

# BYLAWS OF COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH, INC.

## Preamble

The members of the congregation adopt the following bylaws to guide our working together.

## Article I: Name

The congregation, based in Goshen, Indiana, shall be known as COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH.

## Article II: Purpose

Since through the grace of God we are called and made God's people, we seek to fulfill our calling:

- by following Jesus as Savior and Lord, as revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and expressed in the fellowship of believers;
- by uniting in spiritual worship, mutual support and accountability, faithful discipleship, joyful service and the way of peace; and
- by inviting all people in the world to join God's people in faith and hope in Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

## Article III: Relation to the Mennonite Church

**Section 1.** The College Mennonite Church Covenant contains affirmations accepted as this congregation's statement of faith. The Covenant is based on the statements of faith approved by the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly.

**Section 2.** This congregation is a member of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and participates fully in its procedures and activities and in giving and receiving counsel.

**Section 3.** This congregation participates fully in the procedures and activities of Mennonite Church USA through Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and directly through delegate participation in the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly. The congregation's quota of delegates and alternate delegates shall be selected as follows: about one-third from the Pastoral Team, selected by the Church Board, and the rest called through the Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC)—with about one-half of these chosen from congregationally appointed commissions and Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference delegates, and about one-half chosen at-large.

**Section 4.** Through association with Mennonite Church USA, College Mennonite Church is part of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) network of churches. College Mennonite Church may send representatives to MWC assemblies and otherwise participate in MWC activities.

**Section 5.** Congregation. Mennonite polity is clear regarding authority being vested in the congregation; hence, the congregational meeting is the final authority in all congregational matters. College Mennonite Church (CMC) recognizes that as a congregation it receives authority from Jesus Christ, its head. CMC participates fully in the procedures and activities of the Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

*Function & Responsibilities:* The congregation as a body votes on a spending plan, selects the pastoral team, and discerns vision, among other matters, and grants to the Church Board the responsibility to oversee and coordinate College Mennonite Church's program on its various levels, as discerned and acted upon within the congregational meeting. The Church Board, in consultation with the Vision Leadership Team, discerns which additional items are brought to the whole congregation for action or counsel. However, any member may also share concerns and make motions. Congregational meetings will take place at least four times a year, with many additional opportunities provided for hearings and counsel.

## **Article IV: Membership**

**Section 1.** The Covenant shall be used as the basis for meaningful membership in the congregation.

**Section 2.** Anyone professing faith in God, making a commitment to follow Christ and declaring willingness to participate in relationships as stated in the Covenant shall be eligible for membership. Individuals may present themselves or be recommended for membership to the Discipling Commission. When recommended by the Discipling Commission, the person becomes a member by believer's baptism or, if baptized, by presentation of a church letter or confession of faith.

**Section 3.** Members shall have the right to:

- a. Participate in all the activities of the congregation
- b. Participate in the congregation's decision-making
- c. If qualified, hold office in the congregation.

**Section 4.** Affiliate Membership

Affiliate membership may be granted to a resident of this community who presents a certificate from another congregation (yet wishing to retain membership in that other congregation), who desires to fellowship with this congregation, and who is willing to participate in relationships as stated in the Covenant upon recommendation of the Discipling Commission. An affiliate member has all the rights and responsibilities of a member. Affiliate membership ends with the termination of residence in this community.

**Section 5.** Nonresident Membership

The status of members not participating regularly in the life of the congregation shall be reviewed by the Discipling Commission. Members residing outside this community who develop patterns of accountability with the Discipling Commission shall be affirmed as nonresident members; others will be encouraged to renew their participation in the life of the congregation or to find meaningful church membership elsewhere.

**Section 6.** Associate Membership

Associate membership may be granted to a person who holds a primary membership in a Mennonite Church outside North America or in another denomination. The Discipling Commission shall establish and review relationships with associate members.

**Section 7.** A member wishing to transfer membership to another congregation may be granted an appropriate letter of transfer by the Discipling Commission. Such transfers will be announced to the congregation.

**Section 8.** Any member who causes offense by renouncing faith in God, a commitment to follow Christ, a willingness to participate in relationships as stated in the Covenant of this congregation, or whose conduct hinders the Christian witness, shall be counseled by fellow members in the patterns suggested in Matthew 18. If such counsel is rejected, upon the recommendation of the Church Board and the approval of the congregation, the congregation declares that person's membership forfeited.

**Section 9.** Any person who forfeits or withdraws from membership forfeits all official and legal rights of this congregation.

## **Article V: Relationships**

Members of the congregation interact to support each other and cooperate in carrying out Covenant obligations and the purpose of the congregation in functional relationships such as:

- a. Interpersonal relationships on a one-to-one basis
- b. Family relationships in nuclear and extended families
- c. Group relationships, including small groups which emerge out of one or more concerns or functions such as prayer, study, service, mutual support, or discernment
- d. Structured groups such as neighborhoods or Sunday school classes
- e. Various groups organized by the congregation to carry out specific responsibilities
- f. The whole congregation as it gathers to (1) engage in public worship and instruction, (2) observe Christian ordinances, (3) consider issues which concern the life and witness of the congregation, (4) make decisions regarding these issues and (5) implement the decisions of the congregation.

Non-members and children also participate in many of these relationships.

## **Article VI: Pastoral Team**

### **Section 1.** Accountability:

Each member of the Pastoral Team is called by and ultimately accountable to the congregation. The congregation shall call one pastor to serve as Pastoral Team Leader. In carrying out their pastoral assignments, all pastors are accountable to the Church Board via the Pastoral Team Leader. The Pastoral Team Leader, accountable to the Church Board, leads the Pastoral Team and the Vision Leadership Team. The Pastoral Team Leader is responsible for supervision of pastors, either directly or by assigning supervision responsibilities to other pastors on the Pastoral Team. The Church Board will be responsible for conducting term reviews with each pastor. Members of the Vision Leadership Team are appointed by the Church Board.

### **Section 2.** Roles:

Teaches, cares and leads so that all members are equipped, empowered and called to serve in or through the congregation.

Promotes and coordinates implementation of vision goals; team building, ministry skill development, coordination of necessary details (e.g. schedules) to function well as an entire team; congregational leadership work as specified by Vision Leadership Team.

**Section 3.** The Vision Leadership Team (VLT) leads the whole congregation by providing leadership for and oversight of all congregational ministries through five commissions, both as separate arenas and as one integrated ministry structure. Broad pastoral training will allow for flexibility in providing ongoing pastoral leadership as turnover in the team occurs over time.

VLT is accountable to the Church Board through the Pastoral Team Leader in daily functioning, but ultimately to the congregation, in meeting.

VLT responsibilities: A VLT member:

- provides leadership for at least one commission, as assigned by the Church Board
- provides pastoral care, preaching and teaching; load determined by gifting and available time
- coordinates with other pastors assigned to his/her commission
- keeps pastoral team and commissions focused on vision

In addition to the qualities and gifts listed for Pastoral Team, VLT members will exhibit a special gifting for and ability to lead in several of the following areas: team leader, administration, stewardship, outreach, worship, faith formation, community life, preaching and pastoral care.

## **Article VII: Organization**

Structures for accountability to God are not defined in the bylaws but are assumed and expected to function. The following organizational structures provide for mutual accountability.

### **Section 1. The Congregational Meeting**

- a. The congregational meeting is the final authority in all congregational matters.
- b. A congregational meeting shall be held at least four times annually at a time and place designated by the Church Board.
- c. A special congregational meeting may be called by the Church Board at its own discretion. The Church Board shall call a congregational meeting when requested by a written petition signed by at least fifty members of the congregation and presented to the Church Board.
- d. Public notice of a congregational meeting shall be made at least two weeks prior to such a meeting and shall include the agenda to be considered.
- e. The quorum for a congregational meeting shall be the members present.
- f. The Church Board shall appoint from among its members the moderator of congregational meetings.
- g. In deciding an issue, the moderator will promote open and full discussion of all motions, give full recognition to those who are of a minority view, and encourage mutual acceptance of the decision. Members unable to attend a congregational meeting may submit a written statement of their position to another member for oral presentation. On issues of particularly great importance, the congregation may decide to use an absentee ballot to include the vote of absent members who have been informed on the issue. Motions shall be decided by a vote that respects the will of all members voting, no member or members having a voting advantage over other members.
- h. The congregational meeting shall proceed according to the *American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* (current edition) in all matters not covered by these bylaws.

### **Section 2. Church Board**

- a. The Church Board shall consist of nine members, including: Church Board Chair and Church Board Vice-Chair (discerned by Gift Discernment Committee), five congregational representatives (selected by the congregation), Pastoral Team Leader, and Vision Leadership Team representative (appointed by Vision Leadership Team). Congregational representatives may serve a maximum of three consecutive two-year terms, but to do so they must be re-selected for each term.
- b. The Church Board shall carry responsibility for oversight and governance of the congregation as delegated by the congregation.
- c. The Church Board shall hear concerns in the life and work of the church brought by individual members, commissions or other groups within the congregation. The Church Board may seek counsel from individuals or groups and may request one or more of them to study an issue or to implement a task relevant to the life and work of the church.

d. The Church Board responsibilities include:

(1) *Congregational*

- (a) Overseeing vision discernment, ministry of stewardship, goal setting and strategic planning processes.
- (b) Overseeing pastoral team: evaluation, employment distribution, personnel policy.
- (c) Ensuring that a pastoral advocacy structure is in place.
- (d) Making some decisions on behalf of the congregation
- (e) Discerning agenda for congregational action or counsel, in consultation with Vision Leadership Team.
- (f) Overseeing congregational meetings.
- (g) Evaluating its work annually, seeking feedback from the congregation.

(2) *Legal/Fiduciary*

- (a) Ensuring that policies and practices are established, implemented and monitored to adequately fulfill the Church Board's fiduciary responsibilities
- (b) Recommending a spending plan to the congregation. (Also see Article VIII. Sections 1 and 2.)
- (c) Representing the congregation for legal purposes.
- (d) Representing the congregation to Goshen College through Amity Corporation.
- (e) Appointing other corporate officers (in addition to chairperson and vice chairperson): secretary and treasurer
- (f) Recommending bylaws changes to the congregation.
- (g) Arranging for and receiving the annual financial audit or review. (Also see Article VIII-1-d.)

- e. The Church Board shall identify, and submit for congregational confirmation members to serve on the Gifts Discernment Committee.
- f. The Church Board chair and vice-chair shall be selected by the Gifts Discernment Committee.
- g. Members of the Church Board shall not serve on commissions of the congregation, except for pastors so assigned.
- h. The Church Board shall function as the Board of Directors for College Mennonite Church, Inc.
- i. The Church Board may appoint, at its discretion, an ad hoc Bylaws Review Committee to review the bylaws at least every five years.

**Section 3. Commissions**

- a. Commissions serve the congregation through their ministries. Leadership and coordination among and between commission ministries takes place through the Vision Leadership Team. Commissions are empowered to establish committees to accomplish their respective ministries. They may prepare and recommend proposals to the Church Board through the VLT. Each commission may discern and call volunteers for its ministries, consulting with the Gifts Discernment Committee if deemed useful. Each year, each commission shall recommend a spending plan for all ministries within its area of responsibility.

While Commissions are responsible to communicate with the congregation about their ministries, they are accountable to the Church Board through the Vision Leadership Team.

- (1) The **Worship Commission** is responsible for efforts that will strengthen our relationship with God and with one another as revealed to us in Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Responsibilities include worship (gathered and individual), communion, prayer, renewal and spiritual disciplines, while incorporating music and the arts into the congregation's rituals and practices.

- (2) The **Community Life Commission** is responsible for efforts that will strengthen our relationships, vertical and horizontal, within the Body of Christ including pastoral care, fellowship activities, small groups, mutual care, and giving and receiving counsel.
  - (3) The **Outreach Commission** is responsible for efforts that will strengthen our witness, sharing the love of Christ beyond our congregation, locally and globally, through such programs as mission, peacemaking, relief work, other forms of service, and hospitality.
  - (4) The **Discipling Commission** is responsible for efforts that will strengthen our spiritual formation including education (all ages), baptism, membership, youth, library, and equipping for ministry.
  - (5) The **Administration Commission** is responsible for efforts that will strengthen our congregational ministries by collaborating with the relating VLT pastor and administrative staff in preparing an annual spending plan and in offering counsel regarding facilities and equipment to support congregational staff, pastors and commissions in their work.
- b. Each commission shall include three to five members discerned and called by the Gifts Discernment Committee, plus the VLT pastor(s) assigned by the Church Board. Commission members shall be called to serve a term of two years; a member may serve for no more than three consecutive full terms, but must be re-selected for each term. Commissions have the right to co-opt additional persons; such appointments shall terminate at the end of the church year.
  - c. Commission chairs are named by the GDC in consultation with the pastor assigned to the commission. Each commission shall discern its other officers at the beginning of the first commission meeting each church year.

#### **Section 4. Committees**

- a. The Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC) shall develop methods to ascertain abilities and interests among members and help them discern and commit their abilities and time to the mission of the congregation.
  - (1) GDC shall be composed of the VLT Pastor of either Community Life or Discipling, the Church Board Vice Chair, and four members (one named chair), selected by the Church Board, and is responsible for discerning and calling commission members, the board chair and vice-chair, delegates to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, and delegates to the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly. Members may serve three consecutive two-year terms.
  - (2) GDC shall determine the schedule for calling members to serve in congregational assignments. The procedure for calling members to leadership shall follow policies adopted by the congregation and will provide for commission continuity by ensuring that about half of each commission's members have terms beginning in alternate years
  - (3) GDC shall help the leadership groups discern gifts and attributes of available people for tasks and preferred representations.
  - (4) GDC shall call members of the congregation to fill unexpired terms left vacant:
    - i. on commissions and the Church Board, or
    - ii. by delegates to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference or
    - iii. to the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly.
  - (5) The Church Board shall call members of the congregation to fill unexpired terms left vacant on GDC.
- b. Voluntary membership groups, ad hoc, task force and standing committees that seek church funds for their programs must first achieve authentication by acquiring one of the five commissions or the Church Board as sponsor and will not be eligible for funds until after the first of a new fiscal year

except for those committees that are formed by a commission or the Church Board. The sponsoring bodies shall oversee activities of their committees after their validation.

**Section 5.** Delegates to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

All members of the pastoral team whose credentials are recognized by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference are delegates to the conference. The congregation shall call additional congregational members as delegates to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, as provided for by the conference, and in addition shall call three alternate delegates who will attend cluster meetings and otherwise prepare to serve in the absence of called delegates. Approximately one-third of the additional delegates from this congregation shall be called each year to serve for two-year terms, but they may serve for no more than three consecutive full terms. The Church Board shall designate one of the delegates as chair of the congregation's delegation.

**Section 6.** Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary for the congregation shall record significant discussions and decisions of the congregation made during congregational meetings. The Church Board will call a recording secretary.

**Section 7.** Church Year

The church year begins September 1 and ends August 31. Terms of service coincide with the church year.

**Article VIII: Fiscal Policies**

**Section 1.** The Church Board shall:

- a. Approve policies for oversight and management of the congregation's finances, property, personnel and resources.
- b. Recommend an annual spending plan to the congregation.
- c. Borrow funds as authorized by the congregation.
- d. Arrange for and receive the annual financial audit or review.

**Section 2.** The Administration Commission shall:

- a. Collaborate with the relating VLT pastor and administrative staff in preparing and recommending an annual spending plan to the Church Board. [See also Article VII-2-d-(2)-(b)]
- b. Collaborate with the relating VLT pastor and administrative staff regarding the properties and business affairs of the congregation.
- c. Recommend a congregational Treasurer for appointment by the Board. The Treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Administration Commission for 2-year renewable terms.
- d. Be represented on the Amity Corporation Board of Directors by the Chair of the Administration Commission.

**Section 3.** The fiscal year of this congregation shall begin July 1 of each year and end June 30 of the following year.

**Article IX: Amendments**

**Section 1.** Amendments may be made to these bylaws at any congregational meeting by affirmation of the will of the members present and voting, provided the amendments to be considered have been circulated in written form among the members at least one month prior to the congregational meeting.

**Section 2.** The revision process shall be governed by the regulations of Section 1 regarding announcement and voting.

adopted	10-11-67 as Constitution
amended	07-29-70
amended	05-02-73
revised	04-24-77
amended	01-13-80
revised	03-04-84
amended	04-29-84
amended	03-01-87
revised	02-21-93
amended	06-25-95
revised	09-21-97 as Bylaws
revised	11-22-98
revised	09-22-02
revised	10-19-03
revised	08-26-12 <sup>1</sup>
revised	04-19-15
revised	08-19-18

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<sup>1</sup> Bylaws revisions are based on the restructure document, *Organizational Structure Evaluation Task Group Proposal - FINAL, June 28, 2009*