

Raleigh Mennonite Church Policies and Procedures

*Document originally approved January 2019
Section A (except A6) updated and approved February 2025*

This document will be reviewed—and edited, as necessary—every three years.

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A Organizational Structure

A1 Officers, Deacons, and Staff Church Relations Committee

The RMC Bylaws state: “Officers are appointed for two-year terms that can be served consecutively.” [4.3d]

A1.1 MODERATOR

The RMC Bylaws state:

“THE MODERATOR of the Congregation ensures the preparation of agendas for Church Life Meetings (CLMs), moderates these meetings, delegates such duties as are needed and appropriate for the administrative workings of the CLM, and discerns when the Congregation has reached consensus on a decision. The Moderator also assists in the discernment of Officers, Deacons, Staff Church Relations, and Moderator roles. In addition, the Moderator convenes a quarterly meeting of the Committee of Committees, provides the agenda with the input of the committees, and leads the gathering.” [4.3a]

All Covenant Members are invited to submit agenda items for the Church Life Meeting to the Moderator. The Moderator discerns whether to bring items for communal discernment or if that item is better addressed by a committee, or among the Deacons or Staff Church Relations Committee (SCRC). While all suggested items will be addressed, it is the discernment of the Moderator, in consultation with the Pastor, as to the timing and format for addressing these items. The Moderator will provide an advanced call for agenda items and committee reports, and email the compiled reports and agenda to the Congregation at least four days prior to the CLM. (Church Life Meetings are described in more detail in Section B - Method of Decision-Making.)

The role of Moderator is affirmed by the Congregation at a CLM.

A1.2 SECRETARY

The RMC Bylaws state:

“THE SECRETARY of the Congregation will keep an accurate record of the proceedings of CLMs (and other special meetings as needed), to include resolutions adopted and actions taken, and will publish the minutes of these meetings within one month. The Secretary role may be shared by two Covenant Members.” [4.3b]

The role of Secretary is affirmed by the Congregation at a CLM.

Minutes of the prior meeting will be edited and accepted by the Congregation at each CLM.

A1.3 TREASURER

The RMC Bylaws state:

“THE TREASURER shall have custody of all offerings, funds, and accounts of the organization. The Treasurer receives, deposits, invests and disburses all group monies, in accordance with the direction of the Congregation. The Treasurer will be a member of the Stewardship Committee. In conjunction with the committee, the Treasurer will shape an annual budget to present at a CLM prior to the September start of the fiscal year and will furnish periodic accounting of funds to the Congregation.” [4.3c]

The role of Treasurer is affirmed by the Congregation at a CLM.

A1.4 DEACONS

The RMC Bylaws state:

“DEACONS - Three to four Deacons provide spiritual and communal direction and vision for the church through planning for the future, assessing the needs of the Congregation, and attending to community formation, including accountability in matters related to Covenant Members.” [4.1]

DUTIES: It is the work of the Deacons to

- Assist the Pastor in creating a healthy church environment by discerning spiritual and material needs of the church.
- Facilitate congregational discernment related to vision, policies and procedures, and long-range planning.
- With the Pastor, the Deacons assess congregational needs and provide support and connection to appropriate resources inside and outside the church.
- Assist in baptism preparation, covenant exploration class, new member classes, nurturing of new believers, church discipline, and covenant renewal Sunday.
- With the Pastor, the Deacons help the church to embody its Anabaptist convictions.

COMPOSITION: Three to four Covenant Members based on gifts, sense of call, and availability. New Deacons are affirmed by the Congregation at a CLM. The lead Pastor attends Deacons' meetings in an *ex officio* capacity.

TERM AND MEETING FREQUENCY: Deacons are Covenant Members who serve staggered two-year terms beginning each September, nominated in May of the same year, with the option to renew for one additional term. Upon completion of two consecutive full terms (four years), a Deacon must step away from the role for a minimum of one year. An unfinished term will be completed by a new Deacon who is able to serve for the remainder of that term, then serve a full term with the option of continuing to serve for another consecutive term. Decision-making is made by consensus among Deacons. Deacons meet monthly.

EARLY DISSOLUTION OF TERM: Should a Deacon resign prior to when their term is ended, the Moderator will convene a CLM for a new nomination.

A1.5 STAFF CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The RMC Bylaws state:

“Two Covenant Members serve as the Staff Church Relations Committee (SCRC) to oversee staff members, set policies related to staffing, monitor compliance with these policies, and offer support and care for staff members and their families.”
[4.2]

DUTIES:

- The Staff Church Relations Committee (SCRC) encourages, strengthens, nurtures, supports, and respects the Pastor(s) and staff and their families. The committee confers regularly about the personnel conditions and issues that affect the Congregation’s total ministry, including healthy life-work balance, and helps the staff set priorities.
- Communicates openly and regularly with the Pastor(s), staff, and Congregation.
- In consultation with the lead Pastor and with awareness of the strategy of the Deacons and Officers, recommends needed staff positions and develops and approves written job descriptions and titles for staff.
- Provides to the Stewardship Committee budget recommendations for staff expenses such as compensation, travel, continuing education, etc.
- In consultation with the Pastor(s) and the Conference Minister, maintains written policies and procedures for hiring, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff members; reviews and updates these documents on a regular schedule and submits them for approval at a CLM.
- Organizes hiring processes in coordination with the Conference Minister and committees.
- In consultation with the Conference Minister, provides oversight and accountability for the Pastor(s) and staff.
- Provides an annual evaluation of the Pastor(s) and other staff for ongoing effective ministry.

COMPOSITION: Two Covenant Members based on gifts, sense of call, and availability. New SCRC members are affirmed by the Congregation at a CLM.

TERM AND MEETING FREQUENCY: Members of the SCRC are Covenant Members who serve staggered, two-year terms beginning each September, nominated in May of the same year, with the option to renew for one additional term. An unfinished term will be completed by a new SCRC member who is able to serve for the remainder of that term, then serve a full term with the option of continuing to serve for another consecutive term. The SCRC meets every other month.

EARLY DISSOLUTION OF TERM: Should a member of the SCRC resign prior to when their term is ended, the Moderator will convene a CLM for a new nomination.

A1.6 SELECTION OF OFFICERS, DEACONS, AND STAFF CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Officers, Deacons, and members of the SCRC are affirmed by the Congregation through modified consensus (as defined below) at the July CLM for the term beginning in September. To facilitate this process, the Moderator will request nominations from the Congregation in May for open positions. In June, the Moderator will meet with all nominated persons to discuss the roles and to assist in discerning between those nominations. If the nominees need further assistance, their nominations will be brought before the Congregation at a CLM to help further assess who is needed in the available roles at this time. Covenant Members are encouraged to meet individually with nominees prior to the July CLM if they have concerns or questions.

A2 Committees

RMC committees are the place where the primary work of the church occurs in worship, community, and outreach. These groups are formed through a process of gifts discernment on a yearly basis. Committees are accountable to the Congregation via reports submitted prior to each Church Life Meeting as requested by the Moderator. The organizational chart below provides a list of committees.

A3 Pastor

The Pastor is accountable to the Congregation through the SCRC, and works toward the flourishing of gifts in the gathered body of believers. The Pastor is also accountable to the Central District Conference as a licensed or ordained minister of Mennonite Church USA, and works with the Conference Minister to uphold credentialing standards.

The Pastor is charged with the supervision of church staff. The Pastor works directly with various committees, attends Committee of Committees meetings, and attends meetings of the Deacons and the Stewardship Committee in an *ex officio* capacity. The Pastor is held accountable for decisions by the Congregation.

A4 Congregational Accountability

In rare cases where the Congregation has lost confidence in a Deacon, SCRC member, or Officer, the Congregation may, by a simple majority of Covenant Members (e.g., through a petition or other means), end the term of the Deacon, SCRC member, or Officer. The Congregation would then appoint a committee to recommend a replacement to the Congregation for confirmation, which in this case is defined as approval by two-thirds of Covenant Members.

A5 Organizational Chart

CONGREGATION

Committee of Committees

Staff Church Relations Committee

Pastor

Staff Members

Deacons

Stewardship Committee

Worship/AV Committee

Children's Nurture Committee

Hospitality and Welcome Committee

Peace and Justice Committee

Officers (Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer)

Additional Committees and Ministries

Retreat Committee

Gifts Discernment Committee

Pastoral Care and Visitation Committee

CGS Liaison

Bulletin Team

Ad Hoc (*e.g., Support Circles, Disability Assessment, COVID, Communications Assessment, etc.*)

Education Liaison

Ministries: ONE Wake, Prison Ministry

A6 Corrective Action

This section was not updated in February 2025. It is currently under review.

There are special circumstances which call for a review of a staff member's continuing ability to fulfill the ministerial role. Where concerns of serious breaches of ethics or impaired judgment are raised, the Staff Church Relations Committee may place the staff member on administrative leave, until such concerns can be either confirmed or judged to be without merit. Where possible sexual misconduct is concerned, SCRC will be guided by procedures established by the Mennonite Church USA (as defined in the MCUSA publication "[Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#)"). Where appropriate, SCRC may recommend immediate dismissal to the Congregation.

In cases where a staff member is not meeting the expectations of the role, SCRC must ensure that those expectations are clearly defined and that the staff member has adequate time to meet them, typically three to six months. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a Leadership Discernment Committee, a group of three persons trusted by the staff member and appointed by SCRC to meet with the staff member on a regular basis to review expectations and provide support. The Leadership Discernment Committee keeps SCRC informed and, in turn, SCRC keeps the Congregation informed as appropriate.

If improvement is insufficient, the question of continuation or termination may need to be addressed. In this case the Leadership Discernment Committee and the staff member move into a more intentional discernment process. With appropriate sensitivity and recognizing the serious impact of such a decision on the staff member and Congregation, the Leadership Discernment Committee helps the staff member test whether they should stay or leave. Areas to consider in coming to discernment include:

1. Impact of the staff member's leadership in the Congregation.
2. The staff member's sense of mission.
3. Openness and communication between staff member and people.
4. Family considerations.
5. Vocational considerations.
6. Broader discernment of God's will.

After a period of discussion, the Leadership Discernment Committee brings a report and recommendation to the SCRC. If the SCRC discern that termination is the appropriate course of action they will submit a recommendation to the Congregation, provide a forum for the Congregation's reaction to be processed, and develop plans for meaningful closure. Salary and benefits will continue for 90 days following termination.

In matters of staff discipline, two-thirds of the SCRC must support bringing a recommendation of termination to the Congregation, which in turn must be approved by two-thirds of the Congregation.

A7 Mennonite Church USA Structure

Raleigh Mennonite Church is part of the Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA) as members of the Central District Conference.

This structure provides ministerial credentialing, pastoral and congregational resources, and a district minister for our Pastor and Congregation.

Our identity as part of the Mennonite Church USA means we are part of large, global Christian ministries that RMC alone could not develop or sustain, in categories like missions (Mennonite Mission Network), relief/development (Mennonite Central Committee [MCC] and Mennonite Disaster Service [MDS]), peacemaking (Community Peacemaker Teams and Mennonite Central Committee) and higher education (Mennonite Education Agency). In addition to praying for and contributing financially to organizations like these, we sometimes give of our time (as in cleaning up after a flood or hurricane through MDS) and regularly benefit from teaching and preaching skills honed at our institutions of higher education.

B Method of Decision-Making

B1 Church Life Meeting (CLM)

Raleigh Mennonite Church makes decisions within the model of the priesthood of all believers. Church Life Meetings (CLMs) are the central location for corporate decision-making through modified consensus. All Covenant Members and attendees are encouraged to participate in bimonthly CLMs, and meetings are open to all. Decision-making is to be undertaken only by those who have covenanted to the church and are present at the meeting. Decision-making is altered through in-person discernment, thereby excluding participation in absentia.

B1.1 PROCEEDINGS

Each CLM will include a time to review reports submitted from each committee, Deacons, Staff Church Relations Committee (SCRC), Treasurer, and the Pastor/staff. Questions and calls for communal decision-making on these reports will happen during the CLM.

The Congregation follows a model of modified consensus decision-making. The Congregation discerns the movement of the Holy Spirit among us through a process of engaged listening, questioning, study, and prayer. Sometimes this is done in one congregational meeting, at other times this requires a longer process. The Moderator is charged with discerning when the Congregation has reached consensus.

Up to two people can decide against the decision of the majority without blocking consensus. If three or more people decide against a decision, that decision is blocked.

As specified above, decisions involving staff discipline and contract termination require a vote by Covenant Members.

B1.2 PURPOSE OF CONSENSUS

Our purpose in consensus decision-making is to seek the will of God in a particular matter and to build up the faith of the church. The goal is not to sway all members to one decision or to compromise among differing factions, but to discern together the Holy Spirit's leading of the Congregation. Church Life Meetings are a continuation of our worship and require a prayerful waiting upon the mind of Christ. This prayerful listening is a listening to God, listening to our brothers and sisters in the church, and listening to our neighbors around us. In the end our desire is to be able to say, "It seems good to us and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 15:28).

B1.3 PARTICIPANTS

All Covenant Members and regular participants of Raleigh Mennonite Church are encouraged to attend and share in the discernment process as we seek to know the mind of Christ. Final decisions are limited to covenant members.

B1.4 GUIDELINES

- 1) Take time to understand each person's interests and viewpoints.
- 2) Respect others and their perspectives when you present your views.
- 3) View disagreement as a chance to explore alternatives.
- 4) Hold out if you have serious concerns, but be prepared to suggest a workable solution.
- 5) Do your best to make it work once a decision is reached.
- 6) While unanimous decisions are valued, it is acceptable to reach a decision which is not unanimous, provided that no more than two individuals dissent.
- 7) The goal in consensus is that each person can say:
 - a. I've been heard.
 - b. The others understand my concerns.
 - c. I can live with the decision.
 - d. I am willing to try to make it work.

B1.5 TOOLS FOR CONSENSUS DECISIONS

At various times it may not be clear to the Moderator if consensus has been reached. At this time a “five finger” tool can be utilized. Participants in the CLM can indicate their sense of the community’s decision by raising between one and five fingers:

- 5) I sense strong agreement as to God’s leading us into this decision.
- 4) I sense agreement for God’s leading us into this decision.
- 3) I sense agreement, but I am not fully certain within myself.
- 2) I affirm others sense of God’s leading us into this decision, even though I am unsure about this decision for myself.
- 1) I contribute to blocking consensus on this decision.

C Pastoral Care

Pastoral care happens in the context of the Congregation and in the care of the Pastor or pastoral staff. The Pastoral Care and Visitation team also provides care, support, and nurture to individuals and families in the Congregation.

In these engagements confidentiality is maintained unless there the person receiving care discloses that they are causing harm to themselves or others, or suspects child abuse.

D Local Ministries Discernment Process

RMC uses the following process for exploration and discernment of possible local ministries in the church. We believe Jesus wants us to be his hands and feet in our community and so we want to find ways we can serve in Christ’s name. As you hear of needs in the community and listen for God's leading we suggest you test these with Deacons. Here is the process:

- 1) Individual(s) bring idea or vision for ministry to Deacons for discernment.
- 2) Individual(s) commit themselves to prayer for two weeks before issuing a call to the Congregation.
- 3) Issue a call to the Congregation and set up a meeting time for anyone interested to come and brainstorm together.
- 4) If no interest is shown let the idea die. Continue in prayer with disciple group and if concern does not diminish repeat process.
- 5) If several people show interest and some defined goals are written up for the ministry, then the Congregation will affirm and commission them for service.

E Membership in Covenant

As persons who have experienced the grace of God in Jesus Christ, we joyfully welcome others to join with us in the privileges and responsibilities of this faith community. In order to become a member of Raleigh Mennonite Church one works with pastoral leadership and other members for a time of preparation and discernment to:

- 1) Discuss Christian faith
- 2) Identify gifts and resources
- 3) Learn about our history and practices
- 4) Determine one's readiness for covenant commitment

Our covenant is a confessional statement of who we are and want to become in Christ. Covenant membership means that an individual agrees to fellowship with, serve in, and be accountable to this local Congregation as stated in the covenant. New members are asked to participate in the covenant class and will be received into the community following the discernment process by signing the covenant. This covenant is renewed annually.

As persons seek covenant membership or even if they decide they are not ready for that commitment, every effort will be made to include them in the life of the church. Involvement in any role or function in the church, for both Covenant Members and non-covenant Members, is based on a discernment process to determine gifts, interests, availability, group dynamics, and support of the church's vision. Those in teaching roles (Sunday School teachers, Children's church leaders, youth mentors and MYF leaders) are required to commit to upholding the covenant statement, even if they are not Covenant Members. Decision-making at Church Life Meetings and Deacon / SCRC roles are limited to Covenant Members.

E1 Expectations of Covenant Members

- Participation: To participate actively and regularly in Sunday morning worship services, church life meetings, and some form of a small group in which personal interaction and nurture can take place.
- Stewardship: To exercise faithful and compassionate stewardship in the use of our resources, which includes finances, time, and spiritual gifts.
 - Of our money – We believe we are to give sacrificially and proportionately, according to our income, as an act of worship to God who is the owner of all our resources entrusted to us.
 - Of our time – We believe we need to avoid over-extension of ourselves in the daily activities of life. We will set aside regular time to nurture our faith journeys through spiritual disciplines and we will give time to extending the reign of God through the church.
 - Of our spiritual gifts – We believe it is important to consider a call to service from the church as a call from God. We will volunteer our gifts in the building up of the church on commissions, ministries, and in service projects as they are discerned and we are able (2-4 hours a week in addition to Sunday morning).

- Hospitality: To initiate relationships with newcomers by greeting visitors to RMC and inviting them into our homes and to join in church activities.

E2 Special Circumstances

- 1) Covenant Members on short-term or long-term church assignments or college/graduate students out of town may retain membership at Raleigh Mennonite Church until they arrange for membership elsewhere.
- 2) Because membership is renewed annually, RMC does not transfer membership to other congregations. Covenant Members who take up permanent residence elsewhere are encouraged to establish membership in a church of that area, as soon as possible.

F Other Congregational Policies

The Congregation also has policies which address:

- 1) Church Discipline – accepted by the Congregation in CLM on January 22, 2006.
- 2) Child Protection – updated by the Congregation on August 30, 2011.
- 3) College Scholarships

Copies of these policies are available on the RMC website or via request from a Deacon.