

Martins Mennonite Church Constitution

PREAMBLE.

Believing that the Church is the fellowship of believers, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and guided by the word of God, and sharing meaningfully with one another in grace and discipleship and in striving for holiness, we affirm that the Church is:

- the community of faith and love who share one another's burdens;
- the community of worship and learning;
- the community of witness and service, proclaiming in word and deed the riches of grace in Christ;
- the embodiment of the risen Christ, carrying on the work which He began until He comes again.

We, the Martins Mennonite Church, give ourselves to the concept and purpose herein described and adopt this Constitution.

Article I. Name and Location

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be **Martins Mennonite Church, Inc.** (MMC)

Section 2. The location of this organization shall be three miles southeast of Orrville, at 14027 Church Road, Orrville, OH 44667.

Article II. Purpose

- To make known the love of God the Father, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit
- To win others to a personal commitment to Christ
- To strengthen and nurture each member of the body of Christ
- To receive, hold and apply all donations, bequests, properties, and funds for the aforesaid purposes
- To manage, control, loan, borrow, and invest for said purposes all funds of the organization and of any and all institutions or programs which may come under the Church's jurisdiction

ARTICLE III. Membership and Affiliation

Section 1. Reception of Members

The membership of the Martins Mennonite Church shall consist of all persons who:

- have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,
- have experienced the New Birth,
- have declared their intent to grow in the understanding of *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* of the Mennonite Church, USA,
- have been received into the fellowship of the Congregation by believer's baptism upon confession of faith, or by a qualified church letter.

Section 2. Rights of Members.

Each member in good standing in this Congregation is entitled to participate in all general activities of the Church, and is eligible to hold any office for which he/she is qualified. The right to vote on all questions brought before the Congregation shall be restricted to members fourteen years of age or older.

Section 3. Duties of Members

It shall be the duty and responsibility of each member to:

- live a holy life in the power of the Spirit, not practicing the sins of the world, and consecrated unto God.
- seek by prayer and study of the word to grow in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus glorify God in his/her manner of life.
- demonstrate by his/her deeds and conduct, a sincere Christian love as Christ commands.
- attend the services of the Church as regularly as possible.
- support the work of the Church by his/her time, talents, money and means.
- share in witnessing to the unsaved about Christ.

Section 4. Loss of Membership

Membership may be lost by willfully sinning and refusing to repent. A member withdrawing or in any way losing membership in the Congregation thereby forfeits all rights, privileges and claims to all properties belonging to the Congregation.

Section 5. Restoration to Membership

Any member who has forfeited membership in the Congregation and all rights pertaining thereto, shall be considered by the Congregation as a prime concern for evangelism (Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:5). The attitude of the Congregation is to be one of concern, and love, barring all attitudes of criticism and judgment (Gal. 6:1-5). When the unrepentant one admits his/her need and desire to be forgiven and to be restored to fellowship, he/she shall indicate this to the Pastor in consultation with the Elders. The Pastor shall bring this request to the Congregation. The individual shall be given opportunity to testify publicly to the grace of God and to ask the forgiveness of the Congregation. Indication to forgive and restore to fellowship may be done by a standing majority vote of the Congregation.

Section 6. Transfer of Membership

Any member in good standing may transfer his/her membership to another congregation by requesting a certificate of transfer from the Pastor, subject to approval by the Board of Elders.

Section 7. Conference Affiliation and Accountability

MMC shall be a member of the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church, USA, accounting to, and subscribing to the Polity and Practice thereof.

ARTICLE IV. Authority of the Congregation

The authority to transact any business of the Congregation shall reside with members of the Congregation, fourteen years of age or older, who gather together in any assembly called for the express purpose of transacting the business of the Congregation. All voting rights reside with the above described assembly, known as the Membership-Assembly. The Membership-Assembly shall have the authority to manage and adjust all spiritual and material affairs of the Congregation. Specific responsibility for the management of the Congregation and carrying out of its activities may be delegated by the Membership-Assembly to individuals, committees and boards, either as designated in this Constitution and Bylaws or by the appointment of special committees. All such designated persons shall be accountable to the Membership-Assembly.

ARTICLE V. Business Meeting

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall run concurrently with the Sunday School year, namely from September 1 through August 31.

Section 2. Annual and Special Meetings

The annual business meeting of the Congregation shall be held the first Monday in October. Special meetings may be called as needed, with a minimum of two weeks notice, and officers of Church Council shall conduct all business meetings.

Section 3. Elections

Annual elections shall be held as designated in the Bylaws.

Section 4. Quorum

A quorum shall be declared of all members present.

Section 5. Absentee Ballots

Provision for absentee ballots for any specific purpose must be specified by either Church Council or the Membership-Assembly. All absentee ballots must be cast prior to the vote by the Membership-Assembly.

ARTICLE VI. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any annual business meeting, or special meeting called for this purpose by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast, provided notice of the substance of the change has been distributed to the membership at least two weeks in advance.

ARTICLE VII. Enacting Clause

This Constitution and Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for acceptance by the Membership-Assembly. It shall supersede all previous constitutions and bylaws and such rules as are in conflict with it. All incumbent officers shall continue to serve until the term for which they have been affirmed is completed. In order to effect the organization called for, this proposed Constitution shall be presented to the Membership-Assembly for approval at any time specified for the express purpose of review and acceptance.

Bylaws

Article I. The Ministry

Section 1. Pastor(s)

The Pastor of the Congregation shall be a minister chosen (or affirmed for continuance) by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast by the Membership-Assembly upon the recommendation of the Church Council, with the express approval of the Conference Minister and the Leadership Commission of the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church, USA.

- a. Duties. The Pastor's duties shall be as defined per *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* of the Mennonite Church, USA, and according to the terms agreed upon by the Pastor and Congregation.
- b. Term of office. The Pastor's term of office shall be for a continuing period of time. A review of the Pastor's tenure of service shall be made every five years by the Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) with a recommendation to the Membership-Assembly. A vote shall be taken by the Membership-Assembly with regard to affirming the Pastor's continuance.
- c. The Pastor shall bring an annual report to the annual business meeting.
- d. The "lead" Pastor may be a member ex-officio of every committee.
- e. The Pastor shall not serve as the chair of the Church Council.
- f. The Pastor shall be a member of the Ohio Conference delegate body and shall represent the Congregation at the annual Conference Assembly and other related conference meetings.

Section 2. Board of Elders

The Elder team is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Congregation and discerning its direction and mission.

A Board of Elders shall be composed of the Pastor(s) and three selected persons. Each of the three selected persons shall serve a three-year term. The discernment of Elder shall precede the filling of all other church offices.

Specific directives detailing the selection process can be found in the *Martins Mennonite Church Guidebook of Offices, Positions and Committees (MMC Guidebook)*. One Elder shall be selected annually so that their term of service will terminate on successive years. The “lead” Elder will be determined annually by internal organization. This “lead” Elder (not the Pastor) will chair all Elder meetings and serve on Church Council.

- a. Qualifications. Qualifications shall be according to I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Nominations shall be accepted only when the nominee feels called by the Holy Spirit.
- b. Responsibilities. Refer to the *MMC Guidebook* for a current list of responsibilities and duties.

Article II. Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC)

The PCRC shall promote and encourage positive communication and relationships between Pastor(s), Elders, and the Congregation. The PCRC shall consist of three congregational members and shall use Ohio Conference resource persons at its discretion. This person shall not serve concurrently as Pastor, Elder, or Church Council Chair. Specific directives detailing the term, selection process, and function/objective can be found in the *MMC Guidebook*.

- a. Qualifications.
 - Member of Congregation
 - Committed to the overall growth and development of the Congregation
 - Willing to give freely of time needed
 - Good listener
 - Able to keep confidences
 - Positive, encouraging, and supportive
 - Able to handle stress and deal with conflict
- b. Responsibilities. Refer to the *MMC Guidebook* for a current list of responsibilities and duties.

Article III. Organizational Administration

Boards and Commissions provide the administrative structure for the maintenance and direction of the organization, Martins Mennonite Church. Duties of the Boards and Commissions include acting on and carrying out

administrative functions, maintaining the building(s) and grounds, leading the process for discernment of gifts and affirmation of positions and leaders, managing the financial resources of Martins Mennonite Church, and providing leadership to our Christian Education activities.

Section 1. Boards and Commissions

- a. Church Council (Executive Committee)
- b. Board of Trustees
- c. Leadership Commission
- d. Stewardship Commission
- e. Christian Education Commission

Section 2. Function/Objectives, Responsibilities, and Accountability

Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*.

Section 3. Membership and Term

Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*.

Section 4. Selection of Board and Commission Membership

- a. All members are affirmed by the Membership-Assembly.
- b. Each Congregational Member is provided opportunity to serve the church.
- c. The Leadership Commission conducts the discernment and affirmation process of selecting the Board and Commission members.

Article IV. Delegates, Committees, and Organizations

Section 1. Delegates

MMC shall be represented by delegates to the Ohio Conference, Mennonite Church, USA, church organizations, and other organizations seeking official MMC representation. The MMC Guidebook shall identify these delegate positions. Church Council will process additions, deletions, or changes of Delegate positions.

- a. Function/Objectives, Responsibilities, and Accountability of Delegates
Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*.
- b. Membership and term of Delegates
Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*
- c. Selection of Delegates
 1. All Delegates are affirmed by the Membership-Assembly
 2. Each Congregational Member is provided opportunity to serve as a Delegate representing MMC.
 3. The Leadership Commission conducts the discernment and affirmation process of selecting Delegates.

Section 2. Committees, Coordinators, and Groups

MMC shall be served by various committees, coordinators, or groups to facilitate the activities and needs in areas of worship, fellowship, edification, and service. The *MMC Guidebook* shall identify these Committees, Coordinators, or Groups. The Leadership Commission will review the need for additions, deletions, or changes on an on-going basis and recommend action to Church Council for such changes.

- a. Function/ Objectives, Responsibilities, and Accountability of Committees, Coordinators, and Groups
Refer to *MMC Guidebook*.
- b. Membership and Term of Committee members and Coordinators
Refer to *MMC Guidebook*.
- c. Selection of Committee Members and Coordinators
 1. All Committee members and Coordinators are affirmed by the Membership-Assembly, although some groups may choose their own process for member participation.
 2. Each Congregational Participant is provided opportunity to serve as a Coordinator, on a committee, or participate in a group.
 3. The Leadership Commission conducts the discernment and affirmation process of selecting Committee members and Coordinators.

Section 3. Para-Church Organizations

MMC may corporately endorse representative participation in other organizations that connect to its mission. These may or may not have denominational affiliation. The *MMC Guidebook* shall identify the organizations requiring affirmation from the Membership-Assembly for MMC members participating in these organizations. Church Council shall decide all organizational affiliations and will process additions, deletions, or changes.

- a. Function/Objectives, Responsibilities, and Accountability
Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*.
- b. Membership and Term
Refer to the *MMC Guidebook*.
- c. Selection of Members to Para-Church Organizations
 1. As applicable, members participating in affiliated organizations are affirmed either by Church Council or by the Membership-Assembly through the Leadership discernment process. The *MMC Guidebook* identifies the applicable selection process.
 2. Each Congregational Participant is provided opportunity to serve on organizations.

Article V. MMC Guidebook of Church Offices, Positions and Committees

Section 1. Purpose and Function

- a. There shall exist a *Martins Mennonite Church Guidebook of Church Offices, Positions and Committees (MMC Guidebook)* that describes, defines and authorizes the various committees, organizations, commissions, offices, positions and/or other entities necessary for carrying out the mission and operation of the Congregation.
- b. The Guidebook shall be a multi-part document with the intent of allowing flexible and timely revisions in response to changes in the working and functions of the Congregation.
- c. Any use, application or functionality of the *MMC Guidebook* shall be identified and detailed within the Guidebook, in the Explanatory Document “Purpose of this Guidebook.”

Section 2. Structure

- a. The *MMC Guidebook* shall be a collection of documents consisting of multiple parts.
 - About this Guidebook
 - Explanatory Documents:
 - i. Purpose of this Guidebook
 - ii. Structure of this Guidebook
 - iii. Revisions to this Guidebook
 - iv. Oversight of this Guidebook
 - Offices, Positions and Committees documents:
 - i. A collection of individual documents, each focusing on a specific office, position or committee within the Congregation.
- b. The offices, positions and committees are to be described and defined for membership, term, selection process, function/objective, responsibilities, accountability, annual report, and revisions.
- c. Structure of the *MMC Guidebook* shall follow a uniform and consistent content and layout as detailed within the Guidebook, in the Explanatory Document “Structure of this Guidebook.”

Section 3. Revisions

- a. Revisions to the *MMC Guidebook* shall be made in a systematic and orderly manner through an appropriate approval process. The individual document pages may be reviewed, revised and approved separately.
- b. Revisions to the Guidebook’s Explanatory documents shall be as specified in by-law Article VII.
- c. Revisions to the Guidebook’s Offices, Positions and Committees documents shall be by approval of the congregation or Church Council, and shall follow procedures as detailed within the *MMC Guidebook*, in the Explanatory Document “Revisions to this Guidebook.”

Section 4. Oversight

- a. Oversight of the *MMC Guidebook* shall be the responsibility of the Leadership Commission, and shall follow procedures as detailed within the *MMC Guidebook*, in the Explanatory Document “Oversight of this Guidebook.”

Article VI. Annual Reports

Section 1. Content of reports should be descriptive of the Function/Objective of the office, position, or committee.

Section 2. Required Reports

The following reports should be submitted to the Annual Business Meeting:

- Pastor
- Youth Pastor
- Elders
- PCRC
- Church Council
- Conference Delegate
- Trustee
- Church Treasurer
- Church Audit
- Martins Day Care
- Martins Day Care Audit
- Other groups receiving financial support through the church budget

Section 3. Reports not identified in Section 2

Refer to the *MMC Guidebook* for annual report requirement.

Article VII. Amendments

The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Membership-Assembly at any regularly or specially called business meeting.

This Constitution was revised and reprinted in July, 2006, by the Church Structure Task Force (CSTF):
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Ratification: By the MMC Membership Assembly, October, 2, 2006