

The Constitution

of



West Union

Mennonite

Church

Parnell, Iowa

Mission Statement

*The sisters and brothers at West Union
united by the gospel of peace
gather in worship to meet the living God
plant and nurture the seed of God's word
spread the love of Jesus to others
so that all people are welcomed to new life in Jesus Christ.*

Drafted in 1990

West Union Constitution

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MINISTRIES COMMISSIONS ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

July 2004

I. MINISTRIES

Board of Elders (Pastoral Care Commission)
5 members Pastor Associate Pastor 4 Elders Elected - 4 year term
Spiritual Oversight Crisis Ministry Mutual Care Counseling Care Groups

Mission & Service Commission	Nurture Commission	Worship Commission	Stewardship Commission	Gifts Discernment Commission
4 members Affirmed - 2 year term	5 members Affirmed - 2 year term	3 members Affirmed - 2 year term	3 members Church Treasurer elected - 3 year term	5 members Elected - 2 year term
Mission Outreach Service MCC Sale	Sunday School Bible School Life Planning MYF Youth Clubs Library	Sunday Services Special Services Evening Prayers	Mission Treasurer elected - 3 year term Trustee Chair affirmed - 1 year term Finances Building & Grounds Cemetery	Enablement Gifts Survey

II. ADMINISTRATION

Church Council
10 members Chair (Elected - 2 year term)
Pastor Elder Church Treasurer Trustee Chair
4 Commission Representatives (Elected - 2 year term) (Gifts Discernment, Mission & Service, Nurture, Worship)
Mennonite Women Representative (Elected - 2 year term)
At-Large Representative (Elected - 2 year term)

CONSTITUTION

of WEST UNION MENNONITE CHURCH Parnell, Iowa

Article I NAME

The name of this organization shall be the West Union Mennonite Church. In the Articles of Incorporation filed for record, May 6, 1898, and renewed in 1948, it is known as the West Union Amish Mennonite Church of Greene Township, Iowa County, Iowa.

Article II PURPOSE

The Purpose of this organization shall be to 1) proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved of the community and lead them to faith in Christ and to membership in the church; and 2) establish and strengthen the life of each member through worship, instruction, fellowship, stewardship, and service.

Article III CREED AND AFFILIATION

The congregation accepts the Mennonite Confession of Faith adopted by Mennonite General Conference August, 1963, near Kalona, Iowa. It affiliates with the Central Plains Mennonite Conference, formally known as the Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite Conference, thereby subscribing to the Constitution and Discipline of said conference, and further expresses its willingness to take counsel, give counsel and support the building of the Church.

Article IV MEMBERSHIP

Section I **Reception of Members.**

The membership of this congregation shall consist of persons who have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, have experienced the new birth, have declared their loyalty to the faith and practice of the Mennonite Church, and who have been received into the fellowship of the congregation by baptism, upon confession of faith, or by transfer of church letter.

Section 2 **Privileges of Members.**

A. Every person who holds membership in this congregation is entitled to participate in all the general activities of the church, is eligible to vote on all questions

brought before the church, and is eligible to hold any office in the church for which he has the aptitude and is spiritually qualified.

B. Persons of like faith and practice considering themselves to be in this community only temporarily and wishing to retain membership in their home congregation may be granted associate membership and may participate fully in the life of the church. Associate membership is considered temporary and shall be reviewed with the Board of Elders in three years or less.

C. Persons of like faith and practice may be granted short-term responsibilities in the church upon approval of the Church Council.

Section 3. **Duties of Members.**

It shall be the duty and responsibility of each member to live a holy life, separated from the sins of the world, and consecrated unto God. He shall seek to glorify God in his conduct and to preserve the good name of the Church. He shall attend the services of the church as regularly as possible, support the work of the church with his time, talents, and possessions, and share in witnessing for Christ to the unsaved about him. He shall seek to maintain a caring relationship with other members of the brotherhood. He shall be ready to serve in any capacity in which he is able and to which the Lord through the church may call him.

Section 4. **Loss of Membership.**

Membership in this congregation may be withdrawn by church letter at the request of the individual and consent of the congregation. Persons who fall away from the fellowship of Christ and church shall not be retained as members. Members who fall into a sinful way of life and injure the cause of Christ shall be admonished to confess their sin with genuine penitence. Impenitent transgressors are to be expelled from membership in the congregation. Upon repentance and confession they shall be reinstated to full membership by the approval of the congregation. Any officer or committee member who withdraws his membership from the congregation by letter, or who otherwise ceases to be a member, forfeits immediately his place on any committee and/or his occupancy of any office in the congregation. Any vacancy thus created by death, forfeiture, or withdrawal shall be filled by an appointment made by the Church Council for the remainder of the term.

Section 5. **Real Estate Rights.**

Any members who withdraw from or in any other way lose their membership in the congregation thereby forfeit their rights and privileges to any and all property belonging to the congregation. In the event of a division in the congregation the legal ownership of all property shall reside with those members recognized as the West Union Congregation by the Conference.

Article V
LEADERSHIP

Section 1. **Pastor.**

The pastor(s) of the congregation shall be a scripturally qualified ordained or licensed minister of the gospel, chosen by the congregation through the leadership of the elders and approval of the Church Council and in consultation with the Iowa-Nebraska Conference. The pastor shall be responsible to provide leadership for the equipping of the members for the work of the church. The elders may assist the pastor in discerning priorities for the exercising of his gifts according to the needs of the congregation. The pastor will work in close cooperation with the elders and Church Council in their specific areas of responsibility.

Section 2. **Suggested Duties**

1. Leading the congregation in corporate worship.
2. Declaring the Word in the power of the Spirit.
3. Administering the ordinances of the church.
4. Being responsible for teaching of Instruction Classes for prospective members.
5. Leading the congregation in the reception of new members.
6. Giving counsel in the teaching ministries, the extension activities, the service programs and fellowship activities of the church.
7. Developing an active visitation program.
8. Providing for personal counseling as needed or desired.
9. Leading the congregation in discipling and correcting believers.
10. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
11. Promoting ministry to the unchurched in the community.
12. Cooperating and participating in the work of Conference, Region, and Mennonite Church in general.
13. Cooperating with other churches of the community in areas of mutual interest.

The pastor shall be responsible to the congregation through the elders. He shall prepare an annual report summarizing the life of the congregation for the Fall Business Meeting.

Article VI
BOARD OF ELDERS (PASTORAL CARE COMMISSION)

Section 1. Purpose.

The Board of Elders shall provide leadership, oversight, and guidance in the growth and strengthening of each member so that each member is equipped, enabled and encouraged to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved of the community and lead them to faith in Christ and to membership in the church.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements.

The Board of Elders shall be comprised of the Pastor, Deacon, and four members elected from the congregation. One elder shall be elected each year to a four-year term on a rotating basis. An incumbent of one term or less may be affirmed for a second term. Each year the Elders shall, by mutual agreement, appoint one of their number as Chair and one as representative to the Church Council.

Section 3. General Responsibilities.

The Board of Elders shall:

- 1) Provide spiritual oversight for church programs and activities;
- 2) Provide support and counsel for the Pastor;
- 3) Provide for lay ministries or crisis ministries, as needed;
- 4) Provide for the pastoral care of the members of the congregation.

Section 4. Other Responsibilities.

The Board of Elders shall also:

- 1) Serve as a spiritual advisory group for the Pastor and the congregation;
- 2) Assist in worship services and provide for preaching in the Pastor's absence;
- 3) Assist in administering ordinances;
- 4) Assist with pastoral visitation;
- 5) Serve as a channel of communication between the Pastor and the congregation;
- 6) Review membership lists, applications for membership, letters of recommendation, and the status of inactive members;
- 7) Oversee the selection and call of a new Pastor if the Pastor resigns, takes a leave of absence, or dies.

Section 5. Responsibilities of the Chair.

The Chair of the Board of Elders shall maintain a close relationship with the Pastor, being sensitive to the Pastor's needs, points of stress, concerns, and vision. The Chair shall provide an annual report.

Article VII
MISSION AND SERVICE COMMISSION

Section 1. Purpose

The West Union Mission and Service Commission will advocate for mission, witness, and service that reflect our strengths, gifts and passions. The congregation will be challenged to intentionally examine its opportunities and call to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ through daily life experiences, specific programs, and as called vocational missionaries.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements

This Commission shall be comprised of four members affirmed by the congregation. Members of the Commission shall serve two-year terms. In addition, one youth may be chosen each year by the MYF. The Associate Pastor serves on the Mission and Service Commission as ex-officio member. A chair of the Commission shall be appointed annually by mutual agreement among the Commission's members. The chair shall provide an annual report. Every other year one of the two persons affirmed to this Commission shall be chosen by the congregation to serve as representative to the Church Council for a two-year term.

Section 3. Responsibilities

The Mission and Service Commission shall:

- 1) Encourage and promote prayer for mission and service efforts and those persons involved.
- 2) Share mission and service opportunities with the congregation.
- 3) Identify giftedness and encourage persons to explore mission/service opportunities.
- 4) Counsel, guide and assist persons seeking assignments in and beyond our community in conjunction with the pastoral care commission.
- 5) Provide opportunities to share stories of outreach and mission with the congregation.
- 6) Arrange for support teams for mission and service workers from West Union when requested.
- 7) Serve as a contact between the congregation and mission and service programs of the Mennonite Church USA and other mission and service agencies.
- 8) Disburse information to the congregation pertaining to mission.
- 9) Provide oversight to West Union ministry of worship services and chaplaincy support at Parkview Manor in Wellman. Appoint a representative from West Union Church to the Parkview Manor Chaplaincy Board for a two-year term.
- 10) Appoint West Union's representative for a three-year term to the MCC Relief Sale Committee.

Section 4: **Goals/Job Description**

The Pastoral Care Commission and the Church Council shall assist the Mission and Service Commission in formulating goals for the Commission and job descriptions for specific positions that may be created under this Commission.

(Revised 10/27/2013)

Article VIII
NURTURE COMMISSION

Section 1. Purpose

The Nurture Commission shall initiate, develop, and continue programs that strengthen the life of each member in the congregation through instruction, education, and training.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements.

This Commission shall be comprised of five members affirmed by the congregation. Members of this Commission shall serve two-year terms. A chair of this Commission shall be appointed annually by mutual agreement among the Commission's members. Each year in which two persons are affirmed for this Commission, one of the two shall be elected by the congregation to serve as representative to the Church Council for a two year term. It is preferable that the Church Council representative also serves as Nurture Commission Chair.

Section 3. General Responsibilities.

- 1) The commission shall assume primary oversight for the Sunday School program, youth programs, and the Library Committee.
- 2) A secretary shall be appointed.
- 3) Minutes of each meeting will be distributed to each commission and a copy will be filed in the church office.
- 4) The Nurture Commission chair shall provide an annual report.

Section 4. Other Responsibilities.

The Nurture Commission shall:

- 1) Provide oversight to the Sunday School program, appoint Superintendents, and assist the Superintendents in appointing teachers, if necessary.
- 2) Provide oversight to the Summer Bible School program, and appoint a Bible School Committee.
- 3) Provide oversight to the MYF program and appoint sponsors in consultation with current sponsors, MYF members and/or parents.
- 4) Provide oversight to the Life Planning program and appoint coordinators.
- 5) Provide oversight to the JR MYF, GMSA, and Boy's Club programs and appoint sponsors.
- 6) Provide oversight to the Library Committee and appoint members in conjunction with Mennonite Women.
- 7) Develop vision, resources, and common themes for these programs, as may be appropriate.
- 8) Coordinate activities between various programs that involve the same persons or groups of persons.

- 9) Modify or change any of the above programs, as may be appropriate, with major changes to be approved by the Church Council.

Section 5. **Goals/Job Descriptions**

The Church Council shall assist the Nurture Commission in formulating goals for the Commission and job descriptions for specific positions that may be created under this Commission.

Section 6. **Youth Groups.**

The Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF), Junior Mennonite Youth Fellowship (JRMYP), Girl's Missionary and Service Auxiliary (GMSA), and Boy's Club shall serve in accordance with their own constitutions or guidelines. The Nurture Commission shall provide oversight and leadership for these groups.

Article IX
WORSHIP COMMISSION

Section 1. Purpose.

The Worship Commission shall strengthen the life of each member through worship and fellowship.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements.

This Commission shall be comprised of three members affirmed by the congregation. Members of this Commission shall serve two-year terms. A Leader of this Commission shall be appointed annually by mutual agreement among the Commission's members. The Leader shall provide an annual report. Each year in which two persons are affirmed for this Commission, one of the two shall be elected by the congregation to serve as representative to the Church Council for a two year term.

Section 3. Responsibilities.

The Worship Commission shall:

- 1) Provide Sunday morning worship services;
 - plan the worship activities
 - appoint Song Leaders, Ushers, Greeters, and Secretary of Music as needed
- 2) Provide Sunday evening services (which may include adult activities at the church and/or Little Churches);
 - appoint a Sunday Evening Program Committee, as needed
- 3) Appoint leaders for Sunday Evening primary and junior children's activities, as needed.

Section 4. Goals/Job Descriptions.

The Church Council shall assist the Worship Commission in formulating goals for the Commission and job descriptions for specific positions that may be created under this Commission.

Article X
STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Section 1. Purpose.

The Stewardship Commission shall help the congregation be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us, so that the resources may be used to further both the extension of the Gospel and the nurture of the congregation.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements

This Commission shall be comprised of an elected Chairperson, the Church Treasurer, the Chair of the Trustees, and two Members at Large. The chairperson and treasurer shall be elected for three-year terms on an alternating basis. The two members at large shall be elected for two-year terms in alternating years. In the event of a resignation during a term of service, the Church Council may appoint to fill that position until the term expires. An incumbent of one term or less may be affirmed for a second term.

A separate Trustee Committee shall be comprised of three Trustees affirmed to three-year terms on a rotating basis. These Trustees shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings and grounds of the congregation. The Trustee serving the third year of a term shall be designated as the Chair of the Trustees.

Both the Church Treasurer and the Chair of the Trustees shall serve on the Church Council. The Church Treasurer, the Chair of the Trustees, and the Chair of the Stewardship Commission shall provide an annual report.

Section 3. Responsibilities

The Stewardship Commission shall:

- 1) Advise Trustees on the management of the buildings and grounds and guidelines for use;
- 2) Make recommendations to the Church Council regarding custodial services;
- 3) Review annually the Support Agreement with the Pastor and make recommendations to the Church Council regarding wages and salaries of Pastor and other paid employees;
- 4) Oversee the receipt and disbursement of congregational funds;
- 5) Review and recommend an offering schedule to the Church Council;
- 6) Oversee the Endowment Fund;
- 7) Appoint a Cemetery Trustee, as needed.

Section 4. Goals/Job Descriptions

The Church Council shall assist the Stewardship Commission in formulating goals for the Commission and job descriptions for the Church Treasurer, the Chair of the Trustees and other positions that may be specifically created under this Commission.

Article XI
GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMISSION

Section 1. **Purpose.**

The Gifts Discernment Commission shall facilitate the process of selecting qualified and willing persons to serve in the various church positions.

Section 2. **Members and Term Requirements.**

The Gifts Discernment Commission shall be comprised of five members elected by the congregation. Members of this Commission shall serve two-year terms. Each year the members shall, by mutual agreement, appoint one of their number as Chair and one as representative to the Church Council.

Section 3. **Responsibilities.**

The Gifts Discernment Commission shall:

- 1) Provide the congregation with a slate for election/affirmation at the Summer Business meeting;
- 2) Notify persons of their impending nomination prior to presenting the slate to the congregation;
- 3) Report the Commission's progress on the election/affirmation slate to the Church Council;
- 4) Interview members on a "through-out the year" basis regarding their abilities and gifts;
- 5) Solicit information from other sources (other than individual interviews) regarding abilities, gifts, and suggested names for specific responsibilities;
- 6) Provide information to the other Commissions regarding gifts and availability of members for various positions and tasks.

Article XII
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Mennonite Women

The Mennonite Women shall operate in its own sphere in accordance with its own constitution. The Mennonite Women shall elect a representative to the Church Council, the term of which shall be two years.

Section 2. Mennonite Disaster Service

I. Purpose

The purpose of MDS is to provide aid for victims of disaster locally and serve with the church wide MDS in disaster relief.

II. Officer terms

MDS will have one representative to serve as the contact person for West Union. This representative will serve a 2 year term. The Gifts Discernment Commission will be responsible to find a candidate to serve as representative. This will be an affirmed position on the ballot at the summer business meeting.

III. Responsibilities

- a) Act as West Union's contact person for church wide MDS.
- b) Inform West Union of local and church wide MDS needs.
- c) Inform the appropriate MDS officials, if necessary, of local needs.
- d) Provide an annual report.

IV. Funding

All account balances and funds will be deposited or withdrawn through the West Union general fund and will be designated "MDS Fund".

Article XIII
ADMINISTRATION -- THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Purpose

The Church Council shall plan for and make recommendations on the life and work of the congregation, seek to unify the activities of the church, be available to give counsel to various Commissions and officers, and provide oversight to the process of selecting members to serve in various church positions.

Section 2. Members and Term Requirements

The Church Council shall be comprised of the Pastor, the Chair, an At-Large Member, an Elder, the Church Treasurer, the Chair of the Trustees, a representative elected by the Mennonite Women, a member from the Mission and Service Commission, a member from the Nurture Commission, a member from the Worship Commission, and a member from the Gifts Discernment Commission. Care shall be taken to stagger terms as much as possible to provide for continuity and diminish yearly turnover.

Section 3. The Church Council Chair.

The Church Council Chair shall be elected to the Church Council for a term of two years. An incumbent of one term or less may be affirmed for a second term. The Chair shall call and lead the meetings of the Church Council and Business Meetings of the congregation. The Chair shall inform the congregation of the Church Council's recommendations and decisions. The Chair shall provide an annual report.

Section 4. At-Large Member.

An At-Large Member shall be elected to the Church Council for a term of two years.

Section 5. Commission Representatives.

The Council representatives from the Mission and Service, Nurture and Worship Commissions shall be elected by the congregation for two-year terms. Each year in which two persons are affirmed for these Commissions, one of the two shall be elected as the representative.

Section 6. Responsibilities of the Church Council

Appoint persons to serve in other positions, as needed, including persons listed in *section 8*.

Section 7. Other Affirmed Positions

Delegates to the Central Plains Conference shall be affirmed in accordance with that organization's requirements (presently, one lay delegate per 50 members or fraction thereof). A member of the Stewardship Commission shall be one of these Delegates.

Section 8. Other Appointed Positions.

The persons appointed by the Church Council to serve in the following positions shall be responsible to the Council.

- 1) A Church Historian shall be appointed to a term of six years.
- 2) A Mutual Aid Representative shall be appointed to a term of six years.
- 3) Representatives to the Iowa Mennonite Benevolent Association (Pleasantview Home) shall be appointed in accordance with that Association's requirements (presently, one representative per 100 members or fraction thereof).
- 4) A Representative to the Southeast Iowa Camping Association (Crooked Creek Christian Camp) shall be appointed for a term of three years.

Section 9. **Pastoral/Congregational Evaluation Panel**

The Church Council shall provide for a Pastoral/Congregational Evaluation Panel.

- 1) Composition and Terms
The Panel shall consist of the Church Council Chair, the Stewardship Commission Chair, the Church Council Member at Large, a representative from the Board of Elders, and an additional person named by the Board of Elders. They shall serve until the evaluation process is complete.
- 2) Responsibilities
Lead the congregation every three years in an evaluation of the Congregation and of the Pastoral ministry in a manner that is mutually acceptable to the Pastor and the Pastoral/Congregational Evaluation Panel, and submit a report to the Board of Elders.

Article XIV
ELECTIONS/AFFIRMATIONS

Section 1. Election Procedure.

Annually, the Gifts Discernment Commission shall provide the congregation with the election/affirmation slate for congregational approval. Some positions will be approved by election and some by affirmation. Others will be by appointment by the various Commissions or the Church Council. Nominations to elected positions may also be made from the floor at the business meeting, provided that the nominee has been previously contacted and given assent to their nomination.

Section 2. Definitions.

- 1) "Election" means that the congregation will vote between two qualified persons nominated for an "elected" position.
2. "Affirmation" means that the congregation will vote "yes" or "no" for a qualified person nominated for an "affirmed" position.
- 3) "Appointment" means that a qualified person will be appointed by Commissions or the Church Council to perform specific duties.

Section 3. Method of Election/Affirmation.

Election/affirmation shall be by ballot unless the congregation specifies otherwise. For an elected position, the nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be considered elected. For an affirmed position, a nominee who receives more "yes" votes than "no" votes shall be considered affirmed.

Section 4. Voting Rights.

All communicant members of the congregation shall be eligible to vote. With the consent of the congregation, the Pastor may suggest that on difficult issues the children who are members not be encouraged to vote.

Section 5. Time of Election/Affirmation.

An Annual election/affirmation shall be held during the Summer Business Meeting.

Section 6. Assumption of Office.

All elected, affirmed, and appointed officers and committees shall assume office on September 1, unless otherwise specifically stipulated. All officers and committees shall serve until the duly named successor takes office, and are encouraged to continue making plans and appointments as may be necessary for the following year. The outgoing Leader of each Commission shall call the first meeting of the fiscal year, which meeting shall include the Pastor and the Church Council Chair. This meeting may need to occur prior to September 1.

Section 7. Vacancies.

If any church position becomes vacant because a duly elected or affirmed officer or committee member is unable to complete his/her term of service, the Church Council

shall appoint a person to assume responsibility for such vacancy. If the vacant position is one appointed by a Commission or committee, that Commission or committee shall make the appointment to fill the unexpired term.

Article XV
BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meetings.

An annual business meeting shall be held during the summer months for the purpose of electing/affirming persons to the various church offices, committees, and commissions, and to take action on the proposed offering schedule and any other congregational matters. Another annual business meeting shall be held during the fall months for the purpose of reviewing the various reports of the previous year's activities. Reports are due to the Secretary of the Business Meeting no later than September 7.

Section 2. Notice of Meetings.

It is anticipated that the Summer Business Meeting will be held in July and that the Fall Business Meeting will be held in September. The Church Council shall have discretion to determine the exact dates of these meetings. Notice of the exact date shall be provided two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 3. Special Meetings.

The Church Council may convene special meetings of the congregation by providing the required notice and stating the purpose for such meeting.

Section 4. Quorum.

The quorum required to take action at a business meeting shall be the number of members present at the meeting.

Section 5. Officers of the Business Meeting.

The Church Council Chair shall serve as Chair of the Business Meetings. The Church Secretary shall serve as Secretary for the Business Meetings.

Section 6. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of the congregation shall extend from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

Article XVI
SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be suspended temporarily by a ninety percent (90%) vote of the members present at any annual or special meeting of the congregation.

Article XVII
AMENDMENTS

Amendments may be made to this constitution at any Annual or Special Business meeting without prior notice by a ninety (90%) vote of the members present at such meeting; or, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at such meeting, provided that the congregation shall have been advised of the proposed amendments and its contents at least thirty (30) days prior to the Business Meeting.

Article XVIII
ADOPTION

This constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a duly announced meeting. This constitution, when adopted, supersedes any or all other constitutions of this congregation.

ADOPTED APRIL 4, 1990