



Committee/Hearing Process Handbook  
SWC Annual Meeting  
2021

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## **I. Resolution Committee Chair Responsibilities**

1. Be accountable to the SWC Conference Minister and Executive Board.
2. Attend the training session prior to the opening of Annual Meeting.
3. Learn procedures for your Committee and its role within the context of the Annual Meeting.
4. Model graciousness, flexibility, adaptability
5. Remain dispassionate about the topic of the resolutions assigned to the committee in order to be passionate and committed to a healthy process
6. Commit to listening for a variety of perspectives
7. Help the committee discern God's will for it and for us on this important topic
8. Appoint recorders and other assistants (time keepers, worship/song leaders, etc.) as needed for your Committee and be certain they have appropriate information.
9. Moderate and guide the Committee in working with all business referred to it. This includes creating an agenda, facilitating a fair and open communication process, invoking a spirit of discernment, and developing recommendations for consideration by the Annual Meeting.
10. Be responsible for complete reports to the Annual Meeting on the material referred to the Committee. You will have a Technical Support Volunteer (TSV) to help you.
11. Prepare and share with Conference Minister and Moderator a report of your Committee's work and recommended actions along with the needed forms and documents in a timely fashion.
12. Check-in with Moderator at the beginning of the business session in which your Committee report is scheduled to be given.
13. Present the committee report to the floor of the Annual Meeting. Answer questions related to the Committee Process that may be raised from the floor while your business item is being deliberated.
14. Attend debriefing and evaluation session.

## II. Other Persons Related to the Committee Process

### Delegates

Delegates are chosen by the SWC congregations and authorized ministers holding standing in the SWC, and the members of the SWC Executive Board. Delegates are assigned randomly to Committees. Delegates assigned to a given Committee/Hearing have full privileges at all times in the Committee/Hearing to which they are assigned and in plenary.

### Moderator

The Moderator, **Rev. Rock Fremont** or the Incoming Moderator, **the Rev. Sarah TevisTownes** will preside over all sessions of official business.

### Parliamentarians

Assisting the moderator will be Annual Meeting staff and the parliamentarian, **Mr. Brendan Mahoney, Esquire**. The parliamentarian provides assistance to moderator and when asked to do so, to the delegates if they need assistance in offering a motion.

**Executive Board** acts for the Annual Meeting at all times when Annual Meeting itself is not in session (SWC Bylaw lines 483-488). During the Annual Meeting, the Executive Board recommends how to handle the material introduced to Annual Meeting. They may propose assignment to a Standing Committee, directly to a plenary, or referral to the Executive Board.

### Proponents

Proponents are people representing the source of the particular item to be considered by a Committee. They have a right to speak when the Committee is in a committee forum/hearing mode. They may speak during the deliberation mode only if called upon specifically by the Chair.

### Recorders / Timekeepers

The Committee/Hearing Chair may choose Recorders and Timekeepers, who must be full Delegate members of the Committee. Recorders keep track of the deliberations of the Committee, note changes in items of business, and work with the Chair in directing the Technical Support Volunteer (TSV), who documents these changes.

### Technical Support Volunteers

The Technical Support Volunteer (TSV) serves the Committee at the direction of the Chair. The TSV offers word processing services to prepare the final approved text(s) of business for recommendation to plenary. The TSV (who is usually not a delegate) may help the Committee keep track of its work by reading or projecting updated business aloud to the Committee as requested.

The TSV stays with the Chair and Recorder until all work is complete. SWC staff will send all work products of Committees/Hearings to delegates prior to the business session in which they are considered.

### III. Procedures for Committee Meetings/Hearing

Committees meet Friday, April 23, 2021, 1:00 pm - 1:45 pm AZ / 2:00 pm - 2:45 pm NM if needed.

#### A. Purpose

1. To provide a forum for full expression and hearing of diverse points of view.
2. To receive and consider additional information presented.
3. To deliberate a recommendation to present to the Annual Meeting in plenary.

#### B. Participants

1. The Chair of the Committee will preside.
2. The Committee will be composed of Annual Meeting delegates (randomly assigned).
3. The Chair may appoint a recorder, a timekeeper, prayer leader, listener/process observer, or other assistants from among the Committee members.
4. Proponents.
5. A liaison from the SWC Executive Board will be assigned to the Committee.
6. The Committee will a Technical Support Volunteer (TSV) for edits to the resolution.

#### C. Agenda

Committee Chairs may wish to provide an agenda (sample below) and a list of business. The agenda may be posted in chat.

Greetings and Welcome

Prayer (at the beginning and end of Committee meetings)

Community Building (Section 7, Section C)

Introduction of the topic

Orientation to the Committee process

Organization of the work of the Committee

Presentations by the Proponent (representative of the submitting congregation, standing committee, or responsible Executive Board member)

Committee Forum/Hearing mode: a time to surface the diversity of responses to the resolution

Deliberation: dialogue, discernment, decision

Preparing a recommendation for the Annual Meeting

Prayer

Thanks and recess / adjournment

#### D. Procedure

1. The Chair will convene the meeting, appoint the recorder, clarify the role of participants, the purpose of the meeting, and the procedure. No rigid timeline is suggested for the Committee process, except that the work must be done within the time allotted. The Chair should work with the Committee to develop an appropriate schedule.
2. There will be a period of prayer.
3. The Chair may choose to do a short community building exercise. (Section 7, Section C)
4. The Chair will review the business item(s) referred to the Committee, and help the Committee find a copy of the assigned business items.
5. The Chair may choose to appoint a time keeper to help track time.
6. A brief presentation (maximum five minutes) of the business item will be made by a proponent of those proposing the business. If the proponent is not present, the Committee may move to

the Forum/Hearing mode.

*E. Committee Forum/Hearing Mode Portion*

1. The Chair will clarify the purpose and procedure for the Committee Forum/Hearing Mode portion of the meeting: this is the time to hear a diversity of responses to the concern at hand. People should speak briefly and to the point. Questions of clarification to the proponent may be considered. All delegates (even those not members of the committee) may be given the opportunity to speak. Questions may be addressed to anyone who might bring clarity to the matter at hand.
2. The Chair will invite individuals in turn to speak to the matter. The Chair should be careful to recognize those with various points of view, and alternate presentations of those with divergent viewpoints.
3. Committee members may ask questions of clarification or for additional information following each presentation.
4. Hearing mode tools may be used such as
  - appointing a reflective listener
  - using quiet grounding prayer
  - recording ideas for further deliberation
  - paying attention to repeated ideas and to what is missing.
5. The Chair will bring the Committee /Hearing mode to a close.

*F. Deliberation:*

1. The chair will clarify the purpose and procedure for the deliberation portion of the meeting: to deliberate with the end of making a recommendation to the Annual Meeting in plenary regarding the resolution(s) before the committee.
2. The Chair (or someone else designated) may lead the Committee in prayer.
3. The Committee will address the question, “Therefore, what shall we recommend to the Annual Meeting in plenary on this matter before us?” The Committee/Hearing may choose from the following options:
  - Approve as submitted
  - Approve as amended by committee
  - Approve one resolution consolidating multiple resolutions sent to the committee
  - Reject
  - Approve substitute motion as crafted by committee
  - No action (see Conference Minister and Moderator before proceeding)
4. Using a process of consensus or standard parliamentary procedure, at the discretion of the Chair, the Committee will move to a recommendation to the Annual Meeting.
5. The Committee must begin with the original text of the business referred as the main motion and starting point.
6. Tools for deliberation might include:
  - a “straw vote” or show of hands
  - using spectrums
  - asking “what would help you move towards the emerging consensus”
  - clarify places of objection
  - times of prayer or silence
  - appointing a writing team
  - breaking into small groups for more engaged discussion and deliberation
  - See Section VII, D: Toolkit for Consensus Building

7. Delegates may address specific requests for information to the Chair, who in turn may refer the question to an appropriate person (the Proponent, for example).
8. The Committee will develop its recommendation to the Annual Meeting.
9. When the work draws to a close, the chair should thank all participants and close the meeting with prayer.

*G. Deliberation draws to a close*

1. The Chair will inform the Committee about the procedure for reports during the plenary session. Each Committee will report in an order determined by the Business Agenda. Most Committees are allotted 5-10 minutes for presentation, debate and action.
2. If more than one item is assigned to a Committee, the Agenda Committee will determine the order in which the items are reported to the Annual Meeting plenary.
3. When the work draws to a close, the chair should thank all participants and close the meeting with prayer.

*H. The result of the deliberation*

1. All items referred to the Committee must be accounted for by some action recommended to the Annual Meeting.
2. At Plenary, the Committee will move the adoption of the business item being considered (which simply means the Annual Meeting may discuss it at Plenary).
3. The Committee may then recommend action:
  - Approve as submitted
  - Approve as amended by committee
  - Approve one resolution consolidating multiple resolutions sent to the committee
  - Reject
  - Approve substitute motion as crafted by committee
  - No action (see CPT before proceeding)
4. If the committee should like to recommend no action, a parliamentarian and the moderator must be consulted. There slight differences of opinion about how this is handled from a parliamentary point of view. The parliamentarian and moderators are there to help the committee reach desired outcomes within parliamentary procedure.
5. If any Committee member wishes to pursue a minority resolution, the Chair, in consultation with the parliamentarian, shall provide information about the procedure and notify the Conference Minister. An information sheet may be found in the back of this Committee Process Handbook, See Appendix 11. (Note: Minority resolutions are proposed based on actions of the **Annual Meeting**, not as a minority report from the Committee.)

## **IV. Preparing Committee Recommendations for Presentation**

The Committee Chair ensures the Committee's work is recorded and processed to be forwarded to a plenary session. There are a number of persons who support you in this role: The Committee's Recorder; the TSV; the Conference Office Staff.

When your Committee has finished its work:

- A. Send your materials to the Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister. Working with your Recorder, TSV and Executive Board Liaison check the resolution document for final changes from the

Committee.

- B. Proofread the material ***carefully***.
- C. Prepare a script of your presentation—the talk that you will give to the Annual Meeting in Plenary. There are two parts to the script:
  1. The first part is a brief report from the committee (2-3 minutes). This is where you speak to the process. The script can follow this general pattern:
    - Brief self-introduction
    - Orient delegates to the business at hand, and where it can be found
    - Describe the work of the committee (in spirit)
    - Describe the changes to the resolution developed in Committee. (What comes out of your committee IS now the motion, but delegates need to be brought up to speed. Be prepared to talk them through the changes.)
    - Be sure you can delineate line number changes if there are any.
    - Make a motion (generally, this will be “On behalf of Committee # \_\_\_\_, I move that the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference adopts the Resolution ... )
  2. The Moderator will accept the motion and ask you if you’d like to speak to it. This is the second part of the script for you to prepare: where you advocate on behalf of the committee for the action the committee is recommending. This is where you speak to the substance of the resolution. For this, you have a maximum of 3 minutes.

## **V. Reporting to the Annual Meeting Plenary**

- A. The Executive Board will determine the exact order in which the Committees will report, with the consent of the Annual Meeting. Committee reports begin Saturday morning and continue through the remainder of the Annual Meeting.
- B. The agenda allots most Committees 5-10 minutes for presentation, debate and action.
- C. Materials for plenary sessions—if there are any-- will be distributed by the Conference staff.
- D. A preliminary and changeable schedule of reports will be posted on the Annual Meeting website.
- E. Be in touch with the Moderator, Conference Minister, and/or parliamentarian any time you have questions.
- F. Please be in the zoom meeting at least fifteen minutes before you are scheduled to make your report and be ready to open your microphone when called upon by the Moderator.
- G. If more than the allotted time is used for a committee report, the moderator may call the order of the day and move on to the next committee report. However, there is a provision which allows for a delegate to move to extend debate. That motion, itself, cannot be debated and requires a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> margin for adoption. Committees with unfinished business items might then be called back later if there is time. Any items not dealt with during the Annual Meeting are referred to the Executive Board, which will convene as the Annual Meeting *ad interim* to address the items.

## **VI. A Word about the Media**

You’ve been asked to do a big job. It is our suggestion that you not complicate your work or your role as facilitator of what we hope is a fair and faithful process by unintentionally becoming the “spokesperson”



for the committee process outside of your role.

Conference policy gives the media appropriate access to our proceedings. In the unlikely event that they contact you or members of your committee, you may simply say: I have nothing to report to the media. You may refer them to the SWC Conference Minsiter.

## **VII. Resources**

### ***A. Decision Making & the Committee Process for Annual Meeting***

One of the things delegates can count on at this upcoming Annual Meeting is that they will be asked to consider and make decisions on a number of matters including resolutions, a budget for the SWC, and the election of standing committee members. Delegates will deal with these and other matters and will be guided in their deliberations by the SWC Bylaws, the Standing Rules, and Robert's Rules of Order.

As you prepare for Annual Meeting let us remember who we are and reflect upon why we are gathering. We gather as the Church and as part of the Church to enable the mission of the Church—God's mission. Hence, the decision making is not so much a matter of making up your own minds, but rather that of seeking to discern God's yearning for us and for the mission to which God is calling us. Prepare yourselves to gather as a community of faith, as children of God, as siblings in Christ Jesus, whose aim in decision making is discernment.

### ***B. Work of Committees/Hearings***

The Annual Meeting Committee Process first begins with Educational Intensives (EI) which is the first official business of delegates. Educational Intensives offer a non-biased overview of a particular piece of business that will come before delegates to consider Sunday morning during Committee Process. The committees provide an opportunity for delegates to more fully consider and faithfully reflect upon resolutions than is usually possible for the whole body. The process offers space and time for diverse points of view to be heard and honored.

To consider the business of Annual Meeting delegates will be assigned randomly to committees ensuring a diverse mix of thoughts and perspectives represented in the full Annual Meeting. The committees will deliberate on the matters that have been referred to committee by the Executive Board. Delegates who have agreed to chair a committee will attend a training session before the Annual Meeting convenes that will provide them with the resources necessary to facilitate the work of the committees.

After a period of deliberation each committee will report out its recommendations to the Annual Meeting in a plenary session and suggest a specific action in the form of a main motion. A committee may recommend approval, amendment, consolidation, referral, or no action.

### ***C. Community Building***

Community building may be led by the Committee Chair in a format similar to one of these:

Send the committee into breakout rooms on the meeting platform. Take 1 minute each to share names, where you're from (church and state) and something about your local church:

- what was the most challenging decision your local church has made in the last five years? How did that play out? OR
- your expectations of Annual Meeting, OR
- a program or activity that energizes you, OR...

### ***D. Toolkit for consensus building***

- Appoint a “deep listener” or “spirit listener.” Stop occasionally and have that person summarize what they are hearing in the conversation.
- Use a show of hands (non-binding). “How many people are moving toward this?”
- Use a spectrum. (It gets people moving which is good too!) Define a spectrum line on the floor with the distinct different positions at the ends. Ask people to place themselves along the spectrum, and then ask a few people along the line to comment. May also ask, “What would help you move further down the line this way?”
- Stop and be silent, welcoming the Spirit and being aware of its presence. Especially effective at moments that get heated. (Also effective when you as facilitator need a small break).
- Listen reflectively. “Am I hearing this?” People will shake their heads, and others will usually let you know if you are hearing it incorrectly.
- Vote a scale, 1 to 4. I am totally for, somewhat for, somewhat against, totally against. People can use fingers to indicate, or again, you have people group themselves.
- Sing a simple Song. (Examples: “This Little Light of Mine” or “Jesus Loves Me” or Be Thou My Vision.” For a moment, everybody will be doing the same thing!
- Clarify points of disagreement. Ironically sometimes that clarity will help you form a better decision, or may simply clarify that certain people will not, can not join the emerging consensus.
- If someone is disruptive: chair raises hand and invites others to do likewise. If it continues, chair claps once and invites everyone to do likewise.
- Use a set of quick small groups: Form groups of 4. Name 3 important points we want to get accomplished. Now form different sets of groups of 4. Name 3 important points we want to accomplish. Do it one more time. Debrief in the larger group.
- Fly airplanes. Have people put suggestions for committee conversation on pieces of paper, --fold them into airplanes. Fly them around two or three times. Open random ones and take turns reading them. As a reader, your job is to find the value in the idea first. Only afterwards can you comment on a concern.
- Appoint a writing team. Let them get stuff on paper, then come back and have the larger group reflect, respond to it.
- Take 5 minutes to talk in “we” form. People will be invited to speak, but must attempt to speak from what they hear as the emerging “we” perspective (i.e. I think I hear us as being really very concerned about this, even while acknowledging that. It sounds like we have a lot of agreement on

this). After that time is up, ask people to comment in a word or phrase about what perspectives and concerns might have been left out in the “we.”

- Acknowledge feelings. It is important for people to be heard and for their feeling to be recognized.
- Be pastoral to the whole. This is hard work. Thank them for sticking with it.

## ***E. Parliamentary Guide***

Debate: Mover – 3 minutes plus can use 2 minutes more for summary/close of debate  
Other speakers – 3 minutes total

Motions from floor: Must present in writing to scribe at time of making motion

**Main Motion** *Debate - Yes Amend - Yes Vote – Majority*

**Amendment** *Debate - Yes Amend - Yes Vote – Majority*

- “Friendly” = short & simple, acceptable to Mover and only before the motion is seconded, not voted
- After a motion is seconded, all changes must be made with a motion to amend.
- “Substitute entire new motion” – tricky: original and substitute debated

**Postpone to Certain Time** *Debate - Yes Amend - Yes Vote – Majority*

- Amendable as to time to which to postpone
- If passed, item postponed follows scheduled business at new time. To make it a “Special Order” to precede schedule business at new time requires 2/3 vote.

**Terminate Debate/Call the Question** *Debate - No Amend - No Vote – 2/3*

- May not be made at conclusion of speech addressing pending motion
- An individual “call for the question” does not end debate. Chair will ask if intent is to terminate and, if so, ask for second and treat as a motion.

**Call for Orders of the Day** *Debate - No Amend - No Vote – None*

- Not seconded, not voted. Single voice is sufficient to require return to order of the day.
- Chair may call for vote; 2/3 negative overrides order of the day and extends debate
- May interrupt speaker, but pending question may be voted on without further debate; effective immediately if past-due business is a Special Order (see “Postpone to Certain Time”)

**Raise a Question of Privilege** *Debate - No Vote – Chair rules*

- Not debated, not voted – Chair rules
- Examples: comfort (sound, ventilation, etc.); go to exec session
- Chair rules; may put to vote (majority) if he/she wishes

**Recess** *Debate - No Amend - Yes Vote – Majority*

- Means a brief recess to begin immediately, even while another motion is pending
- Amendable as to length of recess; amendment is not debatable

**Point of Order** *Debate - No Amend - No Vote – Chair rules*

- Chair rules. May put to vote if he/she desires, but it then becomes debatable.
- May interrupt speaker

**Suspend the Rules** *Debate - No Amend - No Vote – 2/3*

- Applies to Agenda, Standing Rules or normal procedure
- Certain rules may be changed for single instance by majority vote

**Division of the House** *Debate - No Amend - No Vote – Majority*

Means a counted vote; may be ordered by Chair or by majority vote

## ***F. Denomination Lexicon for the United Church of Christ***

### **VERBS IN COMMON USE IN THE UCC (SELECTED DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS)**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| To Collaborate | To labor as the associate of another; performing work together.                                    |
| To Consult     | To ask advice or opinion as a guide to one's own judgement.  |
| To Cooperate   | To work with mutual efforts to promote the objective.  |
| To Coordinate  | To bring entities into casual, complementary, parallel, or reciprocal relationships; to harmonize. |
| To Negotiate   | To confer regarding a basis of agreement; to arrange for.  |

### **ORGANIZATIONAL TERMS**

**ADVISORY COMMISSION**—A temporary body appointed by the United Church of Christ Board

**AFFILIATED MINISTRY**—A non-profit corporation which provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, whose Board of Trustees is elected by its corporate membership, and which was recognized previously as an instrumentality by the General Synod. The Pension Boards are an Affiliated Ministry.

**ASSOCIATED MINISTRY**—A non-profit corporation which provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, whose corporate membership is nominated and elected by the United Church of Christ Board, and which was recognized previously as an instrumentality by the General Synod. The United Church Foundation is an Associated Ministry.

**ASSOCIATION**—That body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all local churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers of that Association, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in that Association.

**BIENNIUM**—For matters related to budgeting and programming, a biennium is the two-year period following January 1 of the year after a General Synod adjourns; for matters related to responsibility of United Church of Christ Board of Directors and others elected by General Synod, a biennium is the two-year period from General Synod to General Synod.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**—The policy making body of a Covenanted or Associated Ministry.

**BODY**—Any organized body at the national level of the United Church of Christ. The word "body" (always written with a small "b") is used in the United Church of Christ as a generic term—not in a legal meaning unless so indicated by its context. The expression "body of the United Church of Christ" refers to all organized national bodies—whether or not in the Constitution or Bylaws—whether programmatic or advisory or policy making—whether permanent or temporary—whether large or small.

**CAUCUS**—A meeting of any group often convened with the intention of influencing policy decisions of a larger, more powerful body. A caucus is an informal group called at any time as respective members of that group strategizes on a particular issue.

**CONFERENCE**—That body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all local churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers in its Associations, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in its Associations.

**COUNCIL**—A body created by the General Synod for the principal purpose of advising the Officers or the UCC Board or other bodies of the Church. A Council's areas of concern are related to those of persons with like concerns who normally compose such Councils.

**COVENANTED MINISTRY**—There are three covenanted ministries as defined and set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws, whose purpose is to capture the spirit as well as the substance of the relationships among the parts of the United Church of Christ in its national expression.

**INTER-MINISTRY TEAM**—Consists of people from different Covenanted, Affiliated, Associated, and/or other Ministries who meet together to address a topic of common concern.

**GENERAL SYNOD**—The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ composed of delegates chosen by the Conferences, voting members of Board of Directors of Covenanted Ministry, and ex officio delegates.

**LOCAL CHURCH**—The basic unit of the life and organization of The United Church of Christ is the local church.

**MINISTRY TEAM**—Consists of staff persons with related program responsibilities within a Covenanted Ministry, generally led by a Team Leader.

**MISSION PLANNING COUNCIL**—Provides a multi-missional setting bringing together the Officers of the United Church of Christ and principle staff, leaders, or designated representatives of the Covenanted, Associated, and Affiliated Ministries for planning coordinated ministries and for visioning over a wide range of concerns.

**SPECIAL GROUP**—Any group of persons who represent a constituency with a particular concern or specialized interest. There may or may not be formal organizational ties. In order to be granted voice without vote by General Synod, a group must meet the criteria set forth by the standing rules.

**TASK FORCE**—A body named by the General Synod or the UCC Board or anybody to perform a single precisely-defined undertaking within a given time.

#### **COMMONLY USED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ABBREVIATIONS**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AUCE    | Association of United Church Educators                          |
| CAIM    | Council for American Indian Ministry                            |
| CCM     | Council of Conference Ministers                                 |
| CHE     | Council for Higher Education                                    |
| CHSM    | Council for Health and Human Service Ministries                 |
| CHM     | Council for Hispanic Ministries                                 |
| CJA     | Christians for Justice Action                                   |
| COREM   | Council for Racial Ethnic Ministries                            |
| CYYAM   | Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministry                      |
| EI      | Educational Intensives  |
| GS      | General Synod   |
| JLCM    | Justice and Local Church Ministries                             |
| HC      | Historical Council  |
| HUGS    | Historically Under Represented Groups                           |
| MRSEJ   | Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice               |
| NIN     | Neighbors in Need   |
| OGMP    | Office of the General Minister and President                    |
| OPTIC   | Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communications |
| OGHS    | One Great Hour of Sharing                                       |
| PAAM    | Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministry                    |
| PB      | Pension Boards – United Church of Christ                        |
| UBC     | United Black Christians   |
| UCAN    | United Church of Christ HIV & AIDS Network                      |
| UCCB    | United Church of Christ Board                                   |
| UCCDM   | United Church of Christ Disability Ministries                   |
| UCCOSSN | United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network            |

UCF  
WCM

United Church Funds  
Wider Church Ministries



## ***G. Some Useful Verbs for Wording Motions***

I move that the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference . . .

receives and affirms the statement on . . .

declares . . .

calls upon. . .

calls upon the President of the United States . . .

urges advocacy . . .

urges conferences, associations, and local churches . . .

requests . . .

supports continued protection . . .

invites the UCC Pension Boards . . .

recommends . . .

requests the Executive Board . . .

commends the action of . . .

celebrates its global partnership . . .

affirms Wider Church Ministries . . .

recognizes a growing relationship . . .

gratefully acknowledges . . .

reaffirms its support . . .

directs the United Church Board . . .

Verbs which call on various parts of the United Church of Christ must reflect our polity. For example, **Affiliated Ministry** (The Pension Boards) and **Associated Ministry** (The United Church Foundation) may be *requested*, or *urged*, but never *directed*. **Conferences, Associations and Local Churches** may be *called upon*, *urged*, or *requested*, but never *directed*. Annual Meeting may *direct* the SWC Executive Board (which may in turn delegate to standing committees and/or staff).

## VIII. Plenary Presentation Info

### A. *Formal Motions and Presentations to the Annual Meeting*

**Procedures** are described in the Standing Rules.

**Proposed Pronouncement:** A Pronouncement is a statement of Christian conviction on a matter of moral or social principle and has been adopted by the Annual Meeting. It is based on biblical theological and ethical grounds. Until adopted, the statement presented for consideration by a Annual Meeting is a Proposed Pronouncement. Proposals for Action shall not be included in Proposed Pronouncements.

**Proposal for Action:** A Proposal for Action is a recommendation for specific directional statements and goals implementing a Pronouncement.

#### **Resolutions and Other Formal Motions:**

1. **Resolution of Witness:** A Resolution of Witness is an expression of the Annual Meeting concerning a moral, ethical or religious matter confronting the Church, the nation, or the world, adopted for the guidance of the Southwest Conference Executive Board, staff, Officers, Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministries or other bodies as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; the consideration of local churches; and for a Christian witness to the world. The text of the proposed resolution should be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.
2. **Prudential Resolutions:** A Prudential Resolution establishes Southwest Conference policy, institutes or revises structure or procedures, authorizes programs, approves directions or requests actions by majority vote.
3. **Other Formal Motions** include actions other than those provided for above by majority vote. (For example, reports recommending actions.)

Copies of each Resolution or Other Formal Motion and the recommendation pertaining to it **must be distributed to Delegates before action can be taken.**

### B. *Notes from the Parliamentarian (regarding the content of the Committee's report)*

The normal Annual Meeting process is to refer an **issue** to a Committee (consisting of one proposal or several related ones) which has been **introduced** but not yet **moved and debated**. When the Committee makes its report, it presents one or more new Main Motions dealing with that issue, and each motion in turn is debated and acted upon. Thus the Committee report might include the following:

- The presenter may make a brief statement about how the Committee went about its work.
- The presenter moves the adoption of the item of business. No second is necessary since the action comes from a Committee. **All Motions must be framed in the positive, as, I move the adoption of . . ., even if the Committee intends to recommend defeat of the motion.**

To recommend the *defeat* of an item of business, the presenter must move the adoption and then recommend the Annual Meeting vote no. For example, *Committee 32 moves the adoption of business*

*item X. We recommend you defeat X by voting no.*

- The presenter may then speak to the motion for a maximum of three minutes.
- Delegate deliberation and action proceeds. The chair remains at the podium until after the vote and until dismissed with thanks by the Moderator
- If the committee has an additional item of business scheduled for immediately following the preceding, the Moderator will invite the chair to continue, repeating the steps above.

(Note: A Proposal for Action should always be presented as a separate motion, following the adoption of the Pronouncement which it implements.)

**The Committee's responsibility:** Under the Standing Rules, the issues which the Conference has assigned to Committees are presumably those it **wishes** to debate in plenary. The Committee, therefore, as a servant of the Annual Meeting, has a certain obligation to move and make a recommendation on each issue assigned to it. Neither a Committee nor the Annual Meeting may refer the issue to the next Annual Meeting.

**Some suggestions for format:**

*Therefore* and motion paragraphs should include The 2021 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference (singular verb) . . . The name of the proposer should be removed from the Other Formal Motion and replaced by the Annual Meeting.

*Therefore* does not have to be repeated every sentence.

Verbs which call on various parts of the United Church of Christ must reflect our polity. For example, Local Churches, other Conferences, and Associations, the National Setting, UCC Board, and General Synod may be *called upon, urged, or requested*, but never *directed*. The SWC Annual Meeting may direct the SWC Executive Board who in turn may delegate to Standing Committees and or staff.

Any piece of business with financial implications must contain the statement, ***Funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.*** There is no financial guarantee of any kind other than the annual budget determined by the Executive Board and adopted by the Annual Meeting.

Actions recommended by the Annual Meeting should set directions or goals; strategy and program should be left to the bodies being asked to implement the action. Reports are **received** and recommendations are **adopted**.

## **IX. Special Circumstances**

### **A. Amending an Amendment**

In short, only one Amendment to an Amendment is allowed at one time.

So if after debate, a voting delegate rises to make an Amendment, if that amendment is seconded, debate begins on the amendment. The amendment is then debated and voted like the main motion. If the amendment passes, debate begins on the motion as amended. If, during the debate of an amendment (before it is voted on), someone makes a motion to Amend the Amendment, this is allowed

once. If seconded, debate begins on the amendment to the amendment. After debate, the amendment to the amendment is voted. If the amendment to the amendment is voted and passes, discussion returns to the full amendment (as modified by the second amendment). If that "full amendment" is voted on and passes, then a final vote is taken, on the motion as fully amended by the first and second amendment.

### **Robert's Rules for Amending a Motion**

#### **By C. Alan Jennings, PRP from Robert's Rules for Dummies**

The motion to amend is perhaps the single most-used of the subsidiary motions allowed by Robert's Rules. You use this motion when you want to change the wording of the motion under consideration. You can use it to make a good idea better or a bad idea more palatable. Amendments are really at the heart of the process of perfecting motions before a final vote, and the importance of understanding the basics of amending can't be overstated.

If an amendment is adopted, the motion it's applied to changes. However, the amended motion itself is not adopted until the motion, as amended, is voted on and passes. If a motion to amend fails, the original motion is not changed in any way.

In making a motion to amend, be aware of its key characteristics; the motion

- Can't interrupt a speaker who has the floor.
- Must be seconded.
- Is debatable if the motion to which it is applied is debatable. (Permissible debate is restricted to the pros and cons of the amendment, and not to whether the main motion has merit.)
- Can be amended, but only one amendment to an amendment can be considered at any one time.
- Requires a majority vote for adoption, even if the main motion requires a different vote for its adoption.
- Can be reconsidered.

One big rule for using amendments is this: An amendment must be relevant (or, as Robert's Rules describes, "germane") to the motion it seeks to amend. Another important rule to remember is that **an amendment that does nothing but make the motion a rejection of the original motion is not proper and not in order.**

Amendments enable you to affect changes to pending questions in the following four ways:

- By inserting (or adding, if placing at the end) words, sentences, or paragraphs
- By striking out words, sentences, or paragraphs
- By striking out and inserting words (with the words inserted replacing the words struck out)
- By amending by substitution (a form of strike out and insert applied to paragraphs or entire motions)

For example, suppose an amendment is offered to insert words to a motion. It only complicates your life to try to amend the amendment into a motion to strike out words. If you're in a situation where that seems like the thing to do, encourage the group to defeat the first amendment (to insert words) and consider another amendment to accomplish the desired result.

## ***B. Process for a Committee to Offer a Substitute Resolution***

## ***Altering the Intent of the Original Resolution***

It is possible that a Committee may determine that it wants to amend a resolution in such a way that it may alter the substance or the intent of the original resolution.

After careful deliberation and discernment, the Committee may vote that the current, original language of the resolution is not acceptable. It may choose either:

- Take the resolution in its original form to the plenary and recommend either “no action” or “defeat.”
- Create a substitute resolution that would be offered in place of the original resolution. The committee would work through a deliberative process to create the substitute resolution, and follow the standing committee guidelines in terms of copies and distribution.

During the report of the committee, the chair would explain the process through which the committee came to the decision to submit a substitute, and would then ask that the body accept the substitute motion for deliberation.

The Chair would then ask the body if it is willing to accept the substitute resolution. As the request comes from a committee, it does not need a second. It is, however, debatable. It requires a majority vote.

If the body accepts the substitute, it becomes the main motion, and debate begins.

If the body does not accept the substitute resolution, then the original resolution is presented to the body with a recommendation from the committee do defeat.

### **Draft Plenary Script to Offer Substitute Resolution**

*Committee 9-b: Reaffirming our commitment to full equality for persons of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.*

***Ruth:***

*Good morning. My name is Ruth Bradshaw and I am a delegate from the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. Committee 9 received the resolution “Reaffirming Our Commitment to Full Equality for LGBT Persons”. The committee enthusiastically supported the spirit of this resolution. However, the committee felt that “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender” or LGBT was not sufficiently inclusive of all God’s people. Therefore, the committee wished to replace LGBT with the phrase “persons of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.” This wording was suggested by Andy Lang from the Open and Affirming Coalition. Because this change involves the entire resolution and not just the “therefore” section, the committee wishes to offer a substitute resolution. Please find this resolution in your Packet B, beginning on Line 2242. You can note the changes from the original resolution.*

*Moderator, on behalf of Committee 9, I move that the Thirtieth General Synod consider the substitute resolution, titled “Reaffirming Our Commitment to Persons of Any Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Sexual Expression,” rather than the resolution originally submitted.*

***Moderator:***

*In order for this body to consider a substitute resolution, the body must agree to accept the substitute resolution for deliberation.*

*The question before us is: do you agree to consider the substitute resolution rather than the original resolution? This vote takes a majority vote and is debatable. If passed, the substitute resolution would be the one on the floor and would then be the resolution considered. If this motion fails, the original resolution will still be the one on the floor.*

*Are you ready to vote?*

*1: yes, I accept the substitute resolution as the one to consider*

*2: no, I do not accept the substitute resolution as the one to consider*

*3: abstain.*

*(Moderator announce vote)*

*(If the vote passes): **Moderator:** "Would you like to speak to the resolution now on the floor?"*

*(If the vote fails):*

- ***Ruth:** Moderator, I move that General Synod 30 adopts the resolution titled "Reaffirming Our Commitment to Full Equality for LGBT Persons"*
- ***Moderator:** This motion no longer comes from a committee so it needs a second. Is there a second?*

*(To Ruth): Would you like to speak to the resolution?*

***Ruth** (speaking to the substitute resolution, now the resolution on the floor):*

*The United Church of Christ and its predecessors have a long history of supporting individual conscience and religious freedom. This resolution reaffirms the right of churches and faith groups to practice their beliefs. At the same time, in the realm of public commerce and civic life the United Church of Christ strongly supports equal rights and protections for all people. Since late 2014, a growing number of state legislatures have considered laws that would establish a broad religious exemption that would allow businesses or even government officials to deny services to persons of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This resolution urges all settings of the United Church of Christ to advocate against such legislation and to work toward full civil rights for persons of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.*

## **X. Procedures/Parameters for Others in the Process**

### **A. Parameters for Resolution Proponents**

Thank you for agreeing to be the proponent of a resolution that the Annual Meeting will consider. Our goal is to help the committee and the delegates understand the issues raised in the resolution, and to discern God's call for how to respond. You will be a part of that process, as will others. The committee chair will have your name and contact information. If you want to bring someone else with you, please be sure they know, and let me know. Delegates are expected to go to their assigned committees, so unless you have a particular need for someone else, the expectation is that you will be the one to articulate the history and passion behind the resolution.

Here is how we inform the committee chair of your role:

#### **Proponents**

*Proponents are people representing the source of the particular item to be considered by a Committee.*

*They have a right to speak when the Committee is in a committee forum/hearing mode. They may speak during the deliberation mode only if called upon specifically by the Chair.*

The committee chair will put together the agenda and is responsible for the committee time. The chair will determine how much time is available for you to speak. Generally this is 10 minutes at the most. The chair has the authority and responsibility to run the meeting and decide speakers and process.

Most often, committee time will follow an agenda something like this:

- Greetings and Welcome
- Prayer (at the beginning and end of Committee meetings)
- Community Building
- Introduction of the topic and where it can be found in written materials
- Orientation to the Committee process
- Organization of the work of the Committee
- Presentations by the Proponent
- Committee Forum/Hearing mode: a time to surface the diversity of responses to the resolution
- Deliberation: dialogue, discernment, decision
- Preparing a recommendation for the Annual Meeting
- Worship or Prayer
- Thanks and recess / adjournment

Following your presentation, you are encouraged to stay for the rest of the process. Then you can be available if the committee has questions of you. The committee chair will decide whether or not to grant a request from you to speak at any other time following your presentation.

It's been a long road already for the resolution, through a process of drafting, finalizing, and the appropriate votes from the submitting setting(s). The resolution has now become the committee's, and it will be their role to discern the next steps, any possible edits, and the recommendation for the plenary. Thank you for helping with that process, and for supporting the committee and committee chair as they now do the work that is before them.

We do all this together with the hope and assurance that the Holy Spirit is alive and at work, thanks be to God!

## ***B. Procedures for Technical Support Volunteers***

*The Technical Support Volunteer (TSV) serves a committee at the direction of the chair. By offering word processing services as the Committee works, business items may be prepared quickly for review by the CPT for action by the Annual Meeting. The TSV may help the committee keep track of its work by reading or projecting updated business aloud to the committee as requested. Printing capabilities will not be available to the committee. TSV may also be asked to project an agenda from the Chair. The TSV stays with the Chair until all work is complete.*

TSVs will receive an electronic copy of the business being considered.

While the committee is in session, the TSV serves the Committee at the direction of the Chair and Recorder, who are members of the Committee. *The TSV does NOT take minutes of the meeting;* rather, the sole responsibility of the TSV is to record changes by updating the original document as requested.

The TSV does NOT engage in any discussion of the issue under consideration. However, the committee may request that portions of the resolution be read back after changes are made; the TSV will read the documents aloud from the screen of the laptop. Printing capabilities will not be available to the TSV.

Saturday:

- Open Microsoft Word
- Open Resolution or piece of business
- Save As “(same resolution name)v1.docx” on hard drive
- Turn on Review/
  - Track Changes function
  - Show All Markup
  - No Reviewing Pane
- Feel free to save multiple copies, using the naming function above
- Make changes only when committee chair confirms a vote has been taken to change.
- At end of process:
  - Save As “(same resolution name)FINAL.docx”
  - KEEP track changes ON so that the changes are apparent: don’t “Accept Changes”
  - This allows delegates to see ~~deletions~~ and additions.

When the committee has finished the Committee Chairperson, the Recorder, and the TSV remain on zoom. All four people together will go over the final document to make sure all changes are correct. Before you leave, make sure the Committee Chair has an electronic copy of the resolution in its final form. Copy [GBenham@uccswc.org](mailto:GBenham@uccswc.org) when sending the final form to the chair. After everyone agrees you will be free to leave.



## XI. Checklists

### ***A. Committee Completion Procedures: Committee Chairs, TSVs, and Recorders***

- When the committee has finished the Committee Chairperson, the Recorder, the and the TSV will remain on the zoom call briefly.
- The Chair, Recorder, and TSV will go over the final document to make sure all changes are correct. Document must show all edits.
- The chairperson will then **fill out the Supplemental Agenda form. (page 27)**
- Email a copy of the Supplemental Agenda Page and a copy of the FINAL resolution to [GBenham@UCCSWC.org](mailto:GBenham@UCCSWC.org)
- Keep one copy of the Supplemental Agenda Page and one copy of the resolution as revised. You'll use these for your presentations.
- TSV and Recorder are then free to go.
- The Chair may want the recorder to stay and help with writing the presentation.
- You can then go to work on your presentation. See page 26 for the outline of your presentation.
- You will make your presentation to the Annual Meeting plenary at some point on Saturday during the business session.

## **B. Committee Process Check Lists**

Committee # \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

### **Plenary Presentation Script Checklist**

1. The first part is a brief report from the committee to the plenary (2-3 minutes). This is where you speak to the process. The script can follow this general pattern:
  - o Brief self-introduction
  - o Orient delegates to the business at hand, and where it can be found
  - o Describe the work of the committee (in spirit)
  - o Describe the changes to the resolution developed in Committee. (What comes out of your committee IS now the motion, but delegates need to be brought up to speed. Be prepared to talk them through the changes.)
  - o Be sure you can delineate line number changes if there are any.
  - o Make a motion (generally, this will be "On behalf of Committee \_\_\_\_, I move that the 2021 Southwest Conference Annual Meeting adopts the Resolution ...")
2. End with motion: "On behalf of Committee # \_\_\_\_\_ I move that the 2021 Southwest Conference Annual Meeting adopts the Resolution: \_\_\_\_\_ and recommend: (chose one)  
approval as submitted approval as amended by committee disapproval other
3. The Moderator will accept the motion and ask you if you'd like to speak to it. This is the second part of the script for you to prepare: where you advocate on behalf of the committee for the action the committee is recommending. This is where you speak to the substance of the resolution. For this, you have a maximum of 3 minutes.

## **XII. Samples**

### **A. Sample Committee Report to Plenary**

*I am Persephone Hall from \_\_\_\_\_. We were given one resolution to consider – (Title). The resolution can be found on the SWC website and in your email in box.*

*During our committee time, early on, we agreed that ...*

*The passion and care around this topic was clear as delegates asked questions and sought to understand the objective of the resolution. Following a period of clarification, we quickly agreed to ... We also strengthened the document by... Lastly, our revisions ...*

*On behalf of Committee #5, I move that the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference adopts the Resolution: (TITLE) as (presented, amended by the committee, etc.)*

*(Moderator: ...Do you wish to speak to the motion?)*

*(Committee Chair: Yes, thank you. [Committee chair presents the committee's case for their recommendation.]*

**B. Supplemental Agenda Page – Committee Report**

**SCRIPT TEXT:**

**MODERATOR:**

“I call on \_\_\_\_\_  
to present the recommended action(s) from

Committee #\_\_\_\_\_. Assigned to this Committee was

\_\_\_\_\_

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:**

- *Help delegates locate the text of the recommended action(s)*
- *Briefly describe work of the committee.*
- *Note additions or corrections in report, if any.*

Move: “On behalf of Committee #\_\_\_\_\_ I move that the Annual Meeting adopts the Resolution on:

\_\_\_\_\_

and recommend: (circle one)

approval as submitted    approval (as amended by committee)    disapproval    other

**MODERATOR:**

“This item comes from a Committee so does not require a second.

**VOTE REQUIRED:** SWC Standing rules require majority vote on resolutions, budget, etc.

“Does the Committee wish to speak to the Motion?”

(Committee chair will say “yes” or may ask to cede this time to a proponent, or back to the chair)

Debate and action.



7. Do you have any suggestions for another Annual Meeting in regard to the work of Committees and the decision-making process?

a. Training

b. Committee time

c. Staff support

d. Reporting

e. Other

Name, if you wish to give it: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Additional comments: