

**BYLAWS**  
**of**  
**First Mennonite Church, Calgary**  
2600 Richmond Road S.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T3E 4M3

**Part 1 - Membership**

- a. People may be received into membership of FMC in the following ways:
- I. by **baptism** following exploration and acceptance of the Confession of Faith and the Constitution and Bylaws through membership classes. After making their statement of faith before representatives from the Deacons and the Pastor(s), and the congregation, they may be baptized and accepted as full members of FMC.
  - II. by **transfer of membership from another Mennonite church**. Upon receipt of a letter of transfer by the pastoral office from the originating congregation, and after examination by representatives from the Deacons and the Pastor(s) concerning their willingness to accept the Confession of Faith as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of FMC, they may be accepted as full members.
  - III. by **transfer of a baptized believer from another Christian church**, after receipt of a letter of transfer where possible. After examination by representatives from the Deacons and the Pastor(s) concerning their acceptance of the Confession of Faith, as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of FMC, they may be accepted as full members. As a general rule applicants will be encouraged to attend church membership classes to help with their understanding.
  - IV. by **confession of faith of a person baptized as an infant**, or is no longer a member of another church after having been baptized in a Christian church, or cannot obtain a letter of transfer from the church that holds the person's membership. After exploration and acceptance of the Confession of Faith as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of FMC, usually through attendance of church membership classes, and after examination by representatives from the Deacons and the Pastor(s) concerning their acceptance of the Confession of Faith, as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of FMC, they may be accepted as full members.
  - V. as an Associate Member upon confession of faith. Members of other Christian churches temporarily in Calgary, worshipping at FMC but wishing to maintain their membership in the home congregation, may be accepted as Associate Members after examination by the Deacons concerning their willingness to accept the Confession of Faith as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of FMC.
- b. Notice of any person's intention to seek membership or associate membership shall be announced on two successive Sundays preceding the date of their presentation to and acceptance by the congregation. Associate members have all the privileges and responsibilities of active members during their participation at FMC.
- c. Membership in FMC may be ended voluntarily by transfer or withdrawal, with intent to do so transmitted in writing to either the (Lead) Pastor or congregational Chairperson. It may also be ended by disciplinary action. Where there seems to be sufficient grounds for discipline, FMC will follow the guidelines in article 14 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

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- d. Members who are resident but inactive shall be approached about their non-participation by representatives from the Deacons and the Pastor(s) following the procedure established for this purpose. Non-resident members who are inactive shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to a congregation in their locality within a reasonable time of their move from Calgary. Inactive members not seeking to fulfill their financial and other obligations to the extent they are able may, at the discretion of the congregation, be either removed from the membership list or placed on an 'inactive membership' list following notification of intent to do so.
- e. Active adherents shall be encouraged to seek membership in FMC.
- f. Further definitions of membership (including those deemed 'active' and 'inactive') are provided in FMC's Membership Policy.

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**Part 2 - Organization and Administration**

**1. Council of Church Ministries.**

- a. The activities of FMC shall be administered by the Council of Church Ministries comprised of the (Lead) Pastor, the elected Executive Officers and Coordinators of the following Ministries: Congregational Life, Christian Education, Stewardship, and Outreach and Service, and/or such other church personnel or ministries as may be determined.
  
- b. Vacancies in the Council of over six months until the term of a position would normally come to an end shall be filled by election at a meeting of the congregation. Vacancies of under six months shall be filled by appointment by the Council.
  
- c. The Council of Church Ministries is responsible for:
  - I. upholding the Confession of Faith and the Constitution of FMC,
  - II. aiding the Pastoral Ministry in ensuring the well-being of the church,
  - III. giving direction to, supporting and coordinating the work of the various church Ministries,
  - IV. ensuring that FMC is appropriately represented at such Conferences of which it is a member, along with the Mennonite Central Committee, and such projects to which it commits itself, and that the Church fulfills the obligations inherent in such membership,
  - V. appointing such individuals and/or committees it may deem necessary to advance the work of the church, including the appointment of an auditor or financial review committee,
  - VI. being sensitive to potential problems that may harm the work and life of the church, seeking to prevent such problems, and being alert to opportunities that may enhance the work,
  - VII. presenting an annual Church ministry plan, and directing the preparation of a budget based on the work of the Ministries for consideration and approval of members at the annual general meeting,
  - VIII. nominating members of the Gift Discernment Committee for election in March/April of each year, and
  - IX. offering Pastors a salary consistent with Conference guidelines.

**2. Executive Officers.**

- a. The Executive Officers of the Council are the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Past Chairperson and Recording Secretary. Most functions of the Executive Officers would be carried out through their designated roles or the Council of Church Ministries as described above and below. In addition, the Executive Officers are charged with ensuring that pastoral relations responsibilities are initiated and carried out, such as the calling of a pastor, providing advice and support, and ensuring that ethical guidelines are followed both during the course of the pastor's ministry and when separation occurs.

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- b. The Chairperson, who serves one year in this capacity and then as Past-Chairperson in the following year, shall: preside at all Congregational, Council and Executive meetings, seek to coordinate the programs and affairs of the congregation, ensure remuneration for paid pastor(s) and other remunerated church workers, and serve as official spokesperson for the congregation. The Chairperson is an ex-officio member of all Ministries.
- c. The Past-Chairperson shall be a resource person to the Council and to the Pastoral Ministry regarding church business and administration.
- d. The Vice-Chairperson, elected each year to succeed the Chairperson one year later, shall be an under-study of the Chairperson, becoming thoroughly conversant with the governing procedures, fill in as chairperson when the Chairperson is absent, and may be assigned other duties from time to time.
- e. The Recording Secretary shall keep a clear and concise record of Council and Congregational meetings, and be responsible for official Church correspondence as directed.

**3. Pastoral Ministry.**

- a. The Pastoral Ministry of FMC will be comprised of the Pastor(s), assisted by the Deacons and a Worship Committee. The Pastor (or, Lead Pastor, if more than one) shall coordinate this Ministry.
- b. The Pastoral Ministry will be responsible for: planning the preaching and teaching ministry, including such events as 'deeper life services'; preparing members for work in the church through membership, baptism, marriage, child dedication and other preparation classes and services; supervising the administration of the church ordinances; visiting members and adherents in hospital and home; and, exercising such other leadership gifts as may enhance the work of the Church.
- c. This Ministry shall seek to discover those in the membership who have gifts of speaking, providing them an opportunity for further development towards ordained ministry.
- d. Characteristics, Roles and Responsibilities of Pastors.
  - I. Pastors called to serve FMC shall be chosen in the spirit of Article 15 of the Confession of Faith.
  - II. The (Lead) Pastor should exercise leadership in all aspects of the Pastoral Ministry, and be available as ex-officio member and a resource to all other Ministries.
  - III. The (Lead) Pastor takes primary responsibility, in consultation with the Pastoral Ministry and the Council of Church Ministries, for planning and conducting baptisms, communion services and child dedications.
  - IV. The (Lead) Pastor is responsible for church membership records.

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- V. In administrative matters Pastors are accountable to the Council of Church Ministries.
  - VI. In their pastoral role Pastors are accountable to the congregation but facilitated through the Council of Church Ministries.
- e. Deacons
- Deacons called to serve FMC are expected to exercise leadership through a ministry of caring, visitation and reconciliation, working closely with the Pastors and calling on others in the congregation to assist with these tasks. Deacons will work independently, undertaking their work 'in confidence'. Deacons will support the Pastoral Ministry in communion services and other ceremonial occasions as called upon. Deacons will work with the Pastoral Ministry in providing spiritual direction for the congregation. The congregation shall periodically determine the number of Deacons required. Deacons will be elected from a list of nominees provided by the Gift Discernment Committee.
- f. Worship Committee
- I. This Committee is a sub-committee of the Pastoral Ministry, and shall be responsible for planning and coordinating all worship services in FMC, including the ministry of music, drama, and other creative forms of worship.
  - II. The Worship Committee shall be led by a Coordinator (who may be, but does not need to be, the (Lead) Pastor), and a minimum of two other persons bringing appropriate gifts to the planning of worship services which speak to people of all ages in the congregation.
  - III. The Committee shall take responsibility for organizing special services other than Sunday morning, such as special music or drama programs. Such programs may be organized in collaboration with other Ministries.
  - IV. This Committee will work closely with the (Lead) Pastor and other members of the Pastoral Ministry in accomplishing its tasks.
- g. Lay Ministry Registry
- I. A register shall be kept of members other than Pastors who have been ordained to the pastoral/preaching ministry, and who are recognized by the congregation.
  - II. At the discretion of the Preaching Ministry and/or the Council of Church Ministries, such lay ministers may from time to time be requested to assist in the preaching ministry or other such pastoral ministries as may be determined.
  - III. At the discretion of the congregation, the names of lay ministers on the registry shall be submitted to the Conference of Mennonites of Alberta for purposes of registration with the Bureau of Vital Statistics and with the Conference of Mennonites of Canada for purposes of Conference registration and identification.
  - IV. Persons named in the lay ministry registry are eligible for any and all elected or appointed positions in the church as any other member.
  - V. Persons in this registry may respond to private requests for services such as funerals or weddings; any such requests must be reviewed with the Pastoral Ministry or someone designated by him/her before proceeding. The Lead Pastor is the primary contact for such

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services. Lay ministers may not respond to privately initiated baptisms or communion services that are not extensions of the regular church ministry.

**4. Gift Discernment.**

- a. A Gift Discernment Committee, comprised of the Past-Chairperson of the Council as Coordinator and two members, shall be nominated by the Council in March or April of each year, and elected by the Congregation with additional nominations from the floor.
  
- b. The Committee is charged with discerning the gifts of members and regular adherents of FMC, encouraging the use of those gifts through the Ministries of FMC, and preparing a slate of nominees for positions in Ministries and Executive to be filled at the October/November congregational meeting.

**5. Church Ministries.**

The work of FMC finds its expression through the following Ministries.

- a. Congregational Life Ministry
  - I. The Congregational Life Ministry shall be led by a Coordinator and have a minimum of three other members, with membership reflective of the diversity of age and interest in the congregation and, if possible, one a youth.
  - II. This Ministry shall be responsible for nurturing the development of a spiritually minded and caring Christian community within FMC. Among its responsibilities is that of encouraging caring and visitation of members both through the Deacons and by individual members, of child and youth ministry, of welcoming newcomers, organizing ushering services and audio operators, and encouraging the spiritual and social welfare of all members and adherents of FMC through prayer and active support, being guided constantly by the standards of spirituality and care suggested throughout the Confession of Faith.
  - III. Ministry to children and youth will include but not be limited to organizing of youth groups, boys and girls clubs, and so on. The congregation shall periodically decide how best to pursue the child and youth ministries.
  - IV. Women's groups in the congregation, while remaining independent in their activity, have an opportunity to coordinate their work with that of the congregation as a whole through representation on the Congregational Life Ministry. In turn, this Ministry may reach out in a supportive way to women not in formal groups, either in the congregation or in the community.
  - V. Men's groups, when formed, while remaining independent in their activity, have an opportunity to coordinate their work with that of the congregation as a whole through representation on the Congregational Life Ministry, seeking to build a vital "men's ministry" in the congregation and in the community.

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b. Christian Education Ministry

- I. The Christian Education Ministry shall be led by a Coordinator, and a minimum of two other persons.
- II. This Ministry shall coordinate the total educational program of FMC, including Sunday school, DVBS, weekday Bible studies, and FMC-sponsored weekend activities. To accomplish its tasks the Ministry will recruit Sunday school teachers, DVBS teachers and others in accordance with job descriptions and procedures outlined elsewhere.
- III. This Ministry supervises such related services as the Church Library, and encourages the reading of church literature and Conference publications.
- IV. This Ministry keeps open lines of communication with Menno Simons Christian School and Conference schools with which we are affiliated.
- V. The Ministry also is responsible for the making and preservation of church records other than membership, including the historical.

c. Stewardship Ministry

- I. The Stewardship Ministry shall be led by a Coordinator, and a minimum of three other persons (one of whom is elected specifically as the Treasurer, and one of whom chairs a Maintenance Committee).
- II. This Ministry is:
  - charged with responsibility for all aspects of the treasury of FMC, and for encouraging members of the congregation in sound stewardship of their financial and other resources consistent with Article 21 of the Confession of Faith;
  - responsible for all custodial and maintenance work and, where necessary, recommends to the Council that improvements be made to the building and grounds. A maintenance committee will be established for these purposes in accordance with job description and procedures outlined elsewhere.
- III. The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping an exact record of offerings and gifts to the Church, and depositing monies so received in the Church bank account; paying all financial obligations with cheques drawn upon the Church bank account which are to be signed by any one of the Treasurer, Chairperson or Coordinator of the Stewardship Ministry; preparing reports to the church in a timely manner on financial receipts, expenditures and outstanding obligations; and, preparing a complete financial review for the annual congregational meeting.

d. Outreach and Service Ministry

- I. The Outreach and Service Ministry is led by a Coordinator and a minimum of two others.
- II. This Ministry brings together a vision for outreach to others, and service to those in need.
- III. The Ministry maintains an active relationship with MCC and related services, and identifies persons willing to serve as representatives to Mennonite Mutual, MDS, the Variety Store, and so on, for appointment by the Council of Church Ministries.

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**6. Terms of Office.**

- a. Pastors normally will be elected for a three-year term (which may include a trial period). Renewal is contingent upon a careful review of our congregational goals and directions, of the pastor's compatibility with these, and of the ongoing relationship.
- b. A Vice-Chairperson will be elected annually to succeed the Chairperson in the following year.
- c. Other Executive Officers, deacons, pulpit support workers, Coordinators of Ministries and persons in all other elective positions will be elected for two year terms. So as to provide continuity, at the initiation of this Constitution persons in similar positions will assume responsibility within the new organizational framework, with the length of initial term determined so as to ensure an orderly turnover of membership.
- d. Deacons and pulpit support workers may be elected to more than two terms. All other persons in elected positions, if re-elected and except as indicated elsewhere in this constitution, may continue through a third term in the same office, and thereafter shall be ineligible for re-election to that office for at least one intervening year. Persons serving part terms of one year or less will be eligible for election to three full two-year terms before being ineligible for re-election.
- e. The term for appointments to normal positions within the Church Ministries will be for up to 2 years. Other appointed positions may range from a few weeks to a few months. Appointments to special committees may be for an indefinite period or such periods of time as may be decided. All appointments are subject to ratification at the next congregational meeting.
- f. Every elected person takes office following the annual January congregational meeting, except when refilling a vacated position. Appointed persons will take office immediately upon appointment, or as otherwise agreed.

**7. Congregational Meetings.**

- a. The congregation of FMC shall meet not fewer than three times a year. It shall meet in January to consider the church ministry plan and budget, accept reports from the pastor(s), and from the Coordinators of the Ministries and chairpersons of standing committees. The congregation shall meet in late October/early November to fill positions, by election, of those persons recommended by the Gift Discernment Committee; and, it shall meet in the spring of each year to affirm/elect the members of the Gift Discernment Committee.
- b. Special meetings of the congregation can be called by the Council as needed.

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- c. Notice of all congregational meetings and their purposes along with main agenda items requiring congregational action shall be announced on two consecutive Sundays prior to the meetings.

**8. Voting and Elections.**

- a. Only members of FMC may hold positions as Executive Officers or as Coordinators of the various Ministries. Active adherents who are believers in Christ and supporters of the Confession of Faith may hold elected positions within the Ministries or on committees. Both members and active adherents may hold appointive positions.
- b. All members, other than as stated below, may vote on all matters brought before the membership. There will be no voting by proxy on any matter. Members on the inactive membership list lose all voting and other privileges related to matters arising in the congregation until reinstated as active or associate members by the Deacons.
- c. Quorum:
  - I. Quorum must consist of fifteen percent of members for a congregational meeting without any "Important" matters and twenty percent of members for a congregational meeting with one or more "Important" matters. "Important" matters include:
    - Constitution amendment or revision;
    - calling of a pastor;
  - II. At any congregational meeting when a quorum is not achieved the Chairperson may adjourn the meeting and call another with at least two weeks notice when any number present shall constitute a quorum.
  - III. Members counted for the purposes of establishing a quorum are those designated as 'Active Members' and 'Associate Members' as defined in FMC's Membership Policy.
- d. Majority and Important Matters:
  - I. A simple majority will govern all votes except for matters deemed "important". A two-thirds majority is required for matters deemed "important".
  - II. "Important" matters include:
    - Constitution amendment or revision;
    - calling of a pastor;
  - III. Any matter may become "important" by a simple majority vote.
- e. Voting shall be by show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested by any one member.
- f. All matters requiring a notice of motion (a statement of intention to bring forward a matter) must be announced on two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting where it will be addressed.

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- g. In this and all other Articles, it is to be understood that the phrase “two consecutive Sundays prior” means the two consecutive Sunday morning worship services conducted in the building of FMC prior to the meeting or event.

**9. Amendment of Bylaws.**

Bylaw amendments may be made by a regular quorum and a simple majority, unless the matter is deemed to be “important”.

Adopted: 11 December, 1997

Amended:

- 30 January, 1998 (Part 2, 6, e)
- 13 May, 1998 (Part 2, 5, d, I)
- 5 November, 1998 (Part 1, a, I; Part 1, a, II; Part 1, a, III; Part 1, a, IV;  
Part 1, d; Part 2, 5, c, I)
- 10 June, 1999 (Part 1, a, V - added; Part 1, b; Part 1, f - added;  
Part 2, 8, c, III - added)
- 14 October, 1999 (Part 2, 3, g, V)
- 29 January, 2000 (Part 2, 6, a; Part 2, 6, d; Part 2, 6, e)
- 23 November, 2000 (Part 2, 6, d)
- 21 November, 2002 (Part 2, 1, a; Part 2, 5, a, III; Part 2, 6, d)
- 12 May, 2004 (Part 2, 8, c, I)
- 7 May, 2009 (Part 2, 8, b, c, d)
- 26 November 2009 (Part 1, a, IV)
- 26 May 2011 (Part 3 a, e; Part 5 a)
- 19 Nov 2015 (Part 8 c, I, Part 8 d, II)
- 17 Nov 2016 (Part 6 a)