

African Methodist Episcopal Church
 49th Quadrennial Session
 General Conference
 Minutes—Bills Passed

June 27-July 4, 2012

Gaylord Opryland
 Nashville Resort and Conference Center
 Nashville, Tennessee

Business Session VII
 June 30, 2012

BILL NO.	IC-04-02
TITLE	CORRECTION TO DEED FORM FOR REAL PROPERTY
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, The doctrines and disciplines of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, page 57, Part III Incorporation and church property, Form of deed</i>
INTENT	To improve the language creating a trust in favor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on local church property.
RATIONALE	The improve the existing language used in the

recommended deed form included in the Book of Discipline places the “In Trust” language in the habendum clause (TO HAVE AND TO HOLD) of the deed but does not place “In Trust” language in the granting clause of the deed. The failure to include the “ In Trust” language in the granting clause has been held by some State Supreme Courts to be defective thus rendering the trust language in the habendum clause are unenforceable.

AMENDED TEXT:

SAMPLE DEED

STATE OF _____

COUNTY OF _____

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that in consideration of the sum of _____ paid to the undersigned grantor(s), in hand paid by the grantee herein, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, (NAME OF GRANTOR) _____ (herein referred to as "Grantor"), hereby grants, bargains, sells, and conveys unto the (NAME OF GRANTEE) _____ IN TRUST for the AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, INC. (herein referred to as "Grantee"), the real estate situated in (NAME OF COUNTY) _____, (NAME OF STATE) _____, the following described real property:

(LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY)

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, IN TRUST, the aforesaid land, tract, privileges, and appurtenances belonging thereto, that said premises shall be used, kept, and maintained as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Inc., subject to *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, usage, and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time may be authorized and declared by the General Conference of the said church and the Annual Conference in which bounds the said premises are situated. It is provided, however, that no pastor, no Trustee Board shall mortgage or sell any property of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc., without the written consent of the Bishop of the Episcopal District and the Annual Conference where the property shall be located and or the approval of the District trustees in the interim of the Annual Conference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Grantor has signed and sealed this Deed

on the _____ Day of _____ (Month) _____ (Year)

(NAME OF GRANTOR) _____ -

By:

Print Name:

Title

STATE OF _____

_____ COUNTY

I, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said County, in said State, hereby certify that (Name of Grantor) _____ is signed to the foregoing instrument and who is known to me, acknowledged before me on this day that, being informed of the contents of said instrument, he/she, and with full authority, executed the same voluntarily, acting in his/her lawful capacity as aforesaid.

Given under my hand and official seal, this the _____ day of (Month), (Year).

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires _____

The foregoing SAMPLE DEED appropriate to transfer or convey local church property is subject to the law and legal requirements of the particular state wherein the property is located.

The following language, however, must be included in the Deed:

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD , IN TRUST, the aforesaid land, tract, privileges, and appurtenances belonging thereto, that said premises shall be used, kept, and maintained as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc., subject to *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, usage, and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time may be authorized and declared by the General Conference of the said church and the Annual Conference in which bounds the said premises are situated. It is provided, however, that no pastor, no Trustee Board shall mortgage or sell any property of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc., without the written consent of the Bishop of the Episcopal District and the Annual Conference where the property shall be located and or the approval of the District Trustees in the interim of the Annual Conference.

Business Session VIII

June 30, 2012

BILL NO	IC-04-03
TITLE	Local Church Property--Transfer of Property
REFERENC E	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 56, Section II. B</i>
INTENT	To eliminate confusion as to what happens when there is a failure to make a formal transfer property after local church incorporation
RATIONAL E	Though the property transfer after incorporation should take place, the reality is that often such a transfer does not take place. The language of our <i>Book of Discipline</i> mandates the transfer, but what are the legal consequences of a failure to make the transfer as described? The language added at lines 38-41 should eliminate any controversies that may arise. Whether incorporated or unincorporated, transferred or not, the local trustees are empowered and directed to continue administering the property as directed by the <i>Book of Discipline</i> . The added language should also have the effect of ratifying actions by the trustees where the proper transfer may not have taken place. The amendment also makes clear that individual members in control of church property also hold IN TRUST. .

AMENDED TEXT:

B. Local Church Property—Transfer of Property

The Board of Trustees, duly elected by the local church as provided by *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, may take such steps to purchase, mortgage, sell, transfer and convey real and personal property, PROVIDED that such transfer has been duly approved by the resolution in Quarterly Conference of the said church, and also by the trustees of the Annual Conference in which the property is located, and of which the presiding bishop is president.

The Board of Trustees and members of the local church hold property of whatever kind IN TRUST for the General Church and not in their individual capacities. When the local church shall be incorporated, all property—real, personal, or mixed—shall be deeded to it in its corporate name, IN TRUST for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc. Failure of the local church to deed said property to the local church corporation shall not eliminate the Connectional, IN TRUST character of the property or change the authority and duty of the local trustees and members to administer the property as directed by *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*.

The local church corporation shall have the power to sell, convey and dispose of both real and personal property as directed by *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. The proceeds of or from the sale of any local church property shall be held IN TRUST for the African Methodist Episcopal Church or disbursed for another improvement of other property owned by it, or to be purchased by it. No property shall be sold except with the approval of the Quarterly Conference, by Resolution.

BILL NO.	JA-12-01
TITLE	CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - I
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008,</i> Page 294-307, Section XIV
INTENT	To incorporate the recommendation of the Legal Council Committee convened to establish the Sexual Misconduct Policy Protocol
RATIONALE	All persons working with youth should undergo a background check

AMENDED TEXT: All candidates applying to the Board of Examiners for itinerant or local orders and pastors receiving a first pastoral assignment or who move to a different pastoral assignment shall undergo a mandatory background check. In addition, all persons (clergy and non-clergy) assigned, appointed and/or employed to positions within the African Methodist Episcopal Church involving the care and supervision of children must undergo a mandatory background check.

BILL NO.	JA-12-05
TITLE	CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - V
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008,</i> Page 294-307, Section XIV
INTENT	To correctly identify to whom the policy applies
RATIONALE	The policy covers all persons not just clergy

AMENDED TEXT: Sexual Misconduct Policy

**The amended language should be used in the title and throughout the text
whenever the policy is mentioned

BILL NO.	JA-12-09
TITLE	Guiding principles to Consider Whether a Clergy Person, Bishop or Lay Person Should be Temporarily Suspend After a Sexual Misconduct Complaint is Filed
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 301, Section IV(A)
INTENT	Encourage uniform processing of a sexual misconduct complaint.
RATIONALE	Sexual misconduct complaints are processed differently in each Annual Conference. The current process does not address the status of the clergy person when the Judicial Committee is considering the complaint. It also does not address the status of the bishop of the lay person while the complaint is being investigated. The proposed amendment will encourage uniformity and fairness.

CURRENT TEXT: Issue not addressed. New paragraph to be added at the end of section IV(A) on page 301.

When an official complaint is submitted against a clergy person, the clergy person may be temporarily suspended until the Judicial Committee determines whether there is sufficient evidence to refer the matter to the Trial Committee or whether the matter is unfounded. The guiding principles that a Bishop should consider when considering whether to temporarily suspend a clergy person pending the recommendation from the Judicial Committee include:

1. Whether the complaint involves a minor.
2. Whether an official complaint has been filed against the clergy person one or more times.
3. Whether two or more different individuals have written letters, sent emails or made calls to a Presiding Elder or a Presiding Bishop complaining that the clergy person has violated the sexual misconduct policy in the last four years, but no official complaint was filed.
4. Whether there is any possibility that the clergy person may retaliate against the accused.
5. Whether the official complaint involves allegations of any non-consensual physical activity, i.e. a forced kiss, touching or sexual activity.

If any one of the above guiding principles is applicable to the clergy person or the alleged facts included in the accusers complaint the clergy person may be temporarily suspended until the Judicial Committee makes its recommendation.

It the clergy person is temporarily suspended it shall be with pay.

If the accused is a bishop, the Council of Bishops shall review the guiding principles and if any one of the guiding principles is applicable to the bishop or the alleged facts included in the accusers complaint, the bishop may be temporarily suspended pending the investigation of the official complaint. If the bishop is temporarily suspended it shall be with pay, during the investigation and before the matter is referred to trial.

If the accused is not a bishop or clergy person, the pastor and Pro Tem of the Steward Board shall review the guiding principles and if any one of the guiding principles is applicable the accused may be temporarily suspended or removed from employment with the church or from a leadership position in the church pending the investigation.

BILL NO.	JA-12-14
TITLE	The Judicial Council Duties
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008.</i> Page 314, Section XX, Item H-18.
INTENT	To clarify the issue regarding Judicial Council Members' ability to represent persons on matters that may lead to an appeal to the Judicial Council.

RATIONALE Members of the Judicial Council are elected to render decisions on any and all matters which affect the rights of any member or Church Body of the AME Church. As such, members of the Judicial Council are incapable of providing representation to members of the Church in matters which may lead to an appeal to the same body which is elected to render decisions on behalf of the Church. Such a situation presents an inherent conflict of interest and would be tantamount to the member representing both plaintiff and defendant.

AMENDED TEXT:

At no time shall any member of the Judicial Council provide pro bono or fee for service representation in any matter where such matter may lead to an appeal of that matter to the Judicial Council. Violation of this provision shall result in the member’s immediate removal from the Judicial Council by the Council of Bishops, and replaced by an alternate member who is duly qualified to serve.

Business Session IX
July 2, 2012

BILL NO.	JA-12-04
TITLE	CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - IV
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Pages 303 & 305, Section XIV</i>
INTENT	To eliminate the finding of “neither sustained nor unstained”
RATIONALE	A definitive finding should be rendered in that the evidence is either sufficient or insufficient to reach a conclusion.

AMENDED TEXT: Pg. 303 Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of

the hearing, the Judicial Committee shall submit a written report of the proceedings, a copy of any verbatim transcript taken during the proceedings; the findings of the Committee including whether the complaint was sustained or unsustained, and a record of any previous complaints of sexual misconduct that have been sustained against the accused.

Pg. 305 **Within thirty (30) days** of the conclusion of the hearing, the Trial Committee shall provide the accuser and the accused with a written decision stating 1) the basis for the decision(s) made by the Committee. This notice shall be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing, the Trial Committee shall submit a written report of the proceedings, a copy of any verbatim transcript taken during the proceedings; the findings of the Committee, including whether or not the complaint was sustained or unsustained; and a record of any previous complaints of sexual misconduct that have been sustained against the accused.

BILL NO.	GDC-11-01
TITLE	Episcopal District Development Budget for Districts 14-20
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008 Edition, Page 270, Section II, F. Nineteenth (19th) Episcopal District (Budget and #4)</i>
INTENT	To allow the Episcopal District to establish budget priorities with greater flexibility and to eliminate the percentages in the current reading of the Discipline.

RATIONALE

The prior approval of the 19th Episcopal District Development Budget by the General Conference is cumbersome and does not allow for changing budget priorities. This legislation will allow the Episcopal District to adjust the budget and still be accountable to the connectional church through the General Board.

PROPOSAL: ELIMINATE THE PERCENTAGES AND CHANGE ITEM 4 TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

(AMENDED TEXT)

4. Episcopal Districts 14-20 shall establish an annual budget for the expenditure of Development Funds. The determination of budget percentages for various needs in Districts 14-20 shall be worked out and operated by that district, subject to prior approval by the General Board.

**Bill
Number**

GDC-11-04

Title

The H.B. Senatle AME Church Centre

Reference

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, 2008 Edition, page 280-281, Section VIII, The H.B. Senatle AME Church Centre—Johannesburg, South Africa

Intent	To remove the charter of a district project from <i>The Book of Discipline</i> , to allow the Trustees greater flexibility and autonomy in the administration of the affairs of the H.B. Senatle Centre.
Rationale	The organizational document of the H.B. Senatle Centre was placed in the Discipline at a time when it was advantageous given the political circumstances of the Republic of South Africa. In the current era of liberation, having the governing document couched in <i>The Book of Discipline</i> makes it cumbersome for the Trustees to make adjustments on a regular basis.
Budgetary Impact	None

(AMENDED TEXT)

The affairs of the H.B. Senatle AME Church Centre, Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa shall be managed by a Board of Trustees duly elected by the Episcopal District.

BILL NO. CC-09-22

TITLE Representation of Young Adults on Connectional Boards and Commissions

REFERENCE Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 161 and 220,

INTENT To clarify the language regarding Young Adult representation on General Church Boards

RATIONALE The language and interpretation regarding Young Adult presence on certain boards is vague or nonexistent. This legislation clarifies the intent of ensuring the representation of Young Adults on key Boards and Commissions of the AME Church.

AMENDED TEXT

Page 161.

Part VII, Section 1.A.

The General Board shall also be composed of five (5) representatives from each Episcopal district. Even numbered districts shall be represented by (2) ministers and three (3) lay. Odd-numbered districts shall be represented by three (3) ministers, and two (2) lay of during the quadrennium of 2008-2012. At least one member of every Episcopal District delegation shall be a young adult between the ages of 18-30. The clergy/laity order of district representation is to rotate quadrennially.

Page 161

Part VII, Section 1.A.1. Nominating Committee

...Four (4) members of the nominating committee shall be clergy and four (4) shall be laypersons. At least one member shall be a young adult between ages 18 to 30.

Page 162

3. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee of the General Board consisting of the officers of the Board and one representative from each Episcopal district. At the rise of the 2000-2004 quadrennial, even numbered districts shall furnish the ministerial representatives and odd numbered districts shall furnish the lay representatives on the Executive Committee. At least one member of the Executive Committee (Episcopal District or at large) shall be a young adult ages 18-30.

Page 167

Part VII., Section I. D. Episcopal District Budget,

1. ... The Budget will be structured and developed by the Episcopal District Budget Committee, which shall be made up of one minister and two ministers and one layperson alternately from every Annual Conference. At least one member must be a young adult ages 18 to 30.

Page 220.

G. 1. a. Post-General Conference Committees/Commissions

The General Conference Commission shall consist of four (4) bishops nominated by the Council of Bishops and elected by the General Conference; two (2) representatives (one lay and one ministerial) from each Episcopal district, to be nominated by ballot by the district delegation and elected by the General Conference; six (6) at-large representatives—three (3) lay and (3) ministerial— to be nominated by

ballot at the General Conference of whom at least one must be a young adult ages 18-30; the General Secretary and the Chief Financial Officer of the Church.

Page 227

Part VIII, Section II.

The Budget will be structured and developed by the Episcopal District Budget Committee, which shall be made up of one minister and two ministers and one layperson alternately from every Annual Conference. At least one member must be a young adult ages 18 to 30.

Page 255

Part IX., Section II. Episcopal District Budget

1. ... The Budget will be structured and developed by the Episcopal District Budget Committee, which shall be made up of one minister and two ministers and one layperson alternately from every Annual Conference. At least one member must be a young adult ages 18 to 30.

BILL NO.	GD-07-05
TITLE	Duties of an Active Bishop
REFERENCE	<i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 136, Part VI, Section III, D.</i>
INTENT	To ensure that pastoral vacancies are filled in a timely manner, so that no charge is left without a pastor for an extended period of time
RATIONALE	When a charge is left without a pastor for an extended period of time it creates instability in the charge, and in many instances makes it more difficult when a pastor is appointed. There should be a time frame in which the presiding bishop must fill a pastoral vacancy. This enables the local charge to know when to expect to have the vacancy

filled.

Insert: Duties of an Active Bishop, D., add to item 1, page 136

When a charge within an Annual Conference is without a pastor for any reason, the presiding bishop must appoint a pastor within one hundred twenty days (120) to fill the vacancy.

BILL NO.	GD-07-13
TITLE	Voting Privileges of Retired Bishops in the Council of Bishops, General Board and General Conference
REFERENCE	<i>AMEC Book of Discipline, page 140</i>
INTENT	To require Active Bishops to take full responsibility in their role and office as chief executives by limiting the voting privileges of retired bishops on fiduciary matters and the assignment of active bishops.
RATIONALE	Retired bishops, who have no legal obligation to generate or report funds to the denomination, should be ineligible to vote on fiduciary matters. As the Discipline provides that “under no circumstances shall a retired bishop be permitted to make pastoral appointments,” likewise retired bishops should not be permitted to unduly influence, “by vote,” matters that pertain to fiscal policy, assignment of active bishops when vacancies occur without having to bear any burden of the outcome of their vote.

Amend the section related to Retired Bishops, adding the proposed statement as item (17) as follows:

17. Retired Bishop shall have the right to participate in discussions relative to any matter that comes to the attention of the Council of Bishops, or in any forum where church polity or institutional history is being addressed, (such participation may include

recommendations) but shall not have the right to vote on matters specifically related to fiscal liability and obligations of the denomination, or the assignment of active bishops in the event of a vacancy.

BILL NO.	CC-09-03
TITLE	Application Requirements for Ecclesiastical Endorsement
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 205-06, Section E. Commission on Chaplains, number 5
INTENT	To assist the Ecumenical Officer with persons interested in the chaplaincy by requiring aspirants to complete an application and interview prior to consideration for endorsement.
RATIONALE	The AME Church lacks an adequate screening process to select the best qualified ministers to become chaplains.

AMENDED TEXT: The Commission on Chaplains will be available to assist the Ecumenical Officer with endorsing chaplains for the AME Church. The requirements for ecclesiastical endorsements are:

- a. an Itinerant Elder in good and regular standing within an Annual Conference;
- b. a graduate from an accredited college and accredited theological seminary (ATS).
- c. a completed application of Ecclesiastical Endorsement as provided by Ecumenical Officer of the AME Church;
- d. provide a copy of your mental health assessment results.
- d. provide a certified copy of your mental health assessment results, conducted within the last two years by a licensed mental health provider;
- e. The completed application along with a copy of the mental health assessment results must be submitted within 90 days of the health assessment.
- f. Once the Ecumenical Officer has received and reviewed both documents, a date is set for an interview with the person interested in chaplaincy in coordination with the members of the Commission on Chaplains within 30-60 days.

g. The Commission on Chaplains will choose from its members or designate an endorsed AME Chaplain to assist the Ecumenical Officer in conducting the interview.

h. If an applicant's location prevents him or her from having an in-person interview with the Ecumenical Officer and members of the commission, then an interview may be conducted by "Skype" technology or by telephone.

i. The Endorser and the Commission on Chaplains will assess the candidate's qualification and the Ecumenical Officer will make the final decision on whether to endorse an applicant.

Business Session X
July 2, 2012

**Bill
Number**

CC-09-09

Title

Election of the General Secretary

Reference

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, 2008 Edition, page 215, Section I, The General Conference, Subsection E.1. & 7

Intent	To elect the General Secretary at the same time as other General Officers and allow for the smooth transition between secretaries.
Rationale	The proper functioning of the General Secretary requires much preparation and coordination of resources. When the General Secretary chooses not to stand for election, or when the incumbent is not re-elected, the introduction of new personnel has the potential of disrupting the efficiency and integrity of the operation. The effect of this bill is to delay the election and assumption of duties by the General Secretary beginning with the 50 th Session of the General Conference.
Budgetary Impact	None

Amended Text: 5. The General Secretary of the AME Church shall be elected at the same time, and in the same manner, as other General Officers. The newly elected General Secretary will assume official duties immediately following the close of the General Conference. The General Secretary serving the session of the General Conference will organize the documents of that session and turn them over to the new General Secretary within thirty (30) days following the close of the session.

And

7. The General Secretary shall appoint a First Assistant Secretary, Second Assistant Secretary, Third Assistant Secretary, First Statistical Secretary, Second Statistical Secretary, Engrossing Clerk, and Reading Clerk.

BILL NO.	CC-09-11
TITLE	Enforcement of Conference Attendance by Chaplains

REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 205-06, Section E. Commission on Chaplains, number 2
INTENT	To enforce the annual reporting requirement for Active Duty military and Veteran’s Administration chaplains.
RATIONALE	Chaplains have been ignoring the current reporting requirement. Stricter consequences should boost compliance.

AMENDED TEXT: Active duty military and Veteran’s Administration chaplains must report annually to their annual conference and the Endorsing Agent. One of these reports must be made in person to the Annual Conference during the Quadrennium. Chaplains who will be absent from their Annual Conference must notify in writing the Endorsing Agent and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal District in which the chaplain holds membership. Permission to be absent from the Annual Conference must be granted by the presiding Bishop and a copy of the written request must be sent to the Endorsing Agent. Failure to comply may result in forfeiture of the ecclesiastical endorsement by the Endorsing Agent. Requests for absence from the Annual Conference will not unreasonably be withheld.

BILL NO.	MN-06-01
TITLE	Admissions Policy for Itinerant Ministry
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Part V, Section II, Page 85, paragraph A
INTENT	To change the age requirement of candidates for Admission into the Itinerancy and to make retroactive the status of Locals who meet all requisites under the new policy.
RATIONALE	Many older persons, with natural graces and acquired gifts from prior work experiences, are entering ministry and demonstrating commitment by pursuing graduate level theological training, who

would otherwise have been Admitted to the Conference as Itinerants if not for the age restriction. Such persons will benefit the ministry of our Church.

AMENDED TEXT: Candidates for admission for itinerant ministerial orders shall not be older than sixty (60) years of age, attested to by a certified copy of the applicant’s birth certificate or other legally acceptable proof of age. Each candidate shall be required to present a satisfactory certificate of good health and shall be required to submit to psychological and/or psychiatric tests and evaluations administered by a licensed professional and kept confidential to provide information on the candidate’s fitness for the ministry. Candidates so tested and evaluated may also be required to periodically submit to chemical abuse testing. Physical disabilities are not to be **construed** as unfavorable health factors when such a person is capable of performing the duties associated with the itinerant ministry.

Retroactive Status Adjustment

Ministers who were previously received into ministry as Locals because of the age restriction may apply for Itinerant status, provided all other standards have been met. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, the Annual Conference may change the status of the Local minister and will recognize the crossover from Local to Itinerant with appropriate ceremony and liturgy written for the occasion.

BILL NO.	MN-06-04
TITLE	Clarification of Authority of Active Bishops Section III(D)16 to Provide That All Issues Related to Clergy Sexual Misconduct Complaints Are Governed by the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy

REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 137, Section III(D) 16
INTENT	Encourage uniform processing of sexual misconduct complaints.
RATIONALE	The AME Church has developed specific and unique rules for processing sexual misconduct claims. The processing of the complaint and the status of the accused should all be addressed within the Clergy Sexual Misconduct policy. By definition, sexual misconduct claims may also include a “charge of immoral conduct.” The Discipline provides under the “Authority of Active Bishops” that a bishop may not allow a minister with a charge of immoral conduct to officiate in any pulpit. This provision is not a part of the clergy sexual misconduct policy and it should not be randomly used to suspend a clergy person or temporarily remove a clergy person from a pulpit after a clergy sexual misconduct complaint has been filed.

AMENDED TEXT: 16. The bishop shall not admit to the Annual Conference, transfer, or appoint to the pastorate, presiding eldership, missionary work, or agency, nor allow to officiate in any pulpit or at the alter of any AME Church, any minister under suspension, expulsion, or with charge of immoral conduct against him or her in our church, or from another church. Except that any alleged complaint or charge of violating Section XIV. Clergy Sexual Misconduct shall only be processed by the guidelines established in that section and shall not be controlled by this section.

**Bill
Number**

MN-06-09

Title

Distribution of AMEC Ministerial Retirement Annuity Plan Benefits

Reference

Part V, Section XIII, Retired Ministers, Pages 131-132

Intent

To expedite the distribution of vested retirement annuity benefits to eligible participants 75 years of age and older.

Rationale

Current Retirement Annuity Plan regulations pose potential financial difficulties for clergy persons who are ineligible to receive a pastoral appointment due to age but have not officially requested or been granted Superannuation/Retirement status.

AMENDED TEXT: **Distribution of AMEC Ministerial Retirement Annuity Plan Benefits**

Insert Part V, Section XIII, New C

Clergy persons and other eligible participants who are officially enrolled in the African Methodist Episcopal Church Ministerial Retirement Annuity Plan shall be eligible to request and receive a Full Surrender Distribution of the vested assets in their personal retirement annuity account upon the occurrence of either one (1) of the following eligible distribution events:

- 1. Upon attaining seventy-five (75) years of age, OR**
- 2. Being granted official **Superannuation/Retirement** status by the appropriate Annual Conference, OR**
- 3. Upon the voluntary or involuntary official separation from the active ministry or compensated service of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.**

Written confirmation of either of these eligible distribution events must be submitted to and received by the Executive Director of the Department of Annuity Investments and Insurance by the appropriate confirming entity

prior to the Full Surrender Distribution being permitted. Any person receiving a Full Surrender Distribution shall be rendered permanently ineligible for future participation in the Plan.

The passage of this legislation shall have no bearing or effect on any other existing regulation or provision of the current Plan Document governing the African Methodist Episcopal Church Ministerial Retirement Annuity Plan or any other church sponsored retirement or insurance benefit administered by the Department of Annuity Investments and Insurance.

BILL NO.	MN-06-10
TITLE	INVENTORY OF AME CHURCH PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
REFERENCE	The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008. 48th ed. Nashville, TN: The AME Church Sunday School Union, 2009. The Role of the Presiding Elder (Part V, Section IX, A. 1. f.), Page 124.
INTENT	To amend Part V, Section IX. A. 1, f. by creating a centralized AME Church property asset database for the purpose of managing and protecting all said church properties.
RATIONALE	The AME Church has the responsibility of identifying and providing a tool for accessing all property owned by the AME Church, world-wide. A database will ensure that assets are properly documented and managed and made available to AME Church officials when appropriate, (e.g. Bishops, General Secretary/Chief Information Officer, etc). Currently each local church shall submit a copy of all legal documents, including but not limited to deeds and assets, to the presiding elder during a quarterly conference. For comprehensive and effective record keeping purposes, it is recommended that an official inventory be made of all AME Church property and given to the presiding elder during a quarterly conference. The presiding elder in turn shall submit these documents to the Presiding Prelate, who shall then submit them to the connectional church. This process shall be implemented consistently

across all districts which allows for the creation of a connectional database of all property owned by the AME Church. As a result, the connectional church will have adequate knowledge of all property and assets owned by this institution.

AMENDED TEXT: (Part V, Section IX, A, 1. f. 1. and 2.)

The presiding elder will report to the Annual Conference each year in writing all the all church property and assets purchased (owned), leased, donated or otherwise acquired.

(f. 1.) The presiding elder will verify that all charters, deeds and other church property in the district conform to The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to the laws, usages and forms of the Local Government (i.e. county/parish, state, territory or country), wherein such property is located. **A copy of said documents must be submitted to the Presiding Elder District, Annual Conference, Episcopal District** and to the trustees of the connectional church (e.g. Board of Trustees-AMEC Inc.) for any property newly purchased, modified, or transferred during the current conference year.

(f. 2.) The Presiding Elder shall present to the Quarterly Conference verification of all newly purchased, modified, or transferred property or assets to the Annual Conference Board of Trustees and the Presiding

Bishop, and shall submit a copy to the Board of Trustees for the Episcopal District and shall submit a copy to the connectional church.

FUNDING: No funding is required for this bill.

Business Session XI

July 3, 2012, 2012

BILL NO.	MN-06-20
TITLE	Notarized Statement Regarding Surrender of Ministerial Orders
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , 110; Part V, Section V. A. 1.
INTENT	To ensure that ordained ministers who leave the A.M.E. Church ministry surrender their ministerial orders.
RATIONALE	By signing a notarized statement of understanding prior to ordination, ministers should have a greater appreciation for the fact that they cannot exercise the authority of ministerial orders granted by the A.M.E. Church if they cease to be affiliated with the A.M.E. Church, and that said orders must be surrendered. This law will reinforce the termination of annual conference membership provisions set forth in Part V, Section XIV (page 132).

AMENDED TEXT: A traveling minister of two full years (full years begin with admission on trial) standing in the Annual Conference is eligible for election to the Order of Deacon, provided he or she satisfies the Annual Conference for fitness of the office. If such licentiate is in attendance at an ATS accredited theological seminary and upon passing the Board of Examiners, he or she shall be credited the hours completed in the

theological seminary, and upon passing satisfactory examination, may be ordained a deacon by the bishop of his or her conference. Prior to ordination, the licentiate shall present to the Board of Examiners a statement, signed by the licentiate and notarized, stating:

“I hereby acknowledge that any ministerial orders granted under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Incorporated (the "A.M.E. Church") are the property of the A.M.E. Church. In the event that my orders are terminated or suspended, or should my membership in the Annual Conference be terminated, either voluntarily or by action of the Annual Conference or any other component of the A.M.E. Church authorized to take such action, I will immediately surrender my orders to the Annual Conference and cease to exercise authority granted under said orders. I will also abide by any applicable provisions of the *Discipline*, currently in effect or subsequently enacted, pertaining to the surrender of ministerial orders, including, but not limited to, Part V, Section XIV.”

For purposes of this law, a transfer of Annual Conference membership from one Annual Conference to another shall not be construed as a termination of Annual Conference membership. The Board of Examiners shall present copies of the notarized statement to the bishop and the secretary of the Annual Conference.

It shall be mandatory that the Annual Conference Secretary publish in the periodical of record in the county where the Annual Conference meet as well as the county in which the ministers lives when ministerial orders are revoked.

BILL NO.	MN-06-19
TITLE	MINISTERS' BILL OF RIGHTS—Notice of Change
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 121, Section VII(A)(2)(e)
INTENT	To establish a standard for pastoral change
RATIONALE	A standard should be set to allow for effective oversight and management of appointments, thereby furthering church growth and development.

AMENDED TEXT: Basis for and Notice of Pastoral Change— If a bishop intends to move a pastor to another charge without his or her consent, written notice must be given to the pastor at least (90) days in advance of the move. The written notice must indicate a reason(s) for the move. A pastor may be reassigned to a lesser charge or no charge, or have his/her one (1) year appointment abrogated only for the following reasons: 1) mutual agreement between bishop and pastor; 2) judicial cause (Part XI *Judicial Administration* Section II), 3) location (Part V, Section XII *The Located Ministers*); 4) for the good of the congregation (as referenced in Part V, Section XII; or 5) mismanagement.

Reassignment for the good of the congregation requires the stewards of the congregation to certify in writing to the presiding bishop with a copy to the presiding elder and the pastor, their reason(s) for the request including dishonest or self-interested handling or mishandling of finances. Under no circumstances may a Bishop

negate the underlying purpose of this bill which is to protect pastors from arbitrary and capricious moves, or moves motivated by or intended to be vindictive or revengeful.

Business Session XII
July 3, 2012, 2012

BILL NO.	MN-06-26
TITLE	Retirement of Ministers in the AME Church
REFERENCE	<i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 131, Part V, Section XIII, A
INTENT	To change and clarify the definition and procedure for Itinerant Ministers to retire from the active ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
RATIONALE	Presently the Discipline says that the only way an Itinerant Minister can retire is by request to the Annual Conference, while at the same time stipulating that no Itinerant Minister seventy-five (75) years of age shall receive an appointment as presiding elder or pastor. Additionally, bishops who are Itinerant Ministers must retire at age seventy-five (75). A mandatory retirement age of seventy-five (75) would make the law uniform for all Itinerant Ministers. Any Itinerant Minister who chooses to retire before age seventy-five would submit a letter requesting retirement to the annual conference. Mandatory Location. (Section XII, E., page 131, would be deleted.)

AMENDED TEXT: Insert: Section XIII. The Retired Ministers

A. Definition

An Itinerant Minister must be relieved from traveling, and is not to receive an appointment as presiding elder or pastor at the age of seventy-five (75) years of age by his or her Annual Conference. Those who desire to retire before age seventy-five (75) must submit a letter to the Annual Conference requesting

retirement. The retired minister shall be a member of a Quarterly Conference. Retired ministers are encouraged to continue preaching, assisting in their local church, and may assist in other capacities as requested by the bishop, presiding elder, or local pastor.

BILL NO.	CC-09-25
TITLE	The Annual Conference Board of Trustees
REFERENCE	<i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 230, 231, Part VIII, Section II</i>
INTENT	To set times during the conference year when the Annual Conference Trustees are required to meet and churches in the conference are required to provide the Conference Trustees with information relative to mortgages and other financial matters to which the Conference serves as guarantor
RATIONALE	Currently there is no requirement for the Annual Conference Trustees to meet during the conference year, and no requirement or mechanism for churches within the Annual Conference to whom the Annual Conference serves as guarantor, to report to the Annual Conference the status of its mortgage or other indebtedness.

AMENDED TEXT: Insert: 3. Meetings and Agenda

The Annual Conference Trustees are required to meet at least twice during the conference year, midway during the conference year and prior to the Annual Conference. The Secretary of the Annual Conference Board of Trustees will notify trustees of the meeting date, time and place. At each meeting any church, with a mortgage or indebtedness to which the annual conference serves as guarantor, shall present from the lending institution a written report from the lender, stating the amount

of indebtedness, and status of the mortgage or debt. The Conference Trustees shall take any necessary action, if needed to protect the property of the annual conference.

Minutes and actions of the Annual Conference Trustees shall be recorded and copies provided to the bishop and each member of the Board of Trustees and Annual Conference.

BILL NO.	CC-09-28
TITLE	The Quarterly Conference Composition
REFERENCE	<i>2008 A.M.E. Discipline</i> , Page 233, Section IV. A. Composition
INTENT	To have the Presidents of the Local Lay Organization as members of the Quarterly Conference added to the Discipline.
RATIONALE	Presidents of the Lay Organization are members of the Official Board, Quarterly Conference, District Conference and Annual Conference. The omission under the Quarterly Conference needs to be corrected.

AMENDED TEXT:

Line 5 through 9 – amend to read:

licensed missionary workers, evangelists and the superintendent of the Church School, the presidents of the Lay Organization, A.C.E. Fellowship and Missionary societies, administrators of the A.M.E. institutions, organizations and agencies, provided the latter are members of the A.M.E. Church.

BILL NO.	JA-12-12
TITLE	Rescinding Temporary Suspension of Clergy Person if Clergy Sexual Misconduct Complaint is Not Referred to Trial.

REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 303, Section IV(B) Roles and Responsibilities of Supervising Bishop or President of Council of Bishops – add new sentence
INTENT	Encourage uniform processing of a sexual misconduct complaint.
RATIONALE	Sexual misconduct complaints are processed differently in each Annual Conference. The current process does not address the status of the clergy person after the matter is deemed “unfounded” by the Judicial Committee.

AMENDED TEXT: If the complaint is deemed to be “unfounded” the bishop need not take any further action – Except restore the clergy person to a position that is equal to or greater than the position from which he/she was temporarily suspended if available.

BILL NO.	CC-09-17
TITLE	MEMBERSHIP ON THE EPISCOPAL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE
REFERENCE	The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008. 48th ed. Nashville, TN: The AME Church Sunday School Union, 2009. Part VII, Section I.D., The Episcopal District Budget, Page 167.
INTENT	To amend the first paragraph to include membership representation on the Episcopal District Budget Committee from all Annual Conferences and to clarify the word “youth”.
RATIONALE	To maintain a consistent policy for membership on committees in the Episcopal District, ensuring representation by each Annual Conference on the Episcopal District, Budget Committee.

AMENDED TEXT: Part VII, Section I.D., The Episcopal District Budget, (Page 167)

The Episcopal District Budget - There shall be established in each episcopal district of the African Methodist Episcopal Church a central fund which shall be known as the Episcopal District Budget Fund. The Episcopal District Budget shall be approved by the

episcopal district through its Annual Conferences. The budget will be structured and developed by the Episcopal District Budget Committee which shall be made up of one clergy, one layperson, and one young adult layperson ages 18-30, and two ministers and one lay person, alternately, from each annual conference within the episcopal district. Where there is a person in the episcopal district who possesses accounting or legal expertise, such person shall be considered for election by the respective Annual Conference. The Episcopal District Budget shall not exceed 35% of the episcopal district allocation of the connectional budget, except in episcopal districts where the Episcopal district budget allocation does not exceed \$500,000. The Episcopal District Budget shall not exceed the 1996-2000 level.

FUNDING: There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation.

BILL NO.	CM-05-01
TITLE	Admission Into the Church
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 62, Section I - C
INTENT	To replace what may be viewed as negative language with positive language. To include responsibility of membership.
RATIONALE	The word “probation” has a negative connotation and is generally attached to the criminal justice system. There may be those joining churches who have experienced the world’s “probation” or may yet be

experiencing it. Membership in the church should reflect the newness of life and responsibility that comes with accepting Christ and becoming members of the church.

AMENDED TEXT: C. New Members Training

All persons coming to the church with a desire to flee from the wrath to come, but not exercising saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may be received for new members training for a period of ninety (90) days. During this time they will be placed under the supervision of a class leader in conjunction with the pastor. They shall be instructed in the Bible and the current Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, particularly our doctrine, organizational structure, and local membership guide. At the expiration of the new members training period, based upon the person’s profession of his/her covenant relation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the recommendation of the class leader in conjunction with the pastor, he/she may be admitted to full membership. If, however, after proper examination, the class leader should report him/her as not qualified for full membership, then the new member training period may be extended.

BILL NO.	CM-05-02
TITLE	Admission Into the Church (full membership)
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008,</i> Page 62, Section I - D
INTENT	To replace what may be viewed as negative language with positive

	language. To include responsibility of membership.
RATIONALE	The word “probation” has a negative connotation and references the criminal justice system. There may be those joining churches who have experienced the world’s “probation” or may yet be experiencing it. Additionally amendment emphasizes discipleship training.

AMENDED TEXT: D. Persons To Be Received Into Full Membership

All persons coming to the African Methodist Episcopal Church on profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during a worship service, prayer meeting or revival service, or on other occasions; or persons coming from other denominations, shall be received for *new members training* for a period of three months without the denial of sacramental rites of the Kingdom of God and shall be placed under the special care of the pastor or his/her designee.

BILL NO.	CM-05-03
TITLE	Admission Into the Church (preparation for membership)
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 63, Section I - E
INTENT	To replace what may be viewed as negative language with positive language.
RATIONALE	The term “probationer” has a negative connotation and references the criminal justice system. Membership in God’s church should be

expressed positively.

AMENDED TEXT: E. Preparation for Full Membership

In preparation for being received into full membership in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, all *new members* shall be given at least the following areas of study:

BILL NO.	CM-05-04
TITLE	ADVANCEMENT FROM MEMBERSHIP TO DISCIPLESHIP IN THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
REFERENCE	The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008. 48th ed., Nashville, TN: The AME Church Sunday School Union, 2009. Part IV, Section I.E., Page 63, Preparation for Membership; Part IV, Section III., Page 76, Commissions in the Local Church; Part IV, Section III.B., Duties of Commissions, Page 78.
INTENT	This bill is intended to amend an institutional provision for a Commission on Discipleship whereby members may advance from membership to discipleship. The Commission will become a part of the Commission on Membership, Evangelism and Discipleship along with the duties of the Commission. A process is needed whereby members can continuously develop a relationship with God while practicing the great commission. Membership is a first step to Christian living but discipleship is the ultimate goal of every Christian.
RATIONALE	The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church provides very specific details for the process of becoming a member of the church; however no provision is made for members to advance to the level of discipleship. A process is needed whereby members can continuously develop a relationship with God while practicing the great commission. Membership is a first step to Christian living but discipleship is the ultimate goal of every Christian. Mathew 28:19-20 admonishes believers to “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (JV)”. The Commission will be assigned the responsibility of implementing a formal discipleship curriculum of continuing education through the use of best practice models. (Models currently available include but are not limited to: From Membership to Discipleship Manual 2011: Reid Temple AME Church, Glen Dale, MD, The Rev. Dr. Lee P. Washington, Pastor; Blackaby, H. & R. Blackaby. (2001). Spiritual leadership: Moving people on to God’s agenda. Nashville, TN:

Broadman & Holman Publishers; and McClung, F (1990). Basic discipleship. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.)

AMENDED TEXT: (Part IV, Add new Section 1.F., Pg. 63 and amend numbering in subsequent sections F-H). The new section reads as follows:

Advancement to Discipleship: Following this process, members of the local church shall continue their Christian development by proceeding through a formal discipleship curriculum of continuing education implemented by the Commission on Christian Education and Discipleship.

AMENDED TEXT: (Part IV, Section III, Pg. 76)

Commissions in the Local Church: There may be constituted in each local church the following commissions, whose respective duties are hereinafter defined: (1) The Christian Education and Discipleship; (2) The Commission on Christian Education, (3) The Commission on Missions and Welfare, (4) The Commission on Stewardship and Finance, (5) The Commission of Public Relations, (6) The Commission of Christian Social Action, (7) The Commission of Health.

AMENDED TEXT: Part IV, Section III., B., Duties of Commissions, Page 78.

Duties of Commissions: 1. Commissions on Christian Education and Discipleship:

- a) Every pastor shall be encouraged to establish in the local church a Commission on Christian Education and Discipleship.

1) Implement The Commission on Membership, Evangelism and Discipleship and be assigned the responsibility of implementing a formal discipleship curriculum of continuing education in every local church (for all members; youth, young adults, adults and seniors) under the direction of the local pastor and lay leaders through formal Bible Study, Church School, Christian Education, New Members Class, Evangelism Ministries, etc. This curriculum shall teach obedience to the Word of God “to go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” spiritual persistence and methods to disciple others to experience a growing relationship with God. Best practice research models and current Christian literature shall be utilized.

FUNDING: There is no direct cost associated with this proposed legislation.

BILL NO.	CM-05-06
TITLE	Deaconesses
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 71, Section II,A,d,5
INTENT	To update the style of head covering to be worn.
RATIONALE	The head covering is out dated and is not currently being worn by most newly consecrated deaconesses.

AMENDED TEXT: Regulation garb shall be worn by deaconesses to distinguish them.

They shall wear a neat uniform of plain gray material, with appropriate head covering of the same color, and where possible, of the same material.

BILL NO.	MN-06-25
TITLE	PRESIDING ELDER DISTRICT BUDGET
REFERENCE	The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008. 48th ed. Nashville, TN: The AME Church Sunday School Union, 2009. Part V, Section IX, B., The Role of the Presiding Elder: The Presiding Elders, Page 125.
INTENT	To amend Part V, Section IX, B of The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to bring uniformity in fiscal accountability to all levels of the church.
RATIONALE	The report of the 2004 Strategic Planning Committee indicated that one of the threats facing our church is the lack of financial accountability. It calls for accountability and integrity at all levels of the church. The local church gives a financial report at the Quarterly Conference and the Bishop gives a financial report of the District at the General Conference. The Presiding Elder shall align her/his accountability standards for the District(s) of the Annual Conference with the accountability and integrity measures practiced at the local church and Episcopal District levels. The District(s) of the Annual Conference shall give a financial/budget report at the District Conference and the Annual Conference for finances collected at the District Conference, Church School Conference and Allen Christian Fellowship Conference, thus creating integrity and accountability at all church levels.

PROPOSED NEW TEXT: Part V, Section IX, B, The Ministry: The Presiding Elder, (Page 125) Add new subsection B.1., Financial Accountability and renumber the remaining subsections B.2., and B.3.

Part V, Section IX, B.1. – Financial Accountability

There shall be established in each presiding elder district a budget committee. The budget committee shall be made up of nine persons, five ministers and four lay persons,

and four ministers and five lay persons, alternately, one of whom shall be a young adult, age 18-30.

The presiding elder shall serve as chairperson ex-officio. The committee shall be elected at the District Conference and serve for a term of one fiscal year. Where there is a person in the district who possesses accounting or legal expertise, such person shall be considered for election by the District Conference. The committee shall prepare a comprehensive district financial report to include all financial assessments from the local church for district operations, inclusive of income and expenses for the District Conference, Church School Quarterly Conference, and the Allen Christian Fellowship Convention. The Budget Committee shall present a printed, annual report of district income and expenditures to each local church of the districts of the Annual Conference, and to the Episcopal District.

FUNDING: There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation.

BILL NO.	JA-12-10
TITLE	On Divorce
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 311 and 312, Section XVIII B</i>
INTENT	To remove the current policy on Divorce from the Book of Discipline and to add a statement that honors marriage as a sacred trust, while also expressing Christian compassion for persons who have had to face the difficult decision to legally divorce and to move on with their lives from a relationship that could not be sustained.

RATIONALE The reality is that the current policy statement on Divorce cannot be enforced. It is a draconian rule from another era that can no longer be justified, given the reality that many members of our church (pastors, church officers, and denominational leaders) have been divorced and some have married more than once. They have remarried while their former spouse still lives. This would be considered to be in direct violation of this policy. We are in no position to disqualify them from membership in our churches, or to refuse them our fellowship, deny them the sacraments, or take their ordination.

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGE

Section XVIII – B, page 312 on **Divorce** is hereby repealed. The Compilations Committee is instructed to remove the statement from the Discipline.

AMENDED TEXT: Current policy on divorce is to be deleted from the Discipline.

For the sake of theological and historic continuity, the Historiographer shall be instructed to provide a historical perspective on the former policy to be included in the Discipline as a footnote.

BILL NO.	MN-06-16
TITLE	MINISTERS’ BILL OF RIGHTS--Housing
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Page 120-121, Section VII(A)(2)(b)
INTENT	To align the policy with current practice
RATIONALE	Churches should not be limited or restricted to only provide parsonages to pastors.

AMENDED TEXT: A comfortable parsonage shall be furnished for the pastor’s family by the Trustees of the local church within the agreed means of the church, in the alternative

the Stewards of the local church may negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor.

BILL NO.	MN-06-17
TITLE	Minister's Bill of Rights - I
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page120, Section VII</i>
INTENT	Clarify ambiguity that exist between appointment of Itinerant Elders and Itinerant Deacons
RATIONALE	An Itinerant Deacon may be assigned to pastor a charge; however, if there is an Itinerant Elder in good and regular standing he/she may be appointed to the charge being pastored by the Itinerant Deacon without the bishop being bound by the 90 day notice required if it were an Itinerant Elder

INSERT: Minister's Bill of Rights, Section VII

A. Preamble

1. A Bill of Rights for African Methodist Episcopal Church Ministers. We affirm, declare, and Enact the following basic rights for the Itinerant Ministers of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
2. It shall be the basic right of Itinerant Elders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to:
 - a. remains the same
 - b. remains the same
 - c. remains the same
 - d. remains the same

- e. Notice of Pastoral Change – At least ninety (90) days in advance of the bishop’s intent to move him or her to another charge without his or her consent, notice of such change must be given to the Itinerant Elder. Such intent by a bishop must be in writing and indicate reasons for the same. His or her appointment shall be valid for one (1) year from the date of appointment and may only be abrogated for judicial cause, or mutual agreement between the bishop and pastor, for the good of the congregation when certified in writing to the presiding elder and the pastor, by the stewards of said congregation and concurred in by the presiding elder and the bishop
- f. Itinerant Deacons – Itinerant Deacons may receive an appointment from the presiding bishop to a pastoral charge and pastor that charge as long as the bishop in his/her Judgment decides to appoint them. However, the presiding bishop may in his/her Judgment, if there is an Itinerant Elder in good and regular standing, appoint the Itinerant Elder to that charge without providing the ninety (90) day notice. In such instance the presiding bishop should inform the Itinerant Deacon before such a move is made.

g. BILL NO.	CC-09-07
TITLE	Commission on Higher Education
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008, Page 164, Part VII, Section 1.B. Responsibilities of Standing Committees, Commission on Higher Education</i>

INTENT	To have the Commission on Higher Education review and hold hearings to review the strength and viability of each of our colleges and universities and make a report to the General Board in 2014, with specific recommendations as to how many schools should remain open, possibility of an AME University System, funding for higher education, and to submit evidence of long range planning.
RATIONALE	Our denomination has not taken a comprehensive look at our schools or considered long range planning and alternatives in decades. This legislation would require us to begin this process.

INSERT: The Commission on Higher Education shall also review and hold hearings this Quadrennial on each of our colleges and universities to determine the strength and the viability of each institution. The Commission shall present to the General Board at its 2014 meeting specific recommendations relative to strength and viability of each school, possible alternatives, funding for higher education, and long term planning.

BILL NO.	CM-05-10
TITLE	Growing the local AME Church School
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008</i> , Part IV, and Section II. (A)(3)(c.2) (Page 73).
INTENT	To increase Church School enrollment by modifying the mission to maximize participation for all age groups, utilizing creative teaching technologies and incorporating the Church School Creed in the Discipline. This proposed legislation has no impact on the Connectional Budget.
RATIONALE	The Discipline identifies the only demographic groups for Church School attendance as adults and children. The current language about targeted

demographic groups is too vague and ambiguous. Church officers, youth, young adults and matriculating college students are omitted in the mission statement. These omissions must be corrected if we seek to maximize local Church School growth opportunities.

AMENDED TEXT: The mission of the Church School in the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall be to disciple, teach, train, nurture, prepare, and recruit Church officers, adults, young adults, college students, teenagers and children in God’s Word for Christian service, emphasizing Christian principles, creative teaching pedagogies, state –of-the-art learning technologies and multimedia products which are essential for effective Christian growth and participation.

The CHURCH SCHOOL CREED will be:

believe my AME Church School must grow and grow and I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, Every Christian a worker, Every worker trained, A worker that need not be ashamed, This we ask in Jesus’ name!

BILL NO.	CM-05-15
TITLE	Voluntary Merging of Small Congregations for Greater Spiritual Work
REFERENCE	<i>Presently not in The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church</i>
INTENT	To impact growth of AME Churches by integrating churches with small congregations for more effective fellowship among members of the same locality and to more efficiently expend AME financial resources.
RATIONALE	How does our community perceive the AME Church? Being unable to use costly PR as some denominations, we must change our image of too many small congregations within miles of each other that have 5-10 cars parked on Sunday mornings. Attracting new members to our churches is of great importance. Presently there is no process in our

Discipline on how to merge congregations. This process must take into consideration generational and psychological issues, property and location, as well as membership. The process of merging should take approximately two years or less, if possible, taking into consideration the previously stated concerns and issues of merging. Many of these smaller churches often rely on their respective conferences and Episcopal Districts for financial assistance—many struggle to independently sustain themselves. Also, consideration of property value needs to be foremost in the evaluation and vetting process. We must maintain property of significant historic value. The following process timetable can be accelerated if needed.

TEXT: Add a new section in *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012* to follow chapter on Church Growth and Evangelism.

Episcopal leadership in conjunction with the Committee on Church Growth and Development should identify congregations that are in close proximity to each other with membership ranging from 1-50. Secondly, a meeting should be called with the designated Presiding Elder, the Stewards and Trustees of both Congregations, the Pastors, and the appropriate Board of Trustees. The following steps should be followed to merge Congregations:

Step 1. If all are in agreement, each Pastor should call a Church Conference to present the idea to their members—(Timeline 3 months).

Step 2. Committees should be established to include members from both congregations to do research on property issues, inclusive of identifying a contractor to determine which structure has the best potential for growth and expansion, which property has greater historic value, including special consideration for cemetery properties--(Timeline 6 months). Congregations must determine how cemeteries will be managed and maintained.

Step 3. Both congregations should meet for services together exchanging facilities at least twice per month for the duration of the next conference year—(Timeline 12 months). The goal is for them to see the benefits and how well they can worship together. The Episcopal leadership along with the Presiding Elder would need to ensure that the Pastors involved would also have a future assignment within the upcoming conference year.

Step 4. Boards of each church would be able to merge also, inclusive of Trustees, Stewards, and Stewardesses, etc., based on numbers stipulated in the *Book of Discipline*. No one should lose their position during this transition. Of course, as the church grows, the new pastor should follow the Discipline in making any changes after one year as a combined congregation—(Timeline 12 months). The combined congregation at the end of one year of exchanging services will decide, based on committee reports, which structure will become their actual location; or would the sale of both properties serve them better in searching for a new neutral location. Because of generational issues, the churches names could be combined to maintain continuity. For example, a St. Phillip and a St. Paul could become “The Church of Phillip and Paul AME” or “The African Methodist Episcopal Church of Phillip & Paul.” Another example, “Smith Chapel-Bearden Temple AME Church.” Of course, congregations will have the ability to select a new name, if desired, thus creating a neutral name and a new start for both congregations. Before the final merger closes, classes to train the officers in how to operate as a station church be conducted. The Annual Conference will redistribute the fiscal encumbrances of said churches.

Funding: No additional cost to the Episcopal District or the Connectional Church.

**Bill
Number**

JA-12-11

Title

Referencing Judicial Council Decisions in the *Discipline*.

**Referenc
e**

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008 Edition, Part VIII, Section I.G.2 The Compilation Committee, page 222

Intent

To include in the *Book of Discipline* references to decisions of the Judicial Council that inform a proper reading and implementation of pertinent clauses.

Rationale

A number of clauses in the *Book of Discipline* have come under review by the Judicial Council. Contradictions have been noted and interpretations mandated through various decisions. However, proper legislation has not been passed to purge related material from the *Book of Discipline*. This legislation seeks to require references in the *Discipline* to assist with a current, accurate application of church law.

NEW TEXT

Insert a new “d” with the following paragraphs to be designated in order from “f” through “j.”

d. The Compilation Committee shall also insert footnotes to the text of the *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* to indicate decisions by the Judicial Council that clarify, negate or abrogate referenced sections. No decision shall be referenced in the printed text until the *Quadrennial Report* of the Judicial Council has been approved by the General Conference. The reference shall include the appropriate identifying information on the ruling. Up to fifty words either from the

actual decision or a fair summary of the same shall be included. Readers shall be directed to other points of reference for actual and more complete texts.