

Palmyra Church of the Brethren Governance Manual

Ministry Policies

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I. Statement of Our Shared Ministry

The Lead Pastor is given responsibility by the congregation's bylaws and board policies to shepherd the congregation and direct its ministries. It is a joy to walk together as we live out our calling as a Church of the Brethren congregation. Together, we are called to embody the love and teachings of Jesus in every aspect of our shared life and ministry.

Rooted in the Brethren values of peace, service, simplicity, and community, we seek to faithfully fulfill our mission: *to invite, welcome, nurture, disciple, equip, empower, and inspire all persons to live and serve in the way of Jesus.*

We believe that following Jesus calls us to embrace each person with unconditional love, welcoming them into our community as Christ welcomes us. Together, we nurture one another's spiritual growth, walking side by side in faith as we learn from Jesus' example of humility, compassion, and service.

Through discipleship, we help one another grow deeper in relationship with God and discern the unique ways each of us is called to live out our faith. We are committed to equipping believers with the tools, encouragement, and understanding needed to serve joyfully and faithfully in the world.

Our ministry is also about empowering and inspiring one another to live boldly as ambassadors of peace and justice. Whether in our homes, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, or our broader communities, we carry the light of Christ into a world that longs for hope, healing, and reconciliation.

In keeping with our Brethren tradition of shared ministry, we recognize and celebrate the gifts God has given each person. We strive to create space for everyone to contribute meaningfully to the life

of our congregation and the work of God's Kingdom. No gift is too small; no offering of service goes unnoticed.

In all that we do—through worship, study, service, fellowship, and outreach—we seek to live in the Spirit of Jesus. We commit ourselves to growing together in faith, practicing love and reconciliation, and joyfully joining in God's mission to renew and transform all creation.

This is our shared ministry. This is our calling. And it is an honor to live it out together.

II. Pastoral and Professional Staff Collaboration

We are deeply grateful for the gifted individuals God has brought together to serve alongside each other in ministry. Together, we seek to fulfill our mission with faithfulness, creativity, and compassion. Here's how we structure and collaborate as pastoral and professional staff:

A. Pastoral Staff

Our congregation is blessed to call ordained pastors whose faith, educational preparation, teaching ability, pastoral sensitivity, and administrative gifts have been affirmed through the Church of the Brethren's appropriate discernment processes.

1. Lead Pastor

As the primary spiritual shepherd of the congregation and the executive director of our shared ministries, our Lead Pastor:

- a.** Serves as an ex-officio member of the Church Board, with voice but not vote.
- b.** Leads and guides the church staff, coordinating their work in support of our collective ministry goals.
- c.** Is actively involved in preaching, worship, pastoral care, education, service, and administration.
- d.** Together, we build up the body of Christ through our collaborative efforts.

2. Associate Pastor

Our Associate Pastor partners with the Lead Pastor and our congregation to help envision and implement the church's mission. Specifically, the Associate Pastor gives leadership to our ministries of youth and young adults, outreach and service, and hospitality and engagement.

- a.** The Associate Pastor also shares in worship leadership and preaching.
- b.** In the Lead Pastor's absence, the Associate Pastor assumes additional leadership responsibilities, ensuring continuity and care for the congregation.

3. Pastor of Congregational Care

Our Pastor of Congregational Care extends the ministry of Christ's love among us, focusing on pastoral care ministries.

- a.** This role involves offering direct care, coordinating care efforts among staff, deacons, and congregants, and equipping others to engage in these ministries.
- b.** Together, we are committed to building a caring and compassionate community.
- c.**

B. Professional Staff

To effectively support our mission and ministries, we also partner with professional staff. Additional staff members may be called as needed, with Board approval, and under my guidance.

1. Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant works closely with the Lead Pastor and the Church Board to advance mission-driven initiatives.

- a. They also assist the Properties and Stewardship Teams with specific tasks.
- b. Additionally, they supervise the work of the Office Associate.

2. Office Associate

The Office Associate is often the welcoming first face or voice of our congregation.

- a. Providing administrative and clerical support, the Office Associate helps ensure effective communication and the smooth operation of the church office.
- b. They work under the direct supervision of the Executive Assistant.

3. Director of Worship Ministries

The Director of Worship Ministries helps us shape vibrant worship experiences that reflect our mission, vision, and theological identity. They collaborate closely with the Lead Pastor, other staff, the Worship Team, and volunteers to create worship that is engaging, Spirit-led, and grounded in Scripture.

4. Director of Children's Ministries

The Director of Children's Ministries provides oversight of our ministries with our children and their families. They collaborate with the Lead Pastor, other staff, the Education Team, and volunteers to create an effective children's ministry program.

5. Musicians

We are blessed by talented musicians who direct vocal ensembles, handbell choirs, praise teams, and provide accompaniment for worship services. Their leadership enhances our shared worship and helps lift our hearts toward God.

6. Contracted Services

From time to time, we may partner with outside firms to provide specialized support in areas such as bookkeeping, custodial work, or IT services.

These partnerships allow us to steward our resources wisely and focus more fully on ministry.

III. Ministry Teams Collaboration

A. Delegated and Accountable Ministry Leadership

The Church Board entrusts the Lead Pastor with oversight of the staff and ministry teams, within the Board's defined policies. All Ministry Teams serve under the Lead Pastor's leadership and together work to fulfill the mission God has given us.

B. Ministry Teams Overview

Our Ministry Teams are vital to the health and growth of the congregation. They work collaboratively with assigned staff to develop and implement ministry initiatives.

1. **Core Ministry Teams** – focus on caregiving, education, fellowship, service, and worship.
2. **Resource Ministry Teams** – provide essential support for leadership development, employment practices, property care, and financial management.
3. **Leadership Council** – The Lead Pastor may periodically call meetings of all Core and Resource Team Leaders, or invite all Ministry Team Leaders together, to build unity, share information, and encourage collaboration.

C. Core Ministry Teams

1. Deacon Team
2. Education Team
3. Fellowship Team
4. Outreach and Service Team
5. Worship Team

D. Resource Ministry Teams

1. Financial Development Team
2. Financial Accounting Team
3. Gifts Discernment Team
4. Personnel Team
5. Properties Team

IV. Ministry Team Guidelines

A. Accountability

Each team operates under the Lead Pastor's guidance, with the oversight delegated by the Church Board, ensuring our work stays aligned with our mission and strategic vision.

B. Membership

1. Each team includes a staff member assigned by the Lead Pastor as a full member.
2. Teams consist of at least three additional individuals, invited based on gifts, skills, and passion.
3. The Moderator is an ex-officio member without vote.
4. Teams are encouraged to collaborate with the Gifts Discernment Team when seeking new members.
5. Team membership is open-ended without fixed terms; members may step down at any time with notice.

C. Qualifications for Membership

1. Commitment to the church's mission, vision, and values
2. Gifts or skills aligned with the team's focus
3. A collaborative spirit and willingness to serve

D. Leadership

Each year, teams select a Team Leader who works closely with the assigned staff member to:

1. Ensure mission alignment
2. Plan and lead meetings
3. Communicate progress to church leadership
4. Support and mentor team members

E. Meetings

1. Teams meet regularly (typically monthly) or as needed.
2. Meetings are open, except when executive sessions are necessary.
3. Agendas are prepared and distributed in advance, and minutes are recorded and shared promptly.

F. Decision Making

1. We seek to reach decisions by consensus whenever possible.
2. If a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote of those present will decide.

G. Communication

1. Teams maintain open communication with church leadership, staff, and the congregation.
2. Annual reports are submitted by January 15 to the Board.

H. Financial and Job Description Responsibilities

1. Teams submit budget requests annually.
2. Teams develop and review job descriptions for any roles they oversee.
3. Task teams may be formed to carry out specific projects as needed.

V. Working Together – Staff and Teams

Our ministry thrives when staff and teams collaborate closely, building on mutual trust, open communication, and a shared commitment to our mission.

A. Staff Members

1. Provide leadership, vision, theological grounding, and support.
2. Facilitate planning and connection with broader church goals.
3. Empower teams with tools, training, and encouragement.

B. Ministry Teams

1. Serve as the active hands and feet of ministry.
2. Share leadership, ideas, and energy for initiatives.
3. Offer feedback and insight from the life of the congregation.

C. Together, we embody the body of Christ—each part doing its work so that the whole may grow and flourish in love (Ephesians 4:16).

VI. Core Ministry Teams

As we serve together, Core Ministry Teams play a vital role in carrying forward the hands-on ministries of caregiving, education, fellowship, service, and worship. Each team partners with staff and leadership to nurture a thriving, faithful community.

A. Deacon Team

Our Deacon Team extends Christ's love through compassionate care, support, and spiritual encouragement. In collaboration with the Pastor of Congregational Care and the Lead Pastor, the Deacons help embody the heart of our ministry.

Together, the Deacon Team:

1. Plans and implements congregational care initiatives in line with our mission and vision.
2. Provides regular visitation, prayer, and support to those in need.
3. Coordinates acts of compassion, such as meals, transportation, and assistance during times of crisis.
4. Assists with bereavement care and supports families in times of loss.
5. Administers ordinances like communion, love feast, baptism, and anointing.
6. Organizes hospitality ministries to welcome new people into our community.
7. Helps oversee membership status classifications in partnership with pastoral staff.
8. Handles care-related matters with utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.
9. Promotes Deacon activities across our communication channels.
10. Provides feedback to continually strengthen our care ministries.
11. Reports regularly to the Lead Pastor regarding congregational needs and opportunities.

B. Education Team

Our Education Team nurtures faith formation across all generations, partnering with the Associate Pastor, Director of Children's Ministries, and the Lead Pastor to inspire spiritual growth.

Together, the Education Team:

1. Oversees a comprehensive educational program for children, youth, and adults.
2. Recruits, trains, and supports teachers and small group leaders.
3. Reviews and recommends biblically grounded, engaging curriculum.
4. Fosters intergenerational learning experiences.
5. Plans workshops, retreats, and seasonal studies.
6. Promotes educational events through our communication platforms.
7. Encourages participation in Church of the Brethren-related learning opportunities.
8. Regularly assesses our educational ministries for ongoing growth.
9. Keeps the Lead Pastor informed about needs, challenges, and successes.

C. Fellowship Team

Our Fellowship Team strengthens the bonds of Christian community by creating opportunities for joyful connection.

Together, the Fellowship Team:

1. Plans events that foster community life and support other ministries.
2. Coordinates gatherings such as Sunday morning fellowship, potlucks, holiday celebrations, and receptions.
3. Promotes recreational activities for all ages.
4. Recruits and organizes volunteers to assist with events.
5. Fosters intergenerational interaction and connections.
6. Promotes fellowship opportunities through our communication channels.
7. Assesses how well our fellowship efforts are nurturing community life.
8. Shares updates and insights with the Lead Pastor to guide our work together.

D. Outreach and Service Team

The Outreach and Service Team leads us in carrying Christ's love into the world, engaging in service and justice ministries.

Together, the Outreach and Service Team:

1. Identifies community needs where we can make a difference.
2. Plans service projects, mission trips, and outreach activities.
3. Builds partnerships with community organizations.
4. Inspires and equips the congregation to engage in service.
5. Educates the congregation on justice issues from a faith perspective.
6. Celebrates and shares stories of outreach impact.
7. Promotes service opportunities across our communication channels.
8. Regularly evaluates outreach efforts and reports to the Lead Pastor on their effectiveness.

E. Worship Team

Our Worship Team helps ensure that our worship life is vibrant, Spirit-filled, and faithful to our mission and theology.

Together, the Worship Team:

1. Collaborates with the Director of Worship Ministries and the Lead Pastor to shape meaningful worship experiences.
2. Supports evaluation and improvement of worship services.
3. Encourages diverse worship expressions and creative engagement.
4. Helps oversee planning for special services and events.
5. Assists with resource and volunteer management for worship ministries.
6. Partners in maintaining and updating worship staff job descriptions.
7. Promotes worship opportunities through our communication platforms.
8. Evaluates worship effectiveness and reports progress and needs.

VII. Resource Ministry Teams

Resource Ministry Teams empower the work of our Core Ministries by stewarding the congregation's gifts, facilities, leadership, and financial resources.

A. Financial Development Team

The Financial Development Team helps us cultivate a spirit of joyful generosity that sustains and grows our ministries.

Together, the Financial Development Team:

1. Collaborates with the Lead Pastor to plan giving initiatives aligned with our mission.
2. Encourages stewardship education across all ages.
3. Coordinates annual giving campaigns and special offerings.
4. Promotes planned giving and legacy opportunities.
5. Shares stories and testimonies about the joy and impact of giving.
6. Works with the Financial Accounting Team to interpret the budget in mission-focused ways.
7. Communicates stewardship opportunities broadly.
8. Assesses and strengthens stewardship practices and reports to the Lead Pastor.

B. Financial Accounting Team

The Financial Accounting Team carries out the daily financial operations of the church.

Together, the Financial Accounting Team:

1. Works with the Lead Pastor, Executive Assistant, and Treasurer to oversee and manage the church's accounting procedures
2. Receives, counts, records, and deposits all income
3. Works directly with the bookkeeper regarding:
 - a. Accuracy of financial documents
 - b. Submission of all necessary payroll documents, in consultation with the Personnel Team
 - c. Payment of expenses (preparing and submitting requisitions)
4. Provides financial reports to ministry teams for budget tracking
5. Prepares and distributes donor statements
6. Assists Lead Pastor and Treasurer with annual budget preparation
7. Supports the Financial Development Team with data
8. Assists Board, Treasurer, and Finance Committee with annual financial reviews and audits
9. Reviews accounting procedures for best practices

C. Gifts Discernment Team

The Gifts Discernment Team helps us recognize and call forth the Spirit-given gifts among us.

Together, the Gifts Discernment Team:

1. Facilitates opportunities for gifts discovery and discernment.
2. Maintains a database of volunteers, interests, talents, passions and service.
3. Matches individuals with meaningful ministry opportunities.
4. Identifies and nurtures potential leaders.
5. Offers training and support to volunteers.

6. Promotes gifts discovery opportunities through our communication channels.
7. Provides feedback on volunteer engagement and leadership development.

D. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team nurtures a healthy, vibrant staff team, ensuring our employment practices reflect our mission and values.

Together, the Personnel Team:

1. Collaborates with the Lead Pastor and the Executive Assistant on employment practices.
2. Reviews and updates the staff handbook and employment policies.
3. Supports hiring, onboarding, and orientation processes.
4. Facilitates staff evaluations and supports professional development.
5. Monitors staff well-being and morale.
6. Supports conflict resolution and fosters healthy communication.
7. Reviews compensation structures with stewardship in mind.
8. Maintains confidentiality and integrity in all personnel matters.

E. Properties Team

The Properties Team stewards our physical spaces so that they fully support the work of ministry.

Together, the Properties Team:

1. Partners with the Lead Pastor and the Executive Assistant to maintain buildings and grounds.
2. Oversees regular inspections, repairs, and vendor contracts.
3. Ensures compliance with safety standards and emergency preparedness.
4. Plans and coordinates facility improvements.
5. Promotes environmental stewardship in property care.
6. Facilitates volunteer involvement in property projects.
7. Communicates property updates and needs to leadership and the congregation.

VIII. Other Organized Groups and Ministries

We also recognize that God may inspire new groups and ministries within our congregation.

- A. Upon Board authorization, new special interest groups, age groups, or ministry teams may be organized.
- B. Each of these groups will operate under the church's mission and within the collaborative framework we have established.
- C. All ministries remain under the spiritual and administrative guidance of the church's leadership, ensuring that we serve with unity and purpose.

IX. Closing Word

As we journey together, every member, ministry team, and staff role contributes to our shared mission: *to be the Body of Christ in the world, faithfully and joyfully.*