

**Constitution, Guidelines for Operations,  
Job Descriptions and Policies  
of  
SHARON MENNONITE CHURCH**

7675 Amity Pike,  
Plain City, Ohio 43064

Accepted at a Special Members' Meeting on March 26, 1998

Revised and Accepted at the Annual Members' Meeting on September 27, 2001

Revision accepted at Worship Service on April 18, 2004

Revision accepted at September 26, 2007 Members' meeting

Revision accepted at September 23, 2009 Members' meeting

Revision accepted at September 26, 2012 Members' meeting

Revision accepted at September 25, 2013 Members' meeting

**PREAMBLE**

This document is the result of approximately two years of hard work by an ad hoc committee, known as the Constitution Revision Committee. Members began their work in 1996. Their task was to update the latest Sharon Mennonite Church Constitution (circa 1983) after studying constitutions from eight other Mennonite churches and reviewing the preliminary work done by a 1994 Sharon ad hoc Committee. Much information was gleaned from all of these sources, so that past efforts at Sharon did indeed contribute to this 1998 product.

The revised constitution was submitted for congregational approval on October 2, 1997, and was ratified in principle. The guidelines for operation, job descriptions for staff persons, and policies pertaining to use of the facility by outside groups, cemetery use and the Student Aid Fund were accepted in principle on March 26, 1998. In light of feedback from the March 26 meeting, further editorial work was done by the committee before sending it back to the Church Secretary for further processing. A draft was given to the Constitution Revision Committee for final review before distribution to every church family.

The committee appreciates the insights of all who contributed to this effort. This is a working document which will need to be periodically revised. The committee believes this reasonably reflects the work of Sharon which speaks well to where we are as a congregation.

You are encouraged to keep your copy in a safe, but obvious, place for ready reference. The committee's prayer is that we will use this document as a guide for our life as a congregation, recognizing that at best, it ranks no higher than second to the Bible as our guide for congregational life. The *Guidelines for Operation* is to assist the Gifts Discernment Committee and to inform any potential nominees, affirmees, or appointees as to their official responsibilities as a given officer or servant in the church.

The ad hoc Constitution Revision Committee for this assignment included the following members: John Rohrer, chairperson; Jeff Beachy, Ruth Ann Beachy, Katie Mast, Brenda Montgomery, and Howard Schmitt, pastor.

- A subcommittee, Jeff Beachy, Brenda Montgomery and Howard Schmitt, submitted revisions for congregational approval on September 27, 2001, which were accepted in principle.

- A second subcommittee, Jeff Beachy, Katie Mast, John Rohrer and Pastor Howard, submitted further revisions on April 18, 2004, which were accepted by a congregational vote.
- A third ad hoc committee, Pastor Bob Yoder, David Hull and Grace Sims, submitted revisions which were on September 23, 2009
- Additional changes were made to ushers on September 26, 2012
- Additional changes for the formation of the Memorial Garden committee, and the addition of the youth pastor to the Christian Education committee were approved at a Members' meeting on September 25, 2013
- Additional changes to the Facilities Reservation Form and Policy and Fees for Use of Church Facilities were made on April 24, 2018 upon approval by Church Council.
- Additional changes to the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Policy were approved at Members' meeting on September 26, 2018

# CONSTITUTION

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Mission Statement: "Our mission is to know, to worship, to serve and to share Jesus Christ."

Vision Statement: "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

# Sharon Constitution

## Introduction

Desiring that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), and that we may more readily help one another in our Christian walk as members of the Sharon Mennonite Church, we adopt the following constitution to assist us in our work.

## Article I. Name

This fellowship was established in 1933 and was incorporated in 1963 as the Sharon Mennonite Church, hereafter in this constitution referred to as "congregation" or "Sharon," located at 7675 Amity Pike, Plain City, Ohio 43064-9156.

## Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this congregation is to be a community of God's people who:

- a. Glorify God the Father, exalt Jesus Christ His Son as Savior and Lord and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit;
- b. Present the Gospel to the unsaved of the community to lead them to faith in Christ and membership in His church;
- c. Nurture the lives of believers and establish them in the faith through study, fellowship and service;
- d. Discern gifts, equip persons and develop spiritual leadership for the body of Christ;
- e. Demonstrate to the local community, by life and activity, the meaning of Christian discipleship and stewardship;
- f. Provide opportunities for public worship, nurture and observance of the ordinances as requested by the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church;
- g. Receive all gifts and donations and dispense, loan, or invest any and all to the designated institutions and programs;
- h. Commit ourselves to Christ and each other in keeping with the Word of God and our latest doctrinal statement: *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*;
- i. Respond to the spiritual, physical and social needs of people through prayer, assistance, missions, peacemaking, service and education.

## Article III. Affiliation

This congregation is affiliated with the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church and accepts its latest document, Constitution of Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church USA as its guideline. We further express our willingness to receive and give counsel and to cooperate and support the Conference's activities for building the Church of Jesus Christ.

## Article IV. Membership

### Section 1. Reception of Members

Membership in this congregation consists of persons who have been received by church letter or confession of faith, and have been baptized as believers in Jesus Christ after reaching the age of accountability. They are committed to the teachings of the New Testament and have declared their loyalty to the faith and practices of the Mennonite Church.

- a. A class shall be offered periodically to non-members and new attendees to receive a better understanding of what it means to be a member of this congregation.
- b. Since membership in a believer's church includes those who turn from sin, believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord and enter into covenant with fellow believers, infants and young children are not considered members. They are, however, a special part of the congregation and should be loved and nurtured in the teachings of Christ. We believe that they are secure in a loving relationship with God the Heavenly Father.

## **Section 2. Privileges of Members**

- a. Members of Sharon are entitled to participate in the congregation's activities.
- b. Active members of Sharon, duly elected, affirmed or appointed, may be office-holders in the congregation.
- c. Active members are eligible to vote on all questions brought before the congregation.
- d. Burial privileges in the Sharon cemetery will be granted to active members and their infant and adolescent children at no cost to the family.

## **Section 3. Duties of Members:**

- a. To live by the principles of God's Word;
- b. To live a holy life, separated and consecrated to God;
- c. To seek to glorify God by their conduct to preserve Sharon's good name;
- d. To regularly attend church services and Members' Meetings;
- e. To support the congregation's work with their time, talent and means;
- f. To witness for Christ through word and deed;
- g. To willingly serve in any capacity, according to their ability and availability, when called by the congregation;
- h. To care for one another in Christ-like love;
- i. To pray for one another;
- j. To cultivate Christian empathy at all times.

## **Section 4. Members Temporarily Absent**

Members temporarily absent because of mission and service assignments, study or work are expected to participate in a church near their temporary residence to strengthen their spiritual life through Christian fellowship, Bible study and prayer. They will continue to be considered active members until their situation becomes more permanent.

## **Section 5. Inactive Membership**

Members who move to another community are encouraged to transfer membership, if feasible, to the congregation where they worship. They shall be considered inactive members at Sharon when they no longer support our program. Able-bodied resident members shall be considered inactive when:

- a. They no longer attend services or support Sharon's program or,
- b. Their lives indicate they are out of fellowship with Christ and this congregation or,
- c. They no longer uphold their baptismal and church membership vows or,
- d. They do not give and receive counsel in this congregation.

Before members will be placed on an inactive roll (because of a-d), effort will be made by the Pastor and Board of Elders to counsel them in the spirit of Matthew 5:23,24 and 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1 and Romans 12:18. Failure to accept counsel will require that their status be changed to inactive for a probationary period. Continued failure to change their behavior will require termination of membership.

## **Section 6. Termination of Membership**

Members who are absent indefinitely without a valid reason and who no longer support this congregation will forfeit their membership.

- a. Persons who withdraw their membership or whose membership is terminated immediately forfeit their place on any committee or office in the congregation. They will no longer be reported in the membership of the church.
- b. Members who persist in sin, thus defaming the name of Christ, shall confess their sin with genuine repentance. Impenitent transgressors, who have been approached by the Pastor and the Board of Elders but refuse to change, will have their membership terminated.
- c. A penitent transgressor may be reinstated to full membership by recommendation of the Board of Elders and the affirmation of the congregation. Throughout this process, it is the intention and purpose of Sharon to be a redemptive fellowship.

## **Section 7. Associate Members**

Christians from other Mennonite congregations and denominations who regularly worship with Sharon for a temporary period are encouraged to become associate members. The same expectations and privileges for members in Article IV, Sections 1 and 2, apply.

- a. Prospective associate members will be asked to present a statement showing good standing in their home congregation.
- b. They may be received upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and with the affirmation of the congregation.
- c. Associate membership may be granted for a period of two years and then reviewed for possible extension.
- d. If an associate member becomes a permanent resident in the community, membership is encouraged and expected.
- e. Associate membership will terminate with change of residence to another community.

## **Section 8. Active Non-members:**

- a. May participate in Sharon's worship, study, fellowship and service activities.
- b. May serve in any office which would not potentially place them on the Church Council.
- c. Are encouraged to become members of the congregation because non-members do not have voting rights and may not have burial privileges in the church cemetery.

## **Section 9. Real Estate Rights**

Any person whose membership has been terminated forfeits all official and legal rights and privileges to any and all property belonging to the congregation. The legal ownership of the property shall reside with the members who are recognized as the Sharon congregation by the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church.

## **Article V. Officers**

### **Section 1. Regional Pastor**

- a. Shall be a conduit for information between the Conference and the congregation.
- b. Shall be available to the congregation in arranging for pastoral leadership in the event of an opening.
- c. Shall be available for consultation on problems or needs of the congregation.
- d. Shall be available to the Pastor for counsel in pastoral and personal matters.
- e. Shall maintain regular contact with pastors, either as a group or individually.
- f. Shall be available to Sharon's Board of Elders for consultation.

### **Section 2. Pastor**

- a. Shall be chosen by the congregation, in consultation with the Regional Pastor, in keeping with the directives of the Leadership Team of the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church.
- b. Shall be the spiritual leader of Sharon and convener of the Board of Elders, Church Council or other regular-standing committees, but shall not serve as chairperson.
- c. Shall preach the Word, conduct pastoral visitation, assist in community outreach, administer the ordinances and give general oversight to the workings of the congregation.
- d. Shall encourage the congregation, by word and example, to reach out to their neighbors and friends who do not attend church.
- e. Shall help the congregation become more biblically literate and grounded through preaching, teaching and encouraging the development and use of spiritual gifts in worship, nurture and service.
- f. Shall help the congregation become more mature in Christ.
- g. Shall endeavor to preserve and strengthen the unity of the congregation in ways consistent with the standards of God's Word.

### **Section 3. Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders is comprised of three elders and the Pastor ex-officio. Three members --men, women, married or single--shall serve as elders. The Pastor's and elders' spouses may join the Board of Elders' meetings, if requested by the elders. One elder will be selected by the Discernment Committee from nominees given by the congregation, and following congregational affirmation will serve a three-year term. Persons considered for elder positions shall be faithful in their Christian walk and able to cope with conflict situations while maintaining necessary confidentiality.

The third-year elder shall serve as Senior Elder and will serve as Chairperson of the Board of Elders and represent them on the Church Council.

### **Section 4. Moderator**

The Moderator of the congregation shall be chosen by the Church Council. The Moderator will work with the Church Council Chairperson and the Pastor to develop the agenda for Members' Meetings and shall preside at the meetings.

### **Section 5. Church Treasurer**

The Church Treasurer shall be affirmed by the congregation for a three-year term and shall have charge of all funds received for and distributed by the church, except for those of organized groups within the church who have their own treasurer. Checks are written by the Administrative Assistant and the Treasurer reconciles the checkbook with the bank statement and supporting documentation. This person regularly reports to, and serve as a member of, the Church Council.

### **Section 6. Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Representative and Assistant**

These persons shall be affirmed by the congregation for three-year terms and shall serve as ad hoc members of the Missions Committee when requested by them or when circumstances dictate that this is necessary. The Assistant shall serve in the absence of the MDS Representative.

### **Section 7. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Congregational Representative**

The MCC Congregational Representative is affirmed by the congregation to serve for three years as a liaison between the congregation and MCC. This person also serves on the Mission Committee.

### **Section 8. Everence (formerly MMA) Advocate**

The MMA Advocate is appointed by the Board of Elders to serve for two to three years as liaison between the congregation and MMA, for consultation and administration of the Sharing Fund, and to strengthen the church by linking local needs with MMA programs and services.

### **Section 9. Librarian and Assistant Librarians**

The Librarian is affirmed for a three-year term. Each year an Assistant Librarian will be affirmed by the congregation to serve for two years, the first year as second assistant and the second year as first assistant. The first assistant shall serve on the Christian Education Committee. The librarians shall develop and maintain the library for adults and children and encourage the use of Christian multimedia materials.

### **Section 10. Church Historian and Assistant**

These persons shall be affirmed by the congregation for a three-year term. They shall collect materials and keep a record of the life of the congregation.

### **Section 11. Facilities Coordinator**

The Facilities Coordinator is appointed by the Trustees for a three-year term with the possibility of extension.

### **Section 12. Audio-Video Technician**

The Audio-Video Technician is appointed by the Church Council for a three-year term with the possibility of extension. This person, in cooperation with other members with similar expertise, shall be the only ones to run the audio-video systems and do general maintenance on them.

### **Section 13. Youth Pastor**

- a. The Youth Pastor shall be chosen by the congregation; to coordinate the programs of the MYF, working with the Sr. and Jr. MYF Sponsors. This selection shall be in consultation with the Regional Pastor, in keeping with the directives of the Leadership Team of the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church.
- b. To lead the youth of Sharon Mennonite Church into a committed and growing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, while connecting their faith with all aspects of life.
- c. Develop and lead a plan to foster the spiritual growth of the youth at Sharon; through intentional Bible studies, pray for and with students, and organizing special events for Spiritual growth. Also, facilitate monthly youth services.
- d. Serve in pastoral ways to youth with personal visits; while providing avenues to promote community within the youth.
- e. Maintain and encourage connections between youth groups and the congregation
- f. Accountable to the Church Elders, Church council and Senior Pastor

### **Section 14. Sexton**

The Sexton is appointed for a three-year term by the Trustees, with the possibility of extension. This person is responsible for the cemetery.

### **Section 15. Visitation Committee Coordinator**

This person/couple is selected by the Discernment committee and affirmed by the congregation to serve for two years. Works with visitation volunteers coordinating those willing to visit others and those desiring additional visitation; along with that provided by the pastors and elders.

## **Article VI. Committees**

### **Section 1. Church Council**

The Church Council is comprised of eleven persons, seven of whom serve by virtue of office: Senior Elder, Church Treasurer, Senior Trustee, Adult Sunday School Superintendent, Junior Sunday School Superintendent, Senior Missions Committee Representative and an MYF Sponsor. Two are affirmed by the congregation, serving staggered two year terms. The Pastor and Youth Pastor are ex-officio as the tenth and eleventh persons. Collectively these eleven shall serve as the general administrative body of Sharon. As a general rule, they shall meet once a month, and at special meetings called by the Pastor or a majority of Church Council members. Six or more shall constitute a quorum.

### **Section 2. Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is comprised of three persons affirmed by the congregation for three-year staggered terms. Their primary concern is the maintenance of Sharon's building and grounds, as well as overseeing the upkeep of the cemetery, in cooperation with the Sexton. The Senior Trustee shall serve on the Church Council.

### **Section 3. Christian Education Committee**

The Christian Education Committee is comprised of the Adult and Junior Sunday School Superintendents and Assistants, Librarian, Youth Pastor and one person affirmed annually by the congregation. The Adult Sunday School Superintendent shall serve as chairperson. Committee members shall elect their own secretary, and as a general rule meet monthly.

### **Section 4. Worship Planning Committee**

The Worship Planning Committee is comprised of six persons, three affirmed by the congregation. The Pastor, a representative from the Board of Elders and a representative from the Music Committee will also serve. The three affirmed members shall serve two-year staggered terms. The Committee is responsible to plan creative worship and Sunday evening services, and advise on special days or series of meetings.

### **Section 5. Missions Committee**

The Missions Committee is comprised of three persons affirmed by the congregation for three-year staggered terms. The Senior Elected Member shall serve on the Church Council. The Mennonite Central Committee Congregational Representative shall also serve. The Committee's task is to plan for and promote missions and service projects or outings, and include, if deemed necessary the Mennonite Disaster Service Representative can be a part of their meetings.

### **Section 6. Music Committee**

The Music Committee is comprised of the Choristers and two additional persons affirmed by the congregation. They are responsible for the overall music program of the church. A representative of the committee shall serve on the Worship Planning Committee.

### **Section 7. Board of Ushers**

The Board of Ushers is comprised of a chair person and at least eight additional persons affirmed annually by the congregation. They are responsible for the general comfort of worshippers.

### **Section 8. Gifts Discernment Committee**

The Gifts Discernment Committee is comprised of eight persons, five elected, by the congregation, plus the pastor, the youth pastor and an elder who serves as chair. These individuals are elected for two-year terms. One year, three will be elected, and the next year two, etc.; the staggered terms allows for continuity from one year to the next. Their primary duty is to seek persons with the gifts for the proper assignment at the right time. They may solicit help from the congregation through a nomination ballot.

### **Section 9. Food Committee**

The Food Committee is comprised of six persons; the chair serves a two year term, first as assistant the second as chair; additionally there are five, or more, affirmed annually by the congregation. Their primary duty is to plan food and solicit help from the congregation for church functions such as funeral dinners, potlucks, program guests and snacks as requested.

### **Section 10. Flower Committee**

The Flower Committee is comprised of six persons affirmed annually by the congregation. Their primary duty is to provide floral arrangements for Sunday morning worship services and for persons in hospital or families in a time of death of an immediate family member.

### **Section 11. Shower Committee**

The Shower Committee is comprised of two persons affirmed annually by the congregation. Their primary duty is to organize showers for brides and women who are expecting their first baby born to them while attending Sharon.

### **Section 12. Recreation Committee**

The Recreation Committee is comprised of five persons affirmed by the congregation: the chairperson to be affirmed triennially, and two persons, one of each gender, to be affirmed annually for a two-year term. Their primary duty is to maintain all recreational areas and equipment of the church. They shall form an ad hoc committee for any special recreational functions of the church, such as the softball tournament committee. They shall report to the Church Council.

### **Section 13. Visitation Committee**

The Visitation Committee is chaired by an individual or couple, selected by the Discernment Committee and is affirmed for a two-year term, the committee consists of volunteers who visit individuals who desire additional visits to those provided by the Pastor and Elders.

#### **Section 14. Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee**

The Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee is comprised of the Sexton, a representative of the Trustees, and three person affirmed by the congregation serving staggered terms. The committee's task is to propose policy for the placement of cremated remains and organize the maintenance and development of the Memorial Garden. The Memorial Garden is an addition to the Cemetery, and so in cooperation with the Sexton the committee may assist in the management of the Cemetery as a whole.

#### **Section 15. Ad hoc Committees**

Church Council may appoint committees to study and make recommendations to the Church Council.

### **Article VII. Organizations**

#### **Section 1. Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF)**

The MYF is comprised of youth from grade six through high school: Jr. MYF, from grade six to eight; Sr. MYF, from grade nine or age 14. They shall affect their own organization for purposes of spiritual enrichment, development of leadership, and a service ethic. Two sets of sponsors for Jr. MYF, and two sets of sponsors for Sr. MYF, affirmed by the Church Council, shall serve two-year staggered terms: the first year as assistants, the second as lead sponsors. One of the Lead Sponsors shall serve on the Church Council.

#### **Section 2. Mennonite Women (MW)**

MW is comprised of women of the church, who meet for Bible study, sharing, quilting and service projects. They shall affect their own organization. MW of Sharon may correspond and meet with state and church-wide MW.

#### **Section 3. Care Groups**

These are comprised of persons and families who wish to meet for more personal sharing and study and are to include meaningful activities for children.

### **Article VIII. Sunday School**

#### **Section 1. Adult Sunday School Superintendents**

Superintendents are chosen for two years, the first as the Assistant, the second as the Superintendent. They shall oversee adult Sunday School activities, including recruitment of teachers and class formation and location. The Superintendent and Assistant shall serve on the Christian Education Committee. The Superintendent will also serve on the Church Council.

#### **Section 2. Junior Sunday School Superintendents**

Superintendents are chosen for two years, the first as the Assistant, the second as the Superintendent. They shall oversee children's Sunday School activities, including recruitment of teachers and class formation and location. The Superintendent and Assistant shall serve on the Christian Education Committee. The Superintendent will also serve on the Church Council.

#### **Section 3. Sunday School Record Keeper**

The Sunday School Record Keeper is affirmed annually by the congregation for one year and shall keep records and post attendance in the foyer.

#### **Section 4. Sunday School Teachers**

Sunday School teachers, appointed by the Superintendents, shall teach the Bible as the primary curriculum. Other appropriate and supportive topics may be utilized to lead our students into a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and a lifetime of growing in their Christian faith.

## **Article IX. Members' Meetings**

### **Section 1. Annual Members' Meeting**

There shall be an annual Members' Meeting for all members of the congregation for the purpose of hearing reports and planning the work of the congregation. It shall be held on the last Wednesday in September, unless otherwise arranged by the Church Council. Announcement of the meeting and agenda shall be made at least two Sundays before the appointed date. Sharon's fiscal year runs from September 1-August 31.

### **Section 2. Special Members' Meetings**

Special Members' Meetings may be called, if requested by the Pastor or a quorum of Church Council members. They must be announced two Sundays prior to the meeting.

### **Section 3. Quorum**

A quorum for annual and special Members' Meetings shall be members present.

### **Section 4. Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at a Members' Meeting, provided that the said amendment had been previously approved by the Church Council and public announcement of the same had been made at least two Sundays prior to the time of meeting. Voting on all amendments shall be by ballot.

### **Section 5. Suspension of the Constitution**

The Constitution may be temporarily suspended by a four-fifths vote of the members present at any duly called Members' Meeting.

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### Guidelines for Times of Disagreement

Because we are human there will be disagreement and conflict, sometimes with even the best of motives. At the General Assembly (Wichita 1995) the following list of commitments were adopted and recommended to congregations for help in times of disagreement. When we disagree let us pledge to review and experience the admonition of scripture in *thought*, in *action*, and in *life*.

"Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), as both individual members and the body of Christ, we pledge that we shall:

#### IN THOUGHT

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Accept conflict  | a. Acknowledge together that conflict is a normal part of our life in the church.<br><i>Romans 14:1-8, 10-12, 17-19; 15:1-7</i>  |
| Affirm hope      | b. Affirm that as God walks with us in conflict we can work through to growth.<br><i>Ephesians 4:15-16</i>   |
| Commit to prayer | c. Admit our needs and commit ourselves to pray for a mutually satisfactory solution (no prayers for my success or for the other to change but to find a joint way). <i>James 5:16</i> |

## IN ACTION

- Go to the other... d. Go directly to those with whom we disagree; avoid behind-the-back criticism. *Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-20*
- ...In the spirit of humility e. Go in gentleness, patience and humility. Place the problem between us at neither doorstep and own our part in the conflict instead of pointing out the others'. *Galatians 6:1-5*
- Be quick to listen f. Listen carefully, summarize and check out what is heard before responding. Seek as much to understand as to be understood. *James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13*
- Be slow to judge g. Suspend judgments, avoid labeling, end name calling, discard threats, and act in a non-defensive, nonreactive way. *Romans 2:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26*
- Be willing to negotiate h. Work through the disagreements constructively. *Acts 15; Philippians 2:1-11*
- Identify issues, interests and needs of both (rather than take positions).
  - Generate a variety of options for meeting both parties' needs (rather than defending one's own way).
  - Evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not one side's values).
  - Collaborate in working out a joint solution (so both sides gain, both grow and win).
  - Cooperate with the emerging agreement (accept the possible, not demand your ideal).
  - Reward each other for each step forward, toward agreement (celebrate mutuality).

## IN LIFE

- Be steadfast in love i. Be firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution; be steadfast in holding to our common foundation in Christ; be steadfast in love. *Colossians 3:12-15*
- Be open to mediation j. Be open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in mediation in the larger church. *Philippians 4:1-3*
- Trust the community k. We will trust the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to others in the congregation or from the broader church. *Acts 15*
- In one-to-one or small group disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate.
  - In congregational, conference district or denominational disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate or implementing constitutional decision-making processes, insuring that they are done in the spirit of these guidelines, and abiding by whatever decision is made.

Be the Body of Christ

I. Believe in and rely on the solidarity of the Body of Christ and its commitment to peace and justice, rather than resort to the courts of law. / *Corinthians 6:1-6*

Adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church Triannual Session and Mennonite Church General Assembly, Wichita, KS, July 1995.

### **Guidelines for Operation**

This section, *Guidelines for Operation* provides lists of duties for the various offices and committees at Sharon. While organization and job descriptions can be helpful, we will fall far short of our potential of building the Church if our work is not carried out in Christian love and understanding.

The task of each committee is not only to plan creatively, but also to listen attentively to the congregation so that no known needs go unaddressed indefinitely. The *Guidelines for Operation* of this organization may be amended by a simple majority vote of the members present at any duly called Members' Meeting, or Church Council action.

#### **Section 1. Board of Elders**

Office: Board of Elders.

Appointments & Terms: Annual affirmation, following nominations from the congregation, of one to serve for three years.

Reports To: The Church Council

General Job Description: Oversees the spiritual health of the congregation and serves as a confidant and helper to the pastor.

Duties:

- a. Meet monthly or more often if necessary, usually with the Pastor.
- b. Provide leadership for the ongoing spiritual life of the congregation including the development of long term goals for consideration and action by the committees, Church Council or congregation.
- c. Advise the Pastor on, or confirm his choice of, sermon topics.
- d. Assist the Pastor with visitation, worship services and administration of the ordinances.
- e. Provide congregational feedback to the Pastor on needs, program evaluation, policies, procedures and decision making.
- f. Listen to and provide for special needs of people, such as anointing services.
- g. Develop, review and maintain Pastor's Job Description and Pastoral Memo of Understanding. Conduct an annual performance review with the pastor and youth pastor and make recommendation to Church Council for salary adjustments. Elders may appoint additional person(s) to also meet with the Pastor.
- h. May appoint one or more persons to meet with any individual on a sensitive matter.
- i. Administer the Sharing Fund. Consult with Mennonite Mutual Aid Advocate as needed.
- j. Promote awareness of wider church organizations and issues to the congregation.
- k. Act on applications for baptism, membership and membership transfers.
- l. Initiate action for termination of membership.
- m. Refer administrative matters to the Church Council.
- n. Select Conference Delegates from the Board of Elders or other Sharon members as needed.
- o. Select an elder or elder's spouse to serve on the Worship Planning Committee.
- p. Be responsible to the congregation.
- q. An (the Senior) Elder shall serve on the Gifts Discernment Committee.
- r. The Senior Elder shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 2. Moderator**

Office: Moderator

Appointment & Term: Annual election by the Church Council

Reports To: The Church Council

General Job Description: Presides over Members' Meetings.

Duties:

- a. Moderate Members' Meetings
- b. Conduct church business between Members' Meetings, as requested by the Church Council.
- c. In case of absence, appoint temporary Moderator with Church Council backing.

## **Section 3. Church Treasurer**

Office: Church Treasurer

Appointment & Term: Affirmed by the congregation for two years.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Receives and distributes all church funds, except those of organized groups within the church which have their own treasurer.

Duties:

- a. Receive, count, and deposit in a timely manner all funds and offerings received by the congregation.
- b. Working with the Administrative Assistant, distribute funds by check for all routine operating expenditures and non-routine items as directed by the Boards of Elders or Trustees or the Church Council. Each month will reconcile check book with bank statement.
- c. Present a monthly financial report at the Church Council meeting.
- d. Maintain possession of safe deposit box key.
- e. Issue receipts for donations as required by law.
- f. Present books for annual review to persons selected by the Church Council.
- g. Administer the Student Aid Fund.
- h. Submit a written report of all transactions for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 4. Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Representative and Assistant**

Office: MDS Representative and Assistant

Appointment & Term: Affirmed by the congregation for three-year terms.

Reports to: The congregation, and the Missions Committee if necessary.

General Job Description: Recruits volunteers to assist with clean up and rebuilding at disaster sites.

Duties:

- a. Serve as contact person for MDS in the event of a disaster in the area.
- b. Serve as contact person for local disasters which do not involve MDS.
- c. Seek to encourage active participation in MDS projects.
- d. Enlist volunteers and arrange for transportation to disaster or work sites.
- e. Attend regional MDS meetings.
- f. Serve as an ad hoc member of the Missions Committee, as requested and feasible.
- g. The MDS Representative shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 5. Librarian & Assistant Librarians**

Office: Librarian & Assistant Librarians

Appointment & Terms: The Librarian is affirmed by the congregation to serve for three years. Two assistants are affirmed for staggered two-year terms. The Librarian shall serve on the Christian Education Committee.

Reports to: The Christian Education Committee

General Job Description: Develop and maintain an adult and children's library to encourage the use of Christian multi-media materials.

Duties:

- a. Provide staff for the library after church services and at other times by special arrangement.
- b. Enlist help as needed to perform duties.
- c. Encourage use of library through announcements, book reviews and displays.
- d. Work with the Pastor and Christian Education Committee on purchase of new materials and the removal of materials which are no longer relevant.
- e. Examine and approve all materials prior to placement in library, giving special consideration to recommendations by Mennonite periodicals. It is recommended that only Christian materials be considered for the library.
- f. Work with the Christian Education Committee on a suggested annual library budget for approval by the Church Council.
- g. The Librarian shall submit a written report of library activities for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 6. Church Council**

Office: Church Council

Appointments & Terms: The Church Council is comprised of eleven persons, seven of whom serve by virtue of office: Senior Elder, Church Treasurer, Senior Trustee, Adult Sunday School Superintendent, Junior Sunday School Superintendent, Senior Missions Committee Representative and an MYF Sponsor. The congregation affirms two, each for two-year staggered terms. The Pastor and Youth Pastor are ex-officio: the tenth and eleventh persons. Collectively these eleven shall serve as the general administrative body of Sharon. As a general rule, they meet once a month, and at special meetings called by the Pastor or a majority of Church Council members. Six or more shall constitute a quorum.

Reports To: The Sharon members at the annual Members' Meeting or special Members' Meetings.

General Job Description: Serves as the general administrative body of the congregation.

Duties:

- a. Administer, coordinate and promote Sharon's program in consultation with the Board of Elders and the Pastor.
- b. Receive reports and recommendations from all church committee chairpersons and act upon the recommendations.
- c. Review and make suggestions to the congregation concerning financial matters.
- d. Oversee, with the Board of Elders, the selection of a Pastoral Search Committee as needed.
- e. Help the Pastor and Board of Elders plan and schedule special church meetings.
- f. Promote unity and cooperation within the congregation.
- g. Elect the Church Council Chairperson, whose job description includes:
  1. Chair all Church Council meetings or appoint a temporary chairperson.
  2. Consult with the Pastor to help build Church Council agenda.
  3. Give counsel on matters requiring immediate attention
  4. See that necessary Church Council issues are brought to the Sharon body.

5. Be responsible to contact all council members in case a Church Council meeting needs to be changed.
6. Submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.
- h. Elect the Church Council Secretary, whose job description includes:
  1. Record the minutes at all Church Council meetings.
  2. See that the minutes are entered into the church files.
  3. See that complete minutes are posted on the bulletin board after they receive approval by Church Council.
  4. Record all minutes at Members' Meetings from October 1-September 30.
- i. Elect the Church Moderator, preferably from within the ranks of the Church Council.
- j. Select two persons to perform an annual review of the Treasurer's books, who will report at the Annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 7. Board of Trustees**

Office: Board of Trustees

Appointments & Terms: Three persons are affirmed by the congregation for staggered three year terms. One is affirmed each year. The Senior Trustee will serve on the Church Council.

Reports To: The Church Council

General Job Description: Is responsible for the care and upkeep of the church facility and grounds.

Duties:

- a. Provide for maintenance and improvement of the buildings, parking lots, cemetery and grounds. May spend up to \$1,500, by consensus of the trustees, or up to \$1,500 with approval of Church Council, for any item of improvement, maintenance or repair. Any amount over \$1,500 must be approved by the congregation.
- b. Hire and supervise the custodian to do weekly cleaning of the church building with approval of Church Council.
- c. Contract for lawn mowing and shrub trimming with approval of Church Council.
- d. Be available to direct parking at funerals, or arrange for someone to do it.
- e. Arrange for snow removal from parking lot.
- f. Establish guidelines and provide a sign up sheet for borrowing church property.
- g. Establish guidelines, in consultation with the Church Council, for the sale or dispersal of church property.
- h. The Senior Trustee shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.
- i. Appoint a Sexton, with approval of Church Council, whose job description includes:
  1. 1. Keep a record of the graves and lots.
  2. 2. Maintain a copy in the church files.
  3. 3. Arrange for opening and closing graves.
  4. 4. Follow current guidelines for cemetery use.
- j. Maintain a log book of duties and various maintenance activities performed throughout the year.

## **Section 8. Christian Education Committee**

Office: Christian Education Committee

Appointments & Terms: Five persons serve by virtue of office: Adult and Junior Sunday School Superintendents, Assistant Adult and Junior Sunday School Superintendents, Librarian, Youth Pastor and one church Member-at-large affirmed annually by the congregation for a total of eight persons. All members serve during the term of their office.

Reports To: The Church Council

General Job Description: Is responsible for overseeing and directing the education programs and activities of the church.

Duties:

- a. Encourage and arrange teacher training and support activities.
- b. Evaluate need for formation of additional Sunday school classes.
- c. Plan annual church picnic.
- d. Provide leadership for Wednesday evening programs for children and adults.
- e. Oversee Vacation Bible School, including appointment of the Superintendent and assistants.
- f. Obtain leaders for Bible Memory program and Children's Church.
- g. May assist pastor and Worship Planning Committee in the organization of special programs, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- h. Recommend library budget for Church Council approval.
- i. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

### **Section 9. Adult Sunday School Superintendents.**

Office: Adult Sunday School Superintendents

Appointment: Affirmed by the congregation for two years, the first as Assistant, the second as the Superintendent.

Reports To: Christian Education Committee

General Job Description: Oversee adult Sunday school activities, including recruitment of teachers, class formation and location.

Duties:

- a. Recruit teachers, assistants and substitutes.
- b. Organize classes, topics and locations.
- c. Determine interest in and provide leadership for an adult opening on an annual basis.
- d. Determine interest in and arrange for quarterly Sunday school breakfasts.
- e. Select adult Sunday school study materials in consultation with the Christian Education Committee.
- f. Determine Sunday school materials needed and combine with the junior Sunday school material order.
- g. Both the Superintendent and the Assistant serve on the Christian Education Committee. The Superintendent serves as chairperson.
- h. The Superintendent serves on the Church Council.
- i. The Superintendent shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.
- j. Plan for and put on quarterly breakfast

### **Section 10. Junior Sunday School Superintendents**

Office: Junior Sunday School Superintendents

Appointment: Affirmed by the congregation for two years, the first as Assistant, the second as the Superintendent.

Reports To: Christian Education Committee

General Job Description: Oversee children's Sunday school activities, including recruitment of teachers, class formation and location.

Duties:

- a. Recruit teachers, assistants and substitutes.
- b. Organize classes and locations.

- c. Provide for junior and primary openings.
- d. Select Sunday school materials needed in consultation with the Christian Education Committee.
- e. Order all Sunday school materials, in cooperation with the Adult Superintendent.
- f. Be responsible for children's Christmas program and other programs for the congregation as requested.
- g. Select project for weekly Sunday school offering.
- h. Both the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent serve on the Christian Education Committee.
- i. The Superintendent serves on the Church Council.
- j. The Superintendent shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 11. Worship Planning Committee**

Office: Worship Planning Committee

Appointments & Terms: Annual appointment(s)--one person one year and two persons the next--affirmed by the congregation for two-year staggered terms, in addition to the Pastor, a representative from the Board of Elders and a representative from the Music Committee, making a total of six persons.

Reports to: The Board of Elders

General Job Description: Arranges creative and meaningful Sunday morning worship services, Sunday evening services and special days, such as: Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Thanksgiving Eve and renewal meetings.

Duties:

- a. Work at making our services Christ-focused and reverent.
- b. Arrange for worship assistants for each service.
- c. Incorporate special music, in dialogue with the Music Committee.
- d. Encourage the use of many people's gifts to make our services more participatory.
- e. Arrange for monthly Children's Corner.
- f. Incorporate drama and reader's theater from time to time.
- g. Arrange for the preparation and hanging of decorative banners.
- h. Allow time for sharing of personal praise and prayer concerns.
- i. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.
- j. Emphasis on Children, Youth and Women Sunday's are encouraged

## **Section 12. Music Committee**

Office: Music Committee

Appointment & Terms: Persons affirmed annually by the congregation: the choristers and two additional persons.

Reports to: The Worship Planning Committee

General Job Description: Oversees the music program of the congregation and arranges for vocal and instrumental music.

Duties:

- a. Choose their own chairperson.
- b. Arrange for special music for Sunday worship services, renewal meetings and other special services.
- c. Provide choristers for all worship services.
- d. Coordinate instrumental music before and during services.
- e. Advise on the purchase and repair of hymn books and other musical resources.
- f. Organize church and children's choirs.

- g. Arrange for maintenance and tuning of instruments.
- h. Plan for music education programs.
- i. Promote participation in community musical programs.
- j. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

### **Section 13. Missions Committee**

Office: Missions Committee

Appointment & Terms: Three persons are affirmed by the congregation for staggered three-year terms. One is affirmed each year. The Pastor and the Mennonite Central Committee Congregational Representative shall also serve, making a total of five persons. The Mennonite Disaster Service Representative will serve on an on-call basis. The Senior Elected Member will serve on the Church Council.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Promotes the cause of worldwide and local missions through activities such as: education, service projects and mission speakers.

Duties:

- a. Have an interest in and heart for missions.
- b. Research, organize and promote community service and outreach programs.
- c. Keep the needs of our church-wide mission agencies before the congregation.
- d. Promote and support worthy community projects.
- e. Promote and utilize Mennonite Media materials.
- f. Encourage community outreach.
- g. Provide services at area nursing homes.
- h. Work with the Mennonite Central Committee Congregational Representative.
- i. Respond to disaster needs locally and elsewhere in cooperation with our Mennonite Disaster Service Representative or Assistant MDS Representative.
- j. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

### **Section 14. Mennonite Central Committee Congregational Representative**

Office: Mennonite Central Committee Congregational Representative

Appointment & Terms: One person affirmed by the congregation for a three-year term.

Reports To: Missions Committee

General Job Description: Acts as liaison between MCC and the congregation.

Duties:

- a. Report the work of MCC to the congregation.
  - 1. Help the local congregation maintain awareness of MCC programs and concerns. This may be done by sharing and posting current MCC materials on bulletin boards and in church papers or boxes, making announcements, and by personal contacts, etc.
  - 2. Serve as the contact person for itinerating MCC-sponsored people in the congregation.
  - 3. Share information about and encourage participation in MCC-sponsored seminars, workshops and educational trips.
  - 4. Report back to the congregation following MCC annual meeting and as needed during the year.
- b. Provide leadership in the congregation for MCC projects. Encourage participation in activities that support MCC, such as Relief Sales, Houses Against Hunger, SELFHELP/Thrift shops, meat canning, cash projects, learning tours and material resource projects.

- c. Represent the congregation to MCC throughout the year and at the MCC Great Lakes Annual Meeting and via the Great Lakes staff or Great Lakes Board members.
  1. Present ideas and/or feedback for setting the direction of MCC Great Lakes program.
  2. Encourage people to attend the Annual Meeting and to participate in the worship, fellowship and the decision making.

## **Section 15. Board of Ushers**

Office: Board of Ushers

Appointment & Terms: Eight persons affirmed annually by the congregation, for a one-year term.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Welcomes worshipers and seeks to make their stay as comfortable as possible.

Duties:

- a. The chairperson is selected by the Discernment Committee The chairperson shall be in charge of calling an organizational meeting in August prior to the beginning of the new-year and explain the duties of the ushers, and also develop a roster for Sunday service responsibilities. The chairperson is also responsible to go over this job description with the ushers to ensure everyone fully understands their duties and responsibilities, and answer any questions and give help to new ushers who need an understanding of what is expected of them. Another meeting to see how things are going should be scheduled some time in January.
- b. Arrive at church by 8:45 AM on Sunday mornings to unlock the facility, Sunday School Classrooms and greet worshipers at the door.(Outside doors should be opened for those coming in, but should not be left open for extended periods of time). Adjust hallway thermostats to 72 degrees.
- c. Fold bulletins and add inserts as needed.
- d. Assist elderly/handicapped persons from their vehicle by wheelchair when needed.
- e. Welcome all visitors and help them find Sunday School classes or seating in the sanctuary if needed.
- f. Ring first bell at 10:17 AM, the second at 10:22 AM for Sunday School dismissal. New ushers need to be shown and instructed where the bells are and how to operate.
- g. Post one usher at the north rear door to the sanctuary to greet attendees and visitors (Greeters are at the double doors).
- h. Hand out bulletins and usher people to seats at appointed times.
- i. Be prepared to take up the offering at appropriate time. Following the offering the checks and cash are then separated. Two ushers count the cash and record it on the paperwork in the Administrative Assistant's desk, then place both cash and checks into money bag and lock in back room of office.
- j. Count all who are in the sanctuary, as well those in the nursery and other parts of the church where some may be located.
- k. Update numbers on attendance board in foyer.
- l. Deliver the wireless mike during sharing and announcement times.
- m. Following the service, close all windows, turn off fans, reset thermostats in hallways to 78 degrees in the summer and 64 degrees in the winter.
- n. Lock up church building after the service.
- o. Have at least one usher on duty for evening services to unlock and lock, and to do other duties listed above.
- p. Have one usher available to assist with funerals.
- q. Responsible for setting up and taking down chairs, tables, podium and other items as needed.
- r. Remove snow from sidewalks on Sundays.
- s. When an usher cannot fulfill an obligation to serve their time slot on the roster, he/she is responsible to find a substitute, or if having difficulty doing so, contact the usher chairperson.
- t. Ushers need to learn and understand how to set the air conditioning and fans in the sanctuary.

- u. It is encouraged for the ushers to come ready to serve by being friendly and dressing neatly to make a positive impression on all those attending since the ushers are the very first people that attendees will encounter.

### **Section 16. Gifts Discernment Committee**

Office: Gifts Discernment Committee

Appointments & Terms: Annual election, alternating 3 one year and 2 the next to allow continuity of service on the committee, in addition to an Elder and the Pastor, making a total of seven persons.

Reports to: Church Council and the Congregation

General Job Description: Prepare slates of potential officers to take effect in September: Elder and Gifts Discernment Committee to be elected in April, the rest to be affirmed by mid-June.

Duties:

- a. Prepare nomination forms in advance to encourage broad congregational participation.
- b. Utilize these returns as a starting point to develop the ballots.
- c. Prepare a ballot of nominees for election in April, another for affirmation in June.
- d. Look for diversity, such as new members, those who rarely hold a church office, different age groupings and family systems.
- e. Place only members' names in nomination for the elected offices, and offices represented on Church Council.
- f. Include active committed non-members for affirmation slots where feasible.

### **Section 17. Food Committee**

Office: Food Committee

Appointment & Terms: Five persons shall serve. One person affirmed annually by the congregation for a two-year term; the second year person shall serve as chairperson. Additionally, four persons are affirmed annually by the congregation for a one-year term.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Plans and solicits food and workers from the congregation as needed for church functions.

Duties:

- a. The Chairperson orders supplies as needed.
- b. Organize funeral dinners, potlucks, snacks following services and other special events.
- c. Keep a written record of services provided and quantities served to aid future planning.
- d. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.
- e. Keep the refrigerator clean and, along with any other groups using the kitchen, clean the kitchen and mop the floor after each use, as necessary.

### **Section 18. Flower Committee**

Office: Flower Committee

Appointment & Terms: Six persons affirmed annually by the congregation.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Provides floral arrangements for Sunday worship services and otherwise as needed.

Duties:

- a. Elect their own committee chairperson.
- b. Provide an arrangement for the sanctuary each Sunday morning.
  1. 1. Provide a calendar for persons to donate floral or other arrangements for special occasions.
  2. 2. Gather materials for the arrangements from the church family when feasible.
- c. Send or deliver a flower arrangement or planter to church members and regular attendees at the time of their hospitalization or upon the death of an immediate family member.
- d. Be responsible for the interior decor of the building.
- e. Purchase appropriate floral or other tributes for Mother's and Father's Day.
- f. Arrange for window decorations for the advent season.
- g. Encourage congregational participation by requesting spring flowers for Easter and poinsettias for Christmas.
- h. The Chairperson shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

**Section 19. Shower Committee**

Office: Shower Committee

Appointment & Terms: Two persons affirmed annually.

Reports to: Church Council

General Job Description: Organizes bridal and baby showers.

Duties:

- a. Organize bridal showers.
- b. Organize a baby shower for mothers, who are members or regular attendees, who are expecting their first baby born to them while attending Sharon.
- c. The Committee shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

**Section 20. Recreation Committee**

Office: Recreation Committee

Appointment & Terms: Five persons shall serve. One person affirmed triennially to serve as chair. Two persons, one of each gender, to be affirmed annually for a two-year term.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: The Recreation Committee shall be responsible for maintaining all recreational areas and recreational equipment of the church.

Duties:

- a. Purchase and maintain recreational equipment for the church.
- b. Maintain recreational areas of the church, such as softball diamonds, playground equipment etc.
- c. Form an ad hoc committee for any special recreational functions of the church, such as the softball tournament committee.

**Section 21. Everence ( formerly MMA) Advocate**

Office: Mennonite Mutual Aid Advocate

Appointment & Terms: Appointed by the Board of Elders and approved by Mennonite Mutual Aid to serve for a term of two to three years.

Reports to: The Board of Elders

General Job Description: Strengthens the congregation by linking local needs with MMA programs and services.

Duties:

- a. Listen for mutual aid needs in the congregation and community where MMA might provide assistance.
- b. Help the congregation access MMA's fraternal benefit programs including Community Service and Sharing Fund grants, educational programs and other available services.
- c. Refer people from Sharon with insurance and other financial service needs to MMA (to an MMA counselor, Mennonite Foundation representative, etc.)
- d. Share information with the congregation regarding local Sharing Fund matching grant projects, Community Service grants, MMA educational seminars, and other MMA programs and services.
- e. Inform MMA about mutual aid and other activities, as needed, to help maintain their "fraternal benefit association" status.
- f. Submit information about Sharon members on to MMA to help them better serve our congregation.

### **Section 22. Church Historian and Assistant**

Office: Church Historian and Assistant

Appointment & Terms: Affirmed by the congregation for a three-year term.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Collects materials and keeps a record of the life of the congregation.

Duties:

- a. Record all births, deaths, marriages, membership changes, dedications, graduations, celebrations and other significant church events for the historical records.
- b. Collect pictures and newspaper clippings of all items related to the congregation or to the life of its members.
- c. Keep the historical file at the church or keep a document at the church showing where the records may be found.
- d. Submit a report to the Annual Members' Meeting.

### **Section 23. Facilities Coordinator**

Office: Facilities Coordinator

Appointment & Terms: May be a trustee or appointed by them

Reports to: Trustees

General Job Description: Oversee rental of building to outside groups.

Duties:

- a. Master schedule is maintained in the church office.
- b. Check with custodian regarding special events.
- c. Assure that contract is signed, deposit and payment collected. Inform Treasurer to return deposit when warranted.
- d. Be sure HVAC system is adjusted when facility is rented.
- e. Unlock facility and instruct renter(s) on use, lights, restrooms, etc.
- f. Be sure facility is locked and secure after events.

## **Section 24. Audio-Video Technician**

Office: Audio-Video Technician

Appointment & Terms: Appointed by Church Council for three years with possible extension.

Reports to: Church Council

General Job Description: Operate and maintain audio-video system

Duties:

- a. Run the audio-video systems and do general maintenance on them.
- b. Operate audio-video systems and rehearse for all special music, drama groups etc.
- c. Be available for weddings, funerals, special events, as requested. Receives \$75.00 for the events
- d. Recruit and train audio-video assistants as needed.

## **Section 25. Care Groups**

Office: Care Groups

Appointment & Terms: The Board of Elders appoints the Care Groups, in consultation with the Care Group Leaders for a two-year term beginning in September.

Reports to: The Board of Elders

General Job Description: Encourages personal sharing and study and provides mutual support for each participant, adult or child.

Duties:

- a. Help group members grow in their Christian walk through group Bible study.
- b. Care for each other, and for others in the congregation and community, as needs present themselves.
- c. When a crisis comes to a group's member, their group takes the lead to provide meals and respond in other ways. If more help is needed, their Sunday school class becomes involved. If yet more help is needed, the Food Committee draws upon the resources of the whole congregation.
- d. Provide meaningful inclusion of children in the care group activities.
- e. Seek to include families which are not currently part of any care group.
- f. Allow time for personal sharing and prayer as part of the group experience.
- g. Suggestions for meetings: rotate host homes and serve snacks.

## **Section 26. Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) and Sponsors**

The MYF is open to any young person upon promotion to sixth grade. The Jr. MYF will serve young persons from sixth grade to eighth grade. The Sr. MYF will serve young persons from ninth grade or age 14. The MYF has its own constitution and each group organizes itself each year.

The purpose of the MYF is to provide activities for leadership development, spiritual growth and service opportunities under the guidance of the church.

Funds for MYF activities may be raised by various projects, dues, offerings or other means, as approved by the MYF and their sponsors. Sponsors may want to confer with the Church Council, especially on new projects.

The MYF is responsible to their Sponsors and the Youth Pastor.

Office: MYF Sponsors

Appointment & Terms: Two persons affirmed annually by the Church Council for two year terms. The first year they will serve as assistants to the Lead Sponsors and the second as Lead Sponsors. MYF members or Lead Sponsors may submit names for Assistant Sponsors to the Elders who will take the names to the Church Council. The Council will ratify if they concur.

Reports to: The Youth Resources Leader

General Job Description: Provide the spiritual and emotional maturity for youth ministry. Serve as important role models for youth to follow, especially as decisions about faith, values, lifestyles, relationships and careers are being considered. Provide counsel and oversight on the development of leadership, spiritual enrichment and a service ethic for all MYF members.

Duties:

- a. Arrange for the organization and election of officers of MYF members. This will usually include President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. It is suggested organization take place by August 15.
- b. Oversee the establishment of appropriate committees to carry out the activities of the MYF.
- c. Listen sensitively and with empathy to the feelings, concerns and needs of young people.
- d. Confront with care both youth and adults on matters relating to youth ministry as the need arises.
- e. Help youth set limits for behavior as young Christians. Help youth explore their values and what it means to commit all of life to Christ.
- f. Help youth and their parents communicate with each other.
- g. Provide maximum feasible leadership opportunities for the members.
- h. Work with the Treasurer to maintain a treasury for MYF activities and organize an annual review (informal audit).
- i. Oversee the development of a balanced plan of activities to include worship, fellowship, recreation and service.
- j. One of the Lead Sponsors shall represent the youth on the Church Council.
- k. The Lead Sponsors shall submit a written report for the annual Members' Meeting.

## **Section 26. Sexton**

Office: Sexton

Appointment & Terms: Appointed by Trustees for three years.

Reports to: Trustees

General Job Description: Oversee cemetery use and implement cemetery policy on page 35.

Duties:

- a. Implement Guidelines for Cemetery Use.
- b. Maintain the plot plan.
- c. Recruit and train assistants as needed.

## **Section 27. Vacation Bible School Committee**

The Vacation Bible School Committee is comprised of three persons, the youth pastor along with the organizer and assistant organizer selected by the Christian Education Committee. They serve a 2 year staggered terms. They are responsible for selecting the VBS curriculum, but the curriculum choice needs to be approved by the Christian Ed Committee. The youth pastor would also serve as the "face-person" during the week of VBS.

## Section 28. Visitation Committee

Led by Visitation Committee Coordinator (2 year term) and is comprised of volunteers who wish to visit congregational members, and attendees who desire additional visits along with those provided by the Pastor and Elder.

## Section 28. ad hoc Committees

Office: ad hoc Committee

Appointment & Terms: For a specific short-term assignment until completed.

Reports to: The Church Council

General Job Description: Designated by the Church Council on issues which do not readily fit into the parameters of a standing committee, or where special expertise is required.

Duties:

- a. Follow through with the specifically assigned agenda.
- b. Work within the designated time frame.
- c. Report back to Church Council during the process or when task is completed.

## STAFF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Pastor	pages 27-29
Youth Pastor	pages 30-31
Administrative Assistant	pages 31-32
Church Custodian	pages 32

### Pastor's Job Description

**Appointment:** Called in a duly called meeting of members upon the recommendation of the Search Committee, Board of Elders, Church Council, and confirmation of credentials by the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church. The pastor shall serve the congregation for a mutually agreed upon period of time.

**Reports To And Confers With:** The Pastor reports to the elected Board of Elders regarding Job Description and Memo of Understanding. Elders and Elders' Spouses serve as ministerial counselors and give assistance to the pastor. Matters calling for broader counsel are referred to Church Council and/or a Sharon Members' Meeting. Elders and the Pastor will develop and/or review annual goals. Elders will conduct an annual performance review with the Pastor.

#### Responsibilities: Listed in Order of Priority

1. Preaching Ministry

#### Performance Objectives

Pastor models and teaches disciplines of spirituality, sharing with members in the joys and struggles to develop an authentic spiritual life.

- a. Preaches a variety of Biblically based sermons, dealing with our spiritual lives and contemporary issues
- b. Carries primary responsibility or special services such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, parent/child dedications.

2. Crises and High-Need  
Pastoral Visitation

Pastor visits those in hospitals or emergency situations regularly; network is developed to keep pastor and others informed of crises situations; needs of ill or bereaved are met.

- a. Visits shut-ins, in consultation with the elders, as deemed helpful.
- b. Makes hospital and home visits, in consultation with the elders.
- c. Visits new members, inactive members and/or members who have fallen into sin.

3. Ministering to Youth

Pastor gives priority to persons in this key-transition and Young Adults time, with the goal of assisting persons for involvement in and commitment to the church and its faith. Help such persons to claim personal ownership of their faith and life decisions.

- a. Works as a consultant with Youth Pastor and coordinates youth worship service dates.
- b. Establishes personal relationship with youth and young adults to further their Spiritual Growth.
- c. Promotes intergenerational understanding.

4. Pastoral Counseling

Pastor initiates counseling ministry for assisting those within and outside the church, and makes appropriate referrals when needed.

- a. Conducts counseling sessions with couples asking to be married.
- b. Gives counseling in grief and other crisis situations as needs arise.
- c. Receives counseling referrals from Elders

5. Teaching/Training Ministry

Pastor accepts an active teaching role beyond that involved in worship and preaching by providing instruction in the Scriptures, theology, and the history of the church.

- a. Offers baptismal instruction classes.
- b. Offers membership orientation classes.
- c. Encourages congregational leaders to fulfill their duties.
- d. Addresses issues of stewardship and finance.

6. Administration and Participation in Meetings

Pastor accepts appropriate planning and administrative responsibilities in a climate of delegated tasks and shared leadership with lay members.

- a. Attends Board of Elders' meetings, with the exception of executive sessions.
- b. Attends Church Council, Gifts Discernment and Worship Planning committee meetings.
- c. Attends other committee meetings, or meet with chairperson(s), if requested.
- d. Attends annual meeting of the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church, USA as a voting delegate.
- e. Attends the biennial Mennonite Church, USA General Assembly.
- f. Administers and oversees the church office and staff.

7. Missions/Service

Pastor is aware of and promotes the Church's worldwide mission, development and relief ministries. Encourages financial and prayer support and challenges members to hear and heed the call of God.

- a. Encourages members to be aware and participate in the broader church mission including voluntary service missions at home and abroad.
- b. Discerns and encourages persons to pursue the pastoral ministry.

8. Evangelism/Church Growth Pastor and congregation work at goals intended to bring people to faith and to result in the growth of the local congregation.
- a. Provides overall guidance in outreach activities.
  - b. Equips the laity for outreach.
  - c. Contacts new attendees to encourage continued participation and spiritual growth.
9. Developing the Ministry of the Laity Pastor perceives that effective leadership of a congregation is a shared leadership and therefore works actively to develop, support, and encourage effective lay leadership.
- a. Counsels with individual Elders regarding their spiritual lives.
  - b. Counsels and equips other lay leaders.
  - c. Guides the congregation in discerning and developing gifts for ministry within and outside the local fellowship.
  - d. Provides leadership for Care Groups.
10. Outside Ministries Pastor has concern for identifying problems and needs in the community, and for working with both church and community groups. Works with local ecumenical and interfaith efforts.
- a. Supports conference and church-wide activities.
  - b. Participates in efforts of the local ministerium.
  - c. Participates in Regional Pastor Peer Meetings.
  - d. Seeks approval of Elders for any time spent beyond one-half day per week for these outside ministries.
11. Personal and Spiritual Health and Physical Health Pastor models discipline of a balanced life for spiritual and physical health
- a. Regularly takes one day off per week from church work.
  - b. Regularly takes one Sunday off per quarter for personal rest and renewal.
  - c. Spends three weeks annually on vacation.
  - d. Attends up to 15 days of continued education per year, upon recommendation of the Elders.
12. Reporting and Evaluation The Pastor provides regular and open communication to assist in accountability and gage individual and congregational growth.
- a. Reports monthly to the Board of Elders on progress of church programs, plans, concerns, hospital visits, and number and type of counseling sessions.
  - b. Prepares written report annually for the congregation.
  - c. Uses a variety of other means such as, newsletters and oral reports to communicate to committees and the congregation.
  - d. Provides needed information and meets with Elders for annual performance review. Elders prepare recommended salary for Church Council action annually.

**Youth Pastor  
Sharon Mennonite Church  
Job Description  
6-20-06**

**Identity:**

- a. A Christian individual, filled with God's Spirit, a zeal for Christ and a passion for
- b. youth.
- c. Believes in and conforms to the Mennonite Church USA, 1995 Confession of Faith
- d. A full time youth minister with adequate training in youth ministry, giving oversight primarily to the
- e. Senior MYF, but also to the Junior MYF and Young Adult ministries.

**Purpose:**

To lead the youth of Sharon Mennonite Church into a committed and growing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, while connecting their faith with all aspects of life.

**Job Skills:**

1. Thorough Bible knowledge
2. Verbal and written communication skills
3. Organizational and Planning skills.
4. Ability to work with others
5. Basic Computer skills
6. Willing to learn new skills and attend continuing education events

**Objectives:**

**1. Spiritual Development**

Develop and lead a plan to foster the spiritual growth of the youth at Sharon through intentional Bible studies, pray for and with students, and organizing special events for Spiritual growth. Also, facilitate monthly youth services.

**2. Service Emphasis**

Build age-appropriate ministries that will shape young lives and continue to teach a theology of service to the youth as a way of following Christ.

**3. Building Relationships and Community**

- a. Serve in pastoral ways to youth in personal visits
- b. Provide avenues to promote community within the various groups through weekly activities and personal contact
- c. Attend area school functions when possible
- d. Maintain and encourage connections between youth groups and the congregation
- e. Work at outreach to un-churched youth

**4. Administration**

- a. Be accountable to the Church Elders
- b. Shall coordinate schedules and establish a good working relationship with the senior Pastor.
- c. Meet monthly with the Church Elders
- d. Meet monthly with the Church Council
- e. Clarify vision for youth annually with written goals to the Church Elders
- f. Submit annual year end report to the congregation

**Youth Pastor**

**Appointments and Terms**--to be decided

**Reports To:** Board of Elders monthly, church council and the Senior Pastor. (Elders will meet with youth and parents yearly to discuss Youth program). Must have a good working relationship with the Senior Pastor, coordinating schedules and being accountable for communication.

**General Purpose:** To lead the youth of Sharon Mennonite Church into a committed and growing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, nurturing both the spiritual and social aspects of growth.

There shall be primary emphasis on the Senior MYF, but will also include the Junior MYF and Young Adults.

**Duties:**

**Biannually:** Youth Convention (planning, prep, etc.)

Mission Projects for both Jr. and Sr. MYF (planning, prep, etc.)

**Annually:** Vacation Bible School (planning, prep, etc.)

Meeting with parents (survey & discussion)

Coffee House Meeting (in May for high school graduates, planning, etc.)

Coordinate event with community youth or other public outreach event

Attend at least one youth training seminar

**Quarterly:** Youth Sponsor planning meeting (planning social, service, and fund raisers)

Compile 3-month calendar for youth activities

Meet with Youth Worship Planning Committee for youth services

Prepare report to the Church Elders

Prepare and plan for fundraisers

**Monthly:** Plan and facilitate youth service (print bulletin, assign participants, etc.)

Write Youth Update article for the Church newsletter

Prepare monthly Youth calendar of activities and distribute]

**Biweekly:** Lead Jr. MYF Bible study

Lead Sr. MYF Bible study

Lead Young Adults Bible study

**Weekly:** Submit bulletin announcements for youth activities, other coordination issues

**Other:** Be available for counseling and other needs as they arise

Make reminder calls, send birthday cards, thank-you cards, prayer cards, etc.

Attend area school functions where our youth participate, as time permits

Meet with each youth individually on a regular basis

Be available to parents of youth to keep communication open

### **Administrative Assistant Job Description**

- a. Prepare worship service bulletins and any inserts. This includes typing, editing and duplicating, as well as following up on dates, times and events. Mail bulletins to out-of-town members.
- b. Provide clerical assistance to the pastor (i.e., correspondence, telephone calls), as needed.
- c. Record all births, marriages, deaths, baptisms and other membership changes and provide relevant information to The Mennonite.
- d. Prepare, edit and distribute all various committee minutes, as needed.
- e. Distribute Purpose magazine and other church-wide mailings into members' mailboxes, as needed.
- f. Create, edit and distribute monthly church calendar in members' mailboxes.
- g. Prepare monthly treasurer's reports as bulletin inserts.
- h. Order and distribute Sunday School material to the appropriate persons.
- i. Prepare certificates for church ceremonies.
- j. Provide quarterly host and greeter schedules.
- k. Order needed certificates and materials from Mennonite Publishing House.
- l. Provide clerical assistance needed for Vacation Bible School or other church events.
- m. Prepare, edit and distribute year-end reports to all members. Prepare and distribute annual Members' Meeting minutes to congregation.
- n. Prepare, edit and distribute annual church directory.
- o. Provide clerical assistance needed with the church pictorial directory.

- p. Provide other clerical assistance as requested.
- q. Writes checks and pays bills in consultation with the treasurer
- r. Gather information and create monthly Newsletter
- s. Put Annual reports into booklet form
- t. Perform others office tasks as deemed necessary

### **Church Custodian's Job Description**

- a. Weekly Cleaning Duties:
  - 1. Sweep all floors; dust as needed.
  - 2. Clean restrooms.
  - 3. Dust furniture (benches, piano, organ, office furniture, window sills, etc.)
  - 4. Windex the front and rear full glass doors and sidelights.
  - 5. Wash cleaning rags and mops.
  - 6. Sweep front and back sidewalks.
  - 7. Place all trash in dumpster.
- b. Other weekly duties:
  - 1. Turn furnace thermostats up on Saturday. Ensure that furnaces are operating. Ushers are responsible to turn thermostats down after Sunday services. Pastor responsible to turn thermostats up and down for Wednesday evening services.
  - 2. When applicable, clean snow from front entrances by 5:00 PM on Saturday. Any additional snow accumulation Saturday night and Sunday morning is the responsibility of the ushers to remove in time for Sunday services. Snow removal for Wednesday evening services and other functions through the week is the responsibility of the first year trustee.
- c. Irregular Duties:
  - 1. Clean sheets and blankets on beds in nursery bi-weekly.
  - 2. Buff floors twice a month in the winter season and at other times as necessary.
  - 3. Order all cleaning supplies as necessary.
  - 4. Let trustees know when rock salt and de-icer ice removal supplies are needed.
  - 5. Pick up softener salt (pellets) and keep softener salt brine tank filled. Ensure that softener is working.
  - 6. Replace any burned out light bulbs in the church building. If assistance is needed for hard-to-reach bulbs, ask the trustees for assistance.
  - 7. Ensure that the church is in order for services after weddings, social functions, etc. (It is the responsibility of the group using the church for a special function to return all items to their original places.)
  - 8. Strip and wax floors at least once a year with the help of volunteers. If necessary, custodian can hire someone to help with this job.
  - 9. Arrange, together with trustees, a spring cleaning Saturday in March or April. Provide a church sign-up list and organize volunteers into groups with specific tasks. Have all cleaning supplies ready for spring cleaning Saturday.
- d. Kitchen Cleaning Duties:
  - 1. The custodian is responsible to sweep the kitchen floor weekly, and mop as needed.

## POLICIES

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### Sharon Mennonite Church Facility Policy

#### I. Members

- A. Use of the sanctuary and/or fellowship hall for weddings, funerals and other church-related events will not involve a charge for members.
- B. If a member would like to use the fellowship hall for a family reunion or other non-church related events, New Fellowship Hall: \$10 an hour up to \$100.00 for the day. Old Fellowship Hall: \$5 an hour up to \$25 for the day.
- C. Use of the facilities must be arranged and scheduled through the church office. Exceptions and interpretations will be decided by the Trustee chairperson, Trustee committee and Church Council, if necessary.

#### II. Non-Members

- A. A. The rental of the sanctuary includes one sound person and one custodian, provided by Sharon. The fellowship hall rental includes one custodian, and possibly a sound person. Use of the sanctuary and/or fellowship hall for weddings, receptions and funerals will be charged as follows:
  1. Weddings and receptions
    - a. deposit \$500
    - b. sanctuary \$500\*
    - c. fellowship hall \$600\*
    - d. sanctuary and fellowship hall \$1,100\*\*Rates include a facilitator fee
  2. Funerals
    - a. Accept donation if asked for non-members
  3. Special events (family reunions, plays, musicals, etc.)
    - a. fellowship hall: \$20 per hour, up to \$200 for the day\*
    - b. gathering place: \$10 an hour up to \$50 for the day\*\*In addition to above rates, a \$20 facilitator fee per use will be added

Children of members, renting the facility, who have never attended, or no longer attend Sharon, will be encouraged to make a contribution toward expenses.

Policy revised/effective per Church Council 04/24/18

Type of Event	Fees for Members Or Regular Attendees	Fees for Non-members								
<b>Weddings and Receptions</b>	No charge  <i>Families of members or regular attendees who no longer attend Sharon are encouraged to make a contribution toward expenses</i>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Deposit</td> <td>\$500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sanctuary</td> <td>\$500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fellowship Hall</td> <td>\$600.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Both</td> <td>\$1,100.00</td> </tr> </table> Rates include a facilitator fee  Payment is due one week prior to event.  Rates include both Friday and Saturday. Clean up to be completed on Saturday.	Deposit	\$500.00	Sanctuary	\$500.00	Fellowship Hall	\$600.00	Both	\$1,100.00
Deposit	\$500.00									
Sanctuary	\$500.00									
Fellowship Hall	\$600.00									
Both	\$1,100.00									
<b>Funerals</b>	No charge  <i>Families of members or regular attendees who no longer attend Sharon are encouraged to make a contribution toward expenses</i>	Accept donation if asked.								
<b>Church Events (Sunday School, Care Groups)</b>	No charge	Other churches will be charged the non-members rate.								
<b>Non-Church Events (Family Reunions, Birthday Parties, Graduation Receptions)</b>  <b>*\$250.00 Security Deposit Required, unless a member of Sharon.</b>	No charge when most participants are members.  When most participants are non-members: <b>Suggested Donation</b>  <u>Fellowship Hall:</u> \$10 an hour up to \$100.00 for the day  <u>Gathering Place:</u> \$5 an hour up to \$25 for the day	<u>Fellowship Hall:</u> \$20 per hour, up to \$200 for the day*  <u>Gathering Place:</u> \$10 an hour up to \$50 for the day*  In addition to above rates, a \$20 facilitator fee per use will be added								
<b>Sports Use</b>  <b>*\$250.00 Security Deposit Required</b>	No charge when most participants are members.  \$20 per hour when most participants are non-members, but organizer is a member or regular attendee, plus a \$20 per use facilitator fee. * <i>*If member is responsible to open/close and clean up, the \$20 facilitator fee will be waived.</i>	Fellowship Hall \$30 per hour plus \$40 per use facilitator fee*								

Policy revised/effective per Church Council 04/24/18

## Facility Policy

1. \$500.00 refundable deposit is due at time of reservation for weddings. Rental is subject to the availability of Sharon Mennonite Church staff.
2. Following the event, the church must be returned to clean condition. A walk through inspection will be done to ensure satisfaction with condition. If necessary, a cleaning service will clean. Any damages and cleaning expenses will be deducted from renter's deposit. Any expenses over the deposit amount will be charged to renter.
3. Sanctuary: Rental of church sanctuary for weddings will be \$500.00. Payment is due one week prior to event. Scheduling of even on Saturday should be no later than 7:00 p.m. to allow ample time to prepare Sanctuary for Sunday services. Access to sanctuary for decorating and rehearsals will be after 3:00 p.m. the day before.
4. Fellowship hall: Rental of the Fellowship Hall for weddings will be \$600.00. Payment is due one week prior to the event. This includes use of tables, chairs, refrigerators, coffee makers, ranges, and ovens. All paper supplies to be provided by renter. Kitchen equipment used must be cleaned to avoid any additional cleaning costs. All trash must be bagged and taken to dumpster on the southeast corner of parking lot. Access to decorate is 3:00 p.m. the day prior to the event. Due to fire code and insurance regulations, no smoking, no alcohol, no drugs, no firearms, and no special effects (smoke, fog, fireworks) are permitted on the premises.
5. Return all furniture (tables, chairs, etc.) to their proper location. Tables must be washed and chairs free of food.
6. Any property damage is the responsibility of the group renting the building. When renting the fellowship hall and using the kitchen, all utensils must be washed and put away; stove and counter tops washed and the floors swept.
7. Use of the facilities must be arranged and scheduled through the church office.
8. Exceptions and interpretation will be decided by the Trustee chairperson with additional counsel from the Trustee committee and Church Council, if necessary.
9. Sound System: Use of the church's sound system must be operated by a qualified technician from Sharon Church for up to three hours at the rate of \$120.00 for wedding and \$100.00 for reception.
10. Sanctuary, classrooms, mezzanine, kitchen and nurseries may be locked, if they are not part of the rental agreement.
11. Adult renters are to see that children do not jump off the stage, as it may lead to serious injury. Children should be supervised at all times.
12. No baseballs or softballs are to be thrown in the fellowship hall.
13. Payment is due prior to/at the time of facility use. Rental amount is agreed upon at time of reservation confirmation. In the event of a cancellation prior to 24 hours of the rental time, a refund will be given at the discretion of the church office, Trustee chairperson, or the Church Council.
14. Sharon Mennonite Church does not accept responsibility for any injuries sustained on the property, while the facility is being rented. The person(s) arranging for the rental of the facility are expected to provide appropriate supervision of children and others.

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I/we have read and agree to II. Non-members and the General Rules as stated above.

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

**Sharon Mennonite Church  
Memorial Garden and Cemetery Policy  
Accepted at September 26, 2018 Members' Meeting**

**PREFACE**

Since ancient times, Christians have buried their families in the Churchyard, symbolizing the continuum of faith from birth to death, baptism to burial. In this tradition, the Memorial Garden and Cemetery of Sharon Mennonite Church is a dedicated area, integral to the whole of the Church, for the purpose of remembering our members and friends and their families. The garden and cemetery is by design an enduring memorial to the deceased, a testimony to our grief and also to our joyful memories. The use of the garden and cemetery for quiet meditation or for gatherings and celebrations is encouraged. While providing a quiet sanctuary for all who wish to visit, the garden and cemetery is one of honor and memory, promise and testimony for those who walk and meet there.

**Purpose**

The Memorial Garden provides a beautiful outdoor location for the common interment of ash remains within guidelines specified below. It is a place for remembrance, thanksgiving, prayer, reflection, and small gatherings for worship.

**II. Eligibility for Interment of Ashes and Burial in Cemetery**

- Burial plots, including opening and closing of grave, are available free charge to all members of Sharon Mennonite Church, including their infant and minor children. Members and their infant and minor children may also choose to inter their ashes in the Memorial Garden.
- Unmarried children of members may be buried in the cemetery or have their ashes interred in the Memorial Garden, if their parents are active members of Sharon or were at the time of their own death, for the charges listed below.
- Anyone with a spouse buried at Sharon who is no longer a member, may be buried here for the cost of opening and closing the grave, or may have their ashes interred in the Memorial Garden.
- Persons who have been Sharon supporters for years, but failed to become members, and moved away for health and/or care reasons, may request burial here for the charges listed below, or may have their ashes interred the Memorial Garden.
- Persons who have been and continue to be Sharon supporters but failed to become members may request burial in the cemetery for the cost of opening and closing the grave, or may have their ashes interred in the Memorial Garden.
- Members are encouraged to pre-plan by reserving plots with the sexton. Others may investigate whether they may be buried here.
- There will be a \$400 charge for plots, plus opening and closing costs, for persons who wish to be buried with relatives but are not more have been members of Sharon. Fees may be waived in the event of a genuine hardship case.
- Requests which fall within and outside these guidelines shall be careful, sensitive consideration by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, in consultation with the pastor.

**III. Procedures for the Interment of Ashes**

Request for Interment

The family of the deceased should request interment of ashes by submitting a completed "Request for Interment of Ash Remains" form to the church office. One of the church's pastors shall be responsible for working with the family to prepare the service. Details of the services of committal and the interment of ash remains will be determined by the decedent's family and one of the church pastors.

Upon interment a statement of interment shall be issued in duplicate. The original will be filed in the Church office and the duplicate will become the property of the family of the deceased or a duly appointed representative. The statement of interment shall indicate the services performed by the Church.

## Interment of Ashes

Families may choose from several options for the interment of ashes. The spreading of ashes on the surface of any of the grounds of the church property is not permitted. Following are the options for interment of ashes.

- Columbarium - Families may choose to inter the ashes in a niche in the columbarium. The front of the niche will have a plate for engraving the name of the deceased, along with pertinent dates and information. A fee shall be charged to the family/estate of the deceased to cover the cost of the niche, and the family/estate shall be responsible for cost of engraving the plate.
- In-Ground Interment without Container - Families may choose to bury the ashes in the ground in the Memorial Garden without an urn or other container. In such cases, a shallow opening will be created by the Sexton for the burial of the ashes. A flat marker no larger than 2' by 2' is required, at the cost of the family/estate.
- In-Ground Interment with a Container - Families may choose to bury the ashes in the ground in the Memorial Garden in an urn or other container. In such cases, an opening will be required that extends below the frost line, and will be created by the Sexton. A flat marker no larger than 2' by 2' is required, at the cost of the family/estate.
- In-Ground Interment with a Family Member - in some cases, a person may choose to be cremated and have their ashes buried in the same cemetery plot as a spouse or other family member who has already been buried in the cemetery. In such cases, the burial of ashes may be with or without a container and shall be coordinated by the Sexton.
- Other Options - it is possible that a family will request an option other than those listed above. In such cases, the request shall be reviewed and approved or declined by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.

## Guidelines

- The placement of ashes in the niche or the burial of ashes may be part of the funeral or memorial service, or may be done privately at the request of the family.
- The fee for interment of ashes in the columbarium shall be determined by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, to cover the costs of the niche.
- Prepayment - Any qualifying person wishing to pre-pay the interment fee may do so. A certificate will be issued document the pre-payment. It should be noted that the pre-payment of the fee is not tax deductible. Upon written request, and at the discretion of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, the prepaid fees may be refunded, with no payment of interest. Due to changes in maintenance fees and/or the need for future enhancements, increases in the cost of interment may occur from time to time. These additional costs will not be retroactive to those who have pre-paid.
- Fresh cut flowers may be placed in the Garden at the time of the interment service and may remain in place for one week. No cut flowers, plants, or other ornaments may be placed in the Memorial Garden at any other time. At the discretion of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, a wreath may be placed near the Rock at the Memorial Garden during the Christmas season. All plantings in the Memorial Garden are determined solely by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.
- Contributions toward continued enhancements or maintenance of the garden are gratefully accepted. Such contributions are tax deductible.

#### **IV. Administration and Maintenance**

A Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee shall manage the Garden and report its actions to Church Council on a regular basis. The Committee shall be comprised of the Sexton and three other church members appointed by Church Council. The pastors may assist the work and direction of the Committee as ex-officio members.

The Committee will manage the Garden regarding:

- Interment of ashes
- Maintenance
- Plantings and landscaping
- Finances (Memorial Garden Fund)
  - Disbursements from the Memorial Garden Fund shall be approved by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.
- Other issues associated with the Garden, including recommendations to the Council regarding future suggested changes to this policy.
- The Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee shall issue an annual report, along with other annual reports by other church committees.
- The Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee will meet as necessary and will set its own meeting schedule.

#### Policies

Ashes interred in the ground without a container will not be recoverable or preserved intact.

The Church, under the auspices of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, will maintain accurate records of the Memorial Garden showing all interments of ashes.

A variety of events and activities may occur within the Memorial Garden if approved by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee and the pastor. Individual and group meditation and reflection is encouraged.

The Memorial Garden shall be maintained by the Sharon Mennonite Church. This will be done in keeping with the design and purpose of the Garden. All plantings and related objects in the Memorial Garden shall be placed only with the approval of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.

#### **V. Exclusions**

- Placement of ashes in the Memorial Garden shall not take place without a properly executed authorization form signed by the legal custodian having full legal authority to authorize the disposition of the cremated remains.
- No applicant or other person may acquire any right to the physical location or appearance of the Memorial Garden. It is part of the agreement that only the Church shall have any property rights to the Memorial Garden.
- Ashes of animals of any kind are not to be considered for interment.
- No markers, plantings, or additional decorations shall be permitted without the specific permission of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.
- No ashes shall be spread on top of the ground of the Memorial Garden or any other grounds of the church property.
- No permanent decorations shall be placed in the Memorial Garden. If a family wishes a temporary decoration, prior permission must be sought from the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.
- The church reserves the right to require reasonable notice prior to any interment of ashes and further requires that a designated representative of the church is present when cremated remains are placed in the Memorial Garden.

## **VI. Notice of Disclaimer**

No rights or special privileges of any nature are deemed or granted to families of those interred. All rights are reserved by Sharon Mennonite Church, its officers and the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee to make changes, now or in the future, including changes in the design and location of the Memorial Garden.

The Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee, the Sharon Mennonite Church, and the officers, agents, and employees of Sharon Mennonite Church shall not be liable for any damages of property or injuries to persons, niches, gravestones, or any other part of the Memorial Garden and Cemetery.

## **VII. Adoption of This Policy**

The policies and procedures listed above have been adopted by the Church Council of the Sharon Mennonite Church, and can be changed only by subsequent action of that body upon recommendation of such changes by the Memorial Garden and Cemetery Committee.

### **Scholarship Fund Policy of Sharon Mennonite Church**

**Introduction** - The Sharon Mennonite Church recognizes that one of the needs of the congregation is adequate opportunity for education of its members, both in preparation for a vocation, and for fullest participation in the life at the church. This, we believe, is especially important for the training of youth, for leadership training in the church, and in fact, for the training in the exercise of all the gifts of the Spirit in the church. We, therefore, believe that a Mennonite Church college, university or seminary education should be available to any member of the congregation who feels called upon to improve his/her skills and to deepen his/her understanding of the Christian walk.

In order to encourage students to choose a Mennonite Church college, university or seminary, and in order to address the financial difference between a church school and a state school, the Scholarship Fund of the Sharon Mennonite Church has been established.

**Basic Philosophy** - The congregational Scholarship Fund has been established by the members of Sharon Mennonite Church for the following purposes:

- a. To affirm our belief in the distinct values of Christian education in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.
- b. To encourage our members to pursue Christian education at our own church schools.
- c. To help eliminate financial disability as the barrier which may prevent an individual from enrolling in one of our Mennonite Church colleges, universities or seminaries.
- d. To promote a spirit of brotherhood sharing and servant-hood in our congregation.
- e. To give our young people further opportunity to learn about and appreciate the Anabaptist-Mennonite vision.
- f. To help strengthen our Mennonite Church schools.

**Organization** - An ad hoc Scholarship Fund may be composed of three members; the Church Treasurer and two members appointed by the Church Council.

## Operational Procedures

- a. The Church Treasurer will administer the Scholarship Fund Plan for the congregation. A member of the Scholarship Fund Committee or a person designated by the committee will work with each applicant and parents to aid in seeing that all possible avenues of assistance have been looked into. (Some scholarships become available as early as December of the year before.) This person will be responsible to keep information on financial aid and be in close contact with the college student financial aid offices.
- b. Funds are available to the members of the Sharon congregation and their immediate families. Any exception must have the approval of the Scholarship Fund Committee.
- c. Aid is available for enrollment in Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Eastern Mennonite University, Bethel College, Bluffton College, Goshen College, Hesston College and Rosedale College
- d. The amount of Scholarship is contingent upon:
  1. The amount of money in the fund
  2. The number of applicants, and
  3. That it will be divided equally among all qualifying students. As a goal, the congregation will attempt to provide at least \$500, but not more than \$1,500 per student per year (prorated for part-time attendance). Undistributed money will remain in the Scholarship Fund for distribution in a subsequent year. By March 1, the amount each student will receive shall be established for the following academic year. The maximum number of years a student may receive aid from this fund is four (4).
- e. Candidates for aid from this fund must follow the standard procedure of applying for admission and financial aid at the Mennonite college or seminary of their choice.
- f. The Chairperson or other delegated representative of the Student Aid Committee will communicate to the college financial aid office the names of members planning to enroll, and the amount of the grant by May 1.
- g. Shortly before enrollment (approximately September 1 and January 1), the Church Treasurer will issue a check to the appropriate college to be dispersed equally to the designated recipients for each enrollment period during the normal academic year.
- h. The Scholarship Fund has been established to receive monies for student aid. Money will be raised by:
  1. Specially designated fifth Sunday offerings.
  2. Gifts by interested persons.
  3. Gifts as memorials.
  4. Special projects.
- i. The Scholarship Fund is a mission outside our regular church offerings, and any gifts should be over and above a person's usual giving to the General Fund. In addition, the already established practice of giving to the colleges is still considered essential, even though we have a Student Aid Fund.

## **Sharing Fund Policy of Sharon Mennonite Church**

**Purpose** - The purpose of maintaining the Sharing Fund is to have emergency funds available for assistance to members and regular attendants who experience a financial crisis.

### **Generation of Funds**

- A. The funds are generated from offerings received at the spring and fall Communion services. Also, individuals may contribute money to the Sharing Fund at any time. These contributions are in addition to the regular offering.
- B. Special offerings may be lifted by request of the Board of Elders and/or the Church Council, when there is a shortage of money in the account. All Sharing Fund money shall be kept in a special interest bearing account to be maintained by the Church Treasurer.
- C. Money given to the Sharing Fund shall concur with our tax exempt status.
- D. Gifts may be given anonymously at any time.

**Allocation of Funds** - The need for Sharing Fund assistance may come from the individual in need, concerned individuals, the Elders or the Pastor. The Mennonite Mutual Aid Advocate may also be part of the process.

### **Procedure**

- A. The Board of Elders shall process the request. Criteria used shall include an assessment of the need, other available funds, assistance with procuring longer term help, and/or organizing help by way of financial counseling. When the determination is made, a request shall be made to the Church Treasurer. The confidentiality factor shall preserve the privacy of the individual in need.
- B. Psychological counseling assistance shall be up to four sessions. However, additional assistance may be considered by the Board of Elders, if deemed necessary.