

Ebenezer Moravian Church

Bylaws

I. Name

The corporate title of this organization is EBENEZER MORAVIAN CHURCH, Jefferson County, Wisconsin.

II. The Church Council

1. The government of the congregation shall be vested in the Church Council. The Council consists of the communicant members of the congregation.
2. The Council is regularly convened once a year on a date designated by the Joint Board. Special meetings may be called whenever the Elders or Trustees feel it is necessary, or when a request is made by ten (10) members, which shall be in writing stating the business to be submitted. Such a request should be made to the Joint Board.
3. Every meeting of the Council shall be announced at the two previous Sunday services of the congregation.
4. One-tenth of the members of the Congregation shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
5. The pastor is the president of the Council. In the pastor's absence the Joint Board will appoint a temporary president.
6. The Council receives reports from officers, elects all officers who are not appointed, elects all delegates to synods, considers all matters of general interest, and determines the rules and principles for the management of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregation.
7. Every member of the council has the right to express their opinion concerning any matter under consideration, which, however must always be done in a proper and respectful manner.

III. The Officers and Their Duties

A. The Board of Elders

1. The Board of Elders consists of five (5) members of the congregation and the Pastor, who chairs and presides at their meetings and has a vote. Their term of office is two years and is so arranged that two Elders are elected one year and three Elders are elected in the next year. An Elder can be elected to a second two year consecutive term. Four members of the Board constitute a quorum. The Elders meet monthly, and in addition, as often as may be necessary. From the Board, a Vice-Chair, a secretary and a Christian Education & Fellowship representative(s) are chosen.

2. The Elders are especially charged with the spiritual care and oversight of the congregation. They shall strive to secure a faithful compliance with the enactments of the Unity, Provincial and District Synods, with the “Moravian Covenant for Christian Living”, the chapter on discipline in the Book of Order and all other established rules of the congregation.
3. They shall see to it that the public means of grace (worship services, the proclamation of the word of God, and the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion) are regularly and faithfully dispensed according to the ritual and usage of the Moravian Church.
4. They shall have the oversight of the religious nurture of the children and all other members of the congregation, of their instruction in the doctrine, history, principles and usages of the Moravian Church, of the Sunday school and all other organizations. They shall assign the Christian Education & Fellowship Committee such tasks in religious education which can best be carried out by that committee.
5. They shall decide on all matters pertaining to admission, dismissal, suspension and exclusion of members.
6. They shall determine when, how and by whom the church building may be used. All activities in the building shall be cleared through the pastor.
7. They shall, when not provided for by synodal enactment, determine when, how, and what offerings shall be taken for causes outside the local congregation.
8. They shall appoint organists, head usher, and such other assistants as may be necessary for the spiritual care and oversight of the congregation.

B. The Board of Trustees

1. The Board of Trustees consists of five (5) members of the congregation of legal age and the pastor who is an ex-officio member without a vote. Their term of office is two years and is so arranged that two Trustees are elected one year and three Trustees are elected in the next year. A Trustee can be elected to a second two year consecutive term. Three members of the Board constitute a quorum. The Trustees shall meet monthly and in addition as often as may be necessary. A president, vice-president, secretary and Christian Education & Fellowship representative(s) are chosen from among their number.
2. Each Sunday a Trustee and at least one other person shall receive and record the receipts of the congregation showing that the receipts match the deposit.

3. The Trustees are especially charged with the oversight of the temporal affairs of the congregation. They shall strive to secure the prompt payment of the pastor's salary and see to it that sufficient means are raised for the adequate support of the congregation.
4. They shall be responsible for keeping all church property, including the church premises, in good repair, and in an attractive condition.
5. They shall have charge of all permanent funds of the congregation, exercising the greatest of care in investing such funds safely.
6. They shall, at the close of the year, be responsible for scheduling a financial review of the accounts and the Annual Report of the Treasurer and the report to the Church Council.
7. They shall appoint the janitor and such other assistants as may be necessary to effectively maintain the physical structure and property.

C. The Joint Board

1. The Joint Board consists of the Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees and shall meet as often as necessary for the transaction of such business as may require the attention of both boards. The pastor shall preside at its meetings as chairperson and the secretary of the Board of Trustees shall serve as its secretary. In the absence of the pastor, the Vice Chair of Elders shall preside. In the absence of the pastor and the Vice Chair of Elders, the president of the Board of Trustees will preside.
2. The Joint Board shall decide in consultation with the Executive Board of the Western District on the acceptance of the minister appointed for service in the congregation, and on all matters of special importance to the congregation. A 2/3 affirmative vote of the entire membership of the Joint Board is necessary in order to call a pastor.
3. When voting, the Joint Board members vote as individuals, not as separate Boards.
4. Six members of the Board constitute a quorum.

D. The Christian Education and Fellowship Committee

1. The educational and fellowship work of the Church shall be under the supervision of the Committee on Christian Education and Fellowship.
2. This Committee shall be comprised as follows:

- a) Two members at large elected by Church Council. Each shall be elected for a two-year term and in alternate years. In case of a vacancy, the Joint Board shall appoint someone to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.
 - b) One representative from the Board of Elders, appointed annually by that board.
 - c) One representative from the Board of Trustees, appointed annually by that board.
 - d) All Sunday school teachers are members of the Committee.
 - e) One member who is advisor of the youth program.
 - f) The Sunday School Superintendent who is elected for a two year term by the Christian Education and Fellowship Committee.
 - g) One youth is invited from the Youth Group.
 - h) The Pastor serves as an ex-officio member.
 - i) A member of the Moravian Women who is elected annually by that body.
 - j) A music representative
3. This committee shall organize annually with the election of a chairperson and a secretary. The Pastor cannot be elected chairperson.

E. The Memorial Committee

- 1. The Memorial Committee shall consist of a minimum of two members at large and a Memorial Fund Secretary-Treasurer, all appointed by the Joint Board. The terms of office shall be for three years with a member being appointed each year. Members will be eligible to serve additional terms. The basic work of the committee shall be to:
 - a) Develop and present an approved list of memorial suggestions
 - b) Acknowledge all memorial gifts
 - c) Arrange for the dedication of memorials
 - d) Contact the family of those whose memorials may need to be retired or replaced

e) Such other duties as may be assigned by the Joint Board

F. The Secretary of the Church Council

The Secretary is elected annually by the Church Council and shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the Church Council.

G. The Treasurer

The Treasurer, who is elected by the Church Council for a two-year term, shall receive, record, (with a Trustee and the Financial Secretary) and be in charge of all general and benevolent funds of the congregation. He/she shall make no disbursements of these funds except as directed by the Board of Trustees. It shall be his/her duty to submit a written report to the Board of Trustees and to attend a meeting when requested. At the Annual Church Council he/she shall submit a detailed report of the Treasury for the past year.

H. The Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary is appointed by the Church Council for a two-year term and shall receive and record (with a Trustee and the Treasurer) the receipts of the congregation. This person shall be responsible for the distribution of offering envelopes and other stewardship aids. He/she shall submit reports to the individual contributors as directed by the Board of Trustees. In carrying out his/her duties, the Financial Secretary shall serve under the direction of the Board of Trustees.

IV. The Election of Officers

1. A Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for every position to be filled. It shall consist of out going board members whose term of office will expire, and two members at large from the congregation, appointed by the Joint Board, and the pastor who is an ex-officio member. The privilege of making nominations from the floor by members of the Church Council shall be granted. Anyone who wishes to nominate someone from the floor, must have prior consent of the nominee. A majority of votes cast is required for a person to be elected.
2. All officers, for whose appointment no provision is made, are elected at the regular meeting of the Church Council, which election shall be by ballot. Only such members eligible for election as officers or delegates are those at least eighteen years of age.
3. Elected members of the Board of Elders and Trustees shall be elected to serve for no more than two successive terms. Each term shall be for a period of two years. At least one year should lapse before they are again eligible for election to office. Board members who have been appointed or elected to fill an unexpired term shall be allowed to serve one additional successive term.

4. When vacancies occur, the same shall be filled at once by the Joint Board until the next annual meeting of the Church Council when someone shall be elected to fill the unexpired term, if necessary.

V. Membership

A. Requirements of Membership

1. Persons desiring membership in a Moravian congregation shall:
 - a. demonstrate commitment to Jesus Christ through faithful participation in worship and study, offer time, talents, and/or financial support, and uphold the teachings, doctrines, rules and regulations of the Moravian Church and the Ebenezer Moravian congregation.
 - b. be provided with opportunities for growth in that commitment.
 - c. receive from the Board of Elders and/or Pastor the expectations and obligations of membership.

B. Non-Resident Members

1. It is recommended that persons removed from their home congregation by many miles and a prolonged period of time find a church affiliation at the place of residence.
2. Until transfer of membership, participation by sharing in the ministry of the congregation through support of the budget seems to offer the only concrete evidence of intention to remain a member. Financial support sufficient to maintain the ministry of the congregation is expected in an amount commensurate with the person's financial ability.

C. Categories of Membership

1. The members of the congregation are classified as Confirmed Communicants, Communicants, and Non-communicants.
2. Confirmed Communicants are all baptized members who have accepted full responsibility for the life of the church through adult baptism, the rite of confirmation or reaffirmation of faith.
3. Communicants are all baptized members who have been admitted to the communion of the Moravian Church by authority of the Board of Elders.
4. Non-communicants are all baptized members under the age of 18, and who have not been admitted to the Holy Communion, and the children of adherents of the congregation who have received baptism.

D. Admission Of Members

1. Membership in the Body of Christ is an expression of a person's relationship with Christ as Lord and Savior. In that relationship the member seeks to fulfill and carry out the responsibilities and obligations to which membership commits him or her.
2. Persons desiring membership in the congregation shall demonstrate their commitment to Jesus Christ. They shall also approve of the teachings and principles of the Moravian Church in general and be willing to faithfully observe the rules of the congregation in particular.
3. The Board of Elders, whose duty it is to decide on all cases of admission, dismissal and exclusion of members, will exercise the greatest care in the admission of new members. They shall make a thorough examination of the candidates for reception with regard to their sincerity and intention.
4. Requests for membership are made to the pastor, who presents the same to the Board of Elders, who may reject, defer or act favorably in regard to the application. When the application is approved, the applicant shall be informed to this effect. Non-Moravians shall be given a series of classes to familiarize them with the history, beliefs, customs, organization of the Moravian church, and the meaning of church membership. After the candidate has carefully examined the rules of the congregation, he/she is received at a public service.
5. Children are formally received into the congregation by Baptism, in which their names are recorded in the records of the church.
6. When both parents are received, all their baptized children under thirteen years of age are received with them. In cases where only one of the parents is received, the same rule shall apply, unless it be the expressed wish of the parents that their children shall not be so regarded.
7. All unbaptized persons to be received into communicant membership are received on confession of faith by Adult Baptism. Persons baptized in infancy are received on confession of faith by Confirmation.
8. Communicant members of other denominations are received at a public service by the right hand of fellowship, after the letter of transfer presented has received favorable consideration on the part of the Elders. In cases where no letter of transfer can be furnished, it shall be the duty of the Board to decide the question of their reception and the manner of it. They may require a confession of faith.
9. Communicant members from other Moravian congregations shall be received at a public worship service after the Letter of Transfer has received favorable consideration on the part of the Board of Elders.

10. The re-admission of members shall take place in a public worship service. A public announcement of such action of the Elders shall be sufficient. The term "re-admission" shall apply to all applicants who were formerly connected with the congregation, and who at the time of making their application are not members of any church.

E. Dismissal, Discipline and Exclusion

1. Should a member no longer desire membership, he/she is expected to notify the pastor. Letters of Transfer are granted to a member in good standing whenever requests for such are made.
2. All members who are moving to localities where there are Moravian congregations are encouraged to take with them Letters of Transfer to such congregations.
3. Failure to meet the requirements of membership shall require prayerful and appropriate action by the Board of Elders.

VI. Baptism and Confirmation

1. It is expected that the children of members be presented for baptism. Since we believe that baptism receives its fullest expression and meaning of God's grace through the public or corporate worship of the church with the witnessing congregation present, all baptisms shall take place in the church at a public or corporate worship service, unless otherwise specified by the Board of Elders.
2. In no case shall the parents or those responsible for the upbringing of a child be granted baptism for the child unless at least one of them has professed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through either current membership in a Christian church or a prior confession of such faith in the presence of the officiating pastor and elders of the congregation.
3. The age at which confirmation is to take place cannot be definitely fixed; but it is recommended that the step not be taken hastily. It is desirable that the children shall have reached the age of at least thirteen years.
4. All those who confirm their faith are to do so with the understanding that this rite, as a personal ratification of the baptismal covenant, shall mean for them a voluntary public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an expressed desire to become faithful members of the congregation.
5. The sacrament of Adult Baptism and the rite of Confirmation are to be administered as often as candidates present themselves. Necessary instruction in the truth of the Christian faith shall always precede Confirmation and also the Baptism of Adults.

VII. Holy Communion and Love Feasts

1. Holy Communion is to be celebrated at least 7 times a year.
2. All persons shall prepare for Communion by participating in a preparatory service.
3. A Communion service is primarily a means of grace in which the forgiving, redemptive love of God is especially emphasized within the fellowship of the congregation.
4. The church practices open communion and invites all those who profess belief in the Lord Jesus Christ to join in receiving the elements of the Lord's Supper.
5. The Holy Communion is administered to the sick and shut-ins whenever it is requested and the circumstances of the illness permit.
6. Love Feasts were instituted in imitation of the "Agape" of apostolic times (Jude 12) and are intended to set forth by a simple meal, of which all partake in common, that there is no respect of persons before the Lord, and that all are one in Christ, united among themselves by the closest bonds of Christian love.
7. The Love Feast should be regarded as a service for the members and friends of the congregation.

VIII. Special Rules for Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals

1. The pastor shall officiate at all baptisms, marriages and funerals of members.
2. So that baptisms, marriages and funerals do not come into conflict with the other engagements of the pastor, members are expected to notify him/her as early as possible before making any binding arrangements for such occasions.

IX. The Sick and Needy

1. When members of the church become ill or experience other situations of stress, it shall be their duty or the duty of their family to inform the pastor of the situation so that he/she may be in a position to minister to them.
2. Every member shall consider it a special privilege to take both a prayerful and practical interest in those who are sick, sorrowing, distressed or in need; bearing in mind that we are all members of the same body, sharing each other's joys and sorrows.

X. Organizations in the Congregation

1. All organizations in the congregation shall elect their own officers, adopt their own rules and keep their own records and accounts.

2. These organizations should, however, bear in mind that they stand under the general oversight of the congregation and its executive boards. It is to be taken for granted, therefore, that everything in the statutes and practice of these organizations shall be kept in strict accord with the spirit, principles and purpose of the congregation.

XI. Financial Regulations

1. It is the duty of every member to contribute according to his/her ability toward the church's needs.
2. Members are strongly encouraged to follow the Biblical teaching of offering one tenth (tithe) of their income or to practice percentage giving which reflects their gratitude toward God for all His benefits. Charity gifts and contributions to the church may be considered a part of that tithe.
3. It is the duty of the congregation to contribute toward the budget for provincial and district administration and benevolences of the Moravian Church and to endeavor to reach assigned quotas, as well as pastors' benefits.
4. The Board of Elders of the congregation is authorized to use its discretion in the enforcement of the financial ruling upon the members.
5. The fiscal year of the congregation shall run from January 1 to December 31.
6. No member has the right to make any personal claim on the property or funds of the congregation. Should the congregation ever disband or secede to another denomination, all of its property and funds shall revert to the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church in America, Northern Province.

XII. The Records

1. All records, papers and documents of the congregation and its organizations shall be in the care of the Pastor, who shall faithfully preserve everything of value.
2. At the close of each year the Pastor shall see to it that the Officers of the congregation and of the various organizations deliver into his/her hands for safekeeping all records, books and papers no longer in use.

XIII. Cemetery Committee

1. The Cemetery Committee shall have entire charge of the cemetery and it shall be responsible to the church council of the congregation for the faithful discharge of its duties. It shall, together with the Trustees of the Ebenezer congregation, see to it that the funds of the cemetery be invested safely in compliance with the laws

of the state and the rules and regulations of the cemetery as they now exist or as they may hereafter be adopted by the Church Council of the congregation.

XIV. The Rules and Regulations

1. The Church Council only shall have the power to amend the foregoing Rules and Regulations. Notice of any proposed amendment must be given when the meeting of the Council is announced. An amendment shall be valid only after it has received a majority vote of those present, and has been sanctioned by the Provincial Elders Conference.
2. The foregoing rules were adopted by the Church Council on January 25, 2015 and sanctioned by the Provincial Elders Conference on April 21-23, 2015.