

1 GA-2518

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3 **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE**
4 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

5
6 **(OPERATIONAL, POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL)**
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9 **WHEREAS** the General Assembly adopted GA-2343 AMENDMENTS TO THE DESIGN
10 OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) in Louisville, Kentucky in
11 2023, thereby enacting substantial changes to the meetings and the operations of the
12 General Assembly at the conclusion of the 2025 meeting of the General Assembly; and,
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14 **WHEREAS** the Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly define its
15 organization and prescribe additional procedures for the conduct of its business; and,
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17 **WHEREAS** the changes enacted by GA-2343 require changes to the procedures of the
18 General Assembly,
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20 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly of the Christian
21 Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 12-15,
22 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee, adopt the following ***PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE***
23 ***SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE***
24 ***CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)***; and,
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26 **FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that these changes be implemented following the
27 conclusion of the 2025 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ in
28 the United States and Canada.
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32 General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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37 **BACKGROUND**
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39 Following several years of work by the Governance Committee of the General Board,
40 along with opportunities for conversation across the church, the General Assembly
41 meeting in Louisville, Kentucky in July 2023, adopted GA-2343, making significant
42 changes to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States
43 and Canada. These changes, which will be implemented at the conclusion of the 2025
44 meeting of the General Assembly, call for the General Assembly to move to a three-
45 year meeting cycle. Every three years, there will be a hybrid meeting, with opportunities
46 for participation in person and online; in the other two years of the cycle, the Assembly

will meet in online-only gatherings. Congregations will appoint three representatives to serve three-year terms, in which they will engage in dialogue, discernment, and prayer.

In fall 2023, the Moderator of the General Assembly appointed an Implementation Team, as called for in GA-2343, to work toward enacting these changes. Part of their work including revising the Special Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly to align with the changes. The Special Rules of Procedure govern the business of the General Assembly and can only be changed by the General Assembly.

The proposed changes to the Special Rules of Procedure include:

- Definitions of the three-year session known as the Triennium, which includes an Annual Meeting during each of the first two years and a Triennial Meeting during the final year which includes a traditional in-person component;
- The process by which business items shall be submitted to the General Assembly;
- The classification of business items into three categories: Reports; Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items; and Statements of Witness;
- The process for determining Topics of Education, Discussion, and Prayer;
- The role of the Executive Committee and the General Board in preparing business items and Topics for Education, Discussion, and Prayer;
- Introduction of Alternate Perspective Reports, which express an interpretation that contrasts with a proposed Statement of Witness;
- The process by which the business and agenda of the General Assembly is made available;
- The procedures by which the Office of the General Minister and President shall plan, coordinate, and administer the programs of the General Assembly;
- Plans for including Worship, Education, and Discussion at meetings of the General Assembly;
- Procedures for acting on business items during meetings of the General Assembly;
- Procedures for amending the Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly

SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Adopted by the General Assembly 1969, Revised 1979, 1981, 1989, 1995, 2009, 2011, 2025)

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Introduction

The following special rules of procedure for the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada (hereafter the "General Assembly") define further its organization and prescribe additional procedures for the conduct of its business.

As provided in Paragraph 49e of *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern the General Assembly in all other cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with *The Design* or special rules adopted by the General Assembly.

In addition, the General Assembly may, from time to time, adopt standing rules as needed for the effective conduct of its business.

The General Board and its Executive Committee shall likewise adopt standing rules for the guidance of their operations.

1. General Provisions

- 116 **1.1.** The General Assembly shall organize its meetings and work as a three-year session
117 known as the Triennium. Each Triennium shall consist of three Annual Meetings of
118 the General Assembly, the last of which shall be known as the Triennial Meeting of
119 the General Assembly.¹ The Triennium shall begin upon the adjournment of the
120 Triennial Meeting and end at the adjournment of the ensuing Triennial Meeting.
- 121 **1.1.1.** When reference is made to an “Annual Meeting” in these rules, it shall
122 include both the Annual Meeting and Triennial Meeting of the General
123 Assembly.
- 124 **1.2.** Prior to the start of the Triennium, the General Board shall set the dates for the
125 Annual and Triennial Meetings of the General Assembly for each year of the
126 Triennium. The Office of the General Minister and President shall make the dates
127 available among the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)² as
128 well as the business submission deadlines for each Annual Meeting.
- 129 **1.2.1.** The General Board may schedule additional, regular meetings of the
130 General Assembly as it deems necessary or advisable.
- 131 **1.3.** Upon approval of the Executive Committee of the General Board, the Moderator of
132 the General Assembly may call a Special Meeting of the General Assembly. If
133 business is to be transacted, the Office of the General Minister and President shall
134 make the business submission deadlines for the Special Meeting available among
135 the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 136 **1.4.** All deadlines in these rules shall be determined from the date of the first scheduled
137 business session of a meeting of the General Assembly.³
- 138 **1.5.** Communication for the fulfillment of these rules shall occur through a method as
139 determined by the Moderator of the General Assembly and the General Minister and
140 President.
- 141 **1.6.** Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive
142 Committee shall establish policies and procedures for the processes by which:
- 143 **1.6.1.** Congregations and regions notify the Office of the General Minister and
144 President of the selection of new delegates to the General Assembly; and
- 145 **1.6.2.** Congregations and regions notify the Office of the General Minister and
146 President of alternates named to replace delegates who are unable to
147 attend a meeting of the General Assembly.⁴
- 148 **1.6.3.** The Office of the General Minister and President shall make these
149 policies and procedures available among the congregations and regions.

¹ See Paragraph 42 of *The Design*.

² For the purposes of these rules, the “expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” are defined as the entities listed in Section 2.2.1–2.2.5 of these rules.

³ See Section 9.1 of these rules.

⁴ See Paragraph 40 of *The Design*.

2. Submission of Business Items for the Consideration of the General Assembly

2.1. All business items to be considered by the General Assembly shall be submitted to or shall originate with the General Board.⁵

2.2. Business items, as defined by Section 3 of these rules, may be submitted by the corporate body or the governing structure of any:

2.2.1. Congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

2.2.2. Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

2.2.3. Institution of higher education affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

2.2.4. General ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

2.2.5. Recognized ministry partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);⁶ or

2.2.6. Organization with a recognized relationship with the general expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An organization affiliated with an expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may submit items through the expression with which they are affiliated.

2.3. Business items must be received by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 150 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for the Executive Committee and the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.⁷

2.4. The Office of the General Minister and President shall assist those who are considering filing business items and shall make written guidelines for the preparation of business items publicly accessible. The guidelines shall include definitions and interpretations of the classifications of business, these rules, and *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

2.5. The General Minister and President, working pastorally and collegially, may counsel to limit the number of business items and urge submitters to combine items on a single subject. Regional Ministers shall be informed when items are received from congregations in their regions and may be enlisted in extending interpretation and pastoral care.

2.6. In receiving proposed business items and following them through the processes of the Executive Committee, the General Board, and the General Assembly, the Office of the General Minister and President shall see that the identity of the entity or group first submitting an item is preserved even if the item eventually is transmitted to the

⁵ See Paragraph 46 of *The Design*.

⁶ See Paragraphs 75–79 of *The Design*. A list of the current recognized ministry partners is available online at disciples.org/general-ministries/recognized-ministry-partners/.

⁷ Items postmarked with a delivery receipt requested or emailed on the 150th day before a meeting of the General Assembly shall be regarded as meeting the deadline requirement.

- General Assembly by a different entity such as a region, a general ministry, or the General Board.
- 2.7.** The Office of the General Minister and President shall invite each submitting entity or group to designate a spokesperson to attend the portion of the meeting of the Executive Committee and/or the General Board in which business for the General Assembly is discussed.
- 2.7.1.** The designated person shall attend at their own expense.
- 2.7.2.** The Office of the General Minister and President may request that each entity or group submit a description of its business item as a video or other medium.
- 2.7.3.** If an entity or group does not have a person attend a meeting, the Office of the General Minister and President shall inform the entity or group in writing of the Executive Committee and the General Board's decisions and rationales on the business item it submitted.
- 3. Classification of Business Items**
- 3.1. Reports**
- 3.1.1.** Reports are summaries of ministries performed, plans for ministry, and audited financial statements made by the general ministries, commissions, or other entities established or recognized by the General Assembly (hereafter a "reporting entity").
- 3.1.2.** In consultation with the General Cabinet, the Executive Committee shall determine when and in what manner each reporting entity reports to the General Assembly.
- 3.1.2.1.** During a Triennium, each reporting entity shall make at least one report to the General Assembly.
- 3.1.2.2.** Reports may be made to the General Assembly during plenary sessions which are not business sessions.
- 3.1.2.3.** When requested by the Executive Committee, the most recent audit of a reporting entity's financial statements shall be included in its report to the General Assembly.
- 3.1.3.** The General Assembly accepts Reports by virtue of their inclusion on the docket and no other action is considered or taken.
- 3.1.4.** If a Report contains recommendations for action by the General Assembly or if the General Board proposes recommendations for action by the General Assembly, such recommendations shall be submitted separately as an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item.
- 3.1.5.** Covenantal relationships of regions are demonstrated by annual informational reports made to the General Board. In consultation with the

222 College of Regional Ministers, the Executive Committee may request that
223 the regions provide brief updates to the General Assembly and shall
224 further determine when and in what manner such updates are shared with
225 the Assembly.

226 **3.1.6.** Covenantal relationships of congregations are demonstrated by annual
227 statistical reports of the congregations in the *Year Book and Directory* of
228 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).⁸ The reports of congregations
229 are not business items for the General Assembly.

230 **3.2. Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items**

231 **3.2.1.** Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items are those which establish
232 policy or procedures, institute or revise structures, authorize programs,
233 approve directions, or mandate actions.

234 **3.2.2.** An Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item may be originated by the
235 General Board or submitted by any entity eligible to submit business
236 items for the consideration of the General Assembly.⁹

237 **3.2.3.** The submitter of an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item shall be
238 encouraged, through guidelines provided by the Office of the General
239 Minister and President, to attach a financial estimate of the item and how
240 the expenses will be underwritten, if adopted.

241 **3.3. Statements of Witness**

242 **3.3.1.** A Statement of Witness is an expression of the General Assembly
243 concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, our
244 nations, or the world. By adopting a Statement, the Assembly declares
245 that the conviction or view expressed is based on Christian insights and is
246 a part of witnessing to Jesus Christ. Statements are developed for the
247 guidance of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its work through
248 its various ministries, for the consideration of the members and
249 congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and for a
250 Christian witness to the world.

251 **3.3.2.** A Statement of Witness may be originated by the General Board or
252 submitted by any entity eligible to submit business items for the
253 consideration of the General Assembly.¹⁰ No entity shall submit more
254 than one Statement of Witness to a meeting of the General Assembly.
255 The General Board may initiate as many Statements of Witness as it
256 deems necessary or advisable.

⁸ Since 2022, ALEX is the name of the online *Year Book and Directory*.

⁹ See Section 2.2 of these rules.

¹⁰ See Section 2.2 of these rules.

- 257 **3.3.3.** Statements of Witness shall be disqualified and not be eligible for
258 consideration by the General Assembly if:
- 259 **3.3.3.1.** A Statement of Witness on the same subject has been
260 considered by the General Assembly in the previous four
261 years, unless its content or the circumstances leading to its
262 submission are substantially different;
- 263 **3.3.3.2.** The Statement of Witness is of a self-congratulatory or
264 promotional nature;
- 265 **3.3.3.3.** The text of the Statement of Witness brings into question the
266 Christian commitment of those who do not agree; or
- 267 **3.3.3.4.** The text of the Statement of Witness contains doctrinal
268 statements used as a “test of fellowship.” Doctrinal content
269 may be included in a Statement if it does not imply a “test of
270 fellowship” for participation in the Christian Church (Disciples
271 of Christ).
- 272 **3.3.4.** The submitter of a Statement of Witness shall be encouraged, through
273 guidelines provided by the Office of the General Minister and President,
274 to attach an estimate of the item's financial impact, if any, if it were
275 adopted and to suggest how any new expense could be underwritten.
276
- 277 **4. Topics for Education, Discussion, and Prayer**
- 278 **4.1.** The General Assembly shall engage in learning, dialogue, formation, discernment,
279 and prayer on matters of social witness and other matters deemed essential to the
280 witness and ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).¹¹
- 281 **4.2.** The General Board shall approve at least one Topic for Education, Discussion, and
282 Prayer (TEDP) for each Annual Meeting of the General Assembly.¹² The General
283 Board may approve Topics for other meetings of the General Assembly,¹³ but it shall
284 not be required.
- 285 **4.3.** Annually the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General
286 Assembly¹⁴ shall consult the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) about potential
287 Topics.
- 288 **4.3.1.** The congregations shall be consulted through a questionnaire which shall
289 remain open for at least 30 days and shall be completed at least 180 days

¹¹ See Paragraph 38 of *The Design*.

¹² See Paragraphs 55a and 55b of *The Design*.

¹³ “Other meetings of the General Assembly” are additional regular meetings as defined in Section 1.2.1 of these rules and Special Meetings as defined in Section 1.3 of these rules.

¹⁴ The “Moderators of the General Assembly” include the Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, and Moderator-Elect (see Paragraph 49 of *The Design*).

- before an Annual Meeting of the General Assembly. The Office of the General Minister and President shall administer the questionnaire.
- 4.3.2.** The General Board, the General Cabinet, and the College of Regional Ministers shall also be consulted.
- 4.4.** The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall reflect upon the consultations and propose one or more Topics to the Executive Committee.
- 4.4.1.** The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall prepare a written description for each proposed Topic (hereafter the “Topic Overview”).
- 5. Duties of the Executive Committee of the General Board**
- 5.1.** The Executive Committee of the General Board shall review all business items on behalf of the General Board.
- 5.2.** Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee shall determine whether each item qualifies for consideration and its classification. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee shall submit a substitute business item on behalf of the General Board to replace multiple items on the same subject.
- 5.2.1.** When an item is disqualified, reclassified, or replaced by a substitute, the Office of the General Minister and President shall notify the submitting entity and, in the case of an item submitted by a congregation, the regional minister. The notification shall include the Executive Committee’s rationale.
- 5.2.2.** If an entity is dissatisfied with the disqualification, reclassification, or replacement by a substitute of an item it has submitted, it may appeal to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.¹⁵
- 5.3.** The Executive Committee shall make recommendations and forward all qualified business items to the General Board and, as needed, other actions for approval by the General Board.
- 5.4.** The Executive Committee shall set debate time of 12, 24, or 48 minutes for each qualified Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item and Statement of Witness. For Reports presented to Triennial Meetings, Executive Committee shall set debate times of 12, 24, or 48 minutes. For Reports presented to Annual Meetings or other meetings of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee shall set debate time as it deems advisable.

¹⁵ See Paragraph 64e of *The Design*.

5.5. The Executive Committee shall consider all Topics proposed by the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly and make recommendations on the Topic(s) to the General Board.

5.5.1. The Executive Committee may amend the Topic Overview for each proposed Topic as it deems advisable.

6. Duties of the General Board

6.1. At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the General Board shall review the recommendations of the Executive Committee on all submitted and qualified business items, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable, and forward the items to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate action.

6.1.1. When the General Board recommends to the General Assembly to refer an item for further investigation, the General Board shall make a contingent recommendation to adopt or not adopt the item.

6.1.2. When the General Board has replaced an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item with a substitute, the General Board shall make a contingent recommendation to adopt, not adopt, or commit for further investigation.

6.2. The General Board shall review the debate time for each business item as set by the Executive Committee and make whatever modifications it deems advisable.

6.3. At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the General Board shall review all Topic(s) as recommended by the Executive Committee, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable to the Topic Overview(s), and approve or reject the Topic(s) for engagement by the General Assembly.

6.4. The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall work with general ministries and other ministry partners to provide the General Board with educational material regarding General Assembly business items.

6.5. When a counted vote is taken on a General Assembly business item in a plenary session of the General Board, the Office of the General Minister and President shall record the count and report the count with the item in the General Board minutes.

7. Alternate Perspective Reports for Statements of Witness

7.1. Alternate Perspective Reports (APR) express a theological and/or ethical interpretation which contrasts with the theological and/or ethical interpretation found in the Statement of Witness. Alternate Perspective Reports shall inform the General Assembly of theological and/or ethical viewpoints found in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Alternate Perspective Reports shall not be used to consider all perspectives on an issue as equally valid, as certain positions may be considered outside the boundaries of the historical and contemporary witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

- 364 **7.2.** At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the Office of General
365 Minister and President shall make available among the expressions of the Christian
366 Church (Disciples of Christ) all Statements of Witness which have been forwarded to
367 the General Assembly by the General Board.¹⁶
- 368 **7.3.** An Alternate Perspective Report for a Statement of Witness may be originated by the
369 Executive Committee or submitted by any entity eligible to submit business items for
370 the consideration of the General Assembly.¹⁷ No entity shall submit more than one
371 Alternate Perspective Report to a meeting of the General Assembly. The Executive
372 Committee may initiate as many Alternate Perspective Reports as it deems
373 necessary or advisable.
- 374 **7.4.** Alternate Perspective Reports shall be submitted to the Office of the General
375 Minister and President at least 90 days before a meeting of the General Assembly.
- 376 **7.5.** Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive
377 Committee shall determine whether each Alternate Perspective Report qualifies to
378 be considered by the General Assembly. Upon recommendation of the General
379 Minister and President, the Executive Committee may submit an Alternate
380 Perspective Report on behalf of the General Board to replace multiple Alternate
381 Perspective Reports on the same perspective.
- 382 **7.5.1.** An Alternate Perspective Report shall be disqualified and not be eligible
383 for consideration by the General Assembly if:
- 384 **7.5.1.1.** The Alternate Perspective Report does not reflect the historical
385 and/or contemporary witness, theology, and/or ethics of the
386 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- 387 **7.5.1.2.** The Alternate Perspective Report brings into question the
388 Christian commitment of those who do not agree; or
- 389 **7.5.1.3.** The text of the Alternate Perspective Report contains doctrinal
390 statements used as a “test of fellowship.” Doctrinal content
391 may be included in an Alternate Perspective Report if it does
392 not imply a “test of fellowship” for participation in the Christian
393 Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 394 **7.5.2.** When an Alternate Perspective Report is disqualified or replaced by a
395 substitute, the Office of the General Minister and President shall notify the
396 submitting entity and, in the case of an Alternate Perspective Report
397 submitted by a congregation, the regional minister. The notification shall
398 include the Executive Committee’s rationale.

¹⁶ For Statements of Witness replaced by a substitute, only the substitute Statement of Witness is forwarded to the General Assembly by the General Board.

¹⁷ See Section 2.2 of these rules.

- 399 **7.5.3.** If an entity is dissatisfied with the disqualification or replacement by
400 substitute of an Alternate Perspective Report it has submitted, it may
401 appeal to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.¹⁸
- 402 **7.6.** At least 60 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the Executive
403 Committee shall forward to the General Assembly up to two qualified Alternate
404 Perspective Reports for each Statement of Witness.
- 405 **7.7.** The Executive Committee shall not make recommendations on Alternate Perspective
406 Reports. By forwarding an Alternate Perspective Report to the General Assembly,
407 the Executive Committee does not necessarily approve of it or recommend to the
408 General Assembly to attach it to the Statement of Witness.
- 409 **7.8.** The General Assembly may attach Alternate Perspective Reports, which have been
410 forwarded to it by the Executive Committee, to a Statement of Witness to indicate the
411 diversity of theological and/or ethical interpretation in the Christian Church (Disciples
412 of Christ) on the subject.
- 413 **7.8.1.** If attached, the Alternate Perspective Report shall be considered an
414 integral part of the Statement of Witness and the text of the Alternate
415 Perspective Report shall be included when the Statement of Witness is
416 published.
- 417 **8. Preparations for a Meeting of the General Assembly**
- 418 **8.1.** The Docket for a meeting of the General Assembly shall be made available among
419 the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by the Office of the
420 General Minister and President at least 60 days in advance of a meeting of the
421 General Assembly.¹⁹ The Docket shall include:
- 422 **8.1.1.** All Topics for Education, Discussion, and Prayer approved by the General
423 Board and their Topic Overviews;
- 424 **8.1.2.** All business items forwarded to the General Assembly by the General
425 Board, the General Board's recommendations, and their business
426 classifications; and
- 427 **8.1.3.** All Alternate Perspective Reports forwarded to the General Assembly
428 immediately by the Executive Committee after the text of the related
429 Statement of Witness.
- 430 **8.2.** At least 40 days prior to a meeting of the General Assembly, the General Minister
431 and President shall invite each entity or group which has submitted a business item
432 or Alternate Perspective Report on the Docket to designate a spokesperson to make
433 a speech when the item is placed before the General Assembly.

¹⁸ See Paragraph 64e of *The Design*.

¹⁹ See Paragraph 46 of *The Design*.

- 434 **8.2.1.** The Executive Committee shall designate a spokesperson for each
435 business item initiated by the General Board and each substitute
436 business item submitted by the General Board.
- 437 **8.2.2.** For Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items which the General
438 Board has replaced by a substitute, the General Minister and President
439 shall invite the entity or group which submitted the original Operational,
440 Policy, and Organizational Item to designate a spokesperson to make a
441 speech in favor of the original item when the substitute item is placed
442 before the General Assembly.
- 443 **8.2.3.** In the case of reports, the designated spokesperson shall summarize or
444 supplement the printed report.
- 445 **8.2.4.** Submitting entities or groups shall provide the name and contact
446 information of the designated spokesperson including mailing address
447 and email to the Office of the General Minister and President no later than
448 20 days prior to a meeting of the General Assembly.
- 449 **8.3.** The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly
450 shall propose an order of business which shall be made available to the members of
451 the General Assembly prior to the first business session of a meeting of the General
452 Assembly.
- 453 **8.4.** The Office of the General Minister and President shall plan, coordinate, and
454 administer the programs of the General Assembly.
- 455 **8.4.1.** The Office of the General Minister and President shall convene the
456 General Assembly Triennial Meeting Program and Arrangements Task
457 Force to plan the in-person program of the Triennial Meeting of the
458 General Assembly.
- 459 **8.4.1.1.** The Task Force shall be comprised of at least ten (10) persons
460 appointed by the General Minister and President in
461 consultation with the Moderators of the General Assembly.
462 The Task Force shall additionally include staff from the Office
463 of the General Minister and President.
- 464 **8.4.1.2.** The Task Force shall include the Regional Minister and at
465 least one member from each region hosting the Triennial
466 Meeting of the General Assembly.
- 467 **8.4.1.3.** One of the Moderators of the General Assembly shall chair the
468 Task Force.
- 469 **8.4.2.** The General Board shall maintain additional policies and procedures for
470 planning, coordinating, and administering the programs of the General
471 Assembly.
- 472

9. Worship, Education, and Discussion at Meetings of the General Assembly

9.1. The Annual Meeting of the General Assembly may include worship services, education sessions, discussion sessions, and business sessions. Worship services, education sessions, and discussion sessions may occur before the business session.

9.2. The General Assembly Committee shall appoint several persons to provide an introduction during worship to each Topic from various theological and ideological viewpoints, striving to represent the diversity of opinions on each Topic in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

9.3. The General Assembly Committee shall organize education sessions for the Assembly to engage the Topic(s) and Statements of Witness on the Docket.

9.3.1. Each Statement of Witness on the Docket shall have at least one education session dedicated to it, which shall be organized by the submitters of the Statement of Witness. The Office of the General Minister and President shall provide guidance for submitters in organizing and creating the education session.

9.3.2. The General Assembly Committee shall appoint several persons to create and lead several education sessions on each Topic, striving to represent the diversity of opinions on each Topic in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The General Assembly Committee shall work with general ministries and other ministry partners to help organize, create, and lead these education sessions.

9.3.3. Each person attending the Assembly shall be encouraged to attend at least one workshop on a Topic and at least one workshop on a Statement of Witness.

9.4. The General Assembly Committee shall organize several discussion sessions for the General Assembly to engage Topics.

9.4.1. These discussion sessions shall be offered concurrently, with each person with floor privileges²⁰ encouraged to attend a session. Persons without floor privileges shall not participate in discussion sessions.

9.4.2. The General Assembly Committee shall appoint and train facilitators to lead discussion groups, striving to represent the full diversity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including opinions on each Topic.

9.5. Facilitators shall provide a written summary on the discussions in their groups to the Office of the General Minister and President.

9.5.1. The Office of the General Minister and President shall compile these summaries into a discussion report for each Topic.

²⁰ See Paragraphs 39 and 41 of *The Design*.

- 510 **9.5.2.** The report(s) shall be made available among the expressions of the
511 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by the Office of the General Minister
512 and President no later than 30 days after the adjournment of the meeting
513 of the General Assembly during which the Topic was engaged.
- 514 **9.6.** After the General Assembly has engaged a Topic through education, discussion, and
515 prayer, the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General
516 Assembly shall reflect on the discussions and discernment of the Assembly and call
517 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to action in one of the following ways:
- 518 **9.6.1.** Call upon the General Board to take action and/or adjust mission priorities
519 of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) related to the Topic;²¹
- 520 **9.6.2.** Call upon the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to
521 submit Statements of Witness or Operational, Policy, and Organizational
522 Items addressing the Topic to an ensuing meeting of the General
523 Assembly;
- 524 **9.6.3.** Call upon the members, congregations, and ministries of the Christian
525 Church (Disciples of Christ) to witness to the Topic in their communities;
- 526 **9.6.4.** Call upon the General Board to approve the Topic for further education,
527 discussion, and prayer at an ensuing meeting of the General Assembly.²²
- 528 **9.6.5.** The call shall be communicated to the expressions of the Christian
529 Church (Disciples of Christ) no later than 60 days after the adjournment of
530 the meeting of the General Assembly during which the Topic was
531 engaged. The General Minister and President and Moderators shall detail
532 their rationale in the communication.
- 533 **9.7.** Persons appointed under this section shall not bring into question the Christian
534 commitment of those who do not agree with a position on the Topic or Statement of
535 Witness or discuss doctrinal statements as a “test of fellowship.” The Office of
536 General Minister and President shall be able to review all prepared material for such
537 content.
- 538 **10. Business Rules for the General Assembly**
- 539 **10.1.** The General Assembly shall receive all business items submitted to it by the General
540 Board, consider their comments and recommendations, and, after appropriate
541 discussion and debate, take action. The General Assembly shall not initiate new
542 business items.
- 543 **10.1.1.** Action on Reports:
- 544 **10.1.1.1.** Received by virtue of inclusion in the Docket of the Assembly;
545 no action is required. The General Assembly shall allow the

²¹ See Paragraphs 55c and 55d of *The Design*.

²² Pursuant to this call, the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall propose the Topic again through the process described in Section 4 of these rules.

546 time designated by the General Board for presentation and
547 discussion of each report.

548 **10.1.1.2.** A motion to receive all Reports as a group shall be ruled out of
549 order unless the allotted time has passed for discussion and
550 review of all reports.

551 **10.1.1.3.** A motion to receive a single Report without allowing the
552 designated time for discussion shall be ruled out of order.

553 **10.1.2.** Actions on Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items:

554 **10.1.2.1.** Adopt or not adopt;

555 **10.1.2.2.** Commit to the Executive Committee, serving as the
556 Committee on Reference and Counsel, for revision and
557 returned back to the current meeting of the General Assembly,
558 as feasible;

559 **10.1.2.3.** Refer for further investigation to an appropriate body
560 determined by the Executive Committee and reported to the
561 ensuing meeting of the General Board. If the General Board
562 recommends this action, the item shall be referred directly by
563 the General Assembly to the body designated by the General
564 Board in its recommendation.

565

566 **10.2.** The General Assembly shall use a meeting software as recommended by the Office
567 of the General Minister and President and designated by the Executive Committee.

568 **10.2.1.** All persons with privileges of the floor²³ shall have equal access to speak,
569 regardless of their method of attendance.²⁴ Areas around the
570 microphones in the Assembly business meeting hall may not be blocked
571 or have access impeded in any way.

572 **10.2.2.** Upon recommendation of the Office of the General Minister and
573 President, the Executive Committee shall establish the process by which
574 persons seek the recognition of the presiding Officer to address the
575 Assembly. Persons attending the in-person portion of a Triennial Meeting
576 who are seeking recognition of the presiding Officer shall not be
577 privileged above persons attending digitally, nor shall any person
578 attending digitally be privileged above persons attending in-person.

579 **10.2.3.** Persons addressing the Assembly digitally shall be visible and audible to
580 persons attending the in-person portion of the meeting and those

²³ See Paragraphs 39 and 41 of *The Design*.

²⁴ See Paragraph 42 of *The Design*.

581 attending in-person shall be visible and audible to those attending
582 digitally.

583 **10.3.** All votes on all motions shall be taken through a digital system as recommended by
584 the Office of the General Minister and President and designated by the Executive
585 Committee.

586 **10.3.1.** The digital voting system shall provide equal access to persons with
587 voting privileges,²⁵ regardless of their method of attendance.²⁶

588 **10.3.2.** Votes in no way shall be taken by voice to ensure equal access of digital
589 participants.

590 **10.3.3.** The digital voting system shall include a way to determine the vote is cast
591 by a credentialed person with voting privileges who is actively attending
592 the meeting.²⁷

593 **10.3.4.** Votes on main motions shall remain open for five (5) minutes. Votes on
594 subsidiary motions shall remain open for two (2) minutes.

595 **10.3.4.1.** If a voting member has technical difficulties in casting their
596 vote, they shall bring the issue to the attention of one of the
597 persons designated by the Office of General Minister and
598 President, who shall communicate the issue to the presiding
599 Officer. The presiding Officer may pause, extend, or reopen
600 the voting period if the technical difficulty could prevent a
601 proper count of the Assembly.

602 **10.3.4.2.** Results of a vote shall not be announced until the voting time
603 period has closed.

604 **10.3.5.** The presiding Officer shall announce, and the minutes of the General
605 Assembly shall include, the numeric vote totals on main motions and
606 motions to attach an Alternate Perspective Report.

607 **10.3.5.1.** The presiding Officer shall not be required to announce the
608 numeric vote totals on other motions.

609 **10.3.5.2.** A call for "Division of the House" would only be in order to call
610 for a vote count to be announced and recorded in the minutes.

611 **10.4.** A quorum for the transaction of business by the General Assembly shall be the
612 voting members present and voting at a business session of the Assembly.²⁸

²⁵ See Paragraph 39 of *The Design*.

²⁶ See Paragraph 42 of *The Design*.

²⁷ For example, a code displayed during the meeting that voting members must enter into the digital system to verify their active attendance. As provided in Paragraph 40 of *The Design*, voting *in absentia* or by proxy is not permitted.

²⁸ See Paragraph 47 of *The Design*.

- 613 **10.5.** The proposed order of business,²⁹ including all Orders of the Day, shall be the first
614 business item presented to the General Assembly for action.
- 615 **10.6.** The introduction of a business item, properly presented by the presiding Officer, shall
616 be regarded as the main motion and does not require a second, since the motion
617 originated with a group. After the business item's introduction and allotted debated
618 time, the action of the Assembly is on the main motion and not on the
619 recommendation of the General Board, except when the General Board's
620 recommendation is to refer for further investigation, which is a subsidiary motion.³⁰
- 621 **10.6.1.** If the motion to refer for further investigation fails, the original business
622 item is immediately brought to the floor of the General Assembly with the
623 General Board's contingent recommendation.³¹
- 624 **10.7.** Amendments shall not be permitted from the floor.
- 625 **10.7.1.** A person desiring to amend an item may move that the item be
626 committed to the Executive Committee, serving as the Committee on
627 Reference and Counsel, for consideration of amending and returning the
628 item back to the current meeting of the General Assembly.
- 629 **10.7.2.** When time does not permit for a committed item to return to the current
630 meeting of the General Assembly, the item shall be assigned to the
631 General Board, which shall take action on the item on behalf of the
632 General Assembly or refer it to an ensuing meeting of the General
633 Assembly.
- 634 **10.8.** The total time for debate unless otherwise noted in these rules:
- 635 **10.8.1.** Shall be set by the Executive Committee and reviewed by the General
636 Board.
- 637 **10.8.2.** Shall govern the debate on any given business item.
- 638 **10.8.3.** May be changed by the presiding Officer with the approval of the
639 Assembly.
- 640 **10.8.4.** May be changed by the Assembly.
- 641 **10.9.** Debate on Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items shall begin with a speech in
642 favor of adopting the item from the spokesperson designated by the entity or group
643 submitting the item.
- 644 **10.9.1.** When the Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item is a substitute, the
645 speech in favor shall be followed by a speech from the spokesperson
646 designated by the entity or group submitting each original item. The

²⁹ See Section 8.3 of these rules.

³⁰ See Section 10.16 of these rules.

³¹ See Section 6.1.1 of these rules.

647 speeches shall be in the order the original items were received by the
648 Office of the General Minister and President.

649 **10.9.2.** The speeches in this section shall be limited to three (3) minutes each
650 and cannot be reduced by action of the General Assembly.

651 **10.9.3.** Regular debate will follow these speeches according to Section 10.11 of
652 these rules.

653 **10.10.** Debate on Statements of Witness shall begin with a speech in favor of adopting the
654 Statement of Witness and shall be followed by speeches advocating for the inclusion
655 of each Alternate Perspective Report forwarded by the Executive Committee with the
656 Statement of Witness.

657 **10.10.1.** The speech in favor of the Statement of Witness shall be given by the
658 spokesperson designated by the submitting entity or group and shall be
659 limited to five (5) minutes, except when the Executive Committee has
660 forwarded two Alternate Perspective Reports with the Statement of
661 Witness, in which case the speech shall be limited to ten (10) minutes.

662 **10.10.2.** The speech advocating for the inclusion of an Alternate Perspective
663 Report forwarded by the Executive Committee shall be given by the
664 spokesperson designated by the submitting entity or group and shall be
665 limited to five (5) minutes. When two Alternate Perspective Reports have
666 been forwarded by the Executive Committee, there shall be one speech
667 advocating for each Alternate Perspective Report and the speeches shall
668 be given in the order the items were received by the Office of the General
669 Minister and President.

670 **10.10.3.** The speeches in this section cannot be reduced by action of the General
671 Assembly.

672 **10.10.4.** During the speeches in this section, the motion to attach an Alternate
673 Perspective Report shall be ruled out of order.

674 **10.10.5.** Regular debate will follow these speeches according to Section 10.11 of
675 these rules. If no Alternate Perspective Report has been forwarded by the
676 Executive Committee, regular debate will follow the speech in favor of the
677 Statement of Witness.

678 **10.11.** Each person with floor privileges,³² when recognized by the presiding Officer, may
679 speak to each business item and debatable motion once, for no more than three (3)
680 minutes, and may speak again only if all other persons desiring to speak to the
681 motion have had the opportunity within the total time for debate.³³

³² See Paragraphs 39 and 41 of *The Design*.

³³ Original Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items brought to the floor of the Assembly after the failure of a substitute item are separate business items from the substitute, resetting debate limits.

10.11.1. The length of time allotted to each speaker may be reduced by motion and approval of two-thirds of the voting members present and voting. The reduction does not apply to the speeches required by Sections 10.9 or 10.10.

10.12. During regular debate on a Statement of Witness, the subsidiary motion to attach an Alternate Perspective Report forwarded by the General Board shall be in order. This motion shall be debatable, shall be amendable, shall require a second, may not interrupt a speaker, and shall require a majority vote to carry. All motions, except the main motion, shall take precedence over this motion.³⁴

10.12.1. A person desiring to amend an Alternate Perspective Report may move that the Alternate Perspective Report be committed to the Executive Committee, serving as the Committee on Reference and Counsel, for consideration of amending and returning the Alternate Perspective Report back to the current meeting of the General Assembly.

10.12.1.1. If an Alternate Perspective Report is committed for consideration of an amendment, there is no further consideration of the Statement of Witness until the Alternate Perspective Report is returned to the Assembly for action. Upon return, the Assembly shall resume the consideration of the subsidiary motion to attach the Alternate Perspective Report.

10.12.1.2. When time does not permit for a committed item to return to the current meeting of the General Assembly, the Statement of Witness shall be assigned to the General Board, which shall take action on the Statement of Witness on behalf of the General Assembly or refer it to an ensuing meeting of the General Assembly.

10.12.2. When debate on an Alternate Perspective Report is closed, it is recommended that the presiding Officer shall say: "The motion is on the attachment of an Alternate Perspective Report. By attaching an Alternate Perspective Report, the Assembly acknowledges the diversity of theological and/or ethical interpretation present in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on the subject of the Statement of Witness entitled _____. All those in favor of attaching the Alternate Perspective Report entitled _____ to Business Item No. _____, vote yes. All those who are opposed, vote no." Following the vote, it is recommended that the presiding Officer shall say: "The yesses have it and the Alternate Perspective Report is attached to the Statement of Witness" or "The noes

³⁴ See Section 10.16 of these rules.

721 have it and the Alternate Perspective Report is not attached to the
722 Statement of Witness.”

723 **10.12.3.** If this motion carries, the Alternate Perspective Report shall be attached
724 to the Statement of Witness. The final question on the Statement of
725 Witness shall be on the adoption of the Statement of Witness with the
726 attached Alternate Perspective Reports.

727 **10.13.** If there is a desire to close debate, the following procedure shall be used: The chair
728 shall receive the motion, “I move the previous question.” When that motion has been
729 seconded and carried by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the voting members present
730 and voting, the presiding Officer shall immediately put the main question without
731 debate.

732 **10.14.** When the debate is closed:

733 **10.14.1.** On a Report, no action is required.

734 **10.14.2.** On an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item or Statement of
735 Witness, it is recommended that the presiding Officer shall say: “The
736 question is on adoption of Business Item No. ____ entitled _____. All those
737 who are in favor of adopting Business Item No. _____, vote yes. All those
738 who are opposed, vote no.” Following the vote it is recommended that the
739 presiding Officer shall say: “The yeases have it and the business item is
740 adopted” or “The noes have it and the business item is not adopted.”

741 **10.14.3.** In a recommendation to refer, it is recommended that the presiding
742 Officer shall say: “The question is on the recommendation of the General
743 Board to refer Business Item No. ____ entitled _____ to _____ for further
744 investigation. All those who are in favor of referring the business item,
745 vote yes. All those who are opposed, vote no.” Following the vote it is
746 recommended that the presiding Officer shall say: “The yeases have it and
747 the business item is referred” or “The noes have it and the business item
748 is not referred; it now comes to the floor of the Assembly for action.”

749 **10.14.4.** When an Alternate Perspective Report has been attached to a Statement
750 of Witness by floor motion, it is recommended that after saying the title of
751 the Statement of Witness, the presiding Officer shall say: “To which the
752 General Assembly has attached the Alternate Perspective Report entitled
753 _____ (and the Alternate Perspective Report entitled _____).”

754 **10.15.** If a substitute Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item³⁵ fails, the original item
755 shall immediately come to the floor of the General Assembly with the General

³⁵ These procedures do not apply to substitute Statements of Witness or substitute Alternate Perspective Reports so as to ensure the whole Alternate Perspective Report process can occur for any Statement of Witness coming before the Assembly (See Section 7 of these rules).

- 756 Board's contingent recommendation.³⁶ Debate on the original item shall proceed
757 according to Section 10.9.
- 758 **10.15.1.** If a substitute business item is replacing multiple business items on the
759 same subject and fails, the original items shall come before the General
760 Assembly in the order in which they were received by the Office of the
761 General Minister and President.
- 762 **10.16.** In general, the basic rules of parliamentary procedure as described in the current
763 edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall be followed. The following motions,
764 for instance, are in order, the first taking precedence over the second, the second
765 over the third, and so forth:
- 766 **10.16.1.** To raise a question of privilege;
- 767 **10.16.2.** To call for orders of the day;
- 768 **10.16.3.** To rise to a point of order;
- 769 **10.16.4.** To close debate (move the previous question);
- 770 **10.16.5.** To limit or extend time for discussion and debate;
- 771 **10.16.6.** The main motion.
- 772 **10.17.** Additional notes on motions:
- 773 **10.17.1.** "Privileged" or "incidental" motions are 10.16.1–3.
- 774 **10.17.2.** Motions subsidiary to main motion are 10.16.4–6.
- 775 **10.17.3.** Debatable motions are 10.16.6.
- 776 **10.17.4.** The following cannot be amended: 10.16.1–4.
- 777 **10.17.5.** The following do not require a second: 10.16.1–3.
- 778 **10.17.6.** The following may interrupt a speaker: 10.16.1–3.
- 779 **10.17.7.** Simple majority votes carry, except for a two-thirds affirmative vote
780 required for 10.16.4 and 10.16.5.
- 781 **11. Procedure for Amendment**
- 782 **11.1.** A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voting members of the General Assembly present
783 and voting, a quorum being present, shall be required for any subsequent
784 amendments to these rules.
- 785 **11.2.** Any proposed amendments to these rules shall be submitted to or initiated by the
786 General Board as an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item.

³⁶ See Section 6.1.2 of these rules.