

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE MOUNT CLINTON MENNONITE CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I: THE CONGREGATION**

This congregation shall be known as the Mount Clinton Mennonite Church (the "congregation"). The membership of the congregation forms its governing body (as outlined in the following articles) with final authority to select the pastor, elders and persons to other congregational offices; approve the annual budget; make other significant financial decisions; amend this Constitution; and take other action as deemed appropriate by Church Council.

## **ARTICLE II: VISION STATEMENT**

God calls us to be a worshipping, welcoming and united family of faith, following Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and ministering God's salvation, healing and hope to the local community, the nation and the world.

## **ARTICLE III: AFFILIATION**

The Mount Clinton Mennonite Church shall be a member congregation of the Central District of the Virginia Mennonite Conference. It is thus affiliated with the organization known as Mennonite Church USA. This congregation shall be represented in the conference by such representation as designated by the Conference Constitution.

## **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this congregation shall consist of persons who have professed faith in Christ, who give evidence of the new birth, who have affirmed the faith and practice of Mennonite Church USA as described in the current confession of faith, who have been received into the fellowship of the congregation by baptism, upon confession of faith or by transfer of membership, and who affirm the vision of the congregation.

Upon consent of the congregation, associate membership certificates may be received from members in good standing in a related Mennonite conference or other Christian church, provided these persons are sympathetic with the beliefs of Mennonite Church USA.

Associate membership certificates may be granted to members of this congregation who wish to relate to another Christian group on a temporary basis.

All members are expected to be actively involved in the work and ministry of the congregation, conference and denomination, demonstrated by their acts of service and financial support. All members and associate members are eligible to vote on all general questions brought before the congregation.

Members are expected to grow in their Christian life. Any member persisting in sin shall be approached in love with the desire to lead to confession of sin, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. If a member still continues in sin, membership shall be suspended. The Pastoral Team shall continue contact with any person suspended so as to promote restoration.

The membership list of the congregation shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor and/or Pastoral Team. Members who have become active in another congregation shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. Those members not interested in retaining church membership may have their names withdrawn.

## **ARTICLE V: PASTORAL TEAM**

### **A. Purpose**

The Pastoral Team shall discern and guide the spiritual direction of the congregation as it journeys to fulfill its vision and shall provide mutual interchange for personal enrichment and ministry resourcing.

### **B. Composition**

The Pastoral Team shall normally consist of pastoral staff, four elders and an overseer. Opportunity may be given to persons desiring to explore their gifts in ministry as pastoral trainees. Overseer appointment shall be provided by the Central District Council in consultation with the congregations in the District.

The pastoral staff shall be chosen by the congregation under the direction of the Church Council and the Overseer. The elders shall be nominated by a congregational open ballot under the direction of the pastor and overseer. After validation by the Church Council a recommendation shall go to the congregation. When recommended to the congregation, members of the Pastoral Team shall receive affirmation by at least a 75% vote of those voting to be confirmed.

The pastoral staff shall normally have three-year terms. The elders shall have two-year terms. An elder may be reelected to a second consecutive term or for two full terms, if initially filling an un-expired term.

All pastoral staff and elders shall be members of the congregation.

Pastoral trainees may be appointed upon Pastoral Team recommendation and Church Council approval for not more than a one-year term. They shall be a member or associate member of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VI: CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **A. Purpose**

The Church Council exercises general administrative responsibility of the congregation in normal practice and takes major decisions to the congregation for discussion and action. While being mindful of the vision of the congregation, Church Council processes evaluations and assignments of members of the Pastoral

Team at the appropriate times, oversees the appointment and evaluation of office staff, gives guidance to and evaluates the programs and projects of the congregation, reviews the annual budget proposed by the Finance Committee and recommends it to the congregation for final approval, reviews the work of the Gift Discernment Committee and recommends it to the congregation for final approval, and it is responsible to keep the constitution and Bylaws up-to-date as specified in each.

## **B. Composition**

A chairperson and a secretary shall be chosen by the gift discernment process. An assistant chairperson shall be selected by the Church Council at the first meeting of each year. One or two advocates for each cluster shall be appointed or elected as described in the Bylaws. Each advocate shall serve as a link between Church Council and the committees in their cluster. They shall be available to give counsel and guidance to their cluster as requested. At least two members at large shall be elected, through the gift discernment process, for two-year terms.

All church council members shall be members of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VII: CLUSTERS**

Committees and representatives serving similar functions in the congregation shall form a Cluster. One or two advocates shall be chosen for each Cluster to give its committees and representatives a link to Church Council. The number and make-up of clusters shall be outlined in the Bylaws. The responsibilities and composition of all committees and representatives in the congregation are also described in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VIII: GIFT DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

### **A. Purpose**

The Gift Discernment Committee will help members discern their own gifts and will provide opportunities for their use in the congregation. The Committee shall recommend persons to the Church Council for positions of responsibility in the congregation, will contact such persons for their willingness to serve after Church Council validates the proposed slate, and will present the final slate to the Church Council for its recommendation to the congregation. The Gift Discernment Committee will also remind outgoing committee chairs to inform incoming chairs about the procedures and duties of their committees.

### **B. Composition**

Four persons selected by the gift discernment process and the pastor shall make up the Gift Discernment Committee. Each person shall serve a two-year term. No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms. The pastor shall chair the committee.

## **ARTICLE IX: GENERAL MATTERS**

## **A. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the congregation shall be from September 1 through August 31.

## **B. Filling An Unexpired Term**

In the event of a resignation from a position of responsibility in the life of the congregation, Church Council shall make an interim appointment.

## **C. Business Meetings**

An annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month following the close of the fiscal year to secure reports of the activities and concerns from the various committees within the congregation and to make any congregational decisions as appropriate. The Church Council Chairperson shall chair the meetings and the Church Council Secretary shall record the minutes.

Special business meetings, in addition to the annual congregational meeting, may be called by Church Council as it deems appropriate. A congregational meeting may also be convened by written petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of all members of the congregation.

Written notice shall be given for any congregational meeting at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to such a meeting. This notice requirement may be satisfied, among other ways, by publishing a notice in the church bulletin. Such notice shall summarize the issues on which Church Council is requesting congregational action.

In all duly called business meetings of the congregation, all the members present and voting shall consist of a quorum. A simple majority vote, except for constitutional changes as noted below, is necessary for the passing of resolutions.

## **D. Constitutional Changes**

Church Council may present to the congregation recommended changes to the Constitution. The proposed changes must be presented in writing to the congregation at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the vote. A two-thirds majority vote of all members present at a duly called congregational meeting is required for the changes to become effective.

Approved by Congregation: 3 February 2002