

First Mennonite Church (FMC)

Handbook

Organizational Principles 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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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Reception of Church Members	3
Membership Principles	3
Membership Expectations	4
Associate Membership	4
Baptism and Church Membership	5
Decision Making Process	6
Structure	7
Diagram	7
Commissions	7
The Five Functions of Structure	9
Congregation	9
Trustees	10
Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC)	11
Pastoral Team Search Committee (PTSC)	12
Additional Governance Committees	12
Pastoral Team	13
Commissions Management	14
Commissions Ministries	15
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Delegates	16
Mennonite Church USA Delegates	17
Grievances	18
Financial Considerations	18
Typical Annual Budget Categories	18
Procedure for Non-Budget Funds	18
Church Documents	19
Policies	19
Guidelines	19
Revision History	21

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 provided by the trustees shall be printed in the Sunday bulletin at least three Sundays prior to the announced date of receiving persons for membership.
4. FMC members with questions of procedure or judgment shall present them to the trustees or pastor(s) prior to the announced date of reception. In cases where no one raises a question, we will proceed with the assumption that the recommendation has congregational support.
5. If a member raises 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 trustees will use the following principles 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. *Ongoing engagement to the Gospels' invitation to become a community of faith, service, and discernment.*
[Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 12:12-27; Acts 2:42-47]
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 Expectations

The following outline our expectations for all members:

1. Active participation in the life and function of the church includes:
 - a. Involvement in one or more of the following:
 - i. Small group
 - ii. Christian education
 - iii. Commission management team and/or Committee member
 - b. Participation in formulation of the budget and a responsible contribution to it.
 - c. Being responsible to each other by:
 - i. Participating in corporate worship
 - ii. Preparing for participation in church meetings
 - iii. Supporting congregational decisions
 - iv. Sharing individual spiritual gifts
2. FMC is made up of members and participants. We value the contribution of every individual who participates in our church family, regardless of age, race, gender identity, etc.
 - a. Members are eligible to be Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference delegate, MCUSA delegate, treasurer, pastor, or trustee.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Participants are invited to join in the discussion and clarification of issues, serve on commissions/committees, and share their gifts. Participants who 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

As stated in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Article 11, “Christian baptism is for those who confess their sins, repent, accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and commit themselves to follow Christ in obedience as members of his body, both giving and receiving care and counsel in the church. Baptism is for those who are of the age of accountability and who freely request baptism on the basis of their response to Jesus Christ in faith.”

We affirm the Anabaptist tradition of believer’s baptism as a symbol of commitment to Christ and the church. We affirm people from other Christian traditions who were baptized as infants who may find that re-baptism is consistent with their faith journey. However, we also recognize that some people who have experienced infant baptism may not find re-baptism consistent with their faith commitment; in a spirit of Christian love, such persons should be accepted into membership on a confession of faith and commitment to the congregation.

Baptism signals a commitment to the congregation as well as to following Christ. However, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, following discernment among the pastor(s) and trustee(s).

Decision Making Process

The membership is the ultimate decision-making body. Members decide upon the following via a vote:

- Changes to the church structure
- Appointment of pastors, including contract/covenant renewals
- Appointment of trustees
- Annual budget
- Changes to this Handbook (excluding the [Policies](#) and [Guidelines](#) sections)
- Changes to (including adoption or retirement of) church policies

Commissions are entrusted by the congregation to make decisions concerning their own areas of ministry, but trustees may determine that certain decisions need to be made by the entire membership via a vote, particularly if the decision affects the whole church. A proposal may also be raised for a vote if it has the endorsement of at least 50 members.

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 before the vote.
2. A vote may be conducted using paper ballots or electronically.
 - a. In the case of paper ballots, a proxy vote is permissible and should be reported to the chair of trustees in writing or via email prior to the vote.
 - b. In the case of electronic voting, the voting window may open up prior to three weeks post-notice but must not close until at least three weeks has elapsed.
3. A proposal passes with eighty–five percent of votes cast approving it.
4. 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”
5. Abstentions are counted with the majority of votes

Sample paper 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)

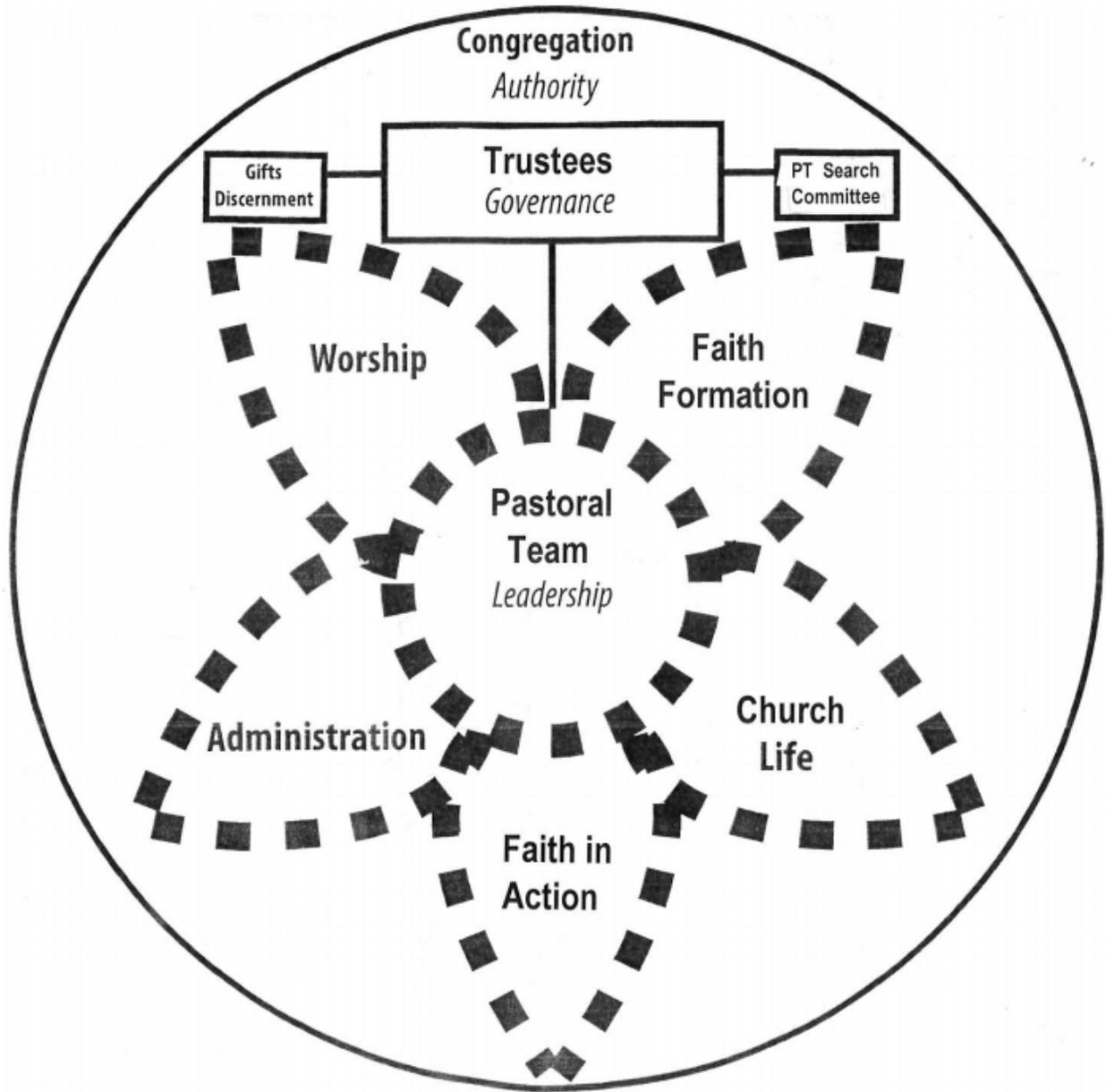
Comments:

Member’s Printed Name (required): _____

The same content may be used for an electronically conducted vote.

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 the "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 among 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 God revealed to us in Jesus Christ

- Worship (gathered and personal) and all its attendant parts
- Worship-related spiritual disciplines
- Prayer
- Visuals for worship service
- Technology considerations for worship service

Church Life Commission

Love one another via our relationships within the Body of Christ

- Congregant care (Care Team)
- Fellowship
- Small groups
- 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
- Programs for children, youth (JYF and MYF), and young adults
- Equipping congregants 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. 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 recognizes 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 them to prayerfully consider this call. If accepted, they are the new trustee. If they decline, 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 a 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. The trustees will make individual commission assignments in consultation with the pastoral team members.
- Attend and actively participate in pastoral team and respective commission meetings
- Provide avenues for communication and coordination among 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 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

Commissions Management

Each Commission oversees 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 a 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. They also give 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. In the GDC process of naming commission chairs, the strengths and weaknesses of a pastor can be balanced.

Selection:

1. Trustees appoint the pastors to commissions.
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 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)

Commissions 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 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.

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 trustees appoint the pastor(s), trustee, and Finance Committee representative to participate in Conference activities.
2. GDC proposes individuals (at-large delegate(s)) to the congregation in writing. Feedback is requested within 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). Being selected and affirmed as a delegate will potentially require representation to 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 consciences.

Gifts and characteristics:

- Is an active and available member

Mennonite Church USA 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

Grievances

FMC shall have a policy for addressing problem behaviors and allegations of misconduct involving FMC staff. The goal is to reduce hurt or harm to members of the congregation or community. See the [Policies](#) section for further information. Cases that do not involve staff shall follow the guidelines in [Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love](#) from Mennonite Church USA.

Financial Considerations

FMC promotes the responsible use of financial resources within its control.

Typical Annual Budget Categories

The following categories (covering both fixed and discretionary expenses) are typically included in FMC's annual budget:

- Mortgage, insurance, utilities, and maintenance
- Staff salary/expenses
- Office expenses
- Commission and trustees expenditures
- Anabaptist Higher Education Gift
- Churchwide giving (e.g., Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, etc.)

Procedure for Non-Budget Funds

Certain church expenditures exist outside of the categories [typically captured in FMC's annual budget](#). Oftentimes, money is raised for a very specific purpose within a well-defined timeline (e.g., installing new technology, purchasing new hymnals, offsetting costs of a youth activity/trip, etc.). On other occasions, money is raised for needs that are more ambiguous and/or ongoing. In either case, if money is collected, administered, and/or distributed by FMC officials it will be considered a non-budget fund. As such:

1. The purpose of raising money/establishing a non-budget fund should be clearly stated in writing.
2. The trustees should approve of the establishment of any non-budget fund.
3. The party administering the fund should be clearly denoted. No member of said party or their immediate family should gain any financial benefit from the party's decisions.
4. All disbursements from such funds should be made directly to a third party (e.g. college, school, seminary, business, individual, etc.).

Church Documents

FMC documents are classified as:

- **Handbook:** (This file.) Organizational principles (description of the structure, membership, and the decision making process).
- **Policy:** Principles of action.
- **Guidelines:** General rules for carrying out activities, initiatives, business, plans, etc.
- **Other:** Any document not falling within the previous classifications (e.g., job descriptions, meeting minutes, best practices, internal communications, etc.).

Policies, guidelines, and other documents exist in files outside of the Handbook to focus scope, and to allow for ongoing maintenance by appropriate parties. Policies and guidelines should be stored in an easily accessible, organized, and actively maintained area.

As stated in the [Decision Making Process](#) section, members vote on changes to the Handbook, and changes to (including adoption or retirement of) church policies. Changes to (including adoption or retirement of) guidelines and other documents do not require a vote.

The [Policies](#) and [Guidelines](#) sections that follow are provided in the Handbook as a convenience and may be updated as needed without a vote. Given their quantity and varied nature, references to other documents are not provided herein.

Policies

Document	Description
FMC Mission, Vision, and Values	An explanation of <i>who we are, where we are going, and how we will get there</i>
Anabaptist Higher Education Gift Policy	Eligibility details, amount, and administration of the AHEG
Background Check for FMC Staff and Volunteers Policy	A description of information that must be collected about potential staff or volunteers, and how to proceed if an allegation, charge, or criminal conviction is identified.
FMC Grievance Policy	A framework for addressing problem behaviors and allegations of misconduct involving FMC staff
Keeping FMC Safe From Abuse Policy	Preventative, proactive steps for protecting children, youth, and adults from abuse

Guidelines

Document	Description
Sharing Fund Guidelines	Purpose and administration of the Sharing Fund
Facilities Usage Guidelines	Expectations for internal and external parties' usage of FMC buildings and grounds (including fee schedule for external parties)

Guidelines for Memorials	A reference for individuals who are considering a commemoration, and a framework for the church bodies responsible for overseeing the memorials
Food Allergies and Intolerances Guidelines	Expectation of persons who are bringing food to certain church functions
First Mennonite Covid-19 Plan	Guiding values and goals for responding to the Covid-19 pandemic (including requirements and resources)
FMC Covid-19 Readiness Guidelines	Expectations for indoor gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic (including an explanation of what's been done to prepare)

Revision History

Revisions Adopted Date (MON-YYYY)	Description
SEP-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master file moved to Google Drive, reformatted as Google Doc ● Most sections following the description of church structure removed to focus the Handbook on organizational principles ● Baptism and Church Membership section overhauled to remove aging references and make succinct ● Decision Making Process section updated to more fully encompass situations requiring a vote and cover electronic voting option ● Grievances, Financial Considerations, Church Documents, and Revision History sections added ● Terminology from the Structure section applied to the rest of the Handbook (i.e., references to outdated bodies removed)