

Community Mennonite Fellowship  
- Corning, N.Y.

## STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

### PREAMBLE

To the world the Church is God made visible (Eph. 3:9,10; 1Pet. 2:9). To us the Church becomes our spiritual home where we share in the experiences of the family of God. Together, as brothers and sisters, we are helping each other grow into complete persons in the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to the glory of God (Eph. 4:15,16; Heb. 10:24,25).

### Article I

#### NAME

Sec. 1. The name of our local body is Community Mennonite Fellowship - Corning.

Sec. 2. This statement of organization will serve as the bylaws upon incorporation.

### Article II

#### MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION

Sec. 1. **Members** of this congregation are ones who have joined in the Membership Commitment of this Fellowship. (See APPENDIX)

Sec. 2. Any member persisting in disobedience to Christ is subject to the discipline of other members that he or she may be restored to obedience. Anyone remaining unrepentant and untroubled excludes himself or herself from church membership and will be recognized as doing so (1Cor. 5:5,13; Matt. 18:15-17).

Sec. 3. This congregation acknowledges the historic Anabaptist emphases (the church as a community of ones who follow Jesus; a call to unconditional love of enemies; a stress on service as well as evangelism) as helpful in expressing their faith.

Sec. 4. This congregation is affiliated with New York Mennonite Conference (Mennonite Church USA).

### Article III

#### ELDERSHIP

Sec. 1. The congregation calls some of its members to the office of **Elder** as they discern that these individuals model a Christian life and are able to reproduce that life in others (1Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1Pet. 5:3).  
The congregation calls three or more persons to this office.

Sec. 2. The office of Elder has a three-year term that is renewable indefinitely.

Sec. 3. The position of the Elders is not that of lording over but of going before as shepherds (Acts 20:28; 1Pet. 5:2,3; Matt. 23:8-12; Mark 10:42-45). They give themselves to prayer and are responsible for the teaching of God's Word in the gathered congregation (Acts 6:4; Eph. 4:12; James 5:14). They are especially responsible for the spiritual condition of members of the Fellowship (1Thes. 5:12; 1Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17).  
The Elders are a team and accountable to each other and the Fellowship.

Sec. 4. The congregation partially frees one or more of the Elders from employment to serve as **Pastor(s)**. A Pastor is chosen as one especially endowed by Christ with spiritual gifts for leading and nurturing the church.

Sec. 5. The Elders maintain a relationship of mutual submission with the District Overseer of the Southern NY District of New York Mennonite Conference (Mennonite Church USA).

### Article IV

#### DIACONATE

Sec. 1. The congregation also calls persons to serve as "deacons" (1Tim. 3:8-12). The choice of the Seven by the Jerusalem Church gives precedent for delegating to those of appropriate character and gifts the responsibility for meeting a particular need which the elders cannot meet (Acts 6:1-6).

When the congregation is faced with a continuing need (which the Elders cannot meet), a person or several persons are asked by the congregation to oversee and coordinate efforts toward meeting that need.

Sec. 2. A church **Treasurer** is chosen by the congregation for a two year term. The treasurer is responsible to a) deposit church funds, b) disburse them in accordance with the church budget, and c) maintain records of all the church's financial accounts.

Sec. 3. The **Trustees** consist of at least three persons chosen by the congregation for three year terms with one or more being chosen each year. The Trustees are responsible to oversee the financial concerns of the congregation as a whole which includes: a) arranging for adequate facilities for worship and Sunday School, b) maintaining all church-owned property,

c) auditing the church financial records, and d) calling the meeting(s) for preparation of the annual church budget.

Sec. 4. The **Ministry Council** consists of Ministry Coordinators and a Church Coordinator who meet together, along with Elders, Treasurer, and Trustees chair.

All Coordinators are chosen by the congregation for one year terms, renewable.

A **Ministry Coordinator** is chosen for each of the following areas: fellowship, worship, discipleship, visitation, children, and youth. Each Coordinator has authority to make any decision in their ministry area as long as it a) is consistent with the congregation's core values, beliefs and vision, b) does not require funding that exceeds the budget for area, and c) does not adversely impact other ministry areas.

The Council meetings provide the Ministry Coordinators with a) occasions to communicate and coordinate their activities and goals, b) opportunity for brainstorming and cross-pollination of ideas, and c) peer accountability and counsel.

The **Church Coordinator** convenes and chairs the Ministry Council, functioning as team leader, monitoring the overall church ministry system.

#### Article V

### CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Sec. 1. Regular **congregational meetings** are held in January, May, and October.

An Elder chairs the meetings.

A quorum is the members present.

The members present strive to move by consensus. (Consensus does not mean everyone agrees a particular decision is best; it means only that the congregation agrees to move with a particular decision.) If the process of working toward consensus breaks down over an issue, the Elders assume responsibility for rebuilding the process.

The purpose of the meetings is a) to hear reports from Elder Team and give feedback, and b) to hear reports from Trustees (and Treasurer) and give feedback. The January meeting is also held a) to appoint the Diaconate (eg. Coordinators), and b) to review, revise if necessary, and approve the proposed budget.

Sec. 2. **Special business meetings** to deal with concerns of congregational life may be called by the elders or any ten members, if announced the Sunday morning preceding.

#### Article VI

### AMENDMENTS

This statement of organization makes explicit various common understandings and patterns of relationships which are now present (2008) in the Fellowship and have been affirmed in a congregational meeting.

The congregation can amend the above statements (Articles I through V) and can also override them to make one-time exceptions, when there is consensus to do so.

#### Article VII

### DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of dissolution of this organization, the elders shall distribute all its net assets to one or more Mennonite Church USA organizations exempt from Federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

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## APPENDIX

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

Community Mennonite Fellowship - Corning, NY

"We recognize Community Mennonite Fellowship as the part of Christ's body, the Church, to which God has joined us.

"As members of this Fellowship, we confess that:

- Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior; we affirm this trust in Christ by submitting to baptism; *Romans 10:9,10 Acts 2:38 1 Peter 3:21*
- the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God and authoritative guide for our lives; *2 Timothy 3:15-17 2 Peter 1:20,21*
- all who belong to Christ belong to each other and need each other. *Romans 12:4,5 1 Cor. 12:12-27 Ephesians 4:15,16*

"And as God gives grace and opportunity, we will strive to:

- meet with each other on a regular basis, and encourage one another; *Acts 2:42,46,47 Hebrews 10:24,25*
- share our resources with each other; *Acts 2:44,45 Galatians 6:10 1 John 3:16,17*
- give and receive counsel, and pray for each other; *Galatians 6:1,2 Matthew 18:15-20 Hebrews 3:12,13 Ephesians 6:18,19*
- testify to the Good News of what God has done in Christ, and cultivate a lifestyle based on love." *Romans 10:14 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 Romans 13:8*