

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF
Maranatha Amish Mennonite Churches**

Article I. Name

This fellowship of churches shall be known as *Maranatha Amish Mennonite Churches*

Article II. Purpose

1. To provide a conferring fellowship so that ordained brethren can be of mutual assistance to each other in continuing to maintain the standards of the gospel by the practical application of its principles and to promote the general welfare of the church of Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:6; Matt.18:15-20; Heb.13:7,17; I Pet.5:1-4

2. To provide a closer fellowship of encouragement, exhortation, practical application of bible principles and accountability.

Heb.10:23-25; Phil.2:2; I Cor.5:6

3. To provide a consistent environment and fellowship for our youth.

I Cor.15:33

Article III. Structure

1. Membership in this fellowship shall be by request, and contingent upon investigation and acceptance by the ministerial body.

2. Each congregation shall be self governed, and have their own resident bishop wherever practical.

3. Commitment to this fellowship shall be through the congregation's ministry. The ministry must have the support of their congregation.

Article IV. Administration

1. A moderator and assistant moderator shall be elected by the entire ministerial body from among the bishops.

2. Their term of office shall be two years. One brother shall be elected each year for a two-year term with the new member serving as assistant. A secretary shall be elected each year from among the ministerial body.

3. These elected brethren must be retired at least for one year before serving again.

4. This committee shall be responsible for planning conferring minister's meetings twice a year.

Article V. Discipline

1. Congregations desiring to participate in this fellowship shall maintain a scriptural discipline in harmony with the accepted fellowship interpretation of bible doctrine and application of bible principles.

2. Violation by members shall be dealt with by the local congregation and ministry. If additional help is desired, it shall be at their request and the assisting bishops' committee shall be their choice.

3. When any congregation fails to maintain the doctrines and discipline accepted by the fellowship the moderator in consultation with the assistant moderator and secretary shall call a meeting of all the bishops of the fellowship and present it at the next semi annual ministers meeting. No final action or decision shall be made without approval of the ministerial body.

4. The authority of this ministerial body in the individual congregations shall be limited to acceptance into, and exclusion from, this fellowship.

5. The bishops, in cooperation with the whole ministerial body, shall be responsible for making ongoing applications to bible principles as the need arises.

Article VI. Statement of Christian Doctrine

1. We agree with the interpretation of our forefathers as set forth in the eighteen articles of faith written in Dortrecht, Holland on April 21, 1632.

2. We also accept and agree with the articles of faith drawn up at Hartville, Ohio on March 23-25, 1964. This statement does not supersede the Dortrecht Confession of Faith which the church still confesses and teaches, but rather it gives expression to some of the doctrines and practices of the early church which at the time of the former confessions were adopted were not a matter of difference.

Article VII. Standard of practice

Can two walk together except they be agreed? Amos 3:3

1. The sanctity of the Lord's work

Maranatha Amish Mennonite Churches will be committed to seeking to please God in every area of church life, home life, business life, and personal life.

We recognize the importance of our Church practices and standards complementing and supporting each other. Therefore, we are agreed upon the following;

a. We will respect and support each other whenever disciplinary action is taken upon wayward or unsupportive members.

We will respect and cooperate with each other in membership transfers.

If asked to assist any church group by providing leadership, we will be careful to respect and honor God ordained church leaders and will not overrule their authority without just cause, godly counsel, and earnest prayer.

b. We believe our Heavenly Father calls His children to a life of separation and non- conformity to the world, and that every aspect of our Christian lives should reflect this holy calling.

We believe musical instruments and accompaniment are contrary to New Testament worship "in spirit and in truth" and will therefore avoid them both in singing and on tapes, etc.

We reject drama because of its hypocritical nature. We will avoid all skits and plays which borrow from drama's insincerity and hypocrisy.

c. We will resist the ecumenical pressure to compromise by not attending religious seminars, and avoiding involvement in any movements, that do not align with the historic, biblical, Anabaptist faith.

We will bind ourselves together in the bonds of Christian love and endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace" while we "contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints."

2. The sanctity of God's order

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." I Cor. 11:3

a. Scriptures are clear that man, as the head of the woman, is to exercise his God ordained headship in the church and in the home. God is looking to "man" to assume leadership positions in teaching and preaching in our worship services. We further believe that "man" is to be the "priest" in the home. Therefore, we expect husbands and fathers to lead out in daily family worship and teaching, and to maintain our church

standard in our homes.

b. Scriptures are equally clear that "woman" is divinely given as man's companion and helper. Women's primary role in life is to be "keepers at home." (Titus 2:5) The headship covering shall be faithfully worn by the women to keep alive their recognition of God's headship order. We believe that the covering should be recognized as a religious symbol but that the covered hair is the scriptural ordinance. Therefore, the covering should be large enough to cover most of the hair and should reach at least to the ears at the sides and to the bottom of the ears in the back. The church approved covering is to be consistently worn and shall not be substituted with other patterns such as the black veiling, etc.

c. Due to the temptations that mixed seating may present, we will maintain the practice of segregated seating for worship services. Weddings and funerals may be considered exceptions since these services usually involve families as a unit.

d. Christian discipline cannot countenance mixed bathing or patronizing public bathing places.

e. Casual appearance promotes casual permissiveness. We will avoid casual attire, casual hairdos, and casual lifestyles, both brethren and sisters, by wearing attire and conducting ourselves in a manner which conforms to Bible principles.

3. THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"(Heb. 13:4)

a. We believe and confess that there is an honorable state of marriage which has been instituted of God for the preservation and welfare of man. (Gen. 2:20-25)

This blessed state of matrimony, according to the holy design of God, consists of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:22) and is indissoluble, except by death (I Cor. 7:39) according to the "one flesh" principle established by God in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:24) and the express words of our Lord when He said, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

Divorce and remarriage is therefore condemned by the clear pronouncement of God's eternal Word (Mark 10:11,12; Luke 16:18). The scripture also does not sanction any excuses, loopholes, or the exceptions to its own clear statement on the permanence of the marital union.

We believe that marriage to a divorced person is an unscriptural marriage and an adulterous relationship that must be broken upon repentance, however, since it involves the exchange of marriage vows that our Lord Himself recognized as "marriage" even in an adulterous marital relationship, we believe that anyone involved in such a situation is not free to remarry as long as the partner from the adulterous marital union is living.

Matt. 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11,12; Luke 16:18; Pro. 13:15b.

b. The holiness of the marital relationship is attested to and supported by the gravity and solemnity of the premarital days. Premarital conduct is an expression of holy purity "...keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22) and submissive trust in the leading of the Lord (Psa. 34:8,9). Knowing that the lust of the flesh indwells the body, and that Christian courtship depends on the soul and the spirit, we believe that all forms of physical contact, (holding hands, petting, hugging, kissing, etc.) are to be withheld until after marriage. This "hands off" policy contributes positively to the stability and nurture of the relationship on a spiritual plane and, therefore, it is to be taught diligently among our people.

c. Weddings shall be simple and Christlike, with Christ as the center and not the bride as is the practice of the world. Services should be in harmony with regular church services.

To help maintain the above principles; the wedding party should file in together and be seated before the service begins, there should be no picture taking during the service, and a reverent atmosphere should be

maintained throughout the reception, etc.

4. THE SANCTITY OF THE HOME

“For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement....”(Gen. 18:19). “Choose you this day whom ye will serve;but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”(Josh. 24:15)

In the midst of a decadent society where the home is fast becoming a forgotten entity, we will endeavor to “hold fast till I come” (Rev. 2:25), and to “strengthen the things that remain.” (Rev. 3:2).

- a. Our homes must be a shelter from the storms of worldliness, the threat of deception, and the pollution of sin. For this cause the filth of television, the allurements of the radio, and the corruption of the Internet will be banned from our homes. We will limit our viewing of videos to business training and instruction.
- b. The church standard is to be faithfully observed in our homes by older and younger alike. The Christian husband/father is responsible for creating and maintaining an environment of “separated” consistency, and is charged, after the example of Abraham, to “command his children and his household after him.”

5. THE SANCTITY OF THE LORD’S TIME AND TALENTS

“Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (I Cor. 10:39)

- a. The Lord’s Day is to be set aside for worship and holy meditation. It is a day to be spiritually refreshed and strengthened by “assembling ourselves together, exhorting one another....”(Heb. 10:25) The Lord’s Day should be kept as a day of rest from physical labor and devoted to the Lord’s business.
- b. Competitive sports are “highly esteemed” by the world and, we believe, “an abomination to God,” therefore we will avoid all commercial sports as well as organized sports teams among us. We believe even our youth are called to “be an example of the believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity....”(I Tim. 4:12)
We seek rather to recreate ourselves in ways that will render us “perfect and complete in all the will of God.”(Col. 4:12)

This *STANDARD OF PRACTICE* is not to replace the individual congregational standard of practice, but is to be used as a *minimum* standard for all the churches.

Article VIII. Amendments

1. All changes and additions to this constitution shall be made with the unanimous support of the participating ministerial body.
2. The minister’s decisions must be validated by the support of their congregations.