

[CHURCH NAME] POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LAY DELEGATE(S)

PURPOSE

To provide a ministry to enable the members of local churches to take part in the democratic process of our denomination.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As the elected Lay Delegate, you're the official denominational representative of your congregation. Lay Delegates have the responsibility to attend and to effectively represent the congregation at every General Conference. You should also participate in every [Name of Denomination] Network Gathering and Summit. It's your responsibility to see that the information flow between the every [Name of Denomination], Network and local congregation is both timely and accurate throughout your term of office.

Lay Delegate: Represents the local church. Has voice and vote at General Conference.

Alternate/Assistant Lay Delegates are chosen to fulfill the responsibilities of Lay Delegates when they cannot attend required meetings.

The every [Name of Denomination]'s General Conferences occur every three years, generally in July. General Conference is the worldwide governing body for the church that gathers twice a year.

It's the responsibility of each local congregation to provide adequate funds for the Delegates to attend these conferences. These funds should include registration, room cost, travel and food expenses.

SPECIFIC TASKS

Lay Delegates serve as the communication link between the local congregation and the every [Name of Denomination].

Flow of pertinent information between these bodies through the Lay Delegate is an important part of your job. Remember, you may be the only link that most members have to the Network or the every [Name of Denomination]. It's your responsibility to make sure that you've been added to the Network and every [Name of Denomination] newsletter email distribution list.

A. Pre-Conference

Pre-conference preparation is essential to a successful conference for both you and your congregation. This preparation includes:

1. **Review of all conference materials:** [Name of Denomination] and local church Bylaws and Policy Manual/Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's); conference reports and the business pack, and any other conference materials received. Many of these will be available on the [Name of website] prior to the Conference – [website url].
2. **Congregational input:** At regularly scheduled congregational meetings, or at a specially called meeting or forum, present the information concerning the conference to the congregation. If appropriate, take a voice vote to get a clear sense of the congregation's opinion on the issues.
3. Be aware of the status of your church's payment of [Name of Denomination] tithes and required reports for your church.
4. Find out from a Board Member or your Pastor the procedures concerning financial arrangements for attendance at conferences. You will specifically want to arrange for registration for conferences, travel and hotel reservations, and per diem for food. Check to see if you will need an exact accounting of all expenses, if the church prepays those expenses, etc. If your expenses are not in the church budget, suggest fund raising activities. Work to get conference and meeting expenses placed in the church budget.
5. Encourage attendance at [Name of Conference] conferences. You share in the responsibility of seeing to it that a large number of people from your church attend conferences. Conferences can be a great blessing to all church members; if you can attract a large number of people from your church to each Network and General Conference, not only will others be blessed, but your church will be blessed as well! You can get the word out about conference and urge people to register. You can see to it that the registration forms are available and the conference is mentioned at worship services and other church events. See to it that articles about conferences before they happen and reports Sample Policy Manual for the Local Church Page on them after conferences appear in your local church newsletter. You can even make arrangements for carpools, buses/vans, and hotel room sharing. The more the merrier!

B. At the Conference

1. **Official Business Meetings:** Clergy and Lay Delegates attend business meetings at General Conference. Usually voting representatives are divided into two "houses" (Clergy and Laity) for voting purposes. Houses vote simultaneously on all issues that affect both groups, but the votes are announced separately for each. On occasion, a vote will be taken that affects only the Clergy or only the Laity and those times will be announced. Other than elections, votes are usually taken by voting cards. Delegates from each church have both voice and vote. All delegates are expected to attend all forums and business meetings at each conference.

2. Workshops and Worship Services: These are interesting, diverse and inspiring. They offer great opportunities to experience different aspects of our denomination. It is recommended that delegates attend workshops and worship services when they are not in conflict with business sessions.

3. New Issues: It is the responsibility of the Lay Delegate to accurately represent the local congregation's view at the business meetings. If new or amended issues arise that have not been discussed by the congregation, it is the duty of the Lay Delegate to vote as you feel the congregation would have voted had they been able to discuss the issue as presented. The congregation elected you to use your best judgement.

4. Conference Expenses: Always keep a detailed record of your expenses for all conferences, including receipts. Submit this information to your church treasurer. If you are paying the bill yourself, it is even more important to do this so that your Board can begin to anticipate these expenses and budget accordingly. In some countries, you can deduct expenses paid personally from your taxes.

5. First Time Delegates: If you are attending a conference for the first time it is a good idea to attend the Lay Delegate Orientation if it is offered. This will help you connect with other Lay Delegates and get a better understanding of how the Business Meeting is conducted.

C. Post-Conference

1. At the first congregational meeting following the conference, the Lay Delegate is to report to the congregation the highlights of the conference. This should include a report of all meetings attended, the outcome of major issues (e.g. elections, votes, bylaw changes) as well as any workshops and worship services attended. Rationale on all voting by the delegate that was not consistent with the input from the congregation should be explained at this time.

2. A report should also be presented in writing to the local Board of Directors/Local Church Administrative Body and posted for the congregation within 60 days following the conference.

3. Be sure to pass along any material you received from workshops that might help your church ministry leaders.

4. Write a report for your church newsletter.

5. Submit an expense report with receipts to your church treasurer.

6. Also, write reports to the congregation and Board for Network Gatherings and Summits as well, although there is no business meeting at these events.

The outline of a sample report could look like this:

CONFERENCE ATTENDED

A. Business Meetings – General Conference

1. Election Results

2. Structure changes

a. Bylaws

3. Resolutions

4. Impact on local congregations

B. Workshops Attended

List material brought home to ministry leaders.

C. Worship Services

Themes / Features Speakers

D. Local Congregation's Participation

1. Clergy
2. Delegate(s)
3. Attendees

E. Personal Insights

Additional Suggested Responsibilities of a Lay Delegate

1. Save, read and organize all Network and [Name of Denomination] mailings throughout the year. Be sure and share this information with your congregation as it becomes available.
2. The Lay Delegates should be in regular contact with the Network Leader, Elder or their designated representative either by telephone or by email. It is your responsibility to see that the leadership has your current address, email address and day and evening telephone numbers.
3. Attend all open Board and Congregational meetings. You may be asked to assist in the preparation of Bylaw changes or resolutions for presentation at conference.
4. Attend church services and activities as much as possible. In order to best represent your congregation, you need to be in touch with the people.
5. In addition to periodic reports, there are a number of important resources you might want to keep with your Network and [Name of Denomination] records. These include the latest directories, the [Name of Denomination] Bylaws, and your local church Bylaws and Policy Manual/Standard Operating Procedures. As a Lay Delegate, you make policy when you exercise your vote at conference. You need to be able to refer to the resources that enumerate the policies of your church and [Name of Denomination].
6. **Head Delegate:** Should more than one Lay Delegate be mandated by membership numbers, normally the senior delegate shall be recognized as Head Delegate or shall be designated, by mutual agreement, among the delegates. Under these circumstances the Head Delegate shall:
 - a. Coordinate in a timely fashion all efforts to inform the congregation of issues that will be dealt with at conferences (based upon pre-conference materials).
 - b. Ensure that all delegates and alternate/assistant delegates have access to Network and [Name of Denomination] pre and post-conference material and any other materials relevant to delegates.
 - c. Keep the local Board of Directors/Church Administrative Body and Ministry Leaders informed of any changes in information and materials from the Network and [Name of Denomination] as it becomes available.

ALTERNATES

The Alternate position can provide an individual with the opportunity to begin learning about the workings of the local church, the Network and the [Name of Denomination] before running for the position of Lay Delegate.

Alternate Lay Delegates play an important role in the life of the church. They can help divide the workload both within the local church and at conferences, and are encouraged to work as a team with the Lay Delegate.

The position is not viewed as just a “substitute” delegate, only to be used when the Lay Delegate is not available. The Lay Delegate and the Alternate must work together to see that their job is done efficiently and effectively.

It is the responsibility of the Lay Delegate to ensure that the Alternate has copies of all conference materials and that the Alternate is fully trained to assume the duties of the Lay Delegate when required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION

Lay Delegates represent the congregation at the conference business meetings. It is, therefore, in the best interest of the congregation to ensure that the most qualified person or persons be elected, supported and affirmed in the position(s) of Lay Delegate(s). This should include financial support, including registration, transportation, meals and housing.

SUMMARY

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your Pastor or to contact your Network Leader or Elder. Contact other Lay Delegates to get their input. Remember the local congregation is not sending you to conferences for a vacation.

You have an important responsibility to represent the congregation to the Network and [Name of Denomination] and upon your return be able to represent the meetings, workshops, and worship services to your congregation. Communication is the key!

SIGNATURES

Lay Delegate

Date

Senior Pastor

Date

Date Revised: _____