

## **I. STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION**

### **Introduction**

This congregation is united as members to worship God, to live out our faith in Christ as a covenant community, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with humanity in service and witness. This handbook serves to enable the congregation to more effectively carry out its mission.

#### **A. Name**

The members of this covenant community, who assemble in the meetinghouse at 5501 Nebraska Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, shall be known as Toledo Mennonite Church (TMC).

#### **B. Purpose**

1. The congregation resolves to be a worshipping community. The members assemble regularly to worship God collectively, and to give encouragement for members to mature in their relationship with God.
2. The congregation resolves to be a covenant community. The members seek to support each other in spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. The congregation plans opportunities for nurture, sharing, and discernment to enable members in a life of discipleship. This includes the discernment and call for members to exercise their spiritual gifts.
3. The congregation resolves to be a witnessing community. The congregation desires to declare the good news of Christ by evangelism, service, and lifestyle. The congregation affirms the gospel of peace, which includes loving enemies and refraining from the use of violence; therefore, it seeks to be peacemakers in God's work of reconciling love.

#### **C. Relationship to the Broader Church**

1. The congregation is affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA through the Ohio Conference. TMC takes full responsibility for being part of this denomination, and will be accountable to this body by giving and receiving counsel in seeking God's will.
2. A Regional Pastor is appointed by the leadership of Ohio Conference. The Regional Pastor serves as a counsel to the Pastor, a link to the Conference, and a resource to the congregation.
3. The congregation also cooperates with other local congregations for joint mission projects and fellowship in the broader Christian Church.

#### **D. Status of Non-profit Corporation**

1. The congregation exists as a non-profit corporation with the officers affirmed at the annual congregational business meeting in the Spring: President – the Chairperson of Leadership Team; Secretary – the Vice-Chair of Leadership Team; Treasurer – the Treasurer of the congregation.

2. The property of the congregation belongs to the members. They authorize the church officers to buy, acquire, manage, lease, mortgage, and sell real estate and personal property.

**E. Membership**

1. Membership in TMC is available to those who commit themselves to the Covenant of Membership. When recommended for membership by the Leadership Team, such person shall become a member by confession of faith and believer's baptism, or by presentation of a church letter.

The Covenant of Membership (in the appendix to this Handbook) is the congregation's current understanding of membership and may be modified or changed by action taken by the members.

2. A member may transfer his/her membership to another congregation by a letter of recommendation, given upon request, by the Pastor and Leadership Team.
3. Membership may be transferred to TMC by presentation of a letter of recommendation from another congregation, commitment to the Covenant of Membership, and by consent of the congregation.

**II. GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

**A. Meetings and Dates**

1. Church Year  
The church year shall begin September 1 and terminate August 31 of the following year. All church offices and commission assignments shall begin September 1.
2. Fiscal Year  
The year shall begin September 1 and terminate August 31 of the following year.
3. Fall Congregational Meeting  
A congregational meeting shall be held in the Fall for the purpose of receiving annual reports from each commission and assignment, approving the annual budget, discussing goals for the church year, and conducting any other business that is discerned by the congregation.
4. Spring Congregational Meeting  
A congregational meeting shall be held in the Spring for the purpose of choosing officers and ministry assignments for the coming church year (see II., C., "Ministries Discernment"), and conducting other business that is discerned by the congregation.
5. Congregational Meetings  
In addition to the semi-annual congregational meetings, a congregational meeting may be called when necessary by the Leadership Team. The Chairperson of Leadership Team shall preside over the meetings. All congregational meetings shall be announced to the congregation in advance on two separate occasions.

6. Quorum

The quorum for any congregational meeting shall be the persons present for the meeting.

**B. Discernment/Decision-Making Process**

**BACKGROUND:** Decisions at TMC are typically made in one of two settings. The majority of decisions are made within commissions in accordance with the TMC Church Structure. An example of this would be the Christian Formation Commission's selection of Sunday School materials. However, occasionally issues or problems surface that have impact upon the entire congregation. When such a situation exists our church has held that God's will can best be discerned when the whole congregation has input.

**STRUCTURE:** The structure of the decision-making process, when congregational discernment is necessary, can take one of two forms. The Leadership Team may identify a problem or need and, as part of their responsibility as the governing body of the congregation, bring an issue directly to the congregation for discernment. When issues are brought from outside the Leadership Team, or when the Leadership Team sees the need for a more detailed process, the following model is used.

**DECISION-MAKING MODEL:**

**STEP 1.** The problem or need is identified. All persons active in TMC can bring a problem or need to the attention of the Pastor or the Leadership Team.

**STEP 2:** The Leadership Team finds a way for the identified problem to be discussed. The discussion of the problem can happen in an existing commission, or an ad hoc commission appointed by the Leadership Team. Those persons involved in identifying the problem should be assigned to the commission.

**STEP 3:** After this commission has begun to work on the problem, it is encouraged to bring the issue to the congregation early for initial feedback, testing, and response. Following this feedback, the commission is responsible to look at the problem from a variety of angles. The options should be clearly stated on paper and be clear about the implications, both positive and negative. After the commission has done its work, it is to make a report to Leadership Team. The report should include at least two ways to respond to the problem and if the commission wishes, its preference. There may be times when only one option can be brought to the congregation for discernment.

**STEP 4:** The Leadership Team reviews the work of that commission. If the Leadership team is in support of the commission's conclusions, those conclusions will be adopted. If the Leadership Team is not in support of the commission's conclusions, the Leadership Team is responsible to call a congregational meeting for discernment in decision-making. If a congregational meeting is called, the Leadership Team may or may not bring a recommendation to the congregation.

**STEP 5:** Following a congregational meeting, the commission is to take all the information and feedback that has been received from the Leadership Team and the congregation and come up with one or more solutions to the problem that will be presented to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will call another congregational meeting to present the problem and proposed solution(s) to the congregation and discern God's will on the issue.

At congregational meetings, a role of the Leadership Team Chairperson is to facilitate discussion among the congregation and encourage persons to ask questions or seek

clarification on the issue once a commission member presents a summary of the problem and the commission's proposal. The Chairperson should help the congregation work toward consensus whether to accept the proposal offered by the commission prior to opening the discussion to other possible solutions.

There may be times when an individual has to let go of his or her right to stop the decision-making process by saying, "I disagree with what is happening, but I will not stand in the way of what meets with support by the rest of the group." If consensus is not forthcoming, the congregation should ask the commission to work at further options and repeat the decision-making cycle with another congregational meeting.

At times a ballot may be the best way to facilitate a timely decision. This may occur in one of two ways:

1. For certain major issues (e.g., deciding to call a pastor): The Leadership Team may decide prior to the congregational meeting that a ballot vote will be taken. The Leadership Team will set the percentage for passage of the issue (usually 80% or greater) prior to the meeting. The Leadership Team may also solicit absentee ballots on an issue that is clearly definable and can be adequately explained to members prior to the meeting.
2. If necessary during a congregational meeting, the Chairperson may call for a vote on a defined proposal within that congregational meeting and after a reasonable attempt for reaching consensus has failed. Percentage for passing a proposal in this instance will be 80%.

Using these guidelines, the Leadership Team Chairperson should help guide the decision-making process during the congregational meeting and should encourage input from as many people as possible during discussion. In doing so, he or she should prayerfully seek God's guidance regarding ways to best facilitate the group process rather than relying primarily on a strict order or set of rules (such as "calling the question" to cut off congregational discussion within Robert's Rules of Order).

**PARTICIPATION:** Typically all persons regularly attending TMC may provide input into and be a part of the discernment process. On occasion, however, the Leadership Team may limit participation in the actual decision to congregational members. An example of such a situation might be the calling of or retaining of the pastor. If Leadership Team is limiting participation, that shall be clearly stated at the beginning of the process. (See Flow Chart, Appendix I.)

### **C. Ministries Discernment**

1. The congregation shall utilize a method to discern and encourage the use of members' gifts in service to the mission of the congregation.
2. The Gifts & Ministries Discernment Commission will obtain information from members and prayerfully discern a slate to propose to the congregation in its Spring congregational meeting for approval.
3. The method may vary, but will include the following:
  - a. Information is gathered from members with regard to their ministry interest, and information suggesting where other members might serve in the congregation.

- b. The Church Secretary will compile survey information and pass it on to the Gifts & Ministries Discernment Commission. The Gifts & Ministries Discernment Commission will pray for the Spirit's leading and discern together a proposed slate.
- c. Members are then asked about their willingness to serve in the given position.
- d. When a slate is completed this is brought to the congregation within the Spring congregational meeting.
- f. All commissions and offices will begin September 1.
- e. At the beginning of each year, the Pastor will facilitate orientation meetings with outgoing and incoming Commission Chairs. The purpose of these orientation meetings will be to discuss maintaining a philosophy of ministry for each area, setting goals, sharing best practices, and managing commission budgets for the new church year.

**D. Policies**

The congregation may take action on issues which arise from the life and ministry of the church. The congregation has adopted the following policies and resolutions. Additional policies will be added to the handbook whenever the congregation adopts a policy or resolution.

## **USE AND DISPERSAL OF DONATED MONIES FOR LOCAL CHURCH**

**Background:** Money is occasionally given to the church outside of the offering process, for example in the form of a will, bequest, etc. This money may come in two different forms, designated and undesignated.

**Dispersal of Undesignated Funds:** Amounts of money under \$1,000 shall be dispersed at the discretion of the Leadership Team, with undesignated funds not in excess of \$50 dispersed at the discretion of the Church Treasurer. The Leadership Team may take a proposal to the congregation if they wish, but such a proposal is not necessary. If the amount equals or exceeds \$1,000, the Leadership Team shall take a proposal to the congregation for discernment and approval.

**Dispersal of Designated Funds:** Monies may come to the congregation designated by either a member or a friend of the church. In general, the wishes of the donor will be honored. It is recognized however, that money may be designated that is not in concert with the values, mission, and priorities of the church. When a designated donation is received, the following process should be followed:

1. The Leadership Team reviews the designation and if the amount is under \$1,000 and the gift is within the values, mission, and priorities of the church, the donation shall be accepted and used as designated. If the gift equals or exceeds \$1,000, the Leadership Team shall take the issue to the congregation with the recommendation that it be accepted as designated.
2. On occasion, money may be designated that upon review of the Leadership Team may be found not to be in concert with the values, mission, and priorities of the church. If such circumstances arise:
  - a. The Leadership Team shall designate a person or persons to approach the appropriate individual and explain why the gift cannot be used as designated and present a number of other options to the donor. If the donor is in agreement with the options presented, those options shall be taken to the congregation for approval if the amount equals or exceeds \$1,000 and dispersed if under \$1,000.
  - b. If the donor is unwilling or unable to change the designation, or it is not possible to contact the donor, the Leadership Team may do one of the following:
    1. They may return the donation regardless of the amount.
    2. They may take the issue to the congregation for discernment accompanied by a specific proposal.

Original: 11/19/87  
Revised: 10/12/2016

## **COMPASSION FUND GUIDELINES**

The purpose of the Compassion Fund is to meet financial needs of the church and community through the use of unrestricted donations to the fund.

The Leadership Team suggests the following guidelines for donations to and disbursements from the fund:

1. As members of the church see needs in the church or community, this need is presented to the Compassion Fund Committee consisting of the Pastor, the Treasurer, and the Care Commission Chair. The Church Secretary, as a non-voting member, will help facilitate communication among the Compassion Fund Committee as necessary.
2. The committee reviews the need, and authorizes disbursements accordingly.
3. When the fund is nearing depletion, a special appeal is made to the congregation for special donations or a special offering.

Note: Since a gift made to the Compassion Fund for a designated person or project is not within the guidelines of the Internal Revenue Code as a deductible contribution to the church, we would discourage this type of giving.

Original: 12/07/84

Revised: 11/11/10; 10/12/2016

## **STATEMENT ON INACTIVE MEMBERS**

Toledo Mennonite Church will seek to maintain an active and meaningful list of those who have covenanted together as members of the congregation. A goal is for membership to be a meaningful commitment to each other in worship, fellowship, and mission.

Members who have moved out of the area and/or have not been active in the congregation for two years shall be contacted concerning their relationship to the congregation. If they have formed a meaningful relationship to another congregation, they shall be encouraged to transfer their membership. If persons are not active in any congregation, the goal in contacting them is to invite them back into fellowship. Repeated efforts will be made to invite them back into congregational life and participation.

However, if after two years and persistent efforts to restore relationships, they have no interest or demonstrated intent on participation in the life of the church, their membership shall be terminated by decision of the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will inform the congregation about membership changes. The Leadership Team will retain the discernment in certain cases such as college students, mission/service assignments, temporary assignments, etc.

Revised 11/11/10; 10/12/2016



## **CONGREGATIONAL STUDENT AID POLICY**

As a Mennonite congregation we wish to support and encourage our youth to attend our Mennonite colleges/universities (Bethel College, Bluffton University, Conrad Grebel University College, Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College, and Hesston College) and seminaries (Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Eastern Mennonite Seminary). This will include financial support to those attending Mennonite schools because:

- The cost is substantially higher than state universities.
- Education in these settings is grounded in faith from a Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective.
- Colleges/universities/seminaries can have a great impact on our youth.
- This substantiates care and support for our youth during these years.
- We are Mennonite and therefore desire to support our Mennonite schools.

Each student attending a Mennonite-affiliated college or seminary should receive a predetermined tuition scholarship. This will be determined by a recommendation from the Treasurer for this line item in the budget and approved by the Leadership Team. Congregational approval must follow at the Fall congregational meeting. The following guidelines will be followed:

1. The money will be for undergraduate students, attending a Mennonite-affiliated college/university or any person attending a Mennonite-affiliated seminary.
2. Those who receive financial support must be a member of Toledo Mennonite Church or committed to the congregation and approved by the Leadership Team.
3. The amount of aid will be determined annually, by the Treasurer on or before March 1. This amount should be evaluated on a yearly basis and will be based on the average percentage of increase for tuition with room & board. The aid will be limited to the equivalent of four academic years or eight semesters.
4. Checks will be written in payment directly to the college with the student's name in the memo.
5. TMC believes there is value in higher education. The purpose of this policy is to provide financial support to help our youth attend our Mennonite-affiliated colleges/universities and seminaries and in so doing to support those institutions.
6. Former students who have benefited from this fund are encouraged to contribute to this (or a similar) fund and/or participate in voluntary service.

Original: 5/24/89

Revised: 3/23/93; 11/11/10; 10/12/2016

## **TOLEDO MENNONITE CHURCH: COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP**

As persons committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we endeavor to be faithful in living out our faith in Christ. We identify with the worldwide body of Christ, and more specifically with the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition in our faith and practice.

While not elaborate or exhaustive, the following statements of faith are basic for us. We acknowledge:

1. Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior. As the Son of God, He alone is Lord of our life, the example for how we are to live, and the only Savior for our sins,
2. the Holy Spirit as the indwelling presence of Jesus empowering and enabling us to follow Christ as His disciple in all areas of life,
3. the Bible as the written word of God as interpreted by the Spirit-led community of faith and as the guide for our faith and practice,
4. the Church to be the community of God's people on earth, and called to be the presence of God in the world.

### **A. MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

As one visible fellowship of God's Church, we, as members of Toledo Mennonite Church, are attempting to hear and act upon God's will for us. We acknowledge that our faith in Christ is dynamic and continually in process. However, we now understand the commitment to Christ and His Church to involve the following:

1. Sharing mutual joys, hurts, and concerns on an individual basis, within the larger fellowship, and/or in small groups, and responding to those needs. This also includes sharing together in decision making both personally and corporately.
2. Supporting and caring for each other as spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial crises arise.
3. Attending our worship services, congregational meetings, and fellowship gatherings.
4. Studying the Bible, praying, and meditating both individually and corporately.
5. Identifying, affirming, and using the spiritual gifts God has given to each member.
6. Witnessing to our world and community of our faith through:
  - a. Evangelism – calling persons to relationship with God
  - b. Service – serving person's physical, emotional, and mental needs
7. Reflecting faithful stewardship of our money, time, and possessions in our habits and lifestyle.
8. Living as peacemakers in all areas of life as demonstrated by Jesus' life and teachings.
9. Relating to the congregations of the Ohio Conference and the broader Mennonite Church.
10. Seeking to do God's will in areas of social injustice in our community, nation, and world.

## B. BECOMING A MEMBER

There are several ways persons can submit themselves to be a member at Toledo Mennonite Church:

1. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and a desire to be baptized as a witness of that confession.
2. Transfer of membership by a letter of recommendation from another congregation of like faith.
3. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ. This recognizes a prior confession of faith and baptism in another Christian fellowship but where for various reasons a church letter of recommendation may not be available.

## C. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

When a person has made a commitment to be a Christian and wishes to become a member at Toledo Mennonite Church, then he/she should consider the membership covenant. Those who are in agreement with the membership covenant are encouraged to consider these options:

### 1. Membership

Membership at Toledo Mennonite Church involves the commitment to the covenant statement as the guiding principles for our faith and life as a congregation. To be a member is to join together as a community of faith for nurture, worship, and mission as persons under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Prior to becoming a member one will participate in a “members’ class” for study and instruction concerning our faith as a church.

Those members who move out of the area or have been inactive for some time may be contacted annually of their status with Toledo Mennonite Church membership. They will be invited to:

- a. Become members of the church in which they are involved, where they are now living, or
- b. Reconfirm their desire and purpose to retain membership at Toledo Mennonite Church, or
- c. Dissolve their membership at Toledo Mennonite Church.

### 2. Associate Membership

This type of membership is provided for those who are living in the area on a temporary basis only. This involves the same commitment as membership but allows persons to retain membership in their home congregation.

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All interested persons are most welcome to participate in worship, fellowship, and service at Toledo Mennonite Church. We invite those who participate and agree with the statement of membership to join as members, but likewise provide the freedom for each person to make that decision.

Original: 9/18/84

Revised 11/11/10; 10/12/2016

### **III. STRUCTURE, OFFICES, AND DUTIES**

#### **Introduction**

It is our purpose to state in a simple form the working pattern of the congregation. It should be noted that this structure is dynamic and can change when it is apparent a better way is identified, and the Holy Spirit directs the congregation into a new path.

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#### **TMC STRUCTURE**

##### **Authority:**

In alignment with Mennonite polity, authority is vested in the congregation. The congregation receives its authority from Jesus Christ, its head, and is a member of and accountable to an area conference of Mennonite Church USA.

The congregation as a body discerns vision, affirms a spending plan, selects the Pastor, and grants authority to the Leadership Team to govern on its behalf. The Leadership Team, with input from Commission Chairs, discerns which additional items are brought to the congregation for action or counsel.

##### **Governance:**

The Leadership Team is composed of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, two At-Large members, and the Pastor. The Leadership Team is accountable to the congregation and is responsible for oversight of the body. In New Testament terms, these are the Elders of the congregation. As such, the Leadership Team is comprised of lay leaders who have gifts to provide spiritual leadership and display traits of Christian maturity. The Leadership Team shares responsibility with credentialed pastoral leadership to lead the congregation toward growth in Christ-likeness.

Their responsibilities involve the spiritual leadership of the congregation in 1) stewarding the congregation's vision and values, 2) evaluating congregational health and direction, and 3) overseeing fiduciary matters. Additionally, the Leadership Team provides support and oversight of the Pastor in spiritual and administrative matters. They lead the Spring and Fall congregational meetings (and others as necessary). They keep the Commissions accountable for aligning their ministries with the congregation's vision. They review proposals from Commissions or staff for new and significant ministries involving substantial commitment of congregational resources. In all these areas, the Leadership Team practices servant leadership by listening to the congregation and staying in touch with congregational life.

Finally, the Leadership Team also serves a role in gifts discernment and representing the congregation at the conference or denomination level, as outlined below.

- Gifts discernment: The Vice-Chair, one other Leadership Team member, and one at-large member from outside the Leadership Team will carry out this responsibility.
- Conference and denominational representation: The two At-Large members of the Leadership Team will serve as delegates at Ohio Conference and MCUSA convention, or they will find an alternate to carry out this responsibility.

### Ministry:

All persons in the congregation live out the call to love God, to love each other, and to love our neighbors, near and far. All are ministers, committed to growing as disciples of Jesus and to helping disciple others whose lives we touch. Together we practice the spiritual gifts we have been given to build up the congregation, a community of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, experiencing and extending God's love and grace.

Six Commissions provide leadership for congregational ministries and programs (see descriptions below). The Commission Chairs participate in a quarterly meeting to ensure coordination of all ministries. The Pastor leads this meeting and provides a line of communication back to the Leadership Team.

The Pastor shall provide spiritual leadership through preaching and teaching, pastoral care, encouraging and equipping the congregation in witness and service, and affirming and nurturing the development of members' spiritual gifts. The Pastor reports to and is accountable to the Leadership Team through the Leadership Team Chair.

### TMC COMMISSIONS

TMC's Commissions lead the congregation in their respective areas of ministry. They are charged primarily with coordinating and managing these areas; their job is to involve many other members in the work of their ministries. Everything we do as a body at TMC, with the exception of duties held by the Leadership Team, falls under the oversight of a Commission. Commissions are empowered to make decisions and establish task forces for specific tasks. They are accountable to the Leadership Team for aligning their ministries with the congregation's vision. Each Commission is composed of 3 members – a Chair and two others.

Each Commission is responsible for the following:

- Developing and maintaining a philosophy of ministry for its area concurrent with the congregational vision
- Overseeing all ministries within its area—beginning new ministries, revising and/or ending existing ministries, and establishing task forces and task groups
- Hearing proposals from congregational members and making proposals to the Leadership Team
- Recommending a spending plan for all ministries in its area
- Providing a written quarterly report to the congregation
- Meeting on a regular basis and, with the exception of Care Commission, ensuring that the congregation is aware of meeting times and topics to allow any who desire to participate to attend

#### Worship Commission:

Attends to the congregation's corporate worship of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Oversees worship, prayer, renewal. Examples: Sunday worship services, special evening services, and other events in the Christian year.

#### Christian Formation Commission:

Attends to discipleship – the spiritual growth and education of our membership. Oversees activities related to membership and learning. Examples: Sunday school, stewardship education, youth group, library, small groups, book studies.

#### Community Life Commission:

Attends to our congregation's fellowship and relationships with each other within the body of Christ. Oversees social activities of the group. Examples: shared meals, social and leisure events.

#### Care Commission:

Attends to meeting the physical and emotional needs of members of the community. Oversees efforts to support people in times of transition, joy, pain, and stress. The Chair collaborates with the Pastor and Treasurer to administer the Compassion Fund. Examples: visiting, member contact, help in times of personal crisis, weddings, funerals, hospitalizations, providing meals.

#### Mission Commission:

Attends to our congregation's relationship to and impact on the world around us. Oversees mission, from local to global. Serves as the Board of Directors for TMC Tutoring. Examples: organizing events, involving congregation in local and denominational events and ministries, highlighting our partner ministries.

#### Facilities Commission:

Attends to caring for our building and grounds. Oversees maintenance, repairs, and aesthetics of our facilities. Examples: repairs, preventative maintenance, cleaning, gardening, mowing, snow removal.

## QUALITIES, GIFTS, AND CHARACTERISTICS

As a congregation we are founded on Christ and proclaim that no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Therefore, our life together and our aspirations as individuals within the congregation are informed by Christ and the scriptures that proclaim him Lord and Savior. Rooted in scriptural passages such as John 13, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:1-16, Philippians 2:1-15, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, along with *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* and *A Shared Understanding of Church Leadership* produced by Mennonite Church USA, we as Toledo Mennonite Church call leaders according to the following standards:

### Leadership Team Members

- A committed Christian who has demonstrated faithful discipleship to Jesus
- Respected within the congregation and willing to conduct oneself in a manner worthy of a spiritual leader and elder for the congregation
- Is spiritually mature and discerning
- Can see the big picture – what’s best for the entire congregation
- Is excited about achieving the congregation’s vision
- Has leadership qualities: willing to work at difficult decisions, not afraid of dealing with conflict, willing to leave comfort zone
- Committed to Anabaptist faith values
- Is an active and available member of TMC

### Commission Members

- A committed Christian who has demonstrated faithful discipleship to Jesus
- Has a passion and understanding of that commission’s area of ministry
- Sees ministry position as an act of service to the congregation
- Has the gifts and calling to help direct and coordinate that area of congregational life
- Has the ability to see the big picture and work together as a team
- Is committed to enabling all ministries within its area to work together toward congregational goals
- Committed to applying Anabaptist faith values to the respective area of ministry
- Commission Chairs: Has facilitative gifts to help the entire team work together
- Is an active and available participant of TMC

## **PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES**

The following principles apply to the entirety of TMC's structure. Each group will:

- Conduct meetings and other activities in a prayerful, spirit-led manner
- Lead in a spirit of servant leadership
- Open meetings to any congregant who would like to join (with the exception of the Care Commission). If confidential matters arise, commission may close part of their meeting to address these.
- Constructively deal with conflict in the spirit of the document *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*
- Abide by term limits
  - Leadership Team Chair, Vice-Chair, and two At-Large Members: 2 Years, staggered
  - Treasurer: 3 Years
  - Commission Chairs: 2 Years
  - Commission Members: 1 Year
  - Recommended limit: 3 consecutive terms
- Expired terms and renewals will be discerned and filled by the annual Gifts Discernment process.

## **EXAMPLES AND SCENARIOS**

The Leadership Team and the Commissions should work collaboratively when addressing issues that cross into multiple areas of congregational life. By way of example, the following scenarios are offered to more clearly understand how this structure can function.

- Changing the start time of the service: Individual or group of congregants would raise the issue with the Worship Commission who would talk with other impacted commissions (i.e. Christian Formation and Community Life) and then form a proposal that would go to the Leadership Team for final processing.
- A proposal to do a Good Friday service in addition to or rather than a Maundy Thursday service, or the scheduling of evening services (i.e. Taize, hymn sings, etc) are decided by the Worship commission.
- Potlucks and social activities (i.e. volleyball social, Erie Orchard bonfire, super bowl party, etc) are decided by the Community Life Commission
- Issues of church discipline would fall under the Leadership Team with on-going pastoral care provided by the Pastor and Care Commission as necessary
- Issues of pastoral misconduct would fall under the Leadership Team with support from Ohio Mennonite Conference
- At times when conflict within commissions would be aided by outside assistance, this could be provided by the Leadership Team or a third party such as Shalom Ministries.
- A proposal to coordinate a bible school or other discipleship program is decided by the Christian Formation Commission. If such a program would require a significant change in the commission's budget, this change must be submitted to the Leadership Team for approval during the annual budgeting process.
- For spiritual counsel, contact the Pastor, the Care Commission, and/or a trusted friend in the congregation



- The creation of a memorial garden: Depending on the vision for the garden, this proposal could go to various commissions. Perhaps it could go first to Christian Formation or Care if the vision is to create a space for spiritual reflection, grief, and remembrance. If the vision is to create a safe and beautiful place for our neighbors, then it could first go to Mission Commission. Facilities Commission should also, naturally, be involved in the process at some point. If a proposal overlaps multiple areas of ministry, it goes first to one commission that seems to match the most and then is discussed at the quarterly meeting of commission chairs for development. Finally, a final proposal involving substantial commitment of congregational resources would also need to go to the Leadership Team.

Other examples could also be given, and others may arise. Ongoing coordination and discernment of these congregational and ministry matters will be coordinated through the quarterly meeting of Commission Chairs as well as regular communication among members, commissions, Leadership Team, and the church office.

## **HISTORY AND RATIONALE FOR ADOPTING A NEW CHURCH STRUCTURE**

### **July 2016**

Beginning on April 20, 2013, the TMC Elders and Church Council began meeting bi-annually for leadership retreats and organizational evaluations. With resources from Terry Shue and Rick Stiffney from MCUSA, TMC Leadership began to look into the question of our church structure and how it is serving our mission and vision in this stage of life at TMC. Through these meetings, the Elders and Church Council agreed that a group should be formed to review this issue and present a plan for change. Thus, the Re-Structuring Task Force was formed.

This decision to pursue a new structure for TMC was reached based on a number of factors. A primary consideration was centered on the current size of the TMC congregation. It was discovered that the current structure included many more positions than regular attenders. Also, it seemed that the number of TMC participants who were willing to lead and serve on committees was decreasing.

Also identified was the ineffectiveness of the current structure. It was becoming increasingly difficult to take action of any kind at TMC. Some of this was due to discord within and among committees while some was due to the design of the system.

Overall, TMC leadership believed we needed a more nimble structure that could align our vision and resources and promote creative release of gifts within our congregation. Through the process of prayer, discernment, and feedback from the congregation, this new structure comprised of a Leadership Team and ministry commissions was proposed and accepted by the congregation at the April 10, 2016 congregational meeting.

#### **IV. REVISIONS**

Recognizing that life in the body is always changing, this handbook may be revised to reflect the current life of the congregation. Such changes would be brought to the Fall congregational meeting for approval.

Revised 11/11/10; 10/12/2016