

OAKLAND CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



THE CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

2009



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preamble and Mission Statement	3
Constitution and Bylaws	
Article I. Corporate Name	4
Article II. Relationship to the Whole Church	4
Article III. Affirmation of Faith and Purpose	5
Article IV. Membership	5
Article V. Officers of the Church	9
Article VI. Employed Staff	10
Article VII. Staff Employment Procedures	10
Article VIII. Congregational Forum	11
Article IX: Leadership Team	14
Article X. Ministry Teams	16
Article XI. The Deacon Body	19
Article XII. Special Committees	21
Article XIII. Conference Delegates	21

PREAMBLE

The mission set forth in the Great Commission may be defined as having an inner and outer direction. The inner mission of the church is to nurture its members to maturity in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13). The outer mission of the church is to be related, as God's instrument, to the problems and needs of the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

A mission statement is a crucial part of church's leadership responsibilities. It sets the direction for critical endeavors in the years ahead. It also provides benchmarks against which all efforts may be assessed. We express our mission as a community of faith who are called to:

Continue the work of Jesus.

Love God.

Love people.

Celebrate life.

PASS IT AROUND!

These are expressed in policy, and the roles and functions of the staff, various committees and the deacon body of Oakland Church of the Brethren.

CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. CORPORATE NAME

The corporate name of the congregation shall be the "Oakland Church of the Brethren, Inc.", a recognized congregation in the Church of the Brethren Southern Ohio District and registered as a non-profit corporation chartered by the state of Ohio (registration no. 470346). It is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Horatio Harris Creek Road and Martin Road in Adams township of Darke County, Ohio.

ARTICLE II. RELATIONSHIP TO THE WHOLE CHURCH

1. The Church Universal:

The Oakland Church is a part of a larger whole, which comprises the complete body of Christ. Therefore, our church shall recognize other Christian bodies and denominations, and shall seek to cooperate with, and give direction to, the united efforts of the church.

2. The Church Denomination:

The Oakland congregation shall covenant to support faithfully the program of the Church of the Brethren, recognizing Annual conference enactments of the Church of the Brethren as having force in its life, and shall remain a member of the Church of the Brethren or its successor. The local church shall send delegates to those official conferences of the Church of the Brethren in which it is entitled to have representation. In ease of strife or division, that part of the congregation, whether a majority or a minority of its membership, which continues in unity with the Church of the Brethren, shall be recognized as the lawful congregation and shall continue in possession of all the property of the congregation.

If the congregation (a) disbands, (b) departs from membership in the Church of the Brethren, or (c) decreases in numbers and financial strength as to render the congregation unable to fulfill its purpose, the Southern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren or its successor, shall have the right to take charge and control of all property, and thereafter to hold, manage, and convey the same at the discretion of the district.

ARTICLE III. AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND PURPOSE

The Oakland Congregation:

1. is founded upon faith in One God who in Holy Love creates, sustains and orders all to life.
2. seeks to worship and serve Creator God and blesses and guides life.
3. confesses God the Christ as Lord and Savior who offers spiritual leadership and salvation.
4. believes in God the Holy Spirit, who works in the hearts and minds of all believers, sustains the Church's mission of the Gospel, gives guidance and comfort, unites believers in Jesus Christ, and heals brokenness among and between members and neighbors.
5. maintains the New Testament as its only creed and rule of faith. In the Holy Scriptures is recorded God's search for people which is climaxed in God's redemptive act in and through Christ. Through the Holy Word God still speaks and continues to accomplish God's redemptive purposes.
6. believes that the gospel is the Good News that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto God (II Cor. 5:19).
7. holds that the church is the body of Christ and is under the Lord's mandate to be faithful in accepting and transmitting the gospel by word and deed.
8. considers that all members of the congregation are responsible for the total ministry of the church.
9. accepts the ministry of the church to be the proclamation and fulfillment of the gospel for all people near and far, and the nurture of the individual believers a part of its life and work.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. Meaning of Membership

According to the New Testament, life in Christ means life in the body (I Corinthians 12:13), so that we, "though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Romans 12:5). Membership in a local fellowship of believers, the congregation, is the way in which we affirm and live out our membership in Christ's larger body, the church universal. In our interrelatedness with other Christians in the local church, we experience the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit, we discover ways to be

faithful to our covenant with God and each other, and we are able to support one another in carrying out our common calling as the people of God. So it was in the house churches of the earliest Christians; and so it is in the life of God's people today.

From the time of its beginnings, the Church of the Brethren has affirmed the importance of church membership. It is appropriate, therefore, for the congregation and its members to reflect on their mutual accountability to one another. On the one hand, the congregation has a covenantal responsibility to care for its members, to encourage growth in freedom and discipleship, to help members discover their gifts and find ways to serve, and to provide ministries which respond to both spiritual and physical needs. On the other hand, each member has a covenantal responsibility to participate regularly in the life of the congregation, to seek counsel of the church in living out the way of Christ, to challenge the church to greater accountability to its calling, to respond to opportunities to serve in the congregation and beyond, and to contribute to the church's ministries in every way possible.

At the heart of our calling as members of Christ's body is the summons to follow Christ as his disciples. Christians do not live unto themselves but are called to seek first the kingdom of God, to risk themselves for Christ's sake, to take up the way of the Cross. To accept and practice the costly grace of radical discipleship is no easy task. In the community of faith, however, we find courage and strength to live out our discipleship in solidarity with others.

2. Entering into and Renewing Church Membership

Membership in the local church is open to all persons who, by their own act of faith, say yes to God's offer of new life in Christ and accept the vocation of the covenant community, as taught and practiced by the Church of the Brethren. One of the responsibilities of the congregation is to reach out to persons irrespective of race, national origins, or status of life, to share with them the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ, and to invite them to enter into the life of Christ's body.

When persons respond to this invitation, the church shall take steps to prepare them for membership. Part of this preparation should consist of classes of sufficient length on the meaning of church membership. Such classes offer an opportunity for persons to explore the faith and history of the wider Christian community, to study the particular story and distinctive emphasis of the Church of the Brethren, and to become familiar with the life and expectations of the congregation they will be entering. In addition to providing membership classes, the congregation may choose to identify persons who will serve as sponsors of new members to assist in the orientation into the life of the church, in whatever ways the congregation chooses to prepare persons for membership, the pastor or minister has a key role to play here.

When persons seeking membership have completed their period of preparation, they shall be presented for congregational confirmation of acceptance as members. Persons may be received into the church in one of three ways:

1. Confession of faith and baptism by trine immersion as practiced by the Church of the Brethren
2. A letter transferring membership from one congregation of the Church of the Brethren or another Christian denomination
3. Reaffirmation of Christian faith and renewal of the commitment to membership made at an earlier time in another congregation

Whatever the particular mode of reception, the act of receiving new members should be a festive moment in the life of the congregation. It is a time for old and new members to affirm their relationship with one another, a time to celebrate the joys and responsibilities of living in covenant in Christ's body, and a time to lift up the lifelong process of growth to which baptism should lead.

The sequel to entering membership is the renewing of membership. Only as we regularly renew our covenant with God and with one another does that covenant function in a vital way. Historically, Brethren worked at renewal of membership through an annual visit by the deacons to the homes of members to reflect on the health of each person's relationship with Christ and the church - and through the love feast which traditionally followed that visit. Whether through this practice or other models of calling one another to accountability, the congregation shall provide its members with annual opportunities to examine their faith and calling and to renew or reaffirm their relationship with the church. As a part of this process, members may be invited to make specific commitments related to their participation in the life and work of the church.

3. Membership Classification

Members shall be classified in one of three ways for statistical purposes and reported accordingly on annual report forms:

a. Members. Members of the congregation shall consist of those persons who have been received into the church by baptism, letter, or reaffirmation of Christian faith, and who choose to continue their membership when the congregation invites them to examine and renew the covenant relationship, thereby confirming their intention to fulfill the responsibilities of members by their finances or participation in worship or support in the work of the church.

b. Associate Members. Congregations may grant associate membership to two categories of persons:

- (1) Temporary residents, such as students and winter residents, who participate in the life of the congregation on a seasonal or short-term basis, and who continue to hold membership in another congregation in the community of their permanent residence.

(2) Former residents, persons who have moved to a new location in which there is no Church of the Brethren, and who wish to continue a relationship with the Brethren at the same time that they become members of another Christian community.

Associate members have the right to vote and hold office in the congregation granting their associate status, and have a responsibility to contribute resources to support the ministries of that congregation. Associate members are not eligible to serve on the church Leadership Team or to represent the congregation as delegates to district or annual conferences. (For more detailed guidelines on the rights and responsibilities of associate members see section 111.2 of the 1985 Annual Conference Membership Study Committee report.)

c. Separated Members. Separated members consist of those persons who were received into the church as members, but who no longer participate in the church's life or carry out the commitments expected of members, and who for three consecutive years fail to respond to invitations to reaffirm or renew their relationship with the congregation~ Whether the causes of separation have to do with the individual, the congregation, or both, the congregation shall continue to explore ways to restore the broken relationship.

Guidelines for working at reconciliation and restoration may be found in the 1976 Annual Conference statement on "Discipleship and Reconciliation", which is reproduced on pages E-9 through E-15 of the Manual of Organization and Polity. For statistical purposes, members whose residence is unknown and cannot be ascertained for three consecutive years will also be designated as separated members.

4. Membership Termination

Membership in a congregation of the Church of the Brethren may be terminated in one of the following ways:

a. Death

b. Transfer of membership by letter. A letter of transfer is the property of the congregation and shall go from the granting to the receiving congregation. Either the letter or accompanying note should indicate whether the member for whom he letter is being sent is a member or separated member. This letter of transfer shall be signed by at least 2 of the following: the Moderator, Clerk and Leadership Team Convener.

c. Withdrawal. This action shall be taken by the Moderator, Leadership Team Convener and Clerk at the written request of the individual.

d. Removal. The Leadership Team may act to remove a person's name from the list of members when:

(1) A member has joined another church, but failed to request a letter of transfer.

(2) The congregation determines that all attempts at reconciliation have failed.

5. The Church Leadership Team in counsel with the pastor shall resolve any question concerning membership status.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

1. The officers of the Congregational Forum shall be the moderator, the church clerk, the treasurer, and the financial secretary. The moderator and the church clerk shall be elected by the Congregational Forum. The treasurer and the financial secretary shall be appointed by the Leadership Team subject to approval by the Congregational Forum.

2. The legal officers of the corporate body shall be the moderator, the church clerk, Leadership Team Convener and the chair of the Financial Ministry Team

3. The congregation shall maintain its non-profit corporation tax exempt status with the state of Ohio. The statutory agent shall be designated by the Leadership Team.

Officers of the Church - Duties and Tenure

1. All officers shall be members of the congregation and shall serve faithfully in their respective offices.

2. The term of office for all officers of the Congregational Forum shall be two years. Officers shall not be eligible to serve more than three terms in succession.

3. The moderator shall be the official head of the congregation but shall recognize the pastor as the spiritual and executive leader. The moderator shall preside at the members' business meeting, convene the Leadership Team for its organization, and perform all other duties that pertain to the office. The moderator shall be considered an ex officio member, with voice but without vote, at all Leadership Team meetings, as well as at Ministry Teams and committee meetings as requested. In the event of the moderator's inability to perform the duties, the Leadership Team Convener will preside.

4. The church clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the Congregational Forum meetings, and the Leadership Team Meetings. Minutes shall be kept in a volume provided for that purpose and they shall be and remain the property of the congregation.

5. The Treasurer, who shall be an ex officio member of the Financial Ministry Team and Leadership Team, shall keep records of the business coordinator and/or financial secretary's bank deposit slips for all contributions. Funds shall be disbursed only upon order by a signed authorization. Signed authorization may be given by the program staff person, Leadership Team chair, Ministry Team chairpersons or Administrative Assistant according to the area of ministry responsibility. Alternatively, authorization may be given with the dual signatures of the Business Coordinator and Treasurer for any ministry area. The Treasurer shall prepare and present a financial report quarterly and to the Congregational Forum and monthly to the Leadership Team, or at such intervals as the Leadership Team may request. The treasurer shall make monthly reports to the Leadership Team and shall submit accounts to an audit annually at the direction of the Leadership Team.

6. The Business Coordinator, shall receive, keep records of, and deposit in the bank for the Treasurer all contributions from the members and other public and private offerings, and all other receipts. The Business Coordinator shall report, as requested, to the Financial Ministry Team.

7. All financial officers may be bonded in amounts determined by the Leadership Team for which the premiums shall be paid by the congregation.

ARTICLE VI. EMPLOYED STAFF

1. Pastor. The congregation shall employ a pastor, who shall be a person(s) whose faith, educational qualification, aptness to teach, preach, counsel, and administer, have been examined in consultation with the appropriate authorities of the Church of the Brethren.

2. Additional professional staff such as a Christian Education director, Administrative Assistant, Youth Director, Church Administrator or others, may be employed as deemed appropriate to assure the continual growth of the congregation and to provide adequate leadership for the congregation.

3. Nonprofessional staff, such as custodian, maintenance co-coordinator, secretary or others, may be employed to provide services to the church program and property.

ARTICLE VII. STAFF EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

1. The selection and call of a pastor and other pastoral staff persons, as well as the termination of their services to the congregation, shall be done in keeping with the approved Brotherhood procedures and after seeking the counsel and guidance of the authorized officials of the Church of the Brethren. The Leadership Team or persons so chosen by the Leadership Team shall represent the congregation in screening and nominating all pastoral and professional personnel for employment by the Leadership Team subject to the approval of the Congregational Forum.

2. The custodian and maintenance coordinator shall be employed by the Leadership Team and be responsible to the Facilities and Properties Ministry Team.

3. All professional staff shall be employed by the Leadership Team after consultation with the pastor, and shall be responsible to the pastor.

4. The terms of employment for all employed staff shall be carefully stipulated and reviewed annually by the Leadership Team. When the terms have been mutually accepted, such terms shall be set forth in writing and shall be considered an agreement between the contracting parties after proper signatures.

5. When there is multiple staff, the division of responsibility and the lines of authority shall be clearly defined and periodically reviewed by the Leadership Team. Although there must be close cooperation and harmony among staff members, in the final analysis all personnel are responsible to the congregation for the conduct of their offices. All pastoral and professional staff will serve under the direct supervision of the senior pastor.

ARTICLE VIII. CONGREGATIONAL FORUM

1. The Congregational Forum is the final authority and governing body within the local congregation; it is the church in business session.
2. All active and associate members shall be eligible to vote in the Congregational Forum. There are no provisions for absentee voting on issues that may come before the forum.
3. Congregational Forum meetings shall be conducted in an orderly fashion using Roberts Rules of Order as a guideline and at the discretion of moderator depending on the circumstance. Business items that are under consideration to be tabled must be recommended by a member, seconded by a member and voted upon requiring a simple majority to table an item until further information is presented to the Congregational Forum for reconsideration.
4. The congregation in the forum meeting shall:
 - a. hear reports and evaluate the ongoing ministry of the church.
 - b. study present conditions, and plan the future programs of the church.
 - c. record the voice of the congregation on current issues where Christian witness is urgent.
 - d. provide opportunity for sharing and coordinating differing points of view.

- e. elect officers, Leadership Team members, Gifts Discernment Team members and deacons.
 - f. adopt budgets.
 - g. rule on policy and organizational matters.
 - h. authorize church officers to act on behalf of the constitution.
5. The Congregational Forum shall meet at least quarterly, unless the Leadership Team decides to cancel a regularly scheduled Congregational Forum meeting for lack of business items. In any case, quarterly reports will be made available to the congregation. Meetings shall be at a time and place decided upon by the Leadership Team.
6. At least one (1) week notice of all Congregational Forums shall be given to the membership.
7. A quorum must be present that represents at least 15% of the active membership and is to be determined by the church clerk.
8. Special congregation forum meetings may be called by the moderator or the Leadership Team at any time that is deemed necessary.
9. All reports and business items shall be available in print to all members at least one (1) week prior to the Congregational Forum.
10. All items of business shall be presented by the Leadership Team convener or others that the Leadership Team may designate.
11. The moderator may have the authority to appoint an ad hoc committee, with consultation of the Leadership Team chair and Pastor, to study any issue and bring back to Congregational Forum meeting additional information for consideration.
12. An open forum time may, at the discretion of the moderator, be provided for anyone to express themselves.
13. If a new committee is created it shall be coordinated into the organization structure of the church with clear lines of accountability to a specific church team or office.
14. The Congregational Forum meeting and/or the Leadership Team may constitute or authorize such other continuing committees as may be necessary to assist with the work of the church.

15. The Congregational Forum meeting and/or the Leadership Team may constitute or authorize short-term committees to carry out specific assignments. When the specific assignment is achieved, the committee shall be dismissed.

16. **Fiscal Policy:** The fiscal year and the church year of the congregation are designated by Annual Conference. At the present time, the year is from January 1 to December 31.

17. **Gifts Discernment Team:** There shall be a Gifts Discernment Team consisting of four (4) members elected by the Congregational Forum from a ballot prepared by the Leadership Team. The moderator and Deacon vice chair shall serve as ex-officio members with voting privileges. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member but without vote. Two members shall be elected annually to serve a two (2) year term with a maximum of three (3) terms.

The Gifts Discernment Team reports directly to the Congregational Forum. Its primary task is to provide nominations and prepare a ballot for the following positions to the Congregational Forum:

- a. Moderator, (to serve an alternating term with the Leadership Team Convener)
- b. Clerk
- c. Leadership Team convener (to serve an alternating term with the Moderator)
- d. All Ministry Team conveners (to serve alternate terms as much as feasible)
- e. Delegates to District Conference
- f. Delegates to Annual Conference
- g. Other committee members as approved by the members' business meeting

18. **Calling of elected positions:** The Congregational Forum shall use the calling process for elected positions to serve in church leadership at Oakland, whereby a ballot of those willing to serve prepared by the Gifts Discernment Team is presented to the Congregational Forum, one for each open position, to be affirmed either collectively or individually at a Congregational Forum meeting.

19. Amendments to the Constitution:

The constitution and the bylaws of the Oakland congregation may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special session of a Congregational Forum meeting representing a proper quorum provided that written notice of the proposed amendment has been given in the call of the meeting issued at least thirty days prior to the meeting and copy of same made available to the congregation for review at that time.

ARTICLE IX. LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. There shall be a body comprised of the elected ministry team conveners and other elected, appointed and ex officio persons, hereafter referred to as the Leadership Team.
2. The voting members of the Leadership Team are elected by the Congregational Forum.. All of the persons who have been elected to serve as ministry team conveners and the Leadership Team convener shall be members of the Leadership Team.
3. Each elected ministry team convener will appoint their committee members, the number and ability of each team member according to the needs of that ministry team. Each elected ministry team convener shall serve as a voting member of the Leadership Team. When designated by the ministry team leader, other ministry team members may bring reports and business to as well as serve as voting substitutes on the Leadership Team when that ministry team convener is absent from a Leadership Team meeting.
4. The term of office for all elected Leadership Team members shall be two years. They shall not be eligible to serve more than three terms in succession. If any Leadership member is absent from meetings without cause for three consecutive months, the office shall be declared vacant. The Leadership Team Convener will be responsible for declaring an office vacant in consultation with the Leadership Team, and will be responsible for addressing any issue of absenteeism short of vacancy. Any vacancy will be filled upon appointment by the Leadership Team in consultation with the Gifts Discernment Team.
5. The moderator, the pastor(s), the church clerk, (who shall serve as secretary of the Leadership Team, treasurer, deacon chair, and church business coordinator shall be ex officio members of the Leadership Team without a vote. Any congregational member may attend Leadership Team meetings to bring items of concern or to observe, unless such meetings, or portions thereof, have been declared executive sessions for the purpose of addressing items of a non-public or otherwise sensitive nature at the discretion of the Leadership Team Convener in consultation with the Moderator.
6. The Leadership Team shall be invested with administrative powers to integrate, and supervise the program of the congregation and set policies. The Leadership Team is responsible for developing and implementing long-range goals.
7. The Leadership Team shall be empowered to act on behalf of the congregation between the Congregational Forum meetings except for those actions specifically reserved for the Congregational Forum meeting as set forth in this constitution and bylaws.
8. Leadership Team meetings shall be conducted in an orderly fashion using Roberts Rules of Order as a guideline but at the discretion of the Leadership Team convener.

Business items that are under consideration to be tabled must be recommended by a Leadership Team member, seconded by a Leadership Team member and voted upon requiring a simple majority to table an item until further information is presented to the Leadership Team for reconsideration.

LEADERSHIP TEAM FUNCTIONS

The Leadership Team shall:

1. Meet on a scheduled basis, preferably monthly. The Leadership Team convener or the moderator may call special meetings.
2. Fulfill the directives of the Congregational Forum.
3. Assign, supervise, and coordinate the work of the Ministry Teams.
4. The Leadership Team approves long range planning, goals, and approves new programs.
5. Make all appointments for which the Leadership Team is responsible.
6. Interpret rules of procedure for Ministry Teams and committees.
7. Prepares a list of nominees for the ballot for use by the Congregational Forum in electing the Gifts Discernment committee members.
8. Fill all vacancies in elected offices occurring between Congregational Forums and fill such other vacancies not otherwise provided for.
9. Act on staff vacancies and present recommendations on personnel and terms of employment to the Congregational Forum for all professional staff personnel.
10. Assists the Moderator in the preparation of the agenda for the Congregational Forum.
11. Establish self-allocation proposals for outreach giving and suggest guidelines to ministry teams for budget planning.
12. Review the proposed budget as prepared by the Financial Ministry Team for presentation to the Congregational Forum for adoption.
13. Approve and supervise, within the limits established by the Congregational Forum meeting, the expenditure of all funds.
14. Provide for an annual audit.

15. Allocate and define authority with respect to the establishment of bank accounts and the signing of checks and other legal documents.
16. Receive, consider, and make disposition of concerns brought by any group or individual member.
17. Report its activities and actions at the Congregational Forum meeting.
18. Bring recommendations to the Congregational Forum meeting when major church policy needs revision or is affected.
19. Enlist the help and the counsel of the district executive and/or other district personnel in program planning and handling of special concerns when necessary.

ARTICLE X. MINISTRY TEAMS

1. Education Ministry Team

The Education Ministry Team provides educational and spiritual opportunities to people of all ages in the Oakland congregation and the surrounding community.

2. Music and Worship Ministry Team

The Music and Worship Ministry Team coordinates the music and worship ministry of Oakland Church by assisting the church in expressing love for God, in sharing the good news found in Jesus Christ and in celebrating new life in the Holy Spirit.

3. Fellowship/Hospitality Ministry Team

The Fellowship/Hospitality Ministry Team is responsible for providing a welcoming and hospitable place for all who enter Oakland's doors by providing a variety of events and experiences that aid in nurturing the congregation and surrounding community with fellowship, hospitality and love.

4. Outreach Ministry Team

The Outreach Ministry Team shall aid in the spreading of God's love and His Word by offering financial and personal assistance to those in need within and outside the congregation. Its functions help the church to present the claims of Christ upon all persons and upon all social structures of society. It assists the church to serve as one of God's instruments in dealing with the social problems and needs of the local community. It provides channels for the congregation to extend its ministry to those outside its fellowship and in turn to the world.

5. Service Ministry Team

The Service Ministry Team represents the church's witness to the world-- its witness to individuals, to groups, to society. It aids the congregation in bringing the gospel of Christ to all people and in manifesting God's kingdom of love, justice, peace, security and

freedom among all people through work projects and other means of congregational combined efforts.

6. Financial Ministry Team

The Financial Team oversees the receiving and disbursements of gifts and all other church income. The team assists the church in doing the work of Jesus through giving education which guides the congregation to understand how church finances are related to ministry and encourages generous giving as a part of a life of faith. The team works to review and interpret church finances in terms of ministry opportunities for the Leadership Team and the church.

7. Facilities and Properties Ministry Team

The Facilities and Properties Ministry Team is responsible for the care of the Oakland church property and resources and to ensure that the day to day maintenance and functional needs of the Oakland Church building are met, as well as planning for future needs.

MINISTRY TEAM FUNCTIONS

Education Ministry Team

1. Plans for educational ministry for people of all ages. Educational ministry opportunities are planned for Sunday morning and through the week.
2. Makes and implements policies related to providing a safe environment for children and youth.
3. Coordinates and provides training for those in the Christian ministries for children, youth and adults.

Music and Worship Ministry Team

1. The committee assists the pastors in planning and organizing worship that brings the faith community together in unity, celebrates diversity of gifts and forms participants as disciples empowered to continue Jesus' work in the world.
2. Coordinates and provides training for the persons and teams involved in the music and worship ministry including, but not limited, to a music coordinator, all choirs, accompanists, song leaders, drama team, Ministry Moments team, and audio-visual team.

Fellowship/Hospitality Ministry Team

1. Assists the congregation in creating a hospitable environment where strangers are welcome and new people are effectively assimilated into the life of the church, plans congregational social opportunities, and gives consideration to fellowship occasions for the community surrounding the church.

2. Coordinates and provides training for persons and teams involved in, but not limited to, the following ministries: parking attendants, greeters, ushers, food service, special events, childcare, Dinner Theater, and Bakers and Takers.

Outreach Ministry Team

1. Aids and supports individuals and charitable institutions in the community and congregation with and through appropriate agencies.
2. Provides help to members of the congregation and community when needed.
3. Provides membership, guidance and representation to various community groups, such as the following committees and positions: Head Start Coordinator, Clothing Bank Coordinator, CROP Representatives, Habitat for Humanity Representative, Community Unity Representative, Brethren's Retirement Community's Keyworkers, Memorial Committee, Community Drive Representative.

Service Ministry Team

1. Provides guidance and benevolent offerings for and appoints representation to various groups, such as: General Board, Association of Brethren Caregivers, On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, Manchester College, Southern Ohio District Board, Outdoor Ministries (Camp Woodland Altars), Brethren Retirement Community's Resident Aid Fund, Disaster Services Ministries (appointment of a Disaster Coordinator).

Financial Team

1. Establishes committees (as needed) to encourage the congregation's stewardship of time, financial resources, and congregational program interpretation.
2. Develops and maintains programs that deepen spiritual understanding of giving as part of Christian discipleship encouraging congregational members be faithful financially through regular giving, memorials and bequests.
3. Oversees the receiving and reporting of all gifts of any nature to the church, such as land or other real estate, moneys, or building furnishings and make recommendations to the Leadership Team for the disposition or conversion of such gifts for the ministry and mission of the congregation.
4. Makes recommendations to the Leadership Team for the establishment of special funds and a means to administer those funds.
5. Works with the other Ministry Teams, committees, and staff to determine the annual financial needs of the church's mission and establish the annual budget.

6. Oversees the disbursement of monies or resources for the mission and ministry of the congregation.
7. Makes recommendations to the Leadership Team for the bonding of financial officers when necessary.
8. Makes recommendations to the Leadership Team whenever it seems necessary or advisable to borrow money and makes arrangements for loans.

Facilities & Properties Ministry Team

1. Oversees the care, maintenance and property of the congregation; including, but not limited to, the church office, audiovisual, musical and sound equipment, kitchen or any other equipment donated or purchased that resides in or on church property. Maintain the inventory of church owned items.
2. Annually reviews insurance coverage and makes recommendations of changes to the Leadership Team.
3. Is the liaison to outside groups using the church facilities, including but not limited to Emmaus and Head Start.

ARTICLE XI: THE DEACON BODY

The Church of the Brethren throughout most of its history has affirmed the ministry of deacons as central to the life and mission of the local congregation. Deacons are among those called to be the spiritual leaders of the congregation, modeling the life that seeks to obey the word and will of God. Through their caring ministries they enhance both the health and the fellowship of the congregation. They are team members with the pastors, staff, church board and all other groups in the congregation, in the interest of "building up the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Qualifications of Deacon Ministry

Members of the Church of the Brethren eligible to serve as deacons include men, women, single or married persons and those of all ethnic origins or races, with maturity being more important than chronological age. The call to deacon ministry will be given to individual persons. Persons called to deacon ministry are those whose commitment and faithfulness have been proven in relationship to the local fellowship of believers. They will be persons who manifest natural talents and spiritual gifts, open and responsive to Scripture and to the Holy Spirit, careful to exercise wisdom and sound judgment, faithful and loyal to Christ and the Church Though their lives are not perfect, they have a deep personal relationship with Christ and know they have received God's grace and power,

thus they are able to reach out in love for and empathy with people who are in pain and in need of compassion.

Calling for Deacon Ministry

Calling involves prayerfully seeking God's leading for the right persons to fill needed ministry positions. The calling process should include the following elements:

1. A period of discernment on the part of the congregation.
2. A method by which all members of the congregation participate in the calling process.
3. An opportunity for those receiving the call to discern God's leading.
4. Affirmation by the congregation.
5. Deacons will serve for a period of two years.
6. After each two year period opportunity will be given for deacons to review their ministry experience.
7. There is no limit to the number of consecutive ministry periods a deacon may serve.

Organization and Meeting

1. The deacon body is composed of all deacons and pastors and is accountable to the Congregational Forum.
2. The deacon body shall organize itself annually according to the needs and size of the congregation.
3. The deacon chairperson carries out administrative responsibilities and represents the deacon body on the Leadership Team.
4. The deacon body will meet regularly for prayer, training, planning, and carrying out the duties assigned to them.

Functions of the Deacon Ministry

The deacons will ensure the following areas of ministry are being addressed in the congregation.

1. Advocacy and Support Ministries
2. Discipleship and Hospitality Ministries
3. Health and Healing Ministries

4. Unity and Reconciliation Ministries

The deacons, led by the Holy Spirit and in response to the needs of the congregation, may branch out into other areas of ministry.

ARTICLE XII. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

At times, there shall be committees formed at the discretion of the Leadership Team or the Congregational Forum to serve special needs of the church. The appointing body of these committees shall provide a written defined purpose, organizational and reporting structure, including the discharge of the committee's duties once its goal has been achieved.

ARTICLE XIII. CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Delegates to Annual Conference

The delegate body assembled in Conference is the ultimate legislative authority of the Church of the Brethren. It is composed of the Standing Committee and the local church delegates.

It functions primarily as a deliberating legislative assembly, determining the polity and setting forth the primary courses of action and relationship in which the church should be involved.

1. The congregation shall have a number of Annual Conference delegates consistent with current Church of the Brethren policy. Delegates should be elected at least six months in advance of Annual Conference.
2. Term of Service. Delegates are elected to serve at one Annual conference. They may serve as ex officio members of the Leadership Team from the time of their election through Annual Conference and six months following in order to help interpret and implement official statements as requested by the Leadership Team.
3. Eligibility. Any member of the Oakland Church of the Brethren is eligible to serve as a delegate.
4. Qualifications. The following qualifications should be given careful consideration in the selection of delegates:
 - a. Consecrated Christian living in home, church, and community.
 - b. Faithful service in local church and district.
 - c. Loyalty to the ideals and the program of the Church of the Brethren.

- d. A working knowledge and understanding of the total church program.
 - e. Ability to exercise mature judgment in Church of the Brethren problems.
5. Delegates to Annual Conference shall give a report to the congregation following Annual Conference if requested by the Leadership.

Delegates to District Conference

1. The congregation shall have a number of District Conference delegates consistent with current Church of the Brethren policy. Delegates should be elected at least six months in advance of District Conference.
2. The pastor and the Leadership Team convener of each church shall serve as delegates by virtue of their offices. Each church shall elect the remaining quota of their delegates from its membership at large.
3. Delegates serving from the membership at large shall be elected for a one-year term.
4. At Oakland
 - a. Delegates to District Conference may be ex officio members of the Leadership Team from the time of their election until six months following District Conference to help carry out the directives of District Conference or as requested by the Leadership Team.
 - b. Delegates to District Conference shall give a report to the congregation following District Conference if requested by the Leadership Team.