

## Resolution Instructions for the 2026 Arkansas Annual Conference

### What is a resolution?

Every year, members of the Arkansas Annual Conference meet to fellowship and address the business of the Conference. Occasionally that business takes the form of considering resolutions. Resolutions deal not only with issues affecting the lives of members of the Conference, but also the lives of our neighbors.

While resolutions may at times afford the best way for the Annual Conference to express a particular stance or urge a specific action, often there may be more effective ways to achieve desired objectives. Before drafting a resolution, it is good to ask these questions,

- What am I hoping to accomplish by seeking to have this statement passed?
- Is the point to have as many United Methodists as possible sign on to a public statement, or to send a message to lawmakers on behalf of the conference?
- Is it to provide a space for public debate on a topic?
- Is it to affect a change in the way the conference does its work or to suggest a new structure or policy?

The process of debate and voting on the floor of the annual conference may or may not be the best vehicle for accomplishing the desired goal. For additional help or support, feel free to contact the Assistant to the Bishop or any Conference Director.

### What are the parts of a resolution?

A resolution typically 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 2020/2024 Book of Discipline* or *Book of Resolutions*, media reports, and other reference materials.

The “Be it resolved” statements, reflecting on the facts established in the “Whereas” statements, suggest 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 Standing 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.

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### 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 is 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 “¶160.1 in *The Book of Discipline* (2020/2024) 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, use a more specific, directed statement like “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.

**Submitters :** 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, local pastor) and where you are appointed. Remember the requirement of at least ten signatures from current lay or clergy members of the upcoming Annual Conference Session!

If your resolution is submitted by an official ARUMC committee, no signatures are required.

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

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## 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.

Pursuant to changes to Par. 208.1 of our Conference’s Standing Rules as adopted during the 2021 Annual Conference, all resolutions and petitions must be included in the Pre-Conference Journal to be considered by the Annual Conference Session. For 2026, the deadline for submission of any resolution is **April 1**. Resolutions not offered by a Conference agency must be signed by at least ten lay and/or clergy

members of the upcoming Arkansas Annual Conference Session. These signatures must be obtained before the proposed resolution or petition may be submitted to Rev. LaToya Shepherd, the Arkansas Conference Secretary.

Resolutions and petitions must contain footnotes that clarify the source of any facts, quotes, or generalizations made within the proposed resolution or petition. These footnotes must be included with the proposed resolution or petition before it may be submitted to the Conference Secretary. These footnotes must include enough information to allow the Conference some level of confidence that the content of the proposed resolution or petition is accurate and reliable. These footnotes must also include enough information to allow the content of the proposed resolution or petition to be checked for accuracy.

Resolutions should be emailed in a .PDF or .docx format to Rev. Shepherd at [conference.secretary@arumc.org](mailto:conference.secretary@arumc.org) and copied to Bishop Laura Merrill ([bishop.merrill@arumc.org](mailto:bishop.merrill@arumc.org)) and Rev. Judy Rudd ([a2b@arumc.org](mailto:a2b@arumc.org)).

## **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 by the Conference Secretary and Assistant to the Bishop 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.

As a courtesy, if anything in your resolution is determined to potentially stand in conflict with the rules in the *Book of Discipline* or the *Standing Rules and Session Rules* of the Annual Conference, or to be grammatically incorrect, you will be contacted and given an opportunity to amend your resolution if you desire. It is our hope that through these efforts and conversations we can assist you to make necessary changes so that your resolution will be in order and will be presented within the timeframe allotted for the Annual Conference business session.