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CONSTITUTION

AND

BY-LAWS

MAPLE GROVE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

ASHLAND, OHIO

Adopted November, 1989
Revised November, 1992
Revised May, 1995
Revised November, 1998
Revised February, 2002
Revised 2007
Revised 2010
Revised June, 2011
Revised November, 2013
Revised November, 2014
Revised November 2016

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PREAMBLE

The church is people, people who have faith in God. This faith involves honoring and glorifying the Father, being committed to His son Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, and being led by the Holy Spirit. Because this faith is grounded in the New Testament, we are a New Testament Church. The Holy Scriptures are understood to be God's eternal Good News through Jesus Christ.

Out of this faith arises the purpose of the church. The church is to be a fellowship of people who have found new life in Christ and who are united by the Holy Spirit. The basic functions of this God-created brotherhood are nurture and mission, and these are under girded by stewardship. This body of Christ makes the Lord Jesus visible in the world today. The church is organized so it can more effectively carry out its purpose.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren is to welcome all people, to involve them in the various activities of the church, to teach them the principles of the Christian faith as embodied by our denomination, to lead them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and to prepare them to use their gifts in the home, the church and the world.

1 **CONSTITUTION**

2 **Article I**
3 **THE CHURCH NAME**

4 **The name and address of this congregation is:**

5
6 **Maple Grove Church of the Brethren**
7 **960 Orange Township Road 964**
8 **Ashland, Ohio 44805-9520**
9

10 **Article II**
11 **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND PURPOSE**

12 **The Maple Grove Church of the Brethren:**

- 13 ▪ Is founded upon the faith that there is but one God, a personal God who in holy love
14 creates, sustains, and orders all.
- 15 ▪ Confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of the church and of all life.
- 16 ▪ Believes that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of believers, creating and
17 sustaining the church through the gospel, giving guidance and comfort, and uniting
18 believers with their Lord and with one another.
- 19 ▪ Maintains the New Testament as its only creed and rule of faith. God's search for all
20 persons culminates in God's redemptive act in and through Christ as recorded in the Holy
21 Scriptures. God still speaks through the Bible and continues to accomplish His
22 redemptive purpose.
- 23 ▪ Believes that the gospel is the good news that God was in Christ reconciling the world
24 unto Himself. God's sovereign will and Christ's redeeming grace are revealed through
25 the gospel.
- 26 ▪ Holds that the church is the body of Christ and is under the Lord's mandate to be faithful
27 in accepting and transmitting the gospel by word and deed.
- 28 ▪ Considers all members of the congregation to be responsible for the total ministry of the
29 church.
- 30 ▪ Accepts the ministry of the church to be the proclamation and fulfillment of the gospel
31 for all people both near and far, and the nurture of individual believers in the Christian
32 faith and life.
- 33 ▪ Shall be subject to consider the decisions and recommendations of Annual Conference
34 and District Conference.
- 35 ▪ Shall endeavor, through elections and appointments, to distribute her work among the
36 membership consistent with the best interest of the church.

Recommendations:

- That trine immersion continue to be the only method of baptism administered by our church. Candidates for membership shall give evidence of their knowledge of the beliefs, practices, and policies of the Church of the Brethren and express a willingness to teach and uphold the same.
- That all persons who are preparing for membership in the church by baptism or by letter shall participate in a membership class to learn more fully the meaning of the Christian life and the teachings and practices of our church. The course of instruction shall include: congregational and denominational history, beliefs in trine immersion, child dedication, feet washing, love feast, communion, anointing service, laying on of hands, and the sanctity of marriage.
- That a member should be encouraged to observe Love Feast as a part of their Christian commitment. Love Feast/Communion shall be open to any baptized believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- These recommendations will be the collective responsibility of church leadership, the church body, and the Pastor and ministry staff.

**Article III
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- Inspire members to do good. Doing good is the true expression of Christian living. We generally know what is right and good. The church, by preaching, teaching, singing, praying, reading the Bible and Godly living must inspire people to do what is good.
- Teach and preach the Truth. Truth with a capital "T": Bible Truth, Spiritual Truth, Eternal Truth, studied and learned in the classes, preached from the pulpit.
- Build a Christian Fellowship. Class parties, Men and Women's Fellowships, eating together at church, member visiting, neighboring, greeting, welcoming. Our best friends should be our fellow church goers.
- Promote the Ministry. Encourage men and women to enter the ministry. Support Bethany Theological Seminary.
- Promote Strong Leadership. Seek out able and willing officers and workers. Provide leadership training. All members are ministers.
- Engage in Domestic and International Missions. Help home churches that are struggling to grow. Establish new congregations in the United States. Spread the gospel both domestically and internationally.
- Evangelize the Local Community. There are many un-churched people in this community. We are called to win them for Christ and the Church.
- Administer Rites and Ordinances. Baptism, Communion, Anointing, Laying on of hands, Child Dedication. No other organization but the church can administer these ordinances as commanded by the Bible.

- 1 ▪ Provide Adequate Church Facilities. Provide and maintain a good building for worship,
2 education and fellowship.
- 3 ▪ Educate Against Sin. Speak and work against: lying, stealing, drunkenness, greed,
4 cheating, hatred, war, division, envy, adultery, jealousy, and gossiping.
- 5 ▪ Strengthen Christian Homes. Encourage parents to raise their children according to
6 God's word and instill in them Christian values.
- 7 ▪ Work for Equal Rights for All. Strive to eliminate poverty and special privileges, and
8 work to achieve an adequate standard of living for all, nationally and internationally.
- 9 ▪ Care for Those in Need. Provide for the material needs of those who are disabled,
10 elderly, widowed, orphaned or otherwise dependent.

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Article IV
STATEMENT ON MEMBERSHIP POLICY

14 1. Meaning of Membership.

15 Membership according to the New Testament is living life in the body of Christ. "For by one
16 Spirit we were all baptized into one body", (I Cor. 12:13), so that we "though many, are one
17 body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Rom. 12:5). Membership in a local
18 fellowship of believers, the congregation, is the way in which we affirm and live out our
19 membership in Christ's larger body, the universal church. In our interrelatedness with other
20 Christians in the church, we experience the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit, we discover ways to
21 be faithful to our covenant with God and each other, and are able to support one another in
22 carrying out our common calling as the people of God. As it was in the house churches of the
23 earliest Christians, so it is in the life of God's people today.

24 From the time of its beginnings, the Church of the Brethren has affirmed the importance of
25 church membership and sought ways to make church membership more meaningful. It is
26 appropriate, therefore, for the congregation and its members to reflect on their mutual
27 accountability to one another.

28 The congregation has a covenant responsibility:

- 29 ▪ to care for its members,
- 30 ▪ to encourage growth in freedom and discipleship,
- 31 ▪ to help members to discover their gifts,
- 32 ▪ to find ways to serve, and
- 33 ▪ to provide ministries which respond to both spiritual and physical needs.

34 Therefore, each member has a covenant responsibility:

- 35 ▪ to participate regularly in the life of the congregation,
- 36 ▪ to seek the counsel of the church in living out the way of Christ,
- 37 ▪ to challenge the church to greater accountability to its calling,

- 1 ▪ to respond to opportunities to serve in the congregation and beyond, and
2 ▪ to contribute to the church's ministries in every way possible.

3 At the heart of our calling as members of Christ's body is the summons to follow Christ as his
4 disciples. Christians do not live unto themselves but are called to seek first the kingdom of God,
5 to risk themselves for Christ's sake, and to take up the way of the cross. To accept and practice
6 radical discipleship is no easy task. In the community of faith, however, we find encouragement
7 and strength to live out our discipleship in oneness with others.

8 2. Entering Into and Renewing Church Membership.

9 Membership in the local church is open to all persons who, by their own act of faith, say yes to
10 God's offer of new life in Christ and accept the vocation of the covenant community, as
11 understood and practiced by the Church of the Brethren. One of the responsibilities of the
12 congregation is to reach out to persons irrespective of race, national origin, or status in life, to
13 share with them the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ, and to invite them to enter into the
14 life of Christ's body.

15 When persons respond to this invitation, the church leadership shall take steps to prepare them
16 for membership. Part of this preparation should consist of classes on the meaning of church
17 membership. Such classes shall offer sufficient opportunity for persons to explore the faith and
18 history of the wider Christian community, to study the particular story and distinctive emphases
19 of the Church of the Brethren, and to become familiar with the life and expectations of the
20 congregation they will be entering. Persons may be received into the church in one of three
21 ways:

- 22 ▪ confession of faith and baptism by trine immersion as practiced by the Church of the
23 Brethren;
24 ▪ a letter transferring membership from another congregation of the Church of the Brethren
25 or of another Evangelical denomination¹; and
26 ▪ reaffirmation of faith and renewal of the commitment to membership made at an earlier
27 time in another congregation, or the same congregation.

28 The act of receiving new members should be a festive moment in the life of a congregation. It is
29 a time for old and new members to affirm their relationship with one another, a time to celebrate
30 the joys and responsibilities of living in covenant in Christ's body, and a time to recommit to the
31 lifelong process of growth to which baptism should lead.

32 3. Membership Classification.

33 Members shall be classified in one of three ways, *member, associate member or inactive*
34 *member*, for statistical purposes and reported accordingly on annual report forms.

¹ Evangelical---1) pertaining to or in keeping with the gospel and its teachings. 2) belonging to or designating the Christian churches that emphasize the teaching and authority of the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, in opposition to the institutional authority of the church itself, and that stress as paramount the tenet that salvation is achieved by personal conversion to faith in the atonement of Christ. (Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1969. Publisher Random House, NY, NY.)

1 *Member* - Members of the congregation are those persons who have been received into the
2 church by baptism, letter, or reaffirmation of faith, and who chose to continue their
3 membership when the congregation invites them to examine and renew the covenant
4 relationship. *****

5 *Associate Member* - Congregations may grant associate membership to two categories of
6 persons:

- 7 ▪ Temporary residents, such as students and winter residents, who participate in the life of
8 a congregation on a seasonal or short-term basis, and who continue to hold membership
9 in another congregation in the community of their permanent residence.
- 10 ▪ Former residents, persons who have moved to a new location in which there is no Church
11 of the Brethren, and who wish to continue a relationship with the Brethren at the same
12 time that they become members of another Christian community.

13 Associate members have the right to vote and serve on committees, but not serve as
14 chairperson, in the congregation granting their associate status, and have a responsibility to
15 support the ministries of that congregation. Associate members are not eligible to serve on
16 the Church Board or to represent the congregation as delegates to district or annual
17 conferences.

18 *Inactive Member* - Inactive members consist of those persons who were received into the
19 church as members, but who no longer participate in the church's life or carry out the
20 commitments expected of members, and who for two consecutive years fail to respond to
21 invitations to reaffirm or renew their relationship with the congregation. Whether the causes
22 of separation have to do with the individual, the congregation, or both, the congregation shall
23 continue to explore ways to restore the broken relationship. For statistical purposes, members
24 whose residence are unknown and cannot be ascertained for two consecutive years will also
25 be designated as inactive members.

26 4. Membership Termination

27 Membership termination in a congregation of the Church of the Brethren occurs in the
28 following ways:

- 29 a. Death.
- 30 b. Transfer of membership by letter - A letter of transfer is the property of the congregation
31 and shall go from the granting to the receiving congregation. Either the letter or
32 accompanying note should indicate whether the member for whom the letter is sent is a
33 member or inactive member.
- 34 c. Removal - The congregation may act to remove a person's name from the list of members
35 when:
 - 36 ▪ A member has joined another church, but failed to request a letter of transfer.
 - 37 ▪ The congregation determines that all attempts at reconciliation have failed.

38

1 **Article V**

2 **ORGANIZATION**

3 **1. Church Council**

4 The Church Council is a business meeting of all members of the congregation. Two (2) regular
5 Council meetings shall be held each year, on the third Tuesday (or Sunday) of the months of
6 April and October. Specific agenda items at these meetings include:

- 7 a. April Council - Elect Sunday School officers
- 8 b. October Council - Elect District and Annual Conference delegates according to Conference
9 guidelines. [It is encouraged that one of the District Conference delegates be a youth] Elect
10 Church officers. Adopt budget for the New Year.

11 Any regular Council date may be changed by the Church Board or a vote of the congregation at
12 Sunday morning worship when circumstances or conditions make it expedient to do so. In
13 addition, "special Councils" may be called by the Church Board after providing notice in the
14 church's Sunday bulletin for a minimum of two consecutive weeks.

15 **2. Church Board**

16 The Church Board is composed of the Church Board Chair, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer,
17 Church Financial Secretary, all chairpersons of church committees, including presidents of the
18 Church of the Brethren Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, and Men's Fellowship. Duties
19 of the Church Board are:

- 20 a. At the end of the calendar year, elect from the current Church Board members a new
21 Church Board Chair and Assistant Chair to serve a one year term the following year. The
22 current board chair is ineligible to be re-elected for the next year. Also, the Church Treasurer,
23 Church Clerk, Church Financial Secretary and their assistants are ineligible to serve as Board
24 Chair and Assistant Board Chair while continuing to serve as church officers.
- 25 b. Meet four (4) times a year: on the second Tuesday of January, April, July and October.
26 Special Church Board meetings may be called by the Board Chair or at the request of three (3)
27 Board members. Individual committees shall meet prior to meeting with the Church Board.
- 28 c. Allow all committee chairmen to be heard at board meetings and, if necessary, advise
29 committees on matters pertaining to their responsibilities. Note: Individual committees shall
30 meet prior to their chair reporting to the Church Board.
- 31 d. Fulfill the directives of the Church Council meetings.
- 32 e. Fill all vacancies in elective offices occurring between church council and fill such other
33 vacancies not otherwise provided for.
- 34 f. Make all appointments for which the Board is responsible.
- 35 g. Project short and long range planning, set goals and initiate new programs.
- 36 h. Develop the agenda for Church Council after receiving all committee reports, considering
37 any old and new business.
- 38 i. Review the Church Constitution every five (5) years or more frequently if necessary.

- 1 j. Review the proposed budget for presentation to the October Church Council meeting.
- 2 k. Provide for annual audit of financial records for the church and associated fellowships.
- 3 l. Bring recommendations to the church council meeting when major church policy or church
- 4 constitution needs revision.
- 5 m. Enlist the help and counsel of the District Executive Minister and/or other district
- 6 personnel in planning and handling of special concerns.
- 7 n. Act to make church membership meaningful and significant, dealing with important issues
- 8 that are related to church membership.

9
10 **Article VI**

11 **OFFICIALS OF THE CHURCH**

12 The officers of the Church Council meetings shall be the Moderator, the Church Clerk, the

13 Church Treasurer and the Church Financial Secretary. The Clerk, Treasurer and Financial

14 Secretary shall be members of the congregation. All financial officers shall give corporate

15 surety, in an amount determined by the Board, for which the premiums shall be paid by the

16 congregation.

17 1. Moderator (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

18 The Moderator shall be elected to a two (2) year term. The moderator serves as the official head

19 of the congregation but shall recognize the Pastor (See BY-LAWS, Article 1) as the spiritual and

20 executive leader. The Moderator shall preside at church council meeting, and perform other

21 duties that pertain to the office. In the event of the Moderator's inability to perform these duties,

22 the Church Board shall appoint a substitute to preside in the Moderator's place on a temporary

23 basis. The Moderator shall be considered an ex-officio² member of all committees and the

24 Church Board. The Moderator is exempt from term limits.

25 2. Church Clerk (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

26 The Church Clerk shall be elected at Church Council to a two (2) year term, with a limit of two

27 terms in succession. The person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant

28 Clerk, also for a two (2) year term.

29 The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the Church Board and Church Council

30 meetings. Minutes shall be kept in a volume provided for that purpose and shall be the property

31 of the congregation. The Church Clerk shall also keep the official membership roll and, along

32 with the pastor, sign new membership certificates. The Church Clerk shall be a member of the

33 Church Board.

34 3. Treasurer (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

35 The Church Treasurer (referred to as Treasurer) shall be elected at Church Council to a two (2)

36 year term, with a limit of two terms in succession. The person receiving the second highest vote

² Ex-officio member has voice but may not vote.

1 shall serve as the Assistant Treasurer, also for a two (2) year term.

2 The Treasurer shall receive and keep records from the Financial Secretary of deposits to the
3 bank. In addition, the Treasurer shall disperse funds, make written reports to the Finance
4 Committee, Church Board, and to the Church Council. The Treasurer shall submit account
5 records to the finance committee for annual audit. The Treasurer shall be a member of the
6 Finance Committee and the Church Board. The assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the
7 Finance Committee.

8 Other groups within the Church (i.e. Church of Brethren Women's Fellowship) may have their
9 own treasurer if approved by Church Council. Such a treasurer is to be elected by their
10 respective group annually. They will be responsible for maintaining and securing the group's
11 account(s) and will provide to the Church Treasurer monthly reports on financial activities of the
12 group.

13 4. Financial Secretary (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

14 The Church Financial Secretary (referred to as Financial Secretary) shall be elected at Church
15 Council to a two (2) year term, with a limit of two terms in succession. The person receiving the
16 second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Financial Secretary, also for a two (2) year term.

17 The Financial Secretary shall receive church funds, keep records of all contributions from the
18 members and other public and private offerings, and all other receipts, and make deposits in the
19 bank. The financial secretary will provide year-end tax statements to donors for individual
20 contributions. The Financial Secretary will provide to the Treasurer records of all deposits. In
21 addition, the Financial Secretary shall make written reports to the Finance Committee. The
22 Financial Secretary shall submit offering and deposit records to the Finance committee for
23 annual audit. The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Finance Committee and the
24 Church Board. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Finance Committee.

25 5. Deacons

26 Deacons (the title applies to persons of both genders) serve for a five (5) year term. An exception
27 to the five year term is deacons who were called for life time service prior to the 1998 adoption
28 of the process described hereafter. Term and life Deacons shall serve jointly with no special
29 privileges or elevated status attributed to either calling. Upon completion of a Deacon's term,
30 they are eligible to be called again to the Deacon ministry. The need to call new Deacons will be
31 determined by Church Council. This can arise due to expired terms, resignation, retirement, or
32 when the size of the Deacon Body needs to be increased in order to effectively minister to the
33 congregation. A Deacon must be a member of Maple Grove Church.

34 The process of calling Deacons shall be confidential and will begin at Church Council. Each
35 church member will submit a list of fellow members he or she discerns as qualified for the
36 Deacon ministry. The number of nominations allotted to each member will be limited to the
37 number of Deacons to be called. The Church Board Chair and Church Clerk shall receive the
38 nominations and act as tellers. They shall tabulate the results of the nominations to determine
39 which nominees receive the strongest call. The Church Board Chair and Deacon Chair shall visit
40 nominated persons to present to them the ministry of Deacon, offer the call on behalf of the
41 congregation, and determine those who are willing to serve. The church will install new deacons
42 during a Sunday morning service of dedication and commitment and which will include the

1 laying on of hands. Upon completing the first year of service, Deacons shall have the option to
2 withdraw from the deacon body.

3 The Deacon ministry is a sacred calling. Those called to this ministry shall be persons whose
4 commitment and faithfulness have been proven in relationship to the local fellowship of
5 believers. They will also be persons of a spiritual mind, open and responsive to the Holy Spirit,
6 careful to exercise wisdom and sound judgment while being faithful and loyal to Christ and the
7 church.

8 Our church looks to Deacons to lead exemplary lives and to uphold the doctrines, teachings, and
9 practices of the Church of the Brethren while investing a significant commitment of time, talent,
10 and resources in the congregation's common life. The Deacon body shall organize annually with
11 a chair and secretary. The duties of the Deacons are:

- 12 a. Make arrangements for the Love Feast and assist in the baptismal services.
- 13 b. Assist the Pastor in ministering to the sick, shut-ins and bereaved.
- 14 c. Be actively involved in visitation by calling upon both active and inactive members.
- 15 d. Provide the anointing service when called upon.
- 16 e. Work with the Moderator and Pastor with conflict resolution and reconciliation as needed
17 or when requested.
- 18 f. Assist in promoting a healthy program of evangelism. This could be done by coordinating
19 or sponsoring annual revival/renewal meeting(s) or spiritual enrichment series.
- 20 g. Fill the pulpit at the request of the Pastor and/or Ministerial Committee.
- 21 h. Review and revise the church membership roll as needed using the Membership
22 Classification in the Constitution and By-Laws.
- 23 i. Hold regularly scheduled meetings; i.e. monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly for planning,
24 training, encouragement, coordination and fellowship.
- 25 j. Minister to the poor and needy in the congregation and community.
- 26 k. Oversee the granting of Deacon emeritus status when directed. Deacon emeritus is an
27 honorary title conferred for life. It recognizes persons who have served as Deacons in an
28 exemplary way for an extended period of time and who have concluded their active service.
29 Emeriti Deacons maintain a relationship with the Deacons and their mission by serving in a
30 consultative, advisory role. Any person, having faithfully served in the Deacon ministry, may
31 be recommended for this position by the Deacons, Church Board, or Church Council.
32 Confirmation shall be by vote of the Church Council.

33 34 **Article VII**

35 **CHURCH COMMITTEES**

36 1. Agape Acres (Nominated in October)

- 37 • The Agape Acres Board is the governing body of Agape Acres, a retirement community
38 started by Maple Grove Church in 1959, and consists of thirteen (13) members, nine (9)

1 of whom shall be members of Maple Grove Church. Each year, up to six (6) names shall
2 be presented to the Maple Grove Church Board and Council for approval, and then
3 submitted to the Agape Acres Board. Three (3) of the submitted names shall be selected
4 by the Agape Acres Board to serve terms of three (3) years. The Chair of the Agape
5 Acres Board shall be a member of Maple Grove Church, and shall report to the Maple
6 Grove Church Board and Council.

7 2. Altar and Flower (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

8 The Altar and Flower Committee shall consist of two (2) members, one elected each year at
9 Council to a two (2) year term. The Altar and Flower Committee's duties are:

- 10 a. Receive gifts of flowers for the sanctuary from any person wishing to remember birthdays,
11 anniversaries, or memorials.
- 12 b. Express the church's appreciation for gifts of flowers and encourage members and friends to
13 provide flowers at any time.
- 14 c. Care for flowers brought to or secured for the sanctuary, and candles, paraments and
15 decorations used in the sanctuary.
- 16 d. Schedule and instruct volunteers to be acolytes for Sunday services.

17 3. Bible in School (Elected in April, takes office in September)

18 The Bible in School Committee shall consist of two (2) members, one being elected each year at
19 Council, to a two (2) year term. Serving as a member on the Bible in the School Board makes an
20 individual ineligible to serve on this Committee. The Bible in School Committee's duties are:

- 21 a. Attend Board meetings of the Bible in School program and represent the interests of the
22 church.
- 23 b. Report back to the church the activities and needs of the Bible in School program by
24 sharing and/or newsletter.

25 4. Camp Representative (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

26 The Camp Representative Committee shall consist of one member, elected at Council, to a two
27 (2) year term. The Inspiration Hills Camp Representative should be a person interested in and
28 enthusiastic about camping and Christian outdoor education. The Camp Representative's duties
29 are:

- 30 a. Serve as a liaison between the local church and Inspiration Hills Camp.
- 31 b. Promote the Camp's mission, needs and opportunities for service.
- 32 c. Promote camping and camp ministry in the church (publicize summer programs and other
33 District events held at the camp).
- 34 d. Attend meetings of the District Camp Representatives.

35 5. Church of the Brethren Men's Fellowship (C.B.M.F.)

36 The Men's Fellowship shall organize annually with a President, Vice-President and
37 Secretary/Treasurer. The Men's Fellowship shall:

- 38 a. Meet the needs of the men which are not fully met through congregational activities or the

- 1 over all adult and/or family programs.
- 2 b. Provide a channel through which the church is able to serve in special ways.
- 3 c. Discover and aid in enlisting for the church the talents and interests of men who are not
- 4 involved in the life and work of the church.
- 5 d. Plan joint annual meetings with our three sister churches and encourage participation in the
- 6 District Men's Fellowship meetings.

7 6. Church of the Brethren Women's Fellowship (C.B.W.F.)

8 The Women's Fellowship shall organize annually with those offices they deem necessary to carry
9 on its work. The Women's Fellowship shall:

- 10 a. Meet the needs of women which are not fully met through congregational activities or the
- 11 over-all adult and/or family programs.
- 12 b. Provide a channel through which the church is able to serve in special ways.
- 13 c. Discover and aid in enlisting for the church the talents and interests of women who are not
- 14 involved in the life and work of the church.
- 15 d. Plan joint annual meetings with our three sister churches and encourage participation in the
- 16 District Women's Fellowship meetings.

17 7. Church of the Brethren Youth Fellowship (C.B.Y.F.)

18 The Youth Fellowship will organize annually by choosing from among its members a
19 President, Vice-President and a Secretary/Treasurer. The Youth Fellowship shall:

- 20 a. Hold regular meetings for support and fellowship for the group.
- 21 b. Participate in District programs such as Senior and Junior High Camp and Youth Rallies.
- 22 c. Provide to the Christian Education Committee a list of names of church members who
- 23 might serve as C.B.Y.F. Advisors, providing assistance to the youth director and officers.

24 8. Christian Education (Elected in April, take office September 1)

25 The Christian Education Committee shall consist of the Adult Education Director, Children's
26 Education Director, Nursery Education Director, Sunday School Secretary, and six (6) additional
27 elected members. Two of these additional members shall be elected each year at Council to a
28 three (3) year term. Elected members of the Committee can serve two consecutive terms, but are
29 then required to be off one year before coming back on.

30 In addition, assistants to the Adult Education Director, Children's Education Director and
31 Nursery Education Director shall be elected to two (2) year terms by Council and shall serve as a
32 voting member of the Christian Education Committee in the absence of their respective chair.

33 The Christian Education Committee's duties are:

- 34 a. Elect a chair of the committee annually from among the committee.
- 35 b. Appoint teachers and helpers for classes up to and including the Junior High Youth.
- 36 c. Work with the Adult Education Director to select, approve and purchase all church school
- 37 materials, curriculum and equipment in consultation with the teachers.

- 1 d. Promote opportunities for in-service training.
- 2 e. Assist in planning special programs such as the Christmas program, Easter Sunrise Service,
- 3 Vacation Bible School.
- 4 f. Select CBYF advisors from the membership who will provide assistance and council to the
- 5 CBYF director and officers, taking into consideration the list of names provided by the
- 6 CBYF.
- 7 g. Select teachers for the youth Sunday School class from the membership, taking into
- 8 consideration a list of names provided by the youth Sunday School class.

9 Adult Education Director (Elected in April, takes office September 1)

10 The Adult Education Director shall be elected by Church Council, to a two (2) year term. The

11 Adult Education Director's duties are:

- 12 a. Direct the education in the Adult Sunday School Classes.
- 13 b. Select teachers for the Adult Sunday School Classes.
- 14 c. Encourage growth and involvement in discipleship and service.
- 15 d. Encourage teachers to attend training opportunities (in the local church or arranged by the
- 16 District).
- 17 e. Oversee Birthday Sunday observance on the first Sunday of each month.
- 18 f. Encourage teachers to have class curriculum approved by the Christian Education
- 19 Committee.

20 Children's Education Director (Elected in April, takes office September 1)

21 The Children's Education Director shall be elected by Church Council, to a two (2) year term.

22 The Children's Education Director's duties are:

- 23 a. Direct the education in the Children's Sunday School classes.
- 24 b. Select teachers for approval by the Christian Education Committee for the children's
- 25 classes.
- 26 c. Encourage growth and involvement in discipleship and service.
- 27 d. Encourage teachers to attend training opportunities.
- 28 e. Encourage teachers to use curriculum approved by the Christian Education Committee.
- 29 f. Direct the Vacation Bible School.
- 30 g. Order materials used by the Children's Sunday School classes.

31 Nursery Education Director (Elected in April, takes office September 1)

32 The Nursery Education Director shall be elected by Church Council, to a two (2) year term. The

33 Nursery Director's duties are:

- 34 a. Direct the teaching in the Nursery department, securing as many teachers as needed.
- 35 b. Select curriculum used in the nursery department and obtain approval of the Christian
- 36 Education Committee.

- 1 c. Visit the homes of the children, if possible.
- 2 d. To assist the Pastor in the child dedication service and presentation of certificate and rose.
- 3 e. Contact the parents of each new baby with a form asking if they want their child on the
- 4 cradle roll.
- 5 f. Update and keep current the cradle roll and regularly send literature to the parents.
- 6 g. Provide nursery service two (2) times a year for Love Feast and Communion Service.

7 Sunday School Secretary (Elected in April, takes office September 1)

8 The Sunday School Secretary shall be elected each year at Council to a one (1) year term. The
9 person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Sunday School Secretary
10 and shall also serve a one (1) year term. The Sunday School Secretary's duties are:

- 11 a. Receive the Sunday School offering from each class, record the amount, and deliver the
- 12 offering to the Church Financial Secretary.
- 13 b. Record the attendance of persons attending the Sunday school classes.

14 9. Congregational Ethics

15 The Congregational Ethics Committee's duty is to review ethical concerns in accordance with
16 Annual Conference guidelines and the laws of the State of Ohio. The Congregational Ethics
17 Committee shall consist of the Pastor, Church Board Chair, and Chair of the Deacons, and shall
18 meet when ethical concerns arise within the congregation. In the case of staff involvement the
19 ministerial committee chair shall be included.

20 10. Directory (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

21 The Directory Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one elected each year at Council,
22 with a three (3) year term. A person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be
23 off the Committee one year before coming back on. The Directory Committee's duties are:

- 24 a. Obtain updated records of all elected or appointed Church officers and Committee
- 25 members.
- 26 b. Prepare the Directory annually, to be published after the first of the year.

27 11. Finance (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

28 A committee of ten (10) members. Six are elected members with two (2) members elected each
29 year at October council meeting for a three (3) year term. The other four members are Church
30 Treasurer and Church Financial Secretary and their assistants. An elected person can serve two
31 consecutive terms but then is required to be off the Committee one year before re-election. The
32 chairperson is chosen from the six elected members of this committee. The Finance Committee's
33 duties are:

- 34 a. A minimum of two elected members will count the weekly church offerings and deliver the
- 35 monies (cash/checks) to the Financial Secretary for deposit along with a signed statement of
- 36 the amount collected. The same statement (or copy thereof) will be provided to the church
- 37 treasurer.
- 38 b. Act as counsel to the Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

- 1 c. Audit financial records annually.
- 2 d. Receive estimates of financial needs from Committees and other departments and prepare
- 3 the church budget or statement of the financial needs and submit the same to the Church
- 4 Board and Church Council for approval at the October Church Board and Church Council
- 5 Meetings.
- 6 e. Plan and direct raising operating funds needed by the church.
- 7 f. Interpret the financial condition of the Church and the trends in giving.
- 8 12. Food Bank (Elected in October, takes office January 1)
- 9 The Food Bank Committee shall consist of one (1) member elected every three years by the Food
- 10 Bank Board to a three (3) year term on the Ashland County Food Bank Board. A person can
- 11 serve two consecutive terms, but then must be off the committee one term before going back on
- 12 the Food Bank Board. The Food Bank Committee's duties are:
 - 13 a. Attend quarterly meetings of the Food Bank Board and bring a report to Church Board and
 - 14 Council meeting to keep the church informed of hunger in the county.
 - 15 b. Insure that donated food items are taken to Food Bank.
- 16 13. Home Visitation (Elected in October, takes office January 1)
- 17 The Home Visitation Committee shall consist of two (2) members, one elected each year at
- 18 Church Council to a two (2) year term. The Home Visitation Committee's duties are:
 - 19 a. Visit shut-in members and friends of the church and community, providing them literature
 - 20 and recordings used in the church and Sunday school.
 - 21 b. Coordinate the Committee's work with the Pastor and other church visitation ministries.
- 22 14. Messenger (Elected in October, takes office January 1)
- 23 The Messenger Committee shall consist of one (1) member elected to a three (3) year term. The
- 24 Messenger Committee's duties are:
 - 25 a. Report quarterly, for publication in the Messenger, all events of the local church, that are of
 - 26 interest to the brotherhood such as new members, deaths, anniversaries, pastoral
 - 27 licensing/ordination and placement.
 - 28 b. Arrange for subscriptions to the Messenger magazine by providing names and addresses of
 - 29 members, new members and newlyweds.
- 30 15. Ministerial (Elected in October, takes office January 1)
- 31 The Ministerial Committee shall consist of six (6) members, two elected each year at Council,
- 32 with a three (3) year term. A person can be elected to two consecutive terms, but then is required
- 33 to be off the Committee one year before coming back on. The Ministerial Committee's duties
- 34 are:
 - 35 a. Serve as an advisor to the Pastor and ministerial staff.
 - 36 b. Meet monthly to receive ministry reports and plan ministry opportunities.
 - 37 c. Provide written annual performance and planning evaluations for the ministry staff.

- 1 d. Help educate the congregation regarding church ministry staff relationships.
- 2 e. Be a counseling body between ministry staff and congregation.
- 3 f. Arrange for pulpit supply in the absence of the Pastor.
- 4 g. Form a search committee, interview candidates, and recommend ministers to the
- 5 congregation when a new pastor/staff is needed.
- 6 h. Carry out the details of employing a pastor for the congregation, following the
- 7 recommended denominational guidelines.
- 8 j. Work with the Deacons in arranging and planning for special services.
- 9 k. Develop jointly with the pastor a pastoral job description.
- 10 l. Develop job description for the ministry staff in consultation with the pastor.
- 11 m. Identify worthy talent in the local congregation and encourage persons to consider the
- 12 ministry as a vocational calling.

13 16. Mission and Service (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

14 The Mission and Service Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one elected each year at

15 Council to a three (3) year term. A person can serve two terms, but then must be off the

16 committee one year before coming back on. The Mission and Service Committee's duties are:

- 17 a. Promote the mission work (domestic and international) in the life of the church.
- 18 b. Promote Brethren Volunteer Service in the life of the church for all ages.
- 19 c. Educate and share the issues of peace, social action and Christian Service to the life of the
- 20 congregation.

21 17. Nominating (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

22 The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members; two elected each year at Council,

23 to a three (3) year term. A person can be elected to two consecutive terms, but then is required to

24 be off the Committee one year before coming back on. The Nominating Committee's duties are:

- 25 a. Prepare the ballot for Church Board approval, with prior acceptance by nominees for:
 - 26 ■ Sunday School officers for the April Council,
 - 27 ■ Church officers for the October Council, and
 - 28 ■ Provide a list of nominations for delegate(s) to District and Annual conferences for the
 - 29 October Council meetings, respectively.
- 30 b. Help to assess and identify spiritual gifts and abilities of the congregation so they may be
- 31 utilized for ministry.
- 32 c. When requested by the Board makes recommendations for filling of vacant committee
- 33 positions.
- 34 d. Keep a record of past appointments/election results.
- 35 e. Serve as tellers at Council meetings.
- 36 f. Provide a list of names to Church Board (approved at October Council meeting) for Agape

1 Acres Board selection.

2 g. Send letters to candidates following elections informing them of the results of the vote and
3 the responsibilities of the position.

4 h. Encourage nominations for any office from the floor at Church Council.

5 18. Property Maintenance and Improvement Fund Committee (PMIF)

6 Committee of nine (9) members. Six are elected members with two (2) members elected each
7 year at October council meeting for a 3 year term. Two members are appointed by their
8 respective committee, Trustee Committee and Finance Committee. The ninth member is the
9 Church Treasurer. The chairperson is chosen from elected members of this committee.

10 Purpose: Raise funds for maintenance (roofs, furnace, etc.) and improvements of church
11 property.

12 Restrictions: Money raised will be kept in a separate budget account, and its expenditure will be
13 in accordance with purpose of this committee as voted by Church Council.

14 Duties: Coordinate annual activities of: (a) Spring and Fall Flings (garage type sale in fellowship
15 hall), (b) Food Trailer at Fair. Committee is not limited to these activities and can plan and carry
16 out other fund raising activities.

17 19. Sunshine and Recognition (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

18 The Sunshine and Recognition Committee shall consist of three (3) members; one (1) elected
19 each year at Council, to a three (3) year term. A person can serve two consecutive terms, but
20 then is required to be off the committee for one year before coming back on. The Sunshine and
21 Recognition Committee's duties are:

22 a. Write cards on behalf of the church for sickness and hospitalization, send anniversary cards,
23 and congratulatory cards on the occasion of new births.

24 b. Order a remembrance (i.e. flowers, etc.) for families experiencing a death, or for special
25 occasions.

26 c. Recognize accomplishments and awards of church members.

27 d. Prepare a list of names of high school and college graduates, service personnel, and those
28 celebrating anniversaries and weddings for recognition in bulletins and newsletters.

29 20. Trustees (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

30 The Trustee Committee shall consist of six (6) members; two elected each year at Council to a
31 three (3) year term. A person can be elected to two consecutive terms, but then is required to be
32 off the Committee one year before coming back on.

33 The Trustee Committee's duties are:

34 a. Attend to the care and maintenance of all church property.

35 b. Give opportunities to the congregation for voluntary service in the care and maintenance of
36 the property.

37 c. Employ or contract custodial, lawn care, snow removal and sanitation services.

- 1 d. Maintain an inventory of church property and a record of the location of church property
2 and equipment.
- 3 e. Be the legal representative of the congregation for acquiring, holding, dispersing, and
4 conveying property in accordance with the decisions of the Church Board and Council.
- 5 f. Annually inspect the church and church parsonage to remain current on repairs and
6 maintenance.
- 7 g. Administer rental agreements for the parsonage or church building working with the
8 building use coordinator.

9 21. Ushers (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

10 The Usher Committee shall consist of eight (8) members. Four (4) members are elected each
11 year at Council meeting to a two (2) year term. The four elected will serve during their first year
12 as Assistant Ushers and then serve their second year as Senior Ushers. The four Senior Ushers
13 will select a chair who will serve as a member on the Church Board. The Ushers are to be
14 courteous and welcoming to the congregation and visitors. Their duties are:

- 15 a. Greet strangers and secure their names.
- 16 b. Place bulletins and other printed materials for distribution in the hands of all entering
17 persons.
- 18 c. Offer to escort all persons entering the sanctuary to a pew. (They should seat no one during
19 the rendering of special music, the reading of the Bible, or prayers. They should not be seated
20 themselves until all persons entering the church are seated and should remain at the rear of the
21 sanctuary at all times to attend late comers or assist worshipers in the case of an emergency.)
- 22 d. Collect offerings.
- 23 e. Properly ventilate the sanctuary.
- 24 f. Provide for the special needs of attendees such as assistance with wheelchairs.

25 22. Worship (Elected in October, takes office January 1)

26 The Worship Committee shall consist of six (6) members; two elected each year at Council, to a
27 three (3) year term. A person can be elected to two consecutive terms, but then must be off the
28 Committee one year before coming back on. The organists, pianists and choir directors shall also
29 serve as members with voting privileges. The Worship Committee's duties are:

- 30 a. Coordinate the music ministry of the church.
- 31 b. Appoint organists, pianists, choir directors and all other music personnel.
- 32 c. Direct the purchase of hymnals, music, robes and instruments or anything pertaining to the
33 music of the church.
- 34 d. Provide systematic care of all music instruments and choir robes, etc.
- 35 e. Work with the Trustees in any building modifications or capital expenses related to
36 worship.

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Article VIII

COMMITTEE RESTRICTIONS

- 1. Church membership is required to be eligible to serve on most Church Committees or to serve in the capacity of Teacher or Assistant Teacher. The exceptions are teaching helpers and Ushers (but not the Head Usher) who may be non-members. Hired nonmember Ministerial staff are eligible to teach if approved by the Ministerial Committee. Hired nonmember nonministerial staff are eligible to teach if approved by the Christian Education Committee.
- 2. No Committee shall have more than one family member serving at the same time. The definition of family member is parent/child, siblings, and spouse.

Article IX

OTHER

- 1. Church Board and Council shall appoint individuals or Committees as deemed necessary to fulfill the mission and work of the church. These individuals or Committees shall report to the Church Board and Council as directed.
- 2. Annual Conference Delegates shall be elected at the October Church Council meeting, to serve a one (1) year term. Delegates shall be church members, shall attend Delegate briefings if scheduled, attend all Conference business sessions, represent the interests of the church in matters of debate and voting, and shall report Conference activities to the church as scheduled. Housing, expenses and travel costs shall be covered by the church as guided by Annual Conference and the Maple Grove Finance Committee.
- 3. District Conference Delegates shall be elected at the October Church Council meeting, to serve a one (1) year term. Delegates shall be church members, shall attend Delegate briefings if scheduled, attend all Conference business sessions, represent the interests of the church in matters under consideration and voting, and shall report Conference activities to the church as scheduled. Housing, expenses and travel costs shall be reimbursed by the church as guided by the Maple Grove Finance Committee.

Article X

FISCAL YEAR AND CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year and church year of the congregation shall be those designated by Annual Conference.

Article XI

QUORUM

- 1. Although it is desirable to have as many members present as possible for the congregational Council meeting, no quorum shall be required except as might be specified by law.

1 2. For boards and committees a majority of members present shall constitute a quorum.

2
3 **Article XII**

4 **AMENDMENTS**

5 This Constitution may be amended by a two-third vote of members present at any Council
6 meeting provided that a written notice of the proposed amendment has been given 30 days prior
7 to the meeting.

8
9 **Article XIII**

10 **RULES OF ORDER**

11 Unless otherwise specified in these by-laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the official rules of
12 order for church committees, Board and Council meetings.

13
14 **BY-LAWS**

15
16 **Article I**

17 **EMPLOYED STAFF**

18 1. Pastor

19 When needed the congregation shall employ a Pastor whose faith, aptness to teach, preach,
20 counsel, and administer, and educational qualifications have been examined in consultation with
21 the appropriate authorities in the Church of the Brethren. The pastor shall be properly ordained.
22 (In special interim situations a licentiate, or a minister from another denomination, may serve if
23 approved by the district board.) The Pastor shall accept and adhere to the faith and the practices
24 of the Church of the Brethren and the local congregation as set forth in Article II of this
25 Constitution, and his life and conduct shall bear witness to his Christian faith.

26 The Pastor shall be the spiritual shepherd of the congregation and servant leader of the church
27 programs and shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Board and Church Committees.
28 Normally the Pastor shall preach and teach, administer the sacraments, visit and counsel, and in
29 various other ways aid the congregation in worshiping and serving God.

30 2. Additional Professional Staff

31 When the congregation has grown to sufficient size, the employment of additional trained staff
32 shall be considered so as to assure the continued growth of the congregation and to provide
33 adequate leadership for the congregation. Suggested areas for other staff members are: an
34 Associate Pastor, Youth Minister, a Minister of Music, a Director of Christian Nurture, a
35 Director of Christian Witness, an Administrative Assistant, or others.

36 3. Office Secretary

1 The local Church shall provide secretarial assistance for the Pastor and the church office. Part-
2 time secretarial assistance shall be provided until such time as the work load requires full-time
3 services.

4 4. Custodian

5 The congregation shall employ a person(s) to meet the needs of cleaning and maintaining the
6 church property. The hiring and evaluating annually this (these) person(s) is the Trustees'
7 responsibility.

8

9

Article II

10

STAFF EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

11 1. The selection and call of a Pastor and other professional staff persons, as well as the
12 termination of their services to the congregation, shall be done in accordance with approved
13 denominational procedures and after seeking the counsel and guidance of the officials of the
14 Church of the Brethren.

15 2. The Office Secretary shall be employed by the Church Board in consultation with the Pastor.
16 The Office Secretary shall be responsible to the Pastor.

17 3. The terms of employment for all employed staff shall be carefully stipulated and reviewed
18 annually. When the terms have been mutually accepted, such terms shall be set forth in writing
19 on approved forms and shall be considered an agreement between the contracting parties upon
20 approval by council.

21 4. Where there is multiple staff, the division of responsibility and the lines of authority shall be
22 clearly defined and periodically reviewed by the appropriate church official or committee.
23 Although there must be close cooperation and harmony between staff members, ultimately, all
24 personnel are responsible to the congregation for their conduct.