

Section III

1. Constitution
2. Covenant of Understanding
3. Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective

Constitution of the North Goshen Mennonite Church

Article I – Name

The name of this congregation and organization is known as the North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Article II – Mission Statement

We are a community of Anabaptist believers at North Goshen Mennonite Church committed to be the people of God, living as followers of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and by the authority of the Scriptures.

We recognize the importance of releasing and affirming the spiritual gifts of individuals in worship, leadership, nurture, mutual care, fellowship, stewardship, discipleship, peacemaking, justice and witness in order to minister to each other and to share the Gospel in our community and in our world.

(Adapted from the Mission Statement approved by the congregation May 1993).

Article III – Covenant Relationships

Section 1 – Relationship to Each Other

Membership in this congregation consists of all persons who profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and are committed to following him, affirm the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, (see copy in NGMC Handbook) and declare a willingness to participate in the life of North Goshen Mennonite Church.

TO HELP GUIDE THESE RELATIONSHIPS, IT IS MY DESIRE AND INTENT TO GROW THROUGH:

1. Studying the Scriptures, praying, and walking in obedience to God's will.
2. Participating regularly in worship, nurture, fellowship, and decision-making.
3. Ministering to others through mutual care.
4. Giving and receiving counsel in Christian love.
5. Confessing my sins and offering forgiveness to others.
6. Sharing the Good news of Christ with my family, friends, and others.
7. Giving my time, finances, and abilities to the ministry of the church.
8. Dedicating myself to live a holy life, in personal, family, and community relationships.
9. Regularly processing with other believers my experience with congregational life.

Persons requesting membership are recommended by the Elders and Pastoral Team and accepted by the congregation. Persons become members by believer's baptism or, if baptized, by presentation of a church letter or confession of faith.

Membership may be ended by letter of transfer to another congregation, at a member's request, or when a member rejects the counsel and covenant of the North Goshen Mennonite Church or continually walks contrary to faith in Christ. Membership is terminated upon recommendation by the Elders and Pastoral Team and approved by the congregation. Any person whose membership is terminated forfeits all official and legal rights of this congregation.

Section 2 – Relationship to the Mennonite Church USA

This congregation is a member of the Mennonite Church, participates fully in and is supportive of its activities and procedures, and is committed to give and receive counsel to and from the broader church.

Section 3 – Relationship to the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

The congregation is a member of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, participates fully in and is supportive of its activities and procedures, and is committed to give and receive counsel by the structures provided.

Section 4 – Relationship to the Community

This congregation is engaged in communication and cooperates with other local Mennonite and Christian congregations and agencies as deemed appropriate and is a spiritual, emotional, and physical resource to the immediate community in which the church is located.

Section 5 – Relationship to the State of Indiana

This congregation is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Indiana. This relationship is governed by the Articles of Incorporation, which are superior to this document in all legal matters.

Article IV – Administrative Structure

The leadership structure of North Goshen Mennonite Church consists of appointed commissions and Elders by Gifts Discernment Commission.

They are: Elders, Coordinating Council, Evangelism, Fellowship, Nurture, Pastoral/Congregational Relationship (PCRC), Steward, and Worship.
(Coordinating Council appoints Gifts Discernment Commission)

The job descriptions and the appointments for and made by each commission are listed in the NGMC Handbook. The commissions and job descriptions are subject to review and/or change annually.

Section 1

PASTOR(S) serve the congregation according to the recommendation of the Pastoral-Congregational Relationship Commission (PCRC) and assist the congregation in carrying out its vision and mission.

Section 2

ELDERS are comprised of three persons and serve along with the pastor(s) to provide spiritual oversight and care for the congregation.

Section 3

COORDINATING COUNCIL coordinates the program of the congregation. Membership includes an Executive Committee of three persons (chair, secretary, and third member at large), a representative from each of the commissions, an elder and a pastor.

Section 4

COMMISSIONS provide resources to the congregation in the areas of Evangelism, Fellowship, Gifts Discernment, Nurture, Pastoral-Congregational Relationship (PCRC), Stewardship, and Worship. Each commission has a leadership committee of three persons: chair, secretary, and third member.

Section 5

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS are the final authority in all congregational matters. Congregational meetings are held as often as needed at the direction of Coordinating Council, but no less than twice a year.

Article V

Section 1 - Calling and Tenure

- A. The pastor(s) of the congregation is affirmed by the congregation upon recommendation of the Pastoral-Congregational Relationship Commission (PCRC) and the Church Life Commission of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

- B. The term of the pastor(s) is determined by the covenant of understanding established between Pastoral-Congregational Relationship Commission (PCRC) and pastor(s).

Section 2 – Pastoral Responsibilities

- A. Provide leadership for the congregational vision, mission, and strategy; provide spiritual oversight; encourage discipleship; exercise pastoral ministries; and model spiritual disciplines with emphasis on Anabaptist-Mennonite understandings.
- B. Follow the Covenant of Understanding/Job Description negotiated with the Pastoral-Congregational Relationship Commission (PCRC) and affirmed by the congregation (see copy in NGMC Handbook).
- C. To relate with the Elders, Coordinating Council, Pastoral-Congregational Relationship Commission (PCRC), Worship Commission, and Gifts Discernment Commission will provide resources to the other commissions as needed.

Article VI – Fiscal Policies

The fiscal year of this congregation is September 1 through August 31 of the following year.

Article VII – Revisions to Documents

- Any revisions to this document must be discussed and approved by Coordinating Council.
- After CC approves the revision it will be circulated to the congregation in written form. This must be done at least one month before any vote can be held.
- The vote for congregational approval of the recommended revision to this document can be made at any congregational meeting, including Sunday morning service.
- The vote must be done by ballot with a 2/3 approval by members and regular attendees.

Article VIII – Annual Review

This document must be reviewed annually by Coordinating Council and revisions will be made as needed.

Covenant of Understanding

A Covenant between Lead Pastor and North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana

1. **Position and period of effectiveness.** This position carries the title of Lead Pastor of the North Goshen Mennonite Church and is a full time position. The specific conditions of this Covenant of Understanding shall be effective for a period of one year, beginning _____ and ending _____.

2. **Term.** The pastor's term shall be 3 years, the initial term beginning _____, with additional terms, the current one of which ends on _____. Each term shall be reviewed by the Pastor-Congregational Relations Commission or its designated representatives at least six months prior to the ending date and is subject to renewal by 67% vote for approval of the congregation at least ninety days before ending date.

3. **Responsibility:** The Pastor's responsibilities fall into the following categories:
 - a. To provide leadership for the congregation's vision, mission, and strategy.
 - Worship/Preaching
 - Work with Worship Commission in planning corporate worship experiences.
 - Lead weekly planning for worship services.
 - Preach approximately 5 out of 6 Sundays.
 - Provide leadership and coordination of other rituals, and transitions.
 - Teaching/Leading
 - Serve as a resource for Bible Studies, Sunday school, Youth, and VBS.
 - Spiritual Oversight and Vision/Mission
 - Provide leadership to pastor/elder tea
 - b. To exercise pastoral ministries and encourage discipleship.
 - Pastoral Care
 - Counseling for persons in crisis, including referrals
 - Regular hospital visits
 - Visitation/interaction with regular attendees and visitors
 - Administration
 - Participate in Worship Commission, Bd. of Elders, and Coordinating Council
 - Resource commissions as needed
 - Receive and distribute information from church agencies to respective commissions

- Maintain involvements with Goshen Ministerial Assoc., Goshen, Mennonite Ministers Council, and IN/MI Mennonite Conference
- 4. **Accountability:** The pastor will be accountable to the Board of Elders for the spiritual guidance of the congregation. The pastor will be accountable to the Pastor-Congregational Relations Committee for relational and practical matters of ministry. The pastor will be accountable to the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in matters of professional conduct.
- 5. **Salary:** The congregation will provide the pastor with annual total cash salary of \$_____. Of this amount, \$_____ shall be designated as a housing allowance, which includes cost, utilities, furnishings, and appurtenances. The congregation will follow MC-USA guidelines pertaining to salary/benefits and other employment practices.
- 6. **Pension Plan/Retirement Fund:** The congregation agrees to participate with the pastor in the Mennonite Mutual Aid Mennonite Retirement Trust or other retirement investment options, at the rate of _____ percent of annual base salary. The amount for this year, _____ will be \$_____.
- 7. **Health plan, sick leave, and maternity leave.** The congregation will provide the pastor and family with the Covenant Mutual Benefit Plan (COMB), formally CEP, or other medical insurance plans. Payment will be made directly by the congregation. The congregation will grant one day per month for sick leave, which may be accumulated up to a total of ninety days. A total of up to 45 days may be accumulated and transferred from prior pastoral locations. Pastors are eligible for the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act if they have been employed in their present position for at least one year. Family leave must be for one of the following reasons: 1) to care for the pastor's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care; 2) to care for the pastor's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; 3) for a serious health condition that makes the pastor unable to perform the pastoral responsibilities. The Pastor-Congregational Relations Commission will review arrangements for long-term illness beyond accumulated sick days.
- 8. **Travel and Auto expenses:** The congregation agrees to reimburse the pastor for church-related travel at a rate of _____ cents per mile based upon report of a regular travel log.
- 9. **Vacation and Holidays:** The pastor will be granted _____ weeks of vacation annually. No more than one week can be accumulated for the following year. Upon termination of services, the last vacation period will be prorated in proportion to the time served that year. Holidays normally observed by society will be time off, with compensatory days for those

religious holidays that call for pastoral duty. The pastor is regularly given 1-½ days off each week from pastoral responsibility.

10. **Continuing Education:** The Church supports various types of continuing education which will encourage the professional growth of the pastor, a maximum of then working days and \$_____ will be provided annually for such activities. These may be accumulated over three years within the congregation being served to permit participation in something such as the seminary interterm or summer school. Other resources may also be available through the area conference of MMA.
11. **Office Expense:** The church will provide adequate office equipment and furniture and pay for expenses of operating the church office, such as stationary, postage, telephone, computer and printer updates, copying and other supplies.
12. **Conference and community.** The congregation looks with favor upon the pastor's participation in conference and Mennonite activities as a part of our congregation's sharing in the large church, as well as in community projects in its own area. It is always appropriate to check with the Pastor-Congregational Relations Committee for guidance as to what is appropriate participation, especially in regard to the amount of time given. Because participation in an attendance of denominational sessions, area conference sessions and ministerial retreats are a part of the pastor's responsibility, the church will pay for the normal transportation cost (the lesser of either auto mileage or low-cost air faire), registration, lodging, and meals.
13. **Social Security.** By law in the United States, the licensed or ordained minister must make Social Security payments as if self-employed. The congregation agrees to pay ½ of the Social Security self-employment tax, as would the normal employer, recognizing that this is a taxable income.
14. **Sabbatical leave.** In order to encourage significant growth in ministry and to increase the likelihood of longer pastoral tenure, the congregation agrees to establish the following sabbatical policy. For each month of service to this congregation, two days of sabbatical leave will be granted. One "Sabbatical Day" will be used each month on directed spiritual retreat with a spiritual director. The second day of sabbatical leave shall be accumulated annually at a minimum, to be used after the third year of ministry here. During the sabbatical, the pastor will receive full salary and benefits as exist in the then current covenant of understanding. The Pastor-Congregational Committee shall approve the sabbatical plans submitted by the pastor. Following a sabbatical, the pastor agrees to provide a minimum of one year of service to the congregation, with the understanding that repayment of sabbatical salary and benefits will be made for failure to do so. Accumulated sabbatical time is

not transferrable from prior congregational locations, nor is a terminal sabbatical acceptable.

15. **Insurance:** The congregation will provide life insurance, survivor's aid, and disability insurance for the pastor. This will be in the amount of \$_____ term life insurance and \$_____ disability insurance.
16. **Resignation and termination:** In the event the pastor chooses to resign this position, the Congregational Chairperson shall be given a minimum notice of 90 days prior to the effective date of resignation. Should the church choose to terminate the pastor in this position, they likewise will give a minimum of 90 days notice prior to the effective date of termination. If immediate dismissal occurs, for reasons other than ethical violations for which ministerial credentials have been terminated by the area conference, severance pay and benefits equal to 90 days shall be given.
17. **Review:** All the terms of the covenant of understanding shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee or its designated representatives, meeting with the pastor, and in time for the presentation of the annual budget of the congregation.

18. Signatures with a copy to each.

Chair of the Pastor/Congregational Relations C.

Date

Pastor

Date

Conference Minister or Overseer

Date

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective

The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective was adopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, meeting at Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995. The following is a summary statement of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. The summary statement is used here by permission of Herald Press, which is the copyright holder for the statement.

1. We believe that **God** exists and is pleased with all who draw near by faith. We worship the one holy and loving God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit eternally. God has created all things visible and invisible, has brought salvation and new life to humanity through Jesus Christ, and continues to sustain the church and all things until the end of the age.
2. We believe in **Jesus Christ**, the Word of God become flesh. He is the Savior of the world, who has delivered us from the dominion of sin and reconciled us to God by his death on a cross. He was declared to be Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. He is the head of the church, the exalted Lord, the Lamb who was slain, coming again to reign with God in glory.
3. We believe in the **Holy Spirit**, the eternal Spirit of God, who dwelled in Jesus Christ, who empowers the church, who is the source of our life in Christ, and who is poured out on those who believe as the guarantee of redemption.
4. We believe that all **Scripture** is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit for instruction in salvation and training in righteousness. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. Led by the Holy Spirit in the church, we interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ.
5. We believe that God has **created the heavens and the earth** and all that is in them, and that God preserves and renews what has been made. All creation has its source outside itself and belongs to the Creator. The world has been created good because God is good and provides all that is needed for life.
6. We believe that God has **created human beings** in the divine image. God formed them from the dust of the earth and gave them a special dignity among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation.

7. We confess that, beginning with Adam and Eve, humanity has disobeyed God, given way to the tempter, and chosen to sin. All have fallen short of the Creator's intent, marred the image of God in which they were created, disrupted order in the world, and limited their love for others. Because of sin, humanity has been given over to the enslaving powers of evil and death.
8. We believe that, through Jesus Christ, God offers **salvation** from sin and a new way of life. We receive God's salvation when we repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. In Christ, we are reconciled with God and brought into the reconciling community. We place our faith in God that, by the same power that raised Christ from the dead, we may be saved from sin to follow Christ and to know the fullness of salvation.
9. We believe that the **church** is the assembly of those who have accepted God's offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the new community of disciples sent into the world to proclaim the reign of God and to provide a foretaste of the church's glorious hope. It is the new society established and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
10. We believe that the **mission** of the church is to proclaim and to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Christ has commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things he has commanded.
11. We believe that the **baptism** of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin. Baptism is also a pledge before the church of their covenant with God to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers are baptized into Christ and his body by the Spirit, water, and blood.
12. We believe that the **Lord's Supper** is a sign by which the church thankfully remembers the new covenant, which Jesus established by his death. In this communion meal, the church renews its covenant with God and with each other and participates in the life and death of Jesus Christ, until he comes.
13. We believe that in **washing the feet** of his disciples, Jesus calls us to serve one another in love as he did. Thus we acknowledge our frequent need of cleansing, renew our willingness to let go of pride and worldly power, and offer our lives in humble service and sacrificial love.
14. We practice **discipline** in the church as a sign of God's offer of transforming grace. Discipline is intended to liberate erring brothers and sisters from sin, and to restore them to a right relationship with God and to fellowship in the church. The practice of discipline gives integrity to the church's witness in the world.

15. We believe that **ministry** is a continuation of the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and of fices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith.
16. We believe that the church of Jesus Christ is **one body** with many members, ordered in such a way that, through the one Spirit, believers may be built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.
17. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to **discipleship**, to take up our cross and follow him. Through the gift of God's saving grace, we are empowered to be disciples of Jesus, filled with his Spirit, following his teachings and his path through suffering to new life. As we are faithful to his way, we become conformed to Christ and separated from the evil in the world.
18. We believe that to be a disciple of Jesus is to know **life in the Spirit**. As the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ takes shape in us, we grow in the image of Christ and in our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is active in individual and in communal worship, leading us deeper into the experience of God.
19. We believe that God intends human life to begin in **families** and to be blessed through families. Even more, God desires all people to become part of the church, God's family. As single and married members of the church family give and receive nurture and healing, families can grow toward the wholeness that God intends. We are called to chastity and to loving faithfulness in marriage.
20. We commit ourselves to tell the **truth**, to give a simple yes or no, and to avoid the swearing of oaths.
21. We believe that everything belongs to God, who calls the church to live in faithful **stewardship** of all that God has entrusted to us, and to participate now in the rest and justice, which God has promised.
22. We believe that **peace** is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance, even in the face of violence and warfare.
23. We believe that the church is God's "holy nation," called to give full allegiance to Christ its head and to witness to every **nation, government, and society** about God's saving love.

24. We place our hope in the **reign of God** and its fulfillment in the day when Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. He will gather his church, which is already living under the reign of God. We await God's final victory, the end of this present age of struggle, the resurrection of the dead, and a new heaven and a new earth. There the people of God will reign with Christ in justice, righteousness, and peace forever and ever.

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There is a complete copy of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* in the church library.