

# **Boulder Mennonite Church**

# **Community Guidebook**

**2020**



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## **Boulder Mennonite Church Guidebook – revisions history**

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## **Acronyms and Links**

BMC – Boulder Mennonite Church [bouldermennonite.org](http://bouldermennonite.org)

COF – Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, publication 1995 <http://mennoniteusa.org/confession-of-faith/>

CPT – Christian Peacemaker Teams [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org)

EFFA – Emergency Family Food Assistance [www.efaa.org](http://www.efaa.org)

EPIC – Ecumenical Program for International Cooperation, Inc. [epicprojects.org](http://epicprojects.org)

GAMEO – Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online [gameo.org](http://gameo.org)

HfH – Habitat for Humanity [flatironshabitat.org](http://flatironshabitat.org)

MCUSA – Mennonite Church USA [mennoniteusa.org](http://mennoniteusa.org)

MCC – Mennonite Central Committee (US) [mcc.org](http://mcc.org)

MDS – Mennonite Disaster Service [mds.mennonite.net](http://mds.mennonite.net)

MSMC – Mountain States Mennonite Conference [www.mountainstatesmc.org](http://www.mountainstatesmc.org)

MVS – Mennonite Voluntary Service [mennonitemission.net/serve/placements/mennonite%20voluntary%20service](http://mennonitemission.net/serve/placements/mennonite%20voluntary%20service)

PCRC – Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee

SCN – Supportive Communities Network [bmclgbt.org](http://bmclgbt.org)

VORP – Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (now under Restorative Justice Program of Boulder County <http://boulder.co.networkofcare.org>)

WDC – Western District Conference [mennowdc.org](http://mennowdc.org)

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## A BMC How-To Primer

Have a question about how things happen at BMC? This Guidebook attempts to answer questions and to document our current realities, but there's bound to be a detail or two missing. Feel free to ask directly.

- **To find out who does what** – See the Functional Groups (Standing Committees) list in Appendix G
- **To propose a new project, action, or outreach** – Fill out the 1-page proposal (Appendix K) and share with the Church Chair for presentation at the next council meeting. Really big issues eventually go to the entire congregation, but individual-energy efforts can get approved rather quickly, and with good input from this leadership group.
- **To get involved with an ongoing task group**, let your wishes be known to our Nominating Team members, the group's lead member, the Chair, or in your response to the annual Time & Talent survey that comes out each spring with the Stewardship packets from the Ministry of Financial Resources.
- **To use the building**, talk with the Church Administrator or our Rentals coordinator volunteer.
- **To express concern over a relational issue**, speak with the pastor or one of the deacons. If it's an issue with the pastor, speak with the deacons. The Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee is available to deal with issues of employment, review, and pastor-member concern.
- **To benefit from a supportive smaller gathering**, join one of our two-year cycle Small Groups! See the Small Groups brochure, or ask the Church Administrator.

### For More Information

For further details, please refer to BMC's website: [bouldermennonite.org](http://bouldermennonite.org) for access to the following.

BMC brochure (Find a hard copy in the foyer or from the Church Administrator)

Current Small Groups (Find a brochure in the foyer or see Community Overview on the website)

Current list of Standing Committees/Task Groups

Full text of Confession of Faith <http://mennoniteusa.org/confession-of-faith/>

Congregational Directory (list of names and contact information) available from the office or on the website with a password

BMC budget information – on website with member password

## **Boulder Mennonite Church**

# **Community Guidebook**

### **Who we are**

Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC) is a Christian community with open doors. Here, in a warm church family, we find spiritual food and guidance, as well as the mutual support we need, to live our faith each day.

### **You are welcome here!**

BMC began in 1984 and had its charter service the following year. We affiliate with the Church of the Brethren and have membership in the Mennonite Church USA. (For more history, see the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.) For more history on BMC, please see section, “A History of Boulder Mennonite Church”. In the recent past, our membership has been approximately 55 persons, with a range of up to 120 individuals involved at some level of participation and support.

#### **Welcome Statement**

“As a Christian community, called by Christ to be inclusive, caring, and peace minded, we affirm that people of any race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status, or life situation, are welcome to be in full participation in our congregation.” (For more on our 1996 adoption of this statement, see Appendix H, Church Policies.)

### **Jesus leads us**

We believe that Jesus’ life and teachings are our clearest revelation of God’s nature and what God desires. We seek to apply Christ’s example of love and service to others through nonviolent actions that can help bring justice to all people

### **Support for one another**

We assist families and individuals to lead meaningful and Christ-filled lives. We welcome God’s children of any race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status or life situation. Our small groups meet once or twice monthly for study, care and nurture, and friendship. These groups of up to 12 people form the heart of mutual care within the congregation.

### **Witness beyond our walls**

Our congregation seeks to be Christ’s hands and feet at home and around the world. We serve at the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless and have provided protected overflow sleeping space during the week. We collect food for the emergency pantry and offer aid to persons in crisis. Care groups have helped families in need at Emergency Family Assistance Association facilities. With other churches, we have worked in the Mennonite Urban Ministries program in Denver. Members have served in Christian Peacemaker Team delegations to global hotspots like Hebron and Iraq, with the backing of our congregation, and support sustainable agriculture programs in Central America through EPIC. Offices in our building have been made available for rent at lower-than-normal cost for other organizations that work for justice and peace.

## **Life in Community**

We find renewal, respite, and inspiration in being together. Our children and young people are valued members of the whole and bring great joy and spontaneity to our worship. The congregation makes a corporate commitment to its youth, and to parents as they dedicate their young children. We commit to support and walk with new members, who join upon their baptism, confession of faith, or transfer of membership. We make group decisions by consensus. We encourage that decisions be in harmony with God's creation and with all of God's children. We have respect for those who may not agree and we have found a way to live out tolerance for differences. Laughter is common at BMC. Whether in fellowship or in worship, we sincerely enjoy one another and are freed by the fact that we have no pretenses here. We enjoy sharing meals and working together in our task groups and on various committees.

# **Mission and Vision Statement**

## **MISSION**

Boulder Mennonite Church is a vibrant, Christ-centered community welcoming all people to know God and to be ambassadors of God's love, healing, and peace.

## **VISION**

### **OUR FOUNDATION**

We live with God our Creator, Jesus Christ our Savior, and God's Holy Spirit, our guide.

We believe that Jesus incarnate is our clearest revelation of God's nature and what God desires of us: that we live simply, love and serve others, create justice and make peace.

We believe in the authority of Scripture and see it as a living document, which through community discernment in the tradition of Anabaptist Mennonites and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, brings richness and relevance to our life together.

We live following Jesus and inviting others to join us, bringing God's love, healing, and care to humanity and to all of God's creation.

### **OUR PREPARATION**

We gather to worship God, to learn from Scripture, to pray in community, and to receive food for thought and suggestions for faithful action.

Boulder Mennonite Church prepares and empowers its members to be ministers of Christ in their daily lives by using their God-given gifts within the church and in the world.

We inspire and inform one another by sharing our faith journeys.

Small groups, children and youth gatherings and Christian education for all ages provide forums for caring, study, sharing, learning and service.

### **OUR WITNESS**

Our faith in Christ as Savior moves us to action. The Holy Spirit leads us to pray for and care for each other, for all people, and for creation.

We seek to be aware of community and world events, and to be part of Jesus' way by pursuing social change that brings about healing, justice and peace.

We joyfully share our time and financial resources in support of the larger Mennonite Church and other ministries that bring God's healing love to our world.

We are called to proclaim boldly through words and actions the story of Christ and invite others to follow Christ along with us.

We are called by God to be inclusive, caring, and peace minded; we affirm that people of any race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status, or life situation are welcome to be in full participation in our congregation.

(This version of our Mission and Vision Statement was adopted by BMC in December 2004.)

## **BMC's Guiding Scriptures**

**God has shown you, O people, what is good and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.**

Micah 6:8

**You will recognize them by the fruits they bear.**

Matthew 7:16

**You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with your mind, and with all your strength. The second most important commandment is this: Love your neighbor as you love yourself (The 'Great Commandments').**

Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-24a, Luke 10:25-28

# **Our Relationship with Community and World**

## **Justice and Peace**

Micah 6:8, Matthew 7: 16, and the Mennonite Confession of Faith (particularly Articles 9, 10, 21, 22, 23) set parameters for how Boulder Mennonite intends to interact with people in the Boulder area, the Colorado, in our nation and throughout the world. We believe that God calls us, as a community, and as part of the larger Body of Christ, to thoughtfully and critically live in society (being in the world but not of it). This entails seeking justice and peace. It is no easy task, for it requires routinely rejecting societal norms and beliefs (e.g., racism, sexism, consumerism, nationalism, vengeance and violence, and careerism) and, on occasion, disobeying government authority. We also believe that our resisting yet affirming presence in the world is possible only with God's help.

Refer to Appendix K, Inclusiveness Awareness document

## **In Resistance or Nonresistance**

As followers of Christ, BMC affirms the Anabaptist faith positions of nonviolence and peaceful resistance to evil as Biblically shown to us through Christ's life and teachings. These positions lead us to reject military service as an appropriate way to resolve conflict. We critically examine how our involvement in occupations and consumption activities may do violence to other humans and the rest of Creation; for instance, involvement with the weapons industry, media, advertising, international finance, politics, multinational

corporations, and law enforcement. We acknowledge that the condition of humanity and the complexity of the modern world make it impossible for anyone to be totally separated from injustice.

## **Seeking a Third Way**

We believe that Christ came not to condemn the world, but rather to save it (John 3: 17). Christ did this, in part by bringing forth the Kingdom of God. As participants in this unfolding Kingdom, we attempt to provide an alternative to the ways of the world. This is often referred to as “A Third Way.” Ultimately, we seek to be present in the world and hope to make it a better place. One way we are present is by living peacefully in our daily actions at home, in the work place, and in our relationships with others. Boulder Mennonite is dedicated to being a safe place for all, and seeks to be a community of hope, healing, and reconciliation. Many Mennonites commit their lives to service, ranging from individual acts of kindness to more formal service in the community, nation, and world, through such organizations as Mennonite Voluntary Service, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Mennonite Central Committee.

We believe that long-lasting peace in the world can be realized only when all people and the creation are treated justly. Our commitments to peace and justice lead us to affirm the participation of our congregation in Habitat for Humanity, the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS), Christian Peacemaker Teams, shelters for the homeless, the Boulder Safehouse, and similar endeavors that proclaim freedom for prisoners and seek to release the poor and oppressed, wherever they may be found.

## **Relationship to the Larger Church**

We at Boulder Mennonite see ourselves as part of the world-wide Christian Church. This Church is the assembly of those who believe and acknowledge Jesus Christ’s, and who, in discipleship, attempt to follow Him in “worship, ministry, witness, mutual love and care, and the ordering of ... common life” (p. 39 of the Mennonite Confession of Faith).

We affirm the diversity of the larger Church and consider ourselves reliant upon it, representatives of its mission faithfully to live as Christ lived, and responsible to admonish those parts of the Church that stray from this mission. Boulder Mennonite church also maintains denominational affiliations. (see section on Denominational Information)

# **Christian Caregiving and Community Support**

Boulder Mennonite maintains an active lay care-giving ministry through its small groups and its deacons’ ministry. BMC also supports more extensive care and support through its professional pastoral staff. This care has over time included pastoral care and counseling, spiritual direction, hospital visitations, family/marriage enrichment and support, vocational counseling, and support in times of personal and family crisis.

Members and friends will experience church life in its fullest sense through participation in Boulder Mennonite Small Groups. We emphasize and nurture small groups. We re-form groups every two years, and believe that the growth of small groups is a means to extend the reach of the church.

## **Worship**

Corporate worship is the integrating factor of life at BMC. It is the occasion when all members and participants meet together every Sunday, creating a common spiritual history. It is the time we bring together our diverse lives for the purpose of worshiping God through praise, sharing joys and pains, praying, learning, singing, and listening to and basking in God’s gracious spirit. Our worship seeks to be Bible-centered, creative, challenging, and nurturing. We seek to incorporate the gifts of lay persons and children in all aspects of worship.



Music and prayer are particularly vital to our BMC worship life. We wish to encourage diverse musical gifts and tastes, and other artistic expressions, as an important ministry to our people. Prayer is our communication with God in which we open ourselves to God, lifting our praise and our need, and seek to be quiet enough to hear God's message to us.

Communion is shared every few months during worship. It is a significant symbolic event which serves to remind us of God's unconditional love and sacrifice for us. Communion is open to all who profess to follow Christ. (see "Worship Planning Team" section)

## **Community Structure and Accountability**

Christian Care-Giving and Community Support is a foundational aspect of Boulder Mennonite Church. BMC maintains an active lay care-giving ministry through its small groups and its deacons' ministry. BMC also supports more extensive care and support through its professional pastoral staff. This care has over time included pastoral care and counseling, spiritual direction, hospital visitations, family/marriage enrichment and support, vocational counseling, and support in times of personal and family crisis.

Members and friends will experience church life in its fullest sense through participation in the Boulder Mennonite small group life.

Groups within the BMC congregation have special roles in promoting the life of the church:

The **Church Council** is the leadership team for the community and meets monthly under the coordination of the Church Chairperson ("Chair"). The agenda is set based on tracking of committee and task group activities, consultation with the pastor/s regarding perceived needs within the congregation, and awareness of timely outreach issues in the community. Our annual or biennial "MapMaking" planning events help to set priorities for the congregation's work and focus (e.g. "Growing Together" in fall 2015). **Committees and task groups** present plans and updates to council, and community members bring proposals for new actions and outreach. Council meetings are open to all attenders and serve as a sounding board and venue for approval of the budget, and for affirmation of strategies and ideas that are then proposed to the congregation.

**Small Groups** are the primary units of mutual support, discipleship and Bible study for our church. We emphasize and nurture small groups. We re-form groups every two years, and believe that the growth of small groups is a means to extend the reach of the church beyond the congregation. Everyone in our congregation is encouraged to participate in a small group. (See "Small Groups" section)

Committees attend to certain church tasks on a continuous basis, and generally meet monthly. The usual model is that members serve two-year terms, appoint a lead member, and provide a report for monthly church council meetings.

**Special Function (ad hoc) groups** have a less formal schedule, not meeting continuously during the year. A representative is asked to communicate updates to the Church Council. They perform needed functions in the church. These functions include some important annual tasks, such as special building upgrade projects under guidance of the Trustees, or coordinating the annual BMC Birthday Auction.

# Filling Roles within the “Priesthood of All Believers”

BMC members offer their time, skills, and spiritual gifts to benefit the running of the community at its many administrative, educational, worship, and maintenance levels. Our paid staff includes a full-time pastor(s) and a part-time Office Administrator, along with a part-time custodian. Members volunteer their service as Church Chair (2 years) and Deacon (3 years), and Treasurer (open-ended), and members and regular attenders serve in many other committees, planning groups, and provide music and worship leading for worship services. Trustees call us to help with ongoing building maintenance and upgrades on spring and fall Saturday work days. Over time, BMC has called individuals to serve in a variety of ways: The Nomination Team calls individuals to serve in specific roles; the Council may tap individuals to serve for specific needs, the Deacons may work with the pastor to affirm small group leaders. These tasks have shifted somewhat over the years.

Nominations and Determining Volunteer Needs happens on multiple levels. In addition to a Nominating Team helping to contact individuals to fill needs as indicated by individual task groups and committees, they can be called upon by Council to help fill positions that may come up for special tasks (ad hoc) or events, if determined helpful by Council. Church Council and other team leadership often fill positions with individuals they are aware of having interest. Any member can refer to the annual Time & Talent survey results (in a shared e-folder) to seek persons interested in helping with a variety of tasks.

In current practice, small group leaders present their ideas for small group focus topics and meeting times and frequency. The Pastor and Office Administrator work with the list of small group suggestions, gather interest from the congregation in order to refine the list.

Additionally, Council is responsible for the filling of other roles and positions in special function groups. As the need arises, individual Council members are appointed at the appropriate times to contact individuals about serving in these “other groups”, including: Pastoral Review Team, Stewardship Committee (which may form as a subset of Ministry of Financial Resources), Treasurer, Greeters and Welcomers. The Admin provides a task list for greeter suggestions and duties.

## **Regular BMC task groups:**

Christian Education

Chair & Church Council

Deacons

Greeters

Ministry of Financial Resources Committee (works with the Treasurer)

- see Outreach Committee

Nominating Team

Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee

Small Groups

Treasurer

Trustees (building and grounds)

Youth Council (YOCO)

Worship Committee

Special Task Groups:

Hands-On Task Force Event Coordinator

Rental Coordinator/Rental Contact

Outreach committee (formerly First Fruits)

BMC Website and Social Media presence

Call & Covenant Task Group (1 from each: PCRC, Treasurer or MFRC, Council, Pastoral Search Committee - formerly Salary Negotiating Group), see Church Council description

**Historical task groups:**

Events (related to rentals)

Hospitality (special events planning/recruiting/set-up of social events, promoting the events, organizing other helpful gatherings as needed by congregation)

Capital Campaigns

MVS Support Committee

## **Church Membership**

Attendees to BMC have an annual opportunity to better understand the history of Anabaptists and Mennonites, as well as to explore the theology and practices of that legacy that Boulder Mennonite had adapted in its own brand of modern-day Anabaptist community and peace witness. The Pastor(s) offer a 6-week overview of these issues that we have called the Inquirer's Class. Typically, one of our Deacons sits in on the sessions to offer further response and input as may be helpful.

These sessions are offered in the two months preceding an affirmation Sunday, when formal acceptance of new members takes place. (A new member can join at any time of year.) Anyone is welcome to express their interest in becoming a member of BMC in conversation with the Pastor(s) or Deacons. Generally, membership may occur after the interested person is baptized as an adult believer (indicating a conscious choice to do so, versus infant baptism), following the Inquirer's Class or youth catechism and conversations in which they demonstrate an understanding of Mennonite faith and BMC values, or when they make a formal profession of faith in front of the congregation.

Historically, the Deacons have worked with the Pastor(s) to keep BMC's membership list current from year to year. Members and attenders are invited to speak with the Pastor if they wish to be removed from any list.

The following understandings of membership vs. inactive member status are prompted by questions from individuals both inside and outside of BMC, and from our church conferences. These definitions and proposals from the deacons were approved by Council in 1995, and were revisited by Deacons in 2017.

### **Active resident members and participants**

Persons involved in BMC worship, and/ or BMC activities, programs, or groups. Those in this category who have chosen to intentionally, formally affiliate and remain active with the church as formal members will be designated with an asterisk (\*) in the church directory.

## **Associate resident members**

Persons who choose to intentionally affiliate with Boulder Mennonite, but who choose to retain their full membership in a different church due to uncertain or nonpermanent residency in the Boulder region. Examples of this might be MVS participants, persons not able to find permanent employment, etc. It is understood that associate members are transferred to the wider fellowship list if they move away from the Boulder area.

## **Inactive resident members and friends**

Members, participants, and friends who have not attended worship and have not been involved in the programs, activities, or groups of the church and have not had contact with the church for a period of three years.

## **Wider fellowship members**

Participants or members who no longer live within driving distance of the church and who do not participate in church programs due to this geographical factor.

## **Categorization**

The deacons review and update BMC listings annually, and make decisions regarding movement of persons from one category to another. Letters shall be sent to inactive persons encouraging them to be active in other congregations in their local communities, and asking if they wish to formally be retained on our membership listings. This should be a registered letter; if BMC receives no response, the person shall be formally dropped from the rolls.

The sum of active formal members and associate members is the “church membership” number we report to our church conferences and others. The sum of all active resident members and participants and associate resident members (the first two categories), plus children, is the number of persons understood to be served through/by the congregation.

In 2017, the Church Administrator maintained a “Participants” email list to 120 persons.

# Christian Education

BMC seeks to offer a complete range of Christian Education classes for children and adults. Adult classes meet for Bible study and discuss varieties of spiritual and social ministry. Our children use the Mennonite curriculum and learn through Bible stories; our youth and high school also sometimes draw from recent Bible and peace/personal faith curricula. Several BMC members work with volunteer teachers and speakers to plan and support the weekly hour on Sundays when we gather in class sessions to study and learn in ways that stretch us in our faith and daily witness. Sessions are offered for children and youth, and for adults beyond high school.

## Christian Education Programming Mission Statement

- To facilitate developmental and age appropriate faith exploration and formation
- To strengthen Biblical literacy with an emphasis on the teachings of Jesus
- To increase the understanding of the basic tenants of Mennonite/Anabaptist faith and its application to daily living
- To facilitate children, youth and adults in experiencing themselves as unique individuals created and unconditionally loved by God

## Programming for Adults

The pastor, in consultation with leadership, plays a leading role in guiding the Christian Education programming for adults. They will support the adults in the congregation who take responsibility for planning and implementing Sunday classes. Adult leadership can be arranged in many different ways including:

- Someone who oversees the programming for an entire a year
- An adult from the children and youth programming committee may choose to add this to their responsibilities
- An adult may volunteer to plan for a specific number of weeks on a specific topic

## Programming for Children and Youth

Boulder Mennonite Church cherishes children and youth as beloved children of God. BMC recognizes it takes dedicated, caring and loving individuals to provide programming for its children and youth. BMC congregants are grateful for the nursery care providers, hall walkers and teachers who give of their time and talents to work with children and youth.

## The Committee Structure

- The committee ideally will consist of at least three persons who are active participants in the congregation. In addition, the pastor will be an ex-officio member.
- Members will be invited to serve for two years but may choose to serve more or less than two years.
- Members will be encouraged to rotate off the committee in a way that provides continuity. If this is not possible, the pastor will provide continuity and work with the new committee.
- The outgoing members may recruit replacements or the Nominating Team can be asked to help find replacements.

## Tasks of the Committee

- Recruit teachers with assistance from the Nominating Team.

- Organize, implement and supervise faith exploration classes/experiences for children and youth.
- Explore the possibility/feasibility of summer activities for children and youth.
- Organize and arrange for nursery care during the worship service.
- Arrange for a coordinator to be in charge of the Christmas Program.
- Order Bibles and insure they are given to children and youth at the appropriate age/grade.
- Work with the pastor to honor high school graduates.
- Work with the pastor to recognize teachers and students at the beginning and end of the year.
- Assist teachers in preparing the classroom for the new year.
- Arrange for appropriate teacher training as needed.
- Provide the teachers and hall walkers with a copy of the Christian Education Handbook and insure they have reviewed it and are familiar with the policies and procedures.
- Insure the teachers and hall walkers are familiar with the Children and Youth Safety and Protection Policies and Procedures handbook.
- Review and update the Christian Education Handbook and the Child and Youth Safety and Protection Handbook annually, updating it as appropriate.

NOTE: Please refer to the “Christian Education Handbook” and the “Child Safety Protection Policies and Procedures Handbook” for details about programming for children and youth. *See current documents in the Appendices.*

## **Church Administrator**

Our Church Administrator, paid an hourly salary by the church, handles church organizational tasks, along with Sunday morning preparation with the pastor and document updates and archiving, as well as manages our building. Our building is used by various groups through the week, and requires coordination between tenants, renters, and the congregation. The administrator finds and maintains relationships with tenants, collects rent, and enforces policies of building usage. The administrator also coordinates the custodial, maintenance, and lock-up services for our building.

The administrator is present whenever possible at the monthly church council meeting. The preference is that the administrator be an active or associate member of BMC. (see Appendix for current Admin Job Description)

Note: In hiring for the Church Administrator position, it is preferable to find a current, active church member, as this person will have a certain advantage by knowing other attenders and general church procedures. Such a BMC member will be recommended based on their skillset as observed by congregation members and the pastor. When an administrator is hired from outside of the congregation, references will be checked by the Church Chair or a designated representative for relevant skills and work history.

### **Rental Coordinator**

The Rental Coordinator is currently an adult volunteer who works with the Office Administrator and website manager(s) to ensure up-to-date descriptions of rental facilities and rates for groups interested in regular or one-time use of our facility. This person is listed as the main contact for rental questions and makes decisions on allowance of use, in consultation with the Administrator, as well as handle agreement documents between BMC and the renter/group.

# Church Council

The BMC church council is the primary decision-making group. It makes the month-to-month decisions for the church where congregational meetings are not needed or cannot be arranged quickly enough. Council decisions can be reviewed by the congregation if BMC members make the request. The council approves, recommends, or declines to recommend decisions to the congregation. Congregational meetings are called when a time for community discussion and interaction is helpful.

The Council also makes month-to-month financial decisions, affirms visions for the church, provides oversight and guidance to committee activities, and facilitates communication and decision-making. The monthly meetings are scheduled by the Chair. The Chair, pastor(s), treasurer, and representatives from the church committees and relevant task groups attend each meeting. Committee representatives generally send a brief written monthly report to council during the week prior to meeting in order to facilitate communication about their activities. Any participant in the life of BMC is invited to attend council meetings.

When the Pastor(s) work with PCRC to developing their job descriptions near the end of each three-year term, based on the current version of the Annual Covenant, leadership representatives from various task groups, as represented on the church Council, give input as part of finalizing the revisions.

Council sets up an annual, ad-hoc Call & Covenant Task Group (task group) made up of a representative from the PCRC, the Treasurer or a representative from the Ministry of Financial Resources Committee, a representative from Council, and a member of the Pastoral Search Committee.)

## Church Chair

The Chair is chosen by the congregation as a whole, by nomination ballot (submitted in late spring), which helps guide the Nominating Team in seeking a BMC member willing to bring their gifts to this role. The Chair's term is two years and typically begins in the fall (September).

The BMC Chair provides leadership to the congregation regarding business matters and congregational decisions. Roles include:

- Setting dates, times and agenda for monthly church council meetings with input from the pastor(s); leading those meetings and designating a scribe to record and share minutes within a timely manner for review at the start of the next council meeting.
- Facilitating council meetings and encouraging representation by each committee
- Helping to sustain communications between the Council and the Church Administrator for relevant announcements, and between task groups and committees and the congregation
- Recruiting members to provide assistance to ad-hoc groups to perform special temporary tasks as needed
- Planning and facilitating congregational meetings (annual meeting in July, and other meetings as needed. An annual or alternate-year "Map-Making"/ministry-focus meeting is led in conjunction with planning with the pastor and Council or PCRC, which help to focus the topic as determined helpful for the congregation's direction, and may involve a small ad hoc group to help facilitate.
- Working with PCRC to finalize employment documentation for church staff, including Pastor, Church Administrator, and other relevant positions, and providing a signature as representative of the congregation as "employer".

# Deacons

The Deacons of Boulder Mennonite Church guide and nurture the spiritual life of the congregation, working to enhance the well-being of all members and participants of the congregation. With the pastor(s), the Deacons help shape BMC's vision of its ministry. This includes:

- identifying spiritual needs of the congregation and shaping programs to respond to those needs
- promoting small groups as the primary functional care unit of BMC
- supporting the pastor(s) in administering the Boulder Mennonite Emergency Aid fund to meet physical/ financial needs of our church members
- promoting, with the pastor(s), special programs of spiritual nurture and outreach in the congregation such as marriage enrichment, service learning, etc., based on identified needs of the congregation
- providing support to the pastor(s); a place to “check in”
- assisting pastor(s) with commissioning, baptisms, communion, and inquiry classes for potential members
- providing non-emergency care for members during pastoral sabbaticals and transitions
- Purchase roses for families of newborns
- Purchase calendars for departing members

The Deacons meet with the pastor(s) monthly to review the well-being of congregational members and participants with special concerns or needs. The health of the small groups in the church is reviewed. The agenda is set by the Deacon appointed as “lead”; this duty can rotate among the Deacons, and is communicated to the Pastor(s) and Council if a shift occurs.

The Deacons may make recommendations to the Church Council for support in areas they feel appropriate. At least one Deacon attends the monthly Church Council meeting and represents the committee.

There are at least three Deacons, all members of the church, with staggered terms so that there is a turnover of one Deacon per year. Every May, for a new term starting the following September, members and participants of the BMC congregation are given opportunity to consider the duties of Deacons and a list of eligible members. After about three weeks, they submit ballots of nomination for a replacement. The results guide the Nominating Team, with input from the Pastor(s) in calling a new Deacon, a BMC member willing to bring their gifts to this role. A Deacon does not serve more than two consecutive, three-year terms.



# Greeters

A group of individuals from the congregation commit to take turns, for one year, serving as Greeters on Sunday mornings. Greeters make a special effort to welcome visitors and ensure that each attendee gets the day's bulletin and other materials. This group is re-formed or reaffirmed on an annual basis and receives training from the Church Administrator and Pastor.

“**Welcomers**” is a term used historically for those who help(ed) to make follow-up contacts with those who recently visited and expressed interest in BMC. This specific effort has not been functional for some time, although there are BMC members who continue to believe it's an effort worth reviving.

## Hands-On Task Force Events Coordinator

Mission: To give leadership to set-up, tear-down, and preparation for events held on BMC campus.

Description:

- Assist the church by working with and organizing persons to set-up and/or tear-down after meals, gatherings, etc., as needed
- Ensure that basement kitchen and upstairs kitchenette are clean, sanitary, orderly, and stocked as needed (coffee, tea, condiments, paper products, silverware, etc.), tablecloths cleaned, towels, dishcloths cleaned/replaced as needed
- Notify BMC Administrator when supplies need to be ordered
- Contact and work with Trustees when repairs are needed for tables, chairs, kitchen, and kitchenette
- Committee chair/coordinator will be notified whenever kitchen/ette, fellowship hall/community room will be used for non-BMC function (i.e., rentals)
- Be willing to work with outside groups as needed with set-up/tear-down needs, giving instructions as to use of kitchen/ette, clean-up, etc.
- Oversee volunteers during BMC events that include use of kitchen/ette and fellowship hall/community room.
- 

Spiritual gifts, skills desired for persons considering serving in this ministry:

- Willingness to serve others in behind-the-scenes type of work
- Ability to work well with others
- Ability to follow direction
- Friendly
- Organized

# Ministry of Financial Resources

The Ministry of Financial Resources Committee (MFRC) prepares and administers an annual Stewardship Drive, which incorporates:

- a sermon series
- a stewardship program
- a visitation/pledge process
- the collection of pledges and gift/talent surveys
- a concluding event of celebration and thanksgiving

This activity is the major component of stewardship education, and supports the continuing effort of the church leadership to encourage the congregation to move toward tithing and fuller participation in service and worship activities. The successful Stewardship Drives in past years have been of great interest to other congregations.

The MFRC lead does the work of coordinating the stewardship drive; planning the date with Church Council, getting volunteer help from the congregation, and presiding over the planning and execution. It is advisable that the Chair be someone involved in previous drives. In the weeks prior to the Stewardship drive, 6-8 other volunteers from the congregation join for a relatively brief period of intensive work in planning, preparing, and assembling stewardship packets. Tabulation of forms submitted from these stewardship packets are tallied and posted in church e-files by the Treasurer (financial commitments) and the Office Administrator (Time & Talent surveys) or another volunteer.

In 2002, BMC adopted a “First Fruits” budget strategy that was recommended to congregations and church agencies in 2002 by the newly formed Mennonite Church USA. First Fruits fosters intentional reflection during the creation of church budgets, gives congregations guidance in determining outreach budgetary priorities. Many times, when churches are faced with financial shortfalls, the first place they choose to cut into is their mission giving. First Fruits asks that congregations consider mission giving (those expenses that go “outside the congregation”, in BMC’s case, “Outreach”) to be the first and most important item in their budget, followed by staff expenses and finally by facilities and programs. These three budget categories, and their recommended percentage of the budget, follow:

**First Fruits:** (15-50%) All giving that goes “outside the congregation” including to MCUSA, area conferences, and other Mennonite agencies, as well as all contributions to other local, national, and international organizations and charities.

**Staff Expenses:** (40-60%) Salaries and other expenses directly associated with staff.

**Facilities and Programs:** (10-25%) Expenses associated with the physical facilities and with programming (education, worship, etc.)

Additionally, the First Fruits stewardship structure recommends that congregations keep a permanent “reserve fund” held in escrow in case of emergency. This reserve fund should ideally be 7-10% of a congregation’s annual budget or one month’s operating expenses.

## Outreach Committee (“First Fruits Committee”)

The Outreach Committee is an ad-hoc group, which benefits from including the Treasurer, that convenes toward the end of the fiscal year to draw up a proposed distribution of outreach and missional funding within the proposed budget provided by the Ministry of Financial Resources. This takes place relative to the Annual Congregational Meeting in July so that an understanding of proposed financial outreach amounts is generally understood and affirmed. This group is essentially the same as the historical “First Fruits” committee.

# Nominating Team

A special Nominating Team is formed or reaffirmed at the annual congregational meeting. This committee consists of two or three individuals chosen by the congregation, who will determine personnel needs for the following:

Christian Education Committee

Trustees

Worship Committee

Youth Council (YOCO) Lead

Outreach Committee (“First Fruits”)

Other standing and special committees as needed

The Nominating Team contacts each of the above to determine which committee participants’ terms are being completed. The Nominating Team may check to see if any of these individuals are willing to commit to another term with the same committee. Where there are vacancies, the group works to identify and contact possible replacements, aided in discernment by the results of the Stewardship Drive and possibly by consultation with small groups. The work of finding willing replacements should be started as soon as any deacon/chair vacancies are anticipated, to be finished by the end of August so that folks are ready to begin their new positions in September at the start of the committee year. When special circumstances require finding replacements at other times of the year, Council will work directly with the committee involved.

## Pastor

BMC’s pastor functions to ground and direct the community by teaching about and sharing God’s love, caring for members of the congregation, and facilitating the extension of that love and care beyond BMC’s walls in a way that claims both transcendent and human relationships. Our pastors are licensed spiritual ministers who are ordained by a national denomination, typically that of Mennonite Church USA.

The priority tasks for mission, ministry, and policies as indicated within the BMC Pastor’s job description have changed over time as determined by the needs and priorities of the congregation as discerned through Map-Making and other communal discussions, in consultation with the Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) and the Church Council. The current Pastoral Job Description indicates priorities based on our Growing Together work in late 2015 and includes: Worship and Preaching; Leadership and Administration; Youth/Young Adults and Christian Education; Pastoral Care; and the Life, Growth and Outreach of the Congregation. (See Appendix E for current Pastor Job Description)

BMC has generally employed a full-time pastor or one full-time combined lead pastoral team. During a period of transition in 2017, Interim Pastors included Steve Goering and Susan Ortman Goering (May 1 – June 11), and Rick King (June 12 – October 15). After considering a range of applicants, the Pastoral Search Committee in September submitted the name of a final candidate to the congregation for its consideration.

# Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee

The PCRC supports the pastor and congregation's relationship and providing or seeking out district-based mediation as may be needed between the Pastor and congregation. The group is available as a sounding board for both the Pastor(s) and community members with the purpose of maintaining a strong and growing relationship between leadership and laity. PCRC meets with the lead Pastor frequently and with any other member of the pastoral team at least quarterly. It assists the Pastor(s) in assessing their goals in order to meet their job descriptions.

BMC formed its first PCRC in 2005. The group is made up of at least three members who approach all conversations with a balanced and objective view and hold all matters in strict confidence.

PCRC will conduct annual pastoral reviews, with significant reviews happening every 3 years in tandem with the renewal of the Pastor's contracted 3-year term(s). The committee is responsible for collating the results of the review and presenting them in an appropriate way to Church Council and to the congregation.

This group forwards any suggested changes to the full-time Pastor(s) hiring contracts (Covenant) as perceived needed, to the Church Chair and Council, which finalizes the document and sees to signing with the Pastor(s). It works with the pastor to revise the Pastor Job Description based on current congregational priorities. PCRC fills out the MCUSA Salary Guidelines Worksheet in collaboration with the Pastor(s) and presents it to the ad hoc Salary Negotiating Group (or the MFRC, in such a group's absence) to assist in salary negotiations or adjustments.

See a copy of BMC's PCRC Job Description in Appendix D.

MCUSA suggestions for the PCRC's role can be found at <http://mennoniteusa.org/res>.

## Pastoral Search Committee

In chapters of BMC's life where new pastoral leadership is sought, a Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) is formed. Typically it includes five individuals of diverse ages and experience, each with consistent recent attendance and involvement. Volunteers are considered, as well as people tapped to round out the team. The church council discusses and affirms the group's makeup.

The PSC works with the council and gathers input from the congregation (e.g., recent documents, "MapMaking" decisions, or short-term meetings to reaffirm direction) in order to complete Mennonite Church USA paperwork to list an official pastoral opening. The team's main reference points are with MCUSA guiding documents. Additionally, the PSC works with a Mountain States Conference Minister to receive and filter a variety of applicants' Ministerial Leadership profiles.

Upon PSC's recommendation of a candidate to the congregation, preparations are made for a congregational visit weekend, otherwise known as "Candidating". This involves inviting church attendees to venues and activities, including worship and message-bringing on the part of the candidate, for getting to know the individual/s on professional and personal levels.

At the conclusion of the visit, the congregation gathers in one or more meetings to reflect and discern God's calling of this individual (or two, if a shared ministry) to Boulder Mennonite Church. The process of affirmation is directed by BMC's Decision-Making Guidelines (see Appendix I), and is tailored to respect the candidate's need for a timely response as well as to BMC's history of listening to one another and to God's direction as we work toward a consensus decision.

# Small Groups

- Small groups are the key to close, accepting relationships. These basic assumptions inform the formation, size and function of these groups.
- Our God is a caring God who wants us to experience the richness and support of a caring community.
- The church is to be a caring community that offers close, accepting relationships through careful listening, forgiving attitudes, and personal care.
- Personal care and community become most concrete and meaningful in small groups of 12 or fewer persons.
- Small groups are becoming the key pastoral structure of our church. Small Group leaders are trained and supervised by our Pastor(s) and become part of the pastoral team.
- All are invited to become part of a small group that meets regularly.

## Qualities of a Small Group

- Has five to 12 members.
- Comes together around a common interest or need.
- Meets regularly (once or twice a month) at a time and place most convenient to its members. Sunday and Wednesday evenings are left unscheduled for other BMC activities, as a possible time for these groups to meet.
- Is people-centered. Meetings are filled with friendship, study, and dialogue.
- Groups agree to confidentiality. Nobody criticizes behind another's back.
- Group members listen to and care for each other. They pray for each other and help each other in times of need.
- Group leaders meet with each other and the pastor/s monthly or at least six times per year for supervision and continuing education.
- Groups are encouraged to participate in welcoming new church participants and in service and discipleship activities.
- Small groups are occasionally asked to discern a thoughtful response to a current topic or congregational decision. They provide feedback on these issues to the Church Council.

# Treasurer

The Treasurer is a church member and volunteer who handles church finances on a continuous basis for at least two years.

Weekly: deposits offerings, rent checks, and other income; records sources of income/ offerings; reports current offering/budget status for the weekly bulletin, pays church bills and outgoing monies as directed by Council or Outward Ministries, reimburses folks with itemized receipts

Biweekly: pays pastor's salary

Monthly: balances the bank statements & accounts; prepares monthly report for and attendance at Church Council, with year-to-date budget/ account information; pays salaries (custodian, administrator)

Periodically: reports delinquent rent payments (over two months late) to administrator; manages BMC Everence and PayPal accounts, order checks, manage church credit cards, provide services for Families in Crisis and for Prayerstream Ministries, as needed.

Annually: (Nov.-Dec.) provides budget statistics to Budget Committee as necessary; (Jan.) generate necessary tax forms for the congregation, pastors/s and employees; provide tax receipts for last year's givers, or provide necessary data to someone who does; prepares preliminary budget proposal (June)

# Trustees

The Trustees take responsibility for the upkeep of BMC's building and grounds, to maintain safety, functionality and appearance, and to respond to the specific physical needs of BMC and the tenants. They work to designate special-project teams for repairs and renovations, as needed and as determined priority by the congregation. This involves work in the following areas: cleaning, painting, carpentry, flooring, heating, plumbing, lighting, electrical, and telephone. Sign construction and installation is necessary when new tenants move in. Trustees must also respond to rare events such as theft, flood, storm, and fire. Trustees organize workdays and once upon a time filled special seasonal needs, including the provision of a fresh-cut Christmas tree. Where appropriate, the Trustees keep written documentation of the work that they have performed, such as a log of boiler repairs, or a listing of telephone circuits and wire codes. This helps provide continuity and greatly aids in communication with the Church Administrator's role and with service providers.

BMC has three or more trustees, serving staggered terms of three years each. Cooperation between trustees is essential as many, if not most, tasks require multiple workers with multiple skills. Needs should not go unmet, and no single trustee should be disproportionately burdened by these needs. In order to allow the trustees to operate in an efficient and effective fashion, one of the three trustees is chosen by the others as Lead, who:

Attends Church Council and reports to the Council on a quarterly basis, or arranges for such representation

Meets at least bimonthly with the building administrator to identify important building needs.

coordinates communication between trustees, arranges meetings when necessary, and delegates areas of responsibility to the appropriate trustees. For instance, one trustee may take special responsibility for tasks involving carpentry.

Takes primary responsibility for keeping track of seasonal Trustees responsibilities

The general duties of the Trustees as a group may be done by the Trustees themselves, by recruited volunteers, or by hired contractors, as appropriate, in order to minimize expense and maximize quality of the facility. This includes duties such as hiring persons or recruiting volunteers for custodial, lock-up, snow removal, and lawn care duties, talking with building inspectors, zoning board, insurance representatives and contractors, scheduling and advertising and organizing workdays. Trustees may make decisions on spending, without consulting Church Council, for amounts up to 25% of the amount budgeted for building maintenance. Council and/or the Treasurer are consulted for larger amounts.

In addition to responding to unscheduled and changing needs of BMC and the tenants (things breaking, leaking, etc.), these are some seasonal items:

**March/April:** Plan spring workday

**May:** Organize volunteer sign-up for spring/ summer lawn mowing and watering

**May /June:** Spring workday • **August/September:** Fall workday

**September/ October:** Inspect and test heating systems for coming season, including boiler check. Facilitate repairs and maintenance.

**October:** Clean up leaves. Remove hoses; cutoff and drain outside faucets. Fall work day

**November:** Plan snow and ice removal for coming season; organize volunteer sign-up for shoveling

**December:** If requested, get Christmas tree and/ or help with other decorations

A significant portion of the job does not occur on any schedule; rather, trustees respond as the needs of BMC and the tenants change and as things break, wear out, leak, etc.

# Youth Council (YOCO)

YOCO is in a time of transition as we seek to discern a best way forward for leadership to youth program and ministry outside of Christian Education classes.

For years, the BMC model has been to have monthly youth group outings coordinated with a part-time paid youth advisor based on ideas generated with the youth. The Youth Council develops and oversees the youth ministry program, providing resources and helping plan events. The aim is to give youth a meaningful and educating church experience. The committee also serves as liaison between the youth and the rest of the congregation. The team consists of a leader, chosen by the Nominating Team, plus the youth teachers and youth group leaders, with the participation of parents and youth themselves.

The BMC Pastor meets with YOCO and provides guidance on a regular basis to activity Sponsor(s) or youth advisor leader(s), as applicable, in relation to spiritual support and nurture of individual youth at BMC.

The congregation affirms the work of YOCO and youth Sponsors to help maintain a program for BMCers grades 6 to 12. The congregation commits to supporting the youth group in their service, fundraising, and larger Mennonite Church involvement activities.

## Youth Mentoring Program

In 2016, the (former) Youth Advisory Council revived a mentoring program for youth with a renewable, one-year commitment. Ten youth and sponsors were led in a kick-off meeting by the coordinator, and asked to report in on their minimum of 6 meetings during the academic year. In September 2017, the project was initiated for a second year with five pairs and a new coordinator. These pairs were celebrated and dedicated in a worship service in October.

## Website and Social Media group

Following a few lunch meetings of an ad hoc Marketing Group in 2016-2017 (spurred by input from our late-2015 Growing Together mapmaking sessions), several members took on the tasks of moving our church website to a new platform with Mennonite Media, and for making regular posts to the BMC Facebook page and Twitter feed (removed in 2020). This group brainstormed additional ideas for exterior building signage and banners to attract public interest. The group served a relatively short-term, ad hoc role.

# Worship Planning Team

Works with the Pastor(s) in attending to worship themes and continuity, as well as to keep welcome and inclusion of all ages and abilities in the delivery and celebration services. In recent years, this group dissolved, but following our Growing Together discernment (“Map Making”) time in late 2015, two planning pods took responsibility for revitalizing our corporate worship by working together to plan three months of worship services in 2016.

*Historical text:* The Worship Committee reviews and helps establish a monthly worship plan, and provides lay feedback and advice to the pastor/s. The committee helps enhance worship by providing new ideas, provides opportunities for individuals in the congregation to use a diversity of gifts in worship, coordinates the music schedule, and plans workshops and retreats to enhance the worship and community experience.

## Sunday Scheduler

Currently, one member works with church staff to assure that our Sunday worship service matrix is kept filled with volunteers for worship leading, Scripture reading, music direction and instrumental accompaniment, along with related tasks including the provision of care for children in the nursery. Individuals are tapped for these slots based on the interest expressed in the annual Time & Talent surveys submitted as part of the stewardship drive in late spring.

**Currently the Sunday Scheduler (volunteer) tends to filling these roles:** Worship leader, Scripture readers, Nursery, Hall Walker, and sometimes children’s story (on a rotation so rarely needs adjusting).

**The Church Administrator fills these roles:** Musicians, Sound technician, Greeter/Ushers, and Fellowship Snacks.

Historically, the Pastor schedules guest speakers, Adult Christian Ed (with a volunteer – See Christian Education documents in Appendix), Hospitality, Special Music that could be determined by the pastor but has no one particular person at this time.



# Denominational Information

The first Mennonites belonged to a movement that developed in Zurich, Switzerland in 1525. They believed in a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, symbolized by adult baptism. (They were nicknamed ‘Anabaptists’ - re-baptizers -- by those who followed the prevailing practice of infant baptism.) These Anabaptists believed that Christ’s body, the church, was an entity separate from the government. They believed in nonviolence, and an ethical life that conformed to the example of Jesus Christ and the scriptures.

The movement initially sprang up in several countries including Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany. The name ‘Mennonite’ arose because Anabaptists carried the writings of Menno Simons, a former Catholic priest, who through his visits and published writings led the Anabaptists in the Netherlands and northern Germany in the mid-16th century. Persecution and economic hardships eventually drove some Mennonites to migrate to such places as Prussia (now Poland and northern Germany), Moravia, the Russian Ukraine, Russia, Canada, Central and South America, and the United States. Mennonites are now active in numerous countries around the world.

## Affiliations

BMC is affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA), a denomination of 839 Mennonite congregations. As noted in its mission statement, the MCUSA believes that “God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.”

Members view the identity of the Mennonite Church USA in two ways: (1) as a network of Mennonite churches throughout North America, communicating with each other and discerning God’s will, and (2) as an institution embodied by staff workers, voluntary service workers, overseas mission workers, and others whom these churches support financially and through prayer. With this support, these persons can do things that the individual churches could not do by themselves, both in outreach and in creating worship and educational resources. The work of these churches and communication among them is coordinated through offices in Newton, Kansas, and Elkhart, Indiana.

Our area, or regional conference, is the Mountain States Mennonite Conference ([www.mountainstatesmc.org](http://www.mountainstatesmc.org)). This group of 20 congregations ranges from Fort Collins, Colorado, in the north, to Carlsbad, New Mexico, in the South. Its mission is to encourage Mennonite churches in Colorado and New Mexico to pursue God’s dreams by the power of the Holy Spirit in the way of Jesus Christ. MSMC leadership is made up of a three-person team of Ministries Coordinator and two Conference Ministers. It is overseen by a Moderator and Leadership Board made up of representatives from its member congregations.

In addition to providing support to its congregations, MSMC promotes these ministries: Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp ([rmmc.org](http://rmmc.org)), the Frontier Village Foundation, the SEED project for church planting, and a Dialogue Resource Team.

## *Mennonite Confession of Faith*

From the beginning, Mennonites have created statements of what they believe. A group of Anabaptists, forerunners of Mennonites, wrote the Schleitheim Articles in 1527. Since then, Mennonite groups have produced numerous statements of faith. All are based on the Bible as the Word of God and the trustworthy guide of faith and life, and on Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3: 11).

The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective (1995, available online and in booklet form) takes its place in this rich confessional history. It is the work of the two previous Mennonite groups in North America, the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) (who joined together in 2001 to become

Mennonite Church USA). Its intent is to describe (rather than prescribe) aspects of faith which many Mennonites affirm.

The document consists of 24 articles, reflecting the traditional Anabaptist understandings of God, Christ, the Bible, sin and salvation, and aspects of Christian life, in light of Christ's teachings. It is used to help teach what Mennonites believe.

## **MCUSA Vision: Healing and Hope**

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

BMC, like hundreds of other Mennonite congregations, finds one expression of its theology of service in actively supporting the work and goals of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC is renowned for its relief work and service abroad, and in the United States, and for its quiet but persuasive testimony to our spiritual heritage, encouraging and enabling us to share some of our wealth with those less fortunate, regardless of their religious beliefs. We also support Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), which coordinates disaster work in North America.

BMC encourages participation in Denver Area Mennonite ministries, and in ecumenical interfaith efforts in the Boulder area. BMC also has associate affiliation with the Church of the Brethren, another historic peace church.

## **BMC's Outreach**

Boulder Mennonite Church seeks to actively engage in mission and service work in our local community and around the world. The following is a list of the organizations we have historically supported on an either through regular giving from our budget and/ or active volunteer involvement by members of the congregation.

Service opportunities are subject to change according to the passions and interests of congregational members who suggest and organize distinct activities or engagements.

### **Atwood Emergency Shelter Children's Program**

Longmont-based shelter for families in need. Members of Longmont small group have been instrumental in funding a children's program and staffing it with volunteers from Mennonite Voluntary Service. (past)

### **Boulder Homeless Shelter / Homeless Overflow outreach**

Boulder Mennonite serves food at the shelter each month from October to April and opens our doors in the winter months when the homeless shelter has reached capacity. BMC currently provides one-night weekly sleeping and breakfast accommodations for the Path to Home effort through the City of Boulder. Occasionally, additional nights are requested and arranged on an as-needed basis.

### **Christian Peacemaker Teams**

This national organization is supported by historic peace churches and sends delegations of peacemakers around the world to intervene in areas of conflict. Boulder Mennonite is at the heart of the Colorado chapter of CPT.

### **Emergency Family Assistance Association**

Boulder-based non-profit provides groceries and basic support services to families in need of emergency assistance. (past and occasional/current)

### **Fundamarcos**

BMC provides financial support to this Guatemala-based sustainable agriculture organization.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

In addition to our annual financial support, BMC members have occasionally been involved as volunteers in Habitat for Humanity building projects.

**Heifer Project International**

BMC provides financial support to this international organization in its efforts to provide livestock to families in developing countries.

**Mennonite Voluntary Service**

BMC supported a local unit of volunteers from the early nineties for this national Mennonite organization. Update with statement that placements of workers in an MVS unit in Boulder was discontinued in 2015, when the national office sought to downsize. BMC misses the vitality and influx of young adult energy we enjoyed over the years with MVSers.

**Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center**

This peacemaking and social justice organization has been housed in our church building for a number of years with members of BMC being involved in various projects. (past)

**Victim Offender Reconciliation Program**

Founded by BMC in the early nineties, this mediation program for victims and offenders of crime continues to be housed in our building receiving financial support from the congregation. (past – these efforts were assumed at a new level within the county's justice program)

# A History of Boulder Mennonite Church

BMC was birthed in the fall of 1984 as a new mission church by the Western District Conference (WDC) of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Marilyn Miller was called by the WDC Home Missions Committee to be the new church planting pastor and she served as pastor until August 1989. Boulder Mennonite's charter worship service was on November 25, 1985, where the core worshiping group covenanted mutual support and accountability with each other in "anticipation of increasing our love of God, neighbor, and self and furthering love, justice, and Shalom in our world." The three primary scripture passages quoted on page 3 of this *Guidebook* were chosen as the foundational, guiding passages for BMC's spiritual and faith life. These passages continue to provide that key guidance and inspiration for our church life. Steve Goering and Susan Ortman Goering, then of Boulder, served as pastors to BMC from 1989 to 2004 while raising their children Christie, Matthew, and Katrina.

In the summer of 2005, the congregation decided to join a new area conference created with churches from Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas that had formerly been members in the Western District Conference and the Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference. The new conference, Mountain States Mennonite Conference (MSMC) was officially established on January 1, 2006. The Boulder Mennonite Church remembers with thanks the WDC for its commitment during our early years. BMC is also affiliated with the national Mennonite Church USA, and less formally with the Church of the Brethren, a sister denomination to Mennonite Church USA.

Jane and Merv Dick served as interim pastors for one year in 2004 – 2005. In the summer of 2004, the church moved from our long-term home at 1520 Euclid to a different building at 3910 Table Mesa.

Karen Cox served as pastor of Boulder Mennonite Church from August 1, 2005, to April 30, 2017. She was officially installed on Sept. 18, 2005 in what was her first pastorate. From January 2015 to December 2016, she served as Moderator for the Mountain States Mennonite Conference in addition to her role at Boulder Mennonite. She earned her Master of Divinity Degree in 2000 from Bethany Theological Seminary (the seminary for the Church of the Brethren). She brought experience as a volunteer at the local, regional, and national levels for the Church of the Brethren. She earned a Chemistry Bachelor of Science degree (1985) from Bridgewater College (VA), and had worked in industrial laboratories and in the computer industry. Karen and her husband, Barry, joined Boulder Mennonite Church in 2000 with their children Mik and Anne.

In 2009, Harlan Unrau, a retired historian and member of First Mennonite Church, Denver, researched for BMC's self-publication of the congregation's 25-year history: *Missional Anabaptist Ministry in an Urban Setting: A History of Boulder Mennonite Church 1984 - 2009*. The spiral bound volume was produced, edited, and indexed by BMC member Terry S. Mast, with photograph collection and identification assistance from a number of long-term BMCers. Copies were made available for a nominal fee; a copy is available for review in the BMC library.

In early 2017, Pastor Karen announced her resignation. That year, BMC Council invited Steve and Susan Ortman Goering to return to fill a part-time, interim pastoral role (May into early June). They were followed by Reverend Rick King, a United Church of Christ pastor from Longmont, who ably served a four-month, full-time interim role (June 12 to October 15).

During that time, a Pastoral Search Committee worked with Linford King, then Mountain States co-minister with his wife MaryEtta, to invite submissions of long-term pastoral candidates for consideration. Randall Spaulding and his partner, Gary Stephens, candidated with BMCers in multiple gatherings and in worship on the weekend of October 27-29. Following the PSC's recommendation that BMC extend a call to Randy for a full-time pastoral position, the congregation gathered on November 5, 2017 to process the decision to call Randy. He accepted the congregation's invitation and began as our pastor on January 14, 2018. The congregation celebrated Randy's ordination within Mountain States Mennonite Conference on February 17, 2019.

# Appendices

- A – Annual Calendar of Events and Cyclical Tasks**
- B - Christian Education Teacher Handbook**
- C – Safety and Security (Background Check) documents**
- D – Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee Job Description**
- E – Pastor Job Description** *(Spring 2017)*
- F – BMC Office Administrator Job Description** *(November 2020)*
- G – Functional Groups (fall 2017) and team members**
- H – Church Policies**
- I – BMC Decision-Making Guidelines and Suggestions for Congregational Meetings**
- J - Affirming Language Awareness document** *(proposed to Council September 2017)*
- K – Proposal to Council for a new initiative (form)**



# BMC CALENDAR of EVENTS and CYCLICAL TASKS

## JANUARY

Recruiting of Small Group Leaders (every other year, 2020, 2022, etc.)

Epiphany Sunday

Mennonite World Conference Fellowship Sunday.

Call for new small groups.



## FEBRUARY

Small Group Sign-ups (every other year, 2020, 2022, etc.)

Advertise Inquirer's class for potential new members

A number of BMC men attend MSMC Men's retreat in late February/early March at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

## MARCH

Start new Small Groups (every other year, 2018, 2020, etc.)

Some BMC women attend MSMC's Women's retreat in mid-March at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

Advertise receiving members on Easter

## APRIL

Palm Sunday Service

Tradition of holding Maundy Thursday feet washing service (Tenebrae or similar)

Pastor has often participated in joint Good Friday service with SOBO Clergy Group, with minimal participation of BMC members

Easter Sunday: Potluck breakfast at 9:30, worship at 10:30, egg hunt for children at 11:45 (youth hide eggs). No Christian Ed hour. On Easter we traditionally give our 5th graders Bibles embossed with their names. (Christian Ed/Betty Jantzen has info on ordering Bibles.)

Provide Deacon/Church Chair nominations forms to active members list (one of three deacon's 3-year terms ends yearly; chair cycles every 2 years)

Call for names of graduates (elementary, junior high, high school, college, graduate)

Traditional "Ebenezer Sunday" on Sunday after Easter; members encouraged to bring stones and to tell stories of how they have experienced 'God with them' in past year in place of sermon (or with shortened sermon).

## MAY

Set Sunday to honor graduates. Gifts for high school grads (10,000 Villages mugs and popcorn bowls are typical. Congregation writes blessings)

Teacher thanks on last Sunday of Christian Ed (Christian Ed handles)

Send out nominating forms for deacons/chair

Annual stewardship efforts typically happen in May through The Ministry of Financial Resources Committee (MFRC). Packets are forwarded to the congregation members that include a recap of the past year, intent-to-give forms, time/talent survey forms. Often, a stewardship sermon or two are offered. Sometimes Everence reps are invited)

## **JUNE**

On Pentecost Sunday, we've invited people to wear yellow, orange, red clothes.

Commission those who will attend MC USA Convention (every other year, 2017, 2019...). Convention typically happens over July 4 week.

## **JULY**

Congregational Annual Meeting (Church Chair handles)

Schedule Sunday for report from MC USA Convention attendees.

## **AUGUST**

1st weekend is MSMC Annual Assembly weekend.

Schedule Sunday for report from MSMC Annual Assembly.

## **SEPTEMBER**

Labor day Sunday after worship: School Kits get built; Gwen Grasse coordinates.

Commission Christian Ed teachers on 1st Sunday of Ch. Ed (usually Sun. after Labor Day).

Peace Sunday.

BMC Retreat weekend usually during Sept. or Oct. Still do worship service on Sunday *at camp* (no service held at church), often with non-traditional 'sermon' time.

This month would be a suitable time for collecting items and updates for revisions as needed to this Guidebook.

## **OCTOBER**

Every other year, BMC has offered an Animal Blessing Sunday where people bring in their well-behaved pets.

In advance of the third-Saturday in October Relief Sale, we collect coins for MCC Penny Power drive (to be delivered to the sale; Steve Voran has coordinated in recent years).

MCC Relief Sale and auction in Rocky Ford, CO

## **NOVEMBER**

First full weekend of Nov. is MSMC Pastor/Partner retreat at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

We have traditionally offered a simple All Saints Day candle-lighting ritual in worship

BMC Birthday Sunday is celebrated Sunday before Thanksgiving. Receive any interested new members during worship. Potluck. Fundraising Auction (handled by a volunteer coordinator).

SOBO Clergy Group offers joint Thanksgiving service (usually on Wed. eve).

We have generally used MC USA Leader worship resources for Lent.



## DECEMBER

Children's pageant generally on 3rd Sunday of Lent (goal is to hold it before schools break for holidays).  
Christian Ed handles this, leadership volunteers are sought/rotate

We give Bibles to 1st graders on the day of the Christmas program (typically 3rd Sunday of Advent).

Tradition of Christmas Eve soup potluck/candlelight service

Have held a morning service when Christmas falls on Sunday; 18 in attendance on 12/25/16.

## Ongoing Calendar Items

**CommuniTEA: Begun in 2016**, Aaron Miller and pastor hosted monthly CommuniTEA gatherings for anyone interested in a casual, social time, typically without "agenda." Hosted for approximately 1 year.

**Potlucks:** We have been recruiting people to set up for and clean up from potlucks and pastor has used the list of the summary of the time/talent form volunteers for this.

**Ecology Tips in Bulletin:** Carole Suderman writes these and gives them to church administrator (usually 6 weeks at a time) for inclusion in the bulletin each week.

**Boulder Shelter for the Homeless:** BMCers cook and serve a meal monthly on the 2nd Friday of the month from October through April. Bruce Fast oversees this.

**Church of the Brethren women's retreat:** We advertise for this event which takes place every 3rd year when it is held in Allenspark (instead of McPerson area).

**5th Sunday of the month:** BMC has had the rich tradition of doing what we call "Faith Sharing" on 5th Sundays when they occur. One or two members of the congregation fill the sermon time with something about their own faith journeys (history, current issues, questions, etc.).

**Communion:** We typically offer communion 4-6 times per year (around new year, Easter, World Communion Sunday-1st Sunday of October, or whenever else it works in or fits with a theme).



# BOULDER MENNONITE CHURCH HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

September 2017



## MISSION STATEMENT

Boulder Mennonite Church cherishes children and youth as beloved children of God. Our goal is to:

- Facilitate developmental and age appropriate faith exploration and formation.
- Strengthen Biblical literacy with an emphasis on the teachings of Jesus.
- Teach the basic tenants of Mennonite/Anabaptist faith and its application to daily living.
- Provide experiences of being unique individuals created by and unconditionally loved by God.

## INTRODUCTION

Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC) recognizes it takes dedicated, caring and loving individuals to provide programming for its children and youth. BMC congregants are grateful for the nursery care providers, hall walkers and teachers who give of their time and talents to work with our children and youth.

## INFORMATION FOR NURSERY CARE PROVIDERS, HALL WALKERS AND TEACHERS

1. The pastor and chair of the Education Committee have screened and approved the persons working in the Christian Education Program. All persons have actively and regularly participated in congregational life for at least six months.
2. Children can easily accidentally acquire a minor injury or bruise while participating in appropriate activities. If this happens, the parent/guardian will be informed.
3. It is not always easy to determine if an incident is minor or significant. When in doubt, err on the side of considering it significant and:
  - Inform and explain it to the parent/guardian.
  - Report it to the pastor and the chair of the Christian Education Committee.
  - Fill out an incident report form located on the bulletin board in the hallway.
  - Give the form to the pastor to file. You may want to keep a copy for your records.
4. In a safety crisis or life threatening situation, secure the safety of the student/students and call 911. Call the hall walker or another teacher in the area or give a loud shout for help. This will be heard in the sanctuary. In an emergency, the worship service can be interrupted to ask for help from someone with medical training. After the crisis is over, report it in detail to the pastor. The pastor will assist you in filling out a detailed incident report. This report will be filed and you may want to keep a copy for your records.
5. Appropriate physical contact and displays of affection are important ways for students to experience being cherished, loved and cared for. This in turn can translate into experiencing being unconditionally valued and loved by God. While appropriate expressions of affection are valued and encouraged, it is important to be aware of and consider the following:
  - Holding hands, a pat on the back, a hug, or a cuddle with a younger child is a positive experience for most students.

- For some students, touches are uncomfortable and can trigger unpleasant memories.
- Consider following the student's lead and return the expressions of affection they offer or initiate.
- Rituals in greetings and good-byes can be important. Consider giving students a choice of saying hello and good-bye with a hug, a pat, a hi-five or whatever they choose.
- Support/encourage students in taking care of and being in charge of their bodies.
- Be aware of students who may be uncomfortable holding hands with peers. (There is a developmental stage where girls and boys are reluctant and uncomfortable holding hands.) If applicable, consider the following possibilities for forming circles or lines without holding hands:

Use short sticks/ribbons with students holding one end rather than a hand

Use a long ribbon/rope, having each child hold it to form a circle/line.

Use a hula-hoop and have student hold it with both hands to form a circle.

Have the students stand with their feet far apart touching shoes forming a line or circle.

6. If you suspect abuse or neglect based on what you see or hear, report it to the pastor immediately. If it involves the pastor, report it to a deacon and the council chair. The pastor/deacon will guide you through the appropriate responses of documentation and reporting. Procedures will be outlined more detail in the Child Safety and Protection Policies and Procedures Handbook.

7. Students may establish a deeply trusting relationship with you and feel safe confiding in you. They may ask you to promise not to tell anyone. Absolutely never promise unconditional confidentiality. You can assure them that you care deeply about them and want them to be safe. This means that you may need to share what they tell you with other appropriate adults.

8. If a student appears troubled and is struggling to say something, consider the following:

- Be calm, attentive and reassuring asking open open-ended rather than probing questions.
- If and when you suspect abuse or neglect, avoid an emotional reaction, stop asking questions and continue to listen to whatever the student freely chooses to share.
- Some appropriate empathetic responses include:
  - “I am sorry this happened to you.”
  - “This was not your fault.”
  - “You did not deserve this.”
- Commend the student for telling you, acknowledging that it took courage.
- Inform the student that you will share this information only with appropriate people.
- Accept whatever is reported and do not try to determine the accuracy/truthfulness of what was said.
- Avoid implying by looks or words that they are responsible or to blame.
- Do not make judgmental comments about a reported/suspected perpetrator.

## **INFORMATION FOR NURSERY CARE PROVIDERS**

Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC) cherishes its youngest congregants as beloved children of God and works to support and nurture parents. Providing childcare during the worship service expresses our love for the children and our support to parents. It enables parents to fully participate in a renewing worship experience while their child experiences a loving and caring relationship with a congregant. BMC congregants thank you for doing this important work!

1. Childcare during the worship service will be provided for children ages approximately one year old through kindergarten. These ages are guidelines, and can be adapted to meet the unique circumstances of a small congregation with few children. For example, you may welcome a child that is younger than one-year into nursery if the child is comfortable being away from parents or you may have a child who is alone invite an older child to join them.
2. Children will be with the parent/guardian for the beginning of the worship service. They will be dismissed to go to the nursery after the children's story.
3. If the nursery care provider is an adult, they may provide care for up to six children. An additional helper will be needed if there are more than six children. This helper may be an older child or youth.
4. If the nursery care provider is 16 to 18 years old, they may provide care for up to 3 children.
5. The nursery care provider will closely supervise the children at all times, keeping the bottom half of the door closed and the top half of the door open.
6. The nursery care provider will not bring snacks for the children. If the child needs a snack, it must be provided by the parent and may not be shared with other children unless parental approval has been given.
7. If at all possible diaper changing will be delayed until the child is returned to the parent. Exceptions can be made if the parent gives permission and leaves instructions/diapers with the caregiver.
8. Parents will take their child to use the bathroom before nursery time. If a child needs to go to the bathroom, the nursery care provider will stand in the classroom door watching to make sure the child goes to and returns from the bathroom. If the child needs assistance, the nursery care provider will prop the door open and have the other children sit outside the door and wait.
9. Children may be picked up or escorted upstairs, to the adult that brought them.

## **INFORMATION FOR HALL WALKERS**

1. The Hall Walker will remain in the hallway to be easily accessible. They will resist the temptation to spend time in the adult class or the kitchen.
2. The Hall walker will be aware of what is happening by discretely checking into the classroom several times during the session (approximately every 15 minutes).
3. The Hall Walker will support the teachers as needed, including supervising children going to the bathroom, spending time with individual children and assisting with special projects.
4. The Hall Walker will allow two children of approximately the same age to use the bathroom at the same time. If there is an approximate four-year age difference between the children, they will have the children use it separately.
5. The Hall Walker will avoid being in the bathroom alone with a child. They will wait outside the bathroom door, unless the child requests or needs help.

## **INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS**

1. If you need a substitute, ask someone you know or call the chair of the Christian Education Committee. Arrangements can be made to find a substitute, combine classes or inform parents that their child's class is cancelled.
2. Parents are encouraged/expected to keep their children with them during the fellowship time. This may not always happen and students may get to the classroom before you. Consider posting a question of the day or directions for a simple activity for those that arrive early.

3. The Christian Education Committee will make sure parents complete a Student Enrollment Form.
4. Classrooms have a window or half-door. The upper part of the half-door must remain open and the window uncovered.
5. Be knowledgeable with information on the Student Enrollment Form. Pay special attention to medical/allergy information as well as to a student's comfort in activities like reading, holding hands, expressions of affection etc.
6. A Hall Walker will be in the hallway and be easily accessible to assist you in whatever you need, including supervising children going to the bathroom, spending time with individual child and assisting with special projects.
7. If two children are approximately the same age, you may dismiss them to go to the bathroom together while the Hall Walker supervises them. If there is an approximate four-year age difference, dismiss them separately.
8. Snacks are available after the service and do not need to be provided during class time. If you choose to offer a snack consider the following:
  - Be aware of food allergies
  - Avoid sugary or food colored snacks and drinks
  - Consider having fruit, carrots, cereal mixes, crackers and cheese.
9. Students will remain in the church or on the church premises during class time. Going outdoors can enhance a lesson or simply be fun and teachers are encouraged to do this as appropriate. Be sure to inform the Hall Walker and put a notice on the door stating where you are and where the children should be picked up. You may ask the Hall Walker to accompany you if you need help in outdoor supervision.
10. There may be times when you want to take the students off the premises. Trips off the premises must be planned in advance and include:
  - Informing parents/guardians of where you are going, what you will be doing, when you are leaving and returning and who will be transporting the students.
  - Providing parents/guardians with your phone number and getting theirs.
  - Getting parents/guardian's consent in writing or via email.
  - Recruiting another adult, as off premise trips must always include two adults.
11. It is important that every child/youth feels safe and is protected from peer ridicule, abuse or bullying. If troubling interactions arise between peers, respond to the immediate situation in a way that seems appropriate, respectful and protecting. Addressing the interaction in the classroom may be the only response that is needed. If concerns continue, talk to a parent/guardian if that seems appropriate, and report it to the pastor or the chair of the Education Committee. They will help guide you in addressing the situation and help determine if an incident report should be written and filed.
12. Disruptive behavioral can be concerning and challenging. The goal is to meet the specific needs of students in a way that reduces the likelihood of disrupting behaviors. Yet in spite of your best, creative and wisest interventions, it may continue to be difficult to manage a student's behavior. Don't struggle in isolation. Consult with the pastor, the parent/guardian, a committee member or in special situations with someone outside of the congregation. If you choose to consult with someone from outside of the BMC community, be sure to maintain confidentiality and do not disclose the name of the student or parent. Following are suggestions for understanding and addressing possible needs and behaviors of the student:
  - Observe the child when he/she is not in class and is in the general congregational setting.
  - Get information and suggestions from the parent/guardian on making the classroom experience more meaningful for him/her.

- Identify a special interest of the student and integrate him/her leadership around this topic.
- Adjust the classroom setting, perhaps more movement, a building/art corner, sending them on errands with the hall walker or assigning them special tasks like sharpening pencils.
- Adjust the lesson to increase the number of self/student directed activities.
- Increase opportunities for choices like, where to sit, a drawing or clay response, joining the activity or choosing an alternative.
- Use the Hall Walker to spend one-on-one time with the student.
- Plan a social gathering with the student and his/her family.
- Check with the Christian Education Committee about arranging for an assistant in your class.
- Arrange for the Hall Walker to spend one-on-one time with the student.

**NOTE:** Members of the Christian Education Committee are eager and available to support you in whatever way you need.





# Safety and Security Documents



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C

## **CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES and POLICY**

[Updated: November 9, 2018]

### **This document contains:**

1. Rationale for Boulder Mennonite Church Child Protection Guidelines
2. Child Protection Guidelines:
  - a. Procedure for Screening Staff/Volunteers
  - b. Prevention Measures
  - c. Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Boundaries: Examples
  - d. Reporting Procedures for Church Workers
3. Child Protection Policy:
  - a. Basic Procedures for Safe and Healthy Ministry with Children and Youth
  - b. Handling a Disclosure of Abuse: A Guideline
  - c. Response Plan for Allegations
4. Christian Education Service Application
5. Report of Suspected Incident of Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Form
6. Safe Church Guidelines for Mentors



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## **RATIONALE for CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES**

Physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and youth is a tragic occurrence. When a person is abused, it creates suffering, erodes self-esteem, destroys relationships, splits families and violates human decency and integrity. Abuse of children is an abuse of power and betrays trust. It can be extremely devastating and have a long-lasting effect. To this end, the following procedures have been established for implementation by all members of the church as well as person employed by, or volunteering in the service of the church, to protect those vulnerable populations.

Boulder Mennonite Church desires to provide a safe refuge for all children and adults who enter its doors. Recognizing the potential for abuse to occur, Boulder Mennonite Church is taking preventive steps in developing these Child Protection Guidelines. Boulder Mennonite Church will follow all legal guidelines with respect to child abuse/neglect reporting procedures.

These guidelines are not intended to create alarm or suspicion, but to implement preventive measures to assure safety for all, including protection from possible false accusations. The Child Protection Guidelines contain three areas: Screening of volunteers/employees, Preventive Measures, and Reporting Procedures.





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## PROCEDURE FOR SCREENING STAFF/VOLUNTEERS Child Protection Guidelines

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs the following guidelines have been established for approving those who desire being involved in the supervision or custody of children/youth (under age 18). The pastor and deacons will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Child Protection Guidelines with all church employees and/or volunteers.

### SCREENING

The screening process will include three steps:

- Application Form
  - Acceptance of Guidelines Form
  - Background Check (if requested or at leadership's discretion)
1. An applicant must actively participate in the life of the church/congregation for at least six months before becoming involved in children and/or youth service programs.
  2. Everyone working with children/youth must participate in healthy boundary/child safety training and be familiar with BMC's Child Protection Policies.
  2. The applicant must complete and sign the Boulder Mennonite Church Service Application. These forms will be kept confidential and on file at the church office.
  3. If an applicant/application presents any information concerning, for example, a past history of assault, child abuse or neglect, the applicant's participation in the children/youth BMC programs will be at the discretion of the pastor/deacon and the Christian Education Committee.
  4. A person convicted of abuse or violence for child abuse/neglect by a county department of human services will not be approved as a child/youth worker. If there were arrests but no convictions (i.e. arrested for domestic violence but no conviction), the pastor/deacons will discern the applicant's participation in the children/youth program.
  5. Service may begin after receiving approval from the church leadership staff or appointed designee(s).





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## PREVENTION MEASURES Child Protection Guidelines

### NURSERY

1. Nursery care will be provided for toddlers through 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Care will not be provided for infants or children not yet walking.
2. Two adults will staff the nursery. The Hall Walker may serve as a second adult and will check in with the nursery worker during the worship service at least once.
3. The bottom door to the Nursery Room will remain closed and the top door will remain open at all times.
4. Background checks for adults volunteering in the nursery during church are not necessary as long as there are two adults supervising the children. The Hall Walker may serve as a second adult.
5. The children must be closely supervised at all times. They will be released only to a parent and/or designated adult. Older children may return upstairs with an adult volunteer when worship ends.
6. An approved adult should accompany a child to the bathroom if necessary.
7. Nursery staff/volunteers will not change diapers.

### CLASSROOMS

1. The Christian Education teachers will be approved applicants. A second person may be a helper and is not required to complete the application process.
2. Where there are half doors, the top half will remain open. Where there are windows in doors, the windows must not be blocked.
3. The Hall Walker will check and look into the classrooms every 15 minutes.
4. Groups of children (i.e. in classrooms) must be supervised by an adult at all times.
5. At the conclusion of class time, children under age 8 will be released to the parent and/or a designated adult.
6. Children of approximately the same age may accompany each other to the bathroom. Two children with a visible difference in age may not accompany each other to the bathroom. Older children may not supervise younger children in the bathroom. The Hall Walker may be asked to accompany a child to the bathroom. The Hall Walker will remain outside unless needed by the child.
7. Overnight chaperones must complete the service application and be approved before they may accompany children/youth on an overnight activity.
8. Respect children's space and let them lead when it comes to expressions of touch/affection. Respect a child's/youth's refusal of touch/affection. Be aware and sensitive to what makes a child feel uncomfortable.
9. Discipline: Reasonable limits must be placed on physical and verbal interactions with children. Physical discipline is not permitted under any circumstance.
10. A body-to-body embrace, a touch on private areas (those areas covered by a bathing suit) or any kiss on the mouth is inappropriate.
11. Teachers should be aware of the location of first aid boxes:
  - Basement: in the kitchen, on the shelf to the left of the sink.
  - Sanctuary kitchenette: in the cabinet above the refrigerator.Teachers are encouraged to become certified in first aid/CPR.
12. At the annual teacher training, reporting suspected child abuse and prevention guidelines will be reviewed. The training will include legal requirements, reporting forms and reporting procedures.





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### Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Boundaries: Examples

Respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between childcare workers and children. The guidelines below are intended to avoid contact that is or may appear threatening or inappropriate.

Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children. Examples of positive and appropriate forms of affection, when offered authentically, include:

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder, back or head
- Handshakes
- High-fives, hand slapping and fist taps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during group prayer



**Remember: children always have the right to refuse even affectionate touch!**

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in a ministry setting. Many of them are the behaviors that people who molest children use to groom children and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- Private meals with individual children or youth

*As posted on Dove's Nest website; from Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church's 2009 ["Safe Church Policies and Guidelines For Children in Childcare."](#)*

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A member congregation of Mennonite Church USA



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www.bouldermennonite.org

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH WORKERS** **Child Protection Guidelines**

The church's responsibility is to be aware and to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. Although a volunteer/staff person may not be a mandated reporter, BMC believes that anyone involved with children/youth has a moral obligation to report. When signs or symptoms of abuse arise, or a staff person or volunteer witnesses abuse or a child discloses abuse or neglect, the volunteer/staff person should not conduct an investigation of the matter. An investigation will be conducted by a trained person who works for law enforcement or a child protection agency (Boulder County Housing and Human Services).

### **Legal Obligations**

Legal reporting obligations for individuals working with children in the State of Colorado are defined in the Colorado Children's Code. The Children's Code states that "any person specified in C.R.S. 9-3-304 who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report upon receiving such information report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department of human services (where the victim resides) or law enforcement agency (where the alleged/suspected offense occurred).

### **Church Obligations**

A sound reporting procedure promotes accountability among church workers/volunteers. Church workers/volunteers need to be trained in identifying inappropriate behavior with children and to identify the symptoms of abuse or neglect. Workers/volunteers should be encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior occurs, and to report questionable behavior to the pastor. If it involves the pastor, report it to a Deacon or the Chairperson of the Church Council. Great care and sensitivity needs to be exercised for the protection of everyone involved.

### **Moral Obligations**

Church workers/volunteers may not want to report a suspected incident of abuse or neglect for many reasons such as embarrassment, fear of the person, and legal recrimination. Discrete and confidential reporting is critical for the safety of the children in our church. Church workers/volunteers should understand the reporting reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty.





## **REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH WORKERS**

### **Child Protection Guidelines**

**BMC workers/leaders: You must report if your Christian Education student, Youth Group member or Mentee tells you that:**

- They have been physically or sexually assaulted
- They are experiencing abuse: sexual, emotional, physical or neglect or uncomfortable physical contact
- They are in danger of hurting themselves or others
- They have had sexual contact with someone in a position of trust (teacher, counselor, minister, youth group leader, babysitter, stepparent)
- They have had sexual contact with a relative
- They are under 12 and have had sexual contact
- If they are under 15 and had sexual contact with someone 4 or more years older
- They are 15 or 16 years old and had sexual contact involving penetration with someone 10 years or more older
- If at any age, they had sexual contact with their doctor or therapist or counselor

**What is NOT reportable?**

- If sexual activity is consensual and they are peers (same age and same ability) 12 years of age and older

**ALL OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION APPLIES TO ALL TYPES OF  
RELATIONSHIPS, ORIENTATIONS AND IDENTITIES.**

How to report to Boulder County Housing and Human Services:  
Call 303-441-1309

For more information on reporting guidelines, please contact  
[Blue Sky Bridge](#) at 303-444-1388





# Boulder Mennonite Church

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## Basic Procedures for Safe and Healthy Ministry with Children and Youth Child Protection Policy

### 1. The “Two Adult” Rule

The ideal in ministry with youth and children is having two unrelated adults in any situation where children or youth are in the care of the church. In the case of BMC Christian Education, we recognize that there are not enough adult teachers to follow this rule. We address this need by having at least one adult available in the hall (the “Hall Walker”) outside the classrooms, who can be generally aware of what is going on in the classes and can also help with any class as needed. The classrooms and nursery have split doors or windows in the door. The top half of the split doors must be left open and the windows in the doors must remain uncovered.

We acknowledge that the one-on-one nature of the mentor program constitutes a unique exception to this guideline. Mentors are strongly encouraged to plan activities that are public and to partner with other mentor pairs. See “Safe Church Guidelines for Mentors” in this packet.

### 2. Advance notice to parents

It is assumed that the children or youth will stay on the church premises during the Christian Education hour. Teachers will leave a note on the classroom door if they take students outside. With large classes, teachers are encouraged to recruit another adult to help supervise outdoor activities.

You may want to take your class off-premises for some reason -- bearing in mind that this is something that is almost never done during the Christian Ed hour, due in part to time constraints. If so, you must do the following:

- a. Get permission from parents (preferably in writing).
- b. Recruit at least one other adult to help supervise.
- c. Inform parents (preferably in writing) of what you will be doing, where you are going, when you will be leaving and returning and who the supervising adults are.
- d. Provide parents with your cell phone number. Make sure you have the number of parents/church with you in case of an emergency.

When outside the classroom, keep the group together, or use a “buddy system” for older children.

### 3. Bathroom breaks

Children of approximately the same age may accompany each other to the bathroom. Two children with a visible difference in age may not accompany each other to the bathroom. Older children may not supervise younger children in the bathroom. The Hall Walker may be asked to accompany a child to the bathroom. The Hall Walker will remain outside unless needed by the child.







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[Basic procedures, continued...]

#### 4. Physical touch/affection (hugs, holding hands, etc.)

Our goal is to support and affirm children and youth in taking charge of their own bodies, including expressions of affection. When you offer a hug or hold the hand of a child, you may feel you are expressing your (and God’s!) love and tender care; however, it may not always be experienced by the receiver as a gesture of caring and affirmation.

A child always has the right to refuse a hug or other forms of affectionate touching. Physical affection between the children or youth in the class (e.g., all holding hands in a circle) is also something they have the right to decline. Be sensitive when asking a child/youth to hold hands for an activity. There are many creative ways to create connection that do not require physical contact.

Of course, if a child spontaneously gives you a hug, feel free to hug back!

Note: In the unlikely event that you are crossing the street with a group of children (see point 2), holding hands would be considered a necessary safety practice, not a gesture of affection. It is fine to ensure that kids are holding hands to cross the street.

#### 5. Dealing with clothes

If for some reason you need to change a child’s clothes, or check for injuries under a child’s clothes, please call in the hall walker or another adult to be present.

#### 6. First Aid/CPR

BMC folks with first aid/CPR knowledge include:

Douglas Minter    Becky McKay-Epp    Lily Mast    Jen Dudenhefer    Karen Cox  
Aaron Miller      Terry Mast            Eldon Mast    Zoë Mast

#### 7. If you have a concern

If you observe something in the care of our children at BMC that concerns you, please tell someone! If it is a minor thing, you may just want to speak to the adult responsible in the situation, if you feel comfortable doing so. Or you can share minor concerns with members of the Christian Education Committee. If you suspect some sort of serious abuse going on at BMC, please share your concerns with the pastor, a deacon, or chairperson of the Church Council IMMEDIATELY. If there is an unsafe situation, we want to address it right away. Since you will be establishing relationships with the children or youth at BMC, it is possible that someone will come to you to talk about abuse that is happening to him or her outside BMC. The article provided in your materials, “[Handling Disclosure of Abuse – a Guideline](#)” gives some good suggestions for this situation. The main principles are:

- Believe the child
- Remain calm



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[Basic procedures, continued...]

- If the child seems to be trying to say something but hinting around, ask open-ended questions – but stop asking questions as soon as you suspect abuse (continue listening to as much as the child wants to say)
- Commend the child for telling you, and avoid implying that they are in any way responsible for what happened

The one thing in the article that does not apply to you (at least according to the reporting laws provided on the Blue Sky Bridge website) is the bit about being legally required to make a report to authorities. Church volunteers are not mandatory reporters, although church pastors are (with some limits). If the problem is occurring at BMC, definitely tell church leadership. If the problem is outside BMC, you are free to use your own judgment, but you would probably want to tell someone – a parent, or if that seems inappropriate, the Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services or law enforcement. Asking a pastor for advice on how to proceed is a good choice too.

The article in these materials, as well as other articles and useful information, is available at [www.blueskybridge.org](http://www.blueskybridge.org) under “Protect A Child/Caregivers”.



## **HANDLING DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE – A GUIDELINE**

We never want to think about anything “bad” happening to our children. Hearing that a child may have been a victim of a crime or abuse is one of our worst fears. We know that telling another about being a victim of sexual abuse or a crime can be difficult. Being prepared in how to behave or what to say is critical for starting the road to recovery and to any possible investigation.

### **Below are the five “R’s” In Dealing with a possible disclosure of abuse:**

- ❖ **REMAIN calm.** This news is difficult and hard to digest. Your body and verbal communication needs to be congruent. Humans are emotional beings, but remind yourself that your child came to you because they trust you. They need to feel like you can handle the information being provided. Thus, manage your emotions. Don’t lose it. Obtain support for yourself from family, friends and/or a professional. Having a support system is crucial for you to be the support your child needs.
- ❖ **RESPECT the child.** To respect a child means to BELIEVE them. Children do not make up allegations of sexual abuse. Regardless of what you think of the disclosure, you need to suspend any disbelief you may have. Research with survivors has found that those whose parents did not believe them report that the trauma of not being believed was worse than the trauma of the abuse. Believe them and reinforce it through your actions and words.
- ❖ **REFRAIN from conducting your own investigation.** Many times children will hint about the abuse or give vague disclosures. If this happens you will need to get more information. Ask your child only open-ended questions; questions that do not solicit yes or no responses. As soon as you suspect what your child is telling you is abuse, stop asking questions. It is important to allow the appropriate professional to ask the questions so that there is the best possible opportunity for your child to make a full disclosure. If your child wants to talk be sure to listen and provide support. In all cases, let your child know that he/she did the right thing in telling, that he/she is not at fault, that you will keep them safe, and together you will get through this together. It is also important to be honest about the need to tell a professional about the disclosure.
- ❖ **REFUSE to discuss this with others.** Go to the appropriate agencies & professionals. Respect your child’s privacy. Ask your child if it is o.k. to tell others; this empowers your child. Also, some people do not understand the dynamics of being a victim of a crime and/or abuse and thus often do not handle the information well. They may say and do things that are hurtful and damaging. While it is critical that your child and family have a support system be careful of the gossip factor.
- ❖ **REPORT the disclosure to the appropriate agency.** Don’t wait – make a report to the Department of Human Services or your local police department. You do not need to confirm or be able to prove what your child is disclosing. You are acting in “good faith”. Remember that you are in a position to start the road to healing and stop further abuse of your child and possibly that of other children.

From Blue Sky Bridge: Child & Family Advocacy Center,  
<http://blueskybridge.org/wp-content/uploads/English-5-Rs-of-Handling-a-Disclosure.pdf>



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## **RESPONSE PLAN FOR ALLEGATIONS** **Child Protection Policy**

Any suspected abuse/neglect must be reported immediately to the Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services or law enforcement and the Pastor/Deacons. The “reporter” is anyone who has a suspicion of abuse/neglect or to whom the child has directly disclosed abuse/neglect. The reporter is encouraged to share this information with the pastor or a deacon before reporting to the Boulder County Housing and Human Services. Please follow these guidelines when reporting abuse/neglect.

### **Receiving Allegation from Victim**

1. The reporter should document the allegation directly from the victim. Great care must be given to refrain from interviewing or asking leading questions of the child as this could taint an official investigation.
2. The reporter should outline the response procedure to the victim in age appropriate terms being careful not to make promises about the outcome.
3. The reporter should err in the direction of protecting the child. A report should be made if there is suspicion of any type of maltreatment.
4. The reporter and Pastor or Deacon should confirm the immediate safety of all involved. Law enforcement or the department of human services may be contacted directly if time is critical and church leaders are unavailable for consultation.
5. The reporter should complete a Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form and submit it to the Department of Social Services or Law Enforcement and the Pastoral Team.
6. If the alleged offender is the parent/guardian, the reporter/Pastoral Team should seek advice from the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the County where the child resides before contacting the parent.
7. The Pastor/Deacon should contact law enforcement and/or Boulder county social services.
8. The designated Pastoral Team member should consult with an attorney and insurance company (if applicable).

### **Responding to Alleged Offender**

1. The pastor or deacon should temporarily remove the alleged offender from his/her duties and/or susceptible environment while the investigation is being conducted.
2. The pastor or deacon will follow up with DHS or law enforcement to learn of the disposition of the case.
3. If substantiated or there is an arrest, the alleged offender will be removed from all work with children or youth.





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[Response plan for Allegations, continued...]

### **Allegations Unsubstantiated**

1. If the department of human services and/or law enforcement determine the allegations are unsubstantiated, the investigation will cease.
2. The pastor/deacons should make every effort to exonerate, reconcile, and restore the accused.
3. The pastor/deacons can make a public statement if the accused so chooses.
4. The pastor/deacons should respond with love, care and concern to the complaint, to the congregation, and to the accused and their family.

### **Allegations that are not Substantiated as Abuse/Neglect, but a Demonstration of Poor Judgment**

1. The pastor/deacons will hold the accused responsible and accountable for the behavior.
2. Education and/or counseling will be expected to correct unhealthy behavior patterns. The accused may be removed from susceptible environments for a stated period of time.
3. The pastor/deacons will communicate the action taken with complainant to the congregation as needed.





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## Christian Education Service Application

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of children and youth. It is used to help the church provide a safe and nurturing environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This is not an employment application form. The information on this application will be kept in strict confidence.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which phone do you prefer we use to contact you?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Former Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If current address is less than 2 years, former addresses where you have lived:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever been investigated, accused, arrested, or convicted of physical or sexual abuse of a child or any child related offense? Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, please describe:**

**Are there any other arrests or convictions should we be aware of that will appear? (e.g. non-violent resistance. This will not keep you from volunteering.) If yes, please describe:**





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[Chr Ed Service Application, continued...]

### Summary of Policies:

- Any applicant who has been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse or neglect shall not volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
- All BMC volunteers working with youth or children are required to be members or regular attenders and have been actively involved and participated in the life of BMC at least six months prior to volunteering.
- All applicants and volunteers shall follow the guidelines for safety with children.
- All applicants and volunteers shall immediately report any abusive or inappropriate behavior to the pastor or deacons.

### Affirmation

I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information on this application is correct.

With regard to the information gathered pertaining to me, I release any individual, committee or Boulder Mennonite Church from any and all liability for damages that may result to my family or me.

I have received a copy of BMC child protection guidelines and procedures.

I agree to be bound by church policies and practices and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my service with children.

I have carefully read this affirmation and waiver. I understand its contents, and I sign it freely.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_





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## REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Anyone observing or informed of alleged abuse of a child/youth/vulnerable adult must report such to the pastor and/or Chair of Church Council.

*This form is for internal purposes and church files.*

- 1) Name of volunteer (or other) observing or receiving disclosure of child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) Victim's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victim's age/date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) Victim's statement (detailed, including location and time. Use reverse if necessary.):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) Name/s of any witnesses & phone number/s  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) Name of person(s) accused of abuse and phone number/s  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 7) Relationship of accused to victim (staff, volunteer, family member, other):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Reported to Pastor (name)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Date/time:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Summary:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Attach additional sheets, if needed. \_\_\_\_\_



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8) Call to victim's parent/guardian:

Date/time:

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Spoke with:

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Summary:

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1) Call to Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (844-264-5437) for a child/youth victim

Date/time:

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Spoke with:

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Summary:

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2) Call to Elder Abuse Hotline (800-773-1366) for a vulnerable adult

Date/time:

Spoke \_\_\_\_\_ with:

Summary:

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3) Call to Boulder Police Department (911 or 303-441-3333)

Date/time:

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Spoke with:

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Summary:

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**Note:** Written report must be made within 48 hours of initial oral reporting.

- 4) Call to Mountain States Mennonite Conference Team  
Charlene Epp, Conference Minister (971-404-4456)  
Date/time:

Summary:

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Other contacts involved in the process: church lawyer and others as needed. Include name, date/time, and summary. Attach additional sheets with detailed information.

Check here if additional sheets attached. No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ # of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Reporter \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Safe Church Guidelines for Mentors

Boulder Mennonite Church recognizes the potential for harm when a pastor, lay employee, or volunteer engages in sexual exploitation, harassment, or abuse in one of its churches or institutions. The one-on-one relationships encouraged by and created through mentoring can develop strong, trusting relationships between the mentor and the mentee, but they also can create an opportunity for exploitation.

Provided below are guidelines for our Mentoring Program at BMC.

### Mentor Qualifications, Screening & Training:

- All mentors should be 21 years of age or older.
- Before establishing a mentoring relationship, each mentor should submit a BMC/Christian Education Service Application. BMC reserves the right to do a background check of anyone

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[Safe Church Guidelines for Mentors, continued...]

- If a mentor must transport a student alone, they must make at least one other trusted adult aware of travel plans at a minimum. Attempt to receive written permission (email, text message, etc.) if possible.
- It is also recommended that youth call or text their parents/guardians before beginning travel to the destination, as well as contacting them upon arrival.

### Communicating with Youth:

Communicating via phone, text, or email is an important part of the mentor/mentee relationship.

When communicating with youth, mentors should take the following into consideration:

- Communications to youth should follow the “home phone rule:” communicating with youth should not happen at a time when you would not normally call their home phone (*for example, before 8:00 AM and after 9:00 PM*).
- When reaching out to youth via email, a mentor should always copy another adult on the message (*preferably a parent or guardian*).
- Transcripts of all digital conversations should be saved and available for presentation.
- Video chatting with students is strongly discouraged.
- Mentors are encouraged to implement privacy settings and personal boundaries on all methods of communication.
- When communicating with youth, phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are preferred methods.
- All digital communication should include facts and not feelings.

### Mandatory Reporting

It is understood that the mentor/mentee relationship is built on trust and that mentees may report life events or circumstances to their mentor. Conversations between the mentor and the mentee are understood to be confidential, unless circumstances require otherwise.

All mentors should be aware of and abide by all state and federal laws regarding mandated reporting. Any issues relating to pastoral care or concern should be reported to the pastor or to a deacon.





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who desires to volunteer or work with children and youth in the church. Documentation of volunteers will be given to the pastor and placed in individual, private folders. Background checks will be handled with concern for confidentiality, but negative information will be shared with the Deacons (who may require additional levels of background checks).

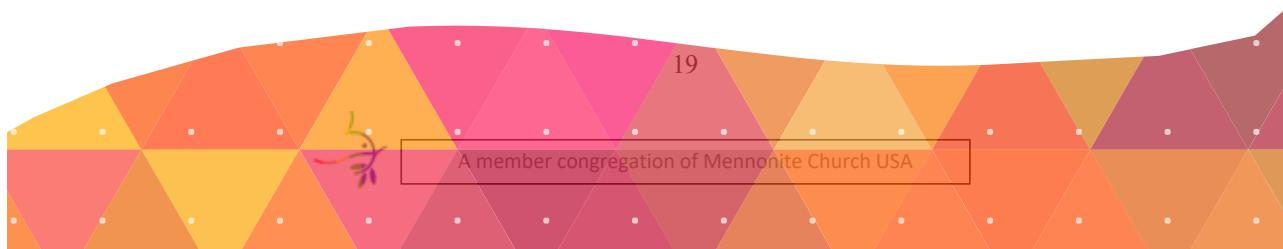
- Each mentor should undergo healthy boundary and child protection training, as required by Boulder Mennonite Church, and be familiar with the goals of the program, policies, and procedures.

### Mentoring Session Locations:

- Sessions should take place in public locations.
- If the session must take place in a private home, it is advised that another mentor/mentee pair be invited to join in the session. If this is not possible, the mentor should make the parents/guardians of the youth and another adult in the church aware of the session location.
- It is recommended that there always be two adults present in a meeting location at any given time.

### Transporting Youth:

- Adult mentors are advised to avoid transporting their mentees to and from sessions, if possible.
- At times when one-on-one interactions are unavoidable, it is recommended that another adult be present in the car during travelling.



# Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee Job Description

## Boulder Mennonite Church

### Pastor Congregation Relations Committee Job Description

(PCRC revision September 2016, from an adaptation of Mennonite Church USA/Canada 2010:dlr Update)

**Overview:** The purpose of the Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) is to care for the relationship between the Pastor(s) and the congregation and when necessary, to mediate conversations between pastors and members of the congregation, Pastors and the Church Council and between Pastors and other members of the leadership team. “The pastor(s)” include all congregational leaders who hold ministerial credentials, i.e., who are licensed, ordained or commissioned by the conference. In some congregations, this means one or more senior/leading pastor(s), associate or assistant or co-pastors, youth ministers, ministers of music, retired pastors (if still active in ministry), lay ministers and others.

The PCRC has a relational and mediating role. Although the agenda may include contractual issues such as salary negotiation and tenure reviews, the PCRC will serve in a consulting role and make recommendations to the Church Council. Historically, our PCRC has made salary recommendations to the Ministry of Financial Resources Committee following discussions with the Pastor(s). The PCRC takes responsibility to fill out the MCUSA salary guidelines worksheets to assist in the process of making a salary recommendation. Council sets up an annual, ad-hoc Salary Negotiating Group (task group) made up of a representative from the PCRC, the Treasurer or a representative from the Ministry of Financial Resources Committee, and a representative from council.

**Responsibilities:** The PCRC attends to both sides of the pastor-congregation relationship. In order to be effective, it must remain a balanced, third-party stance and listen to all voices. PCRC members must be alert to the potential for inappropriate or exclusionary alliances between other congregational committees, the pastors and the PCRC.

**Confidentiality:** It is of utmost importance that members of the PCRC hold all matters of concern or discussion with unwavering confidentiality.

The PCRC will do the following:

A. Support and empower both congregation and pastor to voice concerns, test perceptions and resolve conflicts through active listening and mutual feedback. Be available to the pastor(s) to hear concerns, test perceptions, and deal with conflicts in regularly scheduled meetings and upon request with the goal of supporting both pastor and congregation in voicing desires and dreams, as well as concerns. Occasionally remind the congregation of the committee’s availability, and listen for undercurrents not clearly named.

B. Support and empower pastoral team members to meet regularly to develop mutual support, unity of purpose and mutual accountability. At times, they may encourage the use of an outside resource person to assist the pastoral team when encountering challenges or difficulties.

C. Assist the pastor(s) in assessing their goals in order to meet their job descriptions. Assist the pastor(s) in identifying appropriate goals to accomplish the job description in light of the congregation’s mission and vision.

BMC develops an annual covenant (based on MCUSA) that is revised as needed each year by way of Church Council input. (Pastors are responsible for developing their job descriptions toward the end of each three-year term, based on the current version of the Covenant of Understanding between BMC and the full-time Pastor, with members of PCRC, in consultation with Church Council.)

D. Assist the pastor(s) to assess ministry load, responsibilities, priorities, limits, and boundaries.

E. Assist the pastor(s) to identify personal growth needs and determine a strategy for meeting those goals. Review progress toward those goals.

F. Meet annually and be available on request more often to meet with the pastor's spouse and family to listen to concerns (e.g., inappropriate expectations, parsonage issues, workload). Initiate appropriate congregational responses to any identified. BMC's PCRC will begin to make a check-in with the pastor's spouse part of its annual review process (see "Meetings" below).

G. Communicate regularly and sensitively the responsibilities and needs of the pastor(s) to the congregation. Provide feedback regularly and sensitively to the pastor(s) of the needs, concerns, and expectations of the congregation. Give input to the annual reviews and tenure reviews.

H. Review the pastor(s)'s Annual Covenant, including the salary for each ministerial staff person, annually and, through the ad hoc Salary Negotiating Group (or Ministry of Financial Resources), provide any recommend changes in the next year's salary to the Church Council for discussion. Through these discussions, the Covenant will be aligned with BMC's expectations.

I. Consult with the oversight person (Mountain States Mennonite Conference minister) as needed or when a pastor-congregation conflict has gone beyond the resources of PCRC and the church council.

J. Initiate mediation between the congregation and pastor(s) in times of conflict. Use services available through Mountain States Mennonite Conference; take the lead from a mediator with regard to PCRC's representation in mediation.

K. Participate in a pastoral search process with representation on the search committee, by providing a representative(s) to sit in or committee member rotating in meetings with this group.

L. PCRC will conduct (smaller) annual pastoral reviews and will work with Church Council as appropriate to conduct (more comprehensive) ministry reviews every three years, in a cycle that relates to the three-year term of a pastoral Covenant. The goal will be to finalize a comprehensive review approximately six months prior to the end of a current three-year Covenant.

**Membership:** The committee shall be composed of three to five members (proportionate to the size of the congregation and/or the pastoral staff). Normally these will be persons who do not hold other major leadership positions in the congregation and who have skills in listening, counseling, or mediation. They must be able to maintain strict confidence and exercise spiritually mature discretion with sensitive information. Members of the pastoral staff or members of their immediate or extended family should not be members of the PCRC.

**Meetings:** The committee will meet separately with each pastor on a quarterly basis, and with the youth advisor and church administrator at least two times per year. In a congregation with several pastors, the lead/senior pastor should meet more often with the PCRC. Each meeting will include time with the pastor(s) and time spent as a committee alone. Annually, potentially during the annual review process, a pastor's spouse shall be invited to meet with the PCRC to review their experience in the congregation.

**Accountability:** PCRC is accountable to the Church Council. The group will post their meeting times for council awareness and provide their annual report to the congregation. Members will attend council meetings as needed.

# Pastor Job Description

(spring 2017)

The Pastoral job description at Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC) is not static and will change as the understandings of the needs and priorities of the Congregation change. The Pastoral Relations Committee (PCRC) and the Church Council, in consultation with the Pastor and feedback from the Congregation, will recommend priorities for the Pastor's work.

*The below description represents the needs of the Congregation for the Term July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.*

The Covenant of Understanding between the Pastor and BMC stipulates that there will be a periodic review of this job description. BMC has not always had a PCRC. In the event that there is no PCRC, the tasks of this committee are reverted to the Deacons.

BMC recognizes that a Pastor's job consists of many tasks and that not all of them can be included in a job description. Therefore this job description identifies tasks that BMC considers most critical to the life and health of the Congregation. The order in which the tasks are presented is not intended to reflect their priority. Guidance for prioritizing tasks will be given to the Pastor by the Council and PCRC. It is important to note that the priority of some tasks along with time required may vary significantly from month to month and year to year, according to normal fluctuations in the life of the Church.

The Pastor at BMC will be grounded in personal faith, called by God and the Congregation, and willingly fulfill the leadership tasks defined by the Congregation. The basic premise underlying this job description is that the fundamental role of the Pastor is to bring and share God's love, care for the members of the Congregation and facilitate the extension of that love and care beyond the Congregation. This will involve claiming and sharing both transcendent and human relationships.

The Pastor is:

**Accountable:** ultimately, to the Congregation, corporately, which calls her; in day-to-day ministry, to the Church Council with whom she works. With her leadership, the Church Council determines the mission, ministry and policies for the Congregation.

## Priority Pastoral Tasks

### Worship and Preaching:

The Pastor is responsible for the development and delivery of meaningful worship services. These are determined by the Congregation as Bible-centered, creative, challenging, and nurturing and to incorporate the gifts of lay persons and children in all aspects. The pastor will:

- place a high priority on sermon/worship planning
- invite and provide a variety of structures/opportunities for laity to be involved (e.g. in worship committees, assigning specific tasks, brainstorming sessions, involving youth and children)
- preach (on average) at least 3 services a month
- create awareness within the Congregation of global peace and justice concerns and challenge the Congregation with examples of peace
- maintain responsibility for responding to feedback regarding worship (from individuals and from PCRC) and implement suggestions, as appropriate perform rituals of dedications, baptisms, marriage, communion, funerals, etc. as appropriate

E

## **Leadership and Administration**

The Pastor is responsible for providing leadership to the Congregation regarding the life, growth, and future of the Church and will:

- chair the Growing Together Committee and ensure that all projects that emerge from the Growing Together initiative have responsible owners to ensure effective delivery
- delegate tasks and share leadership with lay members while maintaining responsibility for the implementation of those tasks
- participate in Church Council, Deacons, Youth Advisory, Christian Education and PCRC meetings
- meet with other committees, small groups or individuals, as appropriate, to ensure effective functioning
- supervise and evaluate the Church Administrator and conduct an annual review of that position, potentially with assistance from a representative of council

## **Youth/Young Adults and Christian Education**

The Pastor is responsible for ensuring youth/young adult programming and Christian Education that fosters faith, spiritual and wholistic development and will:

- prioritize the immediate hire of a Youth Advisor (\$5,000 has been included in the 2016-2017 BMC budget)
- supervise the Youth Advisor
- create and chair a Youth Ministry Support Committee
- support BMC's youth mentoring by providing active oversight of youth mentor program chair
- work with the Christian Education Committee to ensure a strong Christian education program for all ages

## **Pastoral Care**

The Pastor will care for congregants and others, as appropriate, who are experiencing illness, death, crisis, or special needs and will:

- connect with them as appropriate via visits, email, phone, etc.
- communicate these needs to the Congregation as appropriate
- provide no more than 3-5 counselling sessions to congregants in response to a specific need, after which she will make an appropriate referral for continued counseling

## **Life, Growth and Outreach of the Congregation**

BMC recognizes that creating a welcoming community that is healthy and growing is a joint responsibility of the Congregation and the Pastor. The Congregation's responsibility will be addressed through the channels of the Church Council and the PCRC. The Pastor will:

- connect with newcomers via visits, phone calls, meals, email, etc.
- strengthen relationships with members and participants whose involvement in BMC is decreasing
- actively seek out Mennonites in the area and invite participation in the Church (e.g. recent grads from Mennonite colleges)
- encourage members to identify/support needs in their community
- potentially work with and inform the Congregation of local interfaith efforts
- Ensure continuance of small groups and oversee small group leaders



# BMC Church Administrator Job Description

(November 2020)

Contact Persons: Pastor, Church Chair

Accountability: Reports to Pastor

Hours: 12 hours per week

Pay: \$15 per hour less appropriate taxes

Duty: Administrative tasks as assigned in support of Pastor and Congregation

While this document seeks to list the priority tasks for the position, other items may arise that would be assigned to the Church Administrator (e.g. ad hoc projects based on need or projects/tasks identified by Church Administrator). We would seek to keep assignments within the 12-hour per week work limit.

Note: While BMC currently uses volunteers for some administrative tasks, it is the Church Administrator's responsibility to ensure the tasks are completed, with or without volunteers. Updates and requests can be made through the Pastor or directly to the Church Council via the Church Chair.

## General Office duties:

- Track info for and prepare weekly bulletin/announcements docs;
  - Tuesday reminder emails to Sunday volunteers
  - Friday bulletin copying, other office tasks (this may be assigned to volunteers)
- Oversee office volunteers
- Send out congregational email prayers/announcements
- Handle incoming snail mail/email/voice mails
- Organize and maintain office files and relevant archives
- Maintain/print BMC brochures
- Purchase office supplies
- Make copies as needed for Christian Ed, meetings, etc.
- Place copier service calls as needed
- Track group subscription for *Anabaptist World* publication
- Track & coordinate building use calendar
- Track and coordinate Sunday volunteers schedule (an online spreadsheet)
- Maintain church member info database/directory and make updated editions available
  - Maintain BMC attendees' mail folders
- Work with the pastor to electronically file/archive all worship bulletins (Pastor keeps one hard copy reference binder)
- Oversee admin computer use/upkeep
- Occasional state/federal tax document prep
- Relate to snow removal company
- From time to time, attend to lost and found items
- Care for plants



**Building Administration duties:**

- Prep sanctuary for Sunday service (occasional chair set-up, hymnals)
- Track building keys
- Change lockbox code periodically
- Handle building rental inquiries/bookings
- Supervise custodian by posting building schedule and purchasing supplies
- Communicate building use to Bruce (local Trustee) as applicable for heating needs
- Communicate with Treasurer as needed regarding annual tax exemption report
- Purchase kitchen supplies (napkins, paper products, dish detergent)
- Purchase bathroom supplies (tp, paper towels)
- Oversee (with BMC Trustees and/or repair people) that things in the building work such as stair lift, copier, kitchen appliances, sinks/toilets, etc.
- Schedule inspections as needed (boiler, back flow valve, fire extinguishers, fire department, etc.)
- Address building appearance/tidiness

**Related tasks being handled by volunteers 2020-2021:**

- On-call for annual office work (copies, compiling, proofreading) (Carole, Gwen)
- Put out/return trash carts as needed (Thurs/Fri.) (Typically Gary/custodian)
- Purchase grocery cards for Emergency gifts (Becky S)
- Oversee grocery card fundraiser program (Becky S)
- Maintain Facebook presence (Randy administrates, with occasional help from Lily)
- Maintain BMC website (Randy, Bruce, Lily)

# Functional Committees and Task Groups

(fall 2020)



## Pastor

Randy Spaulding 303-443-3889 (BMC) 941-228-2984 (mobile/emergency)  
randy@bouldermennonite.org

## BMC Administrator

Ivanna Johnson 303-443-3889 (BMC) info@bouldermennonite.org

## END DATE

9/2020 - open

## Church Chair

Toni Diaz Bachus 303-579-4290 tmclain@coloradogroup.com

9/2021

## Treasurer

Bruce Fast 720-233-4859 brucefast@gmail.com

1/2015 - open

## Deacons (3-year term)

Carole Suderman 303-494-8527 cjsude@yahoo.com

9/2024 (*extended + term*)

Paul Claasen 316-217-2355 pjclassen@gmail.com

9/2022

Steve Voran 303-499-6843 stevevoran@gmail.com

9/2021 (*extended 1 yr*)

## Events Coordinator

Elvira Glenn 303-666-6331 e\_eglenn@netzero.net

## Fellowship Time Coordinators

- OPEN -

## Youth Council (YOCO)

### Pastor

Cornelia Krahn & Kent Olson 303-917-0914 cornelia.krahn@gmail.com

Suzanne Claasen xxx-xxx-xxxx bootoil@hotmail.com

Toni Diaz Bachus 303-579-4290 tmclain@coloradogroup.com

## Youth Sponsor

- OPEN -

## Mentoring Program Coordinator

Cornelia Krahn 303-917-0914 cornelia.krahn@gmail.com

open

## Christian Education Committee

### Pastor

Douglas Minter 303-819-5248 mintersfour@gmail.com

Carolyn Clement 720-334-6436 cclement97@yahoo.com

## Trustees / Building & Grounds

Bruce Fast 720-233-4859 brucefast@gmail.com

Kurt Firnhaber 303-917-0914 kfirnhaber3@gmail.com

*another person ?*

**Ministry of Financial Resources**

Eldon Mast	303-478-2673	eldon.s.mast@gmail.com	2019
Gary Stephens	203-231-1056	garytoddstevens@gmail.com	?
Becky Sawatzky	303-446-2648	besawatzky@gmail.com	?
Bruce Fast	720-233-4859	brucefast@gmail.com	<i>member as Treasurer</i>

**Outward Ministries Fund** (“First Fruits” budget designation)

Bruce Fast	720-233-4859	brucefast@gmail.com
Mary McKay	303-747-2059	mckaypyne@gmail.com
Cindy Firnhaber	303-91-0613	csfirnhaber@gmail.com
Becky Newmann		

**Outreach/Community Needs Task Force**

Cindy Firnhaber	303-91-0613	csfirnhaber@gmail.com	open
Mary McKay	303-747-2059	memckay@csd.net	

**Small Group Leaders**

*see Website > Community Overview > Small Groups*

**Tech Team / BMC worship and virtual gatherings**

Steve Voran, Elleanna	303-499-6843	stevevoran@gmail.com
Alfred Sawatzky, Joel and Katharina	303-68-7663	alfred.sawatzky@gmail.com
Eldon Mast	303-478-2673	eldon.s.mast@gmail.com

**Worship Committee**

Open - by theme and pastor/planning and request  
Sundays Scheduler of volunteer personnel: Ivanna Johnson as Admin

**Nominating Committee**

Eldon Mast	303-339-0669	eldon.s.mast@gmail.com	open
Carole Suderman	303-494-8527	cjsude@yahoo.com	open

**Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee**

Douglas Minter	303-666-1293	minters4@q.com	12/2017-
Jonathan Falk	303-506-5364	jonathan@jwfalk.com	1/2018 -
Carolyn Clement	720-334-6436	cclement97@yahoo.com	1/2018 -

**Grocery Coupon/Card Coordinator** (% to BMC)

Becky Sawatzky	303-446-2468	besawatzky@gmail.com
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**Boulder Shelter for the Homeless Contact Person**

Bruce Fast	720-233-4859	brucefast@gmail.com
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## **Annually/as needed:**

### **Building Beautification Team/Ad hoc**

Cornelia Krahn                      303-917-0914                      cornelia.krahn@gmail.com                      open  
Another member?

### **BMC Website and Social Media Team**

Pastor/Admin, with support from Lily Mast, Bruce Fast  
(This group meets virtually with no formal reporting requirements)

### **BMC Annual Retreat registration**

Deb Falk                      720-272-3256                      deb@debfolk.com                      open  
Jonathan Falk                      303-506-5364                      jonathan@jwfalk.com                      open

### **BMC Guidebook revisions** (annually in fall)

Terry Mast                      720.340.2220                      terry.mast@gmail.com                      open  
*with Council and others as congregational decisions arise*

### **BOHO Representative**

- OPEN -

### **Denominational/MCUSA Agency representatives:**

#### **Everence** (Financial Planning/Insurance)

Paul Classen                      720-328-8320                      pjclassen@gmail.com                      open

#### **Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sale Contact Person**

- OPEN -

#### **Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) School Kit Assembly** (annually in fall)

Gwen Grasse                      303-499-6843                      ggrasse@juno.com                      open

#### **Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Representative**

Brenda Fox (Prayerstream Ministries)                      720-252-7939                      prayerstream@mountainstatesmc.org

#### **Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)**

Paul Claussen                      open  
Teresa Troester-Falk                      open

#### **Mountain States Mennonite Conference Women Contact Person**

Toni Diaz Bachus                      303-579-4290                      tmclain@coloradogroup.com                      open



# Church Policies

## Publicly Affirming Congregation

In May 1996, the BMC congregation approved the following in a special congregational meeting:

1. We adopt a statement of welcome indicating the acceptance of people of gender and sexual minorities (GSM) as full members and capable of assuming responsibility and leadership in all areas of church life. Our statement of welcome, included in the weekly bulletin, will read:

“As a Christian community, called by Christ to be inclusive, caring, and peace minded, we affirm that people of any race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, economic status, or life situation, are welcome to be in full participation in our congregation.”

2. We add our church’s name to the list of Publicly Affirming Congregations maintained by the Supportive Communities Network.

3. We express our willingness to be listed as a church to whom gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons are referred, who are seeking a welcoming church home.



## Fundraising/Sales on Sunday

In October 1998, the Church Council agreed on the following **Policy Statement for Fundraising and Other Sales on Sunday**:

Church Council has affirmed the use of our gathering time on Sunday mornings for the following activities specifically related to the life of Boulder Mennonite Church: youth activities, trips, or missions; congregational benefit (e.g., budget fundraisers); other causes directly supported by the congregation (e.g., MCC, 10000 Villages, Christian Peacemaker Teams).

Other Christian, non-profit groups wishing to make sales at BMC on a Sunday may do so. However, all interested parties must get the Council’s affirmation in advance of the date requested. Requests can first be directed to the Church Chair who will bring the request to the Council. Any individual or non-Christian group may make a similar request about fundraising in the church on any other day of the week.

Set-up for all persons doing fundraising at BMC should be done to minimize the impact on Christian Education programs and on BMC worship services.

## Expenditures Policy

In March of 2002, the Church Council agreed on the following **Policy Statement Regarding Budgeted Expenditures**.

With the exemption of regular expenditures for which the treasurer and pastor(s) are required to make in the normal function of their duties, all expenditures drawn from the church budget shall be subject to the following approval protocol.

Expenditures made by building administrator and youth advisor/pastor:

\$100-\$250 - approval from pastors.

\$250-\$499 - approval from pastors and church treasurer.

\$500 or greater - approval from pastors and church council.

Expenditures made by committees or other groups:

Up to \$249 - approval from committee members.

\$250-\$499 - approval from committee members and church treasurer.

\$500 or greater - approval from committee members and church council.

Expenditures made by pastors:

\$300 or greater - approval from church council.

This policy is intended as a general guideline for committees and staff in making decisions regarding budgeted expenditures. Discretion and flexibility is encouraged for emergency expenditures or special circumstances.

## **College Fund**

In October 2001, the Church Council agreed to create a College Fund by way of the following **Policy Statement**:

Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC) will maintain a line item in its annual budget (amount to be determined year-to-year) as a scholarship to help send young people affiliated with BMC to colleges affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Each summer an announcement shall be made through the church bulletin (and other pertinent places) regarding the availability of these funds. Applicants will be asked to submit a letter to church council stating why they wish to receive funds to attend a Mennonite college. Deacons shall then use their discretion in making decisions regarding distribution of these funds for this purpose.

## **Support for Conference Attendance**

Boulder Mennonite Church recognizes that attending conference sessions for our area conference and our denomination are valuable experiences for our members. In 2001, the church council established a **Policy for Supporting Conference Attendees**. Conference attendees representing BMC may also be able to claim non-reimbursed conference expenses as a donation on their tax return. For tax purposes, church council minutes must note the names of people representing the church at a conference (the representatives do not have to be official delegates). We also commit to helping our youth attend conferences, through support of fund raisers and other support.



# Decision-Making: A Process for Spiritual Discernment to Carry Out God's Action

Boulder Mennonite Church is committed to an open process for decision-making and conflict resolution in our congregation. We discern God's intended action through prayerful listening, being open to discovery, and discussing issues together. This process, rooted in the consensus model, involves many bodies within the church: the BMC Church Council, deacons, small groups, and the congregation as a whole.

Decisions that fall within a committee's role (as described in this Guidebook) are generally affirmed under the direction of that group's leadership. BMC has an understanding of financial/spending strategies (See Appendix H, Church Policies, Expenditures) within these groups to allow them to move forward within the boundaries of our annual budget from year-to-year. Updates provided to Church Council are helpful on a regular basis from most task groups, as well as reports (in the form of shared minutes and verbal as well as written announcements) to the congregation so that all are kept informed of forward movement on projects, improvements, outreach, and ministry activities.

Our volunteer congregational leaders are called by active member nomination, or are individuals who have stepped into a variety of roles within task groups and committees, and who assume positions of trust in which they commit to act in good faith and through spiritual discernment on behalf of the BMC community.

## Basis

For deciding matters of importance at BMC, majority rule has not been seen by our congregation as an appropriate strategy. Some adaptation of a consensus model is preferred, the main question being how much time and effort the congregation can be expected to invest in resolving a particularly weighty or divisive question.

The manner in which Boulder Mennonite Church makes decisions is part of its identity. A goal of consensus is consistent with an Anabaptist emphasis on peacemaking, and the process described below incorporates many elements which give the congregation a chance to achieve consensus. Our communal decision-making process will be included in the Inquirers Class curriculum; it will be brought up from time to time in the consciousness of the congregation (for instance, at annual meetings), and will require reconfirmation by the congregation from time to time, as the constituency of the church shifts.

Our goal in spiritual discernment and subsequent communal decision-making is to bring the experience of God to a given human experience. We understand spiritual discernment to be a spiritual discipline that calls for bridging the gap which so often exists between worship and decision-making. So again, we focus on: how is God calling and leading our congregation (not just each of us as individuals) in responding to this proposal? The congregation consists of busy people with considerable commitments. While it is right to lead the congregation in the direction of this form of decision-making, the realities of our time constraints and our patience must be honored.

Adopting this model of communal decision-making will require a commitment of time and of learning and practicing the process. Note that there are some built-in limits on the amount of time and participation: in particular, one issue will not be pursued in more than two meetings of a maximum of two hours apiece. Points 7d and 7e2 under "Process" touch on two circumstances where an actual vote will be in order, but voting will be considered a 'last resort' after a full exercise of this model has fallen short of consensus. We will seek to educate ourselves

- in thinking in terms of what God is calling the congregation to, rather than what we each want personally,



- in the importance of prayer and openness to God’s Spirit in pursuing Christian unity and direction,
- in the techniques of consensus decision-making,
- a willingness to invest more time in listening to each other,
- practical steps (scheduling, facilitation, child care) that make the process workable. While leaders in the congregation will work on learning how to facilitate the process, the entire church is urged to understand the ideas and workings of seeking unity and direction.

This process has been used for coming to communal decision regarding the purchase of our Table Mesa building, for acceptance of our congregation’s choice to become an open and affirming congregation, and for matters related to approval of our annual budget. Our expectation is that these guidelines will be used on matters of a similar nature, including within congregational meetings to call new pastoral leadership or to make a change in pastoral leadership.

## Glossary

### Unanimity

The fortunate state of affairs when everyone agrees. This is an ideal situation, but not realistic! If an issue is serious enough to require a congregational meeting, unanimity is unlikely; and if unanimity is likely, the issue can probably be decided by church council, rather than requiring a congregational meeting.

### Consensus

Mutual consent. Everyone need not agree with a decision (in the sense that everyone is thrilled with, or in favor of a proposal) to go ahead with it. But the congregation can proceed with the permission of those who don’t share the viewpoint of the apparent majority, where permission can take one of several forms including

- Satisfying oneself that the others truly understand one’s objections and rationale, yet have an honest difference of judgment, and deferring to the prevailing judgment.

- “I disagree but do not wish to stand in the way.”
- “I will not stand in the way, but please record me as being opposed.”

In this case, the individual/s in opposition to the leaning of the larger community will be listed in the minutes of the meeting. This record will be filed for reference in the “Congregational Meetings” binder in the BMC Administrator’s office.



### Communal Decision-Making

Our adaptation of the true consensus model. In particular, while we hope to achieve consensus as described above, there are time restrictions on the number of meetings (two) and time per meeting (two hours), and provisions for a vote when those limits are passed — requiring 80% for passage. This compromise between the ideals of consensus and short-term efficiency has been revisited and practiced since its initial congregational approval on June 4, 1994.

## Process

### Proposal

1. A church member (usually a council member) presents a proposal to church council.

### Engagement

2. Church council engages the proposal. Council decides whether to proceed with the proposal at all, to act on it without input from the congregation, or to send it forth (perhaps modified) to the next stage.

### Small Group Forum

3. The processed proposal is put to the church’s small groups, if appropriate. The small groups discuss the proposal and report back to council with their response. At this level, discussion and seeking out of feelings and

ideas is sought, not consensus. Council may ask for written comments from the small groups, to insure effective communication. This small group setting is the time for sharing of individual visions, and also for each person to begin asking the question of spiritual discernment: how is God calling and leading our congregation in responding to this proposal?

There will be an extra meeting at the church, at a time advertised at least a week in advance, for those not in (or unable to attend) one of the small groups. At least one church council member will be at this meeting to provide the relevant information, and to convey the response of the meeting back to church council.

### **Modification**

4. Church council uses the feedback from small groups to modify the original proposal, and form its own recommendation to the congregation.

### **Congregational Meeting**

5. At a congregational meeting, the moderator presents the original proposal, and the feedback of the small groups, and the council's recommendation. The modified proposal is set forth clearly, along with a clear statement of the goal of the meeting. A time of prayer and silence is appropriate. In no case will more than two hours be spent on discussing a single proposal at a meeting.

### **Discussion**

6. The feelings and ideas of the formal members and active participants of the congregation are solicited. The church chair (or chosen facilitator) guides the discussion to determine what divisions of opinion exist and to explore the nature of objections; to allow objections to be addressed and alternative viewpoints to be explored; to seek the changes of wording which will render the proposal more acceptable. We are clear that individuals bringing a strong voice of dissent or disagreement with a proposal are to be heard with careful listening and reflecting. All individuals have a responsibility to this communal process and opinions shared are done so in a public manner. If needed, the meeting facilitator is encouraged to adopt a format in which individuals wishing to speak are each allowed equal time (e.g. two minutes) to share their perspective/s.

### **Resolution**

7. The matter of the proposal may be resolved in a timely manner in one of the following ways, in the following order of preference:

#### Option a

Unanimous affirmation of (a version of) the proposal.

#### Option b

General agreement to adopt (a version of) the proposal, with everyone willing (for the sake of the group) to allow passage of the proposal, but with alternative points of view noted. This kind of standing aside by those with differing viewpoints can take one of two forms; the concerns of those who have difficulty supporting the proposal can be noted verbally in the meeting, or in a more forceful case, be written into the proposal itself. (See 'Consensus' in the glossary.)

#### Option c

Unanimous agreement to drop the proposal.

#### Option d

Unanimous agreement to conduct a vote, agreement on the required percentage for passage, and agreement to abide by the results.

#### Option e

##### *Option e1*

Failing to accomplish unity via one of the above, the matter is postponed to a 2nd general meeting. (If progress is clearly not being made, or there is a special time constraint, the meeting can choose postponement before the

whole two hours are up, by a voice vote.) The meeting chooses a group, including one or more of those on each side of the issue, to rework the proposal in good faith before the 2nd meeting; the use of a neutral mediator is encouraged, if appropriate. Mountain States Mennonite Conference makes available a third-party facilitator through the Dialogue Resource Team.

#### *Option e2*

If this is already the 2nd meeting on the proposal, and unity has not been accomplished by the end of the meeting, then the meeting proceeds to a final vote where 80% is the required result for passage. All formal members and active church participants may vote, though the votes of those who are not actually formal members may not constitute over 30% of the total votes. (If the number of voting non-members does exceed 30% of the total, then their votes will be weighted so that this block of votes counts for 30% of the total. Deacons will be consulted if there is any question of who is a member or active participant of the congregation.) If this ‘last resort’ vote fails to yield 80% or higher, the outcome will be that of no decision. The proposal is effectively denied, and dead for the time being.

#### Suggestions for Congregational Meetings

At the beginning of such decision-making meetings, let there be a time of prayer and silence, and then a review of purpose of the meeting, the possible directions the meeting can take, the nature of the unity we seek and the ways we can agree and disagree with each other, how we can express our different viewpoints and explore the viewpoints of others.

Always keep the working proposal very clear, so that we all know what we are working on. While we may not talk of voting (except cases 7d and 7e2), it is fine to take straw polls from time to time, if needed, to know where we stand on the current proposal. This is one way to discover differing viewpoints, which can then be discussed.

People should be reminded to speak for themselves only, not for (hypothetical) other positions, or others not present, or for those who are silent. Also, while emotions are sure to be involved in discussions of important issues, speakers will generally be encouraged to keep emotions in check while discussing issues; we shall let emotions serve us and help drive us in doing what is right, but not let them control us.

If only one or two members are unable to support overall agreement, there is a possibility of less time-consuming resolution in making those people part of the group charged with reworking the proposal before the 2nd meeting (point 7e1 above): part of the meaning of good faith is that all members of that group will support the revised proposal which they bring to the 2nd meeting. We want to stress listening, and take seriously the opinions and viewpoints of the whole group. We will explore the viewpoints which differ from our own, and deal with them by discussion, reworking and rewording of the proposal, and reminding ourselves that we are seeking direction for the congregation as a whole.

Those who find themselves with views not in accordance with the apparent majority are likewise to remember that we are seeking direction for the congregation as a whole, and that in relevant cases, their options include working on an alternative that is still acceptable to the others, or permitting passage of the proposal in one of the senses listed above.

**Note:** Revisions of this text were affirmed by the church council on 12 November 2020 based on elaboration suggested in a large group of BMCers in an adult education discussion in October 2017, with additional clarification regarding the archival of dissenting opinions (fall 2020) by individuals who make such a request.

# Reflections on Inclusive Language

**Boulder Mennonite Church, October 2017**

*(proposed to church council, to be presented to the congregation)*



Whereas

- All people are created in the image of God
- God includes but is not limited to the language we use to describe God
- Our language for God and humans shapes how we experience and understand them
- Our ability to know and use language in our faith is ever-evolving
- BMC is a faith community that affirms each person as a unique and valued creation of God

Therefore, we offer these reflections to invite dialogue and intentionality regarding inclusive language in the life and faith of the BMC community:

**Scope** – These reflections may apply to church materials, including mission statements, policies, liturgy and worship materials, promotional items, and social media postings, and aims to help us think through what we say, sing, and write, and the impact these have on others.

**Expansive Language about God** – since God is so much more than words or images can do justice to, it makes sense to add, rather than substitute, imagery for God in speaking about or to God. We also acknowledge that people in the Church historically have referred to and addressed God almost exclusively as male, and with titles that assume a hierarchical relationship. But God's self-revelation is so much more than these. Examples of the wide range of names or descriptors for God are those of a midwife, mother, mother bear, shepherd, woman, baker, eagle, hen, fire, wind, rock, water, light, bread, vine, word, wisdom, I Am, and potter. And these are just a start.

**Inclusive Language for People** – This is rooted in challenging all our assumptions about who and what our language includes, and evolves with greater understanding of the human person in all their manifestations, including but not limited to such things as gender, race, class, age, physical abilities, nationality, theological beliefs, culture, lifestyle, and the other ways we describe and categorize humans.

**Learning and Growing Together** – We are inviting reflections on our use of language, not to call one another out, but to expand our community's awareness of the way language is used, the assumptions that underlie our use of certain terms and expressions, and how our language impacts our being a welcoming congregation. Above all, we seek to speak to one another in love and truth out of our own experiences and for ourselves only.

**Good Faith and the Benefit of the Doubt** – As we reflect on language together, we will do so in good faith and give one another the benefit of the doubt, working from the assumption that no one in community means to do harm in using language that excludes, and all of us have room to grow.

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1. The theological basis for this Policy was greatly informed by a teaching-learning document on Inclusive Language from the Worldwide Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches: <http://mccchurch.org/inclusive-language-guidelines/>

2. Scriptural references for these names can be found at <http://www.ucc.org/worship/inclusive-language/language-about-god.html>.

*This document was drafted and presented by Cheri Krause, Church Administrator, and Rick King, Interim Pastor, August 2017.  
Revision input was provided by church council members.*



# Boulder Mennonite Church Project Initiative

## Proposal Form



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Name of Project

Contact Person taking Responsibility

Date

Date of Presentation (Council Meeting):

Project Description

Resources Needed? (Financial or otherwise) Please describe funds that may be required from BMC

Start Date

Anticipated End Date

What circumstances might affect the end date?

