

MICHIGAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

guide to annual conference



MIUMC lay member of annual conference guide part 1

WHY DO WE HAVE ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

The Annual Conference session is the annual meeting of the lay and clergy members of the geographical area, currently the state of Michigan. This session may include: reports of past and ongoing work; adoption of budgets; ordination of clergy members as deacons and elders; appointments of clergy and election of delegates to Jurisdictional and General Conferences (every 4 years) and legislative sessions. The bishop presides over the Annual Conference session.

WHEN & WHERE IS IT?

Annual Conference usually covers a time span of three to five days and is typically in May or June. This year, Annual Conference is June 2-4 at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, MI.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LAY MEMBER OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

The Lay Member of Annual Conference, along with the pastor, interprets the work done by the Annual Conference session to the congregation. They are the liaisons between the congregation and the general church and represent the congregation in the actions taken at the Annual Conference sessions. The Lay Member of Annual Conference:

- Participates in all Annual Conference sessions and votes on legislation;
- Reports to the congregation after the close of the conference;
- Serves as a member of the charge conference, church council, finance committee and staff/pastor parish relations committee of their local church.

WHO ATTENDS?

The United Methodist Church is committed to providing an equal voice to both clergy and laity.

All ordained elders and deacons, retired and serving, as well as licensed local pastors currently serving a church are members of Annual Conference. Clergy are expected to attend, even in retirement

At least one lay person is elected by each charge (one or more churches). Each charge with more than one clergy is entitled to as many lay members as it has clergy under appointment. Then, there is a formula for larger churches who are entitled to more lay members based on the membership of the church.

In order to ensure an equal number of clergy and laity, the Annual Conference registrar calculates how many additional lay members are needed to achieve balance. These lay members, who are called equalization members, are identified in two ways.

- 1) Lay members serving in leadership positions at the conference level (on boards, councils, committees and commissions) are equalization members.
- 2) The balance is then selected by the Conference Board of Laity (typically divided at the district level).

All lay members are required to be a professing member for at least two years and an active participant in the church for at least four years at the time of their election.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LAY MEMBER OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

If you are employed, you will have to take time off from work to attend Annual Conference. The dates are announced in advanced in order to plan accordingly. The Michigan Conference typically tries to schedule a Thursday through Sunday time-frame in an attempt to accommodate working laypersons.

Prepare

- Study pre-conference materials and resolutions as they are available. They are distributed electronically through email and at **2023.michiganumc.org**.
- Attempt to attend available pre-conference meetings and training sessions. Check with your district or the conference website for dates.
- Review and have an understanding of the Rules of Order, found in the Conference Journal and on the website. Also, be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure).
- It would be helpful for you to know what is included in *The Book of Discipline of The UMC - 2016*. Just a general overview.
- Have conversations and discussions with your pastor and people in your congregation about the resolutions submitted and included in the Annual Conference business.



Participate

- Attend the Annual Conference First Time Orientation or use as a refresher.
- Attend the laity event (formerly laity session). This session is named at a specific time in the conference agenda and includes a keynote speaker focusing on the ministry of the laity.
- Participate in all sessions dealing with Annual Conference business, including legislative committees. You will be asked to vote on items.
- Listen to proceedings to be informed before voting. You do not have to vote the same as other members from your congregation or your pastor.
- Engage in worship.
- Be present at teaching and devotional sessions. These sessions can be an excellent way to grow spiritually.
- If available, explore resource or sponsor displays. You'll get some helpful and inspiring information from mission and ministries of The United Methodist Church.
- Journaling during annual conference is a great way to gather your thoughts or reflect on moments as they happen. It will help you when sharing with your congregation about Annual Conference.

Serve

- Share your experience of Annual Conference with your congregation.
- Search websites and general church news sources about information to share with your congregation throughout the year.
- Consider participating in conference or district committees or ministry areas.

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PART 2 includes registration & legislation information

