

BY-LAWS

Bethel Lodge No. 358, F. & A.M. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Chartered January 25, 1882

Last revised: _____ 2025

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PREAMBLE

Bethel Lodge No. 358 operates under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Michigan. These By-Laws are adopted in accordance with Michigan Masonic Law (the “Blue Book”) and are subordinate to the Grand Lodge Constitution, Regulations, and Laws. In the event of conflict, Grand Lodge law prevails.

Article 1 – Name and Jurisdiction

Title. This Lodge, located in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, shall be known and hailed as Bethel Lodge No. 358, Free and Accepted Masons, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Michigan.

Article 2 – Meetings

2.1 Regular Communications

Held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 : 30 p.m. (Blue Book §4.15.2.1), except February and March when the Lodge is dark. If that Tuesday is a U.S. federal holiday or during a declared emergency, the meeting moves to the next Tuesday (Blue Book §4.15.2.3).

2.2 Special Communications

May be called by the Worshipful Master with 48 hours’ notice by e-mail and recorded phone call unless Grand Lodge law requires otherwise.

2.3 Order of Business

Opening → Welcome → Sickness & Distress → Treasurer's Report → Communications → Petitions → Committee Reports → Unfinished Business → New Business → Good of the Order → Closing.

2.4 Quorum

A majority of Master Masons present, **minimum six including one elected officer** (Blue Book §4.1.1).

Article 3 – Membership

3.1 Qualifications

Members in good standing may attend, vote, and participate. Members shall uphold Masonic principles, pay dues promptly, and support Lodge charities.

3.2 Annual Dues

The total annual dues consist of two components: (a) the Lodge portion, and (b) Grand Lodge assessments (per capita and any special assessments).

The Lodge portion shall be NO LESS than \$200.00 and shall increase automatically by three percent (3%) on January 1 of each year, calculated by multiplying the prior year's Lodge portion by 1.03 and rounding up to the nearest whole dollar. This automatic increase is mandatory and does not require annual approval. Any reduction of the Lodge portion below the calculated minimum requires a bylaws amendment following the full amendment procedure in Article 10, including written proposal, layover, 14-day notice to members, two-thirds vote, and Grand Master approval (Blue Book §3.12.2, §4.3.4, §4.4.1(k)). The Lodge may increase dues above the minimum by majority vote at any Regular Communication.

Grand Lodge assessments are added to the Lodge portion to determine total dues. All dues are due January 1 (Blue Book §4.22.1.1). The Secretary shall announce the total dues for the following Masonic year at each August Stated Communication.

Example:

2026: Lodge portion \$203.50 + GL assessments \$46.50 = \$250 total dues

2027: $\$203.50 \times 1.03 = \209.61 , rounded up = \$210 Lodge portion + GL assessments = total dues

2028: $\$210.00 \times 1.03 = \216.30 , rounded up = \$217 Lodge portion + GL assessments = total dues

Dues for new members are prorated per Blue Book procedures.

Note for Historical Perspective: The following information is provided solely for educational and self-reflection purposes and has no binding force on dues determination. In 1882, Bethel Lodge's \$12 annual dues represented 2.18% of the average annual income. If those original dues had merely kept pace with inflation, they would be approximately \$360 in 2025. More dramatically, if the Lodge maintained that same 2.18% proportion of income, based on Chippewa County's 2025 median individual income of \$35,000, dues would be \$763 annually ($\$35,000 \times 0.0218$). Our current dues represent less than 0.75% of median income. Imagine what our Lodge could have accomplished with proper funding, the educational programs delivered, the community impact achieved, the temple maintained in its glory. As we look forward, this context reminds us that when we value Masonry appropriately and commit to delivering that value through excellent programming, mentorship, and community service, we create a Brotherhood worthy of meaningful investment and capable of transforming both members and community.

3.3 Degree Fees

Entered Apprentice (with petition) – \$100

Fellowcraft – \$50

Master Mason – \$50

3.4 Life Membership

Brothers with 40 years of Masonic service may petition for life membership (Blue Book §4.25.7.1).

3.5 Non-Payment of Dues

Handled per Michigan Masonic Law §4.22.3.

Article 4 – Officers

4.1 Elected Officers (Blue Book §4.16.1.1 – secret ballot each November)

Worshipful Master · Senior Warden · Junior Warden · Treasurer · Secretary · Senior Deacon · Junior Deacon

4.2 Appointed Officers (Blue Book §4.16.1.2)

Chaplain · Steward(s) · Lodge Education Officer · Tiler and others as permitted.

4.3 Election Procedure

Before balloting, the Lodge may decide with or without nominations by majority vote (Blue Book §4.16.1.9). Election is by simple majority of votes cast.

4.4 Installation

Officers must be installed after the December meeting and before the January meeting (Blue Book §4.16.3.1).

4.5 Vacancies

- *Worshipful Master.* Senior Warden acts as Master unless a special election is held by Grand Master dispensation (Blue Book §4.16.2.1-2).
- *Other Offices.* The Master may (Blue Book §4.16.2.4):
 - a. Call nominations and elect by simple majority;
 - b. Appoint a qualified brother;
 - c. Advance the officer line.

Article 5 – Duties of Officers

Worshipful Master: Oversees Lodge strategy and Grand Lodge compliance.

Senior Warden: Chairs Finance & Audit and Delinquent Dues Committees.

Junior Warden: Chairs Member Welfare Committee.

Secretary:

- Keeps the Standing Resolutions Register.
- Submits Grand Lodge reports on time.
- Turns funds over to the Treasurer before each meeting (with receipt).
- Coordinates biennial by-laws review in odd-numbered years.
- Is reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of his duties, **subject to Lodge approval.**

Treasurer:

Presents financial reports, assists audits, receives & deposits Lodge funds, and disburses as directed. **All Lodge funds shall be deposited/invested in the Lodge's name at its risk (Blue Book §4.6.1–2).**

Other Officers: Perform duties set by Michigan Masonic Law and Lodge custom.

Article 6 – Finances

6.1 Budget & Expenditures

Bills within the annual budget (approved each December) may be paid without further vote. All other spending requires majority approval at a Regular Communication. The Finance & Audit Committee assists the Master-elect in preparing the budget.

6.2 Accounts & Signatures

All Lodge funds are deposited/invested in the Lodge's name at its risk. Two signatures are required on checks: Worshipful Master and Treasurer. The Secretary may be the second signer in the event the Treasurer is unavailable.

Article 7 – Committees

7.1 Appointment

Immediately after installation, the Master appoints the standing committees listed below for **one-year terms** (or until successors are named).

7.2 Standing Committees

Committee	Chair & Core Members	Key Duties
Finance & Audit	Chair: Senior Warden; ≥ 3 members; Secretary & Treasurer ex officio	Draft annual budget; audit books first week of December; written report in December
Delinquent Dues	Chair: Senior Warden; ≥ 3 members; Master & Secretary ex officio	Investigate arrears; report in August
Member Welfare	Chair: Junior Warden; ≥ 3 members	Visit sick; aid widows & orphans; liaise with Masonic Home
Property	Members appointed by Master	Inventory Lodge property; maintenance; insurance advice
Charity & Relief	Worshipful Master, Treasurer, Secretary (any two may act)	Grant emergency relief up to \$100 ; report next meeting
Permanent Investment	Brothers with finance expertise	Manage investments to produce sustainable income

7.3 Default Composition

If a committee is not formally appointed, it consists of the Master, Senior & Junior Wardens, Secretary, and Treasurer.

7.4 Ad Hoc Committees

The Master may create or dissolve special committees as needed.

Article 8 – Programs and Events

8.1 Mason-of-the-Year Award

Three-member confidential committee appointed by the Master; announcement in August; presentation at a September/October dinner. A brother is ineligible within three years of a prior award; the sitting Master is ineligible.

8.2 Annual Events

- **Family Picnic:** Second Saturday in July
- **Memorial Service:** Lodge of Sorrow declared at the January meeting
- **Officer Installation:** Between December and January meetings per *Blue Book*

8.3 Masonic Temple Association (MTA)

1. The Masonic Temple Association of Sault Ste. Marie, Inc. is a separate legally incorporated organization with its own bylaws that owns and manages the Temple building and property.
2. **Facility Use.** Bethel Lodge shall enter into an agreement with the MTA for use of the Temple facilities and shall pay the required facility support contributions.
3. **Compliance.** Bethel Lodge shall comply with all MTA policies regarding building use, scheduling, and maintenance. Any Lodge proposals affecting the building or grounds require MTA approval before implementation.

Article 9 – Communications and Records

9.1 Member Notices

Primary written notice via e-mail, Grandview **and** recorded phone call. Postal mail is sent to members without Internet or as required by masonic law.

9.2 Standing Resolutions Register

- **Purpose:** Day-to-day operational policies & procedures
- **Adoption:** Majority vote
- **Numbering:** YYMMDD-XX (e.g., 250701-01)
- **Review:** Each September; automatically **expire after three years** unless renewed
- **Hierarchy:** Subordinate to Michigan Masonic Law, these By-Laws, and Grand Master's edicts

The Secretary maintains the Register (calendar, committee schedules, operational policies).

Article 10 – Amendments

10.1 Procedure

Written proposals must be presented at a Regular Communication, recorded in the minutes, and lie over until the next Regular Communication. Members receive **14-days' written notice**. Adoption requires a **two-thirds majority** and approval by the Grand Master.

10.2 Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order governs where not inconsistent with these By-Laws or Masonic Law.

Article 11 – Definitions

Good Standing: Current on dues; not under suspension or expulsion.

Master Mason: Brother who has received all three degrees and is in good standing.

Regular Communication: Second-Tuesday meeting

Special Communication: Meeting called outside the regular schedule.

Standing Resolutions Register: Secretary's record of all Standing Resolutions.

Ex officio: Committee membership by virtue of holding another office.

REVISION AND CERTIFICATION

Revision Date: _____

These By-Laws supersede all prior versions and take effect upon approval by the Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Michigan.

Office	Name (print)	Signature	Date
Worshipful Master	Byron Knepp III		
Secretary	Robert W. Linn, PM		
Grand Lodge Representative			<i>Date of Grand Lodge Approval</i>

APPENDIX A – Suggested Annual Calendar

January

- Regular Communication (2nd Tues)
- Memorial Service / Lodge of Sorrow
- Officers Installed (Dec–Jan)
- Committees Appointed (Finance & Audit, Delinquent Dues, Member Welfare, Property)
- Dues Payable Jan 1; NPD clock begins

February–March (Lodge Dark)

April–June

- Regular business, petitions, degrees
- Property & Welfare checkups
- **Grand Lodge Annual Communication – May**

July

- Family Picnic (2nd Sat)
- Light summer business

August

- Secretary announces dues for next year
- Delinquent Dues Committee report
- Mason of the Year selected & announced

September

- Standing Resolutions reviewed (renew/expire)
- Begin Property & Finance year-end prep

October

- Mason of the Year Dinner (option)
- Finance & Audit drafts budget
- Remind members of November elections

November

- **Annual Election of Officers** (secret ballot)
- Final committee updates

December

- Finance & Audit audit & report (1st week)
- Budget adopted at December meeting
- Officer Installation (Dec–Jan)
- Charity & Relief year-end report