CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

FOR

PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

OFFICIAL MAY 1, 1997
REVISED 1980
AMENDED 1981
REVISED 1986
AMENDED 1988
AMENDED 1995
AMENDED 1998
AMENDED 2012
REVISED 2014
REVISED 2022
REVISED 2024

PREAMBLE

Preliminary to any plan of district church organization is an understanding of the Mission of the church and the place and function of the district in that mission.

The mission of the church is set forth in the Great Commission of our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20. Although never fully understood, it seems clearly to have an inner and an outer direction. The inner mission of the church is to nurture its members that they may grow more and more into the stature of maturity in Christ. The outer mission of the church is to be related as God's instrument to the problems and needs of the world. The two major functions of the church are effective to the extent that they are undergirded by stewardship of time, talent, and treasurer on the part of the membership.

The Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren, hereafter called the District, is a group of congregations located in geographic proximity to each other and having common purposes. The District enables the member congregations to do together what they cannot do separately and helps them to carry out in better fashion their major functions. The organizational structure of the District shall reflect as much as possible the purposes of the District. Above all, the organization shall be shaped to achieve the District's goals and fulfill its functions.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. INCORPORATION

The name shall be the Pacific Northwest District, Church of the Brethren (fka Oregon Washington District, Church of the Brethren). The principle place of business (district office) shall be in an appropriate location for the District Executive Team. The affairs of the District (corporation) shall be managed by the District Board, whose Moderator, Board Chair, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer shall be the legal officers of the District.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE OF THE DISTRICT

The purpose of the District shall be to administer and coordinate the religious and business activities of the Church of the Brethren within the bounds of the District. The District shall have power to own and convey real estate and to be trustee of property and of endowment and other funds. The District shall send a delegate to the Standing Committee of the Annual Conference of The Church of the Brethren, hereinafter called Annual Conference, and may appoint representatives to cooperative religious bodies as need and opportunity allow.

The District recognizes the following among its further directives in serving its member congregations and camps:

1. Facilitate connection among member congregations and camps within the district.

2. Support member congregations and camps in building denominational connections.

3. Organize district-wide materials and program options for spiritual and community edification.

4. Support member congregations and camps in their individual ministries and operations.

ARTICLE III. RELATION TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Unless herein specified otherwise, the polity and policies of the District shall, as much as is possible, harmonize with the directions of the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBER CHURCHES

All Church of the Brethren congregations which are based geographically in Oregon or Washington or virtually and recognized by the District as organized churches shall be member churches of the Pacific Northwest District. A new church development shall be called a “fellowship” until it has fifty or more members and is chartered as a member church.

ARTICLE V. DISTRICT CONFERENCE

1. Purpose of District Conference

District Conference is a mass meeting to which attending members from the District congregations come in business sessions to give implementation to district purpose. District Conference is the final authority of the District on polity, program, and procedure. Although worship and fellowship are important parts of District Conference, the following agenda is indicative of its principle business function:

a. To review achievements
b. To analyze procedures and results
c. To survey continuing opportunities and needs
d. To outline objectives, determine priorities, and set goals
e. To approve strategy and adopt policy
f. To organize for action and delegate responsibility
g. To dedicate resources
h. To go forth in service

2. Conference Body

a. All attending members who are active, informed, and committed members of a church or fellowship of the District shall have the privilege and responsibility of joining in the discernment and consensus-based decision-making business of District Conference.

3. Conference Officers

a. The officers of the District Conference shall be the Moderator, Board Chair, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.

b. The Moderator and Board Chair shall be called every two years by the District Conference in alternating years. Each position is eligible for a second two-year term. The Treasurer and Recording Secretary shall serve for three-year terms and are eligible to serve a second three-year term.

c. A slate listing the above four officers shall be prepared by the Board. The Board shall present the slate to the District Conference for confirmation.

ARTICLE VI. DISTRICT BOARD

1. Purpose of the Board

The District Board, hereafter referred to as the Board, shall manage and administer the work of the District as authorized by the District Conference. The Board is the legal agent of the District and shall be empowered to act on behalf of the District Conference

ad interim, except for those actions specifically reserved for the District Conference as set forth in this Constitution and By-Laws.

2. Board Members

There shall be a Board consisting of the officers of the District Conference, the standing committee delegate for the District, any persons from the District who are serving on the Mission and Ministry Board, the District Executive Team members, the District Administrative Assistant, the District Ministry Team chair, and District Area Ministers.

Those members of the incoming District Board shall be presented to the District Conference either in person or by name and there shall be, as part of the conference program, an installation service for the incoming Board to denote acceptance by the Board of their respective offices and responsibilities and the acceptance of the District Conference of the Board as the agent of the District Conference to perform the duties given the Board in the Constitution and By-Laws.

3. Board Officers and Organization

The Board shall be organized annually immediately following District Conference. The officers of the District Conference shall also serve as the officers of the Board.

4. Board Responsibilities

The Board shall recommend to the District Conference a District Executive Team and shall counsel with team members regarding their individual responsibilities and record of agreement.

It shall be the duty of the Board to appoint an auditor annually to audit the financial records of the District and submit a report to the Board and District Conference. The Board shall be responsible for appointing members to any ad hoc committee or team as required.

ARTICLE VII. MINISTRY TEAMS

1. The work of the Board shall be implemented by a combination of continuing and ad hoc committees. The Ministry Team, a continuing committee, will be responsible for the identification and credentialing of ministers, conflict mediation, and the support of Area Ministers. Ad hoc committees may be called and formed by the Board to address specific tasks identified and directed by the District Conference or the Board.

2. The Ministry Team chair will be called and confirmed to a two-year term at the District Conference. The Ministry Team chair may serve two consecutive terms. Additional Ministry Team members shall be appointed by the Board as required.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

1. Other Committees

The District Conference and/or the Board may constitute or authorize such other continuing or short term committees as necessary to assist with the ongoing work of the District. When specific assignment of a committee is achieved, the committee shall be dismissed.

2. Historian

There shall be an historian appointed by the Board. The historian shall be concerned with all matters of historic interest to the District and shall collect, preserve, write, and, as authorized, publish such materials.

ARTICLE IX. RELATED INSTITUTIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS

1. The District may enter into relationship with separately organized and incorporated Church of the Brethren institutions or interdenominational ministries such as camps, homes for the aged, colleges, and other bodies of interest to the District. In each instance there shall be mutual agreement between the District and the body as to the nature of the relationship. The involvement of the District in terms of financial support, selection of trustees, program endorsement, receiving of reports, etc. shall be subject to the District Conference action.

2. As requested or as need arises, the Board shall authorize the formation of special interest or age groups within the District. All such organizations shall exist to aid in fulfilling the mission of the church at large in the District and shall be subject to the oversight and direction of the Board. Any such group which elects its own officers shall submit a roster of its elected personnel to the next District Conference to be accepted and entered into its minutes.

ARTICLE X. AREA MINISTER PLAN

1. The District may designate within its boundaries workable units, geographically and/or numerically in order to facilitate the organization and administration of district affairs through Area Ministers.

2. The size of an area may vary according to prevailing circumstances. Where possible an area shall include about five churches within a geographic radius that allows for travel and sufficient time for a meeting in one day.

3. The Area Ministers minister to the pastors of the congregations in the District. They come alongside the pastors for counsel, encouragement, support in ministry, training, and help with resources for congregational revitalization and service. An Area Minister reports to the Ministry Team chair and works closely with the District Executive Team and the Board.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. PERSONNEL SELECTION AND TENURE

1. The Board shall prepare a slate for the use of District Conference in the calling and confirmation of:

a. Officers of the District Conference including Moderator, Board Chair, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and others as determined by the Board and confirmed by the District Conference.

b. Members of the District Conference committees

c. Standing Committee delegate

d. Any other officers authorized by District Conference.

2. The term of office for all called or appointed personnel shall be three years unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and By-Laws. No one shall be eligible to serve more than two terms in succession (maximum, six years). An officer who does not fill their position in a responsible way and/or is absent from meetings for six months may have their office declared vacant by the Board.

3. Approximately one-third of the membership of the Board and continuing committees shall be selected in any one year.

4. The prepared slate shall include only the names of persons who have consented to be nominees. Prior to calling, information about each nominee shall be given to the District Conference. Immediately following affirmation, a letter shall be sent by the District Executive Team to each nominee reporting the results.

5. For the aid of those groups making nominations and appointments, the District Office shall maintain a file indicating the training, interest, and record of service of persons showing promise of district leadership.

ARTICLE II. INDEMNIFICATION

All persons now or hereafter Trustees or officers of the District (and their heirs, executers, and administrators) shall be indemnified by the District against all liabilities and expenses, including attorney's fees, reasonably incurred in connection with any claim to which they are parties by reason of being or having been Trustees or officers of the Corporation except in relation to matters as to which such persons shall have been adjudged to be liable for gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of duties as such Trustees or officers.

ARTICLE III. EMPLOYED STAFF - DISTRICT EXECUTIVE TEAM

1. The District shall call a District Executive Team to give executive guidance to the District. The composition of the District Executive Team shall be decided by the District Conference and may include a single employed executive, multiple individuals serving on a volunteer basis, or other constituencies as chosen and called by the District Conference. The members of the District Executive Team shall be qualified by training, experience and personal dedication to Christ and the church to guide, counsel, and encourage district and local church workers in the development of needed church programs.

2. Members of the District Executive Team shall serve on the Board and shall give general oversight to the implementation of district work. District Executive Team members shall work in a liaison capacity with the staff of the Mission and Ministry Board on denominational programs.

3. The District Executive Team shall have basic responsibility for pastoral placement in the District and shall be available to coordinate with the Ministry Team for giving guidance and counsel to district pastors and congregations.

4. A job description shall be kept on file in the District office.

ARTICLE IV. STAFF EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

The selection and employment of professional staff approved by the District Conference, as well as the termination of such services, shall be the responsibility of the Board in keeping with approved denominational pastoral placement procedures in consultation with the Director of Ministry.

ARTICLE V. CONFERENCE OFFICERS QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

1. All District Conference officers shall be members in good standing of a member church or fellowship and shall serve faithfully in their respective offices.

2. The Moderator shall preside at business sessions of the District Conference. The Moderator shall study the needs of the District and give their interpretation and counsel regarding them to the District Conference, and to any other appropriate district agency.

3. The Board Chair is chairperson of the Board and will work closely with the District Executive Team to lead the Board in carrying out decisions mandated by the District Conference. They shall study the needs of the District and give their interpretation and counsel regarding them to the Board.

4. The Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of District Conference and District

Board meetings and shall, in cooperation with the District Executive Team, prepare them for publication and distribution.

5. The Treasurer shall be custodian of all District funds, disbursing them as authorized by the District Conference and the Board. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Board. The Treasurer shall make quarterly written reports to the Board and to the District Conference as requested and submit the accounts for an annual audit.

ARTICLE VI. DISTRICT BOARD FUNCTIONS

The Board shall:

1. Fulfill the directives of the District Conference and make an annual report to the Conference.

2. Assign, supervise, and coordinate the work of all District committees.

3. Interpret the rules of procedure for teams and committees,

4. Study the member congregations and strive to help them meet their needs and fulfill their mission.

5. Project long-range planning, set goals, and initiate new programs. 6. Promote,

administer, and supervise the denominational program in the District.

7. Call and direct the work of the District Executive Team and such other personnel as may be authorized by the District Conference.

8. Make all appointments for which the Board is responsible.

9. Fill vacancies in elective district offices occurring between district conferences and fill such other vacancies not provided for otherwise.

10. Have custody of all District capital funds, endowments, and annuities, and hold title to District church properties. Distribute District current funds and invest permanent funds as authorized by the District Conference. Negotiate the purchase and sale of property, and the borrowing and lending of money on behalf of the District.

11. Prepare the District budget for presentation at District

Conference. 12. Provide for an annual audit.

13. Allocate and define authority with respect to the establishment of bank accounts and the signing of checks and other legal documents.

14. Arrange for bonding for the District Treasurer.

15. Receive, consider, and make disposition of concerns brought by any persons or church group.

16. Coordinate the District program and prepare the District calendar.

17. Bring queries or other business to the District Conference and process queries from local churches for District Conference action.

18. Plan or otherwise provide in-service training opportunities for Board members, employed staff, and other District personnel.

19. Actively promote the extension of the church in the District.

20. Discern the licensing, ordination, and discipline of ministers with consideration of Annual Conference Directions and the District commitment to building the beloved community.

ARTICLE VII. DISTRICT MINISTRY TEAMS FUNCTIONS

1. Ministry Team shall provide for:

a. Identification and credentialing of ministers.

b. Conflict mediation.

c. Support Area Ministers

The Ministry Team shall give counsel and guidance to all ministerial affairs in the District, directly and through Area Ministers. This Team shall seek ways to strengthen the relationships and understandings between congregations and pastors, provide training for local ministerial commissions, encourage pastors in their professional growth, and in various ways strive to increase the joy and effectiveness of the pastoral ministry. This Team shall counsel and assist churches and individuals in the various phases of extending and receiving a call to the ministry, becoming equipped and trained for the ministry, and licensing and ordaining ministers. This Team shall review the ministerial list periodically and shall make recommendations to the Board regarding those ministers who no longer appear to show interest or dedication to their ministerial calling.

ARTICLE VIII. BUSINESS MEETING

1. District Conference

a. The District Conference shall convene once a year, whether in-person or virtually, at such time as to allow district organization and program to be in readiness for the new church year. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the conference officers in consultation with the Board. The facilities for the meeting should be conducive to attendance and provide arrangements adequate and comfortable.

b. The time of week for the conference should be as free as possible from conflicts with work schedules. Business sessions shall be at hours when the attending members are the freest to attend. Sunday meetings at the District Conference should not disrupt regular church services in the churches.

c. The Board shall call a committee to be responsible for planning the conference program, obtaining leadership, determining the place of meeting, securing facilities, providing for exhibits, registering delegates, and making other necessary arrangements for the conference. Suggested scriptures, hymns, litanies, and worship themes may be offered to the churches for their use locally on District Conference Sunday.

2. The District Board shall meet at least three times each church year. a. One

of these meetings shall be immediately prior to the District Conference. b.

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Board.

c. The District Executive Team~~s a~~nd any called committees shall meet regularly or as the Board may direct.

d. The Board may call Executive Sessions as necessary.

e. Adequate advance notice and preparatory materials of all business meetings shall be given to the membership involved.

ARTICLE IX. QUORUM

1. Although it is desirable to have as many attending members present as possible for the District Conference, no quorum shall be required except as may be specified by state corporation law.

2. For meetings of the Board and any committees, a majority of the called attending members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X. RULES OF ORDER

The District Conference and District Board meetings will use consensus decision making as the official rule of order. The decision-making body of District Conference

shall comprise attending members who are active, informed, and committed members of the churches and/or fellowships of the District. These attending members shall have the privilege and responsibility of joining in the discernment and consensus-based decision-making business of District Conference. The decision-making body of the District Board meetings shall comprise the attending District Board members.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and By-Laws of the District may be amended or suspended by a consensus of attending members at any regular session of the District Conference. Written notice of any proposed amendment shall be given with the call of the meeting issued at least thirty days prior to the meeting.