

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF THE
SOUTH ABBOTSFORD MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I
CORPORATE NAME**

This body was duly organized on May 1, 1932 as the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church and shall hereafter be referred to as "the Church".

**ARTICLE II
STATEMENT OF MISSION AND PURPOSE**

Our mission is to introduce people to Jesus Christ and membership in His family, to encourage them in Christ-like maturity, to equip them for ministry in the church and our community, and to commission leaders for the mission of the church

Our purpose is to turn hearts toward Jesus.

**ARTICLE III
AFFILIATION**

The Church is a member of the British Columbia Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches and thereby is affiliated with the Canadian Conference as well as with the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. It shall give moral and material support of the above-named Conferences. All articles of this Constitution shall be in accord with the constitution of the above-named Conferences.

**ARTICLE IV
FAITH AND CONDUCT**

The Confession of Faith of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches shall be the Confession of Faith of this Church. The Church accepts the Scriptures as the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The walk of all members of this Church as believers should have the following characteristics:

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Evidence of new life | (Rom. 6:4; II Cor. 5:17) |
| 2. A walk in the Spirit | (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:1) |
| 3. Walking in Love | (Eph. 5:2; I John 1:7) |
| 4. Following Christ's example | (I John 2:6; Eph 5:15) |

**ARTICLE V
SCOPE**

The Church shall conduct its activities without the purpose of material gain for its members and any profits or gain to the Church shall be used for promoting its purpose.

**ARTICLE VI
DISSOLUTION**

In the event of the dissolution of the Church, funds and assets of the Church remaining after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall be transferred to the British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

**ARTICLE VII
AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

Section 1 - Initiation of Amendments

Any Member, or Council, or Committee of the Church may initiate a proposed amendment(s) to these articles by submitting it in writing to the Council.

Section 2 - Review of Amendments

- 2.1 The Council shall review and study the proposed amendment(s). Proposed amendments shall be published by the Council a minimum of two Sundays prior to their consideration at the subsequent Church Business meeting.
- 2.2 A minimum of thirty days must then elapse before a vote is taken to adopt the proposed amendment(s). A 75% majority of all votes cast at the business meeting where a quorum of 20 percent of the membership is present is a minimum requirement for adoption of an amendment of any part of this Constitution.
- 2.3 Should a quorum not be present, the amendment is tabled following discussion. At a subsequent membership meeting the amendment is re-introduced, discussed and voted upon without the requirement of a quorum.

BY-LAWS – SOUTH ABBOTSFORD MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH

- **ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**
- **ARTICLE 2 MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES**
- **ARTICLE 3 COUNCIL STRUCTURE**
- **ARTICLE 4 COUNCIL PROCESSES**
- **ARTICLE 5 DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**
- **ARTICLE 6 DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE PROCESSES**

ARTICLE 1: MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

1.1 Authority

Members in good standing may:

- Participate in the planning and decision making of the Church
- Approve the hiring and termination of continuing Pastoral Staff.

Qualifications for membership:

- Anyone who professes saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is born again according to the Holy Scripture, is baptized *as a believer* and subscribes to the Church's Statement of Faith may qualify to become a Member of the Church. This provision is unalterable.

1.2 Limitations of Authority

Without additional authorization from the Church or the Council, Church members may not individually or collectively:

- Violate municipal, provincial or federal laws or regulations.
- Speak on behalf of the Church or
- Transact any business on behalf of the Church.

1.3 Responsibilities and Expectations of members:

The responsibilities and expectations of members include participating in:

- The ministry of the "Great Commission"
- Church meetings and Worship Services regularly
- Decision making processes of the Church
- Ministries for which they are gifted
- Effective stewardship

1.4 Accountability

- Accountability is mutual. The Church seeks a balance between the fulfillment of the needs of the Church members and the personal fulfillment of the staff and volunteers.
- Membership may be terminated for prolonged absence or for flagrant and/or wilful misconduct which is irreconcilable with the MB Conference's Statement of Faith and for which such Member does not show remorse.

ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES

2.1 Application

Application for membership in the Church may be made to a pastor of the Church or to one of the Council Members who, in turn, may request that the interested party fill out a formal application form, participate in orientation sessions, and provide further information as the Council may require. The applicant shall be interviewed by the council or nominees of the Council. If the Council or Council Nominees are satisfied with the qualifications of the applicant, the Council or Council Nominees shall approve the applicant. New Members shall be publicly welcomed at a subsequent Worship Service of the Church.

2.2 Termination

Membership may be terminated by:

- a Member's written resignation received and accepted by the Council;
- a Member becoming a member of another Church. Except by special arrangement, when a Member ceases to attend the Church and instead supports and joins another Church, their membership shall be evaluated and terminated by the Council;
- death.
- a membership vote, for flagrant and/or wilful misconduct. Such termination shall be voted upon by the Members at any general meeting upon the recommendation of the Council. The Member, whose membership is being terminated, shall first be given full opportunity to appear in person before the Council and provide a defence before a decision is made and action taken.
- council for reason of prolonged absence. Any member who absents him/herself from the Church for more than twelve consecutive months without communication with the church may have their membership status reviewed by council. If there is no communication from the absent Member after reasonable attempts have been made to contact him/her, it is viewed that such member has indicated their intention not to participate in the activities of the church, therefore his/her name shall be removed from the membership roll.

2.3 Reinstatement

Any person who has been terminated from membership by reason of inactivity may be reinstated by the Council or Council nominees after three months of renewed activity. Persons removed for any other reason shall be required to go through the customary application procedures per 2.1 above.

2.4 Meetings of Members

An Annual General Meeting of the Members shall be held each year at such time and place as determined by the Council, provided that not more than fifteen months shall lapse between annual meetings. Notice shall be given to all Members either by mail or by public announcement at all regular Church services for two consecutive weeks prior to the annual general meeting.

Additional General Meetings other than the Annual General Meeting may be held at such times and places as the Council may determine.

All general meetings shall be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order (Revised).

Except where otherwise provided in these Bylaws, motions shall require a majority of votes cast in order to carry. Only Members in good standing who are at least sixteen years of age shall be entitled to vote. Each Member in good standing shall have one (1) vote at all meetings of the Church. Voting shall be by show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested by any voting Member. There shall be no voting by proxy.

2.5 Quorum

Ten per cent (10%) of the Members in good standing of the Church shall constitute a quorum.

2.6 Filling Pastoral Vacancies

The Search Committee shall seek out a suitable candidate when a pastoral vacancy occurs.

The call of a Pastor shall require a 75% majority of all votes cast at a Church General Meeting called for that specific purpose.

Interim pastoral positions will be affirmed at the Annual General Meeting of the Church.

2.7 Amending The By-Laws

Any member, Committee or Council of the Church may initiate a proposed amendment to these By-laws by submitting the proposed change(s) in writing to the Council.

The Council shall review and study the proposed amendments and may make a presentation of the proposed changes to the Church at the subsequent General meeting.

Proposed amendments to the By-laws shall be published a minimum of two (2) Sundays prior to their consideration at a subsequent General meeting.

A 75% majority of all votes cast at a Church General Meeting is a minimum requirement for the adoption of an amendment to the By-Laws.

Should a quorum not be present, the amendment(s) is to be tabled following discussion. At a subsequent General meeting, the amendment is re-introduced, discussed, and voted upon without the requirement of a quorum. A 75 % majority of all votes cast is required for the amendment to be adopted.

ARTICLE 3: COUNCIL STRUCTURE

3.1 Authority

The governing body of the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church shall be the Council.

The source of all the Council's operational authority is the Church. The Church shall provide the

resources required for the Council to fulfill its responsibilities. The Council is authorized to fill vacancies occurring on the Council between meetings of the members by appointment.

The Council's sources of legal/regulatory authority are various municipal, provincial and federal government authorities.

The Council's sources of ecclesiastical authority are the BC Conference and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

The Church Council shall consist of not less than eight and not more than twelve members, all of which must be members in good standing.

The Council shall have full authority for the affairs of the Church subject to the annual meeting of the Church. The council members shall receive no remuneration for serving in this capacity.

All Council members will be selected by the Discernment Committee and after a process of discernment and affirmation shall be affirmed at an Annual General Meeting.

3.2 Limitations of Authority

In exercising its strategic/operational authority the Council may not cause or allow the Church to:

- Change or violate the terms of the constitution and/or bylaws of the Church;
- Violate the regulations and theological position of the Canadian Conference;
- Violate Municipal, Provincial or Federal laws.

Additionally, without additional authority from the Church, the Council may not:

- Call pastors to continuing ministry
- Buy or sell real estate
- Borrow money or encumber assets.
- Transact official business without a quorum present
- Approve capital expenditures exceeding \$50,000.

3.3 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Council for governance are to:

- Design the Council's structure and governance processes
- Provide strategic leadership by defining the Church's values, beneficiaries and services, vision, mission and priorities
- Delegate management authority and responsibility to the Lead Pastor and Pastor of Administration
- Be accountable for strategic results and to ensure that the Church and each individual in it act within all the limitations of delegated authority.

3.4 Expectations of Responsibilities

The expectations of the Council are described in its Strategic Plan and in the annual strategic goals of the Church and in the annual tactical goals of the Council which shall be documented and maintained in a current Governance Manual.

In fulfilling its strategic and operational responsibility the Council shall:

- Seek and follow the counsel of its members in its strategic planning process and in its governance of the strategic mission and priorities
- Emphasize the partnership of the Church with the BC and Canadian Conferences and encourage support for the work of the church at large.
- Exemplify the principles of servant leadership.

3.5 Accountabilities

The Council is accountable to the Church, to the BC and Canadian Conferences and to municipal, provincial and federal governments.

The Council's accountability shall be exercised by the submission of required documentation to civil authorities and by clear and true reporting to the Church.

ARTICLE 4: COUNCIL PROCESSES

4.1 Affirmation of Church Officers

Officers shall be affirmed at an Annual Meeting of the church and will consist of Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer.

The term of office for the Officers shall commence on their date of affirmation and shall be for a term of 3 years. Two consecutive terms may be served followed by at least one year off.

4.2 Affirmation of Council Members

Council Members shall be affirmed at an Annual Meeting of the church.

The term of office for council members shall commence on their date of affirmation and shall be for a term of 3 years. Two consecutive terms may be served followed by at least one year off.

4.3 Standing and Special Council Committees

4.3.1 The Council may create any standing or special committee to assist the Council with its governance responsibilities.

4.3.2 Unless described otherwise in the bylaws;

- Appointment to any committee shall be made by the Council.
- The committees shall have such purposes, powers and duties as the Council may from time to time determine by resolution.
- The Chair and Vice Chair of all committees shall be members of the Council and shall be approved by the Council.

ARTICLE 5: DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

5.1. Authority

The Discernment Committee receives its authority from the Members to propose the names of candidates suitable for affirmation to the Council. The affirmation of the Committee shall take place at an Annual General Meeting (for general members), and at the first council meeting thereafter (for members from council).

The Discernment Committee shall consist of five members, two appointed from among the Council Members and three affirmed from among the membership. Members of the Committee shall hold office until the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting following their affirmation.

5.2. Limitations of authority

The Committee may not:

- Violate the requirements of the Bylaws
- Allow conflict of interest regarding nominations.
- Affirm the selection of a Council Member

5.3. Responsibility

The Discernment Committee shall present to the Members names of nominees for:

- Membership of the Council
- Such other information and nominations as the Council may, from time to time, deem appropriate and necessary

5.4. Expectations

The Committee is expected to follow the procedures and guidelines outlined in the Bylaws, including the timing of the Discernment process.

5.5. Accountability

The Membership is accountable to the Committee for:

- Providing the authorization and resources required for the responsibility
- Ensuring the assistance of the Management Team.

The Committee is accountable to the Council for:

- Fulfilling its responsibility within the time expected
- Providing a final report to the Council at the conclusion of its mandate, including:
 - Dates of meetings and committee member attendance
 - Summary of Discernment activities.

The Council and the committee shall confirm or renegotiate the relationship description annually.

ARTICLE 6: DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE PROCESSES

The Discernment Committee shall meet within one month following the Annual General Meeting to elect a Chair and to plan the work for the year.

In selecting candidates for positions on the Council, the Committee shall:

- Consult the Lead Pastor, Pastor of Administration and the Moderator
- Receive the approval of the candidate(s) being selected
- Submit the names of the candidate(s) with a biography to the Moderator for distribution to the membership

The Committee shall complete its work one month prior to the Annual General Meeting.

DEFINITIONS

“Affirmed” means achieving a 75% majority of all votes cast.

“Bylaws” are designed to include two primary relationships – the relationship among the members and the relationship between the members and the Council.

“The Church” is the term used through the Constitution and Bylaws to refer to South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church.

“Congregation” – the congregation consists of all members and adherents of the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church.

“Constitution” means the document established by the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church, which includes the name, purpose, affiliation, faith and conduct, scope and dissolution of the Church.

“Council” means the group which receives authority from the members through affirmation and is responsible to design and implement the Council’s structure and process, direct strategic priorities, delegate management authority and responsibility to the Lead Pastor and Administrative Pastor and determine results by measuring and monitoring.

“Members in good standing” mean Members who continue to be qualified under Article 1 of the Bylaws. Any Member who is unable to participate regularly in the functions of the Church due to physical or mental infirmity or due to a temporary absence approved by the Council shall remain a Member in good standing;

“Ministry” means a grouping of agencies of the church according to a common area of concentration, coordinated by Pastoral staff.

Pastoral Staff:

- *Shall substantively meet the requirements for elders as outlined in I Timothy 3 .*
- *Shall be members in good standing with the Church.*
- “Associate Pastor” means a pastoral staff member responsible for a particular area(s) of church work.
- “Intern Pastor” means a person preparing to enter the ministry and participating in the overall program, by invitation, as part of a training program
- “Lead Pastor” means the pastor primarily responsible for the spiritual ministry of the church and for its ministry team.
- “Pastor of Administration” means the pastor who is primarily responsible for the administrative ministry of the Church.