

Constitution

Berlin Mennonite Church

Berlin, Ohio

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Revised 2008

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Constitution

Berlin Mennonite Church Berlin, Ohio

Article 1: Name and Beginnings

This congregation shall be known as the Berlin Mennonite Church. The congregation was established in 1917 as a mission outpost from the Martins Creek and Walnut Creek congregations. The church is based in Berlin, Ohio

Article II: Mission Statement

This congregation accepts the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18ff) as our mandate to be a witness of God to our generation.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to worship in a way that will lead to ministries in the congregation, the local community, and the world, and we want to reach out and help those experiencing spiritual, emotional or physical needs.

Recognizing our varied life and faith experiences, we accept the responsibility to provide regular worship settings in which unbelievers will be invited to a vital relationship with Christ and where believers will be challenged to develop a deeper commitment and greater faithfulness to Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

We will strive to nurture, disciple, and strengthen the body through mutual caring, worship, instruction, counsel and fellowship. In doing this, we will equip each other for service so we may discover and use the gifts of the Spirit present in the congregation.

We work and pray for the glorious goal that all people everywhere may experience God's peace, love and justice in their lives.

Article III: Declaration of Faith and Affiliation

Section 1. The congregation accepts the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and the infallible guide for faith and practice. We are dedicated to personal growth in Christ in daily living.

Section 2. The Berlin Mennonite Church shall be a member congregation of the Ohio Conference and is affiliated with the organization known as Mennonite Church USA.

Section 3. We accept the Mennonite Confession of Faith (1995) and believe in the Anabaptist, Mennonite tradition of Christian discipleship and encourage participation in the worldwide and domestic activities of the Mennonite Church as we seek to follow the way of Christ.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Reception of Members

The membership of this congregation shall consist of all persons who have professed faith in Christ, who have declared their loyalty to the faith and practice of the Mennonite Church, and who have been received into the fellowship of this congregation by baptism, confession of faith, or church letter.

Associate membership shall be granted to persons who qualify for active membership, yet choose to retain a church membership elsewhere. They have all the privileges of full membership; i.e., holding any office and being active in decision making.

Section 2: Privileges and Duties of Members

Every person who holds active membership in the Berlin Mennonite Church is entitled to participate in the full life of the congregation and is eligible to hold office and vote on all questions brought before the congregation.

Members are expected to participate in the activities and life of the church, and be willing to give and receive counsel to promote personal growth, as well as the stated mission of the congregation.

Section 3: Disciplining of Members

Discipline in the life of the congregation shall include teaching and counsel. Obedience to the written Word of God is a positive, preventive discipline in congregational life. We encourage all members to live by the principles of the Word as they are interpreted by the congregation.

Should a member bring reproach upon the name of Christ, the Spiritual Leadership Commission shall seek to restore that member in the spirit of Galatians 6:2. If these compassionate efforts fail, the Spiritual Leadership Commission may suspend such members, and upon presentation of the action taken by them, the congregation may terminate membership.

Grievances between members should be resolved in the Spirit of Christ as suggested in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Corinthians 6:1-8.

Section 4. Inactive Members

Members who fail to be involved in congregational life will be placed on inactive membership status. Membership may be terminated by transfer, action outlined under Section 3, or by unanimous action of the Spiritual Leadership Commission. If the member does not initiate this termination, any action to terminate shall be preceded by compassionate pastoral and Spiritual Leadership contact. The inactive membership roster will be reviewed annually by the Spiritual Leadership Commission prior to the change of the calendar year.

Article V: Authority of the Congregation

The congregational assembly shall have final authority and power to manage and adjust all spiritual and material affairs of the congregation. Any action or decision, whether it proceeds from an individual or from a body within the congregation, shall be invalid unless authorized or sanctioned in the constitution or by special vote.

Article VI: Business Meetings

Section 1: Annual Business Meeting

The fiscal year of the congregation shall be September 1 of each year through August 31 of the following year. The annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held as soon as possible after September 1st of each year. The date and time will be set by Council and will be announced publicly on two Sundays preceding the meeting. A quorum shall be the members present.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Spiritual Leadership Commission, Council, or by written request signed by 25 resident members. The time and purpose of all special meetings shall appear in the church bulletin and shall be announced publicly on two preceding Sunday. A quorum shall be the members present.

Section 3: Order of Business

Each annual business meeting of the congregation shall be opened with a period of devotion and prayer followed by:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. Reports from all officers, commissions, committees, and auxiliaries
3. Unfinished business
4. New business
5. Adjournment

Article VII: Conducting Church Affairs

The conduct of the affairs of Berlin Mennonite Church not addressed in this Constitution will be outlined in the Procedures Manual of Berlin Mennonite Church. This Procedures Manual defines the church's organizational structure, procedures for church offices and conducting the work of the church.

In the event of a pastoral vacancy or need for additional pastoral staff an adhoc pastoral search committee will be formed. The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of seven members comprised of one Spiritual Leadership Team Member and six members from the congregation (excluding the pastor). Nominations for the six members shall be taken by open church ballot. The Spiritual Leadership Team shall be responsible for preparing a slate of names from the list of nominees for congregational approval. The Pastoral Search committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Serve the congregation in seeking a pastor in event of a pastoral change or the addition of pastoral staff.
- b. Work in consultation with the congregation, the overseer, and the Leadership Commission of Ohio Conference
- c. Be responsible for planning the installation service.

Article VIII: Amendments

This constitution shall be in effect when it is approved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation. This constitution may be temporarily suspended by a ninety percent vote of the members present at any business meeting of the congregation.

Amendments may be made to this constitution at any business meeting without prior notice by ninety percent vote of the members present or by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided the congregation has been advised of the contemplated amendment and its contents thirty days prior to the business meeting.

The accompanying Procedures Manual shall be kept in the church office, the library, and posted on the church website. Printed copies will be available to members upon request. This manual shall outline the structure and responsibilities, as well as selection and terms of service for Commissions and committees of the church. Changes to the Procedures Manual must be made by Council and reported to the congregation in the meeting minutes.