

# ***COMMUNITY MENNONITE CHURCH OF LANCASTER***

## ***CONGREGATIONAL STRUCTURE***

***JULY 1997  
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## **I. Introduction**

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### **A. Purpose**

The purpose and intent of the organizational structure as outlined in this document is to enable CMCL as a body of believers to experience, achieve at various levels, and continually move in harmony toward the fulfillment of our common Vision in Christ.

### **B. Vision**

Vision is a statement of direction and purpose of a group. The programs and activities of CMCL are guided by a written statement of our common vision as a corporate body.

The vision of CMCL defines the intent and corporate focus of our life together as believers and followers of Jesus Christ. Our Statement of Vision defines our common direction and understanding in the following three areas:

1. *Worship* – Our recognition and celebration of God’s graceful presence in our lives.
2. *Fellowship* – Our ministry of healing and hope to each other within the congregation.
3. *Mission* – Our ministry in the Spirit of Christ in the world.

Many sources within and outside the congregation contribute to the development of our vision. The Pastor and Elders will lead the Council in formulating and articulating the vision.

The focus of annual programs and long range plans is to move the congregation toward the fulfillment and experience of our common vision.

### **C. Leadership**

Leadership can be exercised by anyone at many different levels in the congregation as needs and opportunities arise. For the purpose of defining and understanding our corporate life together, we use the term leadership to refer to those persons designated by the congregation for specific roles and responsibilities in carrying out our corporate vision.

To be a leader means “having the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who permit leaders to lead.”

Leaders are accountable to the congregation to:

- Develop, propose and implement programs that reflect the vision of the congregation.
- Carry the vision – explaining and illustrating it.
- Solicit input and participation in the vision-building process.
- Exercise participatory management in their areas of responsibility in order to guarantee that decisions are not arbitrary, secret, or closed to questioning.
- Identify, develop and nurture future leaders.

All congregants support those in leadership by:

- Recognizing, supporting and encouraging those in leadership.
- Praying for wisdom, understanding and courage for those in leadership.
- Cooperating and participating with those in leadership.
- Being willing to be lead; being good followers.

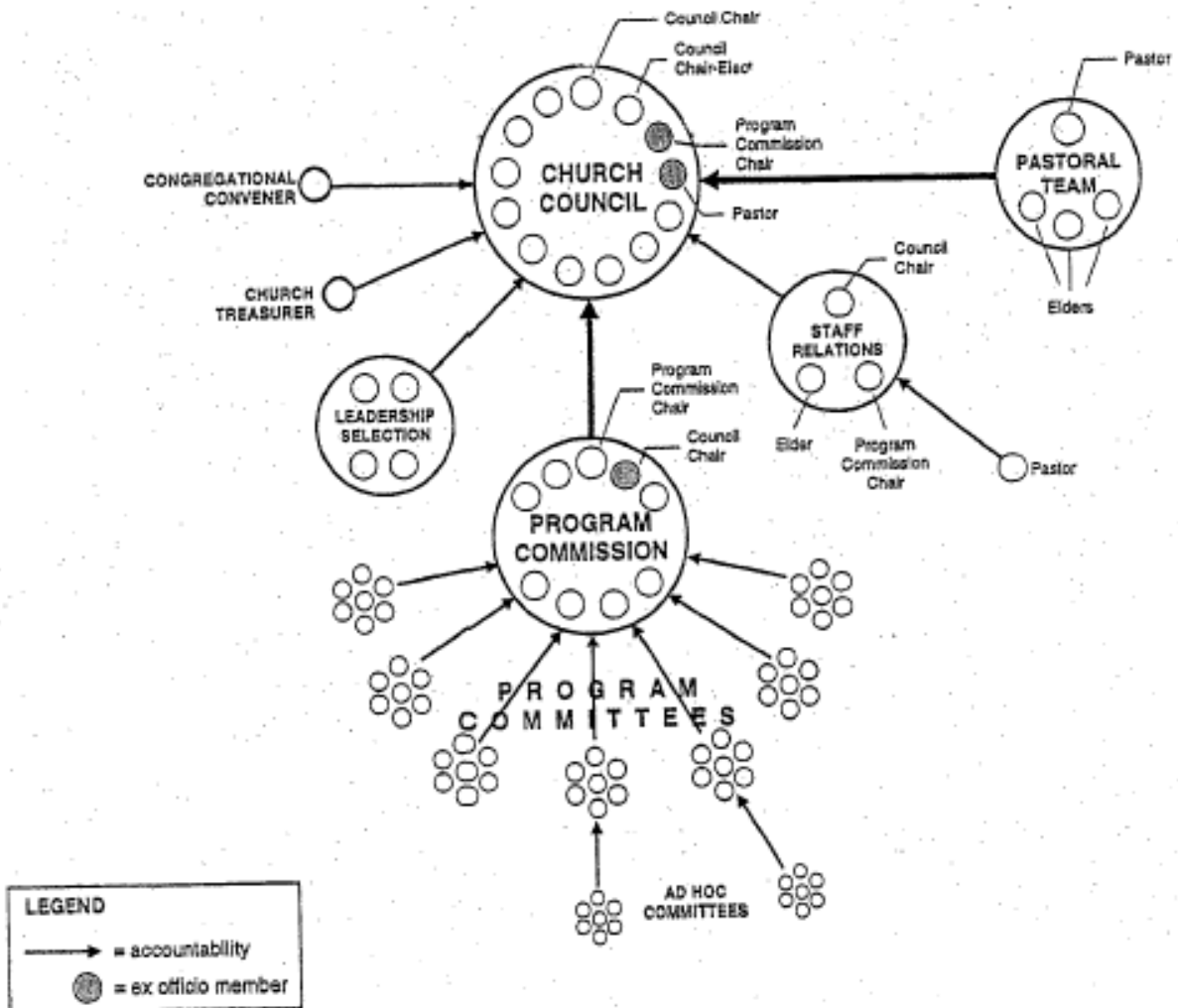
#### **D. Decision-Making**

We believe that we are called to be a church where ultimate authority resides in the congregation, where all members collaborate in the life of the church and in the decision-making that determines the nature of this life. This philosophy is based on the belief that “the presence of the Spirit is in and with those called to be and to build a church,” (Mary Benet McKinney from *Sharing Wisdom*) and that we hear the voice of God and discern direction for our corporate life by listening deeply to the wisdom of each other. McKinney calls this a philosophy of “shared wisdom.” Its bottom line “is a deep and operational faith that the Spirit lives in the group through its membership and speaks through the lived experience of each one.”

Leadership provides ample opportunity for all persons to freely express their endorsement of or concerns about all proposals to be brought before the congregation. Those opportunities are made available — through council meetings, house church meetings or other prearranged forums — prior to the congregational meeting for decision-making. It is the responsibility of all persons with concerns to participate in the process, to share their concerns prior to the congregational meeting for decision-making.

*(For an expanded presentation of vision, leadership, decision-making, and the decision-making process, see Appendices A through D.)*

## II. Overview of the Structure



### **III. Congregation**

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The congregation is experienced at the individual and house church levels and through the congregational meeting. Each person has a voice in the vision, leadership, decisions and structure of the congregation at a variety of levels.

#### **A. Individual**

Individuals attend and become members of the congregation.

#### **B. House Church**

The house church is the primary community subgroup, a small group gathered for the purpose of mutual care and discussion of congregational issues. House churches are organized and supported by the House Church Committee.

#### **C. Congregational Meeting**

Congregational meetings are convened for congregation-wide communication and decision-making. Meetings are held at regular intervals during the church year. Specific agenda items include: presentation of the leadership selection slate; presentation of the annual plan; presentation of the budget; mid-year reporting by Council and committees of progress toward the annual goals. Additional issues may be brought to congregational meetings by the Council. Council shall convene an annual open forum congregational meeting, preferably in the spring. (See Appendix D for an outline of the decision-making process.) The congregational convener calls and facilitates these meetings. All persons including regular attenders are welcome to participate with their ideas and suggestions. Voting on congregational decisions is done by members of the congregation.

## **IV. Components of the Structure**

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### **A. Church Council**

#### **1. Function**

The Church Council is the central governing body of CMCL. The central direction and focus for this body grows out of a clearly articulated Vision Statement which identifies who we are, what we want to become, and what our purpose is for being church.

The Church Council provides the leadership for developing annual and long term planning goals, including development of an annual budget and membership giving plan. The objective of that planning is to continually move the congregation in a direction in harmony with our Vision Statement.

The Church Council develops strategies for articulating, interpreting and implementing the established goals through the program committees.

The Church Council, in partnership with the Program Commission, provides the leadership to assist program committees in the establishment of annual goals at the beginning of each program year. The Church Council presents the annual work plan along with the financial budget plan for approval by the congregation at an annual congregational meeting. The Council supervises the budget process and monitors the budget in relationship to giving. (*See Appendix E for the budget management process.*)

The Church Council develops annual evaluation processes to assess the effectiveness of the programs and objectives which have been established.

The Church Council develops methods to evaluate changes in needs of the congregational life and develops strategies to meet those needs.

The Church Council is accountable to the congregation in its performance and effectiveness of leading the congregation in harmony with our Vision Statement.

#### **2. Members**

##### **a. Responsibilities**

Members of Council provide leadership in the important process of shaping the vision of CMCL as a corporate body in ways that facilitate the presence and experience of God in our personal lives and our ministry to the community and world at large.

Members of Council represent the diversity of the congregation and are committed to an open transparent process where the congregation is given opportunity for input and kept informed of directions and decisions.

##### **b. Qualifications**

Each Council member:

- is a member of CMCL.
- is an active participant in the life of the Congregation so that Council is reflective of the diversity of CMCL.
- is able to articulate opinions and interests of other CMCLers through his or her involvement in many facets of congregational life, but is also able to consider all points of view represented on Council, with a goal of effectively and efficiently reaching harmonious decisions.
- has served a minimum of one complete term in a program capacity (e.g. teacher, Venture Club leader, conference representative) or on a CMCL committee.

### **c. Composition and Selection**

The Council consists of no more than nine members appointed by affirmation at a congregational meeting upon nomination by a nominating committee of the Council formed each year, and comprised of (i) one member who is a member of and appointed by the Program Commission, (ii) one member who is a member of and appointed by the Leadership Selection Committee, (iii) one member who is a member of and appointed by Council, and (iv) one member of the congregation appointed by Council who is not a Council member. One Pastor and the Council Chair shall be *ex officio* members of the nominating committee.

Members commit to a three-year term of service on the Council. Terms are staggered so that approximately one third of Council members are new each year.

## **3. Council Chair**

### **a. Responsibilities**

The Council Chair manages and leads the process and work of the Council consistent with its mission. The Council Chair works at building consensus among the members as an important function of the decision-making process.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Prepare the agenda for Council meetings (in coordination with the Program Commission Chair and the Senior Pastor).
- Call regular meetings of the Council, chair the meetings, and arrange for a minute record.
- Lead the Council in developing annual and long term planning goals, and in formulating strategies for expressing and carrying out these goals through the program committees.
- Help prepare the agenda for and attend all Program Commission meetings.

### **b. Qualifications**

In addition to meeting the qualifications for Council membership, the Council Chair:

- Has demonstrated recognized leadership skills, in order to lead the Council to achieve the highest level of participation in the process of building consensus.
- Possesses a clear understanding of the vision and mission of CMCL.

### **c. Selection**

The Council Chair serves a three-year non-renewable term following one year as Chair-Elect.

## **4. Council Chair-Elect**

### **a. Responsibilities**

The Council Chair-Elect assists the Council Chair in anticipation of and as preparation for the role of Council Chair.

### **b. Qualifications**

The Council Chair-Elect meets the qualifications for Council Chair.

### **c. Selection**

The Council Chair-Elect is nominated for a one-year term of service in the final year of the presiding Council Chair's three-year term. The Leadership Selection Committee works closely with Church Council in this selection process and presents the nominee for confirmation by the congregation.

## **5. Council Meetings**

### **a. Attendance**

Council members are expected to attend and participate in all Council meetings.



The pastor also participates in Council meetings for the purpose of education and to focus on issues pertaining to vision. The Program Commission Chair and the Treasurer are encouraged to attend council meetings for purposes of reporting and as informed observers. The Congregational Convener attends as necessary in order to adequately prepare for congregational meetings.

***b. Agenda Preparation***

Council agenda is developed by the Council Chair, the Program Commission Chair and the Senior Pastor. The Council Chair delivers the agenda to each council member one week in advance of each meeting.

**B. Program Commission**

***1. Function***

The Program Commission is the central administrative body of CMCL. The Commission coordinates the programs to carry out the vision and goals set by the Church Council, and is accountable to the Council to carry out its responsibilities.

The Commission is composed of the chairpersons of all the standing committees and ad hoc committees. A chairperson of the Commission is elected by the congregation through the leadership selection process.

The Commission develops an annual work plan to carry out the goals set by the Church Council. Specific tasks are assigned to the committees so that all parts of the work plan are covered by one of the committees. Any questions about the tasks of a given committee are resolved by the Commission.

The Commission develops an annual budget to carry out its work plan and will manage the allocation of funds within its budget.

To assure that the Commission and the Church Council are synchronized, the Commission Chair is an ex officio member of the Church Council and the Council Chair is an ex officio member of the Commission.

***2. Members***

***a. Responsibilities***

Commission members are committed to accomplishing the tasks assigned to their committee and to working cooperatively with other committees to complete the annual work plan.

***b. Qualifications***

Program Commission members meet the qualifications for committee chairpersons.

***c. Composition and Selection***

Since the Commission is composed of committee chairpersons, the number of members on the Program Commission is determined by the number of committees established by the Church Council.

Program Commission members serve a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years.

***3. Commission Chair***

***a. Responsibilities***

The position of Commission Chair centralizes the administrative responsibility of establishing and carrying out the work plan to realize the vision and goals set by the Church Council.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Prepare the agenda for Commission meetings (in coordination with the Council Chair).
- Call regular meetings of the Commission, chair the meetings, and arrange for a minute record.

- Lead the Commission in developing a work plan to carry out the vision and goals as established by the Council.
- Lead the Commission in dividing the work plan tasks among the committees.
- Have each committee submit its goals and plans to accomplish its assignment. Assist the committees as necessary.
- Within the Commission, resolve any misunderstandings, conflicts or gaps in carrying out the work plan.
- Orchestrate reporting at congregational meetings. Prepare a year-end written report on the extent that the work plan was completed.
- Help prepare the agenda for and attend all Church Council meetings.
- Report regularly to the Council on the progress of the work plan and budget.

**b. Qualifications**

The Program Commission Chair:

- is a member of CMCL.
- has previously served as a committee chairperson.
- demonstrates leadership, management, and personnel skills.

**c. Selection**

The Commission Chair is chosen through the leadership selection process. The length of term is two years.

**C. Program Committees**

**1. Function**

Program committees are the arms of the congregation, accountable to the Program Commission for carrying out the ministry and mission of the congregation. Each committee develops strategies and goals to carry out its responsibilities.

**2. Members**

**a. Responsibilities**

Program committee members are committed to accomplishing the work plan tasks assigned to their committee.

**b. Qualifications**

Each program committee member is a member or regular attender of CMCL.

**c. Composition and Selection**

Committee members are chosen through the leadership selection process. The length of term is two years, with the possibility of one additional term. Terms are staggered so that only one half of each committee's members are new each year.

**2. Committee Chairs**

**a. Responsibilities**

Committee chairs serve as communication links between the Program Commission and the program committees. In this capacity, they take committee concerns to the Commission and they bring action items and information from the Commission back to the committees.

Committee chairs lead the implementation of the tasks assigned to their respective committees by the Program Commission. They lead the process of developing the committees' goals and plans, and they manage the work necessary to accomplish those objectives.

The committee chair leads in the committee's responsibilities including agenda preparation, calling of meetings, facilitation of meetings and minute taking.

Each committee chair is responsible to manage his/her committee's budget. The chair approves all committee expenses and submits the invoices to the church treasurer for

payment. If a given committee needs funds in addition to the approved budget, its request goes to the Program Commission to see if another committee has some unspent funds they could transfer to this committee. If the Commission needs funds beyond the approved budget, its request for additional funds goes to the Church Council.

**b. Qualifications**

Each program committee chair:

- is a member of CMCL.
- has served at least one year as a member of a CMCL committee.

**c. Selection**

Following one year as chair-elect, each program committee chair serves for a two-year term, with the possibility of one additional term.

**3. Committee Chairs-Elect**

**a. Responsibilities**

Each committee chair-elect assists the committee chair in anticipation of and as preparation for the role of chair.

**b. Qualifications**

Each committee chair-elect meets the qualifications for committee chair.

**c. Selection**

Each committee chair-elect is chosen by the committee from among its current members. This selection occurs at the beginning of the final year of the presiding chair's term.

**4. Program Committee Descriptions**

**a. Adult Christian Education**

Initiates and manages adult education.

**b. Children and Youth Program**

Initiates and manages education and activities for children.

**c. Facility**

Manages facility use, maintenance, and security.

**d. Hospitality**

Initiates and organizes fellowship gatherings of the congregation. Organizes meals in answer to times of special need (e.g., birth, illness) in households.

**e. House Church**

Oversees formation, nurture, and transition of congregational house churches.

**f. Justice and Spirituality**

Initiates and manages outreach and spiritual nurture opportunities for the congregation.

**g. Worship**

Oversees Sunday morning and special season worship planning for the congregation. Music committee and ushers are accountable to Worship Committee.

**D. Leadership Selection Committee**

Appointed from the membership by Council, this committee oversees the selection of individuals to fill available roles in congregational life.

Leadership Selection Committee is composed of four persons appointed by Church Council each year, with two members carrying over from the previous year. The committee convenes as needed throughout the year to make committee appointments.

## **E. Staff Relations Committee**

Staff Relations Committee (SRC) oversees the relationship between staff and the congregation. Specifically, this committee handles all personnel issues including questions of salary and reimbursement, and overall evaluation and job performance of all staff. SRC has direct supervisory responsibility for the pastor and will meet with the pastor at regular intervals to discuss mutual concerns. The committee will periodically solicit input from the congregation. SRC reports to the Church Council.

The Church Council will appoint a chair of this committee to serve a three-year term.

The SRC Chair shall be a member of CMCL, should have experience with human resources, and should be familiar with CMCL's organizational structure and the job descriptions of its staff.

The SRC Chair, the Program Commission Chair and one elder comprise the Staff Relations Committee. The Council Chair is an *ex officio* member of this committee.

## **F. Ad Hoc Committees**

Committees will from time to time find it helpful to establish ad hoc committees for the initiation and management of special tasks. These committees are accountable to the program committee out of which they were established and have a stated tenure.

## **G. Pastoral Team**

The pastor(s) and the elders lead by attending to the spiritual well-being of the entire congregation. Roles for pastoral leadership include (but are not limited to) teacher, consultant, counselor, coach and manager. Qualifications for pastoring have to do with both character (integrity) and training (biblical/theological/ecclesiastical skills and knowledge). The result of successful pastoring is the release of gifts of the Spirit in the congregation; successful pastoring promotes visionary growth within the congregation. For the pastor(s) to effectively function as leader, s/he will maintain connection to all parts of congregational structure and life: congregation, Council, committees, small groups, individuals.

For the congregation as a whole, those in pastoral office offer teaching, preaching, instruction and assistance in worship, and attention to congregational vision, decisions, and transitions.

For the Council, those in pastoral office, because of their constant access to all parts of the congregation, because of their training, and because of congregational investment of authority in them, function as interpreters, articulators, and promoters of congregational vision in service to the Council. The pastor(s) attend council meetings regularly.

For both Council and committees, as well as other parts of congregational structure, those in pastoral office are vested with the responsibility to educate and encourage good group process, communication, and leadership.

For small groups and individuals, those in pastoral office attend to transitions, desire for counsel, crisis response, and celebrations.

The elders meet weekly with the pastor(s) to provide support and accountability. The elders assist the pastor(s) in attending to the well-being of the entire congregation in the full range of pastoral activities. Character (integrity), maturity, and love for the church are primary qualifications for the role of elder.

The pastor(s) is responsible to the Council through the Staff Relations Committee.

Elders are members of the church and are selected through the leadership selection process. They are accountable to the Church Council. Term of service is two years, renewable for an additional two years.

## **H. Church Treasurer**

### **1. Function**

The church treasurer is responsible/accountable to the Church Council to handle church finances and maintain adequate records.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Assist all committees in budget preparation by providing reports of last year's expenses, year-to-date expenses, and any unusual anticipated expenses.
- Maintain bank accounts, line of credit, CMCL credit cards, and other banking business as needed.
- Borrow funds from the line of credit. The Council Chair along with the treasurer are authorized to do this.
- Deposit all receipts and contributions.
- Pay invoices approved by the committee chairs responsible for that expense.
- Issue payroll checks to pastor and staff on basis of approved agreements.
- Prepare monthly and annual financial reports for committee chairs.
- Attend Church Council and Program Commission meetings as requested.

## **2. Qualifications**

The Church Treasurer:

- is a member of CMCL.
- has training and/or experience in accounting.
- has demonstrated fiscal management ability.

## **3. Selection**

The Treasurer is chosen through the leadership selection process for a three-year renewable term.

### **I. Congregational Convener**

The Congregational Convener:

- publicizes congregational meetings via church newsletter, bulletin, and/or mailboxes.
- facilitates congregational meetings so that agenda is covered effectively and efficiently.
- insures that minutes are taken, distributed, and retained as part of church records.

The Congregational Convener is a member of CMCL and is chosen through the leadership selection process for a three-year term of service.

### **J. Conference Delegates**

Delegates to the Atlantic Coast Conference attend four meetings per year, about one each quarter. Delegates carry the concerns and interests of the congregation to the conference and report back to Church Council and/or the congregation. (The pastor also attends these sessions; by conference rules, the pastor is an automatic delegate.)

The conference delegates, in consultation with the pastor, determine the conference giving budget.

Conference delegates are chosen through the leadership selection process. Each serves a one-year term.

### **K. Council Appointees**

Council appointees serve at the request of the Church Council and have a specified tenure. The following positions are filled by persons appointed by Council: librarian, historian, reporter, Lancaster County Council of Churches (LCCC) delegate, and representatives to outside organizations.

### **L. Support Staff**

Support staff assists the congregation in carrying out operational tasks. The composition of the support staff is determined by the Church Council.

### **M. Statutory Compliance**

For purposes of statutory compliance with the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Law, the following bodies and positions shall have the following statutory designations:

Church council	Board of directors
Council chair	President
Commission chair	Vice president
Congregational Conveener	Secretary
Treasurer	Treasurer

## **Appendix A. Vision**

Congregations live by vision, whether implicit or explicit. An explicit vision is something widely recognized by the congregation, articulating the basic premises of its life together. An implicit vision is what remains true of the congregation but as yet is not spoken. Moving vision from implicit to explicit is a process of clarification and growing awareness that can be highly energizing and make for the health of the congregation. Failure to move toward explicit vision can result in fragmentation and decay.

The core of the vision quest is primarily to identify the spiritual character of the congregation. In Revelation 1-3, John writes to seven churches. But he writes not to the people but to the *angels* of the churches. These angels are the name of the spiritual character of each congregation. For example, the angel of Laodicea is rich, self-reliant, and lukewarm. The angel of Philadelphia has little power, but endures patiently. The angel of Thyatira is love, faith, service, and patience. When we seek vision as a congregation, our central task is to recognize our “angel” or spiritual character as a church.

Discernment of spiritual character can be described as the interaction of three sources of authority for the congregation: Spirit, Bible, People.

1. We are not only people of an idea, history, or ethnicity, but of a living Spirit. We live in relationship to the Spirit of God, who is the source of all life and our hope for healing all ills. Therefore, we pray for discernment.
2. The Bible is the collection of writings and stories about the earliest recognitions of the Spirit of God and the defining act of the Spirit in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we read the Bible for discernment.
3. We commit ourselves to lively interaction with each other. We know that there are no guarantees of truth. But our understanding may be challenged, supported and deepened through human interaction. Therefore, we share and debate for discernment.

Spiritual character can be said to be expressed in an often-used three-part definition of congregational life: mission, worship, and fellowship. These are fully interrelated and in no order of priority.

1. **Mission** defines the face the group turns outward. Any congregation is connected in many ways locally and globally. How do we honor and strengthen the life-giving connections? How do we challenge and repent of connections based on injustice? We seek to enlarge the scope of God’s peace and justice. This is our ministry in the Spirit of Christ in the world.
2. **Worship** defines the face the group turns toward God. God is already acting and dwelling among us. Our recognition and celebration of God’s graceful presence is our worship.
3. **Fellowship** is the face we who are part of the group turn toward each other. In congregational life, we build relationships of trust. In these relationships, we minister to each other. We address illness, fear, loneliness, despair. We strengthen vision, healing and hope.

Our congregational vision is the particular and unique approach that we bring to the life process outlined above. It lies at the root of all that we will do and be.

## **Appendix B. Principles of Leadership**

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Four principles of effective leadership apply in this organizational structure:

1. *An effective leadership manages the decision process.* An effective leadership does not necessarily make decisions, but instead manages the group process that will result in effective decisions. An effective leadership also understands that managing decision-making is a process rather than a single event.
2. *An effective leadership identifies and utilizes a clear system of accountability.* A clear accountability system is mutual and not authoritarian. The congregational structure can facilitate this.
3. *An effective leadership knows the appropriate location for a particular problem/decision and guides the problem/decision to that location in the structure.*
4. *An effective leadership is responsible for emphasizing a long term approach to management and planning.* This includes having primary responsibility for implementing and motivating the annual planning process. The annual planning process involves the following steps:
  - a. Discovering and articulating the congregation's vision.
  - b. Identifying and articulating a set of long and short term goals with the congregation that reflect and support the vision.
  - c. In an advisory capacity, working with the Program Commission to develop an annual work plan that translates the long and short term goals into program action at the committee level. This implies that the Program Commission accepts the responsibility for implementing this process.

A long term management and planning view also includes having primary responsibility for developing effective leadership behaviors among all Council and Program Commission members. Implementation of an annual leadership orientation process and an ongoing congregation planning process are two useful approaches.



## ***Appendix C. Philosophy of Decision-Making***

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We believe that we are called to be a church where ultimate authority resides in the congregation, where all members collaborate in the life of the church and in the decision-making that determines the nature of this life. This philosophy is based on the belief that “the presence of the Spirit is in and with those called to be and to build a church,” (Mary Benet McKinney from *Sharing Wisdom*) and that we hear the voice of God and discern direction for our corporate life by listening deeply to the wisdom of each other. McKinney calls this a philosophy of “shared wisdom.” Its bottom line “is a deep and operational faith that the Spirit lives in the group through its membership and speaks through the lived experience of each one.”

According to McKinney, to say that each person has a piece of the wisdom is to say the following:

- No one has all the wisdom.
- Everyone has a different piece. (There will be differences and disagreements.)
- Everyone has some of the wisdom. (No matter how strange someone's wisdom may seem, there is something there which the Spirit is calling the others to consider, to respect and even to treasure.)

This philosophy relies both on a deep faith in the reality of the Spirit's work in all of our lives and the skill to elicit the pieces of wisdom from the group members. It is based on the reality that people care as much about *how* a decision is made as they care about the issue itself. It is a philosophy that fosters relationships and community in our corporate discernment for direction.

To operationalize this, we commit ourselves to a process which people feel so good about that even the minority are willing to support a decision they may not necessarily like. Specifically, in our decision-making processes, we commit ourselves to the following:

- To attend regularly to the nurture of our own spirituality.
- To come to the process of decision-making in a spirit of prayerful reflection.
- To find ways to elicit the wisdom from each person.
- To listen carefully and respectfully to each person, valuing the person's experience and attempting to understand his/her perspective.
- To listen openly, in a spirit of letting go, of readiness to allow our opinions to be shaped or to change as we listen to the wisdom of others.
- To work at building consensus in our decisions — not meaning unanimity but rather that all can live with a decision — instead of setting up win-lose situations and creating power struggles that work against our philosophy of shared wisdom.

## **Appendix D. Decision-Making Process**

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In order to make good decisions, the congregation must be well informed. In addition, the process must be a disciplined one to ensure that the decisions reflect the wishes of the congregation and that the outcomes of the decisions are clearly understood by everyone.

Final decisions at the congregational level are the result of a process of consensus building which begins when the idea is first born, long before it is presented to the congregation for a decision.

Consensus means that everyone can live with a decision; it does not mean unanimity.

Consensus building is a process of gaining agreement and support for an idea or concern at every level within the congregation as that idea moves from concept through committees, Council and on to the congregational meeting for approval. By the time the proposal reaches the congregational meeting, the leadership already knows whether there is broad congregational support for the proposal because of the involvement of the majority of members.

The Congregational Vision Statement, annual program objectives and work plans, and the annual budget require the approval of the congregation for implementation. All changes to the Vision Statement and the annual program objectives must be approved by the congregation at a congregational meeting.

### **The Proposal**

Congregational decisions are based on specific proposals presented to the congregation in writing. Each proposal contains the following elements:

1. **The Situation.** A statement clearly articulating the specific problem, issue or concern creating the need for the proposal. Supporting information from congregational inputs which helped identify the issue is also included.
2. **The Solution.** A statement clearly stating the ultimate outcome, solution or objective.
3. **The Action Plan.** The steps needed to initiate, develop, implement and maintain the proposal. The plan includes financial resources needed, training, volunteer time, personnel issues, persons responsible for its implementation and time line.
4. **Supporting Information.** Depending on the nature or complexity of the issues in the proposal, the following are also included:
  - Response to ideas or concerns that were raised in the consensus building process, but which are not included as part of the proposal. This assures the members that their ideas, although not implemented, were heard and given consideration.
  - Additional explanation for key elements contained in the proposal. A good proposal attempts to anticipate questions and concerns that have been or may be raised by the members.

The proposal conveys the good work of those bringing it forward. It reflects a sensitivity to the concerns of the congregation at large, as well as the vision, creativity, and talent of those persons putting it forth.

## **The Process**

Church Council has sole responsibility for moving the proposal to the congregation for agreement. Completing the following steps ensures that the congregation is well informed and prepared to give their support to the proposal:

1. The proposal is distributed in the church mail boxes a minimum of two weeks prior to a scheduled congregational meeting. An announcement is made in the morning worship service informing the members to look for the information in their mail boxes. Any proposals not picked up that Sunday are sent by U.S. mail the following week.
2. Included with the proposal is a statement recommending the action to be taken on the proposal at the congregational meeting.
3. The presence of the members attending the congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum.
4. Members come to the congregational meeting prepared to:
  - Pose questions for clarity and understanding.
  - List their “likes” and “concerns.”
  - Make a congregational decision by choosing from the following four options:
    - a. In favor of the proposal.
    - b. Although not in favor, will support the proposal.
    - c. Refer the proposal back to the committee with concerns.  
One of the following three actions may then be taken:
      - Committee may caucus at the congregational meeting to review and respond to the recommendation for “minor” change(s).
      - Congregation may give conditional approval.
      - Congregation may refer the proposal back to committee with concerns, without approval.
    - d. Reject the proposal entirely.

A proposal is approved if (i) a majority of all votes are in favor (Option a. above); and (ii) the combined vote for Option a. and Option b. above is at least 75% of all votes.

If the proposal is referred back to committee, the proposal would then come back to the congregational meeting at a future date. The committee would distribute any changes, in writing, in advance of a scheduled meeting. The committee is responsible to carefully evaluate the concerns raised by the congregation to determine their merit. The committee has the option to respond by either making changes in the proposal based on new thinking or respond with greater clarity to the original proposal to ensure a better understanding for the proposal as presented. This process may continue between the committee and the congregation until agreement has been reached. In the event of conditional approval, the committee has the option of accepting the conditions or resubmitting changes for approval.

The purpose of this structured process is to produce appropriate decisions. It is assumed that during the consensus-building process, prior to the written proposal to the congregation, those putting forth the proposal will provide ample opportunity for members to express their wishes, views, needs and concerns regarding the proposal.

## ***Appendix E. Budget Management Process***

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The Church Council develops and monitors the annual budget and membership giving plan. The objective of that planning is to continually move the congregation in a direction in harmony with our Vision Statement.

The Church Council will formulate the annual budget in consultation with related committees. The annual budget along with the goals and work plan for the year will be presented to the congregation for approval at an annual congregational meeting.

The Program Commission will develop an annual budget to carry out its annual work plan. The Commission will manage the allocation of funds within its budget to most effectively assist the congregation in achieving its mission.

The Church Council manages the allocation of funds within the approved budget. The Council may, at its discretion, authorize additional spending up to 5% in excess of the approved budget if such funds are available.

The Council will report on the status of the budget and the giving plan at each congregational meeting.

The Church Council will establish guidelines for special offerings and above budget giving. Requests for special offerings and above budget giving will be presented to the Council Chair. If requests fall within the established guidelines, the Council Chair in consultation with the Church Treasurer and the Pastor may grant approval.

## Core Values










Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster

March 15, 2009

### CMCL VISION PRAYER

THROUGH YOUR GRACE, O GOD, FORM US INTO A COMMUNITY  
CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS,  
KNOWN AND LOVED BY YOU,  
NOURISHED THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES BY WORSHIP, RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE BIBLICAL  
STORY,  
OPEN TO NEW VOICES AND NEW DREAMS,  
COMMITTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN TIMES OF CELEBRATION AND DIFFICULTY,  
RESPONSIVE TO HUMAN NEED WITH JUSTICE, PEACEMAKING AND COMPASSION.  
MAY YOUR SPIRIT DRAW US TOGETHER INTO YOUR NEW CREATION. AMEN.

*Anabaptists traditionally have been wary of creeds and fixed statements of faith and of conveying the idea that there is no possibility of our understanding developing in fresh ways. These Core Values are provisional and subject to review, but they speak to this time and place in CMCL's common life. These values function in dialog with CMCL's Covenant.*

-  We are **KNOWN AND LOVED BY GOD**—This is the center of our common faith. We speak this reality to each other and we strive to model this love in our world.
-  We are **CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS**—The teachings of Jesus orient our worship. Turning toward Jesus “God-with-us” at our center is more important than defining the outer edges. Our participation in the wider Mennonite church and the stream of Anabaptist theology informs this call. We respect and learn from people of religious traditions beyond Christianity.
-  We are **NOURISHED THROUGH WORSHIP**—We celebrate music and the arts as vital parts of our spiritual practice. We value worship that honors our wrestlings, our broken places and our raw edges. Our worship brings wholeness and centeredness to fragmented lives.
-  We are **NOURISHED THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS**—We are present to each other in mutual care, not for the purpose of fixing or problem-solving, but for helping one another remember or discover the wholeness and holiness God intends for us.
-  We are **NOURISHED THROUGH THE BIBLICAL STORY**—We are drawn to teachings of Jesus reaching out to the marginal, listening and healing as he moves among them. We strive to understand together what the Bible means for our lives in this time and place.
-  We are **OPEN TO NEW VOICES**—We strive to speak and listen across differences in and beyond our congregation. We value cross-cultural experiences and global perspective. We welcome and embrace diversity of sexual orientation at all levels of congregational participation. We recognize challenges of building racially and economically diverse faith community and strive for reconciliation.
-  We are **OPEN TO NEW DREAMS**—We encourage all in our midst to grow and use their gifts, regardless of age, gender or length of time in the congregation.
-  We are **RESPONSIVE TO HUMAN NEED**—We want our lives to be more than solely for ourselves. We serve and celebrate our neighborhoods, especially our urban Lancaster context.
-  We strive to **RESPOND WITH JUSTICE, PEACEMAKING AND COMPASSION**—We take seriously the church's call to address issues of social, economic and ecological justice and to challenge oppressive

systems in our culture. We proclaim the building of shalom peace and right relationships as the heart of the biblical message.

 We are **BEING DRAWN INTO A NEW CREATION**—We believe that transformation of ourselves and our world is ultimately the work of God’s Spirit.