

## **Standing Rules Annual Meeting 2025**

*These standing rules will be voted on after the approval of the agenda during our first business session.*

1. Working together in community as we carry out the business of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, we desire to conduct ourselves in ways that are inclusive and respectful of all voices. We desire to accomplish our community business in ways that fulfill our responsibilities to one another, to each local church, to our Conference and in covenant with all settings of the United Church of Christ. As delegates and participants in the Annual meeting, we covenant to respect one another, to address our comments to the Moderator, rather than to each other, and to speak our truth in love remembering that we each bear the image of God.
2. Business, according to the agenda, will be conducted using a few basic process rules. While our bylaws make no mention and do not require us to use Robert's Rules of Order, we agree to be guided by the process rules stated below. If a given situation is not covered by these process rules, Robert's Rules of Order/ Consensus will be used. This is at the discretion of the Moderator.
3. Any business needing approval of the delegates requires a Motion and a Second by a delegate to the annual meeting. Motions and Seconds and all discussion will take place using the designated microphones on the floor or in the way designated for those delegates joining the meeting virtually.
4. Any delegate making a motion, seconding a motion, or speaking for or against the motion is asked to identify themselves by name and local church membership. After a motion receives a second, the proposer of a motion may speak in favor of the motion for two minutes.
5. Questions of clarification may be asked by delegates at any time. Following the opening comments of the person proposing the motion, there will be time for delegates to speak for or against the motion. Whenever possible, the Moderator will alternate between pro and con speakers. Those wishing to speak will speak for not more than one minute. No delegate may speak more than twice on a given motion until all wishing to speak have been heard. Those speaking should limit their comments to the issue under discussion.
6. The Moderator will ask for a vote by the delegates attending the meeting physically and virtually on a particular motion when in the Moderator's opinion, sufficient discussion has been heard. We hope to avoid the time-consuming process of moving to end debate, by relying on the Moderator's judgement on a particular motion.
7. During the meeting, if a given matter is one of clear consensus, the Moderator may call for "unanimous consent with no objection" on any item requiring a decision of the delegates.

8. The appropriateness of Amendments to Motions is always the trickiest part of meetings. The Moderator has discretion to work with delegates in a fair and just way to get the most appropriate wording for a motion on the floor for a vote. Here are some guidelines and rules for delegates that can help move the process forward effectively:

a. **“Friendly Amendment”** – This is commonly used but does not exist in any formal procedures. Let’s work with the intent. If you have a minor clarification or addition to a Motion on the Floor ask the maker of the motion to make a change in the wording of the motion. If they do this and the person who seconded the motion agrees – then the updated motion is deemed to be the motion on the floor. OR 2) the request may be made from the floor at a microphone or from a delegate attending the meeting virtually after being recognized by the Moderator. The maker and the second of the motion have 10 seconds to say YES or NO to accepting. There is no debate or back & forth discussion unless the Moderator needs clarification.

b. **“Substance Change Amendment”** – These must be submitted in writing to the screen operator or in the chat function for virtual attendees, so all delegates can see the wording without confusion. These amendments should be made from the floor. The Moderator may rule such an amendment out of order if it is deemed to be on a substantially different subject. Such an amendment does require a second. If the amendment passes, it is incorporated into the original motion.

c. **“Substitute Amendment”** – This is a replacement of the original motion in its entirety. The maker of this type of amendment should say this or similar words, “I move that the motion on the floor be completely replaced with the following...”

9. We entrust the Moderator with the flexibility to discern a fair and just way to proceed at any point during our meeting. In the spirit of this, the Moderator may say “With the support of the Body and with no voiced objection, I suggest we proceed by...” If there is no objection, then the body proceeds in accordance with the Moderator’s suggestion. The Moderator may also lead the gathered body in prayer, into a period of discussion, or a period of silence as a way of seeking consensus or a way forward on a given issue.

10. If an issue emerges during the meeting that in the opinion of the Moderator needs further discussion and discernment, the Moderator can adjust the agenda or provide other settings where discussion or discernment may take place. This includes referring a given item to the Board of Directors of the Conference for further consideration later.

### **Process Guide:**

For this annual meeting we are going to have a Process Guide rather than a parliamentarian. As our Process Guide, the Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski will be available to reference the standing rules, bylaws, and constitution as we move through our time together. The Rev. Leah Atkinson Bilinski will also remind us of our covenant if the need arises. Finally, the Process Guide will help track our voting process.