

Organizational Structure Slate Hill Mennonite Church



And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
Colossians 3:16

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Introduction

The church of Jesus Christ is a living organism not merely an organization. This organizational structure is designed to be flexible and dynamic, able to serve and facilitate the mission of a growing and changing congregation. It should empower the church to fulfill the ministry to which God calls it..

Every person in the church is a minister with gifts given by God and a calling to use those gifts in ministry both within the church and in outreach and service to the world. It is our desire that this structure will empower each person and each group in the congregation to carry out their respective ministries as efficiently as possible while maintaining appropriate accountability.

Slate Hill has a congregational form of government in which the congregation, in consultation with the Bishop designated by Lancaster Mennonite Conference, chooses its pastors and lay leaders and approves the major decisions regarding its life and mission. To enable the congregation to fulfill its mission, the organizational structure includes the following primary components: the Elder Team, which carries out the pastoral caring ministries; the Church Board, which sets policy and goals and provides general oversight and coordination of all congregational ministries and programs; five Commissions, which implement and carry out ministry and programming within specifically assigned areas; and several Standing Committees.

The Slate Hill Mennonite Church and Burial Ground Association is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is a member of Mennonite Church USA through its membership in Lancaster Mennonite Conference. As such it is committed to be faithful to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the policies and faith statements of the Mennonite Church USA and Lancaster Mennonite Conference. It participates in and contributes to the Harrisburg District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Vision Statement

In love God has given us new life through Jesus Christ and invites and empowers us to be a growing and spiritually vibrant community of disciples committed to the Lordship and Reign of Jesus Christ in our lives and in the World..

In the power of the Holy Spirit and from an Anabaptist frame of reference we seek to minister the healing love of God to hurting people and foster spiritual, emotional, relational, mental and physical wholeness.

God ministers through us to one another in caring small groups, vital corporate worship, loving personal relationships and programs that nurture growth and wholeness.

God ministers to those beyond us as we reach out with the Gospel to those in our ministry area who are not yet followers of Jesus , as we seek peace and justice for all people and as we actively support worldwide missions.

Our faith is a living faith expressed in a life of discipleship following Jesus in all areas of life; in personal ethics, work, family, community, service and worship.

Congregational Covenant

We, as members of the Slate Hill Mennonite Church, do solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with each other as members of one body in Christ. We pledge to strive to become a community of faith and love, witness and service, worship and learning. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit we pledge mutual support in the following areas:

- ♦ To support and nurture the Christian life and witness of each member by providing regular opportunities for worship, fellowship, teaching, evangelism and service;
- ♦ To communicate the Gospel to those in the local community who are uncommitted to Jesus Christ and to invite them to Christian faith and discipleship;
- ♦ To promote within the congregation a caring love which rejoices with those who rejoice, supports those who suffer and encourages Christian growth for all;
- ♦ To give and receive counsel as brothers and sisters in the Lord and encourage unity while granting freedom for appropriate diversity
- ♦ To aid each member in the discovery and development of his or her gifts as a means of ministry;
- ♦ To participate actively in the total program of the church;
- ♦ To encourage and support strong family life through the programs and structures of the church;
- ♦ To become aware of and involved in the physical, social and spiritual needs of the community and the larger world, seeking to be peacemakers in all areas of life.
- ♦ To promote the stewardship of each member's life and possessions and to encourage sharing by giving the tithe and through ministries of prayer and service.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we test our understandings against the life and teachings of Jesus and the experience of God's people. In love we commit ourselves to Christ and to each other, dedicating ourselves to obedience to the Scriptures, guided by the faith and practices of the Mennonite Church as expressed in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Congregation as a Whole

Slate Hill Mennonite Church has a congregational form of government. While our ultimate loyalty is to God, God speaks through the gathered congregation to shape our life of faithfulness to God and to lead us into mission. The congregation meets periodically together for discernment and also works through commissions and committees and the individual voices of members.

1. Congregational Meetings

- A. There will be at least one congregational meeting each year prior to the beginning of the fiscal year to approve the budget and for additional agenda items as needed. Other meetings may be scheduled as needed.
- B. Meetings will be held at a time determined by the Church Board to be convenient for most members. The Board chairperson will be responsible to call meetings, prepare the agenda and lead meetings. Nursery and child care will be provided. The date and time for each meeting and the agenda should be announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting via e-mail and a bulletin announcement.
- C. Decisions will normally be made only on those items which appear on the written agenda. Other issues may be discussed but decisions should be deferred to a future meeting, if possible. This policy can be waived by a 2/3 majority vote of those present if an item is of an urgent nature and requires immediate action. Normally decisions will be made by consensus confirmed by a vote. When necessary Roberts Rules of order will be used. The quorum needed to conduct business will be the number of persons present at a meeting that has been called and announced according to the specified procedure.

II Responsibilities of the Congregation

The congregation is ultimately responsible for its work and activity. The Church Board will work for the congregation in giving overall leadership and direction for the congregation. This includes strategic planning, goal setting, and supervising commissions, committees and task forces. The following list identifies specific responsibilities of the congregation as a whole.

- A. The calling of pastoral and lay Elders.
- B. Approval of the annual budget.
- C. Approval of major changes in the organizational structure, and policies of the congregation.
- D. Approval of major capital improvements to the buildings or property owned by the church and the purchase of additional property.
- E. Approval of new programs or ministries with significant ministry and budget implications.

III Composition

- A. For purposes of congregational meetings and decision making, the congregation is composed of all those persons who are members, associate members, and/or regular participants in congregational life as described in the Policy Statement on Church Membership which also describes membership criteria for other positions.

IV. Fiscal and Congregational Years

- A. The congregational year will run from September 1 to August 31 to correspond with the Sunday School year. The Church board, commissions and committees will be chosen prior to September 1 and except for the Treasurer will begin responsibilities on September 1 and end responsibilities August 31.
- B. The fiscal year will run from January 1 to December 31. Normally the treasurer's term will correspond with the fiscal year to allow the existing treasurer to close the books at the end of the fiscal year.

Elder Team

The Elder Team works with the pastor(s) to maintain vitality and strength in the spiritual and pastoral care ministries of the congregation. Everyone in the congregation is strongly encouraged to participate in a Care Group.

The Elder Team is composed of Pastoral Elders ordained or licensed or assigned for specific ministries, and Lay Elders chosen by the congregation. They work under the leadership of the Lead Pastor who chairs the group. The Pastor(s) serve as a direct link between the Board and the Elder Team since they serve on both.

The following description of responsibilities applies to the Elder Team as a whole. Based on giftedness, personal interest, and the overall makeup of the Team, individual Elders may be assigned by the Team to focus on one or more of these general responsibilities.

I. Responsibilities

- A. To work with the Pastor in assuring congregational spiritual vitality and strength through teaching, preaching, prayer and worship activities.
- B. To work with the Pastor and the Associate Pastor of Community Life in pastoral care ministries of the congregation to assure that each person's spiritual, emotional, and physical needs are being met to the greatest degree possible.
- C. To organize and, actively promote a network of Care Groups, usually 8-12 adults, to provide basic care and support for its members. Newcomers will be integrated into the church by incorporating them into groups. The Elders will appoint a Care Group Coordinator and work with that person to appoint a leader for each group and in other ways to strengthen the ministry including providing support and training for group leaders and other care givers.
- D. To provide for the pastoral needs of those people in the congregation who, are not in Care Groups.
- E. To schedule, prepare for, and conduct services for administering the ordinances, Baptism, Lord's Supper, and Feet Washing, as well as for other special events such as receiving new members, dedications, commissioning and review of the vision and covenant. All public activities should be planned in cooperation with the Worship Commission.
- F. To conduct discipleship classes periodically for seekers, newcomers, and new believers in preparation for baptism, membership and / or active involvement in the Slate Hill congregation.

- G. To implement the “Policy Statement on Church Membership, making all decisions regarding baptism, the receiving, transferring, or terminating of membership, and following up with persons whose membership or relationship with the Lord has lapsed or is in question.
- H. To arrange for pastoral oversight and caring support for the Laotian Mennonite Fellowship of Slate Hill working with their leaders to facilitate pastoral caring ministries among the Lao people.
- I. To administer the congregational Mutual Aid Fund.
- J. To promote and oversee the health and wellness ministries of the congregation.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service**

The Elder Team will be composed of all Pastoral Elders who are ordained or licensed or assigned leadership roles in the congregation, and three Lay Elders elected by the congregation. The Care Group Coordinator will normally be a Lay Elder, but if not will function like an elder.

- A. The Lead Pastor will serve as chairperson and leader of the Elder Team and is responsible for coordination of activities and for linkages between the Elders and the Church Board and other congregational groups.
- B. Each Lay Elder will have a three year term of service with one Elder being chosen each year. Lay Elders may serve three consecutive terms. They are eligible for appointment after a year break.
- C. Each Pastoral Elder will normally have a four year term of service with no term limit. These terms will be arranged so that they will end on December 31 of an even numbered year, and should be staggered to minimize simultaneous terminations.
- D. Both women and men are eligible to serve as Elders. The goal is to have at least two women and at least two men on the Team.

III. **Qualifications**

Elders are expected to be:

- A. Members in good standing, active in congregational life, and committed to supporting the church’s ministries with prayer and financial support.
- B. Spiritually mature as evidenced by a faithful lifestyle and a commitment to continued spiritual growth.
- C. Strongly committed to and grounded in an Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
- D. Persons of integrity who are trustworthy and able to hold confidences.
- E. Persons who model the character and life described in the biblical passages, which list qualifications for congregational leaders. (See I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-40).
- F. Good listeners who care without being judgmental or giving superficial answers.

IV. Selection Process

- A. The calling of Pastoral Elders shall be done under the direction of the Church Board working with the District Bishop. The process usually involves a search committee and candidating process. This process shall seek to follow Conference and Denominational procedures and recommendations.
- B. The calling of Lay Elders shall be conducted by the Church Board in consultation with the Pastor and District Bishop. The nomination process should be completed (except for the affirmation vote and commissioning) prior to the time when the Gifts Discernment Committee begins contacting people for other positions. The procedure shall follow these steps:
 1. Members and associate members will be asked to submit nominations for each Lay Elder position being filled. Normally at least three nominating votes are needed for a person to be considered. The existing Elder Team will be specifically asked for suggestions.
 2. The Board will verify the qualifications of each nominee and decide in what order the nominees will be contacted. The criteria for prioritizing the list of nominees will include the gifts of the persons, the number of nominations received, the number of women and men already on the Elder Team, and other relevant considerations. The District Bishop should attend this Board meeting if possible, and if not, will participate in the process in a meaningful way.
 3. The Lead Pastor and Church Board chair will meet with these persons one at a time in the order specified until someone agrees to accept this call. The purpose of meeting together is to discuss the call to serve as a Lay Elder and answer any questions the person may have. Persons should be given adequate time to make a thoughtful decision.
 4. The nominee(s) will be listed in a separate category on the annual slate prepared by the Gifts Discernment Committee such that each nominee can be "affirmed" or "not affirmed individually. Only members and associate members will vote on Elders. This will be noted on the ballot. To be called as an Elder, at least 75% of the votes must be affirmative.
 5. Newly chosen Elders will be commissioned in a public worship service.

Church Board

The Church Board is the central administrative body of the Slate Hill Mennonite Church. It is responsible to oversee, coordinate, and enable all ministries and programs of the church under the direction of the congregation. The Board will normally meet monthly or as often as needed.

All commissions, committees and the Elder Team are accountable to the congregation through the Board, though each is responsible for its assigned tasks and should be given enough autonomy to function freely. The Board may want to facilitate relationships and accountability between the board and commissions, committees and elders by some mechanism such as an annual planning retreat in which all members of the groups participate.. The agenda for each Board meeting will provide opportunity for each Commission to report on their vision and activities, to ask questions and raise issues with the board and for the board to ask them questions and make suggestions. The board may want to plan an annual review of the work of the commissions, committees and Elders Team and their goals for the future. The purpose of a special review is to provide accountability, clarify issues and stimulate vision and quality work.

I. Responsibilities

A. The Board has Authority to Act on these items.

1. To work with the Lead Pastor in developing and maintaining the congregation's vision, purpose, and philosophy of ministry.
2. To give general oversight to the Elder Team, commissions, committees and task forces it appoints.
3. To designate officers for the board and the congregation. . The chair and treasurer are elected by the congregation and are ex officio members of the board. The board will appoint from its membership a Vice Chair and a secretary who will record minutes for Board and Congregational meetings. The officers of the Board, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer will serve as officers of the corporation, Slate Hill Mennonite Church and Burial Ground Association, Inc. The secretary should provide a copy of all minutes and official documents to the administrative assistant in the church office for the permanent records..
4. To work with each commission and committee to establish and interpret their purpose, to facilitate their setting ministry goals and to monitor and evaluate their work.
5. To identify faith and life issues needing congregational attention.
6. To implement the overall vision and mission of the congregation and to approve all new programs or ministries and establish appropriate lines of accountability. New programs or ministries can be initiated by anyone, but should be processed and approved by the Board. Those which have significant budget implications must be approved by the congregation
7. To appoint persons to fill un-expired terms except Board members and Elders. Replacement of Board members and Elders must be approved by congregational vote in the usual manner.
8. To approve decisions regarding office staff including the number of hours worked, pay scales and raises, benefits, etc., and if necessary, terminations.
9. To work with the Stewardship Commission to determine staff salaries using the church wide guidelines for salary, benefits, and expense accounts for all pastoral staff.
- 10 .To interpret and clarify the job descriptions of all pastors, elders, and commission chairpersons as may be needed.
11. To appoint two persons with two year staggered terms to conduct an annual audit of all financial records and accounts. It is strongly suggested that at least one of these persons have accounting background. This should normally be completed within three months after the close of the fiscal year. The auditors should prepare a written report of their findings for the Board.
12. To appoint an editor for the congregation's monthly newsletter, currently called "The Hilltop News," to establish a ministry description and appropriate term of service for this position, and provide general oversight of the editor's work.
13. To determine and manage graphic standards for the use of the congregational logo and other brand and identification items.

14. To work with the Technology Committee to maintain a web page. Normally the Board will be responsible for content and design and the Technology Committee for implementation and web requirements.
 15. To facilitate the work of the commissions possibly by arranging for an annual planning retreat and annual discussions with each commission, committee and the elders as described in the introduction. The retreat might include spiritual nurture, goal setting and strategic planning. The discussions with the groups should include opportunity for mutual accountability and support.
 16. To arrange for a system to keep permanent records of legal papers, minutes of commissions, committees, the elders and the board, reports and other items .
 17. To approve the slate of nominees prepared by the Gift Discernment Committee.
- B. The Board does background work leading to recommendations to the congregation for the following items.
1. Initiate and oversee the calling of Pastoral Elders, establishing a search committee when needed and working closely with the Bishop..
 2. Conduct the process for the selection of Lay Elders and recommend nominees to the congregation.
 3. Choose and recommend appropriate persons to serve on the Gifts Discernment Committee. These names are to be included in the annual slate which comes to the congregation for approval.
 4. Approve and recommend the annual budget which is prepared by the Stewardship Commission to the congregation.
 5. Prepare recommendations for any needed changes in the organizational structure, constitution, or other official statements.
 6. Make recommendations for the creation of all new ministries or programs which require congregational approval (those with major budget implications).
 7. Make recommendations for the hiring of additional ministry and/or office staff persons as may be needed.
 8. Recommend any major capital improvements to the buildings or property owned by the church and the purchase of additional property.
 9. The Board may at its discretion with full information shared with the congregation make short term temporary changes to these guidelines to meet immediate needs.
 10. Approve all above budget giving, making sure that all legal requirements for tax deductible contributions are met.

II. Composition and Terms of Service

- A. The Board consists of nine members elected by the congregation. The chairperson, treasurer, and two additional members chosen directly by the congregation and the elected chairs of the five commissions. Each commission chair is a church board member by virtue of their role. The Pastor(s) are permanent Board members. The bishop is an ex officio member.
- B. The chairperson and treasurer each have three year terms. If possible the chairperson should be someone who has been on the Board previously. When the chairperson's term expires, that position should be filled first, then the other Board positions filled as needed.
- C. The two members from the congregation will each have three year terms staggered with the chairperson's term, with one member chosen each year. With the exception of the chairperson, no elected Board member shall serve for more than 6 consecutive years. If elected as chair a board member may serve up to 12 consecutive years including time as Board chairperson.

III Qualifications

Church Board members are expected to be:

- A. Members in good standing, active in congregational life, and committed to supporting the church's ministries with prayer and financial support.
- B. Spiritually mature as evidenced by a faithful lifestyle and a commitment to continued spiritual growth.
- C. Strongly committed to and grounded in an Anabaptist understandings of the Christian faith.
- D. Persons of integrity who are trustworthy and able to hold confidences.
- E. Persons who model the character and life described in the biblical passages which list qualifications for congregational leaders (see I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-4).
- F. Committed to the vision, mission, and philosophy of ministry of this congregation.
- G. Persons with leadership and/or administrative gifts.

Commissions

Accountability to Church Board

Each commission is directly accountable to the Church Board for the work in its ministry description. The Board will establish the general parameters for the work of each commission and will provide oversight, coordination, help with goal setting, and direction in implementing the congregation's vision and mission.

Decision Making Authority

Each commission has the authority to make decisions and set procedures and policies in order to carry out the ministry of its program area and fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it. Each commission may also appoint persons or sub-committees from its membership or from the congregation to carry out certain tasks or ministries as may be needed to fulfill its responsibilities. These persons or committees must be given clear job descriptions and be asked to serve for a specific length of time.

Budgeting Responsibilities

Each commission will be responsible for its own portion of the general budget and in cooperation with the Stewardship Commission will establish the various account lines needed for its particular work. Each commission is required to do advanced budget planning to make the best possible estimate of their budget needs for the following year. These budget requests must be submitted in writing by each commission chairperson to the Stewardship Commission no later than October 1 each year. Mid-year changes or over-runs in the total amount budgeted for each commission must be approved in advance by the Church Board. A commission may rearrange or shift budgeted funds among the different account lines within its own portion of the budget without Board approval. Expenditures beyond the bottom line need to be approved by the board.

Year-End Reports

The chairperson of each commission will provide a 1-3 page typewritten report at the beginning of each year which summarizes the commission's activity during the previous year and projects goals for the next year.. This report will be submitted to the Board in February to be included in the Annual Report to the congregation.

Record Keeping and Internal Structure

Commissions will normally meet monthly or as often as needed. They will designate a secretary keep minutes of all meetings. The secretary should also keep records of the various ministries and programs in which the commission is involved. Minutes, reports and other significant documents must be submitted to the church office for the permanent files. Commissions will generally operate by consensus with Robert's rules of order as back up when necessary. It is also recommended that each commission choose an assistant chairperson annually to help the chairperson as needed and to take the leadership when the chairperson is unable to do so.

Composition and Terms of Service

Commission members including the chairpersons will be chosen by the congregation through the annual process conducted by the Gifts Discernment Committee. The following chart shows the details for each commission.

Commission	No. Members Chosen by Congregation (Including Chairperson)	Length of Term	Members Chosen Each Year
Christian Education	6 + youth pgm	3 yrs.	2-3
Trustee	8	3 yrs.	3-4
Evangelism, Peace & Service	6	3 yrs.	2
Stewardship	6	3 yrs.	1
Worship	4	3 yrs.	1-2

Terms for commission members are three years except for youth terms which are one year. With the exception of the chairperson, no elected commission member shall serve more than two consecutive terms on the same commission. If elected chair, a person may serve up to two additional terms. Persons are eligible for reelection after a one year break. This restriction can be waived by the Board if there is no one else who is qualified and/or willing to serve on a given commission. Each committee has its own terms and policies.

Normally persons will not serve on more than one commission at the same time. Lay Elders are not eligible to serve as commission chairpersons, but may serve as commission members.

Because of shifting workloads, commissions may need additional members or fewer members for specified periods of time. The Church Board may approve changes in size for temporary or long term needs.

General Qualifications for All Commission Members

- A. Normally commission members will be members or associate members in good standing, active in congregational life, and committed to under-girding the church's ministries with prayer and financial support. Regular active participants who are not members who meet the other requirements may serve if needed.
- B. Persons should be spiritually mature as evidenced by a faithful lifestyle and a commitment to continued spiritual growth.
- C. Persons should be responsible and dependable, willing to commit themselves to faithful attendance at commission meetings and to active participation in the commission's work.
- D. Persons should be willing to listen to the viewpoints and ideas of others and to work with the group to find consensus and facilitate decision making.

Additional Qualifications for All Commission Chairpersons

- A. They should have ability to provide leadership for the commission and facilitate healthy group interaction, processing and decision making.
- B. They should have administrative gifts needed to plan commission meetings and assure that the commission carries out all of its assigned responsibilities.

Christian Education Commission

I. Responsibilities

This commission is responsible for all the educational programs and ministries of the church including:

- A. Sunday School – all departments
- B. Youth Programs – Junior High, Senior High, and Post High
- C. Children's Program – Girls and Boys Clubs and other Family Night children's activities

D. Bible School or similar programs

E. Church Library

F. Activities for Wednesday night out

G. Planning and Administration

1. Establish and implement policies for the Christian Education ministries of the congregation that are consistent with and foster the vision and mission of Slate Hill.
2. Assess and project all immediate and future educational needs and develop strategic goals and objectives to meet them.
3. Make all decisions regarding selection and usage of curriculum, taking into consideration ideas and feedback from the congregation.
4. Appoint persons as needed from the Commission or the congregation to do the various administrative tasks of the commission's work and recruit the workers needed for all programs.
5. Take responsibility for the proper storage and/ or disposal of books and supplies.
6. Plan social/fellowship functions related to the educational programs as may be needed.
7. Assess the space, facility and equipment needs to the educational programs at least annually and make appropriate adjustments, recommendations, and/or budget requests to meet those needs.
8. Arrange for or relate to special ministries and activities such as the current women's ministry and the activity for mothers with young children.

H. Equipping

1. Provide all materials, supplies, and equipment needed by workers.
2. Arrange for the best overall usage of facilities and equipment.
3. Provide supervision, encouragement and support for all workers.
4. Provide training programs for present and potential workers.
5. Represent workers to the congregation as a whole.
6. Keep the congregation informed about various needs, opportunities and / or developments in Christian education.
7. Encourage and facilitate the use of the church library.

- I. Evaluating
 - 1. Review and update educational goals and objectives periodically.
 - 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of all workers periodically.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service -**

- A. The Christian Education Commission has six elected members
 - 1. The Youth Pastor or leader of the youth program is a permanent member of this commission.
 - 2. The chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 - 3. Five additional members chosen by the congregation.

III. **Qualifications** – See general section on commissions for terms of service and general qualifications

- A. An interest in the educational ministry of the church.
- B. Some experience as a Sunday School teacher or Christian Education worker is recommended.
- C. Educational training or experience is beneficial.
- D. A willingness to continue learning through reading, workshops, etc., to keep abreast of current educational patterns and resources.

Evangelism, Peace and Service Commission

This Commission exists to plan, oversee, and carry out the general programs and responsibilities relating to ministries of evangelism, service, justice and peace.

Mission:

The Evangelism Peace and Service Commission exists to foster commitment among our congregation to bring people to Christ, to encourage peacemaking, and to promote acts of service in our communities and around the world.

I. **Evangelism Initiatives:**

- A. Develop and implement ministries and programs designed to effectively reach non-church-going people with the message of the Gospel and with information about Slate Hill.
- B. Intentionally work at assimilating newcomers and drawing them into care groups and congregational life.

- C. Plan and implement an effective means of follow up through prompt personal contact with every local first-time visitor.
- D. Work with the Worship Commission and pastor to plan periodic evangelism events for the congregation and community.
- E. Actively support the international missions of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Mennonite Missions Network (MMN,) and other local, national and international mission agencies. This should include at least one event annually with a missions speaker.

II. Peace Initiatives:

- A. Promote Christ's call to nonviolence and peacemaking in all areas of life. Provide education and resources to promote peacemaking, reconciliation and healing.
- B. Provide educational resources that promote the conscientious objector option to military service.
- C. Appoint a contact person for young adults regarding the available options for military draft registration and alternate service.

III. Service Initiatives:

- A. Actively support and promote relief and development through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and other agencies as appropriate.
- B.. Actively encourage and promote both short-and long-term volunteer opportunities through Mennonite Voluntary Services (MVS,) Mennonite Central Committee MCC), and other opportunities as appropriate.

IV. General Initiatives:

- A. Make recommendations regarding budgeting, monitoring and distribution of funds for the EPS Commission.
- B. Keep the congregation informed of EPS needs and initiatives through the Hilltop News and the weekly congregational bulletin.

V. Composition and Terms of Service –See general information on commissions for terms of service.

- A. The Evangelism, Peace and Service Commission has six members who serve 3 year terms .
 - 1. The chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 - 2. Five additional members chosen by the congregation.

VI. Qualifications – See General Information on qualifications for commission members..

- A. An interest in or sense of call to evangelism and missions, and commitment and desire to see people come to Christ, to see the church grow, and to reach out to the world.
- B. A concern about justice issues including peace and non-violence.
- C. A commitment to service and outreach to the local community.

Stewardship Commission

This Commission exists to plan, oversee, and carry out the general programs and responsibilities relating to the stewardship of life, possessions, and all of God’s creation as enumerated below.

I. Responsibilities

- A. Plan programs and activities which promote and educate in a biblical, whole life (time, talents, and assets) understanding of stewardship, including care of the earth and all of God’s creation.
- B. Provide offering envelopes for all who desire them and promote their use by all regular contributors, explaining periodically how to use them and why they are beneficial.
- C. Provide for a system to keep accurate records of all contributions given through the offering envelopes, and issue tax deductible receipts in accordance with government requirements.
- D. Provide a brief financial report to the congregation at least quarterly showing current status of giving in relation to budget and expenses.
- E. Review the annual budget at mid-year regarding expenses and income and make recommendations to the Church Board as needed.
- F. Conduct studies and make recommendations with regard to endowment funds, , investments, and major capital expenditures.
- G.. Monitor the overall stewardship and financial health of the church.
- H. Develop and revise long term financial and whole life stewardship goals.
- I. Appoint a Congregational Stewardship Secretary to serve according to the Conference guidelines.
- J. Duly authorize the Treasurer, Board Chair and Stewardship Commission Chairperson to sign checks and assist the treasurer as needed.
- K. Recommend for approval by the Church Board, a person to serve as Financial Secretary to keep confidential records of giving for the envelope system.
- L. Recommend for approval by the Church Board, a person to serve as Payroll Treasurer to manage payroll and pay congregational employees.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service.**

- A. The Stewardship Commission has four members who serve 3 year terms..
 - 1. The Chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 - 2. The Church Treasurer who is chosen by the congregation
 - 3. Two additional members chosen by the congregation.

III. **Qualifications** – See general information on commissions for terms of service

- A. Exemplify biblical, whole life stewardship with a commitment to tithing.
- B. Knowledge of finances and accounting
- C. Financial management training and / or skills are desirable.

Trustee Commission

V. **Responsibilities**

- A. Oversee the purchase, care and maintenance of all buildings, grounds, vehicles and equipment owned by the church.
- B. Make provisions for the use of the church bus(es), including finding and training an adequate number of correctly licensed drivers, arranging bus routes, scheduling of buses and drivers, etc.
- C. Operate and maintain the church cemetery.
 - 1. Appoint a manager / overseer of the cemetery. This person may or may not be a trustee and has no specified term. The overseer will:
 - 2.
 - a. Sell cemetery lots;
 - b. Oversee opening and closing of graves;
 - c. Hire necessary help to mow lawn, trim and maintain appearance of cemetery;
 - d. Take care of questions or complaints that may arise regarding grave site care, lot exchanges, etc;
 - e. Establish and update rules for cemetery to be approved by the Trustees;
 - f. Work at establishing and updating cemetery records as well as good current records.
 - g. Arrange for coverage when the manager is not available.
 - 3. Appoint a treasurer to handle cemetery funds. This person may or may not be a trustee and has no specified term. Congregational procedures for vouchers and approvals should be followed. These records should be audited on a regular schedule with other congregational funds and included in the annual congregational financial report.

4. Establish and update cemetery lot prices for members and non-members as necessary.
 5. Establish policies for operation as needed.
- B. Manage and provide for all insurance needs of the church, reviewing each policy annually to maintain appropriate coverage.
 - C. Find volunteers or hire all persons needed for the care and maintenance described above and supervise their work.
 - D. Keep accurate records of all Trustee business.
 - E. Make recommendations to the Church Board regarding any major renovations, capital improvements, building projects, or land transactions that may be necessary to meet the current and future needs of the church.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service**

- A. The Trustee Commission has eight members who serve 3 year terms..
 1. The Chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 2. Seven additional members chosen by the congregation.
- B. The eight members chosen by the congregation (including chairperson) will each have a three-year term of service, with two persons chosen each year except the year a chair is chosen when the chair and two additional members will be chosen..

III. **Qualifications** – See General Information on qualifications of commission members.

- A. Repair and maintenance skills.
- B. Training or experience in mechanical and / or construction trades beneficial.
- C. Willingness and ability to donate time and labor to the church.

Worship Commission

The Worship Commission's task is to cooperate with the Pastor in planning all public worship services. It is also responsible for coordinating everything else that relates to public worship, including the greeters, ushers, nursery staff, decorations, and, Children's Church. The overall goal is to provide for the spiritual health and growth of all participants in a manner that is inclusive and caring so that everyone feels welcome and at home to the greatest degree possible.

In planning for worship the Commission should attempt to use the gifts and talents of every believer who is willing to serve, and to provide the training and / or guidance needed to enable them to do their best to advance the overall goals of worship. It is also important to provide appropriate settings for children and youth to use and test their gifts and for them to have visible roles in public worship.

III. Responsibilities

- A. Be involved in the planning for all public worship services.
- B. Seek to coordinate worship plans as much as possible around the preaching theme or series to enhance the total worship experience.
- C. Provide suggestions and feedback to aid the pastor(s) as they plan preaching themes and series.
- D. Cooperate with the pastor(s) in designing all parts of the service, including the prelude, offering, etc., to be integral parts of the whole worship experience.
- E. Plan services that, to the greatest degree possible, encourage the active participation (even if silently) of everyone present, rather than ones that are performance / spectator oriented.
- F. Work with the pastor(s) in scheduling and coordinating special events such as communions and baptisms.
- G. Plan for whatever music is needed for all services, including instrumental, congregational, choirs, and special music.
- H. Arrange for worship leaders, Scripture readers, etc. as may be needed for any given service.
- I. Appoint ushers as needed, designating one as the head usher. Be sure there are sufficient ushers “on duty” for ALL public services who have received training and know their responsibilities.
- J. Arrange for greeters for all morning and special worship services.
- K. Provide orientation and / or training for Scripture readers, worship leaders, song leaders, ushers, greeters, etc. as needed.
- L. Work with the technology Committee to arrange a sound system coordinator or committee to operate and maintain the sound system, projection equipment, lighting etc. and duplicate tapes as needed. See that a duly trained and qualified person is available to operate the sound system for all public meetings and for special services such as weddings and funerals as needed.
- M. Make provisions for the appropriate decoration of the worship space as may be desired, including things like flowers, plans, banners, candles, and other visual aids to worship.
- N. Appoint a nursery coordinator to arrange staffing for the infant and toddler nursery. Provide a staffed nursery during all public meetings, including morning worship, Sunday school, all special services, and congregational meetings.
- O. Plan an annual congregational retreat.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service**

- A. The Worship Commission has four members who serve 2 year terms.
 - 1. The Chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 - 2. Three additional members chosen by the congregation.
 - 3. The lead pastor meets with the commission.

III. **Qualifications** – See General Information on qualifications of commission members

- A. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in matters of worship.
- B. Awareness of the wide range of styles, needs and preferences regarding worship.
- C. Personal interest in and practice of worship and spirituality
- D. Gifts or interest in music and /or other arts is beneficial.

Gift Discernment Committee

The Gifts Discernment Committee has a crucial role in the effectiveness of nearly all the ministries and programs of the church. This committee has two primary responsibilities: 1) Helping people discover their spiritual gifts and areas of interest for ministry, and 2) Discerning who the Lord is calling to serve in the various ministry positions which are open each year.

This is important spiritual work which should be entered into with a high level of commitment to prayer and to discerning the Spirit's leading. Each person on the committee and the committee as a whole should commit much time to prayer as they carry out their responsibilities. The overall effectiveness of the ministries and programs of the church depend in large measure on choosing people who have appropriate gifts and the willingness to serve God and the church in the ministry to which they are called.

I. **Responsibilities**

- A. Develop and implement, in cooperation with the pastors, effective ways for people to discern their gifts and ministry interests. This is an ongoing process which should include persons currently in the congregation as well as those new comers who are becoming members or active participants in congregational life.
- B. Keep accurate records of current ministry assignments, and the gifts, ministry interests, and past experience of each person for future reference in discerning appropriate ministry placement.
- C. Update these records carefully each year by the end of December so the information is as accurate as possible for the nominating process which takes place in February and March.

- D. Cooperate with and provide information and recommendations to the Board and the Commissions regarding potential persons to serve in various roles, ministries or committees which they appoint.
- E. Prepare the annual slate of nominees to be presented in writing to the Church Board at the April Board meeting using the following guidelines. In preparing the slate, the committee should consult with existing committee chairs for suggestions related to reappointments and new appointments.
- F. The Elder Team will be invited to make suggestions to the church board on the nomination of elders.
 1. The annual slate from this committee will normally include nominees for the following positions. See the descriptions for each commission and committee for details.

	Members	Term	Chosen each year
*Church Board	11	3 Yrs.	1
Christian Education Commission	6 + Youth Pgm.	3 Yrs.	2
Trustee Commission	8	3 Yrs.	2-3
Evangelism, Peace & Service Commission	6	3 Yrs.	2
Stewardship Commission	3 + Treasurer	3Yrs.	1-2
Worship Commission	4 + Pastor	3 Yrs	1-2.
Pastoral Relations Committee	4	4 Yrs.	1-2
Food and Fellowship Committee	8	3 Yrs.	2-3
Lancaster Conference Delegate	3 Youth +pastor	3 Yrs	2
Gifts Discernment Committee	4	3 Yrs.	1-2
Elder (Nominated by board)	4 (Care group)	3 Yrs	1-2.
Scholarship Committee	3	3 Yrs	1
Technology Committee	5	3	2-3

* Chair plus 2 at large elected members; Ex-Officio members: - Lao Fellowship Representative, Treasurer, Pastor, all Commission Chairs

2. If an existing board member is elected chair, there would be an election for two persons that year.
3. When a Commission chairperson's term expires, that position will be one to be filled that year. When this occurs the chairperson should be chosen first. If the chairperson chosen is already on the Commission, that person will begin a new full length term as chairperson and someone else should be chosen to fill that person's unexpired term and that position be added to the slate.
4. In keeping with guidelines suggested by the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, we are to send four congregational delegates to the Conference Annual Meeting in March one of which is a Pastoral Elder who serves as the facilitator for the delegates work. One or the other delegate is a youth. The delegates, other than the Pastoral Elder, serve for three years with one being chosen each year. The conference provides a description of delegate duties prior to each meeting.

5. A questionnaire should be distributed to the congregation in early February giving the congregation opportunity to volunteer and/or recommend others for the various positions on the slate. This feedback along with the information on people's gifts and interests, qualifications needed for each position, and other appropriate considerations should be used by the Gifts Discernment Committee in discerning who will be recommended for each position on the slate.
6. Each person chosen to be on the slate must be contacted and agree to serve before her/his name is added to the slate. In this contact the person being asked to serve should be given a copy of the job description, responsibilities, etc. for the position under consideration and be given at least a week to pray about it and decide.
7. The slate will contain only one name for each open position. No additional nominations will be received at the congregational meeting.
8. The congregation in early August or before will be given a written ballot listing each specific position and the person being recommended for it. For each position the congregation will be asked to check one of two options indicating if they "AFFIRM" or "DO NOT AFFIRM" this person for this position.
9. Only members and associate members will vote on nominees for the Elder Team. All regular participants who are active in congregational life are invited to vote on the other positions..

II. **Composition and Terms of Service**

- A. The Gifts Discernment Committee has four members who serve 2 year terms.
 1. The Chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 2. Three additional; members are chosen by the congregation.
- B. The four members chosen by the congregation (including the chairperson) will each have a three year term of service.
- C. The Church Board will make the nominations for members of this committee and add them to the slate before presentation to the congregation. The above process for contacting people will also be used by the Board.

III. **Qualifications** - See General Information on qualifications of commission members

- A. Must be members or associate members in good standing, be active in congregational life, and be committed to under-girding the church's ministries with prayer and financial support.
- B. Should have a good general knowledge of the Slate Hill congregation.
- C. Should be committed to prayerful discernment in seeking God's leading regarding those who should serve in the various positions.

Committees

The Church Board may form committees and task forces for specific or long term roles. Normally if the committee is long term, the members will be chosen through the gift discernment process of the congregation.

Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations Committee works closely with the Board to facilitate communication and good relations between the congregation, the Board, and the Pastoral Elders (those who are ordained or licensed), and which conducts periodic evaluations of the congregation and its leaders. Their purpose is to share affirmation and concerns with Pastoral Elders and to be an advocate for them. This is done outside the normal administrative lines to encourage a formative rather than an evaluative approach.

The purpose of evaluations and of all the committee's work shall be to strengthen the ministry and effectiveness of the leaders as well as to strengthen the ministry and effectiveness of the congregation in its mission.

I. **Responsibilities**

- A. Serve as a liaison between the people in the congregation and the Pastoral Elders (ordained and licensed leaders) on a continuing basis. The liaison work will include things like:
 - 1. Listening to the congregation for affirmations and concerns about the ministry of congregational leaders and share these with the leaders..
 - 2. Listening to congregational concerns relating to faith and life issues.
 - 3. Meeting at least annually with each Pastoral Elder and his/her spouse to hear how things are going for them and to share feedback, reflections, and recommendations about congregational life and ministry. This meeting will be in addition to the biannual evaluation.
 - 4. Sharing concerns and recommendations from the Pastoral Elders with the Church Board and/or congregation as may be necessary.
 - 5. Arrange for appropriate public affirmation such as during Pastor Appreciation month.
- B. Facilitate a regular evaluation of the Pastoral Elders for the congregation and the Board..
 - 1. Such an evaluation will be conducted every two years (in even numbered years). Each Pastoral Elder will be included on each evaluation. For those who are in the middle of their term it is an opportunity to reflect on and strengthen their ministries making mid-term adjustments as may be needed. For those near the end of their term it will also be the basis for this committee's recommendation to the Board regarding the renewal or termination of their term of service.

2. The focus of these evaluations will be on:
 - a. Comparing the ministry of each with his/her job description.
 - b. The effectiveness of relevant structures and programs.
 - c. Ascertaining the congregation's overall sense of the leader's faithfulness to the Lord and effectiveness in ministry.
- C. Facilitate a comprehensive congregational evaluation of all aspects of congregational life every six years. .
1. This evaluation will be conducted every six years along with the regular leadership evaluation (every third evaluation process).
 2. The focus of this evaluation (in addition to that of the leadership portion as listed in #I.B.2. above) will be on:
 - a. The degree to which we are fulfilling our congregational Vision and Mission statements.
 - b. The effectiveness of our current structures and programs.
 - c. Identifying areas where growth and/or change are needed.
 3. Determine and plan the form of each evaluation process using available resources from the Conference and Mennonite Church as guidelines. Effort should be made to develop a consistent method and form for the evaluations.
 4. Each evaluation process should include a general evaluation by the congregation, a more detailed evaluation by the Elders, Board members, and members of any relevant commissions, and a self-evaluation by each Pastoral Elder.
 5. All written evaluation forms must be signed to maintain accountability and enable the committee to obtain clarification from the writer if needed. Unsigned forms will not be considered. However, the names will be kept fully confidential by the committee.
 6. Communicate these results to the persons being evaluated, the Elder Team, the Church Board, and the Congregation.
 7. The following schedule should be followed as closely as possible in conducting each evaluation process.
 8. The evaluation itself should begin in early to mid January. The committee's preparation for the evaluation should be done by the end of the previous year.
 9. All evaluation data should be received by mid to late February.
 10. The committee should process the responses and prepare their reports and recommendations during the month of March and present them to the Church Board at their April meeting.

11. Congregational decisions on term renewal for Pastoral Elders or other recommendations from the evaluation will normally be made at the May congregational meeting along with the annual slate.
12. If further processing is necessary, every effort should be made to finalize decisions on term renewal by June 30. This is six months prior to the end of the Pastoral Elder's term.

II. **Composition and Terms of Service**

- A. The Pastoral relations Committee has five members.
 1. The Chairperson, who is chosen by the congregation.
 2. Three additional members chosen by the congregation.
 3. The District Bishop.
- B. The four members chosen by the congregation (including the chairperson) will each have a four-year term with one person being chosen each year.
- C. There should be at least one woman and at least one man on the committee at all times.
- D. Members may serve up to three consecutive terms then must take a year off before being eligible again.
- E. If it is necessary for a committee member to leave the committee prior to the end of his/her term, the Gifts Discernment Committee will bring a replacement recommendation to the Church Board for final approval.
- F. If a member's term expires while an evaluation is in process, that member should continue in that process until it is completed. New members should not normally enter an evaluation in process.

IV. **Qualifications** - See General Information on qualifications of commission members

- A. Must be members in good standing who have been active in congregational life for at least two years.
- B. Must be spiritually mature as evidenced by a faithful lifestyle and a commitment to continued spiritual growth.
- C. Must have good listening skills and be persons of integrity who are trustworthy and able to hold conferences.
- D. Should have a positive outlook on the church and be committed to building up the congregation and its leadership.
- E. Ordained and licensed leaders and members of their immediate families are not eligible to serve on this committee.

Food and Fellowship Committee

The purpose of this committee is to oversee the use of the Church Kitchen and Fellowship Hall and facilitate social interaction through fellowship meals of various kinds. This will involve initiating periodic fellowship meals for the whole congregation and working with any of the Commissions to plan for and carry out special social events they may be initiating which include a meal or use of the Kitchen and/ Fellowship Hall.

I. Responsibilities

- A. To oversee and coordinate the use of the Kitchen and Fellowship Hall.
- B. To plan for and conduct periodic fellowship meals for the whole congregation which are designated to foster social interaction and Christian fellowship. These will typically be for Sunday lunch and will sometimes be planned in conjunction with congregational meetings in the afternoon.
- C. To plan and oversee an annual church picnic.
- D. To plan and serve special meals that may be needed for events like funerals, etc. recruiting additional help as needed.
- E. To work with any Commission or group that may be initiating a special social event which includes a meal and uses the church facilities.
- F. To be in charge of the kitchen whenever it is being used for a public function.
- G. To provide drinks and other refreshments for Sunday morning fellowship times as may be requested by other Commissions or the Church Board, and to arrange for and oversee appropriate cleanup procedures.
- H. To purchase supplies and maintain adequate inventory of all kitchen items including paper products, condiments, utensils, etc.
- I. To establish appropriate procedures for cleanup after all events and for the storage, use, and disposal of all leftovers. This includes routine cleanup procedures and periodic cleaning of all appliances, etc.
- J. To establish guidelines and oversee non-congregational use of the Kitchen and Fellowship Hall.
- K. To appoint one committee member as the primary contact person.

II. Composition and Terms of Service See General Information on qualifications of committee members

- A. The Food and Fellowship Committee will have eight members. The chairperson and all seven additional members will be chosen by the congregation.
- B. The term of service for each person on this Committee will be three years.
- C. There will be no term limits.

Technology Committee

The purpose of this committee is to provide for audio, visual, communication, and computer technology needed to facilitate the work of the congregation. It will arrange for operation of the equipment and for maintenance and replacement of equipment related to the sanctuary, offices, and classrooms. This includes but is not limited to sanctuary sound, projection and lighting controls, office computers, copiers, faxes and scanners, and classroom TVs, projectors, and VCR's. The committee will work closely with commissions and committees and others responsible for programming.

A technology budget will be maintained for the committee. Program areas in consultation with this committee may also purchase equipment from their budgets.

I. Responsibilities

- A. To develop policies for operation and use of technology.
- B. To consult with groups needing technology and/or for arrange for purchase, maintenance and repair, and regular replacement of equipment.
- C. To recruit, train and assign operators for the equipment in the sanctuary and the fellowship hall as needed.
- D. To recommend an annual budget to the stewardship committee.
- E. To provide necessary software in consultation with the end users.

II. Composition and terms of service See General Information on qualifications of committee members

- A. The Technology Committee will have five members. The congregation will choose the chair and the additional four members.
- B. There will be no term limits.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Slate Hill Mennonite Church
Proposed July 2003
Approved by the Church Board August 21, 2003 and
By the Congregation, September 10, 2003
Revised by Church Board August 19, 2004 and
Implemented September 2004
Updated January 2013

Preface

We recognize that this document in and of itself does not protect Slate Hill from liability if a problem arises. We also recognize that it is not possible for this or any other document to guarantee total safety for our children. We present this as instruction and guidance for best practices to allow us to continue to nurture children in our midst in the safest way possible.

Introduction

Slate Hill Mennonite Church provides high quality care for children who participate in our programs. Even though we may not be aware of incidents of child abuse in the past and have no reason to expect any in the future, we want to do everything we can to prevent child abuse.

This document provides procedures which will help to protect the children within our care. It is built on the expectation that persons who work with children will have been part of the congregation long enough to be known personally by members of the children's ministry and congregational leadership. It also outlines procedures to be followed in the case that an incident occurs.

It is expected that all persons working with children and youth will plan and manage activities and contacts to avoid compromising situations where inappropriate sexual activity could occur. Even situations where there might be the appearance of inappropriate behavior should be avoided.

The following sections include definitions and procedures for response if an incident is reported.

Definitions¹

1. Physical Abuse

Beatings, violent shakings, human bites, poisoning – any non-accidental injuries, intentional or unintentional, that may result in bruises, welts, scars, long-lasting psychological damage, internal injuries, or temporary or permanent impairment..

2. *Sexual Abuse*

Any sexual contact or interaction (touch or non-touch) with a child is abusive. Persuasion, coercion, exploitation by misrepresenting right and wrong are some of the ways this abuse is perpetrated. Even if a child, out of ignorance, innocence or fear, does not resist, such behavior is abusive.

¹ Federal law lays the groundwork for States by identifying a minimum set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C.A. §5106g), as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. Pennsylvania Law also defines child abuse and neglect. See P.A. CS 23§6303.

3. Emotional Maltreatment

A pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulating, as well as failing to provide love, support, or guidance. This can be the most prevalent type of abuse and is often the most difficult to prove. This type of abuse can lead to developmental delays.

4. Neglect

The failure to provide a child with basic needs such as food, clothing, education, shelter, or medical care. The pattern of failing to provide for emotional needs; abandonment and inadequate supervision, are forms of abuse, even though passive in nature.

Response to Suspected Abuse or Allegations of Abuse

Everyone at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, including church members, teachers, club leaders and other volunteers involved with children's ministries (birth - 18 years) will immediately report any suspicions or concerns that relate to child abuse, inappropriate behavior, or child neglect to two people, a pastor and an additional member of the Elder Team. (Pastors are considered part of the elder team.) The report will be confidential and will include observations, complaints or suspicions the volunteer has heard or seen.

If a child offers information, it will be taken seriously. The problem will not be denied. Emotional support will be given, but the volunteer will not pressure the child for details.

The persons to whom an incident is reported will inform the rest of the Elder Team. The suspected incident will not be discussed with others. It is the responsibility of the Elder Team to process the incident, documenting each conversation or contact as it takes place.

The Elder team will promptly follow up on the report in one or more of the following ways:

- Designate someone to speak with the individual (child, youth, adult) involved to determine the facts and report back to the Elder Team. The Elder Team will then determine appropriate action.
- The Elder Team may seek counsel with appropriate persons regarding next steps and whether there is a need to report the incident to legal authorities.² The Elder Team may review the plan for follow-up of any particular situation with legal counsel prior to, or during implementation of follow-up.
- If warranted, an incident will be reported to Child Protection Services, law enforcement agencies and other appropriate agencies.
- The Elder Team may notify parents/guardians of alleged abuse, contingent upon advice from Child Protection Services or law enforcement agencies.

² <http://www.rainn.org/pdf-files-and-other-documents/Public-Policy/Legal-resources/2009-Mandatory-Report/Pennsylvania09C.pdf>

General Procedures

1. Volunteers working with children are expected to read, complete, sign and comply with the Covenant for Children's Ministry Volunteers (Attachment A). These forms will be kept on file in the church office.
2. Volunteers working with children must be known personally by at least one member of the Christian Education Commission, leader of the children's ministry, or leader of the congregation. Generally, persons new to the congregation should attend at least six months before serving in children's ministry. An individual wishing to serve in one of the children or youth ministries, and who is new to our church, may be asked to share their faith journey, via the Children's Ministry Volunteer Profile (Attachment B), with the chair of Christian Education or an elder of the church.
3. Parents or guardians should bring preschool-aged and younger children to their rooms. If the volunteer is not in the room, parents or guardians should stay with the child(ren) until the volunteer arrives.
4. Within 10 minutes after dismissal time, parents or guardians should pick up preschool and younger children unless other arrangements have been made with the volunteer. For everyone's safety, the parents or guardians are encouraged to keep their children from running in the sanctuary, narthex, halls and parking lots.
5. Nursery: Normally the only adults permitted in the nursery are parents or scheduled caregivers. At least one adult beyond high school age should be present in the nursery at all times when children are present unless the parent gives approval for a younger person to serve as the primary caregiver.
6. In situations where it is not possible to follow these policies, exceptions may be made with the approval of parents and/or the Christian Education Chairperson.

Health Procedures

1. Children with communicable diseases, profusely runny noses, fever or persistent coughing should avoid contact with other children.
2. Children/youth who require medications during ministry times must have a parent or guardian hold the medication and administer it.
3. For off-campus and overnight events (i.e. field trip, retreat, etc.), medication may be administered with the following guidelines:
 - a. The parent or guardian must submit in writing to the volunteer his/her request for administering the drug, instructions for use, side effects, precautions, etc., including the parent or guardian's signature.
 - b. The medication must be in the original container with the label intact and be carried by the volunteer.
4. Slate Hill Mennonite Church prefers not to store or disperse medications (prescription or over-the-counter) to children/youth in our care. In some circumstances, exceptions will be made for life-saving devices such as EpiPen, inhaler or insulin that are designed for use by non-medical personnel. Please note that our volunteers are not medically trained. Parents are responsible for providing instruction to the volunteer on how to use the device, etc. If church volunteers are not comfortable with assuming this responsibility, a parent may be requested to remain on site during the activity/event.

Planned Events/Overnight Procedures

Activities for children and youth away from Slate Hill Mennonite Church property must be pre-approved by one of Slate Hill's pastors and follow the special policies and procedures below. The exception is individuals in mentoring pairs. Mentoring pairs require a parental sign-off on the adult with whom a youth is paired, prior to the mentoring experience.

1. Background checks are required for mentors, for junior- and senior-high youth leaders, and for chaperones or anyone else who accompanies children or youth on overnight trips.
2. Background checks will be requested by the individual, but payment will be reimbursed by the church. Each individual will bring the ORIGINAL background check to the office where a copy will be made of it and filed in the office. The individual whose name is on the background check will keep the original document in his/her possession.
3. Each child/youth participating in an event away from the church property must have on file a copy of the Registration/Emergency Information form (Attachment C). This original form will be kept in the church office and a copy will also be carried by volunteers supervising all off-property events.
4. Planned Event Consent forms and Medical Release forms are required for each minor person participating in activities off our property. New forms must be signed for each new event. The Planned Event Consent form will have two parts. One part will state the event, time, place, etc. and will be kept by the parent or guardian as a reference of this planned event. The second part will be signed by the parent or guardian and kept by the group leader.
5. When an activity involves transporting children/youth, all drivers must have a valid driver's license for the type of vehicle driven and current automobile insurance.
6. The number of persons per vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts and all Pennsylvania motor vehicle laws must be adhered to. Verbal parental permission must be given for any child to ride with driver under 21 years of age.
7. All group trips and outings require a minimum of two approved gender-appropriate adult volunteers whenever possible. These volunteers are responsible for their assigned group for the duration of each event. Staffing ratios (children per adult) must be followed:

Preschool (3 to 5 years old) - 4 to 5 per adult
Grade school (kindergarten through 5th grade) - 6 to 8 per adult
Junior high and older (6th through 12th grade) - 8 to 10 per adult

8. Any adult chaperones, other than the leaders, attending events with children/youth from the church, must be approved by the Christian Education Commission chairperson.
9. Verbal parental consent should be given for any one-on-one meetings and activities involving church staff or church members and youth, such as activities of youth leaders with individual youth and activities between mentors and mentees.

Bathroom Procedures

1. Parents or guardians are strongly encouraged to take their children who need assistance to the bathroom prior to going to classrooms.
2. Volunteers assisting a child should keep the door open when going into a bathroom stall to assist the child.

Physical Contact Procedures

1. Touch is an essential part of nurturing. Volunteers should be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, special needs and sexual development. Physical contact with children/youth should be age-appropriate.
2. Physical punishment is never to be used. All interactions regarding discipline must be done with the consideration of the person's dignity and self-esteem. Discipline is to be carried out through instruction, training and verbal correction. Gentleness, respect and understanding must guide all actions and words.
3. Anyone working with the youth should never pursue or engage in a dating relationship with the youth. Staff should always be sensitive to youth with "crushes."

**SLATE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH
COVENANT FOR CHILDREN’S MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS**

With service and responsibility comes accountability to the Congregation and to our community. We provide this covenant so that you can express your commitment to Christ and His body at Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

Name _____

Ministry Role _____

I accept the call to serve God in ministry to children at Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

As Jesus welcomed the children and blessed them, I, too, want to follow His example by caring for them lovingly and with gentleness.

I want to remember that each child is unique and God-given. I recognize that my words and actions toward them will influence their faith in God and their lives for years to come.

I want to be a role model and do my best to help each child grow in Bible knowledge, in their relationships to others, and especially in their relationship to Jesus Christ.

I am ready to give quality time to this ministry – preparation, teaching time, follow-up (if required), and attendance at training events.

I acknowledge that I have not been guilty of abusing children physically, emotionally, or sexually; neither do I struggle with these kinds of temptations.

I commit to not being under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.

I am excited about sharing my faith with the children and accept this responsibility gladly.

With God’s help, I will do all I can to nurture faith in these young lives.

I have carefully read and agree to follow Slate Hill Mennonite Church’s Child Protection Policy.

Date

Signature of Volunteer

We, the Christian Education Commission of Slate Hill Mennonite Church, appreciate the commitment you are making. We are committed to your success in this ministry and your development in the body of Christ. If at any time you have any need for support that we are not already offering, please tell us so that we can provide that for you. Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Christian Education Commission Chairperson

Date

Attachment B

SLATE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER PROFILE
CONFIDENTIAL

This information will be treated as strictly confidential.

Only those persons having a legitimate need to know such information will have access to this form.

Name _____ Date _____

Present Address _____

Home phone () _____ E-mail _____

Are you a member of Slate Hill Mennonite Church? _____

How long have you attended Slate Hill Mennonite Church? _____

Name the church you previously attended _____ Member? _____

1. Briefly explain how you came to know Jesus Christ and describe your current relationship with the Lord.

2. What motivates you to serve in children's ministries?

3. List any training/experience that equips you for this area of ministry.

4. What do you consider your strengths/gifts/abilities?

5. What are your weaknesses?

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for children who participate in our programs, we need to ask the following questions:

Have you ever been investigated, accused, or convicted of child abuse? _____

If yes, please explain _____

We recognize that abuse is a traumatic event in a person's life, but believe that, by God's grace, a victim can find healing. If you are a victim of abuse who has not worked through your pain, the pastoral staff is here to assist you. Please feel free to call.

AUTHENTICITY AND AUTHORIZATION

The information I have given in this profile is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I am willing, if asked, to provide a background clearance form and to authorize Slate Hill Mennonite Church, or its representatives, to make any and all appropriate inquiries regarding my character and fitness for children's ministry work

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

**SLATE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH
REGISTRATION/EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Child's Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Names _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Work Phone Numbers and/or Cell: _____

Child's Birthdate _____

Grade in School as of September/year _____

Home Church _____

If parents cannot be reached, person(s) to be called in case of emergency are:

Name _____ Phone _____

Relationship _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Relationship _____

Child's Physician _____ Phone _____

Emergency Hospital Preference _____

Name of Medical Insurance _____ Policy # _____

=====

If your child has **health concerns, allergies, limitations, or medications**, please list them here.

(Use back of sheet if necessary)

I give permission for my child to participate in all activities relating to Slate Hill Mennonite Church. I further give permission for church personnel to obtain emergency medical assistance for my child while involved in a church-sponsored activity if I cannot be reached at the above locations.

Signed _____ Date _____

Slate Hill Mennonite Church Leadership Training Scholarship Fund

Revised and Approved May 2013

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

To encourage and to provide financial assistance to individuals attending Mennonite Church colleges and seminaries including Messiah College for training related to pastoral leadership and congregational ministry at Slate Hill or in the larger Mennonite Church USA or Canada.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND:

1. This fund was established by a donation of \$25,000 to establish a Scholarship Fund.
2. Additional donors may contribute cash, securities, real estate or other marketable assets to Mennonite Foundation to be credited to the Fund.
3. The Mennonite Foundation will provide donors receipts to substantiate charitable contribution deductions on their Federal Income Tax Returns.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

1. The Mennonite Foundation will establish a separate account to accommodate the specific objectives of the Fund.
2. The Mennonite Foundation will manage the assets in harmony with its ethical criteria and according to three principal investment objectives: safety of principal, good current income and long-term growth.
3. No distributions of scholarship grants will be made that would result in a fund balance less than the total of all contributions to the Fund. The scholarship criteria for determining annual distributions can be revised by Mennonite Foundation in consultation with the Slate Hill Mennonite Church Board.
4. The Mennonite Foundation will be responsible for all of the administrative details related to the Fund including investment management, accounting, receipts, distributions and reports.
5. The Slate Hill Mennonite Church Board will receive quarterly financial statements from Mennonite Foundation.
6. Mennonite Foundation will credit all net investment income to the Fund.
7. Mennonite Foundation will be reimbursed for its administrative expenses by charging the Fund an annual service charge according to its regular schedule. The service charge schedule will be reviewed every five (5) years and any change will be reported in writing to the Slate Hill Mennonite Church Board.
8. If the Fund is terminated, the remaining principal and investment earnings will be transferred to the Slate Hill Mennonite Church for any use as it may determine. Except for the lack of assets.
9. If Mennonite Foundation ceases to operate for any reason or is sold, merges, or alters its current mission, the assets and investment earnings of the Fund shall be transferred to the Slate Hill Mennonite Church.
10. Slate Hill Mennonite Church can suggest modification of the guidelines related to the administration of the Fund. Such modifications must be reviewed and approved by the Mennonite Foundation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUND

The Fund will be administered by the Slate Hill Mennonite Church Board. They are responsible:

1. To receive applications and make recommendations for scholarship grants.
2. To establish a procedure to objectively examine applications and recommendations in light of the specified purposes of the Fund and the worthiness of the applicants.
3. To make recommendations on the amount of the scholarship grants to one or several applicants for Mennonite Foundation to review and approve.
4. To determine that the scholarship grants will be used for expenses related to the purpose of the Fund (e.g. Tuition costs and other education related expenses such as textbooks, room and board). Scholarship grants approved by Mennonite Foundation will be sent directly to the educational institution for the scholarship grant recipient's account.
5. To report annually to the congregation regarding the activities and assets of the Fund.

ELIGIBILITY

Any recipient of assistance from the Fund must be:

1. An active member of the Slate Hill Mennonite Church.
2. Enrolled in a Mennonite Church college or seminary including Messiah College with a major, minor or concentration of studies in biblical or church ministry and related fields. These studies may include, but are not limited to pastoral ministry, missions, counseling, discipleship and pastoral care.

DISSOLUTION

1. If the Slate Hill Mennonite Church ceases to exist, the remaining assets in the Fund will be divided between Eastern Mennonite University and the Slate Hill Burial Ground Association, if they are both recognized by the IRS as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations.

High School and College Scholarship Fund Guidelines

Slate Hill Mennonite Church

Revised - May 17, 2001, by the Church Board

Revised March 2012 by the Church Board

PHILOSOPHY:

In light of the fact that young people are still in the process of formulating their theology, their values, and their world view, and given our strong belief in the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith, we believe that the Scholarship Fund should be designed to encourage our young people to choose a Christian education with a Anabaptist/Mennonite emphasis. Since the cost of going to an Anabaptist/Mennonite school is considerably more than going to public or state supported institutions, we believe it is proper to encourage our youth not only with our words, but also with our finances. We also believe that the local congregation has a responsibility in training leaders and thus we believe it is appropriate to financially support those desiring training at a Mennonite seminary.

GUIDELINES:

In order to carry out our philosophy in the most equitable fashion, we have set up the following guidelines.

1. The Scholarship Fund will only be used for those enrolled at accredited Mennonite high schools, Anabaptist or Mennonite colleges, and Mennonite seminaries.
2. Persons who desire a scholarship should submit their request in writing including; their name, their school, their year in school, the number of years typically needed to complete their program, and whether they will be a full time or part time student. These requests should be given to the church board chairperson by February 1 each year_ for the next academic year.
3. The Scholarship Fund is available to any person who regularly attends our church, is an active participant in the program of the church, and who isn't excluded by any of the following:
 - a. Messiah College students who only worship with us during the academic year are not eligible.
 - b. Dependents of Messiah College faculty and staff who are eligible for tuition remission are not eligible.
 - c. High school students will be eligible for only grade 11 & 12.
 - d. College or seminary students will be eligible for scholarships for only the number of years of full time work required to complete their particular program (Scholarships are not available for extended study in cases such as change of major, double majors, and part time enrollment).
 - e. High school and college students will generally not be eligible following the academic year in which they have their 25th birthday.
4. Annually, the Stewardship Commission will prepare a recommendation for the level of scholarship support for Church Board action, taking into account the number of eligible students and the amount of scholarship funds available. It is expected that support goals and needed funding will be reviewed annually and projected for at least a three year period. The ratio of support for college or seminary to high school will be approximately two to one.

5. All scholarship checks shall be issued in the name of the school and the scholarship recipient with notation requesting that half of said funds be for the first semester and half for the second semester. Scholarship funds paid out for semesters not completed will be expected to be returned to the Scholarship Fund.
6. In cases of financial need, students can apply for additional funding from the Mutual Aid Fund by making their needs known, in writing, to the Elder Team if they show proof that they have filled out all of the financial aid forms provided by the school to which they are applying.
7. Any questions of eligibility or exceptions to these guidelines will be handled on an individual basis by the Church Board.

**Photo Policy
for Photos for Publication in Print or on Web Site**

Slate Hill Mennonite Church

Adopted by Church Board September 20, 2012

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of photos on the Slate Hill web site and other publications. Persons using photos should not use photos that may be embarrassing or inappropriate.

Candid or group shots at public events and in public places may be used without specific permission as long as identifying information is not included. At least twice a year a notice will be posted in the Slate Hill Church Bulletin giving people the option to request that their photo not be used. For posed shots, the act of posing implies permission. When possible the photographer will give persons the option of opting out of photos. If at any time a person sees a photo being used, they may request that it be withdrawn.

When individual or small group photos are used or when identifying information is shown, permission will be obtained. When no identifying information is given, permission may be verbal. When identifying information is included, permission will be in written form secured by the website committee and housed in the church office.

When children under the age of 18 are photographed, except for group or candid situations as outlined above, the consent of parents must be obtained before the photo is used. When possible, for events like Bible School or events using release forms or parental permission forms, blanket permission for the use of photos will be requested as part of the registration or permission form.

Calendar of Activities

January

- New Budget Year Begins
- Renewal service for Vision and Covenant
- Prepare yearend financial report and submit to auditors

February

- Solicit requests for scholarship funding
- Annual Reports are due for processing
- Gift discernment committee solicits suggestions from congregation to fill positions
- By late February the Church Board should begin conversations with persons for Treasurer, Elders and Gifts Discernment Committee.

March

- New Sunday School Quarter begins
- Audit is reviewed by the Church Board

April

- Nominations for Elder Team to church board for action
- Gifts Discernment Committee begins contacts with nominees to complete slate

May

- Congregational Retreat

June

- New Sunday School Quarter begins
- Bible School

July

- Church Board approves nominations for committees and commissions presented by Gifts Discernment Committee

August

- Congregation votes on nominations for commissions and committees early in the month
- Results of vote are announced
- Begin budget preparation

September

- New Sunday School Quarter begins
- Commissioning for new elder and other positions

October

- Pastoral appreciation

November

- Church board budget approval

December

- Congregational budget approval
- Prepare staff contracts for signature
- New Sunday School Quarter begins

Schedule for evaluations by Pastoral Relations Committee

Evaluations of pastoral elders are on even years. A congregational evaluation is held every six years. Preparation is to begin in December with the evaluation beginning in January with a report to the church board in March and to a congregational meeting in May.

Year	Evaluation
2010	Evaluation of Pastoral Elders - If at end of term, this is a major evaluation leading to decision about renewal. If in the middle of a term, this is a formative evaluation
2012	Evaluation of Pastoral Elders -If at end of term, this is a major evaluation leading to decision about renewal,. If in the middle of a term, this is a formative evaluation Congregational evaluation
2014	Evaluation of Pastoral Elders - If at end of term, this is a major evaluation leading to decision about renewal. If in the middle of a term, this is a formative evaluation
2016	Evaluation of Pastoral Elders - If at end of term, this is a major evaluation leading to decision about renewal. If in the middle of a term, this is a formative evaluation
2018	Evaluation of Pastoral Elders - If at end of term, this is a major evaluation leading to decision about renewal. If in the middle of a term, this is a formative evaluation Congregational evaluation