

**First Mennonite Church**

# *Handbook*

*Guidelines of the Church*

*A welcoming faith community committed to*

*Making peace*

*Seeking justice*

*Serving as the hands, heart, and voice of Christ*

Website: <http://www.indymenno.org>

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## Reception of Church Members

1. Following completion of the Faith Inquiry Class, the pastor(s) shall meet with each person requesting membership to clarify our understanding of the meaning of church membership at First Mennonite.
2. A report of the above meeting shall be made with recommendations to the trustees. The trustees must then approve the recommendations.
3. The recommendation shall be printed in the Sunday bulletin at least three Sundays prior to the announced date of receiving persons for membership.
4. Questions of procedure or judgment shall be presented to the trustees or pastor(s) prior to the announced date of reception. In cases where no question is raised, we will proceed with the assumption that the recommendation has congregational support.
5. If the recommendation receives no response as per #4, it will be interpreted as affirmation; if there are concerns that cannot be resolved in conversation with the trustees and pastor(s), a congregational meeting may be needed to resolve differences.

## Membership Principles

The following principles will be used by the Leadership Council to recommend persons for membership at First Mennonite Church:

1. *Confession of sinfulness repentance, and a commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior.*  
[Rom. 3:21-24; 10:9-13; I John 1:9, 10]  
We believe that salvation is a gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It becomes a reality for us when we admit our sinfulness, acknowledge our need for ongoing repentance and make a personal decision to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of our life.
2. *Recognition of the Holy Spirit's presence and embracing spiritual transformation as a continual process.*  
[Luke 3:8; Gal. 5:22-26; II Cor. 5:17]  
We believe the Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ who empowers, guides and transforms us so we are able to live in accordance with the social and ethical implications of the Gospel.
3. *Completion of the Faith Inquiry Class.*  
[Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:19, 20]  
The Faith Inquiry Class includes a brief review of the basic tenets of our faith, an introduction to our Anabaptist heritage, and an overview of First Mennonite Church and its denominational ties so that persons can make an informed decision before entering a covenant relationship with the church.
4. *General acceptance of the principles contained in Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and a willingness to undertake a pilgrimage toward understanding and growth.*  
[Eph. 4:14-16; I Tim. 4:11-16].  
The Confession of Faith is the result of a church-wide process to achieve consensus on the Anabaptist understanding of Biblical faith and practice. The document is recommended reading for all members. In particular, the summary on pages 93-98 provides an excellent outline for periodic review and for the sharing of our faith with others.
5. *Subscription to the First Mennonite Church Covenant, including its Guidelines, and a continuing exploration of its meaning.*  
[Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 12:12-27; Acts 2:42-47]  
The Covenant statement represents our response to the Gospels' invitation to become a community of faith, service, and discernment. The "priesthood of all believers" implies a mutual responsibility and accountability for growth in Christian discipleship.

6. *A public commitment to Christ and the Church as evidenced by baptism.*

“We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin. Baptism is also a pledge before the church of their covenant with God to walk the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers are baptized into Christ and His body by the Spirit, water and blood,” from Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Sexual orientation, same-gender relationships, and gender identity are not factors for approval of full membership in First Mennonite Church.

## **Membership Guidelines**

The following guidelines outline our expectations for all members:

- A. Active participation in the life and function of the church includes:
  - 1. Involvement in one or more of the following:
    - a. Small group
    - b. Christian education
    - c. Committee member
  - 2. Participation in formulation of the budget and a responsible contribution to it.
  - 3. Being responsible to each other by:
    - a. Participation in corporate worship
    - b. Preparing for participation in church meetings
    - c. Supporting congregational decisions
    - d. Sharing our individual spiritual gifts
- B. FMC is made up of members and participants. We value the contribution of every man, woman, and child who participates in our church family.
  - 1. Members are eligible to be conference delegate, treasurer, or pastor; members are eligible to serve on the Leadership Council, the Gifts Discernment Committee, or the Administrative Relations Committee.
  - 2. Members carry ultimate responsibility for the ongoing life of the congregation and therefore, voting shall be limited to members. At times, it may be appropriate to call a meeting of members only.
  - 3. Participants are invited to join in the discussion and clarification of issues, and serve on committees, and share their gifts. Participants that can uphold the doctrines and the curriculum as it is presented by the church and conference may be invited to teach.

### **Associate Membership**

Associate membership has the same privileges as membership. It is for those who desire to commit themselves to FMC, but who would not be counted as members of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference through our congregation because they already hold membership in another congregation or because they do not desire membership in the conference. Associate membership requirements are the same as regular membership, and associate members are received through the same process as Members. Because associate members are not members of the conference through our congregation, it is recommended that they not serve as trustees or conference delegates.

# Baptism and Church Membership

*(The 1975 Church Life Commission Report to Indiana-Michigan Conference)*

This brief document does not attempt to set forth a complete restatement of our theology of baptism, but accepts as its point of reference the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith. The following principles are, however, highlighted and intended to serve as a guide to responding to these requests.

- A. Baptism is not a sacrament in the sense of conferring salvation through an external act. One of its meanings is that it is a visible sign of an inner transformation in which the Holy Spirit fills the new believer and makes all things new. The transformation is prior to the visible sign, but they belong together as part of the whole experience even though they may be separated in time.
- B. Salvation is not only an inner transformation, but also reconciliation between God and the persons, which has its counterpart in the relationship between persons. It is an event in which a new creation (a new social reality) is brought into existence; i.e. one is bound by the Holy Spirit into a body of believers.
- C. Baptism is a public identification of the believer (a) with Christ in His death and resurrection, (b) with those who are members of Christ's body, that is, the church. Baptism is participation in a covenant which includes both relationships, with Christ and with His people.

The dangers we encounter if we approve the requests as outlined above are these:

- A. The danger of spiritualizing the salvation experience; that is, tearing it apart from its setting in the world outside the person, the world of his relationships. Salvation is an inner experience, but it is more than that.
- B. The danger of individualism, that is, the danger of living out one's faith by himself without reference to God's people. Salvation is not a private experience; it involves us in a new covenant relationship with the church of Jesus Christ.
- C. The danger of accepting a doctrine of the invisible church. The church is not invisible; God expects us to make visible our faith commitment by our identification with the visible body of Christ on earth.
- D. The danger of eroding our historic commitment to viewing baptism as a fully voluntary act of an adult believer capable of making a faith decision.

With respect of the first issue, the counsel of the Commission is that Mennonite pastors and congregations of the Indiana-Michigan Conference not separate baptism from church membership, but confer baptism only on those who are ready at the same time to enter into a covenant relationship with the congregation. The normal experience of the believer is to seek water baptism following conversion as soon as it may be feasible in line with instruction in and growing awareness of the implications of baptism. These three events (conversion - the inner transformation, water baptism - the external sign, church membership - the entrance into covenant relationship) belong together and it is desirable that they coincide in time as much as possible under normal circumstances.

With respect of the second issue, the counsel of the Commission is that Mennonite pastors and congregations of the Indiana-Michigan Conference continue to practice the normal pattern of conferring believer's baptism on persons who have been baptized as infants, but who wish to become members of the Mennonite Church by transfer of membership or confession of faith. The issue at stake here is not primarily the spiritual integrity of the candidate's Christian profession and daily walk; this should be tested irrespective of the previous experience of baptism, infant or adult. The concern focuses primarily upon the Biblical teaching on the implications of the baptismal vows, who is able to make them, and what view of the nature of the church is held. We understand baptism in the New Testament to follow the act of repentance/confession when the person himself requests it, openly identifies himself with Jesus as Savior and Lord and covenant with the members of the body. The nature of this covenant is that of a group of believing disciples who commit themselves to follow their Lord in costly discipleship. This obedience must be freely offered by those who understand its implications and are prepared to follow Him "even unto death".

While the Commission sees the above statements as representing the normative practice of our congregations, it also recognizes that exceptions may be called for in particular cases. We wish to avoid any implication that baptism (including believer's baptism) confers salvation or that it is more important than the true confession of faith of the believer. We further wish to avoid becoming legalistic in freezing precisely the patterns by which baptism and church membership are linked together. However, we ask that responsible congregational processes be set up to make decisions in unusual and exceptional circumstances with these safeguards:

- a. That all such instances be clearly recognized by all concerned as the exception rather than the rule and that no cases be considered as setting precedent;
- b. That due consideration is given to the Biblical and historical meanings of baptism and church membership, as well as, the dangers inherent in making exceptions.

*Ross Bender for the Church Life Commission Indiana-Michigan Conference*

### **Statement of Rebaptism**

*(The 1975 First Mennonite Church Statement)*

On April 15, 1975, the Church Council appointed a task force to study the issues raised in the church business meeting concerning rebaptism. The specific task assigned to this group was to study whether rebaptism should be required of persons seeking membership in our congregation who come from a background of infant baptism and believers' confirmation of faith. The task force, after study and discussion, presents the following statement to the congregation for consideration.

#### *Statement:*

We believe that First Mennonite Church should affirm believer's baptism as our understanding of the New Testament teaching on baptism. The following passages support this view of baptism:

“And Peter said to them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38) “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20) “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16. Also, Acts 8:16, 1:18, 10:47, and Col. 2:11-12.)

Believer's baptism also has a 400-year tradition of faith and practice undergirding its usage as a symbol of repentance and commitment to a life of discipleship in the community of faith. However, the Anabaptists never have viewed baptism as having any saving quality or sacramental value through its use. Walter Klaassen in Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant writes: “Anabaptism testifies uniformly that sacredness or holiness does not attach to special words, objects, places, persons, or days.”

The Task Force feels that where a person gives evidence of a faith commitment to the Lordship of Christ, has seriously considered our understanding of the Biblical basis of baptism, and yet finds that rebaptism would be void of any meaning, that in a spirit of Christian love, such persons should be accepted into membership on a confession of faith.

The Task Force recommends that we encourage each person to seriously consider the biblical evidence for believer's baptism and the possible meaningfulness of the symbol as a current expression of commitment with this particular community of faith. The option for such a rebaptism experience should always be open for any person, at such time it may express a symbol to be consistent with the teachings of Jesus and the scriptures on motivation as a key ingredient in any religious practice. (Matt. 6:1-6; I Cor. 10:23-24; Col. 2:16-19; Gal. 4:10-11; Romans 14:1-15)

## Decision Making Process

The membership is the ultimate decision making body. Committees are entrusted by the congregation to make decisions concerning their own areas of ministry. However, when those decisions affect other committees or the congregation as a whole they need to be approved by the Leadership Council. Membership decides budget and finances, changes in the church structure or policies, and affirming the slate of church officers. The Leadership Council may decide that other decisions need to be made by the entire membership.

1. A vote on a proposal may be taken after three weeks notice to members. An accounting will be made of the steps and course of a proposal presented to the congregation before a vote is taken.
2. A proposal passes with eighty–five percent of members present voting to approve it.
3. A member may vote to affirm, not to affirm, or to abstain
  - a. “I do not affirm” covers these types of responses:  
“I reject the proposal”  
“This is an invalid question or the wrong question”  
“I/we are not prepared enough to answer”  
“I want to see a different/changed proposal”  
“I do not understand/it’s not clear”
  - b. “I abstain” covers these types of responses:  
“I do not have a strong opinion on this”  
“I consent to the opinion of others”  
“I trust others’ opinions more on this topic”  
“I am ok with either result”
4. Abstentions are counted with the majority
5. A proxy vote is permissible and should be reported to the Head Trustee in writing or via email prior to the meeting.

The Leadership Council shall determine if a follow-up meeting is necessary for the sake of church unity and spirit.

*Sample Ballot (to begin with a brief statement of the proposal):*

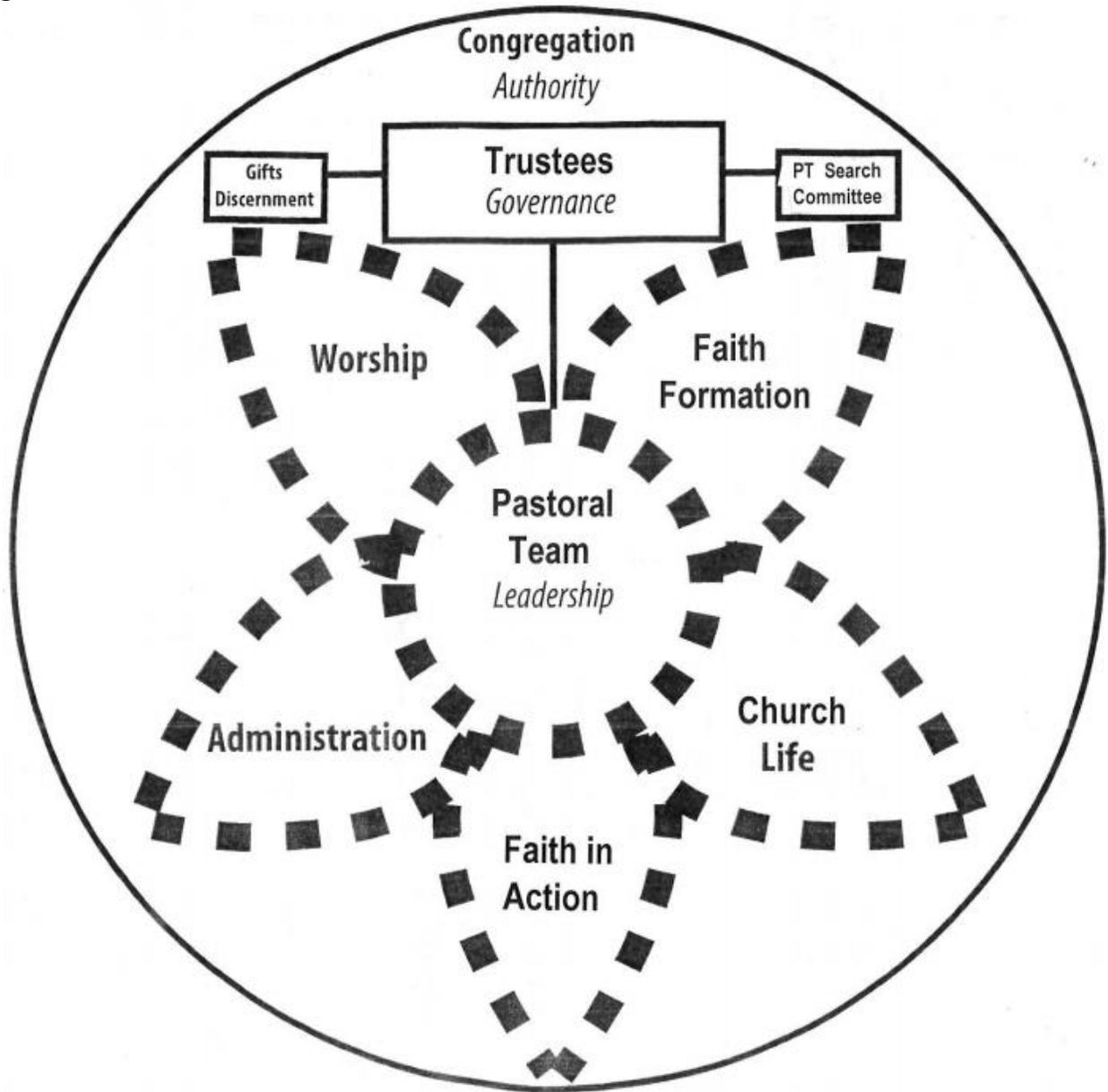
**I affirm**\_\_\_    **I do not affirm**\_\_\_    **I abstain**\_\_\_ (this will be counted with the majority)

Comments:

Member’s Printed Name (required): \_\_\_\_\_

# Structure

## Diagram



### Commissions

The commission structure is based on three biblical priorities that are equal and inter-related in Christian life, and should therefore be equal and inter-related in congregational life: love God, love one another within Christ's body, and love your "neighbor." Commissions seek to assist the congregation in living out these biblical priorities and the congregation's vision.

Commissions tend to all ministries of the congregation. Commissions are empowered to make most decisions and establish committees/coordinators/task groups to execute efforts within its arenas. The pastoral team provides avenues for communication and coordination between commissions but is not in charge of them.

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The five commissions, and their responsibilities (not all-inclusive), are as follows:

### **Worship Commission**

*Love God via our relationship with Her/Him revealed to us in Jesus Christ*

- Worship (gathered and personal)
- Spiritual disciplines
- Prayer

### **Church Life Commission**

*Love one another via our relationships within the Body of Christ*

- Congregant care (Care Team)
- Fellowship
- Small groups
- Participant maintenance
- Visitor follow-up
- Hospitality

### **Faith in Action Commission**

*Love neighbors via our relationships that share the example of Christ beyond FMC*

- Raise awareness of needs
- Local and global relief
- Missions
- Evangelism
- Peacemaking & justice
- Service

### **Faith Formation Commission**

*Formation and equipping for the three biblical priorities and their corresponding ministries*

- Education (all ages)
- Baptism
- Initial membership
- Programs for children, youth (JYF and MYF), and young adults
- Equipping for ministry
- Library

### **Administration Commission**

*Support systems for the other commissions*

- Finances
- Facility & grounds
- Office management
- Congregational database
- Communication
- Public relations
- Conference & denominational links (except mission and education)
- All non-pastoral team personnel matters and evaluation

## **The Five Functions of Structure**

The purpose of a structure is to help an organization work toward its goals. A complex organization works best when the functions of a structure are understood and have accepted definitions, and have been assigned to agreed-upon bodies that have minimal overlap with one another. Problems arise when organizational bodies take on too many functions because core priorities are neglected and division of responsibilities is unclear.

The five functions of structure (as expressed for a church) are as follows:

- **AUTHORITY:** power to decide vision, call pastors, make major decisions
- **GOVERNANCE:** oversight of pastors, vision, gifts discernment, congregational meetings, legal matters
- **LEADERSHIP:** motivate, encourage, guide, equip all parts of the structure to work together toward a common vision
- **MANAGEMENT (OF COMMISSIONS):** organize, administrate, communicate, see that commissions operate
- **MINISTRY (WITHIN COMMISSIONS):** the work of the church

## **Congregation**

Mennonite polity is clear regarding authority being vested in the congregation. A congregation receives authority from Jesus Christ, its head, and is a member of, and accountable to, an area conference of Mennonite Church USA.

*Function:*

Authority

*Accountable to:*

IN-MI Mennonite Conference & one another

*Composition:*

- Members
- (Non-member) participants

*Responsibilities:*

- Align on a spending plan
- Select the pastoral team and duration of service
- Discern vision
- Grant authority to the trustees to govern on its behalf
- Decide upon additional items brought for action or counsel

## **Trustees**

Oversees FMC's mission and vision, ensuring that the plans and actions of the congregation are in alignment with its goals. Supervises and supports the pastoral team, and represents FMC in legal matters.

### *Function:*

Governance

### *Accountable to:*

Congregation

### *Composition:*

- 1 chair (named by the trustees)
- 2-3 constituents

### *Selection:*

Positions are filled by a vote. A vote enables direct delegation of congregational authority to trustees in light of their governance role. Individuals assume the Trustee role because a plurality of the congregation recognize their gifts.

1. The congregation is taught about the role and qualifications of trustees. This role is no more important than any other role in the congregation. With empowered commissions, trustees have limited power.
2. Members prayerfully nominate individual(s) to serve as Trustee (up to the number needed). Nominations are collected and tallied.
3. The top 4 (plus ties) nomination-receivers are put on a slate for election. No one can remove their name from the slate. Members vote for individual(s) on the slate (up to the number needed).
4. A pastor and a trustee contact the person receiving the most votes, asking her/him to prayerfully consider this call. If accepted, s/he is the new Trustee. If declined, the process is repeated with the next highest vote recipient, until one accepts the call. The results are confidential, but made available to the Gifts Discernment Committee for their awareness in discerning gifts for other roles.

### *Term:*

3 years. May serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, but to do so individuals must be re-elected for second term.

### *Responsibilities:*

- Hold regular meetings that include the pastoral team/pastoral team representative, and possibly commission management, commission representatives, or other individuals that require/would benefit from an exchange with this group
- In conjunction with pastoral team/pastoral team representative (except in matters concerning pastoral oversight), make most decisions by consensus (a vote should rarely, if ever, be needed)
- Oversee vision discernment, goal setting, and strategic planning processes
- Make various organizational appointments
- Make some decisions within their area of (limited) responsibility on behalf of the congregation
- Determine additional items for congregational action or counsel, in consultation with pastoral team
- Oversee congregational meetings and agenda
- Recommend spending plan (from Finance Committee) to the congregation
- Represent the congregation for legal purposes
- Oversee structure and by-laws
- Arrange for, and receive, periodic financial audit or review

- Supervise the pastoral team: annual evaluation, employment distribution, personnel policy, care and support
- Evaluate their work annually, seeking feedback from the congregation

*Gifts and characteristics:*

- Can see the big picture - what's best for the entire congregation
- Listens to congregants and is in touch with congregational life
- Is spiritually discerning
- Is excited about achieving the congregation's vision
- Is willing to work at difficult decisions, is not afraid of dealing with conflict, is willing to leave comfort zone
- Values and understands pastoral ministry
- Is an active and available member

**Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC)**

Facilitates and coordinates the discernment of spiritual gifts, passions, personal style, and callings of all congregants.

*Function:*

Subset of governance

*Accountable to:*

Trustees

*Composition:*

- 1 chair (named by the trustees)
- 1 constituent
- 1 pastor
- 1 trustee

*Selection:*

Appointed by the trustees

*Term:*

Chair and constituent: 3 years. May serve two consecutive terms.

*Responsibilities:*

- Promote spiritual gift and passion discernment in congregational life
- Discern and call commission chairs and constituents
- Resource commissions as they discern personnel for all ministries
- Evaluate its work annually

*Gifts and characteristics:*

- Maintains confidentiality
- Values diversity - can set aside personal preferences when they differ with what is discerned as best for the congregation
- Listens well, yet is self-confident enough to speak up
- Is excited about the congregation's vision and structure
- Affirms and has participated in the spiritual gift discernment process
- Has passion for helping all congregants discern gifts and calling

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## **Pastoral Team Search Committee (PTSC)**

Discerns candidates for all pastoral team positions

### *Function:*

Subset of governance

### *Accountable to:*

Trustees

### *Composition:*

- 1 chair (named by the trustees)
- 4-5 constituents
- 1 trustee

### *Selection:*

Appointed by the trustees

### *Term:*

Duration of search process

### *Responsibilities:*

- Search for a team of pastors, which may be comprised of: salaried and non-salaried individuals; full- and part-time individuals; credentialed and uncredentialed individuals
- Call the pastoral team in such a way that the following special gifting will be found in at least one pastor: preaching, youth ministry, and group leadership (if team leader utilized)
- Complete Congregational Information Form
- Consult with IN-MI Mennonite Conference and observe conference guidelines
- Search beyond congregation; search within congregation, in consultation with GDC
- Consult with continuing pastors as appropriate
- Reflect on the search process and provide feedback to be considered in future pastoral searches

### *Gifts and characteristics:*

- Can discern - distinguish between truth and error, pure motives from impure, able to recognize spiritual maturity in others
- Maintains confidentiality
- Values diversity - can set aside personal preferences when they differ with what is best for the congregation
- Listens well, yet self-confident enough to speak up
- Supports the congregation's vision and structure
- Understands the roles/expectations of the pastoral team
- Understands and values *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*

## **Additional Governance Committees**

If needed, additional governance (sub-) committees may be formed. They are accountable to the trustees.

## **Pastoral Team**

Provides visionary leadership for all congregational ministry through the five commissions, both as separate arenas and one integrated ministry structure. Leads the congregation in achieving vision goals, equipping and empowering all persons in the congregation for ministry.

### *Function:*

Leadership

### *Accountable to:*

Trustees

### *Composition:*

- A sufficient number of pastors to lead/facilitate the congregation's vision and ministries
  - Each person on the pastoral team is referred to as "Pastor" and has equal authority
  - Ideally, an individual pastor will provide leadership for no more than 2 commissions
  - If utilized: 1 person is designated team leader (named by the trustees in consultation with PTSC and/or GDC)

### *Selection:*

1. Any changes within the pastoral team are to be done in consultation with IN-MI Mennonite Conference leadership
2. The PTSC presents candidates to the trustees
3. The trustees recommend candidates to the congregation
4. The congregation votes on candidates

### *Term:*

As stipulated in individual contracts

### *Responsibilities:*

- In consultation with the trustees, decide whether the full pastoral team or a single representative will attend regular trustee meetings. If utilized, it is likely that the pastoral team leader makes sense in the latter case (though there could be exceptions).
- Provide leadership for commissions. Individual commission assignments are appointed by the trustees.
- Attend and actively participate in pastoral team and respective commission meetings
- Provide avenues for communication and coordination between commissions
- Provide effective guidance within commissions in a way that equips congregants for ministry
- Provide pastoral care, preaching, and teaching; load determined by gifting and available time
- Keep entire congregation focused on vision
- Avoid micromanaging
- Consult with PTSC as necessary/appropriate
- Evaluate their work quarterly. (Evaluated by trustees annually.)
- Pastoral team leader (if utilized): facilitate pastoral team meetings
- Pastoral team leader (if utilized): work with individuals on the pastoral team at building a climate that encourages mutual accountability

*Gifts and characteristics:*

- Those listed for trustees and GDC
- Those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9
- Feels a call to pastoral ministry and values working as part of a team
- Has a special gifting for ministry in at least two of the five commissions. (Broad pastoral ministry experience enables flexibility in providing ongoing pastoral leadership as turnover in the team occurs over time.)
- May be salaried or non-salaried; full- or part-time; credentialed or uncredentialed
- Holds a philosophy of ministry that prioritizes equipping and empowering all persons in the congregation for ministry
- Is an active and available member

**Commission Management**

Oversees all ministries within its arena. Empowered to make most decisions, take actions, form policies, and organize commission as it sees fit. Is not expected to execute commission efforts on its own, but rather to call individuals to serve as per their talents and passions.

*Function:*

Management

*Accountable to:*

Trustees

*Composition:*

- 1 chair (appointed by GDC in consultation with commission pastor)
- 2-3 constituents
- 1 pastor

*Relationship of pastor and her/his respective commission:*

- The pastor provides leadership for the commission by keeping the commission working in concert with the rest of the congregation (i.e., toward vision goals). The pastor likely has the broadest pulse on what is happening in the congregation. S/he also gives leadership in the sense of having, or being aware of, resources.
- The pastor is not in charge of the commission. The commission chair facilitates the commission meetings. The commission as a body leads the congregation in its arena of ministry.
- The pastor and commission chair work together in establishing the agenda for meetings. The pastor may bring agenda items to the commission from the pastoral team, and vice-versa.
- The pastor of each commission will be consulted in the GDC process of selecting commission chairs. It is important that the two be able to work well together. It is in the GDC process of naming commission chairs that the strengths and weaknesses of a pastor can be balanced.

*Selection:*

1. The pastor is appointed by the trustees.
2. GDC, in consultation with the pastor for the respective commission, proposes individuals (chair and constituents) to the congregation in writing. Feedback is requested within the following 10 days.
3. GDC considers feedback, makes adjustments if warranted, and presents the final appointments to the congregation for affirmation.

*Term:*

Chair and constituents: 2 years. May serve a maximum of three consecutive terms, but to do so individuals must be re-selected for second and third terms.

*Responsibilities:*

- Develop and maintain a philosophy of ministry for its arena, in sync with the congregational purpose and vision statements
- Begin new ministries, revise and/or end existing ministries, and establish committees, coordinators, and task groups
- Recommend spending plan for all ministries within its arena
- Work in collaboration with other commissions as warranted
- Manage communication with the congregation about all of its ministries
- Consult with trustees on matters of potential controversy within the congregation
- Discern and call individuals for all ministries within their respective arena in consultation with GDC
- Provide ministry descriptions for all positions
- Evaluates its work and ministries annually, calls for evaluation within all of its ministries

*Gifts and characteristics:*

- Is spiritually discerning
- Has a passion for, and understanding of, the commission's purpose
- Has the gifts and calling to help set direction and provide oversight in that arena
- Has the ability to see the big picture
- Works well within a team
- Is committed to enabling all ministries within its arena to work together toward the congregational vision goals
- Is willing to work at difficult decisions, is not afraid of dealing with conflict, is willing to leave comfort zone
- Chair: has facilitative gifts to help the entire commission work together (not an authority figure that makes decisions on behalf of the commission)

**Commission Ministries**

All persons in the congregation are ministers and thus contribute to commission efforts. Whether serving in long-term positions, on short-term committees, or just for single activities, together we practice the spiritual gifts we have been given to build up the congregation and accomplish the work of the church.

*Function:*

Ministry

*Accountable to:*

Commission management

*Composition, selection, term, responsibilities, gifts and characteristics:*

As determined by commission management. The practices established within long-standing committees (e.g., Children's Education) should be taken into consideration.

# Job Descriptions for Specific Positions

## Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Delegates

Increase our involvement and understanding of the happenings of the greater Mennonite church. Represent the congregation to the larger church body.

### *Position within structure:*

Administration Commission

### *Accountable to:*

Accountability determined by Administration Commission management

### *Composition:*

- 1 at-large delegate per 150 members or fraction thereof
- At least 1 pastor
- 1 trustee
- 1 representative from Finance Committee

### *Selection:*

IN-MI Mennonite Conference delegates are selected in the odd-numbered years.

1. The pastor(s), trustee, and Finance Committee representative are appointed by the trustees.
2. GDC proposes individuals (at-large delegate(s)) to the congregation in writing. Feedback is requested within the following 10 days.
3. GDC considers feedback, makes adjustments if warranted, and presents the final appointments to the congregation for affirmation.

Note that the Mennonite Church USA Conference at-large delegate is selected from among the IN-MI Mennonite Conference delegate(s) (see corresponding section of handbook). It should therefore be understood that being selected and affirmed as a delegate will potentially require representation for both bodies.

### *Term:*

At-large delegate(s): 2 years. May serve two consecutive terms.

### *Responsibilities:*

- Attend cluster meetings
- Attend IN-MI annual conference
- Meet with other delegates from FMC as needed
- Communicate brief summary of cluster meetings
- Communicate summary of major proposals to be presented at conference and allow for congregation input prior to the conference meeting
- Communicate conference summary, including major themes, results of major proposals, and how this congregation voted on proposals. After input from the congregation, delegates should vote their conscience.

### *Gifts and characteristics:*

- Is an active and available member

## **Mennonite Church USA Conference Delegates**

Increase our involvement and understanding of the happenings of the greater Mennonite church. Represent the congregation to the larger church body.

### *Position within structure:*

Administration Commission

### *Accountable to:*

Accountability determined by Administration Commission management

### *Composition:*

- 1 at-large delegate
- 1 individual (non-pastor) serving in commission management

### *Selection:*

Appointed by the trustees. The at-large delete should be selected from among the IN-MI Mennonite Conference delegate(s).

### *Term:*

At-large delegate: 2 years. May serve two consecutive terms.

### *Responsibilities:*

- Remain up-to-date on current Mennonite Church USA issues
- Serve as contact for the congregation to the Mennonite Church USA
- Communicate summary of major proposals to be presented at General Assembly and allow for congregational input prior to the conference meeting
- Attend Mennonite Church USA General Assembly as a voting representative
- Communicate General Assembly summary to the congregation, including major General Assembly discussions and decisions

### *Gifts and characteristics:*

- Is an active and available member

## **Administrative Support A**

### *Position within structure:*

Administration Commission

### *Accountable to:*

Determined by Administration Commission management

### *Responsibilities:*

The position is part-time, hourly, up to 15 hours per week. Job responsibilities include the following:

### Office Duties

- Check and respond to mail and email, answer phones, tally weekly attendance, prepare and distribute church bulletins, distribute church mail, maintain and purchase office supplies, proof and distribute MennoExpressions publication
- Coordinate maintenance of office supplies (postage, copier, paper, etc.) with Admin B

### Facilities Support

- Provide facilities support including event preparation (building prep., housing, etc.), decorate church interior, update church sign, responsible for church-wide publications (distribution of and renewals of – i.e. The Mennonite, Rejoice), maintain mailbox names / tags for newcomers

### Staff Support

- Attend staff meetings
- Provide Pastoral Care support, Worship Commission support, Church Life Commission support
- Fill in for Admin B as able during leave

### Congregational Support

- Ensure availability of welcome bags, provide care baskets, arrange memorials and sympathy cards
- Maintain church lists (Small Groups, College, etc.)

Other assignments may be made by supervisor

### *Gifts and characteristics:*

- Possesses strong organizational skills and follow-through
- Is reasonably skilled with, and demonstrates knowledge of, standard, modern office tools (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, email, digital file structure)
- Is comfortable being alone in the church building
- Is an effective staff member with minimal supervision
- Is friendly, patient, and kind

### *Vacation and Health Care:*

With this role being a part-time position, health care is not provided. Vacation will be unpaid and not more than six weeks per year. Vacation must be approved by a supervisor. Vacation may not be possible without prior approval, especially around Easter and Christmas. During these busy times, notice of six weeks is expected.

## **Administrative Support B**

### *Position within structure:*

Administration Commission

### *Accountable to:*

Determined by Administration Commission management

### *Responsibilities:*

The position is part-time, hourly, up to 20 hours per week. Job responsibilities include the following:

### Office Duties

- Check and respond to mail and email, answer phones, schedule building use, maintain church calendar, file and scan documents, maintain electronic document repository, maintain committee lists), distribute MennoExpressions publication, make or facilitate updates to website, create and send weekly email, maintain church directory database, run reports, manage creation of physical directory
- Coordinate maintenance of office supplies (postage, copier, paper, etc.) with Admin A
- Update social media presence – regular updates and promotion of special events

### Facilities Support

- Track and manage building use. Coordinate set ups with custodian. Communicate potential conflicts. Meet with outside renters to explain terms and conditions of rentals.
- Provide facilities support including event preparation (building prep., housing, etc.)

### Staff Support

- Attend staff meetings
- Distribute Faith in Action email
- Provide Faith in Action Commission support, Faith Formation Commission support
- Fill in for Admin A as able during leave

### Congregational Support

- Take photos of new members for bulletin board.
- Update church wide documents – Church Structure, etc.

Other Assignments may be made by supervisor

### *Gifts and characteristics:*

- Possesses strong organizational skills and follow-through
- Possesses and demonstrates strong computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, email distribution, social media, digital shared calendar, church database, website content updates)
- Has knowledge of, and experience with, digital filing and record keeping
- Is comfortable being alone in the church building
- Is an effective staff member with minimal supervision
- Is friendly, patient, and kind

### *Vacation and Health Care:*

With this role being a part-time position, health care is not provided. Vacation will be unpaid and not more than six weeks per year. Vacation must be approved by a supervisor. Vacation may not be possible without prior approval, especially around Easter and Christmas. During these busy times, notice of six weeks is expected.

*A welcoming faith community committed to*

*Making peace*

*Seeking justice*

*Serving as the hands, heart, and voice of Christ*

## **Janitor**

*Position within structure:*

Administration Commission

*Accountable to:*

Determined by Administration Commission management

*Responsibilities:*

- Vacuum and/or sweep all floor surfaces as needed, at least once a week
- Dust as needed, at least once a week
- Empty all wastebaskets
- Service and clean all restrooms
- Mop the kitchen as needed. The Fellowship Committee will be responsible to keep the rest of the kitchen clean, including Sunday coffee. The final responsibility for its overall condition will belong to the Fellowship Committee.
- Water any plants as needed
- Wash any windows as needed. Can ask the Facilities Committee to assist in any major cleaning.
- Purchase cleaning and paper supplies as needed
- All kitchen supplies will be the responsibility of the Fellowship Committee
- Keep the entryway and carport area neat, clean and presentable
- All teachers will be responsible for keeping their classrooms neat and in order. Vacuuming and dusting will be the responsibility of the janitor.

The Janitor is not responsible for cleaning up or re-arranging/replacing chairs after a congregational banquet or party. This is the responsibility of the Fellowship Committee, or the sponsoring group. Wedding parties and outside groups are responsible to clean up after their functions. “Clean-up” means vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, etc. All dishes, chairs, tables, etc. will need to be cleaned, put away, and re-arranged by the wedding party or outside groups. Janitor cleans only if clean-up is insufficient.

## **Guidelines for Non-Budget Funds**

1. The trustees should approve of the establishment of any fund.
2. The Stewardship Committee should administer the fund. No member of the committee or their immediate family should gain any financial benefit from the committee’s decisions.
3. All disbursements from such funds should be made directly to a third party (e.g. college, school, seminary, business, etc.).

## **Sharing Fund**

Purpose: To provide assistance to those in our First Mennonite church family (members and participants) and members of our community who have a specific, temporary, financial hardship. The assistance may take the form of a gift and/or loan. The Bible teaches us to ‘bear one another’s burdens’. Mennonite history is filled with examples of congregations and persons helping others in time of need. This fund provides a way for our congregation to help those of our family that are financially burdened. The confidentiality of the recipient will be respected.

The Church Life Commission will be responsible to administer the Sharing Fund.

1. Review application for completeness
2. Review for compliance with current fund guidelines and tax laws
3. Determine adequacy of funds to meet the request
4. Retain a copy in the financial files

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The Stewardship Committee will request contributions to this fund when the balance is less than \$2,000 or more funds are required to meet the needs. Our Mennonite Mutual Aid Advocate (an FMC member) will be informed of approved requests in order to apply for matching grants when appropriate.

### **Anabaptist Higher Education Gift**

Background: First Mennonite Church (FMC) has recognized the desirability of encouraging our college age students to attend historically Anabaptist higher education institutions. Many years ago, FMC instituted a financial aid plan which eased the financial burden of families who chose to send their children to Anabaptist institutions rather than state supported schools. Over the years, the program has been modified to better reflect the goals of the congregation.

The members of FMC recognize that one of the needs of the congregation is to provide adequate opportunity for higher education, both in preparation for a vocation and for the fullest participation in the life of the church. This, we believe, is especially important for the training of youth, for leadership training in the church, and the development and exercise of all gifts of the Spirit in the church. We, therefore, believe that a college or seminary education at an Anabaptist institution should be available to any member of the congregation who feels called upon to improve his or her skills and to deepen his or her understanding of the Christian walk. We encourage members to obtain these skills and educational experiences at an Anabaptist institution.

#### Goals:

1. Encourage FMC youth to attend Anabaptist colleges and increase the opportunity for positive life changing events.
2. Affirm our belief in the distinct values of Christian education in the Anabaptist tradition.
3. Provide financial support to reduce a barrier for students to attend Anabaptist colleges.
4. Encourage our students to develop gifts for the entire Christian community.
5. Promote a spirit of mutual sharing and servanthood in our congregation.

#### Guidelines:

1. The name of this financial program is the “Anabaptist Higher Education Gift” (AHEG).
2. The AHEG will be a line item in the Stewardship Committee budget, and as such the gift amount will be set on a yearly basis by the Stewardship Committee.
3. The Stewardship Committee will administer and update the AHEG, including determining the number of students likely to be eligible for the plan during the next year.

Participation Requirements: The AHEG is available to active members or active participants and their immediate families. It is understood that cases will arise where the student or student’s family will leave FMC just prior to or during the student’s time at college. It is also possible for the student’s family to become active at FMC during the student’s time at college. In these cases, it will be at the discretion of the Stewardship Committee, and in accordance to the goals stated above, as to whether the student should receive the AHEG, for how long, and at what amount.

The Anabaptist Higher Education Gift is intended only for the following institutions:

1. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
2. Bethel College (Newton, KS)
3. Bluffton University
4. Canadian Mennonite Bible College
5. Conrad Grebel College
6. Eastern Mennonite Seminary
7. Eastern Mennonite University

8. Goshen College
9. Hesston College

The treasurer of the congregation will issue a check to the appropriate institution. In the event a student needs to reduce his or her hours below a full time load, he or she will notify the Stewardship Committee concerning this change. The amount of the AHEG will be adjusted accordingly.

Tuition aid will be available for the equivalent of four years (eight full time semesters) of undergraduate and three years (full time semesters) seminary education.

Students requiring additional financial aid should apply through the Sharing Fund.

The intent of this plan is to assist the student as he or she successfully completes college or seminary training at an Anabaptist institution. Therefore, if any student already has scholarship assistance equal to tuition expenses, no assistance from the AHEG should be required. In any case, the AHEG will not be greater than total tuition minus any other grants and scholarships.

Undergraduate Amount Formula:

Prior to 2013:

Anabaptist Higher Education Gift =  $50\% \times ((\text{Goshen Tuition} + \text{EMU Tuition})/2 - (\text{IU Bloomington Tuition} + \text{Purdue West Lafayette Tuition})/2)$

Any existing students participating in the gift program during the 2012/2013 school year will have their remaining gift capped at the current level (\$8,239.50).

January 2013 and after:

Anabaptist Higher Education Gift =  $40\% \times ((\text{Goshen Tuition} + \text{EMU Tuition})/2 - (\text{IU Bloomington Tuition} + \text{Purdue West Lafayette Tuition})/2)$

The Stewardship will review the viability of the scholarship program no less than every two years. The program should not exceed 10% of the church budget without further review and approval from trustees.

Graduate Amount Formula: Committee consisting of the Stewardship Chair, Head Trustee, and Pastor will determine the total amount to be contributed.

## Guidelines for Use of the Facilities

### Process of Arrangements

1. Arrangements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis with preference given to members/active participants.
2. All individuals or groups desiring use of the facilities should have a contact person.
3. The contact person will be given a set of these guidelines for relay to those in his/her group.
4. The contact person will work with the administrative assistant on all details of making the reservation for building use.
5. The administrative assistant and trustees will make final decisions regarding the fees, scheduling conflicts, controversial activities, etc.

6. To help eliminate conflicts in building equipment usage, members of First Mennonite wishing to borrow church equipment (tables, chairs, kitchen utensils, etc.) should check with the administrative assistant about their availability and to reserve such items.
7. Before a reservation can be accepted, a personal visit must be made to First Mennonite to receive instructions, make the deposit, and sign the checklist and the contract. Payment of the fee for building usage should be made prior to the time of the event.

### **Recommended Fee Schedules**

1. Members/active participants for weddings, receptions, showers, family dinners, reunions, etc. require no fee, but donations will be accepted via the church office, if person so desires.
2. First Mennonite committees, classes or Small Groups may freely use facilities, but must schedule use with the administrative assistant.
3. All other groups desiring use of the facilities should be not-for-profit, neighborhood, community, religious or health program. Corporate groups must provide proof-of-insurance at least one week prior to the date of scheduled use.
4. Nonprofit groups that wish to use the facility on a regular basis, whose mission is consistent with FMC's, and who have been approved by the trustees, will not be charged a fee."
5. For groups of less than 50 people, a refundable damage deposit of \$75.00 is required. The fee for the use of the fellowship hall is \$100.00, the sanctuary is \$50.00, the multi-purpose room is \$30.00 and the kitchen is \$100.00. The minimum fee for any one singular use is \$150.00.
6. For groups of 50 to 100 people, a refundable damage deposit of \$100.00 is required. The fee for the use of the fellowship hall is \$125.00, the sanctuary is \$75.00, and the kitchen is \$125.00. The minimum fee for any one singular use is \$250.00.
7. For groups of more than 100 people (weddings, showers, receptions, reunions, etc.), a refundable damage deposit of \$150.00 is required. The fee for the use of the fellowship hall is \$150.00, the sanctuary is \$100.00, and the kitchen is \$150.00. The minimum fee for any singular use is \$300.00 total.
8. Repair of any major damages (damage that results in expenses greater than the deposit) is the financial responsibility of the user group.

### **General Guidelines**

1. Tobacco, drugs, alcoholic beverages, and firearms are prohibited in the building and on the premises of First Mennonite Church.
2. Tables, chairs, chalkboards, etc. are available for use as needed, but if additional furniture or supplies are necessary, arrangements for transportation to and from the church, as well as for payment, is the responsibility of the group using the facilities.
3. Only those areas of the facility specifically scheduled for use with the administrative assistant should be used.
4. Saturday night building use is restricted to 10:00 p.m. The group must be told that they are required to do a general cleanup of the facility prior to Sunday morning.
5. Unless unusual circumstances are known, the administrative assistant is to be the only person notified when the kitchen/sanctuary are being used. If circumstances arise which require additional attention, the administrative assistant will notify the Fellowship Committee chairperson of kitchen usage, and the Worship Committee chairperson of sanctuary usage.
6. There is to be no automatic mailing of church guidelines to people who request casual information about church usage; however, people who seem earnestly interested in using the building can be mailed the condensed guidelines for the First Mennonite Church usage.
7. The administrative assistant or their designated appointee should be available at the beginning and at the end of an event where groups not associated with the church will be using the facilities (to ensure lockup of the building). This does not apply to groups who are regular users of the church, who have church members within the group, or groups with whom the administrative assistant feels

comfortable. If there is any question regarding the ability of the group to be responsible, then the administrative assistant or appointee should be available.

### **Kitchen**

1. All appliances, utensils, etc. are to be cleaned and stored properly after their use.
2. All paper supplies, cups, spices, food and beverages are to be provided and paid for by the group using the facility, including members/active participant groups.
3. **THERE IS A RESTRICTION ON ALL MAJOR APPLIANCES IN THE KITCHEN.** No group is allowed to use the appliances in the kitchen unless specifically coordinated with the Fellowship Committee. Groups may either:
  - a. Have the Fellowship Committee make the necessary food for an occasion
  - b. Have an event catered by an outside professional catering service. Under no circumstances are groups allowed to use the major appliances (except the coffeepot, and microwave) unless given specific permission by the Fellowship Committee.

### **Other Guidelines**

1. Fellowship hall should not be used for recreational activities when there are other meetings or services being conducted unless these activities have been specifically arranged with the administrative assistant.
2. Only tennis shoes or bare feet should be worn during recreational activities.
3. Only a standard volleyball or a foam ball should be used for activities requiring the use of a ball.
4. There should be no intentional hitting, kicking, throwing, or batting of balls or other objects into the ceiling, speakers, lights, exit signs or portions of the wall above the brown strips.
5. Food and beverages should be kept outside of the sanctuary unless absolutely necessary because of space constraints and only if arrangements were made in advance with the administrative assistant.
6. Classrooms should not be used by renting groups unless specific arrangements were made in advance with the administrative assistant.

### **Policy Regarding Sales and Promotions in Church**

All public sales, promotions and fundraisers must further the mission of FMC or be consistent with that mission. The public sale/promotion/fundraiser must have the official endorsement of the appropriate committee of FMC (e.g. Mission & Service, or Peace & Justice, or one of the education committees). As a general rule, the sale/promotion/fundraiser should not financially benefit the promoter/seller. Public sales or services involving a profit may be allowed as long as the sale or service does not occur on Sunday morning. No sales should occur near the entrance of the church or impede access.

# Guidelines for Keeping FMC Safe From Abuse

## Background and Purpose

Across society, the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and youth is becoming a tragic occurrence. Abuse of a child or youth brings suffering, erodes self-esteem, destroys relationships, splits families, and violates human decency and integrity. FMC will not allow, condone, or tolerate the abuse of any child, youth or adult at our church building or at any church-sponsored activity. Recognizing that there is potential for abuse to occur, FMC has taken preventive steps in developing an abuse prevention policy and will follow all laws with respect to child abuse and neglect reporting procedures.

## Policy

The full policy is laid out in a separate document, periodically reviewed for update by the ARC.

## Registering Staff and Volunteers

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs, the following guidelines have been established for those who desire a position involving the supervision or custody of minors. The Leadership Council, committees designated by the Leadership Council, and persons (or groups of persons) assigned responsibilities by this document will be responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy with all church employees and volunteers.

1. All individuals who seek to volunteer with the children and/or youth must sign the Memorandum of Understanding, and they will be screened against the Indiana Sheriff's Sex and Violent Offender Registry.
2. If contract childcare providers are utilized, they must sign the Memorandum of Understanding, and they will be screened against the Indiana Sheriff's Sex and Violent Offender Registry.
3. Any person required under Indiana law to be listed on the Indiana Sheriff's Sex and Violent Offender Registry shall not be approved (to work) as a volunteer with the children and/or youth.
4. All employed staff must sign the Memorandum of Understanding, and they will be screened against the Indiana Sheriff's Sex and Violent Offender Registry.
5. All volunteers and employees must sign the Memorandum of Understanding on an annual basis. After a particular individual is screened against the Indiana Sheriff's Sex and Violent Offender Registry, that same individual does not need to be screened again.
6. An individual who has attended regularly at FMC for less than one year prior to volunteering to work with children or youth must provide to the program for which they are volunteering (such as Children's Education, JYF or MYF) the names of two persons who have known him or her for at least two years and can attest to his or her suitability to work with children and youth. The persons providing the recommendations may be from within or outside the congregation.

## Training

Pastors, church staff, Sunday school teachers and substitute teachers, nursery workers, VBS teachers, VBS teachers, drama directors and directors of children's choirs, youth group sponsors, and all other persons who will be registering to volunteer will be expected to attend an annual orientation program in which they are educated regarding the following items and will sign the corresponding Memorandum of Understanding:

- church's policies for the prevention of child abuse
- procedures to be used in all ministries with children and youth
- appropriate steps to report suspected child abuse
- dynamics of abuse

The Children's Education committee will plan and be responsible for this annual orientation program, and will determine how to provide education to those unable to attend the annual orientation program.

## Abuse Response Plan

Any incident or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall be reported, in writing, by summarizing the incident or the child's description of the abuse or neglect, or orally, to a member of the Leadership Council. Further, the reporter shall immediately notify the Department of Child Services or the police department. (NOTE: If the reporter is unable to make contact with a member of the Leadership Council, he or she still must follow through immediately with the report to authorities.) If possible, an advocate from the Leadership Council will be available if desired to assist the reporter in reporting and processing the incident.

Incident is reported

1. The Leadership Council shall help ensure the immediate safety of the victim and shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim when applicable and appropriate or enact an appropriate support system
2. The Leadership Council shall take the necessary steps to activate the Response Team:
  - a. The Leadership Council will present the names of the panel identified by Gifts Discernment Committee to the alleged victim (hereafter this refers to the alleged victim's family if she or he is a child). The alleged victim may nominate one of the persons from the panel to serve on the Response Team. The alleged victim may also strike one of the names from the panel.
  - b. The Leadership Council will present the remaining names of the panel to the alleged perpetrator. The alleged perpetrator may nominate one of the persons from (those that remain on) the panel to the Response Team, and strike one of the names (from those that remain on the panel).
  - c. The Leadership Council will identify a trustee (who is not from the panel identified by Gifts Discernment Committee) to serve on the Response Team, and will confer with the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator for their approval and support of this trustee to serve on the Response Team.
  - d. The Leadership Council will complete the process of creating the Response Team, without negating or overriding the choices or the strikes made by the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, by choosing additional names remaining on the panel (identified by Gifts Discernment Committee) so that the Response Team consists of five persons. Since the Pastor and the Associate Pastor are not on the Response Team, they are not expected to minister to the needs of the parties regarding the abuse allegations and will minister to the overall pastoral needs of the congregation.
3. The trustee serving on the Response Team will seek guidance from the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference staff and will obtain legal counsel as deemed necessary.
4. The Response Team may work with the alleged victim, the accused, and their families in order to seek resolution and healing, however, this may be done only if it does not interfere with or compromise the official investigations undertaken by the authorities. All parties involved will be treated with dignity, compassion and respect.
5. A brief and honest statement will be prepared at the discretion of the Response Team that can be made to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy or violating any confidentiality concerns.
6. The Response Team may make recommendations, as they deem appropriate, to the Leadership Council. If the Response Team believes it is wise to set limitations on the involvement of the accused person in the life of the congregation, the Leadership Council will receive such recommendations from the Response Team and will retain final decision-making authority in such matters.
7. The same Response Team structure used to process an allegation of child abuse shall be convened to respond to an allegation of Professional Abuse at FMC. Their responsibility will be to seek resolution and healing among all parties to the situation. The Response Team may make recommendations about the job status of the minister and whether to forward a complaint to the Indiana-Michigan Conference for action on the minister's credentials, but the Leadership Council, with the accused minister or intern recusing himself or herself, will retain final authority on these matters.
8. If an instance of Domestic Violence within FMC comes to the attention of the Leadership Council, the Response Team may be convened at the discretion of the Leadership Council

# Guidelines for Memorials

## Background and Purpose

Commemorating a loved one can often be a healthy step in the grief process. First Mennonite Church wishes to assist persons in their grief by providing a variety of opportunities for commemorating loved ones on the premises of FMC. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework of reference for individuals who are considering a commemoration and a framework for the various church committees or bodies responsible for overseeing the memorials.

## General Parameters for Requesting and Processing a Request for a Memorial

1. A memorial can be made by a person associated with First Mennonite Church even if the person being memorialized or commemorated had no connection to FMC.
2. A memorial can be made by a person or organization not associated with First Mennonite Church if the person being memorialized or commemorated had a connection to FMC.
3. Out of consideration for the overall time, energy and finances required to provide adequate care for the buildings, other structures, landscaping and grounds of FMC, including the proposed memorial, requests for a memorial/commemoration should be made in writing to the Leadership Council.
4. Leadership Council may choose to review, make proposed changes to the request, deny the request or approve the request as submitted, or may delegate these responsibilities to another body (e.g. Buildings and Grounds Committee, Memory Garden Task Force, etc.).
5. Upkeep of various memorials, as long as reasonably feasible and funds are available, will be managed through the Memory Garden fund. Requests to replenish the fund may be made periodically if approved by Leadership Council.

## Requesting a Memorial

1. List the name of the person(s) being memorialized/commemorated.
2. List the name of the person(s)/organization(s) requesting the memorial, along with contact person's name, address, and contact information.
3. Provide a full description of the proposed memorial item(s) or provide an image/photo/design/etc.
4. List the expected amount, type and frequency of upkeep that will be needed (if any) for the memorial item(s).
5. The cost of purchasing or creating a non-existing memorial is the responsibility of the person(s) requesting the memorial unless other explicit arrangements have been approved by Leadership Council or designated body.

## Memorial Options to Consider

- Trees – shrubs – flowers – grasses
- Sculpture – carving
- Plaque – marker
- Stone – brick
- Bench – chair
- Painting – drawing – wall hanging
- Others – be creative

## General Parameters

1. If the request is for an existing tree, shrub, flower or grass, then a memorial can be as simple as specifying a designated planting as the memorial item. See #4 below.
2. If the request is for a new planting, at least the following should be taken into account:
  - a. Climate and soil requirements.
  - b. Expected growth rate and pattern.
  - c. Plantings and structures adjacent to the proposed location.

- d. Location allotted for memory garden items and other plantings used for commemorative purposes.
3. If the request is for a sculpture/carving, plaque/marker, stone/brick, bench/chair, etc. at least the following should be taken into account:
  - a. Durability of materials (e.g. weather, vandalism, etc.).
  - b. Portability (e.g. access for maintenance around it, flexibility to move it due to growth of plantings around it, theft, etc.).
  - c. Aesthetics (e.g. appropriate for viewing of all ages, fits into general scheme of area in which it is placed, etc.).
  - d. Location allotted for memory garden items and other structures used for commemorative purposes.
4. If the request is for a painting/drawing for an indoor plaque or marker to commemorate an outdoor memorial (e.g. existing tree, shrub, flower patch, etc.), at least the following should be taken into account:
  - a. Materials – are in general keeping with themes of church interior décor.
  - b. Aesthetics – are in good taste and appropriate for viewing by persons of all ages.

# Guidelines for Food Allergies and Intolerances

## Background and Purpose

There is a fairly lengthy list of foods and food ingredients to which persons at First Mennonite Church have known adverse reactions. The severity and impact of these food allergies, intolerances and autoimmune conditions (“food related reactions”) vary from minor nuisances to severe and life threatening and all gradations in between. Generalized attempts to prohibit one or more of these foods from being present at FMC would likely not be successful and would not result in decreased vigilance by those affected.

Therefore, FMC is **not** recommending a generalized all-church avoidance of specific foods. However, we are providing our expectation of persons who are bringing food to certain church functions, which include sharing the food with others, to label the foods and list the ingredients. Likewise, we are recommending certain foods/food groups not be permitted at certain functions due to the severity of the reactions they are known to produce. In addition, we are recommending certain rooms be designated as off-limits for certain food items when the rooms are used by a person with a known significant reaction to a specific substance. For the latter to be successful, we are also recommending the information about the type and severity of the reaction be made known to the appropriate committee(s) by the affected individual and/or his/her family/advocate. Finally, the recommendations address being considerate and supportive of individuals who are affected by food related reactions.

## General Parameters for Food Brought to FMC and Communication within our Congregation

1. Foods and food ingredients which have been requested be avoided should not be brought for food sharing events. Food should also be labeled appropriately, including listing all of the ingredients.
2. Foods and food ingredients which have been requested be avoided should not be brought to classrooms or other specific areas of the building used by persons known to have severe reactions to specific allergens. This request applies to persons/groups from within the church as well as outside persons/groups using the church and may include limiting access to specific classroom(s) or other areas of the building. These classroom(s) or other areas should have appropriate signage, which may include:
  - a. listing of the specific allergen(s) which is/are not to be brought into the area
  - b. listing how to avoid contamination of the area by the allergen(s)
  - c. listing how to clean or decontaminate the area of the allergen(s)
  - d. listing of signs and symptoms of a possible reaction to the allergen(s)
3. Individuals or, in the case of a minor, a parent, should inform the Fellowship Committee (and/or other committees) of a food related reaction.
4. Persons with food related reactions should not be subject to harassment, bullying or other forms of intimidation related to their condition.

## Responsibility and Oversight

Fellowship Committee has oversight of events with food considered ‘all-church’ and will make the determination about which foods are to be avoided. Other committees may also make similar requests depending on the food related reactions of persons planning to attend the events.

Children’s Education Committee has oversight when person(s) with a known severe reaction is/are an elementary aged child and will make the determination about which foods are to be avoided and into which classrooms/areas they are not to be brought. Assistance/delegation to other committees can be made if a child is preschool aged (e.g. Nursery Coordinators) or if a child is older (e.g. Youth Executive Council). Likewise, committees may request assistance from Buildings and Grounds or the Church Office when there are specific rooms that have been designated as having limited access.