

# WEST PHILADELPHIA MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

## ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENT

with changes approved by the congregation on October 18, 1998

**I. Name:** The name of this congregation is West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship.

**II. Purposes:** By God's grace, to grow as a joyful community of Jesus' disciples who honor God in worship, seek God's presence daily, encourage each other in faithfulness, invite others to faith in Christ, and work for the shalom of our city.

### **III. Affiliation:**

A. The congregation is a member of the Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church and participates fully in its proceedings and activities. The Conference accepts as its guide the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

B. Conference Delegates: Franconia guidelines state that there is to be one lay delegate to Franconia Assembly for every 100 members or fraction thereof. Delegates shall be members who are in good standing with the congregation, who are actively involved in the life and work of the congregation or conference, and who manifest spiritual discernment and mature judgment. Also representing WPMF at Franconia Assembly are the pastor(s) and a lay person representing the elders.

### **IV. Membership:**

A. Requirements: To become a member one is expected to attend the "Exploring Anabaptist Faith" class and fulfill the requirements of that class. Any person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ and who commits him/herself to Jesus Christ as Lord, and who accepts the responsibilities of discipleship as understood by the Mennonite Church and the WPMF Covenant of Membership, may be recommended for membership by the elders to be received by water baptism, by letter of transfer, or by confession of faith.

B. Privileges: Only members can vote on leadership issues: the affirmation of persons who have been nominated as elders and the calling of pastors. Only members can be nominated for the elder or deacon positions, or serve on the Human Resources Committee.

C. Yearly Covenant of Membership Renewal: Each spring, a covenant renewal service is held. This gives all members the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship by signing the Covenant of Membership.

D. Transfer: Members moving away from the geographical area are encouraged to become members of a Mennonite congregation or other Christian fellowship in a new place of residence. A member wishing to transfer to another congregation may be granted an appropriate transfer letter by the pastoral team.

### **V. Congregational Meetings:**

A. Since the congregation is the local body of believers, united by faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, following Jesus in a life of discipleship, sharing in fellowship, expressing mutual love, and witnessing individually and corporately, the government of the congregation shall be the members assembled in a congregational meeting.

B. Congregational meetings can be called as needed by Council or by petition of ten or more members. A facilitator for each meeting will be chosen by the group calling the meeting. These meetings are to be a maximum of two hours in length. At least two weeks written notice of the meeting agenda is to be given to the congregation. A quorum consists of the members present. The congregation will strive for a consensus but if a vote is needed, a two-thirds majority is considered the action of the congregation. Consensus is needed for affirming elders.

**VI. Church Council:** The Church Council is the administrative and decision making body of the congregation. Council is accountable to the congregation, and all agendas, minutes and other documentation is available to the members. Council welcomes input and feedback on all matters from the congregation. The council is responsible for implementing the vision and programs of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship. Church Council is composed of all the members of the Pastoral Team, Deacons,

and Human Resources Committee. Each of these groups is empowered to make decisions relating to their areas of responsibility. Each group will appoint one of its members to take responsibility for communicating that group's decisions, discussion, and questions to the other groups and the congregation. A partial or full council will meet as necessary as determined by any one of the groups.

A. Pastoral team. The Pastoral Team, consisting of the Pastors and the Elders, deals with congregational spiritual life--clarifying vision and mission, and seeking to discern God's will for the congregation.

1. Pastors: A composite job description has been developed for the pastors. It includes specifics regarding preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, prayer and Bible study, intern supervision, church meetings, community outreach/service, accountability, networking and Franconia Conference. If there is only one pastor, that pastor is not expected to fulfill the entire composite job description.

2. Elders: See below for selection criteria.

3. Areas of responsibility:

- a) Overseeing the small-group life of WPMF
- b) Pastoral care
- c) Working with the core ministries--currently defined as worship and children's ministries
- d) Encouraging and supporting other ministry teams that develop
- e) Dealing with matters of church discipline
- f) Shaping the preaching and teaching plan
- g) Overseeing the church's membership policy and records
- h) Overseeing the integration of new persons into the life of the church
- i) Intervening with members experiencing conflict with one another
- j) Appointing one elder as delegate to the Franconia Conference Assembly
- k) Keeping records of elders' meetings.

B. Deacons: The deacons are responsible for the general administration of the congregation, including financial, personnel and physical plant. Deacons must be members of the congregation. The deacons shall also act as the Board of Trustees for the congregation and shall hold legal title to all assets on behalf of the congregation. The trustees shall, under the same conditions, have authority to execute all leases or agreements for the purchase of real property, execute contracts and otherwise transact business on behalf of the congregation. The deacons shall appoint one of their number to be Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the authority to certify as true and correct all financial statements.

Areas of responsibility:

1. Shaping the budget and presenting it to the congregation.
2. Overseeing and monitoring financial affairs of the congregation and taking such steps as to maintain the fiscal integrity of the congregation.
3. Looking after legal affairs.
4. Facilities: negotiating lease, relating to landlords, attending to improvements needed, scheduling use of building.
5. Responding to mutual aid requests.
6. Disbursing missions budget line items.

C. Human Resource Committee (HRC): HRC's purpose is to plan and conduct the activities necessary to provide for the current and future organizational and staffing needs of the congregation.

Areas of responsibility:

1. Employ and supervise all paid staff, including development of job descriptions, do an annual review/evaluation of job performance, negotiate compensation packages to be proposed to Deacons, and monitor vacation time, sick/personal leave, and continuing ed. time.
2. Name a search committee in the event of pastoral vacancies.
3. Initiate and oversee the process of elder selection.
4. Select nominees for Deacons and HRC.

## **VII. Ministry Teams:**

———A. Core ministries are those ministries deemed to be essential to the life of the congregation. They are connected directly to the pastoral team by a designated elder. Core ministries identified as of this writing are worship and children's ministries.

B. People are encouraged to start ministry teams as they feel led. Elders are available as a resource to the ministry teams. Examples of such ministry teams include those related to hospitality and missions.

C. The Administrative Assistant will serve as the communication center among the various ministry teams as well as the groups comprising Church Council. This includes keeping a list of ministry teams and maintaining a schedule of activities.

**VIII. Committee Selection and Terms:** Gender balance is to be sought in the composition of each group which forms Church Council, with a minimum requirement that both genders are to be represented on each group. Immediate family members are not to serve together on either the Pastoral Team, Deacons, or HRC (although they may serve in different groups of these three).

A. Pastors: When a pastor resigns, or desires a leave of absence, a three month notice shall be given. When a pastor resigns, HRC is responsible to initiate the naming of a Pastoral Search Committee. The Congregational Overseer must be part of the Pastoral Search Committee. Prior to presenting candidates, the Search Committee will articulate a process, subject to congregational affirmation, for review and selection of a pastor. Pastors will serve renewable three year terms.

B. Elders: Elders are selected through a process supervised by HRC. Elders must be affirmed through consensus by the members of the Congregation and will serve a term of three years renewable once. Terms end on May 31.

C. Deacons: Deacons are selected by HRC. Immediate family members of paid staff are not to serve as Deacons. Deacons are presented to the Congregation for affirmation. If consensus is not achieved a vote will be taken and two-thirds majority of members present is required for affirmation. Deacons will serve a term of three years renewable once. Terms end on May 31.

D. Human Resource Committee will have at least 3 members, selected by HRC. Immediate family members of paid staff are not to serve on HRC. Candidates for HRC are presented to the Congregation for affirmation. If consensus is not achieved a vote will be taken and two-thirds majority of members present is required for affirmation. Members of HRC will serve a term of three years renewable once. Terms end on May 31.

E. Conference Delegates will be elected by the Congregation and will serve a term of two years renewable once. If consensus is not achieved a vote will be taken and two-thirds majority of members present is required for affirmation. Terms end in November.

F. Ministry Teams: Ministry teams are free to recruit their own members and determine their own term limits, if any.

G. Administrative assistant: The administrative assistant is hired by HRC in consultation with Deacons.

H. Other personnel: HRC will recommend hiring of other staff as necessary.

**IX. Amendments and Revisions:** The congregation may amend this organizational document at any meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided the proposed changes have been circulated in written form among the membership at least fourteen days prior to the meeting at which the changes are to be considered.

Changes approved October 18, 1998