

Synod Approved Recommendations of Rules and Regulations (2018)

Article I Organization

Section 1. Name:

This church shall be known as the [name of congregation], a congregation of the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province.

Section 2. Organization:

It is organized under the Constitution of the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province, by authority of the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church, or Unitas Fratrum. It owes its allegiance and renders its reports to the Synod of the Southern Province under whose constituted authority it carries on its work.

Section 3. Object:

Its object is to be a true church of Jesus Christ and to further the interest of the Kingdom of God according to the teaching of His Holy Word, and according to the doctrines and practices of the Moravian Church as determined by its Unity Synods, and Provincial Synods.

Article II Membership

Section 1. Communicant Members:

1. Persons applying to become communicant members of this congregation by the rite of Confirmation or Adult Baptism, on profession of faith, or by re-affirmation of faith shall receive such instruction as their circumstances may require. When they have been prepared, their names should be submitted to the Board of Elders or the Church Board that has power to grant or refuse their application.
2. Persons who have been full members of another Moravian Congregation or of another Christian church, and who desire to unite with this congregation, shall present their letters of transfer or dismissal from their former church. In case such letters of transfer cannot be obtained, they shall submit the proper evidence of their previous membership. If their applications for membership are approved by the Board of Elders or Church Board, they shall be received by the right hand of fellowship.
3. All persons becoming communicant members of this congregation shall be furnished with a copy of Rules and Regulations of the congregation and such other literature and/or instruction as shall inform them concerning the doctrines, history and practices of the Moravian Church.

Section 2. Non-Communicant Members:

All baptized children of communicant members of this congregation shall be called non-communicant members. They shall remain non-communicant members until they become communing children or in later years become communicant members of this or some other Moravian congregation or some other denomination. Non-communicant members and communing children shall be under the care of the church until their twenty-first birthday. At

this time, unless they have become communicant members, they will have forfeited their church membership.

Section 3. Children of the Church:

Unbaptized children of members and children under the care of the church until their twenty-first year shall be listed as children of the church.

Section 4. Communing Children:

Baptized children may be admitted to Holy Communion after appropriate pastoral instruction and counseling with the children and their parent(s) and/or guardian concerning the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper.

Section 5. Associate Members:

1. Any communicant members of this congregation in good standing may transfer their membership to another Moravian congregation or to the congregation of another Christian Church and retain an associate membership in this congregation provided the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - a. That along with the request for a letter of transfer permission to retain an associate membership be applied for in writing.
 - b. That the annual assessment for associate members as fixed by the Board of Trustees (or Church Board) be paid in full.
2. Associate members may not vote in the Congregation Council or hold office on the official board(s) of the congregation, but shall exercise all other rights and privileges of communicant members as long as the above conditions are fulfilled.
3. Associate members who are communicant members in another Moravian congregation are not included in the annual membership statistics of this church.
4. Students while attending school in this community, who are communicant members of another Moravian congregation or the congregation of another Christian Church, may become associate members of this congregation provided approval of such association is received in writing from the congregations of which they are communicant members in good standing.
5. Baptized children of associate members shall be non-communicant members or communing children in either one of the congregations as the parent or parents may choose and will be included in the statistics of the chosen church.

Section 6. Inactive Members:

1. Members who became inactive over a period of time and who cannot for the present be reclaimed to active membership will be placed on an inactive roll by action of the Board of Elders or Church Board. (Such members may likewise be returned to the active roll by action of the Board of Elders or Church Board when the board determines that such members have become active again in the life of the congregation.)
2. Those placed on such an inactive roll will be informed that by virtue of their status as inactive members they would:
 - a. Be visited and extended the ministries of caring that other members receive, including admission to the Lord's Supper.

- b. Receive regular communications of the church including The Moravian for a period of three years.
 - c. Be ineligible to vote at Congregation Council or hold church office.
 - d. Not be counted in the statistics of the congregation.
 - e. Be given a qualified letter of transfer if they request a letter of transfer.
 - f. Have no privilege of burial in the church's designated graveyard.
3. If after repeated efforts to minister to an inactive member and to bring him or her back into active fellowship within the congregation the person remains inactive, the Board of Elders or Church Board may remove that person from the roll of that church.

Section 7. Discipline of Members:

The Board of Elders or Church Board will make every effort to determine what pain or need lies behind behavior of any one of its members who displays conduct unbecoming a Christian and will fulfill appropriate ministries to him or her. When such ministry is rejected, the Board of Elders or Church Board may enact discipline, consistent with the Book of Order, that is deemed constructive for the spiritual growth of that person.

Members who have been disciplined shall in all cases have the right to appeal to the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Section 8. Transfer to Other Churches:

Any member desiring a letter of transfer to another Moravian Congregation or another Christian Church shall make application either in person or by letter to the pastor, who shall issue such transfer or dismissal upon approval of the Board of Elders or Church Board.

Article III Congregation Council

Section 1. Composition of Congregation Council:

The Congregation Council is composed of all communicant members of the congregation who are in good standing.

Section 2. Secretary:

The Congregation Council shall elect a secretary who shall remain in office until a successor is elected and shall keep a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the Council which record shall be carefully preserved.

Section 3. Chairperson, Place of Meeting, Notice of Meeting, Duties:

The Pastor shall be chairperson of the Congregation Council. In the absence of the Pastor the vice-chair of the Board of Elders or the Church Board shall convene Council and shall preside until a chairperson is elected. All meetings shall be announced on at least two occasions of public worship, and in such manner as the Board of Elders or Church Board may determine. It shall be the duty of the Council to elect delegates to the Provincial Synod; members of the Board of Elders and the members of the Board of Trustees or the members of the Church Board, Regional Conference of Churches representatives, and other officers and Boards of the Church not otherwise provided for. Matters that relate to temporal or spiritual welfare of the church,

may be discussed in the Council at the request of any member, or by the Board of Elders or the Board of Trustees or the Church Board. In all matters the Congregation Council shall acknowledge and respect the authority and duties of the Church Board(s) and the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Section 4. Annual Meeting:

A meeting of the Council shall be held at least once each year, at which time the Church Board(s) must render a report for the work of the previous year. The time and place of holding the Council shall be determined by the Council itself or may be left to the direction of the Board of Elders or the Church Board. It should, however, be held under such conditions as will secure the largest possible attendance, interest and cooperation of the membership. At least ten percent (10%) of the communicant membership shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Council.

Section 5. Special Meetings:

The Board of Elders or the Church Board shall have authority at any time to convene a special meeting of the Council. They shall likewise call a special meeting upon application of the Board of Trustees or the number of members in good standing equivalent to the number of members on the Church Board or Joint Boards.

Section 6. Elections:

All standing officers of the Church elected by the Council shall continue in office until their successors are elected. All elections shall be by ballot, and the majority of votes cast shall be necessary to a choice. Thirty days prior to the Council the Board of Elders or Church Board shall appoint a Nominating committee whose duty it shall be to submit to Council names of members eligible and qualified for election to the Boards. However, nothing in this section shall prevent nominations from the floor by any member of the Council, provided the nominee has indicated willingness to serve.

Section 7. Annual Report and Fiscal Year:

The annual report of the Board of Elders, the annual report of the Board of Trustees, including the financial statement or the annual report of the Church Board shall be submitted in writing to the annual meeting. The fiscal period shall end on December 31 of each year.

**Article IV
Executive Boards**

For the management of the affairs of the congregation there shall be two executive boards, the Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees. Each shall consist of three or more members to be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the Council. Members shall serve for three years and shall be so elected that as nearly as possible one-third of them shall retire each year. No member shall be elected for more than two consecutive terms, although he or she may be re-elected after an intermission of one year.

[[Note: Where there is a single Church Board, the Board shall assume all duties under Sections 2, 3, and 4 of this Article.]]

Section 1. Joint Meetings:

The Boards of Elders and Trustees each have their separate sphere of activity and responsibilities and should respect one another in the performance of their respective duties. Yet, it is desirable that they should be on terms of cooperation and confer together in such cases as may arise where each Board is interested, or where such mutual conference may result for the good of the congregation. In the absence of the Pastor, the presiding officer of the Board of Elders shall preside over all joint meetings.

Section 2. Duties of the Joint Board:

1. To cooperate with the Provincial Elders' Conference in carrying out the rules and principles enacted by Synod.
2. To confer with the Provincial Elders' Conference concerning the issuance of calls to prospective Pastors and Associate Pastors, and matters related to expectations for, and review of the Pastor(s) service.
3. To confer with the Provincial Elders' Conference concerning the appointment of directors of Christian education.
4. To appoint a Stewardship Committee composed of members of the Church Board(s) and others from the congregation.
5. To approve the annual budget.

Section 3. The Board of Elders

1. Officers. The Pastor shall serve ex-officio as chairperson, and at the first meeting after the annual election of the Board, the Board shall elect from its lay members a vice-chair and a secretary. All ministers serving under call to a congregation shall be regular and voting members of the Board.
2. Duties
 - a. To watch over the spiritual and moral well being of the congregation, originating such plans as will encourage the development of the church's spiritual life.
 - b. To plan, schedule, and publicize the various services of the church.
 - c. To determine the purposes for which the church building may be used.
 - d. To maintain the proper exercise of church discipline among the members.
 - e. To assist the Pastor(s) in the administration of the church music and to appoint music personnel such as organist and choir director.
 - f. To pass upon all names of persons presenting themselves for membership, and the names of members to be transferred to other churches, also the names of members to be suspended, excluded, dropped or placed on the inactive roll.
 - g. To have the oversight of the Church School.
 - h. To appoint non-salaried personnel engaged in the various activities of the Church, such as Chief Usher, Head Diener, etc.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees

1. Officers. The Board of Trustees shall organize at the first meeting after the annual election by electing from their number a chairperson, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer, which latter may or may not be a Trustee, and such other officers as may be necessary.

2. Duties.

- a. To plan the annual budget in consultation with the Board of Elders.
- b. To fix compensation of personnel (including Pastors) and appoint all paid personnel not appointed by the Joint Board or the Board of Elders.
- c. To have charge of the maintenance of all church property.
- d. To administer the financial program of the congregation
- e. To make full settlement with the treasurer of the Southern Province promptly before the close of the fiscal year, and furnish said treasurer, as early as possible thereafter, an audited statement of the financial affairs of the Church.
- f. To furnish to the Provincial Treasurer a budget for the coming year.

Section 5. Vacancies:

Any vacancy occurring among the members of any board elected by the congregational Council may be filled by the remaining members of the board at a regular meeting and such an appointee serve the remaining portion of the unexpired term.

**Article V
Congregation Finances**

In regard to congregation finances, the following are duties of the Board of Trustees or Church Board:

1. The Board of Trustees, or Church Board, of each congregation shall prepare a budget of expenses and contributions for the guidance of the financial affairs of the congregation at the beginning of each fiscal year. This budget is to be covered by subscriptions from the membership.
2. The Board shall appoint a committee of auditors from the membership of the congregation to examine in detail the accounts of the treasurer at the end of each fiscal year.
3. At the close of each fiscal year, the treasurer of the congregation shall submit a full report of all financial transactions to a Congregation Council. This report is to be accompanied by a certificate of the auditors.
4. A copy of the annual report of the treasurer of each congregation and a certificate of the audit shall be filed with the Treasurer of the Province.

**Article VI
Amendments**

These Rules and Regulations may be altered, amended or added to at any time by a majority of two-thirds of all votes cast in the Congregation Council, provided that no proposed amendments shall conflict with legislation adopted by Provincial Synod, and such amendments have been approved by the Provincial Elders' Conference prior to their adoption by the Congregation Council.