

What is a resolution?

Resolutions are an opportunity for the Annual Conference to express a stance and urge actions in response.

Every year, members of the Arkansas Annual Conference meet to fellowship and address the business of the Conference. Part of that business takes the form of considering resolutions. Resolutions deal with issues affecting the lives of members of the Conference, but also the lives of our neighbors.

By passing a resolution, we are able to communicate to the media, and elected leaders the will of the majority of delegates from the churches of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

What are the parts of a resolution?

A resolution has two main parts: a series of “Whereas” statements followed by a series of “Be it resolved” statements. Generally speaking, the “Whereas” statements should establish the factual basis of the resolution, using such sources as Scripture, *The Book of Discipline*, media reports, and other reference materials. The “Be it resolved” statements, reflecting on the facts established in the “Whereas” statements, say what we should do in response to these facts.

“Be it resolved” statements cannot seek to legislate or set policy for the Annual Conference. Resolutions do not amend the rules of the Conference or require specific actions from the various Conference committees or agencies. For instance, a resolution cannot dictate how money in the Conference budget is spent; such a change would have to be proposed as a motion in the Finance report. Resolutions can urge (but not force) members and churches in the Conference to do something, notify elected leaders of the stance of the Conference, etc.

Who can submit a resolution?

Any clergy member of the Arkansas Annual Conference or lay member of a Conference church, along with church boards, officially recognized committees and Conference boards and agencies, can submit a resolution.

Resolutions not sponsored by an official organization of the Annual Conference must be signed by at least 10 lay or clergy members of the 2019 Annual Conference.

You must submit your resolution by **March 15** as a PDF in order to be printed in the Pre-Conference Journal or available online.

If it is not received by March 15 it is still possible to send 1300 copies for placement in the packets distributed at Annual Conference if received by May 17. At the 2019 Annual Conference a petition can be given to the Conference Secretary at Annual Conference by 3pm the day before the first Business Session. Again the submitter would have to provide 1300 copies.

In order to best assist you in preparing your resolution for voting, you are encouraged to submit a draft as soon as possible. Those who miss the March 15 publication deadline are *strongly* encouraged to have your petition reviewed before making 1300 copies for distribution. This could save an expense and set you up for greater success as the presenter of a resolution.

Resolutions should be emailed to petition.resolution@arumc.org. For questions or concerns, email the Conference Secretary at aubrietta.jones@arumc.org.

How should I format my resolution?

Since your resolution will be included in the Pre-Conference Journal, formatting may be lost or degraded as it's transferred. Please use the "normal" style in your word processor, and don't change font, size, or indentation. Acceptable formatting includes bold, italics, superscript, and subscript.

Title: Begin with a **bold title** that describes your resolution without using the word "resolution."

Factual Basis: Following your title will be the factual basis of your resolution. Have one or more paragraphs that begin with (bolded) "**Whereas,**" Offer references that support the claims you are making.

For Scripture references, list the reference followed by the translation, like "*John 3:16-17 (NRSV)*." Likewise, references from *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions* can be cited in-text. Be sure to include the paragraph number and year of publication, like "¶160B in *The Book of Discipline* (2016) Social Principles states..."

Once you have the citation, reference it by adding a bracketed number after the relevant sentence or paragraph. Then, at the bottom of your resolution, include a list of all of your references.

Desired Response: After establishing the factual basis for your resolution, articulate how you would like the Conference to respond. Begin the first such paragraph with "**Now, therefore, be it resolved,**" and each subsequent paragraph with "**Be it further resolved.**"

Be sure to be specific. For instance, avoid phrases like "send this resolution to lawmakers". Instead, choose "send this resolution to all members of the Arkansas General Assembly," or "the Arkansas Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore," or "the Arkansas Congressional Delegation."

If you have directed the resolution to be sent to certain people or bodies, please include their addresses as practical. Including these, all paragraphs to this point should be left-aligned. Please do not center or justify text.

Finally, describe who is submitting the resolution. If you are a lay person, please include the church's name where you are a member. If you are a clergy person, please include your designation (deacon, elder or local pastor) and where you are appointed. Remember your 10 signatures from current lay or clergy members of the 2019 Annual Conference!

If your resolution is submitted by a committee, no signatures are required.

Resolutions should be no longer than about 2 pages (1,000 words).

What comes next?

Many people will work to ensure you have the best chance to have your resolution considered at Annual Conference. Your resolution will be reviewed to ensure it is worded so as to be "in order", or worded and supported in a way that the Conference can vote on it according to our church laws, policies and the broadest understandings of Christian civility.

You will be contacted about anything in your resolution that stands in conflict with the rules in the *Book of Discipline*, the *Standing Rules* and *Session Rules* of the Annual Conference. Finally, spelling and grammar will also be reviewed and corrected. It is our hope that through these efforts and conversations we can assist you to make necessary changes so



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that your resolution will be in order and will be presented within the timeframe allotted for the Annual Conference business session.

Resolutions received by the March 15 deadline will be included in the Pre-Conference Journal. If received in order between March 16 and May 17 with 1300 copies it can be distributed at Conference. If received and in order by 3pm the day before the first Business Session with 1300 copies it will be distributed.

Resolution Planning Sheet/Template

Subject: What topic or issue am I concerned about?
<i>Ex.) Arts in schools</i>
Narrowing it down: What about it do I want to change? Or, what about that topic do I want to say something about?
<i>Ex.) -I think the arts should be given a higher priority in schools -Arts should be given more funding</i>
Solution: How do I think we should solve this problem?
<i>Ex.) The state should give schools more funding specifically for the arts</i>
Research: Is there a bible verse/passage that supports it? What does the UMC say about this topic (What the UMC Believes)? Are there facts or statistics you can find about it? Can you find evidence to back up what you are saying or asking? Is there evidence that your proposed solution might work? (These are just some suggestions, and are by no means the only things you can include, nor do you need to include all of these)
Impact: Who do I want to send this resolution to?
<i>Ex.) The Governor, the President, my county's school board, The Arkansas Congressional Delegation, The AR Legislature, the Bishop, etc.</i>



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So now what?

Now it's time to take what you've planned, and turn it into a resolution.

Your resolution can be longer and/or more detailed than this. This is just a guide to help you know how to format your resolution.

Step 1: Start with your evidence from the UMC's beliefs or the Bible, or relevant books, websites or periodicals. Use a "whereas" for each supporting piece of information. Format this section like this:

Whereas, _____ says " _____;" and

Whereas, _____ says " _____;" , etc.

Step 2: Talk about the issue:

Whereas, in Arkansas, only \$ _____ is given to schools for arts programs, compared to the \$ _____ that was needed; and

Whereas, arts education in schools is important because _____ showed that _____ improves _____ in students, and makes _____ better;

Step 3: Now, move on to the solution to the problem. Start this one with "Now, therefore be it resolved". At the end, tell to whom you would like the resolution sent.

Now, therefore be it resolved, _____ give more funding to _____; and

Be it further resolved, this resolution be sent to Governor _____, Representative _____, and Secretary _____.

Include references to resource used here.

Include sponsoring group or individual's name with 10 signatures here.



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This is a sample resolution with proper formatting and references from a previous North Carolina Annual Conference session.

Hurricane Matthew Relief: A Call to Care for the Least of These

Whereas, in Matthew 25:40, the King said, “just as you did it to one of the least of these..., you did it to me;” and

Whereas, ¶164B in The Book of Discipline (2016) Social Principles says, “The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust;” and

Whereas, North Carolina only is getting \$6 million of the \$929 million requested for Hurricane Matthew relief in the proposed federal budget; and

Whereas, there are still people living in hotels and with relatives seven months after Hurricane Matthew, many of whom were renters and are unable to afford the repairs themselves [1]; and

Whereas, some of the counties most affected by the storm such as Edgecombe, Robeson, Wayne, and Wilson have some of some the highest poverty rates [2];

Now, therefore be it resolved, we, the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, call on our representatives in the United States House of Representatives and in the United States Senate to appropriate the full request of \$929 million so that people may be able to return to their homes; and

Be it further resolved, that the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church continue to promote recovery efforts to local congregations.

1. *The News and Observer* [Raleigh, NC]. Sunday, May 14, 2017. Section 1, Page 1.

2. Budget and Tax Center and US Census

Submitted by
Methodist Federation for Social Action
North Carolina Annual Conference Chapter

Many thanks to North Carolina Conference Secretary Jerry Bryan and Resolutions Committee Chair Benjamin Wolf for allowing the Arkansas Conference to adapt their 2018 Annual Conference’s resolution instructions to fit the needs of the ARUMC.