

CONSTITUTIONAL BYLAWS SHALOM MENNONITE CONGREGATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The Shalom Mennonite Congregation identifies itself within the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition of Christian faith.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

Shalom Mennonite Congregation is a welcoming and inclusive community rooted in Jesus' radical call to love, justice, and peace.

III. VISION STATEMENT

We seek to grow our welcome and inclusion as we deepen our spirituality, build meaningful relationships, work for peace and social justice, and cultivate diverse community connections.

IV. AFFILIATION

Shalom Mennonite Congregation is affiliated with Mennonite Church USA through Central District Conference for the purposes of wider Christian fellowship, mission efforts, ethical discernment, and theological accountability. This relationship is primarily maintained by sending delegates to annual Central District Conference assemblies and by providing financial support to Central District Conference. Shalom Mennonite Congregation meets at Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

V. COVENANT STATEMENT

Shalom Mennonite Congregation has adopted a covenant statement which members are asked to affirm during an annual covenant renewal service. Members of the congregation commit themselves to our common vision with this statement:

In the coming year I commit to Shalom Mennonite Congregation in being welcoming, inclusive, and following Jesus' way of love, justice, and peace. I will work to bring about Shalom by building relationships with others, committing to causes of peace and justice inside and outside our congregation, and attending to both my personal and our collective spiritual journey and transformation.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

Shalom Mennonite Congregation offers full membership and invites the full participation of all people without discrimination based on age, ability, race, sexual or gender identity, expression, or orientation, social status, culture, or faith.

We distinguish between membership in Shalom Mennonite Congregation and the traditional theological notion of "membership" in the body of Christ initiated by confession of faith and signified in baptism. We acknowledge that there are many confessions of faith within and beyond our Anabaptist tradition, and we affirm covenanted membership and participation in Shalom Mennonite Congregation without discriminating against those who do or do not adhere to broader church confessions of

faith. Through Central District Conference we covenant with Mennonite Church USA and welcome its Renewed Commitments as guideposts for our own practices and our¹ ongoing affiliation with Mennonite Church USA and our global family of faith.

Members of Shalom Mennonite Congregation exercise authority for its assets, liabilities, and decision-making processes through the organizational structure. People can become members of Shalom Mennonite Congregation in various ways: through baptism, through a letter of transfer from another Christian congregation, through a personal confession of faith, or through participating in our annual covenant renewal and signing our covenant statement. People who become members through any of these means may participate fully in all membership responsibilities and privileges.

People who have signed the covenant within the last two years are considered active members, and will be included in the annual membership count of Shalom Mennonite Congregation reported to Central District Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

The covenant renewal service of Shalom Mennonite Congregation will be held in the fall of the year. During this service and for the month that follows, active participants in the congregation will be invited to sign the covenant statement in person or online. An annual Covenant Survey will also be distributed during this time so that participants can select or write in any number of specific ways in which they intend to follow through on that covenant commitment.

¹ <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/JF-DRAFT-Document-V3.pdf> 2

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This organizational structure, related job descriptions and policies serve as guidelines to assist members in the work they do together as a congregation. These documents can be found in the Shalom Mennonite Congregation's Organizational Handbook.

All people selected for positions of responsibility within the organizational structure of Shalom Mennonite Congregation should be covenanted members who support our stated mission and vision. The organizational handbook provides detailed job descriptions and other details of the organizational structure.

The organizational structure includes two entities that report to the Congregational Meeting. (see Appendix B): 1) a Ministry Council focused on the mission and vision in ministry through the coordination and collaboration of ministry programs; and 2) an Administrative Council focused on the mission and vision in governance of policy, finance, personnel, safety, and facilities. Administrative Council Committees & Ministry Teams coordinate and carry out different areas of Shalom's vision and mission. Each committee/team sets its own schedule for meeting and has a layperson who serves as chair.

The Lead Pastor (Ministry Council Chair) and Congregational Chair (Administrative Council Chair) are responsible for facilitating communication between the two Councils

and to annually review Shalom's overall stewardship of mission and vision.

The Gifts Discernment Team presents a slate of new committee/team chairs and members to the Congregational Meeting annually. Members of committees/teams commit to a two-year term, unless specified differently, with the option to renew for one additional term. A lapse of two years is expected before a person can be renominated for the same committee/team position.

In January of each year members of the annual roster of committees and teams will be commissioned at a worship service after which committee/team members will assume their positions.

A. Congregational Meetings

The overall responsibility for the administration and ministry of Shalom Mennonite Congregation belongs to the membership of the congregation. The congregation, at regularly scheduled meetings called specifically for that purpose, makes major decisions.

Covenanted members will make these decisions by seeking the guidance and direction of God's Spirit, and by listening to each other. Every effort will be made to hear from members regardless of opinion. The processes for making major decisions include voting after open and respectful discussion. These decisions will carry by a two-thirds majority of members present.

All people who regularly participate in the life of Shalom Mennonite Congregation are welcome to attend congregational meetings. Such meetings should be announced in the church newsletter/bulletin two weeks before the meeting is scheduled.

The fiscal year for Shalom Mennonite Congregation is January 1 through December 31. The annual budget will be approved at a congregational meeting held for that purpose in December or early January.

1. Congregational Chair

The Administrative Council chairperson will call for congregational meetings, prepare the agenda in consultation with Ministry Council chairperson and preside over the congregational meeting. When the chairperson is absent, another member of Administrative Council shall fulfill the chair's responsibilities. The chairperson will typically serve a term of one (1) year but will serve no more than two (2) consecutive years. The chair-elect will typically serve a one (1) year term on the Administrative Council prior to assuming the role of Congregational Chairperson.

2. Congregational Treasurer

A standing member of Administrative Council and its Finance and Facilities Committee who presents budget reports at the Congregational Meeting and at Administrative Council. Works together with Shalom's Bookkeeper to monitor Shalom's overall financial health and regularly review financial records.

3. Congregational Delegate(s) to Central District Conference

The delegate(s) will attend the regular delegate sessions of Central District Conference. An alternate delegate will be chosen to serve in the event that the regular delegate(s) cannot attend a delegate session. The pastor(s) and/or another member(s) of the congregation will be delegate(s) to MCUSA biannual assemblies.

B. Administrative Council

1. Purpose

The Administrative Council supports, encourages and provides accountability for the fulfillment of the congregation's vision. The Administrative Council provides overall administrative leadership and vision for the congregation in accordance with this Constitutional Bylaws and directives adopted by the membership at the Congregational Meetings. The Administrative Council shall establish goals and objectives to accomplish the mission of the organization, monitor and evaluate all activities, establish and maintain current operating guidelines, and ensure that the necessary resources are available and used effectively. It is responsible for the oversight of policy, personnel, congregational safety, facilities and finance.

2. Composition and Duties

The Administrative Council consists of the Congregational Chair, a Chair-Elect, a Finance and Facilities Committee Representative, a Personnel Committee Representative, and at least one additional Member-at-Large. The Lead Pastor and an administrative staff person serve as ex-officio members.

The Congregational Chair shall preside at Congregational Meetings and meetings of the Administrative Council. This person is responsible for overseeing processes relating to the administration of the congregation.

3. Administrative Council Meetings

The Administrative Council meets bi-monthly and as needed to conduct business.

4. Administrative Council Committees

The Administrative Council provides leadership, oversight, and collaboration for the following standing committees: Finance and Facilities Committee, Safe Congregations Committee, and Personnel Committee. The Administrative Council may create or disperse other committees as the need for such groups arises.

a) Finance and Facilities Committee

(1) The Finance and Facilities Committee is responsible for developing and managing the budget. This committee works closely with and determines the level of oversight that is required by the Shalom Bookkeeper. They present a budget annually to the Administrative Council, develop budgetary policies, review investments and determine changes in the

accounts as provided by the Shalom Bookkeeper. They make recommendations to the Administrative Council as needed about the maintenance of assets and debts. At the conclusion of the budget year this committee makes recommendations to the congregation about how budget surpluses will be allocated or how deficits will be addressed.

The Finance and Facilities Committee may propose mid-year budget amendments should the need arise. Any budget amendment must be approved by Administrative Council. If the budget amendment is greater than 5% of the annual budget, the congregational chair must submit it to the congregation at least two weeks prior to a congregational meeting for approval by the congregation.

- (2) The Finance and Facilities Committee coordinates and manages the facilities rented or owned by the congregation. This oversight includes working with administrative staff and coordinating with ushers and setup crew for the weekly in-person and virtual worship space. This committee also establishes the expectations for periodic review of the appropriateness of facilities, software and hardware and recommends related changes to the Administrative Council.
- (3) This committee should have at least three (3) members. One member of this committee serves as the Treasurer. The Lead Pastor serves as an ex-officio member.

b) Safe Congregations Committee

- (1) The Safe Congregations Committee is responsible for fostering a consistently safe environment at Shalom that protects children, youth and adults from harm and promotes the wellbeing of all. The committee is charged with implementing the Safe Congregations Policy. This includes child protection policies. This committee coordinates congregational training regarding the Child Protection Policy, child abuse, and gender and/or power-based violence.
- (2) The committee should include a representative of the ministry staff, a representative from the Administrative Council, Ministry Council, and two other members of the congregation, with a strong preference for individuals with experience and/or knowledge in counseling, social work and/or trauma and violence informed care. An effort will be made to ensure that there is a gender balance on the Committee. Anyone who has concerns about inappropriate sexual conduct, violence, intimidation, or physical abuse by child-care workers, teachers, or others in the congregation will be able to receive guidance from the Safe Congregations Committee.

c) Personnel Committee

- (1) The Personnel Committee functions within the purview of Shalom's Administrative Council to oversee the church's staffing functions. They

are responsible for evaluating staffing needs and proposing staffing solutions to the Administrative Council. They will develop, maintain, and revise job descriptions for all staff positions. They are responsible for facilitating hiring processes, providing evaluation processes, and any consideration of termination of paid pastors and staff. The Lead Pastor will function as supervisor of other Pastor(s) and the office staff. The Personnel Committee will lead, with input from other pastor(s) and in accordance with established evaluation policy, the yearly evaluations of pastors. Evaluations of office staff will be conducted by the Lead Pastor. The Personnel Committee will meet with each pastor at least once a year to facilitate communication and awareness of staffing function and needs.

(2) This committee should have at least four (4) members. The Lead Pastor serves as an ex-officio member of this committee.

5. Committee Chairpersons

- a) Each committee appoints a lay chairperson who is responsible for organizing and convening the committee, setting agendas, and ensuring the committee reports to and is represented at both the Administrative Council and Congregational Meetings. The Committee Chairpersons are responsible for communicating the appointment of members to ad hoc positions to the Gifts Discernment Team.

C. Ministry Council

1. Purpose

The Ministry Council shall establish goals and objectives to accomplish the mission and vision in ministry of the Congregation through the coordination and collaboration of programs, provide leadership and oversight for the Ministry Teams, and monitor and evaluate activities of the Ministry Teams.

2. Composition and Duties

The Ministry Council consists of pastor(s) and chairs or representatives of Formation Team, Hospitality and Community Building Team, Mission and Service Team, Pastoral Care Team, Worship Team and Gifts Discernment Team. The Ministry Council meets quarterly, beginning in January with a collaborative planning retreat for the coming year. This event and future meetings are organized and facilitated by the Ministry Council Chair in consultation with team chairs and pastor(s).

3. Ministry Council Meetings

The Ministry Council meets quarterly to conduct business.

4. Ministry Council Teams

The Ministry Council provides leadership and oversight for the following standing teams: 1) Formation Team; 2) Hospitality and Community Building Team; 3) Mission and Service Team; 4) Pastoral Care Team; 5) Worship Team; and 6) Gifts Discernment Team. The Ministry Council may create or disperse

other teams as the need for such groups arise.

a) Formation Team

- (1) The Formation Team is responsible for the overall educational and faith formation needs of all ages and life stages at Shalom.
- (2) Team membership shall represent a diversity of life stages. The team should have at least five (5) members.

b) Hospitality and Community Building Team

- (1) The Hospitality and Community Building Team cares for and nurtures the community through a variety of programs and activities on Sundays and at other times in the life of individuals and families at Shalom.
- (2) At least five (5) people should be on this team.

c) Mission and Service Team

- (1) The Mission and Service Team plans and implements the sharing of our resources with the local and global community. Our resources include our time, talents, skills and money which we offer to others in need—within Shalom and in our community, as well as across the globe.
- (2) This team should have at least three (3) members.

d) Pastoral Care Team

- (1) The Pastoral Care Team holds the primary responsibility for pastoral care. The pastoral care team, with the pastor(s), is responsible to form and support small groups and plan retreats that provide opportunities for fellowship, mutual care, learning and outreach in the congregation.
- (2) This team includes pastoral staff and at least two (2) lay members. There shall be a minimum of four (4) members on the pastoral care team.

e) Worship Team

- (1) The Worship Team organizes worship for congregational gatherings and events in the church calendar and in the life of the church.
- (2) This team includes at least one pastor and at least four (4) at-large members.

f) Gifts Discernment Team

- (1) The Gifts Discernment Team holds the primary responsibility for identifying talents and gifts of the congregation. The Team will gather information from the Covenant Gifts survey conducted annually. This Team solicits suggested names for vacant committee and team positions and other congregational positions. The Team presents a list of nominees to the Congregational Meeting. This team is also responsible for maintaining a list of members serving in ad hoc positions that have been created and appointed by other Committees and Teams.

(2) This team shall consist of the Pastor(s), and a representative of the Ministry Council and at least two (2) at-large members.

5. Team Leaders

Each team appoints a lay leader who is responsible for organizing and convening the team, setting agendas, and ensuring the team reports to and is represented at both the Ministry Council and Congregational Meetings.

The Team leaders are responsible for communicating the appointment of members to ad hoc positions to the Gifts Discernment Team.

D. Positions

1. Pastor(s)

The job description, length of term, processes of evaluation and remuneration for each pastor shall be negotiated by the Personnel Committee of the Administrative Council, approved by the congregation, and documented in a Covenant of Understanding. Congregational Pastoral evaluations should be done every three (3) years, with an annual review by the Personnel Committee. The Pastor will also meet at least once per year with the Personnel Committee

When changes in pastoral leadership occur, the Administrative Council shall confer with the Personnel Committee, Ministry Council, and the congregation to establish a Search Committee responsible for recommending a new pastor to the Congregational Meeting. The Search Committee will work with and seek counsel of the Conference Minister and the Ministerial Committee of Central District Conference during the time of pastoral transition.

2. Other Paid Staff Positions

The job descriptions, length of contract, processes for hiring, and remuneration for each non-pastoral paid staff member shall be negotiated by the Personnel Committee of the Administrative Council. The Personnel Committee will work in conjunction with the Lead Pastor to establish search committees that will make hiring recommendations to the Personnel Committee. Job descriptions for all paid staff positions can be found in the Organizational Handbook.

3. Other Congregational Positions

The Ministry Council and Administrative Council may recruit congregational members for additional positions as appropriate. Positions may be discontinued and others may be created as needs arise. Each position will fall under the oversight of a committee or team.

VIII. REVISIONS

Members of Shalom Mennonite Congregation may revise these Constitutional Bylaws at any Congregational Meeting. Suggested changes to the Constitutional Bylaws are brought by the Administrative Council. The suggested changes shall

be distributed to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting by the Administrative Council Chairperson. Primary and secondary amendments to a proposed bylaw amendment cannot exceed the scope of the notice. The changes must be approved by a three-quarters majority vote of members present. After a change has been approved, a vote to reconsider the amendment is not allowed without an additional two-week notice. It is anticipated that the Constitutional Bylaws will be regularly revised as the congregation changes and encounters new situations.

APPENDIX A: Shalom Organizational Structure



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