks beginning at the close of the SED Lay Convention 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 SEDLO Election will immediately fill the position of Third Vice President. If the position was uncontested, the president shall, with confirmation of the SEDLO 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, present and voting, by the SEDLO 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 SEDLO 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 SED Lay Convention 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 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 SEDLO 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 of members, present and voting, by the SEDLO 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 SEDLO 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 District Lay Convention 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 forwarded copy to the SEDLO 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 SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board through the Corresponding Secretary of his/her failure to perform designated duties. The SEDLO Executive Board, may, in the interim of the SED Lay Convention suspend the elected officer. The final decision to expel or reinstate from/to office shall rest exclusively with the Second District Lay Organization in its Lay Convention Session. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee will give guidelines, implementation and corrective actions when deemed necessary.
- Section 9. Second Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers shall be elected quadrennially.
- Section 10. Annual 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

- Section 1. The SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board.
- Section 2. The President.
- a. The President of the Second 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 Second Episcopal District, Annual Conference, Districts of the Annual Conference 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.

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 SEDLO 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.

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 SEDLO Executive Board of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization, composed of the elected officers of the organization, elected officers in the Connectional Lay Organization, Presidents of each Annual Conference Lay Organization, President Emeriti, and Chairpersons of Standing Committee.
- Section 2. The SEDLO Executive Board shall meet at least once, annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board meetings must be issued by the Corresponding Secretary to members of the SEDLO 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 Second Episcopal District Lay Organization shall preside over the meetings of the SEDLO Executive Board, and the Recording Secretary shall serve as secretary of the SED Lay Convention.
- Section 5. The SEDLO 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 Second Episcopal District Lay Organization.
- Section 6. The SEDLO Executive Board shall establish the rules and regulations by which it shall be governed. The SEDLO Executive Board shall have authority, supervision and direction of all affairs of the Organization during the interim of the District Sessions of the Episcopal District Lay Organization except that it shall not infringe upon any of the expressed constitutional provisions herein set forth and provided. Further, the general body in its Lay Convention, may nullify, abrogate, or rescind any action of the SEDLO Executive Board.
- Section 7. The SEDLO Executive Board shall pass upon the Constitution and By-Laws of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations to determine their compliance with or conformity to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connection Lay Organization.
- Section 8. The SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the SEDLO and such other distinguished lay members as the President may designate. The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons.
- Section 10. The Annual Audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the SEDLO and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the SEDLO Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the Episcopal District Lay Organization as required by the General Board. Upon approval of the SEDLO Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the SED Lay Convention session this would include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

ARTICLE X- MEETING

- Section 1. The Second Episcopal District Lay Organization shall meet biennially in its regular session. SED Lay Convention.
- Section 2. The SED Lay Convention of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization shall be held within the period June 1st to November 30th, which will be held every (2) two years. The site of the Lay Convention shall rotate between the five Annual Conferences.
- Section 3. All meeting Roll Calls and membership attendance records shall be maintained by the Recording Secretary.
- Section 4. The SEDLO President and/or a majority vote of the SEDLO Executive Board members present and voting may call an emergency meeting of the SEDLO 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 5. All delegates to the SED Lay Convention must be elected at a regular or properly convened meeting. The names and addresses of all delegates must be submitted to the Episcopal District Financial Secretary on or before April 1st of the Convention year. These names shall be forwarded to the District Director of Lay Activities by the Financial Secretary on or before May 1st of the Convention year for the expressed purpose of expediting pre-registration for Educational sessions.

ARTICLE XI - VOTING PRIVILEGES

- Section 1. Voting privileges in the SEDLO 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 SED 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.
- 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 districts meeting within two (2) years prior to the election of officers as defined by Article IV.

ARTICLE XII - POWERS AND JURISDICTIONS

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

ARTICLE XIII - RESERVED AND IMPLIED POWERS

- Section 1. Each 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 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 SEDLO or the template for subordinate divisions.

- Section 2. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of each Annual Conference must be filed with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Episcopal District Lay Organization for examination and response.
- Section 3. Each Annual Conference, Districts 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 Second Episcopal District 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 *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 Second Episcopal District 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 SEDLO 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 SEDLO Executive Board. Appointments shall be locale inclusive and age sensitive.
- The President, in appointing Committee members, shall follow these guidelines: at least one (1) person from each Annual Conference, at least one (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. Committees of the SEDLO Lay Convention Session. The Committees of the SED 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, Hospitality, Marshall/Staffers, Scholarship, Nominating and Strategic Planning.

- Section 5. The Credential Committee prepares and presents to the SEDLO Lay 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 SED Lay Convention.
- Section 7. The Budget and Finance Committee of the SEDLO shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the SED Lay 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 SEDLO Executive Board for approval and the SED Lay 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 SED Lay Convention.
- Section 10. The Organizational and Officers Effectiveness Committee shall report annually to SEDLO Executive Board. The committee will propose and present for the SEDLO 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 SED Lay Convention to appoint the committee members who will present their findings.
- 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 SEDLO Executive Board.

ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES

- Section 1. Annual Conference Lay Organizations – The Annual Conference Lay Organizations shall be composed of:
- a. all elected officers.
 - b. all Presidents, Directors of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representative of the Annual Conference Organizations.
 - c. six (6) elected delegates from each Annual Conference Lay Organization, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35.
 - d. each President or a duly elected representative of each organized District Lay Organization of the Annual Conference.
 - e. six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18-35 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. any elected officers of the District Lay Organization.
- h. each President and six (6) elected delegates, at least one of whom shall be a young adult, ages 18 - 35, from each Station or Circuit.

Section 2. 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.
- d. This organization is amenable to the Annual Conference Lay Organization and must report to the Annual Conference Lay Organization at least annually.

Section 3. 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 4. 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 Second Episcopal District may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the District 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 District Lay Convention. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail, to each of the Annual Conference President. Two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Lay District convention shall be required to affect an amendment.

By-Laws of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization

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 Committees Report
- i. President's Message
- j. Reports of Officers
- k. Reports of Annual Conference 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 and voting, from the Annual Conference Lay Organization of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization with voting delegations at the District Lay Organization Convention and/or district meeting 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, at the SED Lay Convention.

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 SEDLO, 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 SEDLO 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.

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