

# **BY-LAWS OF SOUTH ABBOTSFORD MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

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## **ARTICLE 6 DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE PROCESSES**

### **1. ARTICLE 1: MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

#### **1.1. Authority**

Members in good standing may:

- 1.1.1. participate in the planning and decision making of the Church;
- 1.1.2. affirm the hiring of individuals to Pastoral Staff;
- 1.1.3. affirm a change in Lead Pastor; and
- 1.1.4. affirm capital expenditures exceeding \$50,000.

Qualifications for membership:

- 1.1.5. 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 Church Member. *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:

- 1.2.1. violate municipal, provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- 1.2.2. speak on behalf of the Church; nor
- 1.2.3. transact any business on behalf of the Church.

### **1.3. Responsibilities and Expectations of Church Members**

The responsibilities and expectations of Church Members include:

- 1.3.1. participating in the ministry of the “Great Commission”;
- 1.3.2. regularly attending the Church’s Worship Services;
- 1.3.3. attending the Church’s General Meetings;
- 1.3.4. contributing to the decision making processes of the Church;
- 1.3.5. involvement in Ministries for which they are gifted; and
- 1.3.6. practicing effective stewardship.

### **1.4. Accountability**

- 1.4.1. 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.
- 1.4.2. 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 Church Member does not show remorse.

The Church is accountable to the Council for:

- 1.4.3. providing the authorization and resources required by the Council; and
- 1.4.4. active participation in the nomination and affirmation of Council Members.

## **2. ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES**

### **2.1. Application**

- 2.1.1. Application for membership in the Church may be made to a member of the Pastoral Staff or a Council Member. The interested party shall submit a formal application, participate in orientation sessions and provide further information as the Council may require.
- 2.1.2. The applicant shall be interviewed by the Council or its designates. If the Council or its designates are satisfied with the qualifications of the applicant, the Council or its designates shall approve the applicant.

2.1.3. New Members shall be publicly welcomed at a Worship Service of the Church.

## **2.2. Termination**

Membership may be terminated by:

2.2.1. a Church Member's written resignation received and accepted by the Council;

2.2.2. a Church Member becoming a member of another church except by special arrangement. When a Church Member ceases to attend the Church and instead supports and joins another church, their membership shall be evaluated and terminated by the Council.

2.2.3. the death of the Church Member;

2.2.4. the Council for flagrant and/or wilful misconduct. The Church 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;

2.2.5. the Council for reason of a prolonged absence of more than twelve (12) consecutive months without communication with the Church. If there is no communication from the absent Church Member after reasonable attempts have been made to contact them, it is viewed that such Church Member has indicated their intention not to participate in the activities of the Church; therefore their name shall be removed from the membership.

## **2.3. Reinstatement**

2.3.1. Any person who has been terminated from membership by reason of inactivity may be reinstated by the Council after three months of renewed activity.

2.3.2. Persons removed for any other reason shall be required to go through the customary application procedures per 2.1 above.

## **2.4. Meetings of Church Members**

2.4.1. An Annual General Meeting of the Church Members shall be held each year at such time and place as determined by the Council, provided that not more than fifteen (15) months shall lapse between Annual General Meetings. Notice shall be given to all Church Members at all regular Church services for two (2) consecutive weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.

- 2.4.2. Additional General Meetings other than the Annual General Meeting may be held at such times and places as the Council may determine.
- 2.4.3. All General Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (Revised).
- 2.4.4. Except where otherwise provided in these Bylaws, motions shall require a majority of votes cast in order to carry. Only Church Members in good standing who are at least sixteen (16) years of age shall be entitled to vote. Each Church Member in good standing shall have one (1) vote at all General Meetings. Voting shall be by show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested by any voting Church Member. There shall be no voting by proxy.

## **2.5. Quorum**

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

## **2.6. Filling Pastoral Staff Vacancies**

- 2.6.1. The Search Committee appointed by Council, shall seek out a suitable candidate when a Pastoral Staff vacancy occurs;
- 2.6.2. The affirmation of an individual to Pastoral Staff shall require a 75% majority of all votes cast at a General Meeting.

## **2.7. Amending The By-Laws**

Any Church Member can recommend Bylaw changes to the Council by submitting a proposal in writing.

- 2.7.1. The Council shall review and study the proposed amendment(s).
- 2.7.2. Proposed amendments shall be published by the Council a minimum of two (2) Sundays prior to their consideration at the subsequent General Meeting. A minimum of thirty (30) days must then elapse before a vote is taken to adopt the proposed amendment(s).
- 2.7.3. A seventy five percent (75%) majority of all votes cast at the General Meeting where a quorum of twenty percent (20%) of the membership is present is a minimum requirement for adoption of an amendment of any part of these By-Laws.
- 2.7.4. Should a quorum not be present, the amendment(s) shall be tabled following discussion. At a subsequent General Meeting, the amendment will be re-

introduced, discussed, and voted upon without the requirement of a quorum. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority of votes cast at the subsequent General Meeting is still required for affirmation.

### **3. ARTICLE 3: COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

#### **3.1. Authority**

- 3.1.1. The governing body of the Church shall be the Council.
- 3.1.2. The Council's source of operational authority and resources are derived from the Church.
- 3.1.3. The Council's sources of ecclesiastical authority are the BC Conference and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
- 3.1.4. The Council's sources of legal/regulatory authority are various municipal, provincial and federal government authorities.
- 3.1.5. The Council shall have full authority for the affairs of the Church subject to the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.1.6. The Council Members shall receive no remuneration for serving in this capacity.
- 3.1.7. The Council is authorized to fill vacancies occurring on the Council between Annual General Meetings by appointment on an interim basis until the next Annual General Meeting.

#### **3.2. Limitations of Authority**

In exercising its strategic/operational authority the Council may *not*:

- 3.2.1. change or violate the terms of the Constitution and/or By-Laws of the Church;
- 3.2.2. violate the regulations and theological position of the Canadian MB Conference;
- 3.2.3. violate Municipal, Provincial or Federal laws;
- 3.2.4. hire a Lead Pastor without Church affirmation;
- 3.2.5. hire Pastoral Staff without Church affirmation;
- 3.2.6. buy or sell real estate without Church affirmation;
- 3.2.7. borrow money or encumber assets;

- 3.2.8. transact official business without a quorum present; nor
- 3.2.9. approve capital expenditures exceeding \$50,000.

### **3.3. Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Council for governance are to:

- 3.3.1. design and keep current, the Council's structure and governance processes;
- 3.3.2. provide strategic direction by defining the Church's values, vision, mission and key priorities;
- 3.3.3. provide the Church with opportunities for dialogue regarding strategic matters;
- 3.3.4. delegate management authority and responsibility to the Lead Pastor;
- 3.3.5. be accountable for strategic results and to ensure that the Church and each individual in it act within the limitations of delegated authority; and
- 3.3.6. administer the process of filling vacant positions on the Discernment Committee.

### **3.4. Expectations**

- 3.4.1. Council Members shall be Church Members in good standing.

The goals of the Church are described in the Strategic Plan which is developed and updated by the Council. The strategic planning process is documented and maintained in the Governance Manual.

In fulfilling its strategic and operational responsibility, the Council shall:

- 3.4.2. consult the Church Membership in its strategic planning process and in its review of the Church's vision, mission and strategic priorities;
- 3.4.3. annually review the strategic priorities and tactical goals of the Council;
- 3.4.4. emphasize the partnership of the Church with the BC and Canadian Conferences of MB Churches and encourage support for the work of the global church; and
- 3.4.5. exemplify the principles of servant leadership.

### **3.5. Accountabilities**

- 3.5.1. The Council is accountable to the Church, to the BC and Canadian Conference of MB Churches and to Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments.
- 3.5.2. The Council's accountability shall be exercised by the submission of required documentation to civil authorities and by clear and accurate reporting to the Church.

## **4. ARTICLE 4: COUNCIL PROCESSES**

### **4.1. Affirmation of Council Members**

- 4.1.1. The Council shall consist of not fewer than ten (10) and not more than fourteen (14) members, including the four (4) Church Officers.
- 4.1.2. Council positions run for staggered terms not longer than three (3) years.
- 4.1.3. The term of office for Council Members shall commence on their date of affirmation and shall be for three (3) years or fewer to complete the position's term.
- 4.1.4. Council Members shall be affirmed at an Annual General Meeting of the Church.
- 4.1.5. Term renewal requires a recommendation by the Discernment Committee and affirmation at an Annual General Meeting of the Church.

### **4.2. Affirmation of Church Officers**

- 4.2.1. The Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer shall be Council Members, recommended for those positions by the Discernment Committee and affirmed at an Annual General Meeting of the Church.

### **4.3. Standing and Special Council Committees**

- 4.3.1. The Council may create standing or special committees to assist the Council with its governance responsibilities.
- 4.3.2. Appointments to Council Committees shall be made by the Council.
- 4.3.3. Council Committees shall have such purposes, powers and duties as defined by Council.
- 4.3.4. The Chair of all Council Committees shall be members of the Council and shall be approved by the Council.
- 4.3.5. Members of Council Committees shall be Members in good standing.

## **5. ARTICLE 5: DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

### **5.1. Authority**

- 5.1.1. The Discernment Committee receives authority from the Church to propose the names of candidates for Council suitable for affirmation by the Church at an Annual General Meeting.

### **5.2. Limitations of authority**

The Committee may *not*:

- 5.2.1. violate the requirements of the Bylaws; nor
- 5.2.2. allow conflict of interest regarding nominations.

### **5.3. Responsibility**

The Discernment Committee shall present to the Church names of candidates for:

- 5.3.1. Church Officer positions, membership on the Council; and
- 5.3.2. other positions as the Council may, from time to time, deem appropriate and necessary.

### **5.4. Expectations**

- 5.4.1. Discernment Committee members shall be Church Members in good standing.

### **5.5. Accountabilities**

The Discernment Committee is accountable to the Council for:

- 5.5.1. providing its recommendations to the Council not later than one (1) month prior to the Annual General Meeting;
- 5.5.2. fulfilling additional responsibilities as needed within the time constraints determined by Council; and
- 5.5.3. reporting Discernment Committee activities as needed.

The Church is accountable to the Discernment Committee for:

- 5.5.4. providing the authorization and resources required by the Committee; and
- 5.5.5. active participation in the nomination and affirmation process.

## **6. ARTICLE 6: DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE PROCESSES**

### **6.1. Affirmation of Discernment Committee Members**

- 6.1.1. The Discernment Committee shall consist of seven (7) members: two (2) appointed from Council and five (5) at-large from the Church.
- 6.1.2. The term of office for at-large Discernment Committee Members shall run for staggered two (2) year terms and shall commence on their date of affirmation.

6.1.3. The at-large Discernment Committee Members shall be affirmed at a General Meeting of the Church.

6.1.4. Term renewal requires a recommendation by the Discernment Committee and affirmation at an Annual General Meeting of the Church.

## **6.2. Responsibilities**

6.2.1. The Discernment Committee shall meet within one (1) month following the Annual General Meeting to choose a Chair and to plan the work for the year.

6.2.2. The Discernment Committee Chair shall not be a Council Member.

6.2.3. The Discernment Committee shall accept names at any time from Church Members for positions on the Discernment Committee or the Council.

## **6.3. Accountabilities**

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

6.3.1. consult the Lead Pastor and the Moderator;

6.3.2. obtain consent of the candidate(s) being selected; and

6.3.3. submit the names of the candidate(s) with a biography to the Moderator for distribution to the Church one (1) month prior to the Annual General Meeting.

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Affirm:** achieving a 75% majority of all votes cast.
2. **Approve:** achieving a simple majority of votes (50%+1).
3. **Associate Pastor:** a pastoral staff member responsible for a particular area(s) of church work.
4. **Bylaws:** the document established by the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church, which includes the Articles: Membership Structure; Membership Processes, Council Structure; Council Processes; Discernment Committee Structure; Discernment Committee Processes.
5. **Congregation:** the group which consists of all Church Members and adherents of the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church.
6. **Constitution:** the document established by the South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church which includes the articles: Corporate Name; Statement of Mission and Purpose; Affiliation; Faith and Conduct; Scope; Dissolution; and Amending the Constitution.
7. **Council:** the group which receives authority from the Church 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 determine results by measuring and monitoring.

8. **Director:** a person hired to Staff and to work in a particular program or in particular programs.
9. **Interim Pastor:** a person who is hired as an Associate Pastor, responsible for a particular area(s) of work in the Church for a fixed term.
10. **Intern:** a practicum student given various roles under the supervision of a Pastor, Director or Staff Member.
11. **Lead Pastor:** the person to whom authority and responsibility has been given to enact tactical plans to fulfill the strategic goals of the Church. This includes management of all Pastoral and Support Staff.
12. **Members in good standing:** Church Members who continue to be qualified under ARTICLE 1 of the Bylaws. Any Church 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 Church Member in good standing;
13. **The Church:** the term used throughout the Constitution and Bylaws to refer to South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church, an organization made up of its Church Members.
14. **Pastoral Staff:** shall substantively meet the requirements for elders as outlined in I Timothy 3, and shall be Church Members in good standing with the Church.