

# **A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church**

## **(2018 Edition)**

### ***Preamble***

The General Conference of Brethren churches, to secure a uniform method of procedure in the organization of new churches and the administration of the churches already established, adopts the following manual of procedure. Consistent with its limited congregational polity, The Brethren Church recognizes the right of each local congregation to order its own affairs but seeks a common commitment on matters of faith and practice at the regional and denominational levels. Therefore, Chapter One, Sections 3 through 5, dealing with local congregations, and Chapter Four, Section 8, dealing with districts, shall be considered advisory, while Chapter One, Sections 1 and 2, and Chapters Two through Four (except Chapter Four, Section 8), shall be under the authority of General Conference.

### ***Chapter One: The Organization of the Church***

#### **Section 1. The Local Church**

*Article 1.* The Brethren Church is a body of baptized believers. The mode of receiving new believers into church membership is upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, repentance, baptism by trine immersion, and confirmation by the laying on of hands. Local churches at their option may receive believers who reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ as saving Lord, who have been previously baptized by believers' baptism and who evidence a personal faith and walk in Jesus Christ as Lord.

*Article 2.* As a family of Brethren congregations, we corporately affirm and practice the following church ordinances: baptism of new believers by trine immersion; confirmation by the laying on of hands on newly baptized believers; threefold communion, consisting of footwashing, love feast, and the Eucharist of bread and cup; and anointing of the sick with oil.

*Article 3. Church Plant.* The normal process for church development and recognition shall involve two stages: church plant and church. A church plant may be recognized by the Executive Board of General Conference following:

- A. Consensus of a group to both be a part of, and to support, The Brethren Church
- B. Recognition of a pastor who is under the oversight of the Regional Leadership Team
- C. An intentional relationship with a Brethren Church region and the Brethren Church National Office
- D. An agreed upon process of deployment and affiliation
- E. The recommendation of the Regional Leadership Team

A recognized church plant shall have the privileges and responsibilities afforded by General Conference, including ministerial and the minimum number of lay credentials granted to a church and the full support of regional and denominational ministries. A church plant shall follow the guidelines established by the Executive Board.

*Article 4. Church.* A church plant may become a church, with all privileges and responsibilities afforded by the General Conference, at such point as it:

- A. Has sufficient members to assume responsibility for its own financial obligations
- B. Has an established internal leadership team or board
- C. Has a pastor who is under the oversight of the Regional Leadership Team
- D. Is able to be a contributing partner to Brethren regional, national and global ministries in the estimation of the Regional Leadership Team.

The process for a church plant to be recognized as a church is as follows:

- A. Members of a church plant vote as a majority to be recognized as a church and communicate that desire to the Regional Leadership Team
- B. The Regional Leadership Team or its designee assesses with the church plant its readiness for recognition as a church
- C. Upon their mutual agreement of readiness, the Regional Leadership Team recommends to the next General Conference that the church plant be recognized as a church
- D. General Conference, by majority vote, affirms or refers back to the appropriate Regional Leadership Team the request for recognition as a church.

*Article 5.* The Brethren Church is a family of churches. Each local congregation has opportunities for input in corporate decisions. Each local congregation has moral and relational responsibilities to every other Brethren congregation. Therefore, each local congregation should support denominational ministries by participating in the General Conference of The Brethren Church and by providing funds for the ministries established by the delegates of General Conference.

*Article 6.* All local churches shall by proper and legal procedures provide that all property and assets shall revert to The Brethren Church, Inc., in the event that the local organization disbands, becomes disorganized, or ceases to use its property for and in the interest of The Brethren Church.

*Article 7. Church Dissolution.* A Brethren Church may disband upon a decision of its membership, or upon a decision of the Regional Leadership Team that said church is no longer able to fulfill any of the requirements of a church as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1, article 4.

The process for dissolution is as follows:

- A. Members of a church may vote to cease being a Brethren congregation. Notice of said decision is to be made to the Regional Leadership Team and the National Office. At the time of dissolution, the church will disperse its assets in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1, Article 6.
- B. The Regional Leadership Team which has oversight over a Brethren church may declare it dissolved when upon assessment of its status it is in the opinion of the Regional Leadership Team no longer able to fulfill any of the requirements of a church. The Regional Leadership Team shall give the church written notice of its decision, and assist the congregation in dispersing its assets in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1, Article 6.
- C. When a congregation is dissolved by a Regional Leadership Team, the congregation may appeal the decision to the National Board of Oversight, whose determination shall be final.

## **Section 2. Officers of the Church**

*Article 1.* The regular officers of the church are elder; licensed or commissioned pastor; and deacon and deaconess.

## **Section 3. Respective Duties of Officers**

*Article 1.* It shall belong to the elder or pastor to feed the flock of God by reading and expounding the Word of God; to administer the ordinances; to manage with other church officers the organization of all the subordinate work of the congregation; to visit the people from house to house and pray for and with them; to be devoted to the care of the poor, the sick and the dying; and, under the direction of the church, administer government and discipline. It shall also be the duty of the pastor, in so far as conscientiously possible, to encourage the people to supply themselves with the literature of the church; and to support loyally all the organizations and institutions of the church. The pastor shall keep a careful account of the work so as to supply the appropriate Regional Leadership Team and the General Conference with information concerning the pastorate, statistical, administrative or spiritual, and to leave to the successive pastor a particular account of the charge, including the names and standing of the members and their places of residence.

*Article 2.* It is the duty of the deacons and deaconesses to assist the pastor or elder in charge of a church in the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation as the scriptures indicate and the needs of the church require.

## **Section 4. Officers, How Called and Elected**

*Article 1.* Candidates for the gospel ministry shall be called by the congregation at a regular or special business meeting, and the results of said election shall be transmitted to the Regional Leadership Team by the congregation through the officer presiding at said election.

*Article 2.* Properly qualified persons shall be examined for and ordained to the eldership according to the provisions of Chapter Two, Section 4, Article 2A.

*Article 3.* Any local church may call a layperson to the work of a commissioned pastor at a regular or special business meeting. Such call shall be transmitted to the Regional Leadership Team for its consideration.

*Article 4.* Deacons and deaconesses may be elected in the following manner: After due public notice the church shall convene at the place appointed. The election shall be by ballot and three-fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary to an election. If no election is had on the first ballot, then a second ballot shall be taken, and so on until an election occurs or is postponed.

*Article 5.* Churches recognized according to Chapter One, Section 1, Article 4, shall elect and call a pastor in the following manner: After due public notice the church shall convene at the place of public worship. The election of a pastor shall proceed by ballot. It shall require a majority of votes cast to constitute a call, unless the church shall have previously determined that a two-thirds or three-fourths vote is necessary.

## **Section 5. Rights of Members**

*Article 1.* All members of a local church who are in full membership and enrolled in its active membership shall be eligible to vote in all transactions of the church, excepting in those states where there are legal restrictions regarding the voting of minors.

## ***Chapter Two: Regions***

### **Section 1: Boundaries of Regions**

*Article 1.* The whole territory embraced by The Brethren Church in North America shall be divided by the General Conference into regions. Existing regions may be divided or their boundaries changed and new regions may be formed as the wisdom of General Conference may determine, providing, however, that no existing region shall be divided or its boundaries changed without the consent of those congregations that would be affected by the change.

### **Section 2: Purpose of Regions**

*Article 1.* The purpose of regions shall be the preservation and promotion of existing Brethren congregations and the development of new congregations within the boundaries of the region. To accomplish this purpose, General Conference, through its national and regional personnel and resources, shall provide every possible aid to enhance and expand the ministry of congregations within the region.

### **Section 3: Authority of Regions**

*Article 1.* The authority of regions, as exercised through their teams and ministries, shall be delegated by General Conference and shall be exercised in a collaborative relationship with the local congregations composing each region.

### **Section 4: Functions and Ministries of the Regions**

*Article 1.* The regions shall carry out the functions that General Conference considers necessary for the mission of The Brethren Church. Regions shall serve as channels for the concerns and needs of local congregations to the national level of the denomination and as advocates to local congregations of the mission and vision of The Brethren Church as established by General Conference and its Executive Board. The congregations composing a region may also choose to gather for times of fellowship, worship, and training.

*Article 2.* Each region shall have a Regional Leadership Team.

A. *Duties and Responsibilities.* The Regional Leadership Teams shall serve in an executive role in their regions, providing oversight of pastors, elders, and congregations and serving as advocates for the mission and programs of the national church and for ministries within the region. Its specific duties and responsibilities shall be to:

- (1). Examine and approve candidates for licensure and commissioning

- (2). Examine and prepare candidates for ordination to pastoral ministry or for recognition of prior ordination and referral to the National Board of Oversight for final examination and approval. A member of the Regional Leadership Team should be present at and assist in the ordination service of any candidate from that region who has been approved for ordination
- (3). Provide nurture, oversight, and discipline of pastors and congregations
- (4). Maintain a regional list of Brethren elders and licensed and commissioned pastors in good standing within the region. The team shall supply the list to the National Board of Oversight on a yearly basis and shall yearly issue a certificate of good standing to all elders within the region so certified. Elders moving between regions are expected to present to their new Regional Leadership Team their certificate of good standing as well as a letter of good standing from the congregation in which they held membership. The team shall communicate in a timely fashion with any person removed from the list of elders in good standing with an explanation for the decision.
- (5). Identify and develop persons or teams to nurture and promote church planting and congregational vitality in collaboration with the regional resource coordinator and the national staff
- (6). Oversee the selection process for members of the Regional Leadership Team.
- (7). Appoint yearly two of its members, one elder and one lay person, to serve on the National Board of Oversight
- (8). Serve as a liaison with any regional camp board for advocacy, reporting, and accountability, including financial
- (9). Affirm a regional resource coordinator selected in collaboration with the national staff.
- (10). Form committees and task forces as needed to fulfill its responsibilities

B. *Composition and Selection.* This team shall be composed of both elders and laity who are elected by the congregations within that region on rotating two-year renewable terms. Licensed and commissioned pastors are considered laity if elected to this team. Members may serve three consecutive full terms but may then become eligible for re-election only after going off the team for at least one year. An equal number of elders and laity shall be elected each year. The number of members on given regional teams should be flexible, based on the amount of work each team must conduct. The selection of team members should reflect as much as possible the geography of the region. Candidates for this team must demonstrate commitment to the life and concerns of local congregations and the national vision and core values and have the time, gifts, and abilities necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the

office. All members of a Regional Leadership Team shall be members in good standing of their local Brethren church at the time of their election and throughout their terms of service. In addition to the elected members, the regional resource coordinator serves as a member of the team with voice and vote. Each team shall organize itself internally by selecting a chair and a secretary.

*Article 3.* Each region shall have a recognized regional resource coordinator working under the direction of the national staff. This regional resource coordinator must receive the approval and affirmation of the Regional Leadership Team with which they are serving. Their functions are:

- A. Developing regular, healthy communications with and among pastors, congregations, and their Regional Leadership Team
- B. Supporting the denominational priorities as established by General Conference and the Executive Board
- C. Identifying and developing persons or teams to nurture and promote church planting and congregational vitality in collaboration with the Regional Leadership Team and the national staff
- D. Serving on the Regional Leadership Team as a member with voice and vote
- E. Coordinating the equipping, training, and resourcing of clusters and congregations
- F. Serving as a liaison between congregations, the Regional Leadership Team, the denomination, and the Brethren Church National Office
- G. Encouraging regular intercongregational fellowship, collaboration, and connectivity

*Article 4.* The Brethren Church, Inc., shall consult with the pertinent Regional Leadership Team on the use of any assets designated for use in their region that result from the closure of a local congregation or camp.

## ***Chapter Three: The National Board of Oversight***

### **Section 1: Authority**

*Article 1.* The National Board of Oversight derives its authority from the General Conference.

### **Section 2: Responsibilities**

*Article 1.* The responsibilities of this board shall be:

- A. Final examination and approval of candidates for ordination or for recognition of prior ordination
- B. Creation of uniform policies and procedures for examination and oversight
- C. Serving as a board of final appeal in cases of regional discipline of pastors and elders and of congregations
- D. Maintaining a national list of all Brethren elders and licensed and commissioned pastors in good standing

### **Section 3: Composition**

*Article 1.* Each Regional Leadership Team shall yearly appoint two of its members, one elder and one lay person, to serve on the National Board of Oversight.

*Article 2.* The executive director of The Brethren Church or their appointee shall serve as a member of the board with voice and vote.

*Article 3.* A Brethren theologian shall serve on the board with voice and vote. This appointment will be made by the executive director of The Brethren Church, with the approval of the Executive Board of The Brethren Church.

*Article 4.* The chair of the National Board of Oversight shall be nominated by the Executive Director and approved by the National Board of Oversight. The chair shall serve a three year term of office, who may be reappointed and reapproved at the end of each term. A nominee for this position need not be a member of the National Board of Oversight or of a Regional Leadership Team.

*Article 5.* The National Board of Oversight shall select a secretary from among its members.

## **Chapter Four: General Conference**

### **Section 1: Purposes and Authority**

*Article 1. Purposes.* The purposes of the General Conference shall be: the promotion of a sense of comradeship among the membership of The Brethren Church; to bring about increased efficiency and a profounder spirituality and a missionary and evangelistic spirit in all the churches; to consider and provide for missionary, educational and literary activities of the denomination as a whole; and to acquaint the church with the moral and spiritual welfare of society and to encourage activity looking toward the moral and social uplift of all people through the application of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Article 2. Authority.* The General Conference shall have the power: to provide for its own perpetual succession; to provide for the holding of property by purchase or gift, and sell, convey, or dispose of the same, whether real or personal; to provide for and promote in every way the denominational unity and efficiency in all efforts looking toward the realization of the supreme task of the church, namely: the evangelization of the world; to direct and control all cooperating organizations of its own creation; to delegate authority to the National Board of Oversight; to delegate authority to the regions, as exercised through Regional Leadership Teams and ministries; to nominate for any position elected by General Conference; and to effect its own organization, determine the time and place of its meeting and to adopt a constitution and by-laws for its own government. It shall have no power to interfere with the work of any local congregation or with the work of the several district conferences.

*Article 3. Purpose of “The Meeting of General Conference”.* The purpose of the meeting of General Conference is to gather Brethren delegates together to foster relationships, address challenges, celebrate achievements, and facilitate unity in matters of Brethren mission, faith, and practice.

### **Section 2: Membership**

*Article 1. Delegates.* The membership of the General Conference shall be constituted as follows:

- A. *Ministerial Delegates.* All regularly ordained elders, licensed pastors, and commissioned pastors of Brethren churches and church plants who are in good standing in their local churches shall be members of General Conference *ex officio*; provided that they bring to the Conference properly certified credentials from their local churches.
- B. *Lay Delegates.* Each regularly organized congregation of The Brethren Church shall be entitled to representation by lay delegates in the General Conference on the basis of two delegates for the first fifty members or fraction thereof, and an

additional delegate for every additional fifty members or fraction over twenty-five. Each recognized church plant shall be entitled to representation by two delegates, regardless of the membership of the church plant. All such delegates, before being admitted to membership in the Conference, shall present to the conference registrar properly certified credentials from the church plant which they represent.

C. *Cooperative Delegates.* All members and officers of the Executive Board and the president and secretary of the Women's Missionary Society shall be delegates upon presentation of properly accredited credentials signed by the secretary and moderator of General Conference.

**Article 2. Requirements for Delegate Status.** Regularly organized congregations of The Brethren Church entitled to ministerial and lay delegates by credential as provided in A and B above shall include only those congregations where the following practices are observed and certified by the officers signing the credentials: (1) Where new believers are received into the church only on profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, repentance, baptism by trine immersion, and confirmation by the laying on of hands. (Local churches at their option may receive believers who reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ as saving Lord, who have previously been baptized by believers' baptism and who evidence a personal faith and walk in Jesus Christ as Lord.) (2) Where the traditional love feast is a continued practice by observation of the three-fold communion service, which includes the washing of the saints' feet, the love feast meal and the Eucharist of bread and cup.

**Article 3. Initial Voting Body.** At the first business session of the Conference meeting, the conference registrar shall present as seated delegates all unchallenged ministerial and lay credentials, and when these are reported by name to the first session, they shall constitute the beginning voting body of General Conference.

**Article 4. Quorum.** A quorum for General Conference business sessions shall be one-third of the first session's delegate total.

### **Section 3: Executive Board**

**Article 1. Duties and Responsibilities.** The Brethren Church and the General Conference shall be led by an Executive Board. That board, with the leadership of the executive director, shall cast a unified vision for The Brethren Church and its ministries. The board shall manage the business and legal affairs of General Conference and implement its decisions. It shall at all times act under the direction and control of General Conference and shall report to each General Conference regarding its actions. It shall fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

- A. Serves as the corporate board of The Brethren Church.
- B. Serves as the corporate board of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church.

- C. Acts on behalf of General Conference when the Conference is not in session.
- D. Proposes denominational priorities to General Conference.
- E. Adopts major policy, including preparing budgets.
- F. Presents annually to General Conference for its approval a projected budget and congregational support figures.
- G. Selects, employs, and evaluates the performance of the executive director and has authority to terminate the director's employment as its members deem appropriate.
- H. Forms commissions and task forces as it deems necessary from among its own members and from the church at large to address important and historically significant areas of responsibility.
- I. Elects a secretary from among its own members to be responsible for Executive Board minutes.
- J. Approves the minutes of the final business session of General Conference.
- K. Appoints a temporary chair if needed to serve in place of the moderator.
- L. Appoints a statistician under the oversight of the Executive Board
- M. Appoints a conference registrar who shall certify that each individual with a delegate credential is in good standing according to chapter 4, section 2, articles 1 and 2. The conference registrar shall present the list of certified delegates to the conference, and if there are no challenges from the floor they shall be declared seated.
- N. Nominates trustees of the Retirement Fund, Inc., for approval by General Conference.
- O. Conducts an annual meeting with the boards of directors of wholly owned subsidiaries and elects those boards of directors.
- P. Plans General Conference.
- Q. Identifies, recruits, and nominates candidates for moderator and members at-large of the Executive Board who are committed to the national vision and core values and have the time, gifts, and abilities necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the office.
- R. Provides oversight, as the representative of General Conference, for the Regional Leadership Teams.
- S. Provides for the indemnification of all past and present members of the Executive Board and all officers appointed by the Executive Board.
- T. Maintains current editions of all denominational documents not otherwise delegated to other entities by the General Conference or the Executive Board, and oversees the maintenance of documents so delegated.
- U. As the corporate board of trustees of The Brethren Church, it shall hold in trust all charters, deeds, chattels and other property of the church that may be conveyed to it following the closure of a local congregation or camp or the disposition of any other assets. Such assets shall either be 1) undesignated for use to further the

purposes of The Brethren Church, Inc., or 2) designated for use by The Brethren Church, Inc., within the region of the donating entity. The Brethren Church, Inc., shall consult with the pertinent Regional Leadership Team on the use of any assets designated for use in their region.

**Article 2. Qualifications.** All members of the Executive Board shall be members in good standing of their local Brethren churches at the time of their election and throughout their terms of service.

**Article 3. Membership and Election.** The Executive Board shall consist of nine members as follows:

- A. The executive director.
- B. The moderator of the General Conference.
- C. At-large members of the Executive Board shall be nominated through a process established by the Executive Board and attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Executive Board includes six (6) at-large members, two (2) of whom shall be elected by General Conference each year for a three-year term from a slate of nominees prepared by the Executive Board and/or from nominations from the floor. Each at-large member may serve two consecutive terms plus any unexpired term to which he/she may have been elected. Thereafter, each person may become eligible for re-election to the Executive Board after one year has passed.
- D. The president of Ashland Theological Seminary or the president's appointed representative, who must be a member in good standing of a Brethren church, shall serve on the board and represent both Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary.
- E. All members may vote on any matter before the board, except that the executive director may not vote on any matter pertaining to employment in that position.

**Article 4. Officers and Duties.**

- A. *Executive Director.* The executive director shall give visionary leadership to The Brethren Church and shall employ, supervise, guide and coordinate staff in cooperation with the Executive Board in fulfilling the priorities and ministries of The Brethren Church. The executive director shall be nominated by the Executive Board. Prior to employment, the proposed executive director shall be presented to General Conference for a vote of affirmation. In the event of a vacancy, the Executive Board may appoint an interim executive director to serve until the General Conference shall have opportunity to give a vote of affirmation for a new executive director. Conference shall have opportunity to give a vote of affirmation every six years thereafter. The Executive Board shall set the salary and benefits of the executive

director. The Executive Board, upon majority vote of such Executive Board, excluding the executive director, may terminate the employment of the executive director at will.

- B. *Moderator.* The moderator shall chair all meetings of General Conference and of the Executive Board and shall serve as would any other member of the board with regard to committees, task forces, etc. The moderator of General Conference shall be nominated through a process established by the Executive Board and attached hereto as Exhibit B. The moderator shall be elected for a three-year term by General Conference, may serve no more than two consecutive terms, and shall become eligible for election again after one full term expires. In the event of a vacancy during the Conference year, the position shall remain vacant until election of a new moderator for a full three-year term by the next General Conference.
- C. *Secretary.* The secretary shall be elected to a two year term by General Conference. The secretary shall be responsible for the official minutes of General Conference.
- D. *Other Officers.* The Executive Board may appoint such other volunteer officers as it deems necessary from time to time. Duties and responsibilities of all officers shall be outlined in job descriptions ~~appearing as an addendum to this manual~~ and such special duties as may be assigned.

#### **Section 4: Conference Committees**

*Article 1.* General Conference shall, before its final adjournment, create annually, unless otherwise provided for, the following committees:

- A. Social Issues
- B. Polity
- C. Rules and Organization
- D. Nominating
- E. Such other committees as General Conference may from time to time determine as necessary for the proper functioning of General Conference.

*Article 2.* The purposes and responsibilities of these committees are attached herein as Exhibit C.

*Article 3.* Committee membership shall be constituted as follows:

- A. Social Issues – five members elected for five year terms on a rotating basis.
- B. Polity - five members elected for five-year terms on a rotating basis.
- C. Rules and Organization - three members elected for three-year terms on a rotating basis.
- D. Nominating - two ministerial, two laymen, and two laywomen elected annually.

## **Section 5: Cooperating Organizations**

*Article 1. Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary.* Though General Conference has neither a direct organizational connection with, nor exercises any authority over Ashland University or Ashland Theological Seminary, the Conference does recognize the historic relationship between the university and seminary and The Brethren Church. Because the seminary serves as the training ground for Brethren Church pastors and other leaders, General Conference maintains a formal liaison with the university and seminary by providing a voting seat on the Executive Board.

## **Section 6: Special Provisions**

*Article 1. Time of Meetings.* Sessions of the General Conference shall be held annually, unless it shall have been designated at its last meeting how soon the next meeting shall be held.

*Article 2. Order of Business.* The order of business at the opening of each annual session of the General Conference shall be as follows:

- A. Call to order and suitable religious exercises.
- B. Report of the Conference Membership Committee.
- C. Report of the Rules and Organization Committee.
- D. Agenda as prepared by the Executive Board (including an address by the executive director).

*Article 3. Rules.*

- A. No delegate shall represent more than one vote in Conference.
- B. All credential fees for a church or a church plant, as established by the Conference, shall be paid before any delegate from that church is seated. Each church or church plant is responsible for payment of fees for all credentials, elder and lay, to which it is entitled. If payment is not received in advance, credentials from those churches and church plants will be presented to the Conference for its pleasure in seating or not seating their delegates.
- C. All elections and questions shall be decided by a majority vote, except that on the request of any delegate the question shall be decided by a two-thirds vote, the request to be made before the vote is taken.
- D. Any member of The Brethren Church not a delegate shall have all the privileges of the Conference, except that he or she shall not be allowed to make a motion or to vote upon any question.
- E. No person shall be allowed to speak without first addressing the moderator and receiving recognition.

- F. No person shall speak upon the same question more than twice, except by consent of the Conference. The first speech shall not exceed ten minutes or the second five minutes without the consent of Conference.
- G. Standard rules of order shall be followed in all points not specially provided for herein.

## **Section 7: Corporate Matters**

*Article 1. **Membership.*** Members of the corporation of The Brethren Church, Inc., shall be the individuals seated as delegates and members of the most recent General Conference of The Brethren Church.

*Article 2. **Board of Trustees.*** The Executive Board shall serve as the corporate board of trustees of The Brethren Church and of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church.

*Article 3. **Corporate Officers.*** The officers of the Executive Board shall serve as the corporate officers of The Brethren Church and of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church.

## **Section 8: District Conferences**

[This section was *Chapter Two. Conferences, Section 1. The District Annual Conference* in “A Manual of Procedure” through mid-July 2016. With the adoption of the regionalization proposal by the 2015 General Conference and amendments to “A Manual of Procedure” by the 2016 General Conference to implement that proposal, this section has been moved here and shall be removed from this manual in 2020 or when all districts have implemented regionalization, whichever comes first. Historically, this section has been advisory, and district conferences have not been under the control of General Conference.]

*Article 1.* The whole territory embraced by the church shall be divided by the General Conference into convenient districts. Old districts may be divided or their boundaries changed and new districts may be formed as the wisdom of General Conference may determine, providing, however, that no existing district shall be divided or its boundaries changed without the consent of such district.

*Article 2.* It is recommended that each district hold an annual conference.

*Article 3.* The purpose of the district conference shall be the promotion and the preservation of Brethren churches and missions within the limits of the district. To accomplish this purpose it shall render every aid possible by the consideration of all work pertaining to the church and its auxiliaries and the general interests of the church within the district.

*Article 4.* The authority of the district conference shall be such as has been delegated by the conference itself and approved by the several congregations forming such conference and co-operation therewith, except such powers as have been reserved by the General Conference.

*Article 5.* Each district conference shall have the right to effect its own organization, determine its membership and the basis of representation therein, arrange its own programs and order of business, and provide the ways and means of carrying out its duties.

*Article 6.* It is recommended that each district conference elect annually one or more District Elders from the elders of the church; that the several classes and congregations of the district shall be divided into as many groups as there are District Elders and assigned to the several members of the Board of Oversight/ Examining Board; that such District Elders discharge the duties assigned by the General Conference and such other duties as the district conference may assign from time to time; and that each district conference provide for the compensation of such District Elders.

*Article 7.* Each district conference may organize its own Missionary efforts, or any charitable work within its limits, the support of which it can adequately provide for. No specifically district work or project shall have the right of appeal for support beyond its own limits.

*Article 8.* It is recommended that the District Elder shall discharge the following duties:

- A. Visit at least annually all the assigned classes, missions, and churches.
- B. Assist the pastors in better organizing their work and counsel with them in matters of unusual importance.
- C. Preside, at the request of the church, at the election of candidates for the ministry and transmit the names of such candidates to the Board of Oversight/Examining Board of the district.
- D. Be present, at the request of the church, with the pastor at the election of deacons, and assist in the ordination of the same.
- E. Preside at the request of the church, at the election of a pastor by a church.
- F. See that all charters, deeds, and conveyances of church property shall conform strictly to the laws of the state wherein situated.
- G. Assist the pastor in promoting the interests of the local congregation and the general church by keeping before the people the work of Christian education, the Brethren youth, missions, publications and all the benevolent and auxiliary interests of the whole church.
- H. Keep a careful record of all work as the district conference may from time to time demand. I. Discharge any other duties the district conference may impose not inconsistent with General Conference provisions and the autonomy of the local church.

*Article 9.* Each district conference shall provide for the proper examination of candidates for the eldership. In the ordination of any who upon examination by the district and the National Ordination Council are found to possess the proper qualifications, it is recommended that the pastor be assisted by the District Elder. Each district conference shall also be responsible for the examination of candidates for the office of lay pastor.

*Article 10.* Each district conference shall require of every elder within its limits a certificate of standing, of such form as it shall determine, from the congregation in which membership is held. Upon presentation of such certificate the conference shall examine and pass thereon, and if satisfactory, shall cause the same to be signed and sealed by the conference. Such certificate shall be good for the ensuing conference year. When moving from one district to another, the elder shall present such attested certificate as well as a letter from the congregation, in which membership has been held, attesting good standing.

*Article 11.* Each district conference shall keep a correct list of the elders, candidates for ordination, and commissioned lay pastors within its bounds.

*Article 12.* Each district conference shall create a board of trustees of property according to the laws of the state within which the district is incorporated, to hold in trust for The Brethren Church all charters, deeds, chattels and other property of the church as the conference may from time to time determine. It is urged that all local churches shall either convey their property to such board of trustees, or they shall by proper and legal procedure provide that in the event that the local organization disbands, becomes disorganized or ceases to use its property for and in the interest of The Brethren Church, such property shall revert to such board of trustees. All properties of all sorts whatsoever held by such board of trustees shall be subject to the orders of the district conference creating said board, and in the event of the disorganization of the district all rights of the property held by the district shall revert to the board of trustees of The Brethren Church.

*Article 13.* For a church that exists outside the boundaries of an existing district and until a district is formed by General Conference to encompass that church, the Executive Board shall be granted the following authority:

- A. To examine and certify for licensure, according to procedures established by the National Association of Brethren Church Elders, candidates for the eldership who have been called to the gospel ministry
- B. To review annually and certify for renewal licenses of candidates for the eldership
- C. To recommend candidates to the National Ordination Council for ordination examination
- D. To assist the pastor of the local church in the ordination service
- E. To work with the Executive Director or designate when requested in pastoral and congregational care in a way similar to that of a District Elder
- F. To hold in trust for The Brethren Church all charters, deeds, chattels, and other property of these churches
- G. To provide for the reversion of such property to The Brethren Church in the event a local organization disbands or is otherwise not affiliated with The Brethren Church

H. To perform such other functions reserved to a district conference.

### **Section 9: Amendment**

*Article 1.* This manual of procedure may be amended at any regular session of the General Conference by a two-thirds vote; and such rules and by-laws may be reported and adopted as the conference may direct; provided, however, that all proposed amendments and rules and by-laws shall be referred to the standing committee on rules and organization and at a later session be reported back to the conference for final adoption or rejection.

*Article 2.* Exhibits may be modified at such times as may be appropriate or necessary by the General Conference or by the Executive Board of The Brethren Church. Any changes made to exhibits by the Executive Board shall be reported to the General Conference at the earliest convenient time.

## EXHIBIT A

### Nomination Process for Executive Board Members

1. All nominees must be eligible to serve as stated in the Manual of Procedure (Chapter Four, Section 3, Article 2): *“All members of the Executive Board shall be members in good standing of their local Brethren churches at the time of their election and throughout their terms of service.”*
2. Persons can nominate themselves or be nominated by another individual.
3. All nominees must complete the nomination information form to be nominated, whether by the Executive Board or from the floor.
4. The Executive Board shall serve as the nominating committee for Executive Board members, and shall develop a ballot of nominees for said position.
5. Nominations from the floor will be accepted, provided that said nominee submits a completed nomination information form at the time of nomination, or has previously submitted said form for the office.
6. A new nomination information form must be completed for each election cycle.

### Nomination and Election Procedure for Executive Board Members

1. Nomination forms will be made available at General Conferences, online, in a general distribution email, and in *The Evangelist*, with emphasis on distribution in January and February of each year. The nomination process, forms, and current members and openings should be included.
2. All nomination forms should be sent to the Moderator. The Moderator shall send by letter or email a confirmation of the reception of all nominations.
3. All nominations for Executive Board *not from the floor* need to be received no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year of General Conference.
4. The Executive Board shall evaluate all nominations using criteria established by the Executive Board. The primary criteria for this evaluation shall be:
  - a. Is the nomination form completed fully?
  - b. Does the nominee communicate an adequate understanding of our mission, vision, and core values?
  - c. If a layperson, has their pastor certified that they are a member in good standing in their church?
5. All nominees that meet the criteria shall be placed on the ballot. Individuals with incomplete nomination forms shall be notified by the Moderator and have the option of submitting a

completed nomination to the Moderator prior to General Conference.

6. At the first business meeting of General Conference, nominees from the floor shall be accepted. Anyone nominated from the floor must:
  - a. Give consent to the nomination
  - b. Complete a nomination form, including the pastoral certification if the nominee is a layperson.
7. Nominees from the floor shall be evaluated using the criteria in item #4 at a special meeting of the Executive Board for that purpose. Nominees shall be notified if the nomination is considered incomplete or not acceptable. Nominees affirmed for the election process by the Executive Board shall be added to the ballot.
8. A majority vote is required for election. The top two persons receiving the most votes AND a majority (each delegate casting two votes) shall be elected to the Executive Board.
9. If less than two nominees for the Executive Board meet the requirements of item #8, a runoff election would be required. The runoff election shall include the persons receiving the four highest number of votes, with each delegate casting two votes, and the two persons receiving majorities shall be declared elected to the Executive Board. If one person receives a majority on the first ballot that person shall be declared elected. Then the two persons with the next highest number of votes shall be placed in a runoff election, with each delegate casting one vote, and the person receiving a majority shall be declared elected to the other open board position.
10. Openings in offices prior to completion of a term may be filled by the Executive Board in accordance with the Manual of Procedure and the Executive Board Policy Manual until the next General Conference when an election can be held for the open office. Such unexpired term elections shall follow the same nomination and election procedures as outlined above. The Executive Board shall serve as the nominating committee for Executive Board members, and shall develop a ballot of nominees for said position.

**NOMINATION INFORMATION FORM**

This is for  Moderator  Executive Board Member (please check one)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Brethren Church where membership is held: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include current or recent (10 years) community or local church involvements that you believe have helped prepare you for this office:

Please include current or recent district or denominational involvements/offices held that you believe have helped prepare you for this office:

Please include any educational or professional training or experience that you believe has helped prepare you for this office.

**CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE and CALL**

1. How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_ years

2. How long have you been a member of The Brethren Church? \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Why do you desire to serve the Lord and the Brethren Church in this office?
4. Have you read the *Manual of Procedure* and understand the responsibilities of the office you are seeking? (please circle) Yes or No

**The Mission of The Brethren Church:**

*The mission of The Brethren Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who, united in Christ, embrace and reflect God's love and live in the transforming presence and power of the Holy Spirit.*

As a Moderator or Executive Board Member, How do you understand this statement, and what are your responsibilities to fulfill this mission?

**A 5-Year Vision for The National Brethren Church: Est. 7/2017**

*We will be a movement of regionally organized vibrant congregations fulfilling our shared mission.*

*We will accomplish this vision by:*

1. *Establishing Healthy Regional Structures*
2. *Improving Organizational Relationships*
3. *Providing Equitable Care for Leaders and Congregations*
4. *Developing Leaders at All Levels*
5. *Establishing New, Sustainable, Healthy Congregations*
6. *Continuing to Nurture Our Global Partnerships*

What role as a Moderator or Executive Board Member do you believe you play in fulfilling this vision?

### **The Brethren Church's Six Core Values:**

How do you as a Moderator or Executive Board Member see yourself living out each of these core values?

### **Contextual Brethren Life**

#### **Summary:**

We are guided by traditions and values that shape our identity as The Brethren Church, but we seek to apply these traditions and values in ways that fit our context.

### **Incarnational Ministry**

#### **Summary:**

Just as God's reign was ushered into the world by God becoming one of us (John 1:14-18), so we also practice ministry by immersing ourselves in the contexts to which God has called us. Such incarnational ministry is articulated in Paul's statement, "I have become all things to all, in order that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22b).

## **Responsible Stewardship**

### **Summary:**

We recognize our responsibility to act as stewards of all that God has given us as The Brethren Church. The ultimate goal of our stewardship is to bear witness to God's Kingdom throughout creation. This commitment to stewardship extends to all areas of our shared life together.

## **Intentional Kingdom Witness**

### **Summary:**

We recognize that we are called to bear witness to the Kingdom of God to our neighbors and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:7). We understand that we should be actively pursuing opportunities to advance the Kingdom in all the places we find ourselves: locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. As Brethren led by the Spirit, we join together to extend the Brethren witness through the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches.

## **Servant Leadership**

### **Summary:**

We understand leadership to be the ability of a person or group to influence others toward achieving shared goals. Following Jesus' example, leaders in The Brethren Church consider themselves servants of both God and the people around them. We identify and promote the development of leaders at all levels of the church, both lay and ministerial.

**Biblical and Spiritual Formation**

**Summary:**

We are committed to being transformed into the likeness of Jesus through submission and obedience to Scripture and through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

**POLICY BASED GOVERNANCE is the operational model the Executive Board is implementing. It is outlined in "The Governing Role in The Brethren Church." Please read this document and indicate your response below:**

**PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION FOR LAYPERSON (Ministers are certified "in good standing" by their local churches each year. Said certifications are on record with The Brethren Church)**

As a pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ church, I certify that this nominee is a member in good standing, and eligible for this office.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

## EXHIBIT B

### Nomination Process for Moderator

1. All nominees must be eligible to serve as stated in the Manual of Procedure (Chapter Four, Section 3, Article 2): *“All members of the Executive Board shall be members in good standing of their local Brethren churches at the time of their election and throughout their terms of service.”*
2. Persons can nominate themselves or be nominated by another individual.
3. All nominees must complete the nomination information form to be nominated, whether by the Executive Board or from the floor.
4. The Executive Board shall serve as the nominating committee for Moderator, and shall develop a ballot of nominees for said position.
5. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted, provided that said nominee submits a completed nomination information form at the time of nomination, or has previously submitted said form for the position.
6. A new nomination information form must be completed for each election cycle.

### Nomination and Election Procedure for Moderator

1. Nomination forms will be made available at General Conferences, online, and in a general distribution email, with emphasis on distribution in January and February of each year. The nomination process and forms, along with a list of current members and openings on the Executive Board, should be included.
2. All nomination forms should be sent to the current Moderator. The Moderator shall send by letter or email a confirmation of the reception of all nominations.
3. All nominations for Moderator *not from the floor* would need to be received no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year of General Conference.
4. Prior to the March meeting of the Executive Board, the Executive Board shall select two of its members who shall interview each prospective nominee using the following criteria and keep a written record of the responses of each nominee:
  - a. The nominee’s understanding of their gift mix and abilities as they relate to the office of Moderator
  - b. Their experience and understanding of working together with teams and leading teams

- c. Their understanding of the responsibilities of the office as outlined in the Manual of Procedure.
  - d. Their motivation, both personal and spiritual, for seeking the office.
5. The Executive Director shall also interview each nominee to determine alignment with the denominational mission, vision, and values and willingness to work with the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall give to the Executive Board a recommend or not recommend decision for each nominee.
6. The Executive Board shall evaluate all nominations submitted using the following criteria:
  - a. Is the application form completed fully?
  - b. Does the nominee demonstrate an adequate understanding of our mission, vision, and core values?
  - c. If a layperson, has their pastor certified that they are a member in good standing in their church?
  - d. The results from the board and Executive Director interviews.
7. All nominees that meet the criteria shall be placed on the ballot. Individuals not accepted for nomination shall be notified by the Moderator. These individuals would have the option of being nominated by the delegate body per item #10 below.
8. At the first business meeting of General Conference, nominees from the floor shall be accepted. Anyone nominated from the floor must:
  - a. Give consent to the nomination
  - b. Complete a nomination form, including the pastoral certification if the nominee is a layperson.
9. Nominees from the floor shall be evaluated using the criteria in items #4 - #6 at a special meeting of the Executive Board for that purpose, and the nominees shall be notified if the nomination is considered incomplete or not acceptable. Nominees affirmed for the election process by the Executive Board shall be added to the ballot.
10. Nominees not accepted by the Executive Board would be permitted to request their nomination be accepted by the delegate body through a direct motion to the Moderator on the floor of conference for that purpose. A majority affirmative vote by the delegate body would be required to place that name on the ballot.
11. The person receiving the most votes AND a majority (each delegate casting one vote) of the votes cast shall be elected Moderator.
12. If no one meets the requirements of item #11 for Moderator, a runoff election shall be

required. The runoff election for Moderator would include the persons receiving the two highest numbers of votes, with each delegate casting one vote, and the one receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected as Moderator.

13. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the position shall remain open until the next General Conference when an election can be held for the open office. The person elected to fill the vacancy shall serve a full three year term in accordance with the Manual of Procedure. Such an election will follow the same nomination and election procedures as outlined above.

## EXHIBIT C

### General Conference Committees

#### Social Issues Committee

Purpose: to assist Brethren in the development of biblical positions on domestic and global social issues and to challenge Brethren to live in Christlike, socially responsible ways.

Responsibilities:

1. Review and propose revisions to previous Brethren documents on social issues.
2. Develop new statements on social issues when a Brethren response is deemed necessary.
3. Increase the awareness of Brethren about such matters as the Brethren peace position, the persecuted church, and other issues that need the voice and presence of the church.

#### Polity Committee

Purpose: to make a continuing study of congregational, district, and denominational structure and interrelationships.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop a thorough knowledge of the Manual of Procedure of The Brethren Church.
2. Develop a thorough knowledge of the interrelationships of the various levels of government of The Brethren Church.
3. Respond to specific assignments of the General Conference or the Executive Board regarding proposed changes in the Manual of Procedure.
4. Make recommendations regarding the polity of The Brethren Church at any level to General Conference or the Executive Board.
5. Prepare a written report of activities for publication in the annual report booklet.

## **Rules and Organization Committee**

Purpose: to see to the orderly operation of General Conference business sessions.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop a thorough knowledge of standard rules of order and of the Manual of Procedure of The Brethren Church.
2. Advise the moderator regarding matters of procedure in conducting the business of the conference.
3. Conduct and certify the results of all elections.
4. Report at any time such rules or by-laws as the conference may direct for its government including review of all amendments to the Manual of Procedure before final enactment.

## **Nominating Committee**

Purpose: to provide nominations for General Conference committees, with special emphasis on selecting nominees based on demonstrated gifts within the area of service.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop a thorough knowledge of established procedures for selecting committee nominees as outlined by the Manual of Procedure of the Brethren Church.
2. Select and enlist nominees for all General Conference committees listed in Chapter Two, Section II, Article 6 of the Manual of Procedure.
3. Select and enlist nominees for all special committees.
4. Assist the Executive Director in preparing a ballot for General Conference by reporting a complete slate of nominations in accordance with established deadlines.
5. Be prepared to provide replacement nominees in the event individuals nominated must withdraw from nomination.

## EXHIBIT D

### Nomination Process for Regional Leadership Teams

1. All nominees must be eligible to serve as stated in the Manual of Procedure (Chapter Two, Section 4, Article 2 B): *“Candidates for this team must demonstrate commitment to the life and concerns of local congregations and the national vision and core values and have the time, gifts, and abilities necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the office. All members of a Regional Leadership Team shall be members in good standing of their local Brethren churches at the time of their election and throughout their terms of service.”*
2. Persons can nominate themselves or be nominated by another individual.
3. All nominees must complete the nomination information form to be nominated.
4. The Regional Leadership Team shall serve as the nominating committee for Team members, and shall develop a ballot of nominees for said position.
5. A period for nominations to be received shall be announced to all churches of the Region by the Regional Leadership Team, and churches in a region will have 60 days to make nominations before an election can be held.
6. A new nomination information form must be completed for each election cycle.

### Nomination and Election Procedure for Regional Leadership Teams

1. Nomination forms shall be made available to all churches of the region online, in a general distribution email, and by other methods determined by the Regional Leadership Team. Distribution will occur so that all churches have 60 days to submit nominations prior to an election. The nomination process, forms, and current members and openings should be included.
2. All nomination forms are to be sent to the Regional Leadership Team chair or at the Team's discretion, the regional resource coordinator. Whoever receives the nominations is expected to send by letter or email a confirmation of the reception of all nominations.
3. All nominations for Regional Leadership Teams must be received no less than 30 days prior to an election.
4. The Regional Leadership Team shall evaluate all nominations using the following criteria:
  - a. Is the nomination form completed fully?
  - b. Does the nominee communicate an adequate understanding of the mission, vision, and core values of The Brethren Church, and the region's role in their fulfillment?

- c. Has the nominee demonstrated the maturity necessary to provide oversight, guidance and discipline to both churches and elders? (See the biblical guidelines for deacons and elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4)
  - d. If a layperson, has their pastor certified that they are a member in good standing in their church?
5. All nominees that meet the criteria shall be placed on the ballot.
  6. Ballots shall be distributed to all churches in the region, and votes received during a set time period of not less than 15 days nor more than 30 days. Alternately, the region may choose to meet face to face, at which time ballots could be received, PROVIDED churches not attending would be permitted to submit their ballots as described above.
  7. Every Brethren church and church plant shall have the right to vote for Regional Leadership Team members. Each church is allowed a number of cast ballots, using the following formula:
    - a. One (1) ballot for each commissioned, licensed or ordained pastor-  
PLUS
    - b. Four (4) ballots for each church or church plant within the region  
PLUS
    - c. One (1) ballot for each twenty-five (25) members or fraction thereof, based upon the most recent membership statistics presented to General Conference.
  8. Each local congregation shall determine how its ballots are cast, using a method determined by its leadership, provided the method permits its members an opportunity to communicate their preferences, and those preferences are proportionately reflected in the ballots cast. Each congregation may cast its ballots for any number of those nominated.
  9. Ballots are to be received by the Regional Leadership Team. Each church shall be notified by the secretary of the Regional Leadership Team by email or letter to confirm receipt of the ballots and the votes cast. The Regional Leadership Team shall send to all churches in the region the results of the election and will upon request be able to present the numbers of ballots cast in the collective and by each church.
  10. Those persons receiving the most votes for each position shall be selected. If multiple positions are to be selected, a ballot is cast for each position (two positions, two votes). If one of the positions is an unexpired term, the persons receiving the most votes will fulfill full terms, with the next highest serving the unexpired term.
  11. Openings in offices prior to completion of term shall be filled by the Regional Leadership Team until the next regional election cycle. Such unexpired term elections shall follow the same nomination and election procedures as outlined above.

**NOMINATION INFORMATION FORM  
FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Brethren Church where membership is held: \_\_\_\_\_

Please share current or recent (10 years) community and local church involvements that you believe have helped prepare you for this office:

Please share current or recent district, regional, or denominational involvements/offices held that you believe have helped prepare you for this office:

Please include any educational or professional training or experience that you believe has helped prepare you for this office.

**CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE and CALL**

1. How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_ years

2. How long have you been a member of The Brethren Church? \_\_\_\_\_ years
  
3. Why do you desire to serve the Lord and the Brethren Church in this office?
  
4. Have you read “*A Manual of Procedure*” and understand the responsibilities of the office you are seeking? (please circle) Yes or No

**The Mission of The Brethren Church:**

*The mission of The Brethren Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who, united in Christ, embrace and reflect God’s love and live in the transforming presence and power of the Holy Spirit.*

As a Regional Leadership Team Member, How do you understand this statement, and what are your responsibilities to fulfill this mission?

**A 5-Year Vision for The National Brethren Church: Est. 7/2017**

*We will be a movement of regionally organized vibrant congregations fulfilling our shared mission.*

*We will accomplish this vision by:*

1. *Establishing Healthy Regional Structures*
2. *Improving Organizational Relationships*
3. *Providing Equitable Care for Leaders and Congregations*
4. *Developing Leaders at All Levels*
5. *Establishing New, Sustainable, Healthy Congregations*
6. *Continuing to Nurture Our Global Partnerships*

What role as a Regional Leadership Team Member do you believe you play in fulfilling this vision?

### **The Brethren Church's Six Core Values:**

How do you as a Regional Leadership Team Member see yourself living out each of these core values?

### **Contextual Brethren Life**

#### **Summary:**

We are guided by traditions and values that shape our identity as The Brethren Church, but we seek to apply these traditions and values in ways that fit our context.

### **Incarnational Ministry**

#### **Summary:**

Just as God's reign was ushered into the world by God becoming one of us (John 1:14-18), so we also practice ministry by immersing ourselves in the contexts to which God has called us. Such incarnational ministry is articulated in Paul's statement, "I have become all things to all, in order that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22b).

## **Responsible Stewardship**

### **Summary:**

We recognize our responsibility to act as stewards of all that God has given us as The Brethren Church. The ultimate goal of our stewardship is to bear witness to God's Kingdom throughout creation. This commitment to stewardship extends to all areas of our shared life together.

## **Intentional Kingdom Witness**

### **Summary:**

We recognize that we are called to bear witness to the Kingdom of God to our neighbors and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:7). We understand that we should be actively pursuing opportunities to advance the Kingdom in all the places we find ourselves: locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. As Brethren led by the Spirit, we join together to extend the Brethren witness through the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches.

## **Servant Leadership**

### **Summary:**

We understand leadership to be the ability of a person or group to influence others toward achieving shared goals. Following Jesus' example, leaders in The Brethren Church consider themselves servants of both God and the people around them. We identify and promote the development of leaders at all levels of the church, both lay and ministerial.

**Biblical and Spiritual Formation**

**Summary:**

We are committed to being transformed into the likeness of Jesus through submission and obedience to Scripture and through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

**PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION FOR LAYPERSON (Ministers are certified “in good standing” by their local churches each year. Said certifications are on record with The Brethren Church)**

As a pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ church, I certify that this nominee is a member in good standing, and eligible for this office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

## EXHIBIT E

### Statement of Indemnification

The Brethren Church shall, to the fullest extent legally permissible, indemnify each person who may serve or who has served at any time on the Executive Board or as an officer, director, or employee appointed by the Executive Board of The Brethren Church against all expenses and liabilities, including, without limitation, counsel fees, judgments, fines, excise taxes, penalties and settlement payments, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon such person in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding in which he or she may become involved by reason of his or her service in such capacity; provided that no indemnification shall be provided for any such person with respect to any matter as to which he or she shall have been finally adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that such action was in the best interests of Brethren Church; and further provided that any compromise or settlement payment shall be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of directors who are not at that time parties to the proceeding. The Brethren Church may advance the costs of defense of any proceeding against any member of the Executive Board or an officer, director or employee appointed by the Executive Board. Any member of the Executive Board or an officer, director or employee appointed by the Executive Board shall be fully protected in relying in good faith upon the records of The Brethren Church and upon such information, opinions, reports, or statements by any of its agents, or any other person, as to matters the member of the Executive Board or officer, director or employee appointed by the Executive Board believes are within such other person's professional or expert competence and who has been selected with reasonable care by or on behalf of The Brethren Church.

The indemnification provided hereunder shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of persons entitled to indemnification hereunder. The right of indemnification under this Agreement shall be in addition to and not exclusive of all other rights to which any person may be entitled.

This Agreement constitutes a contract between The Brethren Church and the member of the Executive Board or officer appointed by the Executive Board, indemnified officers, directors, and employees. No amendment or repeal of the provisions of this Agreement which adversely affects the right of an indemnified officer, director, or employee under this Agreement shall apply to such officer, director, or employee with respect to those acts or omissions which occurred at any time prior to such amendment or repeal, unless such amendment or repeal was voted by or was made with the written consent of such indemnified person.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[ADD SIGNATURE LINES FOR BOARD MEMBER OR OFFICE AND HAVE THEM SIGN IT WHEN THEY ARE APPOINTED OR ELECTED]

## EXHIBIT F

### Conflicts of Interest Policy of The Brethren Church, Inc.

#### Article I

#### Purpose

The purpose of this conflicts of interest policy is to protect The Brethren Church, Inc.'s (the "Corporation"), interest when the Corporation contemplates entering a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or Director of the Corporation or as a member of the Executive Board.

#### Article II

#### Definitions

1. Interested Person. Any Director, member of the Executive Board, principal officer, or member of a committee with board delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
2. Financial Interest. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment or family—
  - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has entered a transaction or business arrangement, or
  - b. A compensation arrangement with the Corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has entered a transaction or business arrangement, or
  - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or business arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

## Article III

### Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of his or her financial interest and must be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of committees with board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The interested person shall abstain from any vote upon whether the matter disclosed to the board or committee is a conflict. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists. Alternatively, an interested person may independently determine that a conflict of interest exists without the need for the remaining board or committee members to consider the matter.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.
  - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the board or committee meeting, but after such presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement that results in the conflict of interest.
  - b. The chairperson of the board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - c. After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether the Corporation may obtain a more advantageous transaction or arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably attainable under circumstances that would not give rise to a conflict of interest, the board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest and for its own benefit and whether the transaction is fair and reasonable to the Corporation and shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement in conformity with such determination.

- e. The interested individual shall not participate in any vote or be present for any vote relating to a transaction or arrangement which is determined to be a conflict of interest, and the interested individual shall be deemed to have abstained from any such vote.

4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

- a. If the board or committee has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b. If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the board or committee determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV

Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the board and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain—

1. Names of Persons With Conflicts. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
2. Names of Persons Present. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection therewith.

Article V

Annual Statements

Each Director, principal officer and member of a committee with board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms that such person –

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,

- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands that the Corporation is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

#### Article VI

##### Periodic Reviews

To ensure that the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and that it does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its status as an organization exempt from federal income tax, periodic reviews shall be conducted.

#### Article VII

##### Use of Outside Experts

In conducting the periodic reviews provided for in Article VI, the Corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used their use shall not relieve the board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

## EXHIBIT G

### Procedures for Congregational Discipline

Because of the highly relational nature of the Brethren Church, the denomination places great value on maintaining strong fellowship ties and unity in essential moral, doctrinal, and practical commitments. When a Brethren congregation deviates from these common biblical and practical standards, it may come under the discipline of the Brethren Church. In such cases the Regional Leadership Team will take the lead and thoroughly investigate the matter with the congregation's leaders and members and determine an appropriate course of action. Every effort should be made to resolve deviations through open dialogue and appeals to church and denominational unity. However, disciplinary action may be necessary. Disciplinary actions that could be taken by the Regional Leadership Team include:

- Issuing a warning to deal with the deviation within a specified period of time.
- Recommending to General Conference that a congregation's delegates to General Conference not be recognized.
- Recommending formally to the National Board of Oversight the disfellowshipping of the congregation from The Brethren Church. This step would be taken only if the deviation is serious enough and the congregation fails to deal with the matter within a specified period of time.

The National Board of Oversight will review the actions taken by the Regional Leadership Team and will also solicit input from the leaders of the congregation. If the board upholds the recommendation of the Regional Leadership Team to disfellowship the congregation from The Brethren Church, the board will issue formal notification of its action to the congregation and its leadership. The board may decide on another course of action, but it will provide clear expectations to the congregation, including a specific time frame, for addressing the issues in question. At all times the goal should be loving restoration and a desire to live in harmony with our brothers and sisters in the faith.

The National Board of Oversight is the final court of appeal in all cases of discipline of congregations, as authorized by Chapter Three, Section 2, Article 1 C in "A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church."