

Arnaud Mennonite Church Constitution

(approved 13 November 1998)

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:11

CONSTITUTION
OF
THE ARNAUD MENNONITE CHURCH
ARNAUD, MANITOBA

1:00 FOUNDATION

1:01 Name and Purpose of the Church

The name of the Church shall be The Arnaud Mennonite Church, a Christian Church adhering to an evangelical creed.

1:02 Objective of the Church

The objective of the church is the building of the Kingdom of God, among us and through us, within and beyond the bounds of the Church, by means of preaching and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, through the Christian training of our children in our homes, through theological and catechismal instruction, in accordance with the teachings of the Bible and the beliefs and principles of the Mennonite Church.

2:00 CREED AND CONFESSION

2:01 Concerning the Word of God

This Church recognizes the entire Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament, as The Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the only guiding principle in matters of faith and life. "because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoken from God." 2 Peter 1:21

According to the Scriptures the Church adheres to the following teachings:

2:02 Concerning Salvation by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour and his blood which he shed for us. Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 9:13-14. This includes:

a) Repentance or godly sorrow for sin. "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death." 2 Corinthians 7:10

b) Conversion, Rebirth, change of heart and mind. "Very Truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." John 3:3-6.

c) Sanctification. "for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" I Peter 1:16

d) Complete Commitment "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Romans 12:1

¹ Scripture quotations in this document are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., unless otherwise stated.

- 2:03 Concerning Baptism: We believe, that only born-again believers, on the basis of their own inner desire, following Church membership instruction, in accordance with the Scriptures, may receive baptism. Each candidate must have two witnesses, one of whom may be the father or the mother. These witnesses are to share with the congregation their impressions of the candidate's spiritual commitment. Candidates are encouraged to share a public confession before the congregation.
- 2:04 Concerning the Lord's Supper According to the command of Jesus Christ and the teachings of his apostles, we celebrate Communion in remembrance of the sacrificial suffering of Christ and as a sign of unity with Christ and among believers. The Word of God requires honest soul-searching and repentance of all participants. People who are not members of AMC but are baptized and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives may participate in our communion services. A preparatory sermon should always precede the Lord's supper by one week.
- 2:05 Concerning the Oath: According to the word of Christ and the teaching of the apostles, we believe every Christian is to speak the truth using a simple yes or no. According to the teachings of Christ a Christian should refrain from taking an oath. "But I say to you, Do not swear at all...Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one." Matthew 5:34-37, James 5:12
- 2:06 Concerning Non-violence: According to the commandment of Christ and his apostles, we strive to live at peace with all people. Our Church adheres to non-violence, true to the example of the early Christians and as believed and practised by our forefathers. We will participate in constructive rather than destructive activity. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" Romans 12:17-19, Matthew 26:52, Matthew 5:24, Matthew 7:12, 1 Peter 2:21-23.
- 2:07 Concerning Government (those in authority): We also believe, teach and admonish all, according to Romans 13:1 to obey, and be subject to the government as an instrument of God's order in all things which are not contrary to God's Word. Over and above this, we should pray for all in authority according to 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

3:00 MEMBERSHIP

- 3:01 All who have been accepted into the Church through holy baptism, are members of this congregation.
- 3:02 Members wishing to transfer from sister churches may do so after presenting a satisfactory reference from their home Church. The Church encourages a testimony from such a person.

3:03 Members of other denominations will be accepted after adopting our confession of faith. Those having experienced child-baptism and wishing to become members of the congregation need not be rebaptized, unless the person specifically requests rebaptism.

3:04 The names of perspective members shall be announced twice to the congregation. The member is accepted into the congregation by extending the right hand of fellowship.

3:05 The Church, however, decides on each request for membership.

3:06 If a member has had no contact with the AMC for one year, the minister or deacons will make contact with the person to discuss their membership status.

3:07 Associate Membership

a) Associate membership may be applied for and granted by the AMC at its discretion, under the following conditions:

i) a member of the AMC moves out of the community, becomes an active member of another Church and yet wishes to maintain contact with the AMC.

ii) a member of another Church who wishes to be active in the AMC for a temporary period of time (e.g. a college student)

b) The rights and responsibilities of an associate member are the same as for full membership, except that the associate member has no voting privileges and is not counted in official Church statistics (for purposes of Conference dues).

c) Associate memberships are granted for a three year period by the membership by a simple majority vote.

AGM '93

4:00 CHURCH DISCIPLINE

4:01 Should a member of the Church live a life of sin and shame, and by doing so discredit the name of God and the Church, then matters shall be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17. But, it is the responsibility of each member to win this member back through love. If an excommunicated member is willing to repent, then he should, after examination be readmitted into the Church. Special guidance and love shall be shown such a member.

5:00 PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS.

5:01 Every member has the right to vote in all matters concerning the Church.

5:02 All members are owners of their church buildings, the real estate, furniture and whatever constitutes church assets.

- 5:03 Every member is obliged to obey, according to his or her ability, the Christian principles in every walk of life. Furthermore, each member is to promote the well-being of the Church within and beyond the membership and to participate, as much as possible, in Church services, congregational meetings and communion.
- 5:04 Every member is privileged to support the Church financially on a voluntary basis. This includes the support of Conferences, colleges, schools, Bible schools, building funds, etc.
- 5:05 Every member is obliged to report, at appropriate times, events such as births, deaths, marriages, etc, to the registrar of the Church records. The Minister-in-Charge shall be the registrar of Church records.
- 5:06 All Christian endeavour of the Church, such as Sunday School, Youth programs, and choirs, should be strongly supported and encouraged by the membership.
- 5:07 If a member revokes his or her membership, that member forfeits any claim to church property.

6:00 CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- 6:01 The Council shall consist of lay ministers, ordained deacons, one of the elected deacons, the chairperson of the Music committee, the Treasurer, the Sunday School Superintendent, as well as the Congregational Chairperson and three members-at-large. The Pastor(s) by virtue of his office, shall have the right to attend all meetings of the church board and shall have the right to speak to all issues before all meetings of the church board, but shall not have the right to make or second motions, or vote on any issue before the church board. (AGM, 13 Nov, 98)
- 6:02 The annual meeting shall be held every January, unless otherwise designated. Depending on the circumstances, special meetings of the membership may be called by the Minister-in-Charge, by the Congregational Chairperson or by Council.
- 6:03 The fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31 of the same year.
- 6:04 On one member's request, a matter shall be decided by ballot.
- 6:05 If the circumstances warrant it, and the matter is not too weighty, the Council is empowered to arrive at a decision without calling a general meeting.
- 6:06 A general meeting of the membership shall be announced from the pulpit, well in advance of the meeting.
- 6:07 A member of the Council must be a member of the Arnaud Mennonite Church. 12/92

6:08 If a member of a committee has a seat on the Council by virtue of another position, then the committee shall elect another member of the committee to sit on the Council. 12/92

6:09 The Arnaud Mennonite Church adheres to all of regulations of the Income Tax Act.

12/92

7:00 THE MINISTRY

7:01 The Pastorate

a) Duties: The pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. He or she preaches the gospel, provides leadership in organizing the Church program for the best possible service in God's Kingdom, and in general, promotes the spiritual welfare of the Church.

b) Call and Ordination: Whenever it becomes necessary to call a pastor, the Council shall appoint a special committee called a Pastoral Search Committee. This committee shall search for a suitable candidate and make a recommendation to the Council, and through it to a membership meeting. Only after approval of at least 75% of all votes cast at such a membership meeting shall the Church, through its Council, extend a call to the candidate considered for the pastorate.

A pastor may be ordained when the congregation and the pastor sense the Spirit of God leading them in that direction. Ordination will be done in cooperation with the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.

c) Term of Office The pastor is called for a three year term unless a shorter term is mutually agreed upon. A 75% majority vote at a membership meeting is required to extend the call for another term.

The initial salary of the pastor is negotiated by the Council and renegotiated annually upon the anniversary date of employment.

Should the membership or the pastor wish to terminate his or her services, the party requesting termination should normally give a minimum of six months notice of such intended termination.

d) The Pastor(s) is an *ex-officio* member of any committee of the Church.

(AGM, 13 Nov, 98)

7:02 The Lay Ministry

a) The Church may call as many lay ministers as it deems necessary. A candidate for the lay ministry is elected to a three year term at a special membership meeting. During his term the ministerial candidate serves the Church by preaching and assisting the pastor in other ways. At some time, during his or her term, the Church shall call a special meeting

to determine, through a 75% vote, whether it wishes the candidate to be ordained as minister. If the candidate agrees, ordination should follow shortly.

b) A minister is considered ordained for life, unless valid reasons require his or her resignation. If necessary, the Church has the right to remove a minister, or deacon from office with a two-thirds majority vote at a general meeting of the membership.

c) All ministers of the Church have the right to administer communion and baptism. However, the Minister-in-Charge decides which minister(s) will assist or officiate at a Church communion or baptismal service.

7:03 The Minister-in-Charge

The Minister-in-Charge is elected at an annual meeting of the membership to a three year term, and may be reelected to any number of consecutive terms.

7:04 The Diaconate

a) The Church may elect one or more of its members to the office of deacon.

b) The responsibilities of the deacon are, in accordance with the Holy Scripture, to take to heart and to assist the poor, the sick, the lonely and the neglected of the Church. Furthermore, deacons are to assist at important Church functions such as baptism and communion. Deacons should also represent our Church at all meetings of the ministers of the Church. 01/90

c) A deacon may be elected to a lifetime position for which a 75% majority vote is required. A deacon may also be elected to a three year term for which a simple majority vote is required. A deacon may be elected to consecutive terms. The installation of a deacon should take place shortly after election. 01/90

8:00 REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

No paragraph of this Constitution may be amended or deleted or another substituted without the approval of at least two-thirds of the members present at a general meeting. Notice of such a meeting is to be read from the pulpit.

Written in 1945

Translated and revised 1978

Amendments to 13 November 1998 included.