



# A Lay Delegate's Guide 2026

OREGON CONFERENCE OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Congratulations, Delegate! You have been selected by your local church to serve as a lay delegate to the Oregon Annual Conference. The members of your society (church or church board) have expressed their confidence in you to represent them conscientiously at annual conference, which is both an honor and a responsibility. May the Spirit of God guide you as you serve.

Having a clear understanding of Free Methodist practice will enable a lay delegate to serve well. The current *Book of Discipline [BoD]* of the Free Methodist Church provides an overview of the denomination's history, its Articles of Religion (beliefs), governing practices and more. As both a local member of the church and a lay delegate, you are highly encouraged to [own a copy](#). Included below are BoD paragraph (§) notations for further reference.

From the beginning of the denomination in 1860, a basic governing principle has been equal lay - clergy representation. ***“Today, as then, the annual conference is the organization at the regional level that joins societies [churches] into a network. The annual conference ensures that pastors and congregations are counseled and encouraged, identifies those who are being called into the ordained ministry and promotes and oversees church planting and evangelism.”*** (§5000)

## The Lay Delegate (§6250E)

1. Is a member of their society [hereafter referred to as ‘church’] in good standing, serves on its Board of Administration, supports pastors and staff in ministry planning and promotes the peace and unity of its members. (Note: if more than one delegate is elected, at least one shall serve on the local Board of Administration. §6300A)
2. Serves as a liaison between: (§5020)
  - a. The church and its appointed (pastoral) personnel
  - b. The church and the conference or superintendent
  - c. The conference and the church to convey current conference policies such as the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Guidelines
3. Represents the church to the annual conference and acts for the good of the conference

## Annual Conference

One lay delegate is admitted to annual conference from each church, and additional delegates may be admitted as is summarized in the chart at the end of this guide. (§5010B)

### Expectations

- Prepare in advance by familiarizing oneself with the annual conference information packet, which includes annual reports from conference boards and the general church.
- Be present throughout the entirety of the annual conference business sessions. If this is not possible, the conference secretary should be notified that a reserve delegate will provide representation.

- Vote on conference items of business as a representative of one’s church. Electronic votes are a part of this process in the weeks prior to annual conference sessions.
- Report significant annual conference business and highlights to the local church following annual conference in coordination with the lead pastor. This would include the public announcement of a pastor’s re-appointment or the welcoming of a new pastor to the congregation.
- Be a knowledgeable and concerned consultant for the superintendent as he/she promotes church health, addressing spiritual and other needs of your church.

Note: Annual Conference proceedings are guided by the area bishop or his/her designee and follow parliamentary procedure. Further description of annual conference procedures is found in the *Book of Discipline*, ¶15000-5800.

## MULTIPLE LAY DELEGATES

Annual Conference sittings are comprised of all ministers in full membership and lay delegates elected by their churches. (See ¶15010B for election specifics.)

1. One lay delegate shall be admitted from each church. If there are additional, appointed pastors who receive compensation and serve half time or more, one additional lay delegate may be elected for each one.
2. When a church has more than 100 adult members, it may elect one additional lay delegate. For each additional 200 adult members, one additional lay delegate may be elected.

The following chart displays the above information.

Appointed Pastors (over ½ time)	1-100 Adult Members	101-200 Adult Members	201-400 Adult Members
1	1 lay delegate	2 lay delegates	3 lay delegates
2	2 lay delegates	3 lay delegates	4 lay delegates
3	3 lay delegates	4 lay delegates	5 lay delegates
4	4 lay delegates	5 lay delegates	6 lay delegates

Note: The number of Delegates to Annual Conference is based upon the number of members recorded in the previous year’s annual report (as of December 31 of the preceding year). Any exception must be approved by the Board of Administration. [*Oregon Conference BOA - 2013*]