

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN OF ELIZABETHTOWN
ELIZABETHTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT

November 19, 2017

CONSTITUTION
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1 **Article I**
2 **Introduction**

3
4 The mission of the church has an inner and an outer direction. The inner direction is the nurture of
5 its members, which seeks to bring them more and more to the stature of maturity in Christ. The
6 outer mission of the church is to proclaim the good news of the gospel and to be related, as God's
7 instrument, to the problems and needs of the world. These two major functions of the church can
8 be achieved to the extent that they are undergirded with stewardship of time, talent, and material
9 resources.

10
11 The Congregation is the basic unit of the church at work in the world. Its members must be alert
12 to the opportunities about them to serve their Lord. They must make their ministry relevant to
13 changing cultural patterns and strive to be creative in communicating the Word and the Love of
14 God.

15
16 To these ends, this constitution defines the organizational structure and working procedures of the
17 Church of the Brethren of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

18
19 **Article II**
20 **Name of Congregation**

21
22 The name of this Congregation shall be the Church of the Brethren of Elizabethtown,
23 Pennsylvania, in which name it is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of
24 Pennsylvania. Hereinafter, it is referred to as "the Congregation."
25

26 **Article III**
27 **Affirmation of Faith and Purpose**

28
29 **The Congregation:**

- 30
31 A. Is founded upon the faith that there is one personal God who, in holy love, creates, sustains,
32 and orders all.
33
34 B. Confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life.
35
36 C. Believes that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of believers, creating and
37 sustaining the Church through the gospel, giving guidance and comfort, and uniting believers
38 with their Lord and with one another.
39
40 D. Maintains the New Testament as its only creed and rule of faith. The Holy Scriptures record
41 God's search for all persons and climax in God's redemptive act in and through Christ.
42
43 E. Believes that the gospel is the good news that God was in Christ reconciling the world, and
44 revealing God's sovereign will and Christ's redeeming grace.
45
46 F. Holds that the Church is the body of Christ and is under the Lord's mandate to be faithful in
47 accepting and communicating the gospel by word and deed.

1 G. Considers that all members of the Congregation are responsible for the total ministry of the
2 Church.

3
4 H. Accepts the ministry of the Church to be the proclamation and fulfillment of the gospel for all
5 people, and the nurture of individual believers in the Christian faith and life.
6

7 **Article IV**
8 **Relationship to the Whole Church**
9

10 **A. The Church Universal**
11

12 This Congregation is part of the larger church which comprises the body of Christ. It, therefore,
13 recognizes other Christian bodies and seeks to support and to share in the cooperative efforts of
14 the church universal.
15

16 **B. The Church Denominational**
17

18 This Congregation covenants to support faithfully the program of the Church of the Brethren, to
19 recognize Annual Conference enactments as having governing force in its life, and to remain a
20 member of the Church of the Brethren or its successor.
21

22 This Congregation shall send delegates to those official conferences of the Church of the Brethren
23 in which it is entitled to have representation.
24

25 The Board Chair shall serve as a delegate to denominational conferences. The Board Chair-elect,
26 the Moderator, or the Church Clerk shall serve as alternates, in that order. The general rules of
27 tenure shall apply.
28

29 Delegates to Annual Conference shall attend all Board meetings, except closed sessions, held from
30 the date of their election and after their attendance at Annual Conference.
31

32 In case of strife or division, if any part of the Congregation refuses to abide by its obligation as a
33 member of the Church of the Brethren, the part of the Congregation, whether a majority or
34 minority of its membership, which continues in unity with the Church of the Brethren, or its
35 successor, shall be recognized as the lawful Congregation and shall continue in possession of all
36 of the property of the Congregation.
37

38 If the Congregation (a) disbands, (b) withdraws from membership in the Church of the Brethren,
39 or its successor, or (c) so decreases in numbers and financial strength as to render the
40 Congregation unable to fulfill its purpose, the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the
41 Brethren, or its successor, shall have the right to take charge and control of all property, and
42 thereafter to hold, manage, and convey the same at the discretion of the District.
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Article V
Membership

A. Meaning of Membership

In the spirit of Christ’s love, the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren welcomes all persons into church membership through baptism, letter, or reaffirmation of faith. The Congregation accepts all persons as members who profess faith in Jesus Christ and strive to live according to his spirit and teachings.

Church membership is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, because it is membership in the body of Christ. Both the Congregation and individual members shall strive diligently to make membership meaningful and significant. Each applicant shall be instructed in the Word of God and the faith and practices of the Church of the Brethren prior to being received into membership. The occasion of being received into membership shall be a service of spiritual dignity, beauty, and meaning.

B. Membership Classification

1. Member

Members of the Congregation shall consist of those persons who have been received into the church by baptism, letter, or reaffirmation of faith. Members shall conscientiously attempt to live according to the spirit and teachings of Christ, seriously attempt to identify with Christ’s mission in the world, and contribute to the local and worldwide mission of the Church in proportion to their ability. They are active in seeking, and the church shall be diligent in helping them, to discover their gifts for ministry in the body of Christ. They are expected to be faithful and active participants at regular worship services, love feasts, communions, and other meetings of the Congregation, and to be faithful stewards of their time, talent, and treasure. In their daily lives they are a witness for Christ in the Church.

This classification, along with that of Associate Member, may be used for statistical purposes and reported accordingly on annual report forms.

2. Associate Member

This designation may be granted to two categories of persons:

- a. Temporary residents, such as college students, or persons who may participate in the life of the Congregation on a seasonal basis and who may hold membership in another Congregation.
- b. Former members, such as members who have moved, thus preventing active participation, but who wish to continue in a member relationship with the Congregation.

1 Associate members have the right to vote and hold office in the Congregation. However, they
2 are not eligible to serve on the Church Board, or to represent the Congregation as delegates to
3 district or annual conference.
4

5 **3. Inactive Member**

6
7 Those persons who are members, but who no longer participate in the church's life or carry out
8 the commitments expected of members, shall be designated Inactive Members.
9

10 **4. Fellowship Directory Designate**

11
12 The fellowship directory includes the names of all Members, all Associate Members, and all
13 those, identified as Fellowship Directory Designates, who want to be listed in the directory due
14 to a desire to be associated with the Congregation.
15

16 For statistical purposes, Inactive Members and Fellowship Directory Designates shall not be
17 counted as members.
18

19 The Congregation may well consider periodic renewal vows and commitments for all its
20 members.
21

22 **C. Reception of Members**

23
24 Members may be received by:

- 25
26 1. Confession of faith and baptism by trine immersion as practiced by the Church of the
27 Brethren.
- 28 2. Letter of transfer from another congregation of the Church of the Brethren or of any duly
29 constituted Christian body, or
- 30 3. Reaffirmation of faith.
31

32 **D. Membership Termination**

33
34 Membership may be terminated by:

- 35
36 1. Death.
- 37 2. Transfer of letter. This action shall be taken at the request of the member that her/his letter
38 be sent to another congregation which she/he wishes to join.
- 39 3. Withdrawal. This action shall be taken at the written request of the member that he/she
40 desires to withdraw as a member of this Congregation.
41

- 1 4. Removal. The Executive Committee may remove a person’s name from the list of
2 members and Fellowship Directory when:
3
4 a. A member has joined another church, but failed to request a letter of transfer and who
5 does not request to be an Associate Member.
6 b. A member has become an inactive member and with no satisfactory resolution.
7

8 **Article VI**
9 **Church Council**

10
11 The Congregational business meeting, hereinafter called “Church Council,” is the final authority
12 and governing body within the Congregation; it is the church in business session. The
13 Congregation in Church Council shall meet a least two times each year to hear reports and
14 evaluate past accomplishments, study present conditions and plan the future program of the
15 church, record the voice of the Congregation on current issues where Christian witness is urgent,
16 and provide opportunity for sharing and coordinating differing points of view.
17

18 **A. Responsibilities**

19
20 Church Council shall:

- 21
22 1. Elect the Moderator and the Church Clerk.
23 2. Confirm the nominees by the Resources Commission for the Church Treasurer, Assistant
24 Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary.
25 3. Elect members of the Board, including the Chair-elect and, if needed, a Chair to complete
26 an unexpired term (*see Article VII.B and XII.F.1.b*).
27 4. Elect delegates to denominational conferences.
28 5. Elect other such officers as are required.
29 6. Adopt budgets, rule upon policy and organizational matters, authorize the proper church
30 officials to act on behalf of the Congregation, and conduct any other matters pertinent to the
31 life and welfare of the Congregation.
32 7. Call persons to serve as pastoral or program staff and act upon terms of employment for all
33 such persons.
34

35 **B. Church Council Schedule**

36
37 Regular Church Council meetings shall normally be held in the Spring and Fall. When necessary,
38 special and/or additional meetings may be called by the Moderator or the Board. Regular
39 meetings shall be announced through the Sunday morning worship bulletins at least two weeks
40 prior to the meeting date, with additional notices, when possible, such as announcements in the
41 church newsletter.
42

43 Special and/or additional Church Council meetings shall be announced at least ten days prior to
44 the meeting date by written notice, which shall include the reason for calling the meeting, to all
45 members.
46

47 Members and Associate Members of the Congregation shall be eligible to vote in Church Council.

1 **C. Agenda**

2
3 The agenda for Church Council meetings shall be made available at least one week prior to the
4 meetings. When the agenda includes an election, the proposed slate shall be included with the
5 agenda.

6
7 **D. Quorum**—(see Article XIV.D)

8
9 **Article VII**
10 **Church Board**

11
12 **A. Role**

13
14 The Church Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Board,” shall be invested with administrative
15 powers to plan, coordinate, integrate, and supervise the program of the Congregation. The Board
16 shall be empowered to act on behalf of Church Council between Council meetings, except for
17 items specifically needing the action of Church Council.

18
19 **B. Membership**

20
21 The Church Board shall be comprised of either twelve (12) or thirteen (13) persons. There shall
22 be ten (10) elected persons, consisting of two members from each of the five Commissions, a
23 Deacon representative, as well as the Board Chair and the Board Chair-elect. The Moderator,
24 Pastoral Staff, Church Clerk, and Church Treasurer (Assistant Treasurer in the absence of
25 Treasurer) shall be ex-officio members of the Church Board without vote.

26
27 From each Commission, a Chair and a Vice-Chair shall be elected by the respective Commissions.
28 The Deacon representative shall be elected by the Deacon body.

29
30 The Church Clerk shall serve as Secretary of the Church Board.

31
32 **C. Organization**

33
34 In Addition to a Board Chair, there shall be either a Board Chair-elect or a Board Vice-Chair. The
35 latter, elected by the Board from among the Commission Chairs, shall be elected only in those
36 years when there is no Board Chair-elect. The position of Board Vice-Chair is one created
37 internally for the convenience of the Board. Holding the position of Board Vice-Chair has no
38 relationship to any future election to the position of Board Chair-elect.

39
40 Any unexpired term of the Board Chair shall be filled by Church Council action, in regular or
41 special session, within one month after the vacancy occurs, from a slate prepared by the Gifts
42 Discernment Committee. However, the Board shall be empowered to make temporary
43 appointments as needed until Church Council acts. Prompt public announcements of such actions
44 shall be made.

1 **D. Specific Functions**

2
3 Specific functions of the Church Board shall be to:

- 4
5 1. Fulfill Church Council directives.
6 2. Report its activities and action to Church Council.
7 3. Bring recommendations regarding church policy to Church Council.
8 4. Supervise long-range planning, set goals, and initiate new programs.
9 5. Assign, supervise, and coordinate the work of the Commissions.
10 6. Interpret rules of procedure for Commissions and committees.
11 7. Prepare and submit to Church Council a budget for approval.
12 8. Process appropriately any concerns brought by groups or individuals.
13 9. Enlist the help and the consultative resources of the Congregation, the district, and the
14 denomination in program planning and handling of special concerns.
15 10. Make all appointments for which the Board is responsible.*
16 11. Act on recommendations of the Executive Committee on candidates for pastoral, associate
17 and program staff vacancies, and present recommendations of personnel and terms of
18 employment to Church Council.*
19 12. Employ operational staff personnel based on recommendations of candidates and terms of
20 employment as presented by the Executive Committee.*
21 13. Hold regular meetings and special meetings as needed (Special Board meetings may be
22 called by the Board Chair or by the Moderator).
23 14. Appoint a Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary, acting upon
24 the recommendation of the Resources Commission, subject to confirmation by Church
25 Council.*

26
27 *See Article XIV.C for required vote margins and Article XII.F.2,3 for term and tenure rules.
28

29 **E. Board Chair, Duties of**

30
31 The Board Chair shall serve as a liaison between the various structures of the Congregation and
32 shall carry major responsibility in assisting the Board to plan, coordinate, and supervise the
33 ongoing program. The Board Chair shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee and work
34 with the pastoral staff in planning agendas for the Board and the Executive Committee. The
35 Board Chair, the pastoral staff, and the Moderator shall prepare the agenda for Church Council
36 meetings. The Board Chair serves as administrative leadership to the Congregation and as an ex
37 officio member of the Finance Committee.
38

39 **F. Standing Committees**

40
41 **1. Gifts Discernment Committee**

42
43 a. Membership

44
45 The Gifts Discernment Committee shall consist of at least five members for a term of three
46 years, with staggered terms. A pastor shall serve ex officio, without vote. The slate for
47 members of this committee shall be prepared by the Executive Committee and submitted to

1 Church Council for approval. The voting members shall not hold membership on the Board
2 during their service on this committee. The Executive Committee appoints the Chair of the
3 committee. Care should be taken to insure that persons chosen are active in the life of the
4 Congregation, committed to its mission and vision, and enthusiastic about calling persons to
5 use their gifts in the service of the church.

6
7 b. Responsibilities

8
9 The Gifts Discernment Committee shall:

10
11 i. Oversee the gifts discernment process on behalf of the church to meet its leadership
12 needs by engaging in careful and prayerful discernment to match persons' gifts with a call
13 to a specific leadership role in the Congregation.

14
15 ii. Develop and oversee the talent/interest/skill inventories, keeping up-to-date records
16 available for use by anyone in the church seeking help in securing persons for the
17 ministries of the church.

18
19 iii. Develop descriptions for filling the positions for which they are responsible using a
20 standardized form to include position, title, term, tenure, group to whom accountable,
21 duties, appointments and suggested gifts needed to carry out the duties. Using the gifts
22 discernment process, be responsible for calling persons to serve in congregational
23 leadership. These persons include Moderator, Church Board members and representatives
24 to Annual and District Conference. Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary
25 are recommended to the Gifts Discernment Committee by Resources Commission. A list
26 of names for consideration as Deacons are recommended to the Gifts Discernment
27 Committee by the Deacon Body.

28
29 iv. Announce openings and corresponding responsibilities for these positions at least
30 four months prior to Fall Council, educate the Congregation about the importance of gifts
31 discernment, and solicit suggestions for these positions. After prayerful discernment,
32 extend the call of the church to persons for these positions. Prepare a slate for approval at
33 Fall Council.

34
35 v. The secretary of the Gifts Discernment Committee shall officially notify newly
36 elected persons of their respective positions.

37
38 vi. Members completing their term shall serve as mentors as needed for ongoing
39 support.

40
41 vii. The committee shall keep an up-to-date collection of Commission and committee
42 handbooks for sharing with newly elected persons.
43
44

45 **2. Stewardship Education Committee**

1 **Article VIII**
2 **Commissions**

3
4 **A. Membership**

5
6 Each Commission shall be composed of five members, four selected by Church Council for their
7 respective Commissions, and one appointed by each Commission, subject to Board approval.

8
9 Each Commission shall select one of its members to serve as Chair and one of its members to
10 serve as Vice-Chair, subject to Board approval. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be the
11 representatives to the Church Board. Each Commission shall select a Secretary and shall bring a
12 nomination to the Board for its fifth member. If either the Chair or Vice Chair is unable to be
13 present at a Board meeting, it will be his or her responsibility to designate another Commission
14 member to be present in his or her absence.

15 Normally, it is expected that persons serving as Chair of the Commission will have served at least
16 one year on that Commission. Under unusual or special circumstances, persons serving in their
17 first year may serve as Chair. Such a person should have had relevant experience, so as to be sure
18 that the work of the Commission moves ahead, unimpeded.

19
20 Each Commission shall report to the Church Board through one of its designated representatives.

21
22 Commissions shall be responsible for establishing a regular meeting schedule as necessary to
23 fulfill their responsibilities. These meeting dates shall be posted on the church calendar.

24
25 **B. General Responsibilities**

26
27 The five (5) Commissions shall be integral parts of the Board.

28
29 Responsibilities listed relate mostly to present programs, but should not limit future vision toward
30 other programs.

31
32 As the emphasis of the church mission shifts to meet needs, Commissions may need to name
33 committees, trade responsibilities with other established Commissions, and/or recommend to the
34 Executive Committee the establishment of a new Commission.

35
36 Specific duties/responsibilities of each Commission shall be documented in each Commission
37 handbook (*see Article XIV.F*).

38
39 Minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Commission secretary according to the current
40 procedures. All Commission secretaries shall submit the minutes of each meeting to the church
41 office within ten days to two weeks. (*see Article XIV.G*.) A policy on electronic communication
42 and recording of minutes will be established by the computer systems analyst.

1 **C. Specific Commissions**

2
3 **1. Commission on Nurture**

4
5 Nurture Commission has responsibility for the inner mission of the Church. The Commission
6 shall be responsible for providing experiences that enable persons of all ages to develop faith
7 and grow in Christ-likeness as disciples. The Commission shall assume responsibility for
8 opportunities that strengthen the Body of Christ by building and nurturing friendships and
9 relationships.

10
11 **2. Commission on Witness**

12
13 Witness Commission has responsibility for the outer mission of the Church, planning and
14 directing the Congregation's witness to the world through evangelism, church extension,
15 ecumenical relations, missions, social action, volunteer and international service, and mass
16 media. The Commission shall assume responsibility for evangelism, social action, material
17 aid, volunteer service, community relations, and personal witness.

18
19 **3. Commission on Resources**

20
21 Resources Commission has responsibility for planning and developing the Congregation's
22 total resources of property and building, so that they may be dedicated to the purposes of God
23 through the Church.

24
25 **4. Commission on Expressions**

26
27 Expressions Commission has responsibility for the celebratory aspects of the Congregation.
28 Specifically, the Commission shall be responsible for providing programs related to worship,
29 music, drama, congregational and denominational celebrations, some fellowship events, and
30 the recruitment, training and supervision of persons who are designated to carry out these
31 function.

32
33 **5. Commission on Christian Education**

34
35 Christian Education Commission has the responsibility for providing faith formational
36 experiences through programming that enables participants of all ages to grow in their
37 understanding of God and the Bible. The Commission shall provide intentional instruction in
38 the faith, which encourages maturity and life application. The Commission shall assume
39 responsibility for the development, training and care of teachers and leaders.

**Article IX
Committees**

A. Executive Committee

1. Membership

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Board Chair, the Board Chair-elect, the five (5) Commission Chairs, and the Deacon representative to the Board. The Moderator, the pastoral staff, the Treasurer (Assistant Treasurer in absence of Treasurer), and the Church Clerk shall be ex officio committee members, without vote. The Board Chair and the Church Clerk shall serve as Executive Committee Chair and Secretary, respectively.

2. Responsibilities

The Executive Committee shall:

- a. Meet as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
- b. Act on behalf of the Board between Board meetings.
- c. Represent the Congregation in screening, interviewing, and recommending to the Board all candidates for salaried pastoral staff positions, with the terms of their employment. The procedures used in screening and negotiating with ordained candidates for pastoral staff vacancies shall be consistent with denominational and district procedures and in consultation with the District Executive, with the Executive Committee retaining responsibility for personnel matters while being free to delegate certain tasks to a Search Committee and/or Human Resources Committee.
- d. Annually review the work of the Human Resources Committee, the responsibilities of which are described below.
- e. Determine, in consultation with the persons involved, the schedules and terms for vacations, professional growth programs, and in-service training opportunities for pastoral staff members.
- f. Review with and/or assign staff persons to work with specific Commissions as ex officio without vote, program staff persons to coordinate their responsibilities with and report to specific Commissions, and operational staff persons to work under and report to other staff persons, Commissions, or committees.
- g. Appoint members to the Gifts Discernment Committee and appoint the Chair of the committee from the committee's membership.
- h. Appoint members to the Human Resources Committee and appoint the Chair of the committee from the committee's membership.
- i. Appoint members to the Finance Committee and appoint the Chair of the committee from the committee's membership.
- j. Implement programs in coordination with the deacons and the pastors to promote re-engagement of inactive members.
- k. Carry responsibility for ministerial relations including but not limited to the following: consult semi-annually or as needed with pastoral staff regarding their roles, responsibilities, and matters of pastoral, professional, or personal concerns, and discuss issues raised by members of the Congregation related to pastoral ministry and performance.

- 1 l. Develop, in consultation with the Human Resources Committee, an annual plan for a
2 performance review of pastoral staff to enhance their ministry and leadership. Review
3 annual plans for professional development activities prepared by pastoral staff.
4 Approximately every three years supervise a more comprehensive performance review of
5 pastoral staff that includes input from members of the Congregation.
6 m. Every five years (or as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee), the Human
7 Resources Committee shall conduct an overall broad based appraisal of the various
8 ministries of this Congregation excluding areas in the job description of the pastors.
9

10 **3. Standing Committee(s)**

11
12 Standing committee(s) of the Executive Committee include the following: Human Resources
13 Committee, Finance Committee
14

15 **a. Human Resources Committee**

16 17 **i. Membership**

18
19 The Human Resources Committee shall consist of four members appointed by the
20 Executive Committee, one of whom shall be designated by the Executive Committee as
21 Chair of the Human Resources Committee. They should be members of the church
22 with gifts/experience in professional development/human resources. Members of this
23 committee shall not hold membership on the Church Board during their service on this
24 committee. Members shall serve staggered four-year terms, with tenure of two
25 consecutive terms.
26

27 **ii. Responsibilities**

28
29 1). The Human Resources Committee shall oversee the screening, interviewing and
30 recommend to the Board all candidates for salaried personnel positions with the
31 terms of their employment* The procedures used in screening and negotiating with
32 ordained candidates for pastoral staff vacancies shall be consistent with
33 denominational and district procedures and in consultation with the District
34 Executive.
35

36 2). The Human Resources Committee shall counsel and negotiate with all employed
37 persons regarding changes to salary, terms of employment, duties, and working
38 relationships.
39

40 3). The Human Resources Committee is responsible for analyzing and making
41 recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding personnel issues such as
42 compensation, professional development and evaluation. All personnel authority is
43 retained by Executive Committee as outlined in Article IX, A, 2.
44

45 4). Review the schedules and terms for vacations, professional growth programs
46 and in-service training opportunities for staff members.
47

1 5). Every five years (or as deemed necessary the by the Executive Committee), the
2 Human Resources Committee shall conduct an overall broad based appraisal of the various
3 ministries of this Congregation excluding areas in the job description of the pastors.
4

5 *The committee may be assisted in this process by the Resources Commission (in
6 collaboration with the Human Resources Committee for Operational staff) and
7 with the Expressions Commission for music staff.
8

9 **b. Finance Committee**

10
11 **i. Membership**

12
13 Five members appointed by the Executive Committee, including the Chairs of the
14 Stewardship Education and Investment Committees, one of whom shall be designated by
15 the Executive Committee as Chair of the Finance Committee. In addition, the Church
16 Board Chair, Church Board Chair-Elect (when applicable), Financial Secretary, Pastor and
17 Treasurer should serve as ex officio members. The appointed members shall be members
18 of the church with gifts/experience in finance. Members of this committee shall not hold
19 membership on the Church Board during their service on this committee. Members shall
20 serve staggered three-year terms, with tenure of two consecutive terms.
21

22 **ii. Responsibilities**

- 23
24 1) Recommend policies that maintain and improve the financial health and integrity
25 of the congregation.
26
27 2) Review and recommend a long-range financial plan for the congregation.
28
29 3) Review and recommend an annual operating budget consistent with the
30 congregations' long-range financial plan and financial policies.
31
32 4) Analyze and report to Executive Committee the financial impact of any proposed
33 new programs, projects and changes to staff.
34
35 5) Monitor the financial performance and identify significant trends of the
36 congregation as a whole.
37
38 6) Work with the Stewardship Education Committee to identify opportunities for
39 strengthening the personal financial health of the congregation.
40
41 7) Identify and promote opportunities for members to make bequests for the long
42 range sustainability of the congregation.
43

44 **c. Special Committees**

45
46 Church Council, the Executive Committee, and/or the Board may constitute or authorize
47 other committees as deemed necessary.

1 In addition, the Commissions may appoint committees for specific assignments within the scope
2 of the Commission’s responsibilities. Special committees shall meet as directed by the
3 constituting or authorizing group.
4

5 Terms of office and tenure for special committees shall be determined by the constituting or
6 authorizing group. Short-term committees [ad hoc] shall serve until their assignment has been
7 completed.
8

9
10 **Article X**
11 **The Deacon Body**

12 **A. Qualifications for Office**

13
14 The Congregation shall enlist the aid of members to serve as Deacons. They shall be persons who
15 strive to be committed and faithful to Christ and the Church. They shall be responsible for helping
16 to meet physical and spiritual needs of the members and friends of the Congregation.
17

18 **B. Terms of Office**

19
20 Deacons shall be called by Church Council for continuously renewable three-year terms, with no
21 mandatory term interruption.
22

23 Continuing service of persons already members of the Deacon Body shall utilize the following
24 procedure:
25

- 26 1. In preparation for the September Deacon Body business meeting, the Head Deacon(s) shall
27 ask each Deacon in his/her third year if he/she wishes to return the next year to begin
28 another term. The names of all Deacons who wish to return will be listed and shared at
29 the meeting. If any Deacon believes that anyone on the list has not fulfilled his/her role
30 satisfactorily, that Deacon shall report this concern to the Head Deacon(s) within one
31 week. Any such concerns shall be reported to the pastor(s) for resolution.
- 32 2. All names remaining on the list shall be forwarded to the Gifts Discernment Committee,
33 with the stipulation that all persons on the list have fulfilled their duties as outlined in the
34 congregational constitution and the Deacon Body Handbook.
- 35 3. All names remaining on the list which are given the approval of the Executive Committee
36 and the Church Board shall be forwarded for the approval of Church Council.
37

38 When additional Deacons are needed, members shall be called to service by the Deacon Body and
39 the Gifts Discernment Committee in accordance with constitutional procedures.
40

41 **C. Nominating and Calling Deacons**

42
43 When any vacancy occurs on the Deacon Body, the replacement(s) shall be called by the
44 following procedure:
45

- 46 1. The vacancy(ies) shall be publicized by the Gifts Discernment Committee.
- 47 2. The Deacon Body shall be asked to provide names.

- 1 3. The Gifts Discernment Committee, assisted as needed by members and officers of the
2 Deacon Body, shall begin contacting eligible persons on the list.

3
4 The procedure should continue until a slate of names equal in number to the vacancies has been
5 provided. This slate of names prepared by the Gifts Discernment Committee shall then be given
6 to the Church Board to be forwarded to Church Council for approval.

7 8 **D. Organization of the Deacon Body**

- 9
10 1. *Annual Organizational Meeting.* An organizational meeting of the Deacon Body, either
11 regular or special, shall be held prior to the fall meeting of Church Council to elect those
12 officers needing to be published in the Fellowship Directory. Additional internal
13 organization, according to the guidelines described in the Deacon Body Handbook, shall
14 be completed early in January of the new calendar year, after new Deacons have been
15 installed.
- 16
17 2. *Officers.* The entire Deacon Body shall elect:
 - 18 a. A Head Deacon or co-Head Deacons, chosen from among those Deacons who have
19 served at least one full three-year term before beginning a term as Head Deacon.
 - 20 b. A Secretary who shall keep minutes in accordance with Article XIV of this
21 constitution.
- 22
23 3. *Member of Executive Committee and Church Board.* The Deacon representative shall be
24 elected by the Deacon body to serve on the Church Board and the Executive Committee.
- 25
26 4. *Ex officio Members.* The Moderator and the pastoral staff shall serve as members ex officio
27 of the Deacon Body, without vote.

28 29 **E. Affirmation of Deacons**

30
31 A service of affirmation shall be held within three months following the meeting at which the
32 Deacons have been confirmed by Church Council action. The pastoral staff may select the service
33 in *For All Who Minister, Deacon Manual for Caring Ministry* or use other suitable materials.

34
35 The service of affirmation shall include:

- 36
37 1. New Deacons.
- 38 2. Deacons returning to service following a period of inactivity.
- 39 3. Reaffirmation of continuing Deacons.

40 41 **F. Duties of the Deacon Body**

42
43 The Deacon Body's central interest is the spiritual and physical well-being of the church family.
44 Its duties differ significantly from the tasks of Commissions, whose responsibilities are expressed
45 in programs aimed to support, nurture, teach, and direct the ministry and mission of all the
46 Congregation. In contrast, the Deacon Body is concerned with the personal needs of
47 congregational members.

1 Specific duties and guidelines are described in the Deacon Body Handbook, current edition, in
2 keeping with the following central principles:

- 3
- 4 1. Ministry at baptism and assistance with new converts.
- 5 2. Ministry at the love feast and communion.
- 6 3. Ministry to the poor and needy in the Congregation.
- 7 4. Ministry to the sick and shut-ins of the Congregation.
- 8 5. Ministry of reconciliation and restoration.
- 9 6. Ministry through a variety of personal care programs.
- 10 7. Ministry to the bereaved.
- 11 8. Other ministries as they present themselves.

12 **G. Accountability**

13
14
15 For procedural purposes, the Deacon Body is accountable to both the Executive Committee and
16 Church Council, routinely reporting to both bodies. This shall not be construed as being in
17 conflict with the intent of Section F. above.

18 19 **Article XI** 20 **Special Interest Groups**

21
22 Various special interest groups or age groups may emerge from time-to-time within the
23 Congregation and begin to operate under its auspices. Such groups shall be approved by the
24 Board, which shall then assign all such groups to one of the Commissions, to the Executive
25 Committee, or to the Deacon Body for purposes of reporting periodically of their stewardship,
26 purpose, and activities.

27
28 All organizations within the Congregation shall exist to aid in fulfilling the mission and in
29 affirming the faith and purpose of the church as described in this constitution.

30 31 **Article XII** 32 **Lay Leadership Personnel and Related Matters**

33 34 **A. Officials of the Congregation**

35 36 **1. Church Council Officers**

37
38 The officers of Church Council shall be the Moderator, the Church Clerk, the Church
39 Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary.

40 41 **2. Legal Matters**

- 42
- 43 a. The legal officers for the corporate body shall be:
 - 44 (1) Moderator.
 - 45 (2) Church Clerk.
 - 46 (3) Chair of the Resources Commission.
- 47

1 b. Special Procedures for Financial Officers

2
3 (1) Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

4
5 The Resources Commission shall recommend candidates for Church Treasurer,
6 Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary to the Board, which shall then recommend
7 their names to Church Council (*see Article VI.A.*).

8
9 (2) Financial Bond

10
11 The Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall give
12 corporate surety in amounts determined by the Board, for which the premiums shall be
13 paid by the Congregation.

14
15 **B. Eligibility for Office**

16
17 All persons elected or appointed to the Board, to Commissions, to the Deacon Body, and to
18 standing committees shall be members of this Congregation.

19
20 As a general principle, persons shall not be asked to carry more than one major responsibility at
21 one time.

22
23 **C. Dependability**

24
25 If any Board, Commission, continuing committee member, or any elected official is absent,
26 without cause, from meetings for three consecutive months, the office shall be declared by the
27 Board to be vacant, and the unexpired term shall be filled by Church Council at its next regular or
28 special meeting.

29
30 **D. Responsibilities**

31
32 **1. Moderator**

33
34 The Moderator is a member of the Church of the Brethren called by Church Council to serve a
35 two-year term (renewable twice). The Moderator typically is a member of this Congregation.
36 If the Moderator is unable to perform the duties of the office, the Executive Committee shall
37 appoint an acting Moderator until the Moderator can resume the role, or the vacancy is filled.
38 The Moderator provides general leadership to the Congregation, but not administrative
39 leadership, which is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board.

40
41 The Moderator:

- 42 1. Promotes the well-being and shalom of the community.
43 2. Facilitates the process of the ministry of the Congregation.
44 3. Encourages communication among all members by maintaining opportunities for open
45 dialogue on issues.
46 4. Fosters an open and safe environment that enables Church Council to hear and process
47 various points of view.

- 1 5. Provides opportunities for the Congregation to learn healthy ways to manage conflict.
- 2 6. Helps the Congregation address specific issues that are creating conflict and provides
- 3 mediators to resolve conflicts by enlisting persons trained in reconciliation.
- 4 7. Prepares the agenda for the meetings of Church Council in consultation with the Board
- 5 Chair and Pastors.
- 6 8. Conducts Church Council meetings.
- 7

8 The Moderator is a non-voting member of the Executive Committee and the Board and a legal
9 officer of the Congregation. In the event the Moderator is not a member of the Congregation,
10 the Executive Committee will appoint one of its members to serve as legal officer in lieu of the
11 Moderator.

12 **2. Church Clerk**

13 **a. Minutes**

14 The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of Church Council meetings, Board
15 meetings, and Executive Committee meetings. These minutes shall be submitted to the
16 church office within ten days to two weeks. The Church Clerk is a legal officer for
17 the corporate body and is a non-voting member of the Executive Committee and the
18 Board.
19

20 **3. Church Treasurer**

21 The Church Treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of the Finance Committee and the
22 Board. The Treasurer shall keep a book of accounts for the Congregation and shall receive the
23 Financial Secretary's bank deposit slips for all contributions. The Treasurer shall report
24 receipts and disbursements to each regular Church Council meeting, shall report the general
25 state of finances periodically to the Board, and shall submit all accounts to an audit annually at
26 the direction of the Board.
27

28 **4. Assistant Treasurer**

29 The Assistant Treasurer shall understand and be available to carry out the responsibilities of
30 the Treasurer in the event the Treasurer is unavailable.
31

32 **5. Financial Secretary**

33 The Financial Secretary shall receive, keep records of, and deposit in a bank all contributions
34 from members, public and private offerings, and all other receipts. At least two persons shall
35 count and verify in writing to the Financial Secretary and to the Church Treasurer all public
36 offerings. The Financial Secretary is reportable to the Finance Committee.
37

38 **E. Church Board** (*See Article VII*)

39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

1 **F. Personnel and Tenure**

2
3 **1. Election Schedule**

- 4
5 a. Fall Church Council: Moderator, Church Clerk, Commission members for Christian
6 Education, Nurture, Expressions, Resources and Witness, Board Chair-elect, and delegates
7 to denominational conferences and Gifts Discernment Committee members.
8 b. Unexpired terms of any above-mentioned positions shall be filled by Church Council
9 elections at the next meeting after the vacancy occurs. If necessary, however, the
10 Executive Committee or the Board may make interim appointments. Such appointments
11 shall be announced promptly to the Congregation.
12 c. Vote margin required: *see Article XIV.C.5.*

13
14 **2. Terms of Office**

- 15
16 a. Commission Chair, Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board-
17 appointed Commission members: **one year.**
18 b. Moderator, Church Clerk, district meeting delegates, and, effective 1999, Annual
19 Conference delegates (one year as delegate-elect and one year, immediately following,
20 as delegate): **two years.**
21 c. Board members: **three years.**
22 d. The term of office of the Church Board Chair shall be divided as follows: **one year as**
23 **Board Chair-elect and two years, immediately following, as Board Chair.**
24 e. Deacons: **three years.**
25 f. Appointed Deacon member of the Executive Committee and Church Board: **one year.**
26 g. Gifts Discernment Committee: **three years.**
27 h. Human Resources Committee members: **four years.**
28 i. Finance Committee members: **three years.**

29
30 **3. Tenure**

- 31
32 a. Board Chair: **one term.**
33 b. Church Clerk, Gifts Discernment Committee, Commission members: **two consecutive**
34 **terms.**
35 c. Moderator: **three consecutive terms.**
36 d. With the approval of a majority of other Commission members, one person may serve
37 as Chair for his or her entire term on the Commission.
38 e. With the approval of a majority of the entire Deacon Body, the Head Deacon(s) may
39 serve for an **unlimited number of three-year terms.**
40 f. Appointed Commission members: **three consecutive terms.**
41 g. An elected Board or Commission member may serve no more than two consecutive
42 terms.
43 h. The members of each Commission (including the Chairs) shall have staggered terms
44 over a **three-year period.**
45 i. The Moderator and the Church Clerk shall have terms expiring on alternate years.
46 j. Deacons: **unlimited consecutive three-year terms.**
47 k. Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary: **ten consecutive terms.**

- 1 l. District meeting or denominational conference delegates: **one term in any five**
- 2 **consecutive years** (except for full-time pastoral staff members).
- 3 m. Elected Gifts Discernment Committee members: **two consecutive terms**.
- 4 n. Elected Human Resources Committee members: **two consecutive terms**.
- 5 o. Appointed Finance Committee members: **two consecutive terms**.
- 6 p. In applying the above tenure rules, service of more than half a term shall be considered
- 7 a term of service.
- 8 q. After a term of office has been served, a period of one year shall elapse before a
- 9 member will be eligible to serve again.

10

11 **G. Training of Lay Workers**

12

13 All officers of standing committees, Commissions or the Board shall be encouraged to attend any

14 training sessions which may be organized and/or endorsed by the Board.

15

16 **Article XIII**

17 **Employed Staff**

18

19 **A. Pastoral Staff**

20

21 The Congregation may employ a pastor or pastors whose faith, aptness to teach, preach, counsel,

22 and administer are of high quality. Each pastor shall be expected to have completed a Church of

23 the Brethren-approved ordination program. (In special interim situations, a licentiate or a minister

24 from another denomination may serve upon approval by the District Board.) Pastors shall accept

25 and adhere to the faith and practice of the Church of the Brethren and this Congregation, as set

26 forth in Article III of this constitution. Their lives and conduct shall witness to the Christian faith.

27

28 The pastoral staff provides spiritual nurture for the Congregation and leadership for its program.

29 The pastoral staff shall be accountable to Church Council through the Executive Committee of the

30 Board.

31

32 In case of multiple pastoral staff members, the Executive Committee shall review with and/or

33 assign specific persons to serve as ex officio members of the Board, the Executive Committee, the

34 Gifts Discernment Committee, the Deacon Body, and specific Commissions, without vote.

35

36 Under certain circumstances, with the approval of Church Council, duties of members of the

37 pastoral staff may merge with duties performed by members of the program staff cited below.

38

39 **B. Additional Staff**

40

41 **1. Program Staff**

42

43 The Congregation may employ program staff persons for specific program areas, such as

44 music, youth work, community action, or other areas as recommended by the Board and

45 approved by Church Council. They shall be assigned to work within the areas of specific

46 Commissions. They shall be responsible for the enrichment, development, planning, and

47 implementation of the program for the persons and/or groups with which they work.

1 **2. Operational Staff**

2
3 Operational staff persons, such as office secretaries, administrative assistants, custodians, etc.,
4 are employed by the Board for the Congregation. They shall be assigned by the Executive
5 Committee to work under the direction of a specific staff person, Commission, or committee
6 and to report to that person or group.
7

8 **C. Hiring Procedure**

9
10 **1. All Staff Persons**

11
12 In the employment of all staff persons, the Executive Committee, or its designated committee,
13 shall represent the Congregation in seeking, screening, interviewing, and nominating to the
14 Board suitable candidates. If a designated committee acts as a search committee, it shall
15 present its candidate(s) to the Executive Committee.
16

17 **2. Pastoral Staff**

18
19 At the time of the calling of additional or replacement pastoral staff, the Executive Committee
20 shall review and determine the titles and job descriptions of both current and incoming staff.
21 The lines of authority and responsibility between the members of the pastoral staff and the
22 Executive Committee, as well as the lines between/among the pastors themselves, shall be
23 clearly delineated by the Executive Committee. Recommendations for the initial or continued
24 employment of all pastoral personnel and for all relationships involving current and incoming
25 pastoral staff shall be presented at the same meeting of Church Council.
26

27 **3. Review and Evaluation**

28
29 The Executive Committee shall review the arrangements regularly, coincidental with routine
30 evaluation of pastoral staff.

31
32 Any and all subsequent changes in job descriptions shall be presented to Church Council for
33 approval.
34

35 **Article XIV**
36 **Procedural Guidelines**
37

38 **A. Rules of Order**

39
40 Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall
41 be the official rules of order for Church Council and Board meetings.
42

43 **B. Fiscal Year and Church Year**

44
45 The fiscal year and church calendar shall be that established by the Annual Conference of the
46 denomination.
47

1 **C. Vote Margin Required for Action**

2
3 **1. Constitutional Amendment**

4
5 This constitution may be amended by a sixty (60) percent vote of the members present and
6 voting at any regular or special session of Church Council, provided that written notice of the
7 proposed amendment has been given in the notice of the meeting in accordance with Article
8 VI of this constitution.

9
10 Handbooks may be amended by the originating body, subject to the approval of the Executive
11 Committee.

12
13 **2. Staff Calling or Retention**

14
15 A two-thirds (minimum) favorable vote of the membership of the Search Committee shall be
16 necessary to forward the name of a candidate to the Board.

17
18 A two-thirds (minimum) favorable vote of the membership of the Board shall be necessary to
19 forward the name of a candidate to Church Council.

20
21 A two-thirds (minimum) favorable vote of the members of the Congregation present and
22 voting at a regular or special meeting of Church Council shall be necessary for the original or
23 continued employment of pastoral staff members.

24
25 For program staff members, a majority favorable vote of the members of the Congregation
26 present and voting at a regular or special meeting of Church Council shall be necessary for
27 initial or continued employment.

28
29 For operational staff members, a majority favorable vote of the Board members present and
30 voting at a regular or special meeting of the Board shall be necessary for employment.

31
32 **3. Church Council motions—See Article XIV.C.5.**

33
34 **4. Church Board action—See Article XIV.C.5.**

35
36 **5. General action**

37
38 The outcome of all motions and elections, except as designated otherwise, shall be by majority
39 vote.

40
41 **D. Quorum**

42
43 Those members present at any regular or specially called Church Council meeting shall constitute
44 a quorum and shall be entitled to conduct business, provided the meeting has been announced in
45 accordance with Article VI of this constitution. The place of meetings shall be the usual
46 assembling place of the Congregation, unless announced otherwise.

1 For Board and/or Commission meetings, fifty (50) percent of the elected members shall constitute
2 a quorum.

3
4 **E. Meetings, who may attend**

5
6 Board meetings, Commission meetings, and Executive Committee meetings shall be open to all
7 members of the Congregation, except when those respective groups vote to hold closed sessions to
8 consider matters of a confidential nature. Minutes of such meetings or portions of meetings which
9 have been declared closed meetings shall not be made available to the general membership.

10
11 **F. Handbooks**

12
13 The Executive Committee, the Board, each Commission, the Deacon Body, and each standing
14 committee shall have a handbook.

15
16 Each handbook shall contain, minimally:

- 17
18 1. A timeline for performing duties on an annual basis.
19 2. A list of all committees responsible to the body, along with their specific duties and a
20 timeline, if appropriate.
21 3. A list of all appointments to be made by the body, along with duties, term, etc. Specific
22 names and terms shall be listed annually in the Fellowship Directory.
23

24 It is the responsibility of the Chair of each body to keep the handbook for his/her organization up-
25 to-date. The handbook shall be passed on to succeeding Chairs and distributed to new members, if
26 so desired.

27
28 The following procedure shall be instituted to ensure a smooth transition to the system of
29 handbooks. Within one year following the adoption of this constitution, each affected group shall
30 submit to the Executive Committee a copy of its handbook. One year later, and every three years
31 thereafter, an updated copy shall be presented for Executive Committee approval.

32 These handbooks shall be considered as official extensions of the constitution. Each handbook
33 shall remain in effect until the next revision shall have been approved by the Executive
34 Committee.

35
36 **G. Minutes**

37
38 Minutes of all Church Council, Board, Commission, and standing committee meetings shall be
39 kept in a volume provided for that purpose, and they shall be and shall remain the property of the
40 Congregation.

41
42 Procedures for recording emails into official minutes shall be established by the computer systems
43 analyst.
44
45
46
47

1 **H. Enabling clause**

2

3 When adopted by action of Church Council, this constitution shall supersede all previous
4 constitutions, by-laws and amendments.

5

6

**Constitution of the
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN OF ELIZABETHTOWN
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
Atlantic Northeast District**

7

8

9

10 **Revision approved by action of Church Council**

11 **December 17, 2000**

November 21, 2004

12 **May 15, 2001**

November 18, 2007

13 **May 19, 2002**

May 18, 2008

14 **May 18, 2003**

November 20, 2011

15

November 19, 2017