

# **Constitution and By-Laws**

## **Bethesda Mennonite Church of Henderson, Nebraska**

1992

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# I. CONSTITUTION

## Bethesda Mennonite Church

1992

### PREFACE

Since we want to follow the word of the Lord in the family of God we use 1 Corinthians 14: 40 to guide us in all our meetings: "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." In the same spirit this constitution is intended to be a clear and orderly guide for us in working together.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of our congregation is Bethesda Mennonite Church of Henderson, Nebraska.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and we accept the Holy Scriptures as our rule for faith and practice. Our purpose is to unite in building up God's Kingdom in our community and beyond. We will provide for the spiritual care and fellowship of all the members and the greater community through worship, through biblical instruction and such other activities as are useful in carrying out Christ's great commission in Matthew 28: 19-20.

### ARTICLE III. GOVERNMENT

The government of our church is vested entirely in the body of believers of this congregation. For the added strength and stability found in fellowship with other churches we join the churches in the Central Plains Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA, in mutual counsel and cooperation.

### ARTICLE IV. OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

We follow I Corinthians 3:11; "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." We also believe Ephesians 2:8-9; "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

We adhere to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as adopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, meeting in Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995.

The twenty-four articles of the *Confession* state what we believe, provide guidelines for the interpretation of scripture, guide the faith and life of the church, provide unity among members and churches, offer an outline for instructing new members and inquirers, and help in discussing Mennonite beliefs with Christians and people of other faiths.

The summary statement is as follows:

## **Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective**

### **Summary Statement**

1. We believe that God exists and is pleased with all who draw nearby faith. We worship the one holy and loving God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit eternally. God has created all things visible and invisible, has brought salvation and new life to humanity through Jesus Christ, and continues to sustain the church and all things until the end of the age.
2. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word of God become flesh. He is the Savior of the world, who has delivered us from the dominion of sin and reconciled us to God by his death on a cross. He was declared to be Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. He is the head of the church, the exalted Lord, the Lamb who was slain, coming again to reign with God in glory.
3. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal Spirit of God, who dwelled in Jesus Christ, who empowers the church, who is the source of our life in Christ, and who is poured out on those who believe as the guarantee of redemption.
4. We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit for instruction in salvation and training in righteousness. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. Led by the Holy Spirit in the church, we interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ.
5. We believe that God has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and that God preserves and renews what has been made. All creation has its source outside itself and belongs to the Creator. The world has been created good because God is good and provides all that is needed for life.
6. We believe that God has created human beings in the divine image. God formed them from the dust of the earth and gave them a special dignity among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation.
7. We confess that, beginning with Adam and Eve, humanity has disobeyed God, given way to the tempter, and chosen to sin. All have fallen short of the Creator's intent, marred the image of God in which they were created, disrupted order in the world, and limited their love for others. Because of sin, humanity has been given over to the enslaving powers of evil and death.
8. We believe that, through Jesus Christ, God offers salvation from sin and a new way of life. We receive God's salvation when we repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. In Christ, we are reconciled with God and brought into the reconciling community. We place our faith in God that, by the same power that raised Christ from the dead, we may be saved from sin to follow Christ and to know the fullness of salvation.
9. We believe that the church is the assembly of those who have accepted God's offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the new community of disciples sent into the world to proclaim the reign of God and to provide a foretaste of the church's glorious hope. It is the new society established and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
10. We believe that the mission of the church is to proclaim and to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Christ has commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things he has commanded.

11. We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin. Baptism is also a pledge before the church of their covenant with God to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers are baptized into Christ and his body by the Spirit, water, and blood.
12. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sign by which the church thankfully remembers the new covenant which Jesus established by his death. In this communion meal, the church renews its covenant with God and with each other and participates in the life and death of Jesus Christ, until he comes.
13. We believe that in washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus calls us to serve one another in love as he did. Thus, we acknowledge our frequent need of cleansing, renew our willingness to let go of pride and worldly power, and offer our lives in humble service and sacrificial love.
14. We practice discipline in the church as a sign of God's offer of transforming grace. Discipline is intended to liberate erring brothers and sisters from sin, and to restore them to a right relationship with God and to fellowship in the church. The practice of discipline gives integrity to the church's witness in the world.
15. We believe that ministry is a continuation of the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and offices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith.
16. We believe that the church of Jesus Christ is one body with many members, ordered in such a way that, through the one Spirit, believers may be built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.
17. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow him. Through the gift of God's saving grace, we are empowered to be disciples of Jesus, filled with his Spirit, following his teachings and his path through suffering to new life. As we are faithful to his way, we become conformed to Christ and separated from the evil in the world.
18. We believe that to be a disciple of Jesus is to know life in the Spirit. As the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ takes shape in us, we grow in the image of Christ and in our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is active in individual and in communal worship, leading us deeper into the experience of God.
19. We believe that God intends human life to begin in families and to be blessed through families. Even more, God desires all people to become part of the church, God's family. As single and married members of the church family give and receive nurture and healing, families can grow toward the wholeness that God intends. We are called to chastity and to loving faithfulness in marriage.
20. We commit ourselves to tell the truth, to give a simple yes or no, and to avoid the swearing of oaths.
21. We believe that everything belongs to God, who calls the church to live in faithful stewardship of all that God has entrusted to us, and to participate now in the rest and justice which God has promised.
22. We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance,

even in the face of violence and warfare.

23. We believe that the church is God's holy nation, called to give full allegiance to Christ its head and to witness to every nation, government, and society about God's saving love.
24. We place our hope in the reign of God and its fulfillment in the day when Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. He will gather his church, which is already living under the reign of God. We await God's final victory, the end of this present age of struggle, the resurrection of the dead, and a new heaven and a new earth. There the people of God will reign with Christ in justice, righteousness and peace forever and ever.

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A. Requirements for Admittance**

1. People may become members of this church who confess Christ as their Savior and Lord, and who show Christian conduct. When they confess their faith in Christ and are baptized, they will become members of Bethesda. (John 3:16; 14:6)
2. People from other Mennonite churches or other Christian denominations, who want to become members, are to request a letter certifying good standing from their church. They may also be admitted by confession of faith with the recommendation of the pastors and deacons. Our church will provide instruction in our confession of faith and our practice.
3. People who live here temporarily and who are members of other Mennonite churches or other Christian denominations, but who wish to retain their home church membership, may become associate members, if that is acceptable practice in their home church and if they are in good standing there. They will have all the rights and duties of members, with the exception of voting in congregational meetings and holding congregational office or being appointed to a board.
4. We offer our members the privilege of keeping associate membership here while living elsewhere and attending a church there.

### **Section B. Duties and Privileges of Members**

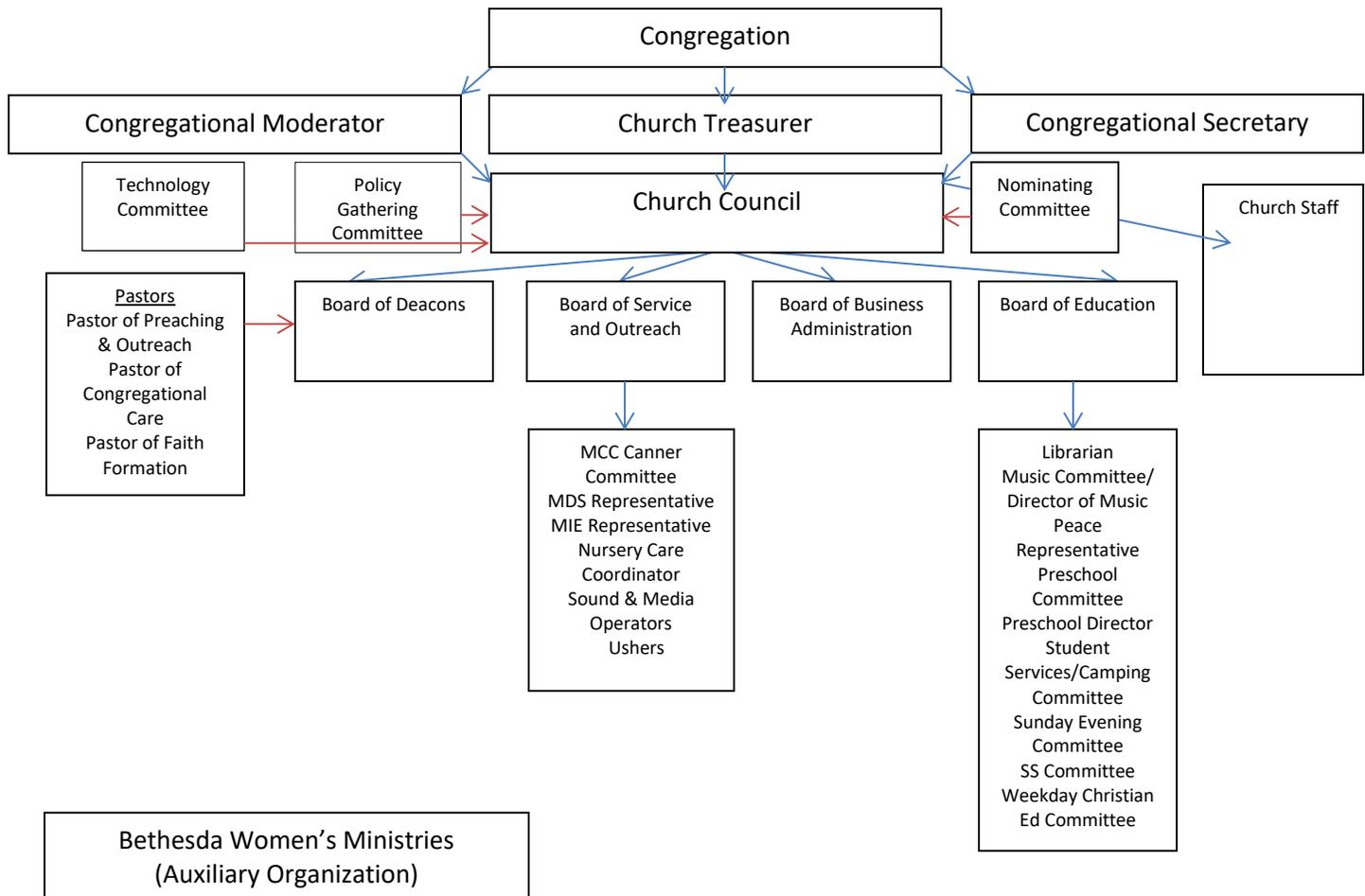
1. Live according to the Gospel of Christ and to attend the services of the church regularly and participate in communion.
2. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6: 2) In that way to nurture mutual sympathy and concern.
3. Willingly join others in working at strengthening the life of the church in every way possible.
4. Contribute faithfully through financial gifts, time and talents as God has given you with a willing heart according to each one's ability, for the local church, Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Church USA, and other causes the congregation supports.
5. Support the pastors in their ministry and respect the authority conferred on them by the congregation. (Hebrews 13: 17) Feel free to call on them for help, service or advice.
6. Promptly report births, adoptions, deaths, changes of address, and other information to the office for inclusion in the records.
7. Submit serious conflict between members to the pastors and deacons for resolution. Members are encouraged to settle disputes out of court. They should follow Christ's way as taught in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6: 1-8.
8. Members in good standing may vote and hold office.
9. Members who wish to transfer membership to another church and request a letter of transfer from the pastors are entitled to have the letter sent to the church they want to attend.

10. Every member has equal ownership in the property of the church. But the property cannot be divided, therefore when membership ends so does ownership in the property.
11. Provide a safe haven for people who wish to come to Christ and the church.
12. Identify those who attend the worship service for the first time and those who attend sporadically.
13. Seek and identify prospective and inactive members.
14. Engage in other activities which give a Christian witness.

### **Section C. Discipline**

Should a member, by unchristian conduct, bring reproach on Christ or persistently fail to show any visible interest in the church; then faithful efforts are to be made to bring that person to repentance and renewal. Such efforts at restoration are of concern to all the members but discipline shall be carried out under the direction of the pastors and deacons, and in the spirit of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18: 15-35. Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored with congregational approval when repentance is evident.

## II. BETHESDA MENNONITE CHURCH STRUCTURE



### Groups/Committee Accountability:

#### **Board of Service and Outreach**

- MCC Canner Committee
- MDS Representative
- MIE Representative
- Nursery Care Coordinator
- Sound & Media Operators
- Ushers

#### **Board of Education**

- Librarian
- Music Committee/Director of Music
- Peace Representative
- Preschool Committee/Preschool Director Teacher
- Student Services and Camping Committee
- Sunday Evening Committee
- Sunday School Committee
- Weekday Christian Education Committee

### **III. BY-LAWS PREFACE**

#### **Bethesda Mennonite Church**

**1992**

#### **Preface**

The CONSTITUTION describes the nature of the church; it tells who we are. The following By-Laws describe how we are organized so we can work together. To provide for smooth functioning of all the activities of our church, and to assure maximum understanding between the councils, boards, committees, and auxiliaries there needs to be coordination. Therefore, the By-Laws begin with how coordination is achieved.

We want to describe carefully the difference between constitutions and By-Laws. The difference goes beyond that described in the previous paragraph. That further difference can be seen in how congregations use the two. Congregations frequently amend the By-Laws, almost never the constitution. That leads to the following observations:

First, By-Laws are best understood as guidelines. They are not engraved in granite.

Second, By-Laws are intended to free people to work for the church and find joy in it. Interpreting By-Laws as law cripples the church.

## ARTICLE I. CHURCH OFFICERS

- A. Moderator. The Moderator of the congregation shall be elected by the congregation for a term of three years. A Moderator may serve two consecutive terms. The Moderator will preside at all congregational meetings and also be a member of the Church Council. The Moderator shall give notice of meetings of the congregation and provide the agenda for them. In order to be informed of all activities, the Moderator may attend the meetings of all boards, with the approval of the chair.

Accountability. The Moderator is accountable to the congregation through the Church Council.

- B. Secretary. The Congregational Secretary is to be elected by the congregation for a three-year term and may serve two consecutive terms. The Congregational Secretary's duty is to record minutes of all congregational meetings. The Congregational Secretary is a member of the Church Council.

Accountability. The Congregational Secretary is accountable to the congregation through the Church Council.

- C. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be hired by the Church Council. The Treasurer shall prepare a written report for all boards and Church Council prior to their monthly meetings.

Duties of the Treasurer include: Sign all checks authorized by the boards and committees, to see to it that all monies collected are counted and deposited in the name and to the credit of the church, to disburse funds as designated, and to coordinate a purchase order system. The Treasurer shall give the congregation financial reports as directed by the Church Council, including an annual report.

Accountability. The Treasurer is accountable to the Church Council.

### D. Non-Profit Corporate Structure

1. Directors – Consist of Church Council Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.
2. Registered Agent – Office Manager.
3. Officers – Moderator, Congregational Secretary and Church Treasurer.

## ARTICLE II. CHURCH COUNCIL

### **Role and Function:**

The role of the Church Council is to serve as overall programmatic coordinating body for the congregation. They will support boards and committees in collaboratively implementing the vision and mission of the congregation as developed by Pastoral Staff and Board of Deacons in consultation with the congregation. They will also serve as the registered legal entity for state and federal purposes.

- A. Membership. The Church Council members include:
1. The Moderator and Congregational Secretary. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member. The Moderator and Congregational Secretary are elected and the Treasurer is hired.
  2. Two members from the Board of Deacons.
  3. Six members elected at large, two elected each year for a three-year term, with a maximum of two terms (6 years). Individuals after an absence of one year may be re-elected.
  4. The Pastoral Staff, as ex-officio members.
- B. Meetings.  
The Church Council meetings are monthly, or more often at the call of the chair.

The Church Council shall organize with a Chair, Vice Chair and a Secretary. The three remaining members will serve as Board of Education Representative, Board of Business Representative and Board of Service and Outreach Representative. None of these three shall be the Congregational Moderator, Congregational Secretary; nor is a Deacon eligible to be Chairperson.

- C. Duties.
- a. Represent the church and coordinate the work of the boards.
  - b. All boards, committees and auxiliaries are accountable to the Church Council, but in turn the Church Council is responsible to help them do their work with loving support given in counsel and affirmation.
  - c. Supervise the offering schedule.
  - d. The Nominating Committee consists of six members. Each board will provide one representative to the Nominating Committee (Church Council, Board of Service and Outreach, Business Administration, and Board of Education) as well as two congregational representatives who will serve a two-year term, appointed by Church Council. Members eligible for reelection cannot serve on the Nominating Committee, unless otherwise specified in the By-Laws. The Church Council Representative will be the chair of the Nominating Committee. One candidate should be nominated for each vacancy. Nominees will be elected to their positions with an affirm or do not affirm vote. Individuals who are willing to serve on a board or committee are encouraged to submit their name to the Nominating Committee Chair no later than two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.
  - e. The Council will appoint elected Council members to attend each of the following boards: Board of Business Administration, Board of Education and Board of Service and Outreach.
  - f. Hire employees, other than pastors, such as music personnel, music coordinator, and other positions approved by the congregation.
  - g. Establish salaries and direct the Treasurer to pay salaries of all church employees.
  - h. Supervise the planning of budgets of all boards and committees.
  - i. Approve delegates to the Central Plains Mennonite and Mennonite Church USA Conferences.
  - j. Instruct all boards and committees to organize promptly after the Annual Meeting so the Annual Yearbook can be prepared.
  - k. Determine the cycle of all elections.
  - l. Provide for annual review\* of the financial records.

- m. Prepare an Annual Report for the church.
- n. Request all boards and committees to regularly review and make recommendations to their policies.
- o. Appoint a Registered Agent for the Church Corporation.

D. Accountability.

The Church Council is accountable to the congregation and is responsible to all boards and committees to help them do their work.

(\*Wording Revised 03-28-2016 by Church Council)

## **ARTICLE III. PASTORAL STAFF**

### **Role and Function:**

Pastoral Staff will provide pastoral services and spiritual leadership to the congregation as outlined by the Board of Deacons in consultation with the congregation. The Pastoral Staff will provide vision and leadership for the spiritual welfare of the whole congregation in collaboration with the Board of Deacons and Church Council. The important role is grounded in the qualifications and expectations for leadership outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 for those responsible for the care of God's church (v. 5). Each member of the Pastoral Staff serves in the character of a servant (Mark 10:43) but with the courage and boldness of the apostle Paul (II Corinthians 3:1-6, 4:1-7).

### **Duties:**

The specific job description or duties will be written and kept current by the Board of Deacons. They will be based on the needs of the congregation and the strengths of the individual pastoral members. A copy of the job description or duties will be kept in the church office.

### **Terms of Pastoral Calling:**

Each member of the Pastoral Staff shall be called by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast by the congregation.

The calling for the initial term is for five (5) years unless otherwise determined by the Board of Deacons. After the initial five (5) year term, and upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons and a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast by the congregation, the call will be for an additional five-year (5) term of service. The five (5) year pattern should be ongoing.

If, after the initial five (5) year term, or any ensuing five (5) year term, there is not a unanimous recommendation from the Board of Deacons, the Board of Deacons, with consultation with our Central Plains Mennonite Church Pastor, will formulate what next steps will be taken to move forward in the congregational voting process.

If, at the conclusion of a five-year (5) term, the pastor receives less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast by the congregation, his/her service to the congregation will expire no more than three months after the conclusion of that term.

If a pastor resigns, three (3) months' notice shall be given to the congregation.

### **Accountability and Assessment Goal Setting Process:**

The assessment/goal setting should be understood as a review process by the pastor and all members of the congregation, and is to be based on the written job description or duties for the pastor and the written goals that are developed by the deacons and the pastor following the previous year's assessment. The goal of this process is for the pastor to progress in his/her congregational leadership skills and each member of the congregation to progress in their Christian walk. In the event of differences occurring between the deacons, congregational members and the pastor, Biblical models, such as those outlined in Matthew 18, should be used to attempt to resolve these issues.

The role of the Congregational Committee is to manage an evaluation process with the congregation utilizing the job description or duties, written goals and recommendations listed in the preceding paragraph and reporting the results to the Board of Deacons and to the congregation. The Congregational Committee shall have (7) members; Church Moderator, who shall be Chair; three (3) Deacons; Church Council Chair; two (2) members - at - large, appointed by Church Council; and one (1) ex-officio Central Plains Conference Representative.

Official congregational input, such as that provided on a survey form, will be solicited and consulted each time the Congregational Committee evaluation process is used. Informal congregational input is encouraged at any time.

The assessment/goal setting with the deacons, Congregational Committee, and the congregational vote, will be done towards the end of their respective year of employment. The five (5) year process schedule will start at the beginning of the first (1) year, sixth (6) year and eleventh (11) year and continue in the same manner for the future years.

Year one (1) – Annual assessment/goal setting with pastor and deacons.

Year two (2) – Annual assessment/goal setting with pastor and deacons.

Year three (3) – Congregational Committee Evaluation process. This shall include direct input from the congregation such as a congregational survey as an example. The purpose of this review is to provide opportunity for pastor feedback, both affirmation and growth areas, in year three to allow opportunity for healing relationships and making adjustments prior to the year five (5) vote. Pastor self-evaluation.

Year four (4) – Annual assessment/goal setting with pastor and deacons.

Year five (5) – Annual assessment/goals setting with pastor and deacons. There will also be a congregational vote.

**Pastor Dismissal Process:**

Dismissal of a pastor from their duties at Bethesda Mennonite Church can only occur with a vote of the congregation in which a pastor receives less than two - thirds (2/3) of the votes cast by the congregation in the affirmative. Congregational elections determining the continued service of a pastor will normally be held prior to the conclusion of year five (5) of each term, but may also be held in extraordinary circumstances upon unanimous request by the Board of Deacons.

(By-Law Amendment dated 2/3/2013; Wording Revised 3/8/2016 by Board of Deacons; Wording Revised 4/10/2018 by Board of Deacons)

## ARTICLE IV. BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

### SECTION A. BOARD OF DEACONS

#### Role and Function:

The Board of Deacons is elected to work collaboratively with the Pastoral Staff in providing overall leadership in cultivating vision and spiritual vitality for the ministries of the congregation. This will be done in consultation with the Church Council and the various boards and committees of the congregation. They will assist and support the Pastoral Staff in tending the spiritual well-being of the congregation.

In contrast, the Church Council will serve as the congregation's programmatic administrative body.

The Board of Deacons shall be composed of six members who serve for a term of three years. Two are elected each year and they will be eligible to serve two consecutive terms. After an absence of two years, they may be re-elected. The deacons are to organize to provide a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, an Everence Representative and appoint two deacons to the Church Council. They, together with the Pastoral Staff, shall meet monthly or when called by the Chair or the Pastoral Staff.

#### DUTIES:

Duties of the Deacons when they work with the Pastoral Staff:

- a. Promote the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
- b. Review the qualifications of applicants for baptism.
- c. Grant requests for membership transfers and in receiving members from other churches by letter.
- d. Supervise the church's worship and invitations to visiting speakers.
- e. Work at church discipline, in Christ's way to bring repentance and renewal.
- f. In case of vacancies on the Deacon Board, appoint people to complete the term until the next deacon election.
- g. Provide a current job description for each pastor.
- h. Administer the Benevolent Fund.
- i. Provide stewardship education in congregation. (Assist in providing information for estate planning and making wills.)
- j. Keep in contact with our district and Mennonite Church USA stewardship leaders and promote use of their resources.

2. Duties of the Deacons when they work alone:

- a. Prepare an annual report.
- b. Prepare the elements for communion.
- c. Recommend candidates for the Pastoral Staff as well as recommend continued discernment terms for them. The Deacons are responsible to find pastoral leaders, in cooperation with the Central Plains Mennonite Conference Minister and the Mennonite Church USA Office of Ministerial Services. The deacons may choose to use a Search Committee in finding pastoral candidates. Candidates are to be recommended to the congregation three weeks prior to voting.
- d. Maintain a relationship with the Pastoral Staff, hearing their concerns and offering counsel in ways that enable pastors to enhance their ministry.

Accountability. The Board of Deacons is accountable to the congregation.

#### Deacon Election Process:

1. Eligible incumbent deacons may be affirmed by a congregational ballot vote on or before the first Sunday in October. A 2/3 affirming vote is necessary to retain an incumbent deacon. The results of the vote may leave 1, 2, or no vacancies on the Deacon Board. If there are any vacancies the deacon election proceeds as follows.
2. The congregation shall nominate deacons by open ballot. Individuals do not need to be contacted for permission to be nominated. The Ballot Committee shall determine and list the top 15 names in order of the nominations received. In the event of a tie or ties at the 15th position, the Ballot Committee shall determine the top 15 names and ties at the 15th level and list them in alphabetical order. This alphabetical list of 15 or more names shall be presented to the congregation for one week prior to the list being narrowed.
3. Prior to deacon nominees removing their names for consideration, a meeting will be held for all deacon nominees and current deacons prior to the final ballot being determined. The purpose of the meeting is for the nominees to learn more about the role of the Board of Deacons and provide an opportunity to ask questions of the current deacons.
4. Nominees on this list may decline their nomination by written request after being contacted by the Ballot Committee. After this, the congregation shall be presented an alphabetical list of names of those who are willing to remain on the ballot. Each congregational member shall then vote for four names in the event of two vacancies and two names in the event of one vacancy.

After nominees have been given the opportunity to decline and there are only enough names to fill the ballot (four names in the event of two vacancies and two names in the event of one vacancy), the deacon preference vote will not take place and the final vote will be held two weeks earlier.

5. When there are two vacancies the Ballot Committee shall form the final ballot by personally contacting the four nominees and then listing them on the final ballot alphabetically and without pairing. These four names shall be presented on one ballot to the congregation, requesting one vote for each vacancy. The two with the largest number of votes are elected, attend Deacon meetings immediately, and assume office (immediately after the Bethesda annual congregational meeting in February.) This election shall take place on the second Sunday in December.

If there are not enough names to fill the final ballot (four names in the event of two vacancies and two names in the event of one vacancy), then the top vote recipients will be contacted, in order of votes received and asked if they would reconsider putting their names on the ballot. If this process does not result in at least two names for one opening or at least three names for two openings then a two-thirds affirmation vote will take place only with the names of the nominees who agreed to be on the nomination list.

6. When there is only one vacancy the Ballot Committee shall form the final ballot by personally contacting the two nominees and then listing them on the final ballot alphabetically. These two names shall be presented on one ballot to the congregation, requesting one vote. The one with the largest number of votes is elected and assumes office immediately after the election. The final election shall take place on the second Sunday in December.

Nominees who tie in the final election: The tie will cause a "drawing of the lot" the following Sunday which will be conducted by the Ballot Committee.

7. The Ballot Committee for the first step of the nomination process shall be composed of:
  - a. Chair of Church Council

- b. Congregational Moderator
  - c. Congregational Secretary
  - d. Additional members of the congregation as selected by the Congregational Moderator.
8. After the original list of names has been selected, and for the following steps in the nomination process, the Ballot Committee shall be determined by the Church Council in such a manner that no one who is within this list of names is on the Ballot Committee. It is recommended that no current members of the Board of Deacons be on the Ballot Committee, but that ex-members may be included.

Prior to nominating, the congregation will need to know who the deacons are, whose term is expiring, who may be reelected, and which deacons and former deacons are not eligible.

## **SECTION B. BOARD OF SERVICE AND OUTREACH**

Seven members compose the Board of Service and Outreach. There are six elected members, with two positions elected each year to three-year terms. Members can serve two terms. Additionally, there is one member from Church Council (non-voting) and one (or more) Pastoral Staff (non-voting). Elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

1. Seek ways to invite and witness to people who wish to come to Christ and the church.
2. Identify those who attend the worship service for the first time and those who attend sporadically.
3. Seek and interest prospective and inactive members.
4. Engage in other activity which gives Christian witness.
5. Consult with Pastoral Staff regarding literature:
  - a. Care Notes and other Mennonite outreach and informational material (What Mennonites Believe).
  - b. Oversee availability of Bibles.
6. Advocate for the Henderson Care Center in regard to their needs for volunteers to give programs at the facility.
7. Provide child care for children up to age three on Sunday morning during Sunday School and Sunday evening. Requests for child care for age three and younger during Sunday evening and other worship services need to be approved or accepted by the Board of Service and Outreach and directed to the Nursery Coordinator.
8. Supervise the sound system and appoint the manager.
9. Direct the Sunday morning greeter program and decide on its future use.
10. Appoint and supervise the ushers.
11. Appoint MCC Canner Project coordinator.
12. Appoint MDS Coordinator and MIE Representative.
13. Direct the MIE program.
14. Write an Annual Report.

Accountability: The Board of Service and Outreach is accountable to the Church Council.

Appointments - (these appointees are non-voting but are encouraged to attend when there is a relevant agenda item) to be determined by chair.

- MCC Canner Project Coordinator
- MDS Representative
- MIE (Mission Inquiry Emissary) Representative
- Nursery Care Coordinator
- Sound & Media Operators
- Ushers

## **SECTION C. BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education will consist of six elected members, two elected every year for a three-year term. Can serve two terms. Plus one representative from Church Council (non-voting).

The Sunday School Chair and Vice Chair are members of the Board of Education.

Elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Board of Education organizes annually.

Duties:

1. Give general supervision to the church's educational program, coordinating and unifying the program.
2. Determine policy regarding curriculum, leadership training and overall goals.
3. Foster a wholesome relationship between the church and the home and promote Christian education in our homes.
4. Make appointments to committees and positions accountable to the Board of Education, as specified under each committee so that committee membership rotates on a three-year cycle.
5. Recruit and train teachers and other workers.
6. Prepare an annual budget based on recommendations of its committees.
7. Promote the use of Mennonite Church USA literature and inform the congregation of denominational educational programs.
8. Be responsible for the administration of the Bethesda Preschool, make recommendations to Church Council for the employment and dismissal of preschool staff, and approval of preschool curriculum and guidelines.
9. Write an annual report.

Accountability: The Board of Education is accountable to the Church Council.

Committees accountable to the Board of Education: It is each committee's responsibility to take issues/concerns to the Board of Education.

### ***Sunday School Committee***

The Sunday School Committee will consist of six elected positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Early Childhood Representative, Primary/Middler Representative, and Jr. High/High School Representative. There are six elected positions, with two positions elected each year to a three-year term. Each member may serve two consecutive terms. The committee will reorganize annually.

Duties:

1. Provide for effective operation of the Sunday School in curriculum, facilities, class size, and teachers.
2. Be concerned for the spiritual welfare and growth of the Sunday School.
3. Recommend curriculum to the Board of Education.
4. Arrange regular teacher's meetings.
5. Recruit and counsel teachers and evaluate teaching.
6. Encourage professional growth for Sunday School workers through reading, conferences and workshops.
7. Keep attendance and other records.

(Sunday School Committee Setup Revised 01/22/2018 by Church Council)

### ***Music Committee***

The Music Committee will consist of the Director of Music and three elected members. One member is to be elected each year to a three-year term.

Duties:

1. Be responsible for the music program of the congregation.
2. Arrange special musical programs.
3. Arrange for tuning and maintenance of the church's musical instruments.
4. Encourage training for church pianists and organists and arrange practice schedules.
5. Responsible for performance review of Director of Music.

### ***Student Services and Camping Committee***

This committee consists of three elected members. One member is to be elected each year to a three-year term.

The committee is to organize with a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Duties:

1. Promote Mennonite schools and assist in solicitation for them.
2. Work with the church staff in maintaining relationships with the students.
3. Maintain and administer student scholarship funds.
4. Serve as liaison with the Central Plains Mennonite Conference Retreat Committee to promote camping and assist with travel to Swan Lake Christian Camp.

### ***Weekday Christian Education Committee***

Duties:

1. Supervise the Weekday Christian Education program, recommend curriculum, teachers, class divisions and location.
2. Supervise the Vacation Bible School and recommend to the Board of Education teachers and curriculum.
3. Select teachers and determine class divisions.

### ***Library and Audio-Visual***

The Librarian will be appointed by the Board of Education.

Duties:

1. Promote and supervise the use of the library
2. Periodically evaluate library holdings.
3. Purchase and promote Christian literature.
4. Arrange for assistance in the library.
5. Index library materials by the Dewey Decimal System.
6. Organize and maintain an audio-visual library, provide a check out system and keep records.
7. Be responsible for the use and maintenance of audio-visual equipment.
8. Maintain a file of program helps and resource materials.

### ***Sunday Evening Committee***

The Sunday Evening Committee consists of three elected members. One member is to be elected each year for a three-year term. The committee is to organize with a Chair and Secretary.

Duties:

1. Develop/coordinate the programs that take place on Sunday evenings in coordination with the Pastoral Staff.

2. Provide resources for meaningful educational and fellowship experiences for the various age groups.

### ***Preschool Committee***

The Preschool Committee consists of three elected members and two parent representatives, one from each age group. All members of this committee are voting members. The Preschool Director and teacher(s) will serve as non-voting members of the committee.

Duties:

Members of the Preschool Committee will oversee the preschool, providing guidance and assistance to the preschool staff. Duties will include, but not be limited to:

1. Organize annually with Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer.
2. Hold monthly meetings to monitor the functioning of the preschool.
3. Make recommendations to the Board of Education concerning curriculum and other program decisions.
4. Make recommendations to the Board of Education concerning Director and teacher position performance reviews.
5. Assure regular communication and cooperation between preschool staff and other church staff.
6. Promote the preschool in the church and community.

### ***Peace Representative***

The Peace Representative is appointed by the Board of Education.

Duties will include, but not be limited to:

1. Promote programs for the congregation on ways to live out our beliefs.
  - a. Children's stories/music in worship services.
  - b. Sunday school programs/videos on peace appropriate to all age groups. Talk about TV, toys, computer games, movies, books, etc. Talk about how to be peacemakers at home in family settings and extended family at school or workplace.
2. Encourage people to share their stories and convictions.
  - a. Peace perspectives throughout the year.
  - b. Two peace Sundays each year.
3. MCC Sale Booth
  - a. Provide information on current issues.
  - b. Raise funds with MCC involvement from members of the congregation.
4. Publicize and support various programs.
  - a. Peace tax fund
  - b. Domestic violence
  - c. Available workshops
  - d. Service opportunities

## **SECTION D. BOARD OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

The Board of Business Administration will consist of six elected members, plus one representative from Church Council (non-voting). Two members are elected every year for a three-year term. Members can serve two terms.

Elect Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and a Treasurer.

Duties:

1. Hold in trust all property of the church and be responsible for it.
2. Make necessary repairs and improvements of the property. Major changes (see policy BUS-020) on the grounds and buildings may be undertaken only with approval of the congregation.
3. Make recommendations to Church Council for the hiring of custodians and conduct performance reviews.

4. Write an annual report and present a budget for approval.
5. Review and approve all bills presented by the Central Treasurer.

Accountability: The Board of Business Administration is accountable to the Church Council.

## **ARTICLE V. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

All organizations in the church formed for the purpose of ministry and who use church facilities are integral parts of the church. They are to work in cooperation with the boards and committees and be accountable to the Board of Service and Outreach.

Duties:

1. Auxiliaries may have their own constitution and membership.
2. Elect their own officers as well as operate their own programs and budgets.
3. Maintain a record of their funds and have the Church Treasurer deposit and disburse their funds.

Members contemplating forming a new organization shall present their plan to the Church Council for approval before an organization is formed.

Auxiliaries Include: Bethesda Women's Ministries.

## ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

### SECTION A: PUBLIC WORSHIP

1. Public services shall be held on Sunday.
2. Communion is observed three times a year, unless others are set by the deacons and pastors. Visitors who have found forgiveness in Christ shall be invited to participate.
3. Special services and meetings may be arranged by or with the consent of the deacons and pastors.
4. No church offering shall be designated without prior approval of the Church Council.

### SECTION B. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. The annual Congregational Meeting shall be on, or near, February 1. At this meeting the annual reports of the boards, committees and auxiliaries shall be given, the church election held, and other business transacted. The fiscal year shall end December 31.
2. Financial and other reports are due by January 10, in order to have the Annual Report ready to give to the congregation on the Sunday prior to the Annual Meeting.
3. The members present at a meeting of the congregation constitute a quorum.
4. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Church Council, Board of Deacons with the Pastoral Staff, or with written request of five percent of the members. Special Congregational meetings and their purpose are to be announced at least two weeks before the meeting and at two previous Sunday morning services. The agenda for the congregational meeting may have items added or deleted for discussion only with the approval of those present. A congregational vote may only be made on these items related to the original purpose of the meeting.
5. Members are urged to be present at business meetings. If they cannot attend they may vote by absentee ballot for nominees or on issues announced prior to the meeting.
6. Meetings are to be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order as a guide, where they are applicable and are not inconsistent with the church's rules of order.
7. Absentee ballots must be requested by the member in writing (email permissible), in person or by phone. The request should be made to the Congregational Moderator or the office staff during office hours. Absentee ballots shall be made available at least two weeks before the meeting. Absentee ballots must be picked up and signed for by someone representing the member doing the requesting. Absentee ballots will not be mailed out by the church office. Deadline for returning absentee ballots will be set by the Congregational Moderator or the Church Council. Late ballots will not be valid.

### SECTION C. CHURCH ELECTIONS AND VACANCIES

The regular election of officers, boards and committee members (except for deacons) is held at the Annual Meeting. Nominations shall be made by the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee consists of six members. Each board will provide one representative to the Nominating Committee (Church Council, Board of Service and Outreach, Board of Business Administration, and Board of Education) as well as two congregational representatives who will serve a two-year term, appointed by Church Council. Members eligible for reelection cannot serve on the Nominating Committee, unless otherwise specified in the By-Laws. The Church Council Representative will be the chair of the Nominating Committee.

One candidate should be nominated for each vacancy. Nominees will be elected to their positions with an affirm or not affirm vote. Individuals who are willing to serve on a board or committee are encouraged to submit their name to the Nominating Committee Chair no later than two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

No one may serve concurrently on more than one board of the church. People may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Vacancies in any elected position, except on the Pastoral Staff and Board of Deacons, are to be filled by the Church Council to complete the term. They are not considered incumbents for purposes of the next election and may serve an additional two consecutive terms.

Vacancies of any appointed position are to be filled by the parent board.

## **ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS**

Resolutions and decisions of the church passed prior to adoption of this constitution and By-Laws, which conflict with any part of this constitution, are hereby repealed.

The constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of votes cast. Proposed amendments shall be announced at least two weeks before the meeting and at two Sunday morning services preceding such a meeting. Proposed amendments are to be read or presented to the congregation in written form, at least once prior to the meeting where the vote is taken.

## **IV. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

### **Bethesda Mennonite Church of Henderson, Nebraska**

The undersigned, acting as incorporators of a corporation under the Nebraska Non-Profit Corporation Act, hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation for such corporation:

#### **ARTICLE I**

The name of this corporation shall be Bethesda Mennonite Church of Henderson, Nebraska.

#### **ARTICLE II**

The corporation shall have perpetual existence.

#### **ARTICLE III**

The purpose for which this corporation is organized is to own and operate a church for religious purposes in Henderson, Nebraska.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

The internal affairs of this corporation shall be regulated by members of the congregation of the said Bethesda Mennonite Church of Henderson, Nebraska, and by its elected Board of Trustees, consistent with the Statutes of the State of Nebraska and the Non-Profit Corporation Act of the State of Nebraska.

#### **ARTICLE V**

The address of this corporation's registered office is 930 16th Street, Henderson, Nebraska 68371, and the name of its registered agent at such address is Carl Epp.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

The Board of Trustees, constituting the Directory of this corporation, shall consist of five (5) members, and the names and addresses of the Board of Trustees of this corporation are as follows, the following also to be the incorporators of this corporation, to wit:

Signed,

Carl Friesen, Henderson  
Ruben H. Friesen, Aurora  
Carl Epp, Henderson  
Arvid Janzen, Henderson  
Stanley Voth, Henderson

Dated this 2nd day of October 1973