

# TOPECO CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

## CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS

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Amended October 1986  
Amended November 2012  
Amended January 2016  
Amended July 2021

## *Organization and Function*

### **PREAMBLE**

*Preliminary to any plan of local church organization is an understanding of the mission of the church. This mission, set forth in the Great Commission though never fully understood, may be defined as having an inner and an outer direction. The inner mission of the church is to nurture its members seeking ever to bring them more and more to stature of maturity in Christ. The outer mission of the church is to be related, as God's instrument, to the problems and the needs of the world. These two major functions of the church are achieved to the extent that they are undergirded with stewardship of time, talent, and material resources.*

*The congregation is a basic unit of the church at work in the world. Servants of the Lord must be alert to the needs and the opportunities about them. They must make ministry relevant to the changing times and should always be creative in communicating the Word and the love of God.*

*To these ends we, The Topeco Congregation, have developed a constitution and by-laws clearly defining the organizational structure and working procedures in harmony with Brotherhood (General Board) and District policy. A constitution is regarded as a statement of the fundamental principles of government adopted by the church. The by-laws are detailed rules and regulations which allow for the effective working of the congregation within its basic organizational structure.*

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# CONSTITUTION

## Article I. Corporate Name

The name of this congregation shall be The Topeco Church of the Brethren and shall be incorporated under, and pursuant to, the Religious Corporation Act of the State of Virginia.

## Article II. Affirmation of Faith and Purpose

This Congregation:

1. Is founded upon the faith that there is but one God who is a personal Father God who in holy love creates, sustains, and orders all.
2. Confesses Jesus Christ is the Son of God, as the Lord and Savior of the church and of all of life.
3. Believes that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of believers, creating and sustaining the church through the gospel, giving guidance and comfort, and uniting believers with their Lord and with one another.
4. Maintains the New Testament as its only creed and rule of faith. The Holy Scripture is God's <sup>1</sup>recorded search for man which is climaxed in God's redemptive act in and through Christ. Through his Holy Word God still speaks and continues to accomplish his redemptive purpose.
5. Believes that the gospel is the Good News that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Through the gospel, God's sovereign will and Christ's redeeming grace are revealed.
6. 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.
7. Considers that all members of the congregation, of the body of believers, are responsible for the total ministry of the church.
8. Accepts the ministry of the church to be the proclamation and fulfillment of the gospel for all people both near and far, and the nurture of the individual believers in the Christian faith and life.

## Article III. Relationship to the Whole Church

1. The Church Universal

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

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<sup>1</sup> Typographical transposition

2. The Church Denominational

The 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 governing 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 case of strife or division, if any part of the congregation refuses to abide by its obligations as a member of the Church of the Brethren, that part of the congregation, whether a majority or 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) so decreases in numbers and financial strength as to render the congregation unable to fulfill its purpose, the district of the Church of the Brethren in which it is located, or its successor shall have 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 IV. Membership

1. Meaning of Membership

Church membership is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly because it is membership in the body of Christ. Both the congregation and the member himself shall diligently strive to make membership meaningful and significant. Each applicant shall be instructed in the Word of God and the faith and practices of the Church of the Brethren prior to being received into membership. The occasion of his reception shall be a service of spiritual dignity, beauty, and meaning. The new member shall be active in seeking, and the church shall be diligent in helping him to discover, his rightful place in the ministry of Christ and his Church. It is expected that the member shall be faithful in discharging his Christian responsibilities by way of attendance at regular worship services, communions, and other meetings of the congregation, and by his stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. He shall remember in his daily work, and wherever he may be, that he is a part of the church and is responsible for a witness that is Christian. The congregation may well consider the periodic renewal of vows and commitments for all its members.

2. Reception of Members

Members may be received:

(a) by confession of faith and baptism by trine immersion as practiced by the Church of the Brethren;

(b) by letter of transfer from another Congregation of the Church of the Brethren or of any other evangelical denomination; or

(c) by reaffirmation of faith. Membership in the local church shall be open to all persons irrespective of race, national origin, or status in life.

3. Membership Classification

Membership Roll: to be documented and maintained by Church Clerk and reviewed annually by Deacon Board.<sup>2</sup>

(a) Active Member

An active member is one who avails himself of the public means of grace by regularly attending church service and communion and contributes to the support of the gospel and the various enterprises of the church in such ways as he is able.

(b) Nonresident Member

A nonresident member is one who lives at such distance from the church as to make it impossible or impractical for him to discharge his membership responsibilities. Ordinarily such a member should seek a new church home where he may be actively involved and should move his letter to that congregation. The home congregation shall encourage the nonresident member in this procedure.

(c) Inactive Status

Any member who, without sufficient reason, shall fail to comply with the requirements for active membership for two consecutive years, after earnest effort by the church to arouse him to the observance of his vows, shall be recorded on a separate list as inactive until such time when he may again become active. Such names shall not be counted in the statistical list.

(d) Absentee Status

Any member whose residence cannot be ascertained for three consecutive years shall have his name placed upon an "absent" list and shall not be counted in the statistical list.

4. Membership in the Church of the Brethren may be terminated by:

a. Death

b. Transfer by letter

A letter of transfer is the property of the congregation and shall go from the granting to the receiving congregation.

c. Withdrawal

This action shall be taken by the local congregation at written request of the individual.

d. Removal

The name of the member may be "removed" or "dropped" from the membership roll of the congregation when there is sufficient cause for taking such action.

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<sup>2</sup> Added - November 2012

## Article V. Congregational Business Meeting (Church Council)

The congregational business meeting is the final authority and governing body within the local congregation; it is the church in business session. The congregation, in business meetings, shall hear reports, evaluate past accomplishments, study present conditions, plan the future program of the church, record the voice of the congregation on current issues where Christian witness is urgent, and provide opportunity for sharing and co-ordinating differing points of view. The business meeting shall also elect officers, adopt budgets, rule on policy and organizational matters and authorize church officials to act on behalf of the congregation. All members shall be eligible to vote in the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)

## Article VI. Officials of the Church

1. The officers of the congregational business meeting (Church Council) shall be the moderator, and the Church Clerk.
2. The Legal officers for the corporate body shall be the Church Board Chairman, the Church Clerk and the Trustees.

## Article VII. Board of Administration (Church Board)

There shall be a Board of Administration, herein after referred to as the Church Board, consisting of all members of the following commissions: Commission of Ministry and Evangelism (Pastoral Board), Commission of Witness and Fellowship, Commission of Christian Education, Commission of Property, and Commission of Finance, plus Chairman of Trustees, and Chairman of Deacons. The Moderator, (if applicable), Pastor, Church Clerk and Treasurer shall be ex-officio members without vote.<sup>3</sup> The board shall be invested with administrative powers to plan, coordinate, integrate, and supervise the ongoing programs of the Congregation. The Church Board is primarily responsible for long range planning, goals and programs and the initiation of new programs. The board shall be empowered to act on behalf of the congregational business meeting as set forth in this constitution and by-laws. The Church Board shall organize itself annually by electing a chairman and vice-chairman from among its members. In the event it is unable to elect a chairman and vice-chairman from within, Church Council may decide. The Church Clerk shall serve as secretary for the board.

## Article VIII. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Board Chairman, and the Commission Chairs. The Moderator, the Pastor, and Church Clerk shall be ex-officio members without vote. In addition to serving the board at interim, the executive committee shall meet with the pastor as needed on advisory and inter-commission problems.

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<sup>3</sup> Added (if applicable) to Moderator; removed President of C.B.Y.F. – November 2012

## Article IX. Commissions

There shall be five commissions:

1. Commission of Ministry and Evangelism (Pastoral Board)
2. Commission of Witness and Fellowship
3. Commission of Christian Education (Nurture)
4. Commission of Property (Stewards)
5. Commission of Finance

Each commission shall be comprised of three elected members,<sup>34</sup> except finance which shall consist of six members, plus specified ex-officio members. Each commission shall elect its own chairman and vice-chairman.<sup>4</sup> The Moderator and Pastor shall be ex-officio members without vote on all commissions.

Commissions are responsible for creating and maintaining a historical record of activities, members, budget, etc. and quarterly reporting during the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)<sup>5</sup>

## Article X. Other Organized Groups

Various other special interest groups or age groups may be organized upon the authorization of the board and the approval of the congregational business meeting (Church Council.) All organizations within the congregation shall exist to aid in fulfilling the mission of the church and are subject to the supervision and direction of the church.

## Article XI. Outside Groups

The use of church facilities by outside groups must be requested through the pastor and cleared through the executive committee if deemed necessary by the Pastor.<sup>6</sup>

## Article XII.<sup>7</sup> Fiscal Year and Church Year

The fiscal year and the church year of the congregation shall be those designated by the Annual Conference.

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<sup>4</sup> Added Vice-Chairman and removed Secretary – November 2012

<sup>5</sup> Add paragraph – November 2012

<sup>6</sup> Added (if deemed necessary by Pastor) – November 2012

<sup>7</sup> Corrected Article number – November 2012

<sup>34</sup> Item 5 – January 2021



# BY-LAWS

## Article I. Personnel Selection and Tenure

1. The nominating committee shall consist of three members, each elected for three years, one being elected each year at the October congregational business meeting (Church Council) from the nomination presented by the Church Board. The member serving their third year shall serve as chair and rotate off at the end of their third year. The member serving their second year shall serve as vice chair and rotate to serve as the chair during their third year of service. The member serving their first year shall serve and then rotate to serve as the vice chair during their second year of service.<sup>8</sup> They may not succeed themselves. They shall be well qualified members of the church, thoroughly familiar with the total church membership. Persons elected to this committee shall be ineligible for membership on any commission. The committee shall maintain personnel files indicating the interest, aptitude, and record of service for all members. The committee shall also prepare a ballot for the use of the congregational business meeting (Church Council) in the election for the church and church school officers.

They shall prepare nominations, one name for each office, as follows:

- a) Sunday School Superintendent
- b) Assistant Sunday School Superintendent/Record Keeper
- c) Commission Members
- d) Moderator

The nominating committee shall contact all nominees two weeks<sup>9</sup> prior to the October congregation business meeting (Church Council) before their names are placed on the ballot. The nominating committee shall be available for consultation for all appointments made within the commissions. They shall serve as teller at congregational business meetings.

2. The term of office for elected members of the commissions and continuing committees shall be three (3) years. They shall not be eligible to serve more than two terms in succession, but may return to serve on the same or another committee after one year furlough.<sup>10</sup> If any board or committee member is absent from meetings without cause for six months, his office shall be declared vacant. The Church Board will appoint such person to fill the unexpired term.

## Article II. Pastor

1. The congregation shall employ a pastor when needed. He shall be a person whose faith, aptness to teach, preach, counsel, administer and educational qualifications have been examined in consultation with the proper authorities in the Church of the Brethren. He shall be properly ordained. (In special interim situations a licensed and/or ordained

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<sup>8</sup> Added rotational definition – November 2012

<sup>9</sup> Reworded for clarification – November 2012

<sup>10</sup> Added for clarification – November 2012

minister<sup>11</sup> or a minister from another denomination may serve upon approval by the district board.)

The pastor shall accept and adhere to the faith and the practices of the Church of the Brethren and the local congregation as set forth in Article II of this constitution, and his life and conduct shall witness to his Christian faith.

2. The pastor shall be the spiritual shepherd of the congregation and the executive director of the church program. He shall be an ex-officio member of the board, the commissions, and the committees. Normally the pastor shall preach, teach, administer the sacraments, visit and counsel and, in various other ways, aid his parish in their worshipping and serving God.
3. Concerning same sex marriage, Topeco Church will not allow any same sex marriage ceremony to be held in the church or on the church property. Also, the pastor will not perform or take part in any such service at Topeco Church or at any other location.<sup>34</sup>

### Article III. Deacon Board

The Deacons are elected by the Church as provided in the Manual of Worship and Polity. Their spouse, in resident in the congregation, may also serve with the Deacons. They shall work in cooperation with the Pastor in nurturing the spiritual life of the Church. They shall serve in organized visitation through the Under Shepherd Plan. There is no tenure of office providing there is a continuance of discipleship and service on the part of the person(s) serving. They shall assist in the program of Evangelism. They shall arrange for and prepare for the love feast and communion (the Eucharist), baptism, and other special services of the Church. They shall give special attention to ministering to the sick and inviting new members into the Church. They shall have the right of providing greeters for the Church Services. The Deacons shall effect their own organization each year to be approved by the Church Council. The Deacons shall be responsible for preparing the active and inactive membership list as referenced in Article IV of the Constitution.<sup>12</sup>

### Article IV. Church Officers Duties

1. All officers shall be members in good standing of the congregation and shall serve faithfully in their respective offices. The moderator should be chosen from outside the congregation.
2. The Moderator shall be the official head of the congregation but shall recognize the pastor as the spiritual and executive leader. The Moderator shall be an elder, pastor or well-recognized lay leader. The Moderator shall preside at the congregational business meetings, convene the board for its organization and perform all other duties that pertain to his office. He shall be elected for three years and may serve two consecutive terms. He shall represent the Topeco Church, on the District level, for any meeting that calls for his voice. The District Commission of Ministry and Evangelism shall approve his nomination<sup>13</sup> for the October congregational business meeting (Church Council.)

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<sup>11</sup> Changed from licentiate to licensed and/or ordained minister – November 2012

<sup>12</sup> Removed Spiritual Nurture Board as an Article and incorporated the responsibilities into the Deacon Board – November 2012

<sup>13</sup> Clarified nomination procedure – November 2012

<sup>34</sup> Added church stance concerning same sex marriage – January 2016

3. The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the congregational business meetings, the board and the executive committee. Minutes shall be kept in a volume provided for that purpose and they shall be, and remain, the property of the congregation. The Clerk shall also keep the official membership roll. They shall be appointed by the board for the term of three years and have no tenure of office.
4. The Treasurer, who shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Commission and the church board, shall keep a book of accounts of the congregation. He shall be custodian of all the funds of the church. He shall receive, deposit and disburse funds as directed by the church through the Finance Commission.<sup>14</sup> He shall make a quarterly financial report to the Church Council, and be ready at any time to give information to the Finance Commission and Church Board when it is requested. He shall make a full and complete annual financial report to the church. He shall encourage the congregation to a higher stewardship of their lives and resources. He shall submit his accounts to an audit annually at the direction of the board. He shall be a member of the local church, well qualified by experience or training. He shall be appointed by the Church Board and approved by vote of the Church Council for a term of three years and have no tenure of office.

The Treasurer will be charged with the responsibility of preparing the quarterly and annual federal social security reports on the church employees and with preparing W-2 annual wage statements for church employees at the end of each calendar year.

5. The Assistant Treasurer shall be appointed by the Church Board and approved by vote of the Church Council for a term of three years and have no tenure of office. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Commission. He shall be invested with the same authority that the treasurer has to deposit or disburse funds. He shall serve in the absence of the treasurer and assist with any duties that the treasurer assigns to him. In the event of the death or illness of the treasurer, he shall fill the unexpired term of the treasurer until time for the next election.
6. The Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Church Board and approved by vote of the Church Council for a term of three years and have no tenure of office. He shall receive and deposit in the bank contributions from the members and other public or private offerings. He shall keep a careful and confidential record of all pledges and amounts given by individuals using church envelopes or by other designation. He shall furnish annual statements to individuals. This signed statement shall serve as an official receipt for tax purposes. He shall be an ex-officio member of the church Finance Commission.
7. The Trustees shall consist of three members elected by the Church with proper notification being made to the Court concerned within the jurisdiction of the Church. They shall be elected by the Church Council for an indefinite time, so long as their activities are in accord with the Council's decisions. They are legal representatives of the Church in all legal business transactions of the Church. They are responsible for the purchase, sale, or transfer of all real property owned by the Church, subject to the approval and authorization of the Church Council and will provide for insurance needs.

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<sup>14</sup> Removed weekly deposit responsibility from Treasurer and added to the Financial Secretary – November 2012

8. Secretary to the Pastor<sup>15</sup> shall be responsible for the clerical needs of the church, including, but not limited to:
- a. Receive and distribute mail and phone messages
  - b. Manage correspondence for the Pastor or the church, when needed.
  - c. Purchase office and Sunday School supplies when needed and submit receipts to the Treasurer for reimbursement or charge to the church account.
  - d. Publish weekly bulletins and special occasion bulletins. Submit the bulletins for on screen presentation for Sunday morning service and other occasions as required.
  - e. Maintain and publish birthday and anniversary calendars.
  - f. Publish lists for Worship Leaders and for Pre-Worship Music.
  - g. Maintain lists for acolytes and greeters and post them in the weekly bulletin.
  - h. Maintain annual Altar Flower sign-up sheet.
  - i. Publish Baptismal and Child Dedication certificates.
  - j. Manage the Church Calendar for the facilities and the Pastor.
  - k. Print numbered sign-in list for Love Feast & Communion services.
  - l. Publish and distribute Council meeting agenda and the Pastor's quarterly report.
  - m. Publish and distribute the ballot of church officers for the October Council meeting, as requested by the Nominating Committee.
  - n. Publish and post on bulletin board the list of Church Officers each year.
  - o. Publish and post on bulletin board the list of Women's Fellowship Officers, as requested.
  - p. Document and publish Smoke Detector & Emergency Light Inspection Forms, when needed for the Property Committee.
  - q. Send Transfer of Membership letters to other churches when we have new members transfer to our congregation.
  - r. Send in New Members Report Form to District Office as required.
  - s. Complete yearly Statistical Reports for the District and/or Brotherhood and submit them in a timely manner.
  - t. Complete District Conference and Annual Conference registration forms and submit to Treasurer for payment and distribution.
  - u. Submit prayer requests and other announcements via the Phone Tree as required.
  - v. Order Class roll books and Sunday School material as requested.

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<sup>15</sup> Added Secretary to the Pastor position description – November 2012

## Article V. Church Board

The board shall elect its own chairman, and vice-chairman, who shall see that a copy of the agenda of the meeting is sent to the Moderator and the Pastor in the event of their absence.

The board shall:

1. Fulfill the directives of the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)
2. Assign, supervise and coordinate the work of the commissions.
3. Project long-range planning, set goals and initiate new programs.
4. Interpret rules of procedure for commissions and committees.
5. Make all appointments for which the board is responsible.  
They shall appoint:
  - (1) Financial Secretary
  - (2) Treasurer
  - (3) Assistant Treasurer
  - (4) Church Clerk
  - (5) Three members to the Auditing Committee
6. Prepare a ballot for use by the congregational business meeting in electing the nominating and personnel committee members.
7. Fill all vacancies in elective offices occurring between congregational business meetings and fill such other vacancies not otherwise provided for.
8. Prepare the agenda for the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)
9. Review the proposed budget for presentation to the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)
10. Receive, consider and make disposition of concerns brought by any group or individual member.
11. Report its activities and actions at the congregational business meeting (Church Council.)
12. Bring recommendations to the congregational business meeting (Church Council), when major church policy needs revision or is involved.
13. Enlist the help and the counsel of the district executive and/or other district personnel in program planning and handling of special concerns.
14. Include a sign-in sheet of all board members present at board meetings in the meeting minutes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Added item 14. – November 2012

## Article VI. Commission Responsibilities

### 1. Commission of Ministry and Evangelism (pastoral Board)

This commission shall consist of three members.

Duties:

- a. Relating to the pastoral program
  1. Secure pastor and draw up contract for approval by the congregational business meeting (Church Council).
  2. Assist and serve as counselor to the pastor.
  3. Advise and update pastoral salary scale.
  4. Arrange for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.
  5. Arrange for hospitality of guest speakers, including, but not limited to, lodging, meals and transportation.<sup>17</sup>
- b. Plan and supervise an overall program of evangelism.
  1. Make arrangements for evangelistic services and other special programs.
  2. Plan other programs that would reach people.
- c. Appoint ushers.
- d. Appoint members of Music and Worship Committee.
  1. This committee shall consist of three members.
  2. One shall be appointed each year for a three year term.
  3. This committee shall appoint Organist, Pianist and necessary assistants and present their names to the Church Council for approval.
  4. This committee shall procure and care for all choir robes as authorized by the Church.
  5. They shall seek to discover new talent and have general oversight of all musical activities.
  6. They shall counsel with the pastor regularly about the form and conduct of the public worship services of the Church.
  7. The Director<sup>18</sup> of Music, Organist, Pianist and Pastor shall be ex-officio members of this committee.
  8. The Music and Worship Committee may appoint or employ the Director of Music subject to the approval of the Church Council.
  9. The Director of Music shall be charged with:
    - a. the training and direction of the Church choirs and shall be responsible for leading<sup>19</sup> the congregational singing in all worship services.
    - b.<sup>20</sup> Successful direction of a choir is not accomplished in the time of the choir rehearsal. A choir director's job includes a great deal of preparation and additional responsibilities that make it a challenging and rewarding position.

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<sup>17</sup> Changed and defined (entertainment) – November 2012

<sup>18</sup> Changed (Minister to Director) – November 2012

<sup>19</sup> Changed (lead to responsible for leading) – November 2012

<sup>20</sup> Defined role of Director of Music and Organist – November 2012

1. Rehearsal
  2. Preparation
  3. Music Selection
  4. Individual Help
  5. Attitude
10. Care of hymnals and repair of musical instruments.
11. The Organist shall be charged with:
- a. Playing the organ on Sunday mornings for hymns, prelude, and postlude as arranged.
  - b. Play for other church services, such as revivals, etc.
  - c. The organist may be asked to play for funerals, but is mostly by invitation only.

## 2. Commission of Witness and Fellowship

This commission shall consist of three members.

Duties:

- a. Plan<sup>21</sup>
  1. Promote Brethren Volunteer Service projects
  2. Advertise and promote church fellowship activities and programs.<sup>22</sup>
- b. Promote heifer project for relief
- c. Prepare Church Directory
- d. Maintain contacts with:
  1. Participants<sup>23</sup> in Brethren Volunteer Service Work
  2. Young men and women in military service
  3. Students away from home by providing fellowship when home on leave or break.
  4. Non-resident members and those in nursing homes and hospitals.
- e. Advertise<sup>24</sup> and promote community activities
- f. Appoint Church World Service representative who will serve as an ex-officio member.

## 3. Commission of Christian Education (Nurture)

This commission shall consist of three members. The Sunday School Superintendent, Children's Director and Assistant Director, Youth Minister or Coordinators and Pastor shall be ex-officio members.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Removed Mission Study and Peace Study from Plan – November 2012

<sup>22</sup> Added (programs) – November 2012

<sup>23</sup> Changed (Boys and Girls to Participants) – November 2012

<sup>24</sup> Added (Advertise) – November 2012

<sup>25</sup> Removed (term definition and Chairman recognition as Director of Education) – November 2012

Duties:

- a. Plan
  - 1. Church School
  - 2. Vacation Bible School
  - 3. Curriculum
  - 4. Appoint<sup>26</sup> Camp Representative and encourage camp participation
  - 5. Mid-week religious school
- b. Provide for training
  - 1. Conference and Seminars
  - 2. Leadership and Training
  - 3. Home and Parent Education
- c. Supervise
  - 1. Publications and Literature
  - 2. Library
  - 3. Audio-Visual Aids
- d. Appoint
  - 1. Messenger Agent
  - 2. Librarian
  - 3. Cradle Roll Superintendent/Nursery Sunday School Class Teacher<sup>27</sup>
  - 4. Youth Coordinators and Counselors
  - 5. Sunday School Secretaries
  - 6. Director and Assistant Director of Children's Dept.
  - 7. Teachers in Church School
  - 8. Historians
  - 9. Literature Representative
  - 10. Supplies Correspondent <sup>28</sup>

#### 4. **Commission of Property**

This committee shall consist of three members. The custodian will be an ex-officio member.

Duties:

- a. Care for physical property of the church
  - 1. The Church building and grounds
  - 2. Properties and equipment<sup>29</sup>
  - 3. Parsonage (annual inspection)
- b. Appoint Custodian (with approval of Church Council)  
<sup>30</sup>Responsibilities include, but not limited to:

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<sup>26</sup> Combined (appointment and camping participation) – November 2012

<sup>27</sup> Removed (Home Department) and Added (Nursery SS Class Teacher) – November 2012

<sup>28</sup> Removed (Audio-Visual Operators and Program Committee) – November 2012

<sup>29</sup> Moved (care of hymnals and repair of musical instruments) to Music and Worship – November 2012

<sup>30</sup> Added (Custodial responsibilities) – November 2012



1. Cleaning of the church, including the sanctuary, behind stage, stairwells, balcony, basement, fellowship hall, all classrooms, restrooms, kitchen and offices.
2. Back rack in pews to be straightened, hymnals and bibles should be straightened accordingly.
3. Cleaning before and after such activities as revivals, retreats, funerals, VBS, district meetings or any other church related event as noted on the church calendar or otherwise by the Pastor. Custodian will be paid by any outside entity who has permission to hold an event on church premises, should they require clean-up service. (Example: wedding.)
4. Replacement of burnt out light bulbs, or arrangement thereof, as well as cleaning annually or as necessary.
5. Inventory, order and purchase necessary cleaning supplies.
6. Removal of trash and debris from facility after services or events.
7. Restock restroom and kitchen supplies after services or events.
8. Report any discovered damages, stains, etc. immediately to Property Committee if unable to remedy. Coordinate with Property Committee for repairs.
9. Request and coordinate spring and fall cleaning days with parishioners.
10. Kitchen to be cleaned on a regular basis and should be attended to as follows:
  - a. Clean ovens as necessary.
  - b. Empty refrigerator contents as necessary.
  - c. Restock supplies.
11. Submit quarterly report to Property Committee detailing the following:
  - a. Supplies ordered/consumed.
  - b. Observed repairs or replacements needed.
  - c. Issues or concerns.
12. Report any misuse of facility to the Property Committee immediately.

## 5. **Commission of Finance**

This commission shall consist of six members, two of which shall be elected each year.

Duties:

- a. It shall direct the receiving, counting, and depositing of offerings.
  1. At least two members shall count and verify in writing all public offerings before they are removed from the church.

- b. Through the church treasurer it shall make quarterly and annual financial reports to the Church Board and to the congregational business meeting (Church Council).
- c. Through the financial secretary it shall issue monthly statements of giving to all contributors to the church program.
- d. It shall conduct an every-member canvass as needed and give leadership to stewardship education.
- e. It shall order and distribute church offering envelopes and encourage every member to use the envelope system.
- f. It shall have charge of the plans, the transaction and the supervision of all the financial affairs of the church and shall authorize the payment of all bills incurred in the operation and upkeep of the church property.
- g. This commission shall work out the annual budget of the church and formulate plans to care for the financial needs of the church.
- h. Their work shall be submitted to Church Council for approval.

### Article VII. Business Meetings (Church Council)

- 1. The congregational business meeting (Church Council) shall be held twice per year, in April and October. Other regular meetings may be held as determined by the congregational business session. Special meetings may be called by the moderator or church board.
- 2. The church board shall meet <sup>31</sup>prior to semi-annual Church council. <sup>34</sup> Special meetings of the church board may be called by the church board chairman.
- 3. Commissions and committees shall meet regularly or as the church board may direct.
- 4. Adequate advance notice of all business meetings shall be given to the membership involved.

### Article VIII. Quorum

- 1. Although it is desirable to have as many members present as possible for the congregational business meeting (Church Council), no quorum shall be required.
- 2. For meetings of the church board, executive committee, and the commissions a majority of the elected members shall constitute a quorum.

### Article IX. Rules of Order

Unless otherwise specified in these by-laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the official rules of order for the congregational business meetings (Church Council).

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<sup>31</sup> Removed (10 days) – November 2012

<sup>34</sup> Item 5 – January 2021

## Article X. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of The Topeco Church of the Brethren

A written proposal for an amendment may be presented at any congregational business meeting. A vote may be conducted at the following congregational business meeting, a two-thirds majority vote of the members present is necessary for passage.



## ADDENDA

1. This constitution and by-laws does not displace any person who has filled a responsible place in the church, but only hopes to delegate particular responsibilities to those persons in order to establish an understanding as to duties and expectations of the church in assigning or electing such persons to perform these duties.
2. Those life-term elections still stand and will continue to function under an assigned commission or committee. Other short-term committees may be formed to carry out specific assignments. Other organized groups will be recognized in their effort to aid in fulfilling the mission of the church and are subject to the oversight and direction of the church.
3. Should the time come for the electing of Trustees, the Board of Administration (Church Board) advises a five-year term. No tenure of office is suggested.<sup>32</sup>
4. Numerous amendments and corrections made through Constitution and By-Laws in November 2012 are noted accordingly.<sup>33</sup>
5. Amended the By-laws section “Article II – Pastor,” concerning same sex marriage by adding the statement, which was passed by Church Council at the October 18, 2015 meeting. The date of this revision is January 8, 2016.<sup>34</sup>
6. From the January 2021 Council meeting, it was voted on to change the frequency of the Board/Council meetings from Quarterly to Semi-Annual. Also, as part of that vote, it was decided to reduce the number of members on the following commissions from five to three: Ministry & Evangelism, Witness & Fellowship, Christian Education and Property. No changes were made to the Finance Commission, it was left at six members.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Items 1-3 previously added – October 1986

<sup>33</sup> Those amendments are noted accordingly – November 2012

<sup>34</sup> Item 5 – January 2016

<sup>35</sup> Item 6 – January 2021