

## **STANDING RULES FOR ANNUAL MEETING 2024 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE**

The Annual Meeting (the business session(s) of the Annual Gathering) is governed by the NCNC UCC Bylaws and these Annual Meeting Standing Rules.

### **A. The Annual Meeting Business Committee (AMBC)**

On behalf of the Annual Meeting Business Committee, the Conference Minister will notify the member churches and ministers of the timeline for submitting proposals, as described herein.

The Annual Meeting Business Committee will:

1. Receive and review proposals for qualification, making final determination as to category assignment, combining similar proposals if appropriate and making editorial clarifications as needed.
2. Have full proposals ready, or descriptions of proposals, ready for distribution at the Annual Gathering.
3. Ensure that each Discernment Session has a Facilitator.
4. Receive late proposals on timely issues up to the time of the close of the Annual Meeting, verifying their origination, the need for their being submitted after the regular deadlines, and that the format of the proposal is in line with requirements. If a late proposal is deemed qualified, it will be submitted to the Moderator for inclusion in the work of the Annual Meeting.

### **B. Timeline and Notification for Proposals**

1. A brief description of any proposal to be considered at the Annual Meeting should be received in the Conference Office by **February 1, 2024**
2. Final versions of all proposals are due in the Conference Office by **March 25, 2024**
3. Proposals of a “timely nature,” that is, in response to events which have occurred after **April 1, 2024** may be submitted and considered by the AMBC (see § A.4., above). The AMBC has final authority to decide if a proposal received after **April 1, 2024** is of a “timely nature.”
4. The AMBC verifies proposals for consistency with the guidelines and requirements noted below (see § D.2., below). The AMBC may send Proposals back to the originators for editing or do their own editing. The AMBC may consolidate similar Proposals.
5. The Conference Council may place proposals on the agenda of the Annual Meeting at any time.
6. Proposals may originate from:

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- a) A local church which is a member of the Northern California Nevada Conference, or from a body representing the local church.
- b) An Association, or body representing the Association
- c) The Conference Council
- d) A Conference Committee
- e) Any 30 members of local churches of the Conference

### **C. Types of Proposals:**

1. Administrative Action: An internal policy statement, ratification of a General Synod action, proposed General Synod resolution consistent with NCNC policies expressed by past Annual Meetings, bylaw revision, goal budget, etc., or a recognition/affirmation of a partner institution, anniversary, undertaking with a previous policy base, etc. A Discernment Session is held for Administrative Actions and a vote is taken by the Annual Meeting.
2. Position Statement: Requests that a stand be taken by vote of the delegates at the Annual Meeting. A Discernment Session is held for Position Statements and a vote is taken by Annual Meeting.
3. Issue of Concern: An item for study and discussion, often referred to the Conference Council for follow-up. A Discernment Session is held for an Issue of Concern, but no vote is taken by Annual Meeting.

### **D. Proposal Qualifications:**

1. Proposals are submitted in the format described below (see #2). On a separate sheet, the following information should be provided regarding the Proposing Group:
  - If proposing group is a local church, include the church name, address, telephone number, and contact person's name, address, telephone number, and email address.
  - If proposing group is an Association or Association body: name of Association, and contact person's name, address, telephone number, and email address.
  - If proposing group is a Conference body: name of that body and contact person's name, address, telephone number, and email address.
  - If proposing group is 30 members of local churches: name, address, telephone number, email address of each person, along with the name of the church in which the person holds membership. Indicate who the contact person is.
2. The final format for all Proposals (Administrative Actions, Position Statements, and Issues of Concerns) shall conform to General Synod guidelines for Resolutions, which state that:

Resolutions shall include the following information in the following format sections.

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- a) A brief Title with information providing the source of the Resolution, the date of submission and any other information pertinent to the Resolution. The title must accurately reflect the intent of the proposed motion. A brief Summary that accurately reflects the content of the Resolution.
- b) Biblical, Theological and Historical Grounding: describe how this action reflects the historic roots of the United Church of Christ and connect it to current identity and theology, noting the current engagement of various settings of the Church.
- c) The text of the motion.
- d) Contact Person[s]—supply name[s], address[es], phone number[s], email address[es].

### **E. Discernment Sessions**

1. Discernment Sessions will be provided for all Proposals prior to the business session of the Annual Meeting.
2. Purpose: Discernment Sessions are designed to increase dialogue in the Conference by giving people a chance to talk about the issue in depth and in a less formal setting, which is not possible during the formal meeting. The Discernment Session is to inform delegates about issues that will be voted on. Discernment Sessions can also help delegates become better prepared to strengthen a proposal once it is presented in the formal meeting.
3. Structure: The Discernment Sessions Facilitator sets the structure for the Discernment Sessions, monitors the time, and facilitates the meeting so that people have the opportunity to ask questions, express views, etc. in an atmosphere which is respectful of all opinions. A Recorder, assigned by the Facilitator, may keep notes as may be helpful for the Discernment Sessions Facilitator.
4. If the Annual Meeting is conducted virtually, discernment session(s) will be provided in the preceding several weeks.
5. After the Discernment Sessions and prior to the Annual Meeting:
  - a) Facilitators for Discernment Sessions on Administrative Actions advise the Moderator who will be the Presenter.
  - b) Facilitators for Discernment Sessions on Position Statements tell the Moderator who will be the Presenter.
  - c) Facilitators for Discernment Sessions on Issues of Concern advise the Moderator if there is any report to the Annual Meeting on an Issue of Concern.
6. Based on the reports from the Facilitators of Discernment Sessions and prior to the beginning of the Annual Meeting, the Moderator announces how time will be allotted

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for each Proposal during the Annual Meeting. Some business items may require the setting of context and background so that they can be fully understood by the Annual Meeting and others may be self-explanatory.

### **F. The Annual Meeting – General Rules**

1. The Moderator (or Vice Moderator) (hereafter “Moderator”) will chair the Annual Meeting in accordance with these Standing Rules.
2. Only delegates can vote, and they must display their delegate’s name tag in order to vote.  
In virtual space, electronic voting that ensures only one delegate per connection may vote will be used.
3. Voice without vote will be automatically granted to all our ecumenical and interfaith visitors and to members of national and regional settings of the UCC.
4. Any delegate, visitor who has been granted voice, or non-delegate member of an NCNC church who wishes to speak on a Proposal will go to a floor microphone: green to voice support, red to voice opposition, yellow to ask a question. [Each sign will bear the printed name of its color for easier identification.] The Moderator will recognize the person and ask the person to identify herself/himself by name, church of membership, and Association, or as a visitor from another setting of the UCC, or another community of faith.  
In virtual space, those who wish to speak on a proposal will indicate their desire to voice support, opposition, or ask a question in text chat to the meeting host who will identify, in order received, their request to the moderator.
5. Only voting delegates may initiate action from the floor of the meeting. Delegates place in writing any action before they present it, following the method announced by the moderator in the meeting, so that there will be an accurate record.
6. Questions of clarification of the content of a Proposal or of the procedures may be raised by any delegate from the yellow microphone. Questions will be heard, addressed, and decided by the Moderator.  
In virtual space, those with questions of clarification will indicate their desire in a text chat to the meeting host who will identify, in order received, their request to the moderator.
7. Position Statements require a 2/3 majority of votes cast to pass; Administrative Actions are passed by a simple majority of votes cast.
8. Regarding abstentions: To abstain means to refrain from voting. An abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote. Abstentions have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the vote since what is required to pass resolutions is either a majority or two thirds of the votes cast.

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9. Votes on all Position Statements and Administrative Actions will be reported in the minutes and other accounts of the meeting by numerical or majority results. Discussion and referrals related to Issues of Concern will be reported in the minutes.
10. If anyone in attendance wishes to distribute material to all present, she/he should (1) sign the material or otherwise note who is distributing it, and (2) submit the material to the FMBC at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting for approval before distribution. (Any Conference Staff or Officers can direct you to a member of the FMBC.)
11. The Moderator may be guided by general principles of Robert's Rules of Order, where these rules are silent. At his/her discretion, the Moderator may invoke strict Robert's Rules of Order as the governing Rules for the Annual Meeting at any time.

**G. Annual Meeting – Presentation and Discussion of Administrative Actions and Position Statements:**

1. Moderator introduces the Proposal to be considered, notes how much time is allotted for the presentation, and introduces the Presenter.
2. The Presenter(s) make(s) presentation introducing and explaining the Proposal.
3. The Moderator announces that questions for clarification may be asked by the delegates and reminds the delegates of how much time is allotted for questions and responses.
4. Delegates ask questions from any floor microphone. Presenter(s) respond(s) to questions.  
In a virtual space, delegates will indicate their desire to ask a question to the meeting host who will indicate their desire in a text chat to the meeting host who will identify, in order received, their request to the moderator.
5. The Moderator announces that discussion will begin, reminds the delegates of how much time has been allotted for discussion, and calls upon Speakers.

Each Speaker is allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes to speak. Those who wish to speak in support of the proposed Administrative Action or Position Statement go to the green microphone; those who wish to voice concerns regarding the proposed Administrative Action or Position Statement go to the red microphone; those who have questions go to the yellow microphone.

In virtual space, those who wish to speak on a proposal will indicate their desire to voice support, opposition, or ask a question in text chat to the meeting host who will identify, in the order received, their request to the moderator.

6. Amendment: Any voting delegate may offer a Motion to Amend the Proposal on the floor without need of a Second. Amendments will be considered on a first voiced, first

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considered basis. Amendments may be voiced from any microphone in the meeting room. Amendments must also be presented in Writing to the scribe. If the Presenter of the Proposal accepts the Amendment as “friendly,” the Amendment is adopted and discussion returns to the Proposal as amended. If the Presenter of the Proposal does not accept the Amendment as “friendly,” it is discussed in the same format as Section 5, above, and when the Moderator ends discussion on the Motion to Amend, a vote is taken. A simple majority of vote cast is needed to adopt an Amendment. After the vote, discussion returns to the Proposal.

In virtual space, any delegate can offer to make an amendment to a proposal to the host who will identify, in the order received, their request to the moderator.

7. Vote on the Proposal: When time for discussion has expired, the Moderator calls for a vote (see also, § F.6.).

**H. Annual Meeting – Presentation and Discussion of Issues of Concern:**

1. Moderator introduces the Issue of Concern to be considered, notes how much time is allotted for the presentation, and introduces the Presenter.

2. The Presenter(s) make(s) presentation explaining the Issue of Concern.

3. The Moderator announces that questions for clarification may be asked by the delegates and reminds the delegates of how much time is allotted for questions and responses.

4. Delegates ask questions from any floor microphone. Presenter(s) respond(s) to questions.

In virtual space, any delegate can submit a question to the host who will identify, in the order received, their request to the moderator.

5. The Issues of Concern are referred to the appropriate body of the Conference, along with the notes from the discussion at the Discernment Sessions and in the Annual Meeting.