

Online Annual Conference FAQ's

Revised 4/21/2021

Shouldn't an Online Annual Conference just be free?

We wish it could! Unfortunately, we must pay for the online platform we are using, and they are expensive. And you may not know, but Annual Conference is a "self-funding unit" of the denomination, so donations you or your church gives to the denomination do not pay for Annual Conference. All expenses related to Annual Conference are paid for by registration fees. That is how we pay salaries for AC staff, office, and warehouse rental, etc. The good news is that even though there are still registration fees, this year you do not have to pay travel costs, hotel fees, and restaurant meals!

Do I have to register if all I want to participate in are the five worship services?

No, you do not need to be registered to participate in worship only.

Why does it cost so much for non-delegates?

As said above, even with online AC, there are still a lot of year-round Annual Conference expenses that need to be covered by registration income. Program and Arrangements Committee made a one-time reduction of the non-delegate fee for this year's online Annual Conference to help make it available for more people, even people who have never attended before. The normal non-delegate registration fee of \$125 is reduced this year to just \$99. And here is what delegates get for that \$99:

- A Wednesday night concert by Grammy winner Fernando Ortega, following worship
- Friday morning plenary speaker Tod Bolsinger, author of *Canoeing the Mountain: Christian Leadership for Uncharted Territory*
- Daily Bible study led by Dr. Michael Gorman, biblical scholar, and author of over 20 books
- Over 40 Insight Sessions, including ones by Dr. Gorman and Bolsinger, as well as a variety of other leaders and topics
- Over 25 Networking Groups on various topics
- All six business sessions
- For pastors, a chance to earn Continuing Education Units

Why is the delegate fee more than the non-delegate fee?

Being a delegate entitles one to certain privileges (and responsibilities) as they represent their congregation. A delegate gets to vote. This year, delegates will vote on both the 2020 deferred election ballot and the 2021 election ballot and will participate in discernment decisions about the Compelling Vision. They will participate in table discussion online with delegates from across our denomination. The delegate fee is the keyway that a congregation helps to make sure we can cover the costs of gathering the larger church family to hold us together as a body of Christ. As a part of the delegate fee, delegates receive a complimentary

Annual Conference booklet, and their congregation receives a complimentary copy of the AC Minutes book.

How will I get on to the online Annual Conference platform?

You will need to log on using your email address (the same one you used to register!) and the password we email you the week before Annual Conference. **If you are a delegate, each person must have a different email address** (i.e., a couple cannot both use the same email address). If two delegates try to use the same email address, it will only let the first person log in. Separate computers or tablets would also be helpful when voting in the election. Delegates using the same computer will need to log out after they cast their ballot so that the other delegate can log in to cast theirs. Non-delegates can use the same email address to register and to log on to the site, but we respectfully ask that all participants register individually for conference.

I am a pastor. Will I still be able to earn Continuing Education Credits by attending Annual Conference Insight Sessions online?

Yes, absolutely! Like in previous years, the back page of the Annual Conference book will list all the Insight Sessions that are available for CEU credit. Because Annual Conference is online you will, of course, not be able to have the leader stamp your page. Instead, you may check the sessions that you attended online and at the end of Annual Conference, mail that page to your District Executive to indicate what CEUs you earned during Annual Conference.

I am not very experienced with computers. How difficult will it be to participate in an Online Annual Conference?

We understand that there are Brethren who are not highly skilled on computers. With that in mind, we chose an online platform that will be very easy for everyone to use. You will be sent a website address for the online platform. It will ask for your email address (be sure to use the same email that you used at registration) and then for the password that we will send to all registrants the week before Annual Conference. Once you are on the website, there will be tabs to click on to go to the Business Session or to Insight Sessions or Networking Groups. We plan to have **training sessions** during the month of June on various days at different times so that anyone who wants to learn how to use the platform will have a chance. We will also post a tutorial on the Annual Conference website to show you what each screen will look like as you enter the website and go to different events.

What if I do not have internet?

We hope that it will be possible for congregations close to one another to cluster together if there is one that does not have access to internet. We are suggesting to districts that they may want to help pair up a congregation without internet with a nearby congregation that does have internet. So, check with a neighboring congregation or contact your district office to ask for help.