

# Bylaws of Community Mennonite Church

## Articles of organization:

### Article I. Name

The congregation shall be known as COMMUNITY MENNONITE CHURCH.

### Article II. Purpose

#### Section 1. Mission Statement

We, the people of Community Mennonite Church, offer our gifts and lives to the call of Jesus Christ. We strive to follow the God of peace through our worship, fellowship, and service to both the local community and the wider world.

#### Section 2. Covenant Litany

The Community Mennonite Church Covenant Litany ["the Covenant"] is this congregation's statement of faith, based on the 1973 Covenant Resolution and 1982 Covenant of Community Mennonite Church.

We, the people of Community Mennonite Church, believe in God, the creator of the universe. We confess Jesus, the Christ, God's Son as Savior. We have opened our lives to the Holy Spirit, trusting the Spirit to enable us to understand God's will as revealed in the Bible and through the Christian community, and to equip us to demonstrate the spirit of Jesus in all of our relationships.

#### **We commit ourselves to a life of discipleship.**

- We will follow the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, giving ourselves to learning, repentance, obedience, and active witness.
- We will practice a life of study, prayer, and meditation; confessing openly our spiritual struggles; giving and receiving counsel, support, and teaching.
- We will strive to live with integrity in a world of materialism, inequity, deception, and idolatry.

#### **We commit ourselves to a life of worship.**

- We will come together having prepared ourselves to meet God and each other, and will actively participate in worship.
- We will bring to God and God's people expressions of our faith through music, sharing, prayer, giving, and proclamation.

#### **We commit ourselves to a life of ministry.**

- We will join ourselves to Christ's purposes by seeking to reconcile people to God and each other.
- We will support broader Mennonite Church programs through faithful giving, personal involvement, and prayer.
- We will recognize our interdependence with the larger body of Christ, maintaining our connections wherever possible.

## **We commit ourselves to a life of love.**

- We will show our love for each other by sharing abilities, gifts, and material resources for the good of the whole.
- We will offer our time, possessions, and abilities to God for the building of the kingdom.
- We will practice hospitality through warmly accepting all persons in our church, small groups, and homes.

In loving response to God's saving acts in our lives, we do hereby bind ourselves to God in Christ and to our brothers and sisters in a covenant relationship. By this covenant we declare our commitment to live in obedience as a fellowship of believers under the lordship of Christ.

## **Bylaws**

### **Preamble**

The bylaws of Community Mennonite Church (CMC) guide our working together and embody the spirit and best intentions of the congregation's mission and vision.

### **Article I. Relation to the Mennonite Church**

#### **Section 1. Allegheny Mennonite Conference.**

CMC is a member of Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC). The congregation's quota of conference delegates and alternate delegates shall be selected by the Gifts Discernment Committee and affirmed by the congregation.

#### **Section 2. Mennonite Church USA**

The congregation participates in Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) through VMC and directly through delegate participation in the MC USA Delegate Assembly. The congregation's quota of assembly delegates and alternate delegates shall be selected by the Gifts Discernment Committee.

#### **Section 3. Mennonite World Conference**

Through association with MC USA, CMC is part of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC). The congregation may send representatives to MWC assemblies and otherwise participate in MWC activities.

### **Article II. Membership**

#### **Section 1. Basis for Membership**

The Covenant shall be used as the basis for membership in the congregation. Anyone professing faith in God, making a commitment to follow Christ and the teachings of the Bible, and declaring willingness to participate in the practices of the Mennonite Church and CMC's Covenant shall be eligible for membership. Individuals may present themselves or be recommended for membership to the Pastoral Team. People become members by believers' baptism and confession of faith, or, if baptized, by transfer of membership and confession of faith.

#### **Section 2. Types and Rights of Membership**

Membership may be full or associate at the member's option. A full member shall have the right to:

- Participate in all the activities of the congregation.
- Participate in the congregation's decision making.
- If qualified and asked, hold office in the congregation.

An associate member wishes to retain membership in another congregation or denomination but desires to fellowship with CMC. An associate member has all the rights and responsibilities of a full member.

### **Section 3. Continuation of Membership**

Membership, full and associate, is renewed annually.

### **Section 4. Transfer of Membership**

A member wishing to transfer membership to another congregation may be granted an appropriate letter of transfer by the Pastoral Team. Such transfers will be announced to the congregation.

### **Section 5. Forfeiture of Membership**

Any member who renounces faith in God, the commitment to follow Christ, or the willingness to participate in relationships as stated in the Covenant; or whose conduct hinders the Christian witness shall be counseled by fellow members in the patterns suggested in Matthew 18. If such counsel is rejected, upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Team and the approval of Church Council, that person's membership is forfeited.

### **Section 6. Withdrawal of Membership**

Any person who withdraws his or her membership forfeits all the rights and responsibilities of membership.

### **Section 7. Reporting of Membership Statistics**

Membership statistics will be submitted annually to VMC. Pastoral Team may revise statistics to account for "inactive withdrawal" of members who no longer participate in the life of the congregation and do not respond to inquiries about their membership intentions.

## **Article III. Pastoral Team**

CMC supports a pastoral team model of leadership. Our pastoral elders support the work of salaried pastors and as a whole the Pastoral Team cares for the spiritual health and vision for ministry within the congregation. Congregational reviews of salaried pastors occur according to policy implemented by Personnel Committee.

### **Section 1. The Lead Pastor**

The lead pastor is nominated by a Search Committee appointed by Church Council and called for a four-year term pending congregation approval as described in Article VII, Section 2. The lead pastor is accountable to Church Council.

### **Section 2. Associate Pastors**

An associate pastor is nominated by a Search Committee appointed by Church Council and called for a four-year term pending congregation approval as described in Article VII, Section 2. An associate pastor is accountable to the lead pastor.

### **Section 3. Staff**

Ministry and support staff are selected by the Personnel Committee and supervised by the lead pastor.

### **Section 4. Pastoral Elders**

Pastoral elders are CMC members selected by the Gifts Discernment Committee and affirmed by the congregation. Pastoral elders serve a three-year term.

## **Article IV. Organization**

### **Section 1. Church Council**

Church Council provides leadership and direction to CMC through commissions and collaboration with Pastoral Team. Council forms task forces, committees, and commissions to fulfill additional responsibilities emerging from our mission. Church Council shall be composed of full or associate members selected by the Gifts Discernment Committee and affirmed by the congregation for the following positions and terms:

- Chair (two-year term)
- Vice Chair (two-year term, followed by two years as Chair)
- Commission Chairs (1 year chair-elect, followed by a two-year term with a limit of two consecutive terms)
- Lead Pastor (ex-officio)
- Church Council has the option to appoint a young adult member to serve a one-year, voting member-at-large position

### **Section 2. Commissions**

Commissions fulfill our mission as a congregation. Commissions are added or disbanded upon recommendation of Church Council and approval of the congregation. The following commissions are established:

- The Administration Commission oversees all aspects of administration and the business of CMC. It is responsible for finances, property, and church organization.
- The Community Life Commission works toward ensuring that each member and attendee experiences connection and belonging at CMC through the development and communication of structures and programs through which people build and deepen relationships with one another and with God.
- The Outreach Commission oversees all aspects of outreach ministry for CMC. It focuses on both local and global missions, making recommendations for how CMC can meet needs in the broader community.
- The Worship Commission oversees all aspects of weekly worship and special services in the liturgical year.
- The Youth Commission oversees all aspects of children and youth ministry at CMC, primarily Sunday School and the youth organizations within the church.

### **Section 3. Standing Committees**

Standing committees are composed of full or associate members and are accountable to Church Council. The standing committees are as follows:

- The Personnel Committee is composed of the Council chair, Council vice chair, Administration Commission chair, and lead pastor. The Personnel Committee will oversee all employment issues for CMC employees and conduct annual reviews.
- The Gifts Discernment Committee members are selected by the Pastoral Team and approved by the congregation. The Gifts Discernment Committee ascertains gifts, abilities, and interest among members to fulfill the mission of the congregation and to fill roles within the congregation. Members of this committee serve two-year terms and may serve no more than three consecutive terms.
- The Finance Committee is a subgroup of the Administration Commission. It drafts an annual budget and maintains all financial records for the congregation. Members of this committee serve two-year terms and may serve no more than three consecutive terms.
- Trustees sign legal and real estate documents on behalf of the congregation. If a congregational vote for the matter hasn't been obtained (see article V., section 3), Council must approve the document before a trustee signs. The trustees are the Council chair, the Council vice chair and the chair of the Administration Commission. A trustee's term lasts until the trustee no longer serves in the respective role on Council.

## **Article V. Congregational Business**

### **Section 1. Congregational Meetings**

Congregational meeting times and agenda will be announced to the congregation at least two weeks in advance. However, Council may call a congregational meeting with less than two weeks' notice if Council finds that circumstances compel an earlier meeting. Congregational meetings shall be chaired by the Council chair or vice chair.

### **Section 2. Approval of Leaders**

The appointment of pastors, pastoral elders, council members, trustees, churchwide delegates, and Gifts Discernment Committee members requires a congregational vote and affirmation of 80 percent or more of the signed ballots submitted by members. A higher percentage requirement may be requested by the candidate. Absentee ballots will be made available and the voting period will be established by Council prior to the start of voting.

### **Section 3. Other Decisions Requiring Congregational Approval**

The following decisions require a congregational vote and affirmation on 80 percent or more of the signed ballots submitted by members. Absentee ballots will be made available and the voting period will be established by Council prior to the start of voting.

- Annual budget
- Changes to the annual budget with a net effect of more than 5 percent of the total budget
- Renovations or additions to a church building that cost more than 1% of the estimated value of the building.
- Changes to these bylaws (See also Article VIII.)

### **Section 4. Church Year/Fiscal Year**

The church year and fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31. Terms of service coincide with these dates. Youth Commission is an exception to this calendar; Youth Commission terms run August-July to coincide with the school year.

#### **Section 5. Removal of Church Leaders**

A church leader who fails to perform his or her duties; who compromises the reputation of CMC; or who causes harm to church facilities or programs shall be removed from his or her position if Council votes by simple majority that one of the above conditions has occurred and then 80 percent of the signed ballots submitted by members following a congregational meeting concur.

#### **Section 6. Conflict of Interest Policy**

The church expects leaders to make decisions that are beneficial to the congregation at large, and not to benefit their own business interests or those of their family members. See the [attached Conflict of Interest Policy](#) for further details.

#### **Section 7. Dissolution of the Church**

In the event of the church's dissolution, 10% of its material assets will be distributed to Mennonite Central Committee, and the remaining 90% to Mennonite Church USA.

### **Article VI. Changes to These Bylaws**

#### **Section 1. Amendments and Revisions**

Changes to these bylaws shall be made if recommended by Council and approved following a congregational meeting by 80 percent of the signed ballots submitted by members. The amendments to be considered shall be circulated in written form among members at least one month prior to the congregational meeting.

*Approved by congregational vote, November 18, 2012. Amended by congregational votes, November 20, 2016; December 10, 2017; March 1, 2019.*