

Bylaws of the Bible Fellowship Church
Revised and voted on at Business Meeting
June 23, 2014

- ARTICLE I NAME
The name of this Church shall be "Bible Fellowship Church", hereafter referred to as "the Church".
- ARTICLE II PURPOSE
Section I. The primary purpose of this Church shall be:
A. to "Glorify God" (I Cor. 10:31)
B. to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20)
C. to grow in love and unity with each other. (Romans 15:5,6)
D. to be an effective witness for Christ. (Matt. 5:15)
E. to identify spiritual gifts of the saints and equip the same for the work of the ministry. (I Cor. 12: 1-6; Eph. 4:11, 12)
F. to foster a Christ-like lifestyle that would realize rewards in heaven (I Cor. 3:1-10)
- Section II. It shall be the purpose of these bylaws to govern the functions and the administrations of Bible Fellowship Church. All the provisions of the by-laws shall conform to the principles and policies expressed in the Articles of Incorporation.
- ARTICLE III AFFILIATION
- Section I Denomination: Mennonite Brethren
The Bible Fellowship Church shall be affiliated with the Central District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and thereby a member of the United States Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (USA and Canada).
- Section II The Church though autonomous in local matters, will be affiliated with the above mentioned Conferences.
- Section III Delegate Representation to Conferences - Central District Conference, US Conference and General Conference of North America. These delegates shall be chosen by the Elder's Leadership Council. Those attending as delegates will be asked to report back to the Church body.
- ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH
- Section I The Word of God
We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inerrant and inspired Word of God, the complete revelation of His will for salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. (II Timothy 3:16, 17, II Peter 1:19-21)

- Section II The Trinity
We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three co-equal persons: Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They act together in creation, providence, and redemption. (John 17:5, Revelation 4:11)
- A. God the Father
We believe He is the One living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy, and love. He reigns with providential care over all life throughout history in the created universe: He hears and answers prayer. He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is the Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior. (I Tim. 1:17, Psalm 86:15, Deut. 32:3,4, Gen. 1:26, I Peter 1:2, Heb. 1:1-3, I Chron. 29:11-13, Matt. 7:11, I John 4:9,10, John 3:16, John 1:12, Acts 16:31.)
- B. Jesus Christ the Son
We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures, He arose bodily the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate. (Matt. 1:18, John 1:1, I Cor. 15:3,4, Heb. 1:3,8; 9:24)
- C. Holy Spirit the Comforter
We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer with many fillings for godly living and service. (John 14:17, 26, 15:26, 16:7-11, Rom. 8:9-11, Eph. 5:18, Gal. 5:22, 23)
- Section III Creation
We believe in the creation of the heavens, earth and man by a direct act of God in six days. (Gen. 1:1, 26, Col. 1:16, Heb. 11:3)
- Section IV Mankind In Need of Regeneration
We believe that Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provided the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe and turn from their sin and only those who personally accept Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God. (Gen. 1:26, John 3:5-8, Rom.5:12, 6:5-6, 8:9-11, Titus 3:5-7, Col. 1:20).
- Section V The Ordinances
We believe that water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not means of salvation. (Matt. 28:19, Acts 8:36-39, 16:31-33, 22:16, I Cor. 11:23-25).

Section VI The Church and Its Membership
We believe that the true Church, the Bride of Christ, is composed of all such persons, who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together to form the Body of Christ of which He is the Head. Therefore we believe that only those who are members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. (Eph. 1:22, Col. 1:18, Acts 2)

Section VII Christ's Return
We believe in the personal, premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this 'Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. (Acts 1:11, I Cor. 15:51, 52, I Thess. 4:16-18, Titus 2:13-14)

Section VIII Last Things
We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead. The believer shall be raised to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. (John 5:28, 29, I Cor. 15, Rev. 20:6)

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Section I Procedure:

A. By Baptism - We, the members of the Bible Fellowship Church, believe in and practice believer's baptism by immersion which best symbolizes the new birth in that he or she dies to sin with Christ and is raised with Him to newness of life. Baptism is also a public declaration of his or her commitment to Christ. (Rom. 6:1-10, Matt. 28:19-20, Acts 2:41-42, Eph. 4:1-16)

B. By letter of recommendation from another Mennonite Brethren Church with a personal testimony or written statement to the Elders and upon the Elder's recommendation shall be accepted into membership by the Church body. They shall have all rights and privileges of full membership in the local church.

C. We recognize that the body of Christ is one therefore we desire fellowship with all believers who follow Jesus Christ in obedience to the Word of God. We as a local church will receive into fellowship believers who transfer membership from another church and have experienced believer's baptism upon their confession of faith and are in good standing with their local church. These believers shall share their testimony and their experience of baptism with the Elders, and upon the Elder's recommendation shall be accepted into membership by the Church body. They shall have all rights and privileges of full membership in the local church.

Section II Transfer of Membership:

A member, when moving to another locality where there is a Mennonite Brethren Church, may request a letter of transfer to that Church. This request shall be made public through proper announcement, and then granted. If a member of this church desires to unite with another evangelical church, the church may issue a

statement certifying his or her good standing in the Church and recommend him/her for fellowship.

Section III Dual/Associate Membership:
Membership may be extended to those who would request membership at Bible Fellowship Church as well as retain membership at their home church due to temporary residency according to the guidelines of Section I. They shall have all rights and privileges of full membership in the local church.

Section IV Inactive Membership:
The Elders shall review the church membership list and recommend at a church business meeting that members be placed on the inactive list if he or she fails to participate in regular services or show any support of the church. A vote to place on the inactive list shall be taken at that meeting. He/she shall be the object of special concern by the Elders to help the member reestablish themselves in the church or another evangelical church. While a member is on the inactive list, they cannot hold office, nor can they vote. The elders may recommend to restore an inactive member to the active list by the confirmation of the Church body.

ARTICLE VI HOW TO DEAL WITH SIN, ACCUSATION OF SIN AND RECONCILIATION WITHIN THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section I Sin of one member against another.
In matters of the personal sin of one member against another Matt. 18:15-17 must be followed. In such cases, a member shall be counseled in love according to Gal. 6:1. The case shall only be brought to the church after it has been reviewed and approved by the Elder Commission.

Section II Sin not necessarily directed against another member as outlined in Gal. 5:19-21. In these cases Matt. 18:15-17 must also be followed. This member shall also be counseled in love according to Gal. 6:1. The case shall only be brought to the church after it has been reviewed and approved by the Elder Commission. (Matt. 18:15-17, II Cor. 7:8-11, Gal. 6:1)

Section III Elders accused of sin.
No accusation of sin shall be considered against an Elder except from two or three witnesses (I Tim 5:19). An Elder that continues in sin (that is, has not repented) will be rebuked by a member of the Elder Commission before the Church membership. In verified cases of sin, the Elder Commission will determine if removal from office is required to sustain the spiritual trust and integrity of the Church.

Section IV Repentance
If repentance is not realized after the above procedures are followed, then by recommendation of the Elder Commission, the Church should no longer associate with that member. (I Cor. 5:11)

Section V Restoration
If repentance is realized after the above procedures, restoration back into the Church body shall be granted through the guidance of the Elders. (Gal. 6:1)

ARTICLE VII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS (Ministry and Business meetings)

Section I Meeting Schedules

A. Three Church Business Meetings shall be held during the year in the months of June, August and January. These times and dates must be announced two weeks prior to the meeting date. Special business meetings may be scheduled by announcing them at two services (not the same Sunday) prior to the meeting. These special meetings may be called by the Elders, or by a written request made by ten or more church members and presented to and accepted by the Elder's Leadership Council. The agenda will be made available when this meeting is announced.

B. The agenda for the Church Business Meetings shall be made available two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section II A. A quorum at all Church business meetings shall consist of at least 10% of the Church membership.

B. The spirit of Christian love and grace shall be applied in the conduct of all the discussions and deliberative processes to carry out the objectives of the congregation. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the general guidelines for meetings except where they conflict with the By-laws.

C. All business unless otherwise specified shall be decided by 2/3 majority of the votes cast.

D. Election of persons to offices shall be by plurality of the votes cast unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.

E. Members 16 years and older shall be eligible to vote.

F. Candidates for all offices shall have been members in good standing of the Church for a minimum of 6 months preceding the election, unless this requirement is waived by the members present at the Church Business meeting. A person must become a member before taking office. (Candidates for the office of Elder must have been a member for one year.)

G. An elected member of a Commission may serve two consecutive terms before a sabbatical lapse of one year is required. The Elders and Deacons are encouraged but not required to take a sabbatical leave for one year after two consecutive terms.

H. The terms of office for Commissions shall be three years.

I. Nominees for each office shall be submitted by the nominating committee to the Elders for their approval. Nominees need to be contacted prior to the business meeting. The nominating committee shall be designated each year by the Elders Leadership Council.

J. The floor of the business meeting shall be open for nominations provided that the Elders have been contacted prior to the beginning of the meeting and the nominee has agreed to be nominated.

K. Candidates for Offices shall be elected at the June business meeting and assume their position September 1st.

L. No person can serve on a second Commission except in an ex-officio capacity.

ARTICLE VIII CHURCH STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Section I Elders Commission

A. Purpose: The Elder Commission is responsible for the shepherding and oversight of the Church including all Commissions, committees, and Elder's Leadership Council. The Elder's will provide vision, guidance, sound Biblical instruction, refutation of doctrinal error, corporate discipline, establish policies and practices, and prayer on behalf of the congregation.

B. Membership Qualifications - Each lay member of the Elder Commission must be an active member of the Church for at least one year and possess the qualifications described in I Tim. 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9.

C. Nomination, Selection Term of Office and Removal: Recommendations to fill the office of Elder shall be encouraged from the Church body and submitted to the Elders. The Elders will review all recommendations to be presented at the June or any duly called business meeting for a vote of affirmation by the Church body (Article VII, Section II - D). Any newly affirmed Elder will assume office immediately.

After a three year term, an evaluation will be made upon each Elder by the other Elders. The vote of reaffirmation will follow the same procedure as the initial recommendations.

Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes spiritually unqualified as determined by the Elder Commission. (Article VI, section III). If an Elder is dismissed it will be shared with the Church body at an appropriate meeting. If an Elder resigns it will be shared at the next business meeting.

D. Membership and length of service: This Commission will consist of the lead pastor and duly affirmed elders. All other pastoral staff must meet the requirements for being an elder and be affirmed by the church body. There shall be no less than 4 Elders (including lead pastor) serving on this Commission. Number of terms is not limited.

E. Decision Making Process: The Elder Commission shall approach decisions in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. They shall seek to reach unanimous decisions.

F. Meetings and Officers: The Commission shall meet a minimum of once a month. Chairman, Vice-chairman and Secretary shall be appointed within the Elder Commission. The pastoral staff may hold any of the appointed positions within the Elder Commission. The Elder Commission shall determine whether the chairman or senior pastor will lead the Elder's meetings.

G. The Elders shall appoint the Church Moderator from within the membership of the Commission. He will conduct the Church business meetings and the Elder's Leadership Council meetings for a one year term.

H. Elders and pastoral staff are accountable to each other under the headship of Jesus Christ and thereby are responsible for the Church body. (I Peter 5:1-4, Eph. 4:11-13, Eph. 5:23-24, I Cor. 11:3, Heb. 13:20-21)

I. The Elders shall oversee the hiring of the Church Secretary in cooperation with the Stewardship Commission.

Section II Elder's Leadership Council (referred to after this as the Leadership Council.)

A. Purpose: The Elder's Leadership Council will be a communication tool to coordinate the Commissions and work of the Church. The Council will see that the directives from the Elders and Church body are carried to completion.

B. Membership: The Leadership Council shall consist of the Elders, the Pastors, the Commission Chairs (persons), the Church Recording Secretary, the Church Treasurer, and two members at large. The Church Moderator is the chairman of the Leadership Council. The Council will appoint a Vice-Chairman. The Secretary is the Church Recording Secretary elected by the Church body.

C. Responsibilities: The Leadership Council will hear reports from each of the Commissions, review all matters of the Church including those to be presented to the Church business meetings, prepare agendas for the business meetings, encourage the Pastoral staff and staff of the Church, review budgetary considerations, appoint a Nominating Committee and make sure the purpose of the Church is being accomplished.

D. Meetings: The Council shall meet bi-monthly or more often as needed. .

E. Members at Large: Members at large shall be elected at the June business meeting for two year terms with an election of one member each year. Members at Large shall not be members of a Commission.

Section III Deacon Commission

A. Purpose: The word "deacon" in the New Testament means "servant, service, and to serve". This Commission will provide direction for the distribution of the Church's benevolent funds with a priority of ministry to the Church family and then to those needing assistance outside the Church when appropriate. The Commission will give or secure spiritual counsel and provide accountability for those needing help in financial areas of life.

B. Membership Qualifications: Commission members must be members of the Church and in good standing with the Church. The Deacon Commission will consist of members possessing the qualifications as described in I Timothy 3:8-13 in personal character, in spiritual character, in moral purity, and in leading his family well.

C. Membership: This Commission shall consist of at least 7 members with the goal of ten (10) and the women being called Deaconesses. These Commission members can be single individuals or a married couple. The Commission shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary/treasurer. Recommendations to fill this office will come from the church body, the Elders and Deacons. The recommendations will be made after a consensus by these two Commissions followed by a vote of affirmation by the Church body at a Church business meeting.

D. Meetings/Terms of Office: This commission shall meet once a month or more often as needed. Commission members will serve a three year term. (Article VII, Section II, G)

Section IV Stewardship Commission:

A. Purpose: To apply the principles of Biblical stewardship while overseeing the Church finances including pastoral and staff salaries, budget, and the upkeep of the grounds and buildings. They will hire all non-pastoral staff except the Church Secretary.

B. Membership Qualifications: They must be members of the Church and be in good standing with the Church and meet the qualifications of spiritual leadership of I Tim. 3:8-13.

C. Members/Officers: This Commission shall consist of at least 7 members which includes the Church Treasurer. The Commission shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary.

D. Meetings and Terms of Office: This Commission shall meet once a month or more often when necessary. The members shall be elected for a three year term at the June business meeting. These terms shall be alternated over the three years so that all the members are not elected at one business meeting. They may serve two consecutive terms before a sabbatical of one year is required.

Section V Worship and Music Commission

A. Purpose: To lift up the name of Jesus Christ by creating an atmosphere of praise and worship for the Sunday Morning Worship Services, to assist the Pastor in all areas of music ministry within the Church and coordinate the ushers and greeters.

B. Membership Qualifications: They must be members of the Church and be in good standing with the Church and have an understanding of Church Music that creates and enhances an atmosphere of worship.

C. Members/Officers: This Commission shall consist of at least 7 members which includes the Head Ushers from each Worship Service and the Coordinator of the Sunday Morning Worship Music. The Commission will annually appoint a Head Usher for each worship service. The Coordinator of Sunday Morning Worship Music shall be appointed annually to the Commission by the Commission itself. They shall appoint their own Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

D. Meetings and Terms of Office: Four members shall be elected at the June business meeting for a three year term. These terms shall be alternated over the three years so that all four members are not elected at one business meeting. Two consecutive terms may be served before a sabbatical of one year is required. This commission shall meet monthly or more often as needed.

Section VI Christian Education Commission:

A. Purpose: To provide for the program planning, leadership development, guidance and direction of all facets of the Christian Education Program at Bible Fellowship Church.

B. Qualifications: They must be a member of the Church and be in good standing with the Church.

C. Members and Officers: This Commission shall consist of at least five members plus the appointed members. Annually they shall appoint the following ex-officio members to serve: Adult Sunday School Superintendent (an Elder or a person who meets the qualification of I Timothy 3), Youth and Children's Sunday School Superintendent, Children's Church Director, AWANA Commander and Youth Pastor. The above personnel will report regularly and participate on the Commission where and when needed. The Youth Pastor shall be accountable for youth programming to this Commission with pastoral accountability to the Elders. The commission shall appoint their own Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

D. Meetings/ Terms of Office: Elected members shall be elected at the June Business meeting for three year terms. These terms shall be alternated over the three years so that all five members are not elected at one business meeting. Two Consecutive terms may be served before a sabbatical of one year is required. The commission shall meet monthly or more often if needed.

Section VII Financial Secretaries

- A. Purpose: They shall count and deposit all incoming monies of the Church.
- B. Qualifications: The financial secretaries must be members of the Church and be in good standing with the Church.
- C. Members:/Terms of Office: Two financial Secretaries shall be elected at the June business meeting for a one year term with no limit of terms.

Section VIII Church Treasurer

- A. Purpose: The Treasurer shall dispense all funds of the church. Disbursement shall be made within the guidelines of the church budget and the specific instructions of the commissions. The Treasurer shall carefully record all receipts and disbursements and give a financial report regularly at all Stewardship Commission meetings, all Elders' Leadership Council meetings and present a complete financial report at the church business meetings.
- B. Qualifications: The treasurer must be a member of the Church and be in good standing with the Church and have an understanding of basic accounting practices and the operation of a church budget. The ability to be bonded is also required for this position.
- C. Term of Office: The Church Treasurer shall be appointed or hired by the Stewardship Commission and presented at the June business meeting for a one year term and shall be a member of the Stewardship Commission. The terms of office are unlimited. Length of service to be determined by the Stewardship Commission based upon performance evaluation.

Section IX Church Recording Secretary:

- A. Purpose: The Church Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of the Church business meetings and the Elder's Leadership Council meetings and make them available within two weeks after each meeting as well as maintain and place on file these minutes. This person shall keep a list of all functioning commissions, committees and their members and terms of office.
- B. Qualifications: The Recording Secretary must be a member of the Church and in good standing with the church.
- C. Term of Office: The Church Recording Secretary shall be elected at the June business meeting for a one year term with no limit on terms.

Section X Committees:

Commissions may appoint committees to serve under them to accomplish certain tasks related to their area of ministry. The Commissions will report on any committee formation and work to the Leadership Council. The Commission will define the purpose, qualifications of members, officers and monitor committee action. The Commission may dissolve the committee at its discretion. The Commission may recommend to the Church body that a committee be changed to a Commission status.

ARTICLE IX PASTORAL STAFF

The Pastoral Staff shall include the senior pastor and other staff pastors and interim pastors as needed. The Elder Commission is responsible for determining when additional pastoral staff is necessary.

Section I Qualifications:

A. Any man seeking a pastoral position should exemplify characteristics of Godliness found in Scripture. A pastor should demonstrate Christian maturity, integrity, honesty, and love in all areas of his family, public and professional life.

B. Biblical qualifications for a pastor include: John 13:14-17, Phil. 2:5-11, I Tim. 2:11-15, 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.

C. A pastor must be committed to the church's statement of faith, purpose and Bylaws. Believer's baptism by immersion should be a part of his experience, testimony and conviction.

D. It is required that a pastor have the necessary biblical training, spiritual gifts, leadership and interpersonal skills necessary to fulfill the ministry to which he is called.

E. A pastor ordained in the Mennonite Brethren Conference shall retain his ordained status if he is in good standing with the Mennonite Brethren Conference and is in full compliance with the statement of faith, purpose, ministry and Bylaws of the Bible Fellowship Church when transferring to the Church.

F. Ordained Pastors transferring from another denomination will retain their ordained status if the Conference recognizes the ordination. Ordained women pastors transferring to the Church will not retain their ordained status (I Tim. 2:9-14). Ordained homosexual pastors transferring to the Church will not retain their ordained status (I Tim. 3:2, I Cor. 6:9).

Section II Procedure for Calling a Pastor

A. At a duly called church business meeting the Elders shall present their recommendation for pastoral staff including a general job description and estimated salary (in consultation with the Stewardship Commission) of the position to be filled. This recommendation shall be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the membership present.

B. Formation of the Calling Committee

A Calling Committee of 5-8 members (with a minimum of one Elder and one person from the Stewardship Commission) shall be nominated by the Elder Commission and approved by the Leadership Council. This recommendation shall be brought to a duly called business meeting and approved by a majority vote of the membership present.

C. Duties of the Calling Committee:

1. To check background, interview, evaluate and select a possible candidate for the position. The committee shall recommend one candidate to the Elder Commission.
2. If the candidate is approved by the Elders, the Calling Committee shall make arrangements for the candidate to come and candidate.
3. Only one candidate at a time shall be recommended to the congregation for a vote to issue a call to candidate.
4. The terms of the "call" will be determined by the Calling Committee and the Elder Commission before making a recommendation to the congregation. These terms will be presented in writing to the congregation and candidate. The "call" will clearly state the job description, salary, benefits, professional expenses, vacation, sabbatical leave and continuing education arrangements.

D. The "call" to a candidate shall issue from the congregation upon the recommendation of the Calling Committee and the Elder Commission, and an 80% majority vote of a written ballot of the voting membership present at a Business Meeting. The Calling Committee shall handle all communication with candidates until a call to fill the pastoral position is accepted: after which further communication shall be made by the Elder Commission.

Section III Extension and Termination of Pastoral Call

- A. A pastor shall serve an unlimited term of service and be evaluated by the Elder Commission every three years or as the Elder Commission deems necessary.
- B. The relation between a pastor and the church may be dissolved by the pastor upon giving a two months' notice, or by a mutually agreed upon timetable with the Elder Commission.
- C. A pastor's "call" may be terminated upon a unanimous recommendation of the Elder Commission who are not pastoral staff and a 2/3 majority vote of a written ballot of the voting membership present at a regular or special Business meeting. The reasons for terminating a "call" shall be considered in light of Article IX, Section I.
- D. Should the Elder Commission recommend the termination of a "call", the pastor will be relieved of all pastoral duties immediately and until the matter has been decided by the membership.
- E. The Elder Commission shall establish the terms of termination in cooperation with the Stewardship Commission.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Church bylaws may be suggested by any Commission or the Leadership Council. The Elders shall review all proposed amendments and then present them to the congregation. They shall be published and distributed two weeks prior to a business meeting. Any amendment shall pass upon a 2/3 majority vote cast.