

Buhler Mennonite Brethren Church

BY-LAWS

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Article I – Membership

A. Qualifications for Membership

In order to become a member of the Buhler Mennonite Brethren Church (BMBC), one must make a request for membership to a member of the Pastoral Staff using the form provided by the Church Office, going through the process outlined in the Church Membership Policy. The basis of membership shall be a public statement of personal faith in Jesus Christ, evidence of a believer's baptism and consent to follow the guidelines of the BMBC Constitution and By-laws. By becoming a member of BMBC, one commits to follow Jesus with active involvement in the church, pray for the church and support the work and ministry of the church.

B. Removal from Church Membership

1. Withdrawal: Individuals may voluntarily withdraw from church membership at any time.
2. Removal: The process of removal from church membership must follow biblical commands and principles and the policies of this Church.
3. Reinstatement: Once removed from official membership, former members may reapply for membership according to the current BMBC membership policy and procedure.

Article II – Governance and Leadership

A. The Team of Elders

1. Ministry Summary: The main leadership and governance of the church shall be delegated by the congregation to the Team of Elders which shall provide the church with servant leadership, spiritual oversight but also general governance and administration. Therefore, the membership of the church entrusts much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are elected, then trusted and allowed to lead. The members of the Team of Elders, with the exception of the Lead Pastor, shall be considered the Officers of the church.
2. Qualifications: The Team of Elders are men who are active members in good standing of this Church and who possess the appropriate spiritual and relational qualifications as specified in 1 Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.
3. Authority: The Team of Elders shall serve under the authority of Christ and the Word of God, and then under the authority of the church membership which delegates church leadership and oversight ministry to the Team of Elders.
4. Role of Elders:
 - a. ensures accountability for the ministry and leadership of the church and for the Lead Pastor's ministry
 - b. ensures that the church is being led in accomplishing the Mission and Vision, guided by Values of the church
 - c. monitors and evaluates the Mission, Values and Vision of the church
 - d. supports, and encourages, and protects the Lead Pastor and provides him and his ministry with an annual review with recommendations
 - e. sets and governs by policy for the church and its leadership
 - f. approves appointments of qualified people to organizational and ministry team leadership as needed
 - g. seeks to ever-improve communication within this Church

- h. ensures that the financial condition and reports of the church are regularly communicated to the church and evaluated, reviewed or audited annually by a reputable group or agency
 - i. appoints or employs within budget guidelines any staff as needed
 - j. meets twice a month or more often if needed with one meeting devoted to Spiritual oversight and prayer and the following meeting devoted to administration
 - k. appoints a Nominating Team made up of the Lead Pastor and three to five members who are responsible for recommending people for appointed and elected positions of the church
5. Quorum: A simple majority of the Team of Elders shall constitute a quorum.
 6. Selection of Elders: The Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of nominees for Elders to be elected by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) or more church members present at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting. Suggestions for qualified Elders may also be recommended to the Nominating Team by any church member provided prior permission is given by the one being nominated. This should be done at least four (4) weeks in advance before the election. In the event of an Elder stepping down during his term of office, the Team of Elders shall appoint a qualified replacement who shall serve for the remainder of the vacated term.
 7. Size of the Team of Elders: Seven (7) Elders plus the Lead Pastor shall function as members of the Team of Elders.
 8. Term of Office: Elders shall serve a 3-year term of office with provision for staggering terms with other members. The initial Team of Elders will need to decide the staggering terms for the new Team of Elders so that all terms do not expire at the same time. They may be elected for up to two (2) consecutive terms of three (3) years each, after which they must take a sabbatical of one (1) year before the possibility of re-selection.
 9. Organization: The Team of Elders shall be self-organizing but must select a Church Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary from its members. The Church Chairman shall chair and lead congregational business meetings and serve as an ex-officio member of all church teams, committees and task forces as needed except for the Team of Elders.
 10. Removal of an Elder: The process of removing an Elder from his position during his term of office shall follow the principles and precepts of Scripture (1 Tim. 5:19-20) and the church policy outlining the procedure for removal of an Elder.

B. The Team of Deacons

1. Ministry Summary: The Team of Deacons shall be made up of qualified members of BMBC who assist in leading and serving in the ministries of the church.
2. Qualifications: The Team of Deacons shall be men, with the support of their wives, possessing the appropriate spiritual and relational qualifications as specified in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
3. Authority: The Team of Deacons shall serve under the authority of the Team of Elders whom they shall assist in ministry to the congregation.
4. Selection: Suggestions for qualified Deacons may be recommended to the Nominating Team by any church member provided prior permission is given by the one being nominated. Nominees shall be first recommended by the Nominating Team to the Team of Elders for approval and then presented to the membership for selection.
5. Size: The size of the Team of Deacons shall be determined by the number of qualified nominees and the needs of the church. It is desired by the church leadership that between 7 and 12 Deacons will function in this official church office and ministry.
6. Term of Office: Deacons may be elected for up to two (2) consecutive terms of three (3) years each, after which they must take a sabbatical of one (1) year before the possibility of re-selection.
7. Organization: The Team of Deacons shall be self-organizing.

C. Ministry Team Leaders

1. Ministry Summary: Ministry Team Leaders are those men and women who provide spiritual and organizational leadership to specific ministries that support the Mission and Vision of the church.
2. Qualifications:
 - a. They shall be active members of the church who love God, love others and help make disciples of Jesus Christ.
 - b. They shall have the spiritual gifts and passion for providing the visionary leadership and administration for the ministry over which they serve.
 - c. They shall be able to develop and oversee a ministry leadership team for their assigned ministry.
3. Number: The number of Ministry Team Leaders shall be determined by need and the availability of qualified candidates. Some Ministry Team Leaders may also serve as Deacons in the church.
4. Selection: Ministry Team Leaders shall be appointed by the Team of Elder for 3-year terms.
5. Term of Office: Ministry Team Leaders shall be appointed for 3-year terms. After serving two (2) consecutive terms, a sabbatical of one (1) year is encouraged.
6. Organization: Ministry Team Leaders shall meet at least quarterly and when meeting shall be self-organizing under the direction of the Lead Pastor. The Ministry Team Leader will also be responsible to organize his or her ministry team for effectiveness. He or she is also responsible for recruiting and training a ministry apprentice and also forming a ministry leadership team to assist him or her in ministry leadership. Each Ministry Team Leader reports to and is accountable to a Pastor or an assigned Elder or Deacon.

D. Support Staff

The Team of Elders has the authority to appoint church members to positions where they can assist in the administration of the church in such areas as financial stewardship, nominations, search teams, ministry evaluation, planning, etc.

Article III – Pastor(s)

A. The Lead Pastor

1. Description: The Lead Pastor of BMBC is called by God and the congregation to provide pastoral oversight and godly leadership to the church and equip believers in the congregation for the work of ministry. This shall be done in a way that brings glory and honor to the Lord and advances the kingdom of God (Eph. 4:11-14).
2. Ministry Summary: His role includes, but may not be limited to, the following responsibilities:
 - a. working with the Team of Elders, he shall perform ministerial duties
 - b. makes and multiplies disciples and does the work of an evangelist
 - c. provides biblical preaching and teaching, godly counsel, fervent prayer, and team and ministry leadership
 - d. along with the Team of Elders, leads the church through fulfilling the Mission and Vision of BMBC, guided by the Values of the church, so that the Mission and Vision of the church are discovered and fulfilled
 - e. provides equipping and training for Elders, Deacons and Ministry Leaders
 - f. models Christian maturity and growth and is a devoted follower of Jesus in his personal life, home, church and community

- g. as a member of the Buhler community, functions as a pastor to the community when appropriate and takes part in community and school events
3. Calling: When a vacancy arises, the Team of Elders shall appoint a Lead Pastor Search Team made up of three (3) Elders and four (4) other active church members to commence a search process that follows the Policy and Procedures for Calling a Pastor. A vote of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the members present at a called church business meeting will be required to call a lead Pastor. When called, a Pastor and his wife become members of BMBC and remain so until resignation or removal from office.
Resignation: The Lead Pastor may submit in writing at least a one month notice of resignation to the Team of Elders. Appropriate severance pay as determined by the Team of Elders may be offered by the church when warranted.
4. Termination: The calling of the Lead Pastor may be terminated by recommendation of the Team of Elders and a majority vote of the church membership at a duly called business meeting. The quorum for this meeting shall be fifty percent (50%) of the voting membership. The motion for termination shall state the reason(s) for such action. In some cases where laws have been violated or where the reputation of the church and its witness is at stake, immediate dismissal, temporary suspension or a paid leave of absence while charges are being investigated may be granted. Specific guidelines for termination and/or discipline of a pastoral staff member may be found in the BMBC Policy for Resignation or Termination of a Pastor.
5. Organizational Position: The Lead Pastor shall serve as a non-voting member of the Team of Elders, a leader among equals. He oversees and directs all other Pastoral Staff members and Church Office members. He shall also serve as ex-officio, voting member of all teams, committees and task forces of the church, except when dealing with financial or other issues that impact his position, such as his salary and benefits.
6. Review of Pastoral Ministry: The Team of Elders shall appoint an Elder and a non-elder to conduct an annual ministry review of the Senior Pastor. This review will be primarily based on the Lead Pastor Job Description and his annual goals for ministry.

B. Other Pastoral Staff Members:

1. Calling: The Team of Elders shall recommend to the membership the need and rationale for any additional pastoral staff and propose a budget for the position. If the position and budget is approved by the membership, the Lead Pastor and Team of Elders shall work with an appointed Advisory Team to search for a qualified candidate, determine if he is qualified and call him to fill the position. If requested by a vote of the church membership, a congregational vote may also be required following the requirements of calling a Lead Pastor. When called, a Pastor and his wife become members of BMBC and remain so until resignation or removal from office. Any additional pastoral staff members are supervised by and accountable to the Lead Pastor. They shall not serve as members of the Team of Elders.
2. Resignation or Termination: The church policies for resignation and termination for the Lead Pastor shall also apply to all pastoral staff members with the exception of the requirement of a congregational vote. The Team of Elders has the authority to terminate or suspend any pastoral staff member other than the Lead Pastor. All pastoral staff members shall have their ministry reviewed on an annual basis by the Lead Pastor and one other Team of Elders member.

Article IV - Meetings

A. Congregational Meetings

BMBC is a church with a congregational system of government. At least two (2) Congregational Business Meetings shall be held each year appropriate to that time of the church year – one in the late fall and one in late winter or early spring. The Team of Elders may also call a Congregational Business Meeting or an informational meeting at any time. The membership may also call a special business meeting by petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the membership.

1. Quorum: The quorum for all Congregational Business Meetings shall be ten percent (10%) of the total church membership.
2. Voting: All votes shall be determined by a simple majority of those members present and voting with the exception of calling a Lead Pastor, budgeting money for capital expenditures and the selection of members of the Team of Elders. Votes may also be submitted prior to a meeting in the Church Office or by postal mail or e-mail when requested.
7. Meeting Rules: All Congregational Business Meetings will be conducted under the guidelines of the Word of God and, when necessary, by the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
8. What Requires a Congregational Vote:
 - a. the calling of the Lead Pastor
 - b. the approval of an annual budget and any non-budget line item expenditures over \$10,000
 - c. the selection of Elders and Deacons
 - d. the purchase, sale or gift of church buildings or land values of over \$5,000
 - e. the amendment of the BMBC Constitution or By-laws
 - f. a majority fifty-one percent (51%) of the church membership present at the meeting may call for a vote on any item or decision at any Congregational Business Meeting

B. Other Meetings.

The quorum for meetings of all church teams, committees, or other groups shall be a simple majority of team, committee or group members present. All team, committee or group members should make every effort to attend all meetings if possible.

Article V – Amendments

These articles of the By-laws may be amended or revised at any regular or special congregational meeting with a simple majority fifty-one percent (51%) of votes cast by the members present. Amendments to the By-laws shall be submitted in writing at least fourteen (14) days prior to voting.

Article VI – Policies

In addition to the Constitution and By-laws, the church and her ministries shall be guided by policies and ministry descriptions approved and maintained by the Team of Elders.