

Lay Members to 2023 Annual Conference

How can I attend and vote at Annual Conference as Laity?

In order to serve this role, you must be a member of the United Methodist Church for two years, and an active participant in the United Methodist Church for at least four years prior to your election (this is waived for those under 30). More information about this can be found in the Book of Discipline ¶132.

There are two main ways laity can attend and vote at Annual Conference. The first is by being elected by their church to serve as a Lay Member to Annual Conference. Each church is given a set number of voting spots each year. If this is a role you are interested in serving, please reach out to your pastor to see if this may be a way to serve now or in the future.

The second way laity attend is as equalization members. Per the Book of Discipline and our Conference Rules, some of these spots are automatically given to certain offices within the conference such as certain conference committee chairs, district lay leaders and other conference positions. Our Conference Rules then indicate any remaining spots be given to the Board of Laity to distribute and find eligible members to serve. To do this, you must meet the membership requirements, apply with your District Lay Leader, and all of your church Lay Member spots must be used. Since these spots are limited, we encourage you to keep an eye out in district communications for information about how to apply. Your District Lay Leader will then let you know if you were selected to serve in this role and you will be given information on how then to register for Annual Conference.

Why are there different numbers allotted for each church?

The number of laity invited must equal the total number of clergy (active and retired) that are invited. Each year part of the job of the Annual Conference Registrar is to calculate the number of Lay Members to Annual Conference each church or charge is given. This calculation is done using our Conference Rules which includes using items such as membership and number of clergy appointed to the church/charge (for detailed information, please see our Conference Rules). Once this is done, they are then sent to each church as these numbers can change from year to year.

New Conference Rules:

The 2021 Annual Conference approved a change to the Conference Rules as to how Lay Members to Annual Conference are distributed, moving more of the representation from our Equalization Members invited by the Board of Laity to

the local church. This mainly impacted multiple point charges as each church in a charge, is now given at least one Lay Member to Annual Conference further empowering the voice of the local church.

Helpful Hints:

- 1) Remember all Lay Members to Annual Conference must be entered by their church into our conference database, Brickriver, as soon as possible. This allows us to communicate Annual Conference 2023 information with them and help alleviate any delay in them being able to finalize their registration.
- 2) Information about our new database as well as some training materials can be found on the conference website here. Please contact Pamela Stewart pstewart@michiganumc.org if you need assistance with Brickriver.
- 3) Subscribe to MiConnect. This will help make sure that you will receive information about Annual Conference and other events going on in the conference.