

**Constitution**  
**of the**  
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BRETHREN CHURCH ELDERS**

**ARTICLE I**

**NAME**

The name of this association shall be the National Association of Brethren Church Elders.

**ARTICLE II**

**HEADQUARTERS**

The headquarters of this association shall be Ashland, Ohio, with its legal address:  
Brethren Church National Office  
524 College Avenue  
Ashland, OH 44805

**ARTICLE III**

**OBJECTIVES**

The Objectives of this association shall be:

- Section 1** To provide a nonprofit Christian fellowship for the elders of The Brethren Church.
- Section 2** To foster a united voice of the elders of the Brethren Church in matters of moral and spiritual importance.
- Section 3** To maintain the highest standards of faith and order as consonant with the historic and traditional position of The Brethren Church and its eldership.
- Section 4** To discover, encourage, and assist promising people to prepare themselves for ministry in the Brethren Church.
- Section 5** To provide means for the elders of The Brethren Church to engage in programs of helpfulness and memorialization, both financial and spiritual.

## ARTICLE IV

### DEFINITION OF ELDER

The primary sense of the word elder designates those who have been ordained and are pastoring in a local Brethren Church. Additionally, the title elder is extended in the following cases, each having been previously ordained:

1. Those retired from the pastoral ministry due to age or health reasons;
2. Those serving in the national offices of The Brethren Church;
3. Those teaching at Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary;
4. Those serving in a church-related position recognized by the Director of Pastoral Ministries, the District Oversight Boards, and this association.

## ARTICLE V

### MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1** Membership of this association shall be composed of Brethren elders as defined in Article IV and those who are currently licensed by their respective districts and they prepare for the eldership.

**Section 2** Membership classifications: Membership in all the following classifications is determined by one's standing in his/her district, and is maintained by keeping annual dues current in addition to any other requirements:

- A. **Regular Membership:** Active Brethren Elders whose beneficiaries are eligible to receive death benefits.
- B. **Licensee Membership:** Those preparing for the eldership who are licensed by their districts, and whose beneficiaries are eligible to receive death benefits.
- C. **Inactive Membership:** Regular or Licensee Members who fail to pay the annual dues shall be considered Inactive Members and shall be notified by the Secretary-Treasurer of such. Past dues owed must be paid to be reinstated. A maximum of three years' dues shall be required.

## ARTICLES VI

### OFFICERS

**Section 1** The officers of this association shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, who shall perform such duties as directed by the association.

**Section 2** In the event of the President becoming unable to perform the duties of that office, the Vice President shall fill the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **DIRECTORS**

The officers of this association shall constitute its Board of Directors, with the President as Chairman.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **COMMISSIONS**

- Section 1** Commissions, for the purpose of aiding in the implementation of the stated objectives and ministry of the association, may be established as needed. The establishment of a new commission and the termination of an existing commission shall be by vote of the association.
- Section 2** Commissions shall each consist of three elected members, each being elected to a three year term, and serving on a rotating basis.
- Section 3** The President of the association, or a member of the Executive Committee appointed by the President, shall be an ex-officio member of each commission.
- Section 4** The Commissions shall function subordinate to and report to the Executive Committee.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **RULES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1** Membership in this association may be sought by applying to a member of the Ministerial Examining Board of the district in which the applicant resides.
- Section 2** Applicants for membership shall be introduced to the association in business session by a member of the applicant's District Examining Board. Applicants presented and paying appropriate dues shall be received into appropriate membership.
- Section 3** The annual dues shall be established by the association, and shall be on a calendar year basis. Retired members of the association shall pay as annual dues an amount equal to one-half of the regular dues.
- Section 4** A membership card, according to classification, shall be issued each year to members when they pay annual dues.
- Section 5** Any member failing to pay annual dues shall forfeit membership and all rights and privileges there from.
- Section 6** Inactive Members, who have become inactive because of non-payment of dues, may become active upon payment of the past and current dues. A maximum of three years' dues shall be required.

- Section 7** All benefits accrued to a member of this association who has membership in and/or is currently serving full time in another denomination shall be forfeited and his membership shall be terminated.
- Section 8** All benefits accrued to a licensee who does not continue on into the eldership within a reasonable period shall be forfeited and his membership terminated.
- Section 9** All benefits accrued to any member who leaves the pastoral ministry and has been designated an inactive elder by his district Board of Oversight shall be forfeited and his membership terminated. Membership may be reinstated upon recommendation by the district Board of Oversight.
- Section 10** Membership and benefits may be retained if the member is granted a leave of absence by the Director of Pastoral Ministries, provided dues are kept current.
- Section 11** All benefits accrued to a member of this Association who has been convicted, either by courts or church council, of conduct unbecoming an elder, or whose conduct has been disapproved by this association, shall be withheld and declared forfeited.
- Section 12** All active members, both Regular and Licensee Members, in good standing will have equal floor rights of speech, debate, and vote.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **TERMS OF OFFICE AND ELECTIONS**

- Section 1** All officers of this association shall be elected for one year, and shall serve until their successors are installed. Commission members shall be elected to a three year term on a rotating basis.
- Section 2** All officers and commission members shall be regular members elected at the annual sessions of this association which are held during the General Conference of The Brethren Church. The officers and commission members shall be installed at this association's last business session of the conference and shall assume their duties upon their installation.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- Section 1** Either the Constitution or By-laws of this association may be amended at an annual conference session by a three-fourths vote of the members present, providing that the text of such amendment[s] is read at a previous business session.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **RELATING TO THE SECRETARY-TREASURER**

- Section 1** The Secretary-Treasurer shall carry all monies on deposit in approved banks except funds specifically designated by the association for investment.
- Section 2** The stated salary per annum for the Secretary-Treasurer shall be examined and set periodically at annual meeting and recorded in the minutes.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW SUPERSEDEENCE RECORD**

- Section 1** Upon adoption of this amended constitution and by-laws, a copy of the old document, which this supersedes, shall be attached to the minute book, and have written across it in red ink, the words:  
*SUPERSEDED BY AN AMENDED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS ADOPTED BY THE MEETING OF THIS ASSOCIATION AT ITS ANNUAL SESSION ON [add date adopted].*