GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATEMENTS OF WITNESS AND ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE REPORTS

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*.

2027 Timeline for General Assembly Statements of Witness Processing

- **Deadline** for submission of Statements of Witness to the Office of General Minister and President is close of business, **February 9, 2027**.
- Resolutions will be reviewed by the General Board during its meeting, **February 27 – March 2, 2027**. The General Board will decide on a recommendation regarding each statement and will refer them to the General Assembly for consideration.
- The Office of General Minister and President will circulate all Statements of Witness for consideration to congregations, regions and general ministries no later than **March 11, 2027**.

Anatomy of a Statement of Witness

Statements of Witness 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 Statement of Witness 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: Statements of Witness 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.

From *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),* rev. July 2025:

46. All items of business to be considered by the General Assembly 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 shall be filed through the Office of the General Minister and President. All items of business shall be made available among the congregations, regions, and general ministries by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 60 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly.

From the *Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly* rev. 2025:

2. Submission of Business Items for the Consideration of the General Assembly

2.1. All business items to be considered by the General Assembly shall be submitted to or shall originate with the General Board.

2.2. Business items, as defined by Section 3 of these rules, may be submitted by the corporate body or the governing structure of any:

2.2.1. Congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.2. Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.3. Institution of higher education affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.4. General ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.5. Recognized ministry partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.6. Organization with a recognized relationship with the general expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An organization affiliated with an expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may submit items through the expression with which they are affiliated.

2.3. Business items must be received by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 150 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for the Executive Committee and the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.

2.4. The Office of the General Minister and President shall assist those who are considering filing business items and shall make written guidelines for the preparation of business items publicly accessible. The guidelines shall include definitions and interpretations of the classifications of business, these rules, and The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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

2.6. In receiving proposed business items and following them through the processes of the Executive Committee, the General Board, and the General Assembly, the Office of the General Minister and President shall see that the identity of the entity or 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.

2.7. The Office of the General Minister and President shall invite each submitting entity or 186 group to designate a spokesperson to attend the portion of the meeting of the Executive Committee and/or the General Board in which business for the General Assembly is discussed.

2.7.1. The designated person shall attend at their own expense.

2.7.2. The Office of the General Minister and President may request that each entity or group submit a description of its business item as a video or other medium.

2.7.3. If an entity or group does not have a person attend a meeting, the Office of the General Minister and President shall inform the entity or group in writing of the Executive Committee and the General Board's decisions and rationales on the business item it submitted.

3. Classification of Business Items
3.1. Reports

3.1.1. Reports are summaries of ministries performed, plans for ministry, and audited financial statements made by the general ministries, commissions, or other entities established or recognized by the General Assembly (hereafter a "reporting entity").

3.1.2. In consultation with the General Cabinet, the Executive Committee shall determine when and in what manner each reporting entity reports to the General Assembly.

3.1.2.1. During a Triennium, each reporting entity shall make at least one report to the General Assembly.

3.1.2.2. Reports may be made to the General Assembly during plenary sessions which are not business sessions.

3.1.2.3. When requested by the Executive Committee, the most recent audit of a reporting entity's financial statements shall be included in its report to the General Assembly.

3.1.3. The General Assembly accepts Reports by virtue of their inclusion on the 214 docket and no other action is considered or taken.

3.1.4. 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.

3.1.5. Covenantal relationships of regions are demonstrated by annual informational reports made to the General Board. In consultation with the College of Regional Ministers, the Executive Committee may request that the regions provide brief updates to the General Assembly and shall further determine when and in what manner such updates are shared with the Assembly.

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

3.2. Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items

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

3.2.2. An Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item may be originated by the General Board or submitted by any entity eligible to submit business items for the consideration of the General Assembly.

3.2.3. 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.

3.3. Statements of Witness

3.3.1. A Statement of Witness is an expression of the General Assembly concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, our nations, or the world. By adopting a Statement, the Assembly declares that the conviction or view expressed is based on Christian insights and is a part of witnessing to Jesus Christ. Statements are developed for the guidance of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its work through its various ministries, for the consideration of the members and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and for a Christian witness to the world.

3.3.2. A Statement of Witness may be originated by the General Board or submitted by any entity eligible to submit business items for the consideration of the General Assembly. No entity shall submit more than one Statement of Witness to a meeting of the General Assembly. The General Board may initiate as many Statements of Witness as it deems necessary or advisable.

3.3.3. Statements of Witness shall be disqualified and not be eligible for consideration by the General Assembly if:

3.3.3.1. A Statement of Witness on the same subject has been considered by the General Assembly in the previous four years, unless its content or the circumstances leading to its submission are substantially different;

3.3.3.2. The Statement of Witness is of a self-congratulatory or promotional nature;

3.3.3.3. The text of the Statement of Witness brings into question the 265 Christian commitment of those who do not agree; or

3.3.3.4. The text of the Statement of Witness contains doctrinal statements used as a “test of fellowship.” Doctrinal content may be included in a Statement if it does not imply a “test of fellowship” for participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

3.3.4. The submitter of a Statement of Witness 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.

4. Topics for Education, Discussion, and Prayer

4.1. The General Assembly shall engage in learning, dialogue, formation, discernment, and prayer on matters of social witness and other matters deemed essential to the witness and ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

4.2. The General Board shall approve at least one Topic for Education, Discussion, and Prayer (TEDP) for each Annual Meeting of the General Assembly. The General Board may approve Topics for other meetings of the General Assembly, but it shall not be required.

4.3. Annually the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall consult the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) about potential Topics.

4.3.1. The congregations shall be consulted through a questionnaire which shall remain open for at least 30 days and shall be completed at least 180 days before an Annual Meeting of the General Assembly. The Office of the General Minister and President shall administer the questionnaire.

4.3.2. The General Board, the General Cabinet, and the College of Regional Ministers shall also be consulted.

4.4. The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall reflect upon the consultations and propose one or more Topics to the Executive Committee.

4.4.1. The General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall prepare a written description for each proposed Topic (hereafter the "Topic Overview").

5. Duties of the Executive Committee of the General Board

5.1. The Executive Committee of the General Board shall review all business items on behalf of the General Board.

5.2. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee shall determine whether each item qualifies for consideration and its classification. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee shall submit a substitute business item on behalf of the General Board to replace multiple items on the same subject.

5.2.1. When an item is disqualified, reclassified, or replaced by a substitute, the Office of the General Minister and President shall notify the submitting entity and, in the case of an item submitted by a congregation, the regional minister. The notification shall include the Executive Committee's rationale.

5.2.2. If an entity is dissatisfied with the disqualification, reclassification, or replacement by a substitute of an item it has submitted, it may appeal to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.

5.3. The Executive Committee shall make recommendations and forward all qualified business items to the General Board and, as needed, other actions for approval by the General Board.

5.4. The Executive Committee shall set debate time of 12, 24, or 48 minutes for each qualified Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item and Statement of Witness. For Reports presented to Triennial Meetings, Executive Committee shall set debate times of 12, 24, or 48 minutes. For Reports presented to Annual Meetings or other meetings of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee shall set debate time as it deems advisable.

5.5. The Executive Committee shall consider all Topics proposed by the General Minister and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly and make recommendations on the Topic(s) to the General Board.

5.5.1. The Executive Committee may amend the Topic Overview for each proposed Topic as it deems advisable.

6. Duties of the General Board

6.1. At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the General Board shall review the recommendations of the Executive Committee on all submitted and qualified business items, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable, and forward the items to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate action.

6.1.1. When the General Board recommends to the General Assembly to refer an item for further investigation, the General Board shall make a contingent recommendation to adopt or not adopt the item.

6.1.2. When the General Board has replaced an Operational, Policy, and Organizational Item with a substitute, the General Board shall make a contingent recommendation to adopt, not adopt, or commit for further investigation.

6.2. The General Board shall review the debate time for each business item as set by the Executive Committee and make whatever modifications it deems advisable.

6.3. At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the General Board shall review all Topic(s) as recommended by the Executive Committee, make whatever amendments or comments it deems advisable to the Topic Overview(s), and approve or reject the Topic(s) for engagement by the General Assembly.

6.4. The General Minster and President and the Moderators of the General Assembly shall work with general ministries and other ministry partners to provide the General Board with educational material regarding General Assembly business items.

6.5. When a counted vote is taken on a General Assembly business item in a plenary session of the General Board, the Office of the General Minister and President shall record the count and report the count with the item in the General Board minutes.

7. Alternate Perspective Reports for Statements of Witness

7.1. Alternate Perspective Reports (APR) express a theological and/or ethical interpretation which contrasts with the theological and/or ethical interpretation found in the Statement of Witness. Alternate Perspective Reports shall inform the General Assembly of theological and/or ethical viewpoints found in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Alternate Perspective Reports shall not be used to consider all perspectives on an issue as equally valid, as certain positions may be considered outside the boundaries of the historical and contemporary witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

7.2. At least 120 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the Office of General Minister and President shall make available among the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) all Statements of Witness which have been forwarded to the General Assembly by the General Board.

7.3. An Alternate Perspective Report for a Statement of Witness may be originated by the Executive Committee or submitted by any entity eligible to submit business items for the consideration of the General Assembly. No entity shall submit more than one Alternate Perspective Report to a meeting of the General Assembly. The Executive Committee may initiate as many Alternate Perspective Reports as it deems necessary or advisable.

7.4. Alternate Perspective Reports shall be submitted to the Office of the General Minister and President at least 90 days before a meeting of the General Assembly.

7.5. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee shall determine whether each Alternate Perspective Report qualifies to be considered by the General Assembly. Upon recommendation of the General Minister and President, the Executive Committee may submit an Alternate Perspective Report on behalf of the General Board to replace multiple Alternate Perspective Reports on the same perspective.

7.5.1. An Alternate Perspective Report shall be disqualified and not be eligible for consideration by the General Assembly if:

7.5.1.1. The Alternate Perspective Report does not reflect the historical and/or contemporary witness, theology, and/or ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

7.5.1.2. The Alternate Perspective Report brings into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree; or

7.5.1.3. The text of the Alternate Perspective Report contains doctrinal statements used as a “test of fellowship.” Doctrinal content may be included in an Alternate Perspective Report if it does not imply a “test of fellowship” for participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

7.5.2. When an Alternate Perspective Report is disqualified or replaced by a substitute, the Office of the General Minister and President shall notify the submitting entity and, in the case of an

Alternate Perspective Report submitted by a congregation, the regional minister. The notification shall include the Executive Committee's rationale.

7.5.3. If an entity is dissatisfied with the disqualification or replacement by substitute of an Alternate Perspective Report it has submitted, it may appeal to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.

7.6. At least 60 days before a meeting of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee shall forward to the General Assembly up to two qualified Alternate Perspective Reports for each Statement of Witness.

7.7. The Executive Committee shall not make recommendations on Alternate Perspective Reports. By forwarding an Alternate Perspective Report to the General Assembly, the Executive Committee does not necessarily approve of it or recommend to the General Assembly to attach it to the Statement of Witness.

7.8. The General Assembly may attach Alternate Perspective Reports, which have been forwarded to it by the Executive Committee, to a Statement of Witness to indicate the diversity of theological and/or ethical interpretation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on the subject.

7.8.1. If attached, the Alternate Perspective Report shall be considered an integral part of the Statement of Witness and the text of the Alternate Perspective Report shall be included when the Statement of Witness is published.