

**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

Revised April 2018

Revised April 2019

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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 undergirded 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.

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **Article I**

### **THE CHURCH NAME**

The name and address of this congregation is:

**Maple Grove Church of the Brethren**

**960 Orange Township Road 964**

**Ashland, Ohio 44805-9520**

## **Article II**

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND PURPOSE**

The Maple Grove Church of the Brethren:

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

## Recommendations

- That trine immersion continues 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 churchgoers.
- 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.

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

#### **Article IV**

### **STATEMENT ON MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

#### **1. Meaning of Membership**

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

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

The congregation has a covenant responsibility to:

- Care for its members,
- Encourage growth in freedom and discipleship,
- Help members to discover their gifts,
- Find ways to serve, and
- Provide ministries which respond to both spiritual and physical needs.

Therefore, each member has a covenant responsibility to:

- Participate regularly in the life of the congregation,

- Seek the counsel of the church in living out the way of Christ,
- Challenge the church to greater accountability to its calling,
- Respond to opportunities to serve in the congregation and beyond, and
- Contribute to the church's ministries in every way possible.

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

## **2. Entering Into and Renewing Church Membership**

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

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

- a. Confession of faith and baptism by trine immersion as practiced by the Church of the Brethren;
- b. Transferring membership from another congregation of the Church of the Brethren or of another Evangelical denomination<sup>1</sup> by letter;
- c. Reaffirmation of faith and renewal of the commitment to membership made at an earlier time in another congregation, or the same congregation.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.)



### **3. Membership Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **4. Membership Termination**

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

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

**Article V**  
**ORGANIZATION**

**1. Church Council**

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

- a. April Council -
- b. October Council - Elect Church Board officers and commission members. Elect District and Annual Conference delegates according to conference guidelines. Approve Church Board appointed committee members. Adopt budget for the New Year.

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

**2. Church Board**

The Church Board is composed of the Church Board Chair, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, Church Financial Secretary, Deacon Chairperson, and all chairpersons of church commissions. Duties of the Church Board are to:

- a. Meet four (4) times a year: on the second Tuesday of January, April, July and October. Special Church Board meetings may be called by the Board Chair or at the request of three (3) Board members.
- b. Receive commission reports on their activities at board meetings. Receive Ad Hoc or other committees'/working groups' reports if requested by Church Board.
- c. Advise commissions/committees/working groups on matters pertaining to their responsibilities.
- d. Fulfill the directives of the Church Council meetings.
- e. Make all appointments for which the Church Board is responsible. Fill all vacancies in elective and appointed offices occurring between Church Council meetings and fill such other vacancies not otherwise provided for.
- f. Project short and long range planning, set goals and initiate new programs.
- g. Develop the agenda for Church Council after receiving all commission, ad hoc committee and nominating committee reports, considering any old and new business.
- h. Review in October the proposed budget for presentation to the October Church Council meeting.
- i. Nominate at the October Church Board meeting candidates for Church Board Chair and Assistant Chair from the current Church Board or commissions. The Church Treasurer, Church Clerk and Church Financial Secretary are not eligible to serve as Board Chair and Assistant Board Chair while serving as church officers.

- j. Bring recommendations to the Church Council meeting when major church policy or the church constitution needs revision.
- k. Enlist the help and counsel of the District Executive Minister and/or other district personnel in planning and handling of special concerns.
- l. Act to make church membership meaningful and significant, dealing with important issues that are related to church membership.

## **Article VI**

### **OFFICIALS OF THE CHURCH**

The officers of the Church Council meetings shall be the Moderator, the Church Board Chair, the Church Clerk, the Church Treasurer and the Church Financial Secretary. The Moderator shall be a member of a congregation in the Northern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren. The Board Chair, Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be members of the Maple Grove Church. All financial officers shall give corporate surety, in an amount determined by the Board, for which the premiums shall be paid by the congregation.

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

The Moderator shall be elected at Church Council to a two (2) year term. The moderator serves as the official head of the congregation but shall recognize the Pastor (See BY-LAWS, Article 1) as the spiritual and executive leader. The Moderator shall preside at church council meeting, and perform other duties that pertain to the office. In the event of the Moderator's inability to perform these duties, the Church Board shall appoint a substitute to preside in the Moderator's place on a temporary basis. The Moderator shall be considered an ex-officio<sup>2</sup> member of all commissions, committees and the Church Board. The Moderator is exempt from term limits.

#### **2. Church Board Chair (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Church Board Chair shall be elected at Church Council to a two (2) year term, with a limit of two terms in succession. The person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Chair, also for a two (2) year term. The elected Church Board Chair and Assistant Board Chair would fulfil their terms on their respective commission, but cannot serve as chair, assistant chair, or secretary of that commission. The Church Board Chair shall preside at Church Board meetings, and perform other duties that pertain to the office.

#### **3. Church Clerk (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

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

The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the Church Board and Church Council meetings. Minutes shall be kept in a volume provided for that purpose and shall be the property

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<sup>2</sup> Ex-officio member has voice but may not vote.

of the congregation. The Church Clerk shall also keep the official membership roll and, along with the pastor, sign new membership certificates. The Church Clerk shall be a member of the Church Board.

**4. Treasurer (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

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

The Treasurer shall receive and keep records from the Financial Secretary of deposits to the bank. In addition, the Treasurer shall disperse funds, make written reports to the Finance Commission, Church Board, and to the Church Council. The Treasurer shall submit account records to the Finance Commission for annual audit. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Finance Commission and the Church Board.

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

**5. Financial Secretary (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

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

The Financial Secretary shall receive church funds, keep records of all contributions from the members and other public and private offerings, and all other receipts, and make deposits in the bank. The Financial Secretary will provide year-end tax statements to donors for individual contributions. The Financial Secretary will provide to the Treasurer records of all deposits. In addition, the Financial Secretary shall make written reports to the Finance Commission. The Financial Secretary shall submit offering and deposit records to the Finance Commission for annual audit. The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Finance Commission and the Church Board.

**Article VII**

**DEACONS/CHURCH COMMISSIONS**

**1. Deacons**

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

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

Deacons not having served previously will be offered mentoring by more experienced Deacons to provide information, training, advice and counsel as they assume their responsibilities. Upon completing the first year of service, Deacons shall have the option to withdraw from the deacon body.

Upon completing a five-year term of service, at least two members of the lead deacon group shall schedule a personal visit with the Deacon whose term is ending and discuss the possibility of another term of service. If the Deacon is willing to accept the call for another five-year term, they will be presented to the Church Council for affirmation by a majority vote. Upon completing two five-year terms of service, the deacon will be offered the lifetime deacon ministry or the opportunity to serve another five-year term. Those Deacons who are called to continued service will be presented to the Church Council for affirmation by a majority vote. A Sunday morning service of rededication and renewal shall be held for all Deacons called to additional term or life-time service.

An ordained minister of the Church of the Brethren and their spouse who are both members of the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren are eligible to be called and to serve as ex-officio Deacons upon affirmation by a majority vote of Church Council.

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

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

- a. Make arrangements for Communion and Love Feast and assist in the baptismal services.
- b. Assist the Pastor in ministering to the sick, shut-ins and bereaved.
- c. Be actively involved in visitation by calling upon both active and inactive members.
- d. Provide the anointing service when called upon.
- e. Work with the Moderator and Pastor with conflict resolution and reconciliation as needed or when requested.

- f. Assist in promoting a healthy program of evangelism. This could be done by coordinating or sponsoring annual revival/renewal meeting(s) or spiritual enrichment series.
- g. Fill the pulpit at the request of the Pastor and/or Ministerial Commission.
- h. Review and revise the church membership roll as needed using the Membership Classification in the Constitution and By-Laws.
- i. Hold regularly scheduled meetings; i.e. monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly for planning, training, encouragement, coordination and fellowship.
- j. Minister to the poor and needy in the congregation and community.
- k. Oversee the granting of Deacon emeritus status. Deacon emeritus is an honorary title conferred to recognize lifetime deacons who have served in an exemplary way and who have requested to be relieved of their full-time responsibilities. The term emeritus does not necessarily signify that a person has relinquished all the duties of their former position, and they may continue to exercise some of them. Emeriti Deacons maintain a relationship with the Deacons and their mission by serving in a consultative, advisory role. Any person, having faithfully served as a lifetime Deacon may request and be recommended for this position by the Deacons and granted this status upon affirmation by a majority vote of the Church Council.

## **2. Christian Education and Nurture Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Christian Education and Nurture Commission shall consist of the Adult Education Coordinator, Children's Education Coordinator, Nursery Education Coordinator, and three (3) additional elected members. One of these additional members shall be elected each year at Church Council to a three (3) year term. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on.

In addition, assistants to the Adult Education Coordinator, Children's Education Coordinator and Nursery Education Coordinator shall be elected to three (3) year terms by Council and shall serve as a voting member of the Christian Education and Nurture Commission in the absence of their respective Coordinator.

The Christian Education and Nurture Commission's duties are:

- a. Elect a chair, assistant chair, and secretary annually from among the members of the commission.
- b. Approve teachers and helpers for classes up to and including the Junior High Youth.
- c. Work with the Adult, Children's and Nursery Education Coordinators to review, approve and purchase all church school materials, curriculum and equipment.
- d. Promote opportunities for in-service training.
- e. Assist in planning special programs such as the Christmas program, Easter Sunrise Service and Vacation Bible School.

- f. Select CBYF advisors from the membership who will provide assistance and counsel to the youth leader, taking into consideration the list of names provided by the CBYF.
- g. Approve teachers for the youth Sunday School class from the membership, taking into consideration a list of names provided by the youth Sunday School class.
- h. Provide ministry support and counsel to committees and fellowships reporting to this commission.

**2.1. Adult Education Coordinator (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Adult Education Coordinator shall be elected by Church Council to a three (3) year term. The person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Adult Education Coordinator, also for a three (3) year term. The Adult Education Coordinator's duties are:

- a. Direct the education in the Adult Sunday School classes.
- b. Select teachers for approval by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission for the Adult Sunday School classes.
- c. Encourage growth and involvement in discipleship and service.
- d. Encourage teachers to attend training opportunities (in the local church or arranged by the District).
- e. Oversee Birthday Sunday observance on the first Sunday of each month.
- f. Encourage teachers to have class curriculum approved by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission.

**2.2. Children's Education Coordinator (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Children's Education Coordinator shall be elected by Church Council to a three (3) year term. The person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Children's Education Coordinator, also for a three (3) year term. The Children's Education Coordinator's duties are:

- a. Direct the education in the Children's Sunday School classes (kindergarten through high school)
- b. Select teachers for approval by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission for the children's classes.
- c. Encourage growth and involvement in discipleship and service.
- d. Encourage teachers to attend training opportunities.
- e. Select curriculum used in the Children's Sunday School classes in consultation with the teachers and obtain approval of the Christian Education and Nurture Commission.
- f. Direct the Vacation Bible School.
- g. Order materials used by the Children's Sunday School classes.

**2.3 Nursery Education Coordinator (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Nursery Education Coordinator shall be elected by Church Council to a three (3) year term.

The person receiving the second highest vote shall serve as the Assistant Nursery Education Coordinator, also for a three (3) year term. The Nursery Education Coordinator's duties are:

- a. Direct the teaching in the Nursery department (cradle to preschool), securing as many teachers as needed for approval by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission.
- b. Select curriculum used in the Nursery department in consultation with the teachers and obtain approval of the Christian Education and Nurture Commission.
- c. Visit the homes of the children, if possible.
- d. Assist the Pastor in the child dedication service and presentation of certificate and rose.
- e. Contact the parents of each new baby with a form asking if they want their child on the cradle roll.
- f. Update and keep current the cradle roll and regularly send literature to the parents.
- g. Provide nursery service two (2) times a year for Love Feast and Communion Service.

### **3. Finance Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

A commission comprised of eight (8) members. Six are elected members with two (2) members elected each year at Church Council meeting to a three (3) year term. The other two members are Church Treasurer and Church Financial Secretary. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on. The chairperson is chosen from the six elected members of this commission. The Finance Commission's duties are:

- a. Elect a chair, assistant chair, and secretary annually from among the members of the commission.
- b. A minimum of two elected members will count the weekly church offerings and deliver the monies (cash/checks) to the Financial Secretary for deposit along with a signed statement of the amount collected. The same statement (or copy thereof) will be provided to the Church Treasurer and Church Secretary.
- c. Act as counsel to the Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- d. Audit financial records annually.
- e. Receive estimates of financial needs from commissions and other groups and prepare the church budget or statement of the financial needs and submit the same to the Church Board and Church Council for approval at the October Church Board and Church Council meetings.
- f. Plan and direct raising operating funds needed by the church.
- g. Interpret the financial condition of the Church and the trends in giving.
- h. Provide ministry support and counsel to committees reporting to this commission.



**4. Ministerial Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Ministerial Commission shall consist of six (6) members, two elected each year at Church Council to a three (3) year term. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on. The Ministerial Commission's duties are:

- a. Elect a chair, assistant chair, and secretary annually from among the members of the commission.
- b. Serve as an advisor to the Pastor and ministerial staff.
- c. Meet monthly to receive ministry reports and plan ministry opportunities.
- d. Provide written annual performance and planning evaluations for the ministry staff.
- e. Help educate the congregation regarding church ministry staff relationships.
- f. Be a counseling body between ministry staff and congregation.
- g. Arrange for pulpit supply in the absence of the Pastor.
- h. Form a search committee when a new pastor/staff is needed following the recommended district and denominational guidelines.
- i. Work with the Deacons in arranging and planning for special services.
- j. Develop jointly with the pastor a pastoral job description.
- k. Develop job description for the ministry staff in consultation with the pastor.
- l. Identify worthy talent in the local congregation and encourage persons to consider the ministry as a vocational calling.

**5. Mission and Service Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Mission and Service Commission shall consist of three (3) members, one elected each year at Church Council to a three (3) year term. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on. The Mission and Service Commission's duties are:

- a. Promote mission work (local, district, and denominational) in the life of the church.
- b. Promote volunteer service in the life of the church for all ages.
- c. Educate and share the issues of peace, social action and Christian Service to the life of the congregation.
- d. Provide ministry support and counsel to committees reporting to this commission.

**6. Trustee Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Trustee Commission shall consist of six (6) members; two elected each year at Church Council to a three (3) year term. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on. The Trustee Commission's

duties are:

- a. Elect a chair, assistant chair, and secretary annually from among the members of the commission.
- b. Attend to the care and maintenance of all church property.
- c. Give opportunities to the congregation for voluntary service in the care and maintenance of the property.
- d. Employ or contract custodial, lawn care, snow removal and sanitation services.
- e. Maintain an inventory of church property and a record of the location of church property and equipment.
- f. Be the legal representative of the congregation for acquiring, holding, dispersing, and conveying property in accordance with the decisions of the Church Board and Council.
- g. Annually inspect the church facility and parsonage to remain current on repairs and maintenance.
- h. Administer rental agreements for the parsonage or church building working with the building use coordinator.

#### **7. Worship Commission (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

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

- a. Elect a chair, assistant chair, and secretary annually from among the members of the commission.
- b. Coordinate the music ministry of the church.
- c. Appoint organists, pianists, choir directors and all other music personnel.
- d. Schedule worship leaders and song leaders for the worship services.
- e. Solicit volunteers to serve as greeters at the weekly Sunday School and worship services.
- f. Direct the purchase of hymnals, music, robes and instruments or anything pertaining to the music of the church.
- g. Provide systematic care of all music instruments and choir robes, etc.
- h. Work with the Trustees in any building modifications or capital expenses related to worship.
- i. Provide ministry support and counsel to committees reporting to this commission.

### **Article VIII**

### **CHURCH COMMITTEES**

## **Report to Board**

### **1. Congregational Ethics Committee**

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

### **2. Nominating Committee (Elected in October, takes office January 1)**

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members; two elected each year at Church Council to a three (3) year term. An elected person can serve two consecutive terms, but then is required to be off the commission one year before coming back on. The Nominating Committee's duties are:

- a. Prepare the ballot for Church Board approval, with prior acceptance by nominees for the October Council for: commissions, church officers, Agape Acres board, Nominating Committee and delegates to District and Annual Conferences.
- b. Provide a list of nominations with prior acceptance by nominees for committees appointed by Church Board at the October Church Board meeting.
- c. Help to assess and identify spiritual gifts and abilities of the congregation so they may be utilized for ministry.
- d. When requested by the Church Board, makes recommendations for filling of vacant commission and committee positions.
- e. Keep a record of past appointments/election results.
- f. Serve as tellers at Church Council meetings.
- g. Provide a list of names to Church Board (approved at October Church Council meeting) for Agape Acres Board selection.
- h. Send letters to candidates following elections informing them of the results of the vote and the responsibilities of the position.
- i. Encourage nominations from the floor at Church Council for any office.

### **3. Ad Hoc Committees**

An ad hoc committee carries out a special task for the church. Examples are: Pastor Search Committee, Youth Leader Search Committee and Constitution Committee. Committee chairs are not voting members of the Church Board, but do report to the Church Board.

#### **3.1. Constitution Committee (Appointed by Board)**

The Constitution Committee shall consist of eight (8) members appointed by the Church Board. No time limit is placed on the member's term of service. Replacement occurs when a member can no longer serve or wishes to serve. The committee shall review the Church Constitution every five (5) years, or more frequently if requested by Church Board or Church Council, and make recommendations for changes to the constitution to the Church Board. Church Board then

proposes changes to Church Council where they are accepted if approved by a 2/3 majority vote of church members present.

### **3.2. Pastoral Search Committee (Appointed by Ministerial Commission)**

The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of members appointed by the Ministerial Commission in accordance with recommended district and denominational guidelines. Responsibilities include:

- a. Meet with the District Executive Minister to obtain training on the Northern Ohio District's search process.
- b. Elect a chair and secretary from among the committee.
- c. Conduct a congregational survey and prepare a congregational profile for use by the district staff in identifying pastoral candidates.
- d. In coordination with the District Executive Minister, identify candidates for interviews, conduct interviews, and select a final candidate for presentation to the congregation.
- e. Conduct appropriate negotiations regarding contract details (compensation, insurance, housing, benefits, etc.) upon consultation with the Finance Commission and with authorization of the Church Board.

### **Report to Christian Education and Nurture Commission**

#### **4. Church of the Brethren Men's Fellowship (C.B.M.F.)**

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

- a. Meet the needs of the men which are not fully met through congregational activities or the overall adult and/or family programs.
- b. Provide a channel through which the church is able to serve in special ways.
- c. Discover and aid in enlisting for the church the talents and interests of men who are not involved in the life and work of the church.
- d. Plan joint annual meetings with our three sister churches (Ashland City, Dickey and Mohican) and encourage participation in the District Men's Fellowship meetings.

#### **5. Church of the Brethren Women's Fellowship (C.B.W.F.)**

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

- a. Meet the needs of women which are not fully met through congregational activities or the overall adult and/or family programs.
- b. Provide a channel through which the church is able to serve in special ways.
- c. Discover and aid in enlisting for the church the talents and interests of women who are not involved in the life and work of the church.

- d. Plan joint annual meetings with our three sister churches (Ashland City, Dickey and Mohican) and encourage participation in the District Women's Fellowship meetings.

**6. Church of the Brethren Youth Fellowship (C.B.Y.F.)**

The Youth Fellowship will organize annually by choosing from among its members two representatives to report to the Christian Education and Nurture Commission. The Youth Fellowship shall:

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

**7. Directory Committee (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Directory Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one appointed each year by Church Board to a three (3) year term. The Directory Committee's duties are:

- a. Obtain updated records of all elected or appointed church officers and commission and committee members.
- b. Prepare the directory annually, to be published after the first of the year.

**8. Home Visitation Committee (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Home Visitation Committee shall consist of two (2) members, one appointed each year by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Home Visitation Committee's duties are:

- a. Visit shut-in members and friends of the church and community, providing them bulletins and recordings from the worship services and literature from Sunday School.
- b. Coordinate the committee's work with the Pastor, Deacons and other church visitation ministries.

**9. Sunday School Secretary (Appointed in October, takes office January 1).**

Sunday School Secretary shall be a two member committee, with one member appointed each year by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Sunday School Secretary's duties are:

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

**10. Sunshine and Recognition Committee (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Sunshine and Recognition Committee shall consist of three (3) members; one (1) appointed each year by Church Board to a three (3) year term. The Sunshine and Recognition Committee's duties are:

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

- b. Order a remembrance (i.e. flowers, etc.) for families experiencing a death, or for special occasions.
- c. Recognize accomplishments and awards of church members.
- d. Prepare a list of names of high school and college graduates, service personnel, and those celebrating anniversaries and weddings for recognition in bulletins and newsletters.

### **Report to Finance Commission**

#### **11. Property Maintenance and Improvement Fund (PMIF) Committee (Appointed in October, take office January 1)**

The committee shall consist of nine (9) members. Six are appointed by Church Board with two (2) members appointed each year to a three (3) year term. Two additional members are appointed, one each from the Finance Commission and Trustee Commission, by their respective commission. The ninth member is the Assistant Church Treasurer. The chairperson is chosen from appointed members of this committee. The purpose of this committee is to raise funds for maintenance (roofs, furnace, etc.) and improvements of church property. Money raised will be placed in the Trustee Commission account and its expenditure will be in accordance with Church Council guidance. Duties of the committee include coordination of:

- a. Spring and Fall Flings (garage type sales in fellowship hall),
- b. Food Trailer at the Ashland County Fair (and/or other events).

The committee is not limited to these activities and can plan and carry out other fundraising activities.

### **Report to Mission and Service Commission**

#### **12. Agape Acres Board Representative (Nominated in October, takes office January 1)**

The Agape Acres Board is the governing body of Agape Acres, a retirement community started by Maple Grove Church in 1959, and consists of thirteen (13) members, nine (9) of whom shall be members of Maple Grove Church. Each year, up to six (6) names shall be presented to the Maple Grove Church Board and Council for approval, and then submitted to the Agape Acres Board. Three (3) of the submitted names shall be selected by the Agape Acres Board to serve terms of three (3) years. The Chair of the Agape Acres Board shall be a member of Maple Grove Church, and shall report to the Maple Grove Church Board and Council.

#### **13. Ashland Care Center Representative (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Ashland Care Center Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Ashland Care Center Representative's duties are:

- a. Be a liaison between the church and agency.
- b. Report back to the commission and church the activities and needs of the Ashland Care Center by sharing and/or newsletter.
- c. Coordinate the annual "Baby Bottle" fundraising campaign.

**14. Bible in School Representative (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Bible in School Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Bible in School Representative's duties are:

- a. Attend board meetings of the Bible in School program and represent the interests of the church.
- b. Report back to the commission and church the activities and needs of the Bible in School program by sharing and/or newsletter.

**15. Camp Representative (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Inspiration Hills Camp Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Camp Representative should be a person interested in and enthusiastic about camping and Christian outdoor education. The Camp Representative's duties are:

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

**16. Community Fellowship Meal Committee**

The Community Fellowship Meal Committee shall organize annually with those offices they deem necessary to carry on its work. The Community Fellowship Meal Committee's duties are:

- a. Report back to the commission and church the activities and needs of the committee by sharing and/or report.
- b. Coordinate the monthly community fellowship meal.

**17. Crop Walk Representative (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Crop Walk Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Crop Walk Representative's duties are:

- a. Be a liaison between the church, the agency (Church World Service), and the local county/community Crop Walk committee.
- b. Report back to the commission and church the activities and needs of the Crop Walk committee by sharing and/or newsletter.
- c. Coordinate the annual Crop Walk fundraising campaign by soliciting walkers and donors and reporting on the results.

**18. Denominational Programs Coordinator (Appointed in October, takes office January 1)**

The Denominational Programs Coordinator shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Denominational Programs Coordinator's duties are:

- a. Be a liaison between the Maple Grove congregation and the Church of the Brethren's denominational ministries.

- b. Report back to the church the activities and needs of the denomination by sharing and/or newsletter.
- c. Advocate for the volunteer opportunities available with the denomination's Brethren Volunteer Service, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Children's Disaster Services, and other ministries.

**19. Food Bank Representative (Appointed in October, take office January 1).**

The Food Bank Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Food Bank Representative's duties are:

- a. Bring a report to the Mission and Service Commission to keep the church informed of hunger in the county.
- b. Insure that donated food items are taken to the Ashland County Food Bank.

**20. Messenger Representative (Appointed in October, take office January 1)**

The Messenger Representative shall be appointed by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Messenger Representative's duties are:

- a. Report quarterly, for publication in the Messenger magazine, all events of the local church, that are of interest to the brotherhood such as new members, deaths, anniversaries, pastoral licensing/ordination and placement.
- b. Arrange for subscriptions to the Messenger magazine by providing names and addresses of members, new members and newlyweds.

**Report to Worship Commission**

**21. Altar and Flower Committee (Appointed in October, take office January 1)**

The Altar and Flower Committee shall consist of two (2) members, one appointed each year by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Altar and Flower Committee's duties are:

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

**22. Audio and Visual Committee (Appointed in October, take office January 1)**

The Audio and Visual Committee shall ideally consist of six (6) members, three in each of the areas of sound and video ministry. Two (one sound and one video) technicians will be appointed each year by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The Audio and Visual Committee's duties are:

- a. To operate the sound system (microphones/speakers/hearing assistance transistors) during



worship services, council meetings and other events.

- b. To operate the video system (screens for congregation and for platform personnel) during worship services and other events displaying announcements, songs, scripture, and applicable pictures and video content.

**23. Ushers (Appointed in October, take office January 1)**

The Usher Committee shall consist of eight (8) members. Four (4) members are appointed each year by Church Board to a two (2) year term. The four appointed will serve during their first year as Assistant Ushers and then serve their second year as Senior Ushers. The four Senior Ushers will select a chair who will serve as a liaison to the Worship Commission. The Ushers are to be courteous and welcoming to the congregation and visitors. Their duties are:

- a. Offer to escort all persons entering the sanctuary to a pew. They should seat no one during the rendering of special music, the reading of the Bible, or prayers. They should not be seated themselves until all persons entering the church are seated and should remain at the rear of the sanctuary at all times to attend late comers or assist worshipers in the case of an emergency.
- b. Collect offerings.
- c. Properly ventilate the sanctuary.
- d. Provide for the special needs of attendees such as assistance with wheelchairs.
- e. Monitor the building entrances and main corridors during Sunday School and worship services.

**24. Greeters (Volunteers solicited throughout the year)**

- a. Welcome and place bulletins and other printed materials for distribution in the hands of all entering persons.
- b. Greet strangers and secure their names.
- c. Direct visitors to classrooms, nursery, sanctuary, restrooms, as appropriate.

**ARTICLE IX**

**COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE RESTRICTIONS**

- 1. Church membership is required to be eligible to serve on church commissions or to serve in the capacity of Teacher or Assistant Teacher. The exceptions are teaching helpers who may be non-members. Hired nonmember ministerial staff are eligible to teach if approved by the Ministerial Commission. Hired nonmember non-ministerial staff are eligible to teach if approved by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission.
- 2. A commission shall have no more than one family member serving at the same time. The definition of family member is parent/child, siblings, and spouse.

**Article X**

**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 Annual Conference business sessions, represent the interests of the church in matters under consideration and voting, and shall report Annual Conference activities to the church as scheduled. Travel, meals, housing and conference-related expenses shall be reimbursed by the church as guided by Annual Conference and the Maple Grove Finance Commission. Report to Church body.
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 District Conference business sessions, represent the interests of the church in matters under consideration and voting, and shall report District Conference activities to the church as scheduled. Travel, meals, housing and conference-related expenses shall be reimbursed by the church as guided by the Maple Grove Finance Commission. Report to Church body.

#### **Article XI**

#### **FISCAL YEAR AND CHURCH YEAR**

The fiscal year and church year of the congregation shall be the calendar year.

#### **Article XII**

#### **QUORUM**

1. Although it is desirable to have as many members present as possible for the congregational Church Council meeting, no quorum shall be required except as might be specified by law.
2. For Church Board, commissions and committees a majority of members present shall constitute a quorum.

#### **Article XIII**

#### **AMENDMENTS**

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

#### **Article XIV**

#### **RULES OF ORDER**

Unless otherwise specified in these by-laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the official rules of

order for church commissions, committees, Board and Council meetings.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **Article I**

#### **EMPLOYED STAFF**

##### **1. Pastor**

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

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

##### **2. Additional Professional Staff**

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

##### **3. Office Secretary**

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

##### **4. Custodian**

The congregation shall employ a person(s) to meet the needs of cleaning and maintaining the church property. The hiring and annual evaluation of this (these) person(s) is the Trustees' responsibility.

### **Article II**

#### **STAFF EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES**

1. The selection and call of a Pastor and other professional staff persons, as well as the termination of their services to the congregation, shall be done in accordance with

approved denominational procedures and after seeking the counsel and guidance of the officials of the Church of the Brethren.

2. The Office Secretary shall be employed by the Church Board in consultation with the Pastor. The Office Secretary shall be responsible to the Pastor.
3. The terms of employment for all employed staff shall be carefully stipulated and reviewed annually. When the terms have been mutually accepted, such terms shall be set forth in writing on approved forms and shall be considered an agreement between the contracting parties upon approval by Church Council.
4. Where there is multiple staff, the division of responsibility and the lines of authority shall be clearly defined and periodically reviewed by the appropriate church official or commission. Although there must be close cooperation and harmony between staff members, ultimately, all personnel are responsible to the congregation for their conduct.

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