

WHAT IS A CONFERENCE DELEGATE?

One of the most important members of your church is the person elected DELEGATE (in some cases, a church will have more than one - in such cases, one will be designated Chairman). Elected in the Spring each year, this individual is, in effect, your congregations' lay leader. He or she is the liaison person between your church and the Pittsburgh Annual Conference.

As the representative of the congregation, each Delegate, when actually seated with credentials, is vested with membership in the Annual Conference Session. Delegates and ministers vote on extremely important issues affecting the life of each church at that time. The Delegate is the official spokesperson for the members of the congregation in all matters acted on by the Conference.

Additionally, the Delegate (or, if more than one, the Chairman) is automatically a member of the Pastor's Cabinet and the Official Board. The term of service is one year.

To be an effective Delegate, a person must have a vital relationship with Christ and a good rapport with both the pastor and congregation members. He or she should be intelligent, alert and fair.

The Delegate is elected by ballot by the Adult Members of the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. Delegates may be nominated by the nominating committee if the society so chooses, presenting at least two nominations for each delegate position for election by ballot (Par. 402.1, Sec. 4). In electing a Delegate, spiritual qualities and leadership capabilities should be considered as of far more importance than the relative ease with which he or she can attend the Annual Conference Session. This is especially true because your Delegate serves you throughout the entire year. The Scriptures provide guidance for persons in leadership. See Exodus 18:21, Acts 7:3, I Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus 1:5-9. Nominating Committees and societies should consult these guidelines when considering persons for delegate to annual conference, leadership positions, teaching assignments and public ministry roles. The lifestyle of such leaders shall be in harmony with the Scriptures above and Chapters I and III of the Book of Discipline.

One of the key responsibilities of the Delegate is to report to the proper boards and committees of your church the various actions affecting their work taken at the Annual Conference. On the one hand, the Delegate represents the church

by his/her voting at the Conference; On the other hand, he/she interprets the actions of the Conference to his/her local church (see paragraph A/406.1 in the '95 Book of Discipline).

Because of the very great responsibility placed on the individual elected to this strategic position, the Adult Members of the congregation should prayerfully seek God's guidance in the selection of this key leader.

c. Annual Conferences

¶ **A/277** The General Conference shall organize the work at large into annual conferences, of which the ministers (not being members of any local societies) shall be permanent members; and to which, at each session, one lay delegate shall be admitted from each society, and in case there be more than one minister in full membership appointed to a pastoral charge, * such pastoral charge shall be entitled to one additional lay delegate for every such additional minister and, where a charge has more than one hundred (100) full members, sixteen years and over, an additional lay delegate may be elected; and for each additional two hundred (200) full members, sixteen years of age and over, an additional lay delegate may be elected. The election of a delegate and any reserve delegate shall be by separate ballot and shall each require a majority vote of those present and voting.

* must be employed with remuneration at least half-time (Ruling by Board of Bishops 1-1-90).