



Know Christ, and Make Him Known

## **RIVERSIDE MENNONITE CHURCH**

### **Constitution**

#### **ARTICLE I -NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Riverside Mennonite Church.

#### **ARTICLE II-PURPOSE**

The purpose of this nonprofit organization shall be that of a religious congregation, established and maintained to:

- Experience God's Presence
- Bring the Good News of Jesus
- Care for the Needs of Others
- Equip Believers
- Love Each Other

#### **ARTICLE III -VISION**

Know Christ and Make Him Known

We believe that God is revealed through the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which we accept as the inspired word of God. We also believe that He is made known as we live our lives according to the standards found in scripture.

#### **ARTICLE IV -MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Section 1. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

The membership of this congregation shall consist of all persons who have professed faith in Christ and have been received into the fellowship of the congregation by baptism, or upon public confession of faith, or by church letter.

##### **Section 2. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

Each member in good standing in this congregation is entitled to participate in all the general activities of the church. Active members are eligible to vote and to hold any office for which he or she is qualified. Any non-member regularly attending church will be allowed to hold any office for which he or she is qualified, at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

##### **Section 3. DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

It shall be the duty and responsibility of members to live a holy life: separated from the sins and evils of the world, and consecrated to God. They shall counsel one another in the spirit of Christian love, they will remember one another in their prayers, and they will aid each other in sickness and distress.

They further agree, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love: to strive for the advancement of the church in knowledge and holiness, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin, and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the

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ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

#### Section 4. INACTIVE MEMBERS

Members become inactive when they have not regularly attended church for one year. The inactive membership list will be reviewed yearly by the pastors, with the pastors reserving the right to add or subtract any names they see fit. Those on the inactive list will not be included in the membership total reported to conference each year.

### ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

#### Section 1. PASTOR

##### Selection of a Pastor

- The Pastor of the congregation shall be chosen by a vote of the members of the church after consultation with the conference personal and other persons who have an interest in the church.
- The Pastor of the congregation shall initially be chosen for a period of one year and thereafter be subject to renewal every three years.

Pastors should meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6-9.

Self-controlled, Hospitable, Able to Teach, Not violent but gentle, Not quarrelsome, Not a lover of money, Not a recent convert, Has a good reputation with outsiders, Not overbearing, Not quick tempered, Loves what is good, Upright-Holy, Disciplined, Above reproach (blameless), Husband of one wife, Temperate, respectable, Not given to drunkenness, Manages his own family well, Sees that his children obey him, Does not pursue dishonest gain, Keeps hold of the deep truths, sincere, tested.

##### General Expectations for the Pastor:

Has a heart for the things and ways of God. A God seeker- Growing, Maturing; A positive attitude; An Encourager to Love and good works; Man of prayer; Man of the Word and Biblical in sound doctrine; If married, wife supports all areas; Willingness to take time each week as a time for reflection, meditation, and personal study. Secure enough (in position and in Christ), to delegate jobs to others. Man of faith- trusting in God to lead and provide. Visionary. Teachable. Always alert to opportunities for mentoring others.

##### Specific Roles for the Pastor (s)

- Lead, Feed and Protect the flock as found in Acts 20:28-31, I Peter 5:3-4, Ezekiel 34;4
- Preaching - Adequate preparation time would be encouraged.
- Add to, support, and promote current leadership vision and purpose
- Board of Elders - Chair the board at the board's discretion
- Relay information to CMC (Reports, etc.)
- Funerals - (as requested- working with other Pastor(s))
- Weddings - (as requested -working with other Pastor(s))
- Pastors should meet at least once a month (or more), in a setting where they are free to open up with each other and discuss necessary (team) items.
- Oversee new believers in their training. Delegate or lead. Membership issues.
- Anointing with oil (as requested- working with other Pastor(s))
- Represent the church where representatives are necessary at a function. (Working with other pastor(s) in the church when the appointment cannot be made by Senior Pastor.)
- To help lead and train others in Communion and Counsel meeting. Allowing other Pastor(s) the privilege to lead Communion.
- Baptism Services - To lead and train as required (or oversee).
- Answer some mail
- Availability (as much as possible ½ time) for crisis situations.
- Purposeful relationship building with members/believers (at his discretion)
- Keep in touch with members that have moved away.

- Help some with Care Center and Greenbrier. (Occasionally or monthly)
- Oversee and work with visitation team to:
  - Follow-up visits (phone, letter, visit) of new attendees.
  - Make contacts within the congregation for special physical, emotional or spiritual needs.
  - Respond to requests by members of the congregation to visit family or friends.
  - Make follow-up visits with new believers. Hospital, jail visits (special case).

## Section 2. BOARD OF ELDERS

### Organization

- The Board of Elders will consist of three elected brothers and the pastors of the congregation.
- A Chairman will be selected annually from the Board of Elders who will take leadership in formulating the agenda for consideration by the board.
- A secretary will be selected annually from among the elected elders by the board.
- The elected members will serve for a 3 year term with one new member elected each year. Members are eligible to succeed themselves in office one time.

### Qualifications

I Timothy 3, Titus I, and related scripture texts are the basis for qualification of elders,

- Growth in personal spiritual walk with the Lord.
- Growth in interpersonal relationships in the brotherhood and in the community.
- Development of a shepherding concern for the congregation.
- Faithful commitment to the brotherhood and a desire to seek the kingdom first.
- Development of leadership gifts with the spirit of a servant.

### Selection

- One new elder will be elected each year by July 31st. Term of service will begin September 1<sup>st</sup>, of the same year.
- The selection shall consist of a two-step procedure;
  - a. The congregation will select candidates for consideration with an open ballot,
  - b. Following interviews with the candidates, the pastors will present a slate of at least two nominees to the congregation to select one elder. Nominees will be contacted before presentation to the congregation.
- A Prayer of dedication will take place prior to or at the beginning of the term of service,

### Responsibilities

- Serve as counselors to the pastors and the congregation.
- Serve in the ministry of intercessory prayer for the congregation.
- Provide leadership in the spiritual growth of the congregation and growth and outreach in the community.
- Provide counsel in preparation for communion, baptism and special services.
- Be sensitive to matters of concern to individual members.
- Assist in the personal contact of members through visitation and in other ways.
- Serve as a prophetic voice and alert ministers of trends within the congregation and community that affect the welfare of the congregation.
- Provide counsel in conflict resolution and in spiritual discipline to maintain the spirit of Christ among us.
- Initiate in consultation with the pastor(s) the review and evaluation process at the end of their respective terms and develop procedure for the congregation to consider and act upon.
- Make recommendations in respect to the leadership needs of the congregation, such as the calling/ordination/licensing of another/additional minister.
- Be supportive of the responsibilities of the pastor and assistant pastor and take up the issue of support and education made available to them.
- Provide the necessary "tools" for the work of Pastor
  - Study helps as needed.

- Office (if needed-adequately supplied)
- Computer and necessary software (if needed)
- Mileage allowance.
- Secretarial (voluntary- as needed)
- Opportunities for continued learning (weekend retreats, Minister's Fellowship, Conference, on-line learning, Seminars, self-study materials)
- Prayer support (Acts 14:23)

### Section 3. LOCAL SERVICE MINISTRIES

#### Organization

- Members will serve for three years.
- The member with the highest votes will become chairperson unless the committee mutually select another member.
- The chairperson will meet with the next committee at the completion of 3 years to share unfinished business and report to the new chairperson.

#### Responsibilities

- Responsible for work projects to help meet the material and financial needs in the congregation and community
- The needs of the congregation are of first priority and community needs should be met with the overall goal of ministry in the spirit of Christ
- Disburse monies from the service fund for the above projects as needed
- Care should be taken to help with needs in an equitable manner
- Responsible for cooperative evangelistic outreach and ministry in our own community
- Disburse monies from the mission board fund as needed.

### Section 4. TRUSTEES

#### Organization

- Members will serve for three years.
- The member with the highest votes will become chairperson unless the committee mutually selects another member.
- The chairperson will meet with the next committee at the completion of 3 years to share unfinished business and report to the new chairmen.

#### Responsibilities

- Responsible for the operation and maintenance of the church building, including routine cleaning, house cleaning, and cleaning list.
- Landscaping, mowing, and snow removal and sidewalk maintenance.
- Electrical, plumbing, and heating systems (lamp replacement etc.)
- Appointment of a heating and ventilating person and an assistant to operate thermostats, fans, windows, and shades
- Appointment of the sound system manager who will oversee the system and the tape recording
- Third year member is chairman of September and January business meetings
- Disburse monies as needed from the church expense fund

### Section 5. RELIEF SALE

- Member will serve for three years
- Responsible to work with larger relief sale committee and attend their meetings
- Delegate specific jobs for work at the sale
- Purchase supplies and equipment necessary for the relief sale breakfast.
- Receive relief sale offering for local expenses and forward the balance of the sale
- Publicize meetings and special projects to the congregation and notice of the sale to the community

#### Section 6. LIBRARIAN

- Member will serve for three years
- Responsible to file and catalogue all resources
- Initiate a card catalogue file with decimal system
- Arrange for a supervised and orderly checkout, and return of resources
- Evaluate donations, discard worn or inappropriate resources and purchase new resources

#### Section 7. BIBLE MEMORY

- Responsible for enrolling children and providing Scripture cards and correspondence courses
- Listen to and record verses for credit
- Determine camp eligibility
- Provide church treasurer with list of campers going to camp
- Help recruit camp personnel

#### Section 8. S. S. SECRETARY TREASURER

- Responsible for ordering Sunday school supplies, recording attendance and regular Sunday morning offerings
- Quantities of S.S papers, quarterlies and teachers manuals are available from the mailbox personnel

#### Section 9. NOMINATING CHAIRPERSON

- To be appointed by Board of Elders every three years
- Responsible for preparing the ballot for church offices
- The ballot is to be distributed for two Sundays and may be received as early as the second Sunday evening
- results of the ballot should be read and posted by the first Sunday of August

#### Section 10. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT AND ASSISTANT

- Appointed for a two year term
- Responsible for reorganization by ballot of the adult S.S. classes (in years ending with even # the senior classes have priority if two classes elect the same teacher, odd year ending #, junior classes have Priority)
- Children's assembly leader, classes and teachers, offering receivers, S.S. chorister is to be chosen by appointment of the superintendent.
- All above reorganization should be completed early in August immediately following election results
- Use of teacher training resources and assistance (e.g. seminars, videos, etc.) can be provided and encouraged by the superintendents.
- Promote harvest offering for adults and distribute banks to children for summer earning projects
- Announce harvest offering date a minimum of 30 days in advance (offering should be received by Dec. 1)
- Select a summer Bible School Supt. by May 1<sup>st</sup>, and set dates for Bible School by May 15<sup>th</sup>
- Superintendents are to oversee or delegate solicitation of students, (transportation, buying of treats, setup and restoration of classrooms and equipment)
- Inventory of existing curriculum and ordering of new stock should be completed by May 15<sup>th</sup>
- Class records and solicitation records are to be kept on file in the church office file cabinet
- Plan S.S. picnic

#### Section 11. DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

- 3 year term, can be renewed
- Mail distribution -includes flyers, Sunday School papers, S.S. quarterlies, and any other mail that comes in to the church
- Oversee publicity for church activities
- Keeping mailboxes current (see guidelines for mailboxes)
- Ordering bulletin covers
- Recognition of death of community people by sending flowers

- Typing the bulletin
- Keeping track of events on the calendar in the copy room
- Mail pick-up from the P.O. Box in Au Gres
- Banners, flowers, and general seasonal church decorations
- Bulletin boards in the foyer and church entrance
- Taking orders for and distributing mailbox items such as S.S. papers and periodicals.
- Sending in correspondence for the Brotherhood Beacon (births, marriages, deaths, etc.)
- Planning and working with the Evening Program Committee for the Thanksgiving Eve service and inviting the other county churches to come.
- Keeping the Church Directory, Phone List, and Prayer Chain current.
- Any secretarial duties that may be required by the Minister(s).
- Someone else can be appointed to the different responsibilities but the Director of Communications is to see it is taken care of.

#### Section 12. TREASURER

- Collect, count and deposit offerings
- Pay bills and balance books
- Prepare and submit annual reports at the Business meeting
- Length of term: 5 years

## **ARTICLE VI ORGANIZATION**

#### Section 1. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting will be held within the month of January each year.

The Annual Business meeting will be held for the purpose of receiving reports, electing officers of the church and Sunday School, and establishing plans, goals and priorities for the coming year.

#### Section 2. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year for the church and Sunday school will be from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### Section 3. ELECTIONS

All elections shall be by secret ballot, and require a simple majority.

#### Section 4. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Amendments to and revisions of this constitution may be made at any business meeting without prior notice by ninety percent (90%) vote of the members present, or by a two-thirds (66%) vote of the members present provided that the congregation has been previously advised of the planned action.