

African Methodist Episcopal Church CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION



Proposed Amendments CLO Constitution and Bylaws

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1. Synopsis

1.1 The Constitution and Bylaws Committee (CBLC) presented its report, to the Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Organization, for the FIRST READING, on the amendments received by the Committee.

1.2 Summary of proposed amendments:

1.2.1 Divisions – Article III

- Bylaws of divisions not to conflict with CLO Constitution.

1.2.2 Membership Article IV

- Stations and Circuits (*previously adopted but omitted*)
- Add Standing Committee Chairpersons

1.2.3 Officers Duties & Responsibilities – Article V

- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer

1.2.4 Election of Officers – Article VII

- Electronic elections
- Filling of vacancies

1.2.5 Qualifications

- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer

1.2.6 Committees – Article XIV

- Standing Committees
- Independent Audit (*moved from officers duties and responsibilities*)
- Budget and Finance Committee

1.2.7 Meetings – Article X

- Electronic meetings

1.2.8 President Emeritus

- Qualifications and requirements

1.2.9 Executive Board – Article IX

- Provision for virtual meetings
- Advisors

1.2.10 Spelling, Grammatical and Stylistic Amendments

1.3 Submissions made reference to various versions of the Doctrine and Discipline (2012, 2016, 2021). We have as far as possible referenced the 2021 Doctrine and Discipline.

1.4 Coding: Language to be inserted/added is indicated in **bold**. Deletions are ~~stricken through~~.

2. Proposed Amendments

2.1 4th Episcopal District

Amendment 1

Title: COMMITTEES

Reference: Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES Section 2. Standing Committees, Section 2, Page 710

Intent: To update the membership of the Standing Committees.

Rationale: To increase the span of membership in the Standing Committees.

Current Text: Section 2 – Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance of, and are vital to the functioning of the Connectional Lay Organization. Standing Committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, AMEV – Alert, Budget and Finance, Social Action and Organizational and Officers Effectiveness. Each standing committee shall have no more than seven (7) members appointed by the president, and approved by the Executive Board. Appointments shall be globally inclusive and age sensitive. The President, in appointing Committee members shall follow these guidelines; at least, one (1) person from Districts 14 - 20; 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.

Proposed

Amended Text: Section 2 –Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance, and are vital to the functioning of the Connectional Lay Organization. Standing Committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, AMEV – Alert, Budget and Finance, Social Action and Organizational and Officers Effectiveness. Each standing committee shall have members appointed by the president, and approved by the Executive Board. Appointments shall be globally inclusive and age sensitive. The President, in appointing Committee members shall follow these guidelines; at least, one (1) person from Districts **1-20**; **at least** one (1) person between the ages of 18-35, and all persons must have demonstrated a diversity of experiences in the work assigned to the committee. The selection of committee members must respect the guidelines that govern the committee’s duties and reporting timelines.

Amendment 2

Title: OFFICERS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article V– Officers, Duties And Responsibilities, I Financial Secretary, Page 689

Intent: To avoid delay in depositing checks/or loss of checks in the mail

Rationale: This change will reduce the delay in funds being available for use by the Connectional Lay Organization. Technology available will enable us to be more efficient.

Current Text: None

Proposed Amended Text: Add 6 and 7 to Article V Part I page 689.

6. The reports generated at General Board Meetings, Bishops Council and other Connectional Church meetings shall be made available within 48 hours to local churches.

7. Accountability in Checks and Balances - clear description of process steps for the expenditure of funds. Positions to be held by persons with associated financial skills to follow process and assure appropriate check and balances.

Amendment 3

Title: PRESIDENT EMERITUS DESIGNATION

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Bylaws, Section 10, Page 717.

Intent: To provide qualifications for President Emeritus

Rationale: There needs to be clear statement of qualifications for President Emeritus.

Current Text: Upon being identified and honoured as an Emeritus President, all persons holding the designation shall be a perpetual member of the Lay Organization he/she served honorably.

Proposed Amended Text: Part XVII, Section III The Connectional Lay Organization, Article IV Section 2 b. **All persons holding the designation and/or office of President Emeritus, all persons who are past presidents shall be elevated to President Emeritus,**

2.2 5th Episcopal District

Amendment 4

- Title: DIVISIONS
- Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article III – Divisions, Section 1, Page 682
- Intent: For clarification to further explain the reasoning behind mirroring the Constitution of the Connectional Organization
- Rationale: The Constitution of the Connectional Organization is the standard for all district, conference, and local organizations to mirror. Following, the By-Laws are to be implemented without conflicts to the Constitution. Providing clarification for how the two separate bodies should be written omits assumption and confusion.
- Current Text: Section 1 – The Connectional Lay Organization shall be comprised of the Episcopal District Lay Organization, Annual Conference Lay, Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, where organized, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit. The divisions shall mirror the responsibilities of the Connectional Organization.
- Proposed
Amended Text: Section 1 – The Connectional Lay Organization shall be comprised of the Episcopal District Lay Organization, Annual Conference Lay, Districts of the Annual Conference Lay Organizations, where organized, and Organizations of a Station or Circuit. The divisions' **constitutions** shall mirror the responsibilities of the Connectional Organization, **and the By-Laws of each division shall not conflict with the Constitution of the Connectional Organization.**

Amendment 5

Title:	ELECTION OF OFFICERS
Reference:	Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE VII – Election of Officers, Section 1, Page 697
Intent:	“Unless provided for herein”, currently has no exceptions for how Officers shall be elected. This provides an opportunity to provide language for the word, “herein”, which means here or within the Constitution, to account for elections, and/or meetings, to be held electronically.
Rationale:	<p>The Lay Organization, it’s committees and umbrella entities, are required to meet regularly and to hold elections during those meetings. It should be noted that around mid-March of 2020, the outset that the COVID-19 pandemic made holding customary face to face meetings impracticable. International travel was at times restricted and; it is also known that there were restrictions put in place by the US domestic authorities to deal with the effects – additionally, the offset of the pandemic was subject to severe and burdensome quarantine restrictions.</p> <p>Furthermore, the pandemic is not over and we do not know the day, neither the hour, when the world could face extreme conditions, forcing the Lay Organization back into quarantine.</p> <p>In light of the ongoing pandemic, a process for meeting/holding elections electronically should be set out to define “herein” within this Constitution of the Lay Organization. While some way from the ideals of our customary general meetings, the proposed process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows and ensures elections can be held on time and within schedule• Allows and invites all members to attend the General Meeting, either in person or electronically.• Allows and ensures that the Constitution and Bylaws are followed• Allows and enables all members that wish to participate in any meeting are able to participate and when certified to vote...can vote, thereby maintaining the status of the Constitution as the supreme governance of the Organization <p>It is anticipated that meeting face to face could be the thing of the past, however this also allows the opportunity for hybrid meeting spaces – where the organization can have both a face/face and electronic meeting.</p>
Current Text:	Officers shall be elected at the Biennial Session, unless otherwise provided for herein.
Proposed Amended Text:	Officers shall be elected at the Biennial Session, unless otherwise provided for herein, such as provisions made for meetings held electronically (Article X, Section 5).

Amendment 6

Title: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE VII – Election Of Officers, Section 7, Page 699

Intent: Article VII – Election of Officer, found in the Lay Organization’s Constitution is clear on how to fill elected offices’ vacancies due to death, resignation, disability or temporary inability or other causes. However, it is not clear on how to deal with those positions that have not been filled due to persons not submitting their letter of intents for a particular office.

Rationale: To add language defining the process for filling vacancies of an office where no person has submitted a letter of intent to run for office. This will clarify the process outside of those circumstances impacted by death, resignation, disability, or temporary inability; and will clearly define “other causes”.

Current Text: None.

Proposed Amended Text: **Section 7.a. Whenever there is an unfilled office, due to a person not submitting a letter of intent, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty-five (45) days of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. Nominating procedures, approved for the last Annual Meeting election, will be used for the election. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper).**

Amendment 7

Title: MEETINGS

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE X – Meetings, Page 707

Intent: In reference to Article VII, Section 1 of the Lay Organization’s Constitution, unless provided for herein, currently has no exceptions for how Officers shall be elected. This provides an opportunity to provide language for the word, “herein”, which means here or within the Constitution, to account for elections, and/or meetings, to be held electronically.

Rationale: Add Section 5 to Article X, defining the provisions for “Meetings Held Electronically”. *(Rationale the same as for amendment 5 above).*

Current Text: None.

Proposed Amended Text: **Article X Section 5. Meetings Held Electronically: Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws or authorized by the Executive Board, meetings of the Lay Organization, or any of its subordinate bodies, may be conducted through use of internet meeting and/or teleconference services, that support the use of voting tools, showing the results of votes, supporting visible displays identifying those participating, and identifying those seeking recognition to speak. These electronic meetings shall be subject to the Lay Organization’s constitution, its bylaws, and/or rules adopted during such meetings. Any electronic voting tool, approved by the Executive Board, shall be deemed a ballot vote, fulfilling any requirement in the constitution that a vote be conducted by ballot.**

Amendment 8

- Title: COMMITTEES
- Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES Section 2. Standing Committees, Page 710
- Intent: To reduce the number of Standing Committees and align the appropriate committees as true Standing Committees for the operations and effectiveness of the Lay Organization. Remove AME V-Alert as a Standing Committee and place It as a Special Committee.
- Rationale: The term, “Standing Committee” refers to a committee that is defined as a permanent committee that meets regularly. According to Newly Revised 12th Edition of Roberts Rules, a standing committee is appointed for a definite time, as a session or a year. A special committee however [or select] committee, is appointed for a special purpose. For the Lay Organization, Standing Committee Chairs are members of the Executive Board – those committee chairs have the same rights and privileges of an Executive Board Member; and like the language in Roberts Rules 12th Edition, those standing committees are required to meet regularly. There are now two Standing Committees where the committees work crosses over. Ideally, the Social Action Committee (SAC) engages the Lay Organization in projects that facilitate achieving its goals of promoting social justice through local and national activism. Inclusive of the Social Action Committee’s work is the work involving voter’s education, registration, and mobilization ingenuities. Therefore, voter initiatives are social action works.
- The work of AME V-Alert is an arm of Social Action initiatives, and the AME V-Alert work should be appropriately categorized as a Special Committee as this committee performs tasks that do not fall within the assigned function of a Standing Committee. Special Committees are also committees of the Biennial Session, and this does not change.
- The Connectional Social Action Commissioner/Director has already shown the AME Church and the Lay Organization how the work of voter initiatives is closely related and effectively blended with Social Action. Again, voter initiatives are arms of Social Action work and the two are not separated, neither is the work divided. The Lay Organization should model this example.
 - Additionally, reducing the number of standing committees from six (6) to five (5) will help with reducing the Lay Organization’s budget (Standing Committees Chairs are members to the Executive Board and carry the same rights/privileges, that could yield to financial support for travel/lodging. In addition, any budgetary needs for operations).
 - Standing Committee Chairs are appointed positions by the President. With 5 appointed positions, the appointment process has the disadvantage of being open to skewing based on the preferences of the President.

Current Text: Article XIV– Committees, Section 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance of, and are vital to the functioning of the Connectional Lay Organization. Standing Committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, AMEV – Alert, Budget and Finance, Social Action and Organizational and Officers Effectiveness.

Proposed

Amended Text: Article XIV – Committees, Section 2. Standing Committees are appointed to implement specific goals, objectives, and programs that advance of, and are vital to the functioning of the Connectional Lay Organization. Standing Committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, ~~AMEV – Alert~~, Budget and Finance, Social Action and Organizational and Officers Effectiveness.

Amendment 9

Title: Membership

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Page 715, New Section XVII – President Emeritus to be added .

Intent: To provide clarity around the President Emeritus’ qualifications, nomination, and overall privileges

Rationale: The current constitution only identifies presidents’ emeriti as members of the executive board and describe them as perpetual members within the bylaws, however the constitution does not clearly distinguish the presidents’ emeriti membership status to the circuit/station’s biennial or annual meetings. This has brought about confusion as to which meetings an emeritus shall attend as a perpetual automatic member. Also, the constitution, neither the bylaws is clear as to the qualifications, nomination, and selection, as well as overall privileges. This language will help define all the above

Current Text: None.

Proposed Amended Text: **Article XVII – PRESIDENT EMERITUS**

Section 1. Qualifications

- a. **Any Past President of the Lay Organization, who is an active member in good and regular standing and who has provided significant, substantive service to benefit the Lay Organization at the level he/she has served as President.**
- b. **One who enhanced the training, grew the organization, implemented the objectives of the Lay Organization, and fully maintained the organization’s mission.**
- c. **One who has established, throughout his/her tenure, a record of unmatched commitment through documented acts and deeds in service to the Lay Organization and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.**

Section 2. Nomination & Appointment

- a. **Eligibility for President Emeritus is assessed by the Executive Board to ensure that the candidate(s) meet all the qualifications noted within Section 1., Qualifications. If it is determined that all criteria are met or exceeded, a resolution is prepared and presented for a vote by the next Biennial Session**

Section 3. Privileges

- a. **As defined within the By-Laws of the Lay Organization, Section 10, President Emeritus shall be a perpetual member of the Lay Organization, however they are not automatic delegates to the Biennial Session**
- b. **As defined within the Constitution of the Lay Organization, Article IX, Executive Board, Section 1., President Emeritus are members of the Executive Board**

- c. Use of the Emeritus title in church, community, and professional activities
- d. Other individual privileges as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board of the circuit or station the candidate has served.

Amendment 10

Title: -

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Section III, THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION; item A, Page 680

Intent: The Lay Organization identifies two separate sections for Constitution and the By-Laws; therefore, the title should also reflect the same. This will also bring clarity around the difference between the meaning of “Constitution” vs. the meaning of “By-Laws” for the Lay Organization.

Rationale: The constitution contains the fundamental principles which GOVERN the Lay Organization’s operation. The bylaws establish the specific rules of guidance by which the different levels are to function. Furthermore, the constitution covers the fundamental principles, but does not prescribe specific procedures for operating Lay Organization’s at the different levels. In the Lay Organization, the Bylaws must not conflict, however the Bylaws set forth in detail the procedures the different levels must follow in order to conduct business in an orderly manner. Bylaws provide further definition to the Articles of the Constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs for the organization change.

Current Text: A. Constitution and By-Laws

Proposed Amended Text: A. Constitution of The **Connectional** Lay Organization

2.3 Individuals

Amendment 11

Title:	Preamble
Reference:	Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Page 679, Add Preamble.
Intent:	Create a Preamble to the Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) Constitution & By-Laws.
Rationale:	A Preamble is an introduction to a bill, statue, or constitution. The Preamble describes the purpose or objective of the text that follows. The Preamble in the US Constitution, non-US Constitution, state Constitution or United Nations Charter outlines a general framework for governance and individual rights for the members that define the organization. The CLO is missing a Preamble in its Constitution & By-Laws (CBL). Including a Preamble will provide the governing document with a general introduction for why the lay organization exists and a description of the legal benefits for every member of the organized lay.
Current Text:	None.
Proposed Amended Text:	We, the international organized laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in order to foster efficient outcomes in our governing activities, maximize the growth and development of our members and support the mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, do affirm, and adopt, with clarity and conviction, through the power of the Holy Ghost, the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization.

Amendment 12

Title:	Membership
Reference:	Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article IV–Section 2g, page 684
Rationale:	To increase participation and expand the current membership empowered to serve as delegates to the Lay Biennial. Financial support is not mandated .
Current Text:	h. Each president or elected representative of each organized Station or Circuit organization.
Proposed Amended Text:	h. Each president, and Director of Lay Activities and Young Adult Representative of each organized Station or Circuit organization. i. Six (6) elected delegates from each organized Station or Circuit, of whom at least one (1) shall be a young adult Representative, ages 18-35.

Amendment 13

Title: Membership

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article IV – Section 2, Page 684

Intent: To add the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees to the membership of the Biennial Session.

Rationale: Chairpersons of the Connectional Lay Organization Standing Committees are members of the Executive Committee and required to attend executive board and register at biennial meetings. They have voice and vote at executive board meetings and bring committee reports with recommendations to the biennial meetings for consideration and approval of the delegation. They should have their own seat in the voting delegation at the biennial meeting by virtue of their appointment as chairpersons.

Current Text: None

Proposed
Amended Text: Add a new category – Under Article IV. Section 2: **h. All Standing Committee Chairpersons**

Amendment 14

- Title: Election of Officers
- Reference: The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article VII, Section 7 Vacancy of Elected Officer, page 699.
- Intent: To provide continuity in operations in the event the treasurer is incapacitated.
- Rationale: With the untimely death of the last treasurer, it was months after the selection of the new treasurer before the financial function was back up and running. With the financial secretary moving to the treasurer position, there will be minimal delays in operations. Until a new financial secretary is identified, the 3rd signer on the bank accounts can assist in ensuring payments are made timely.
- Current Text: Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice Presidents. If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than President and/or Vice Presidents, due to death, resignation, disability or inability to serve, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty- five (45) days, of the vacancy date, to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed &/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 bylaws.
- Proposed
Amended Text: Section 7. Vacancy of Elected Officer other than President and/or Vice Presidents, **or the Treasurer**. If a vacancy occurs in an elected officer's position, other than President and/or Vice Presidents **or the Treasurer**, due to death, resignation, disability, or inability to serve, the President shall, with the confirmation of the Executive Board, appoint an active member, possessing qualifications for the office, to fill the vacancy if the remainder of the term is less than two (2) years. A majority vote by the Executive Board shall determine the result. If the remainder of the term of office is greater than two (2) years, a special election shall be held by the Executive Board within forty- five (45) days of the vacancy date to fill this position. The Letter of Intent shall be sent to the person who last served as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee by each person who wishes to be a candidate for the vacant office. All voting shall be by secret ballot (electronic or paper). Any person appointed &/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 bylaws. **If a vacancy occurs in the Office of the Treasurer due to death, resignation, disability, or inability to serve, the Financial Secretary shall immediately assume the office of Treasurer for the unexpired term of office.**

Amendment 15

- Title:** Officers, Duties and Responsibilities
- Reference:** Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article V–H – Duties and Responsibilities, Treasurer, page 688
- Intent:** The proposed change will bring into line the responsibilities of the treasurer as with that of other nonprofit organizations. Assign the responsibility of audit management to the Audit Committee.
- The proposal will also remove the ambiguity of responsibilities between the Treasurer and Chairperson of Budget and Finance.
- Rationale:** The language of the constitution suggests in order of importance that the functions of the treasurer are as follows: serve as a member of the Budget and Finance committee, receive and disburse funds, keep accurate records, give itemized reports, be bonded and have the accounts audited annually. The language of the constitution implies, and some members have interpreted, that the Treasurer reports to the chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee. This implication and perception create the ambiguity in responsibilities.
- The proposed amended language will follow the responsibilities of other nonprofit organizations. Following is a summary of duties and responsibilities common to many nonprofit organizations.
- Duties and Responsibilities of the Treasurer*
Excerpt from <https://nonprofitlawblog.com/treasurer-duties/>
- Typically, the Treasurer’s duties include the following:*
- Financial management and/or oversight.*** A Treasurer may manage or oversee the management of the financial affairs of the organization, often including such basic tasks as selecting a bank, reconciling bank statements, and managing cash flow.
- Budgets.*** The Treasurer may be responsible for preparing, or facilitating the preparation of an annual budget, as well as regularly monitoring and comparing the actual revenues and expenses incurred against such budget
- Reports.*** The Treasurer should have thorough knowledge and understanding of the organization’s financial reports and important financial ratios. The Treasurer should keep the board apprised of key financial events, trends, and concerns, and her assessments of the organization’s fiscal health.
- Financial Liaison.*** A skilled Treasurer should be able to translate financial concepts and information for board members who do not have financial backgrounds or substantial financial experience.
- Ultimately, while financial management is the primary focus of the Treasurer, the entire board shares the responsibility of financial oversight and accountability.*
- Current Text:** H. Duties and Responsibilities. The Treasurer shall:
1. Serve as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee which is responsible for preparation of the organization’s budget for the fiscal year.

2. Receive and disburse all funds. Disbursements shall be made, in accordance with the line item budget approved by the biennial. Expenditures not reflected/listed in the budget must be approved by the President and the Executive Board with appropriate justification.
3. Keep accurate records and give an itemized report at each Board meeting and the Biennial Session.
4. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.
5. Have the accounts audited, annually, by an external Audit/Accounting Firm approved the Executive Board.

Proposed

Amended Text: H. Duties and Responsibilities. The Treasurer shall:

- 1. Give general oversight to the management of Connectional Lay Organization funds.**
- 2. Be entrusted with the custody of Connectional Lay Organization funds to be disbursed in accordance with the approved budget or as authorized by the President and Executive Board.**
- 3. Serve as chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee.**
- 4. Present the proposed 2-year operating budget, with recommendations, to the Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board for adoption by the Biennial Session. The operating budget should be presented no later than the evening of the second business day of the Biennial Session.**
- 5. Make a financial report to the Executive Board each meeting, the Biennial Session and at other times when requested by the Connectional Lay Organization President or the Executive Board.**
6. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

Amendment 16

Title:	Officers, Duties and Responsibilities
Reference:	Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article V, I – Duties and Responsibilities, Financial Secretary, page 689
Intent:	Align the work of the Financial Secretary to the current environment of online banking and record keeping.
Rationale:	With the implementation of Quickbooks Online, electronic banking and the modernization of the record keeping process, there is no need to keep two sets of records. Historically, keeping two sets of records may have been a type of control process. It is no longer required as the treasurer and financial secretary have access to all records and should work together to ensure transactions are posted timely and reports are generated. With online banking, it is safer and less time consuming to have the financial secretary deposit checks when received. Allowing the Financial Secretary to take over in the absence of the Treasurer allows for continuity of operations. Serving as vice-chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee consolidates the financial responsibilities with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
Current Text:	<p>I. Duties and Responsibilities. The Financial Secretary shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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 biennial, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.5. Be bonded and said bond shall held by the Recording Secretary.
Proposed Amended Text:	<p>I. Duties and Responsibilities. The Financial Secretary shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assist with the work of recording financial transactions and preparing financial reports in concert with the Treasurer.2. Serve as vice-chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee.3. Receive funds for submission to the Treasurer or make deposits when more feasible.4. Coordinate vouchers that authorize expenditures, pursuant to the budget passed by the biennial, which are to be paid by the Treasurer.

5. **Assume the duties of the Treasurer during an absence as necessary or when it has been determined by the Executive Board that the Treasurer can no longer perform the duties.**
6. Be bonded and said bond shall be held by the Recording Secretary.

Amendment 17

Title: Officers, Duties and Responsabilités

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article V – Section 2, Page 693 (*Update and move to Article XIV – Committees New Section 12 Audit Committee*)

Intent: Update the language to note that the audit is of the financial records of the CLO and not of the officers who handle finances. The audit period is noted as required by the General Board. Assign the responsibility of audit management to the Audit Committee and away from the Treasurer. Language in the current constitution has the audit as a responsibility of the treasurer.

Rationale: Updating this language will remove the notion of funds being for the use of an officer rather than the CLO as an organization. It will add another level of internal control.

Current Text: Section 2. The Annual Audit shall include the records of all officers handling finances of the Connectional Lay Organization and shall be conducted by an external licensed, bonded, and insured Certified Public Accounting firm, which shall report its findings, annually, to the Executive Board for review and approval. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the Connectional Lay Organization as required by the General Board. Upon approval of the Executive Board, the Audit is then presented to the Biennial session which will include an annual programmatic report from each office with an operational budget.

Proposed

Amended Text: **Section 2: Independent Audit**

The financial records of the Connectional Lay Organization shall be audited annually, by an independent Accountant, and at other times as requested by the Executive Board. All reports of the independent accountant shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval. This Audit Report shall serve as the basis for the Annual Report of the Connectional Lay Organization as required by the General Board. The audit report is then presented to the Biennial Session.

The Audit Committee shall be authorized to manage the engagement. If there is not a functioning Audit Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee shall be authorized to manage the engagement.

The fiscal year of the Connectional Lay Organization for purposes of the audit shall cover the period from April 1 to March 31, inclusive, as determined by the General Board.

Amendment 18

Title:	Qualifications
Reference:	Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article VIII– Section 9, Treasurer, page 702
Intent:	Update the language of the qualifications to obtain more information on the experience of potential candidates. Remove the require for nonprofit experience.
Rationale:	As the CLO has moved to a computerized accounting package, online banking and other online services, different experiences are required to function in the office of treasurer. Requesting certification/confirmation of experience should provide insight into the work experience and how it matches up with the CLO needs. The requirement for nonprofit experience is desired but not required as the skills obtained in a for profit organization is translatable to the CLO environment.
Current Text:	Section 8. Treasurer Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate: 1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and finance, preferably in non-profit organizations. 2. Five (5) years’ experience working with non-profit accounting, finance, and budgeting. 3. Ability to be bonded. 4. Experience and knowledge with computerized financial or accounting software and financial accounting/reporting.
Proposed Amended Text:	Section 8. Treasurer Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Treasurer must demonstrate: 1. Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and/or finance, preferably in non-profit organizations. 2. Shall certify/confirm having five (5) years’ experience working in accounting, finance, and/or budget management. 3. Experience and knowledge with accounting software packages and financial accounting/reporting. 4. Ability to be bonded.

Amendment 19

Title: Qualifications

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article VIII– Section 9, Financial Secretary, page 702-703

Intent: Adding to the requirement details.

Rationale: Financial Secretary must possess the same qualifications as treasurer because of the possibility of succession.

Current Text: Section 9. Financial Secretary

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

Proposed Amended Text: Section 9. Financial Secretary

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

(New qualifications for Treasurer

1. *Experience in financial management, including but not limited to, the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and/or finance, preferably in non-profit organizations.*
2. *Shall certify/confirm having five (5) years' experience working in accounting, finance, and/or budget management.*
3. *Experience and knowledge with accounting software packages and financial accounting/reporting.*
4. *Ability to be bonded.)*

Amendment 20

Title: Executive Board

Reference: The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article IX, Section 2 and 3, page 706.

Intent: To update the constitution to allow for one in-person meeting per year. One year the in-person Biennial convention will be held. The next year an in-person Executive Board meeting will be held. This change will afford the CLO and Lay members cost savings by eliminating travel expenses and allow for greater virtual participation of members at the Executive Board. Encourage fiscal responsibility.

Rationale: With the dawn of the pandemic and the curtailment of travel, it was determined that the work of the Connectional Lay Organization could be efficiently managed via video conferencing with participation from districts throughout the connectional church. Participation in the virtual meetings have grown from approximately 475 in Spring 2021, to over 500 in Fall 2021 and now 660 for Fall 2022. Many of the attendees have never attended an Executive Board meeting. The cost for virtual attendance is low, \$20/\$35, and there are no other costs for the members. The cost to the Lay Organization is greatly reduced since travel, accommodations and meals are eliminated. See comparison of costs below.

The in-person Executive Board meeting is not a meeting of scale, and it is difficult to breakeven on the meeting. Income from virtual meetings will help to offset the deficit from the in-person meeting. Fellowship is an important component of the Lay Organization and will be afforded annually at the in-person Biennial Convention and the in-person Executive Board meeting.

Managing the costs of the Executive Board meetings will allow the CLO to be more fiscally responsible of the funds entrusted to the organization.

	Fall 2019 (in-person)	Spring 2021 (virtual)	Fall 2021 (virtual)	Spring 2022 (in-person)	Estimate Fall 2022 (virtual)
Revenue	\$16,196.00	\$15,449.00	\$17,456.00	\$30,545.00	\$22,395.00
Expenditures	72,248.24	4,828.10	2,810.50	53,680.30	3,000.00
Revenue	(\$56,052.24)	\$10,620.90	\$14,645.50	(\$23,135.30)	\$19,395.00

Current Text: Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet at least once but no more than twice, annually, at the time and place designated by the President and members of the Executive Board.

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

Proposed

Amended Text: Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet **once in person the alternate year of the Biennial convention. Additional Executive Board meetings, no more than twice, annually, will be conducted via a video conferencing platform that can be used through a computer desktop, mobile app or telephone, and allows users to connect online for video conference meetings (i.e., Zoom).** The meetings shall be at the time and place designated by the President and members of the Executive Board.

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

Amendment 21

Title: Executive Board

Reference: The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, ARTICLE IX, Section 8, page 706.

Intent: To identify the job description of the Advisory Council and its qualifications.

Rationale: The Advisory Council as found in the Book of Discipline does not clearly spell out the duties and responsibilities of the Council. The need is to clarify the role of advisors and their responsibilities in the CLO.

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

Proposed

Amended Text: Section 8- The Executive Board may establish an Advisory Council to act in a purely advisory capacity **to the Executive Board**. The Advisory Council may consist of past presidents of the Connectional **or Episcopal Lay Organization** and such other distinguished lay members. **The members are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Executive Board.** The Advisory Council shall not exceed five (5) persons. **The Advisors will serve as liaisons to committees and elected officers as assigned by the Executive Board. Advisors may attend committee meetings but are to communicate with Chairpersons prior to meetings and not participate verbally in meetings unless necessary or asked.**

Amendment 22

Title: COMMITTEES

Reference: Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Article XIV – COMMITTEES Section 7 & 8, Page 711-712

Intent: Establish the treasurer and financial secretary as chair and vice-chair of the committee.

Rationale: Serving as chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee consolidates the financial responsibilities with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. It will work to remove the ambiguity of responsibilities between the Budget and Finance Committee and Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

Current Text: Section 7. Budget and Finance Committee of the Connectional Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the Biennial Session.

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

Proposed Amended Text: ~~Section 7. Budget and Finance Committee of the Connectional Lay Organization shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the Biennial Session.~~

Section 7. The Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and other members as appointed by the President for a total of no more than seven (7) members. The Treasurer will serve as the chairperson and the Financial Secretary will serve as the vice-chairperson. The president will nominate five (5) additional members. It shall be the duty of this committee to prepare a two-year budget to be submitted to the President and the Executive Board for approval in the Biennial Session for adoption by a majority vote. The Budget and Finance Committee shall submit its final report to the regular session of the Connectional Lay Organization no later than the evening of the second business day of the Biennial Session.

3. Spelling, Grammatical and Stylistic Amendments

Intent: To correct article and section designations, punctuations and cross-references, incorrect word usage, spelling, grammatical errors, and to make such other technical and conforming changes.

Rationale: Incorrect word usage, misspellings, and grammatical errors refer to the improper use of the normative rules for constructing a sentence and could leave room for interpretation by the reader(s) of the Lay Organization’s Constitution and the Bylaws.

Amendments: Areas of the Constitution that are reflected in the above issues:

ARTICLE II –MISSION STATEMENT, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section 3. No semicolon after the word “adopted”

Section 3.a. Add comma after the word “principles”

Section 3.c. Change to “To always advocate respect and loyalty...”

ARTICLE III - Divisions

Section 2. Punctuation Request: Remove comma after the word “optional”

Section 2. Punctuation Request: Add comma after the word “place”

ARTICLE V – Officers, Duties and Responsibilities

Letter A. Duties and Responsibilities. The President of the Connectional Lay Organization shall:

3. Punctuation Request: Remove the comma after “organization”

Letter E. Duties and Responsibilities. The Recording Secretary shall:

2. The word “insuring” should be, “ensuring”

Letter B. Duties and Responsibilities. The First Vice President shall:

2. correct sentence to read “coordinate such duties as assigned by the President and **Executive Board**”. *Include this phrase for all officers as reflected for First Vice and Second Vice Presidents.*

Letter G. Duties and Responsibilities. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. The word “Insure” should be “Ensure”

Letter H. Duties and Responsibilities. The Treasurer shall:

2. hyphenate the word “line-item”

Letter M. Duties and Responsibilities. The Director of Lay Activities shall:

8. hyphenate the word “line-item”

Letter N. Duties and Responsibilities. The Director of Public Relations shall:

1. hyphenate the word, “all-official”

5. hyphenate the word, “line-item”

Letter O. Duties and Responsibilities. The Young Adult Representative shall:

2. hyphenate the word, “line-item”

Section 2. dealing with the audit does not belong under this part related to officers, duties and responsibilities, and should be moved. *(Resolved as part of the proposed amendment by Treasurer in new section 12 under Committees).*

ARTICLE VII – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 5. hyphenate the word, “sixty-day”

ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS

In the first paragraph, hyphenate the word, “line-item”

ARTICLE XV – SUBORDINATE BODIES

Section 4. Replace the word, “or” with the word, “of”. For example: Station/Charge or Circuit Lay Organization – The pastor of each Station or Circuit shall, within thirty (30) days after the close of the Annual Conference, call a meeting of the members of the Station/Charge or Circuit for the purpose of organizing a Lay Organization where none exists.

ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS

In the first paragraph under the Amendment of Bylaws, replace the word, “effect” with the word, “affect”.

B. BYLAWS OF THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION

Within “THE LAY HYMN”, third stanza, second verse, the word, “armour” should be, “armor”.

Consistency required with the spelling of Bylaws (Bylaws, By-Laws and By Laws used interchangeably).