GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

The following is based on the appropriate paragraphs from *The Design* and sections from the *Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly* which follow. The General Assembly conducts its business sessions based on *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

2019 Timeline for General Assembly Resolution Processing

- **Deadline** for submission of resolutions to the Office of General Minister and President is close of business, **January 2, 2019**.
- Resolutions will be reviewed by the General Board during its meeting, **February 9-12, 2019**. The General Board will decide on a recommendation regarding each resolution and will refer them to the General Assembly for consideration.
- The Office of General Minister and President will circulate all resolutions for consideration (except emergency resolutions) to congregations, regions and general ministries no later than **May 21, 2019**.

Anatomy of a Resolution

Resolutions/business items contain two sections:

- **Whereas** – this section delineates the facts of the issue. Each fact receives its own “whereas” statement. Cites and statistical references should be footnoted.
- **Therefore, be it resolved** – this section names the action(s) to be considered by the local congregations/regional ministries/general ministries in answer to the issue described in the "Whereas" section. If an action requires funding, the source of the funding needs to be named. If an action requires an individual or group to act on behalf of the voting delegates of the Assembly, that person or group should be named.

A third section – Background Information – may be included at the end of the resolution to provide additional information and history.

When submitting a resolution to the Office of General Minister and President, please include the name, email address and cell phone number of the person who will act as the point of contact for the submitters throughout the process.

**Please note**: Resolutions may not impose judgment on others, nor are they to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree with the position of the submitters.

At the Assembly

Although it is perceived that running a plenary business session in accordance with *Robert’s Rules of Order* may be restrictive to genuine discussion, by basing our procedure on *Robert’s Rules* provides for the structure needed to fairly hear both sides of an issue by:

- Limiting the time of each speaker
- Rotating speakers between “For” and “Against”
- Ending discussion if only one side of an issue still has people wanting to speak (at General Assembly, if no one from the one side of an issue is waiting to speak, we limit the other side to one additional speaker)
Basing business session procedure on Robert’s Rules also provides for instances where attendees attempt to bring new business directly to the floor of the session. Emergency resolutions must come through the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

From The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), rev. July 2017:

44. All items of business to be considered by the General Assembly, except in cases of emergency, shall be received by or originate with the General Board. Items of business may be filed with the General Board by any congregation, region, institution of higher education, general ministry, or organization with recognized relationships with the general expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or by the governing board of any such body. Such items of business must be filed through the office of the General Minister and President at least 180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly. All items of business shall be circulated among the congregations, regions, and general ministries by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 60 days in advance of the General Assembly meeting.

45. An item of business may be considered an emergency item if its content is of such nature that it could not have been regularly filed 180 days prior to the Assembly. Such items of business may be filed with the General Minister and President when submitted by 10 or more voting members of the General Assembly from not fewer than five congregations. The General Minister and President will see that the items get to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall decide whether such items are emergencies and, if so, make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly as to their disposition.

From the Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly rev. 2011:

1. Classification and Ordering of Business Items to be Considered by the General Assembly
   1.1. All business items to be considered by the General Assembly, except in cases of emergency, shall be received by or shall originate with the General Board.
   1.2. Business items may be filed with the General Board by any congregation, region, organization with a recognized relationship, institution or general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or by the governing structure of any such body.
   1.3. Business items must be received by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.
   1.4. All business items shall be circulated among the congregations and regions by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 60 days in advance of the General Assembly.
   1.5. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Administrative Committee shall determine whether each item qualifies for consideration and its classification.
      1.5.1. When an item is disqualified or reclassified or combined, the Office of the General Minister and President shall notify the submitters and in the case of a resolution submitted by a congregation, the regional minister.
      1.5.2. The notification shall include the Administrative Committee’s rationale.

1 Items postmarked or e-mailed with a delivery receipt requested on the 180th day before the General Assembly shall be regarded as meeting the deadline requirement.)
1.6. The Office of the General Minister and President shall assist those who are considering filing business items and provide upon request guidelines and an interpretation of the classifications of business and The Design.

1.7. The classifications of items shall be included in the General Assembly Docket.

2. Classification of Business Items

2.1. Reports

2.1.1. Reports are summaries of ministries performed, plans for ministry, and audited financial statements of each general ministry, commission or other entity established or recognized by the General Assembly.

2.1.2. Annually the General Board shall review such reports and make whatever comments or recommendations it deems advisable.

2.1.3. In the year in which the General Assembly meets, the General Board shall forward the Reports to the General Assembly.

2.1.4. If a Report contains only an account of work done and is primarily for information, after appropriate General Assembly consideration, no action shall be required.

2.1.5. 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.

2.1.6. When the timing of the General Assembly prohibits a General Ministry from including an audit of its financial statements in its report, such an audit shall be provided for the next meeting of the General Board. The most recently completed audit shall be provided to the General Assembly.

2.1.7. Covenantal relationships are demonstrated by annual informational reports of regions to the General Board and annual statistical reports of the congregations in the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The reports of regions and congregations are not business items for the General Assembly.

2.2. Operational, Policy and Organizational Items

2.2.1. Operational, Policy and Organizational Items are those which establish policy, institute or revise structures, or procedures, authorize programs, approve directions or mandate actions.

2.2.2. An Operational, Policy and Organizational Item may be originated by the General Board or by any other entity eligible to file business items for the General Assembly.

2.2.3. Actions called for in Reports whether recommended by the submitter or by the General Board, shall be transmitted to the General Assembly separately as Operational, Policy and Organizational Items.

2.2.4. The General Board shall submit a substitute Operational, Policy and Organizational Item when the substance of multiple items cover the same subject.

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

2.2.6. The General Board shall review proposed Operational, Policy and Organizational Item(s) make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable, and refer the items to the General Assembly with recommendation for appropriate action: adopt, not adopt or refer to a designated place for further investigation.

2.3. Study Documents

2.3.1. A Study Document is a study and analysis of a subject which involves ethical, moral or religious elements and on which it is deemed important that members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be more thoroughly informed as an aid to the formation of Christian opinions and judgments, or on which the judgment of individuals or groups is desired.
2.3.2. A Study Document should clearly and fairly set forth various points of view held by competent and sincere Christians.

2.3.3. Study Documents for General Assembly consideration may be developed by administrative units, committees, task forces, commissions or panels only after authorization by the General Assembly or General Board.

2.3.4. The General Board shall review proposed Study Documents, determine whether they meet the criteria above, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable, and refer the Study Documents to the General Assembly with recommendations as to whether or not they should be issued for study.

2.3.5. When a Study Document is issued by the General Assembly for study, the following statement shall appear as a part of it: "This document is issued by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is a study document only. It is not to be construed as an official statement of attitudes or policies of the General Assembly." The introduction to the document shall include the substance of the definition of a Study Document as set forth in 2.3.1 above.

2.3.6. Studies not intended for the General Assembly may be conducted by general administrative units or other recognized entities with special interests or capabilities.

2.4. Items for Reflection and Research

2.4.1. Items for Reflection and Research introduce critical issues that require further exploration before they could be addressed in resolutions, study documents, or items dealing with church policies or operations, and those that may never lend themselves to "yes-no" votes.

2.4.2. When an item is accepted for reflection and research, the Administrative Committee of the General Board shall in its next meeting establish, in consultation with the submitting entity, a process for moving the reflection and research forward. One element in the process shall be an interest group during the next General Assembly. Other options might include, but not be limited to:

2.4.2.1. Encouragement of individual inquiry and reflection
2.4.2.2. Organization of response from local study groups
2.4.2.3. Incorporation into ongoing educational programs
2.4.2.4. Suggestions of input-feedback in retreats
2.4.2.5. Enlistment of constituted bodies in regions
2.4.2.6. Preparation of articles for denominational publications
2.4.2.7. Assignment to an existing group
2.4.2.8. Formation of a task force
2.4.2.9. Proposal of a study document
2.4.2.10. Request for research by particular scholars
2.4.2.11. Consultation with ecumenical/non-denominational agencies
2.4.2.12. Arrangement of seminars or conferences

2.4.3. The General Board shall review all proposed Items for Reflection and Research, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable, and refer the items to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate action.

2.5. Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolutions

2.5.1. A Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution is an expression of the General Assembly concerning a moral, ethical or religious matter confronting the church, the nation or the world. Adoption of a resolution must represent agreement by a majority of an assembly’s voting representatives that the conviction or view expressed is based on Christian insights and is a part of their witness to Jesus Christ. Resolutions are developed for the guidance of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its program operation, for the consideration of the congregations and members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for a Christian witness to the world. The text of a proposed resolution should be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.

2.5.2. Not more than one Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution may be presented by any congregation, region, institution of higher education, organization with a recognized relationship or administrative unit (or by the representative governing board of any
such body) to a General Assembly. The General Board may initiate resolutions as it deems necessary or advisable.

2.5.3. The General Board shall submit a substitute Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution to replace multiple resolutions on the same subject.

2.5.4. A Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution shall not be eligible for consideration if a resolution on the same subject has been acted upon by either of the two immediately previous General Assemblies, unless its content, or the circumstances leading to its submission, are substantially different. In preparing the docket for the General Assembly, the General Minister and President shall determine whether a resolution qualifies under this rule. If the General Minister and President determines that a resolution does not qualify, this fact and the reasons for the decision shall be made known to the submitting organization and reported to the moderator. If the submitting organization is dissatisfied with the decision, it may appeal to the Administrative Committee of the General Board for final decision (see par.66 of The Design).

2.5.5. Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolutions of a self-congratulatory, promotional nature are ineligible for consideration. As in 2.5.4 above, the determination shall be made by the General Minister and President, and an appeal may be made to the Administrative Committee of the General Board.

2.5.6. A Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution is out of order and shall not be considered by the General Assembly when it contains doctrinal statements as "a test of fellowship" in its "Therefore, be it resolved" text. Doctrinal content may be included in all other parts of a resolution (and in other business items for the General Assembly) if it does not imply a test of fellowship for participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Determination of a Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution's eligibility for consideration shall be made by the Executive Committee of the Administrative Committee of the General Board upon recommendation of the General Minister and President. An appeal of a determination of ineligibility maybe made to the Administrative Committee (see par.66 of The Design).

2.5.7. The submitter of a Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution shall be encouraged through guidelines provided by the Office of the General Minister and President, to attach an estimate of the item's financial impact, if any, if it were adopted, and to suggest how any new expense could be underwritten.

2.5.8. The General Board shall review all Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolutions, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable and refer the resolutions to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate action.

3. Responsibilities of the Office of The General Minister and President (OGMP)

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

3.2. Upon request the Office of the General Minister and President shall provide printed guidelines for the preparation of business items. The guidelines shall include definitions and interpretations of the classifications of business, the standing rules, and The Design.

3.3. The General Minister and President shall support the Administrative Committee in its preparation of the docket of business by making recommendations concerning the eligibility of items to be considered and the classification of items. Submitters shall receive appropriate and timely notification if their items are ruled ineligible or placed in classifications other than those under which they were filed and informed that appeals for final decisions may be made to the Administrative Committee.

3.4. In receiving proposed business items and following them through the processes of the Administrative Committee, the General Board and the General Assembly, the General Minister and President shall see that the identity of the group first submitting an item is preserved even if the item eventually is transmitted to the General Assembly by a different entity such as a region, a general ministry or the General Board.
3.5. The General Minister and President shall invite each submitting entity to designate a spokesperson to attend the meeting of the portion of the Administrative Committee and/or General Board in which business for the General Assembly is discussed.

3.5.1. The designated person shall attend or participate at his or her own expense.

3.5.2. Communication may occur through the use of technology at the discretion of the Moderator of the General Assembly and the General Minister and President.

3.5.3. If the entity does not send a person, the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and President shall inform the submitting organization in writing of the General Board’s decision and rationale.

3.6. At least 40 days prior to the opening of the General Assembly, the General Minister and President shall invite each submitting entity to designate a spokesperson to make the first affirmative speech when the item is placed before the General Assembly.

3.6.1. In the case of reports, the designated speaker shall summarize or supplement the printed report.

3.6.2. Submitting entities shall provide the name and contact information of the designated spokesperson including mailing address to the Office of the General Minister and President no later than 20 days prior to the opening of the General Assembly.

3.7. The General Minister and President shall recommend an order of business to the Moderators, which the Presiding Moderator shall propose to the General Assembly as the first item of business.

3.8. When a “division of the house” or counted vote is taken on a business item in a plenary session of the General Board, a responsibility of the Office of The General Minister and Presidents to record the count and report the count with the item in the General Assembly minutes.