

CONSTITUTION ARCADIA CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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ARTICLE I NAME

The congregational name of the church is the Arcadia Church of the Brethren as part of the Church of the Brethren denomination. This constitution applies to the Arcadia Church of the Brethren structure.

The Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. of Arcadia, Indiana is the name of the church as incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana as a Non-Profit corporation (Non-Profit Organization Act of 1935 as amended). The Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. is the legal entity of the church as described in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE II AFFIRMATIONS

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren (ABC) shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. To perform the ordinances of God;
2. To work for the betterment of the community and to support missions, both domestic and foreign.
3. To hold religious, revival, evangelistic, educational and social meetings;
4. To build, remodel, repair and maintain a church building and/or buildings and cemetery; and
5. To maintain, manage and operate a church and cemetery in the community of Arcadia, Indiana, dedicated to the glory of God and the Christian faith of the Church of the Brethren;

B. FAITH

The faith of the Congregation of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren:

1. Is founded upon the belief that there is but one God who is a personal God, who in holy love, creates, sustains and orders all.
2. Confesses Jesus Christ is the son of God and thus Lord of the church and of all life;

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B FAITH (Continued)

3. Believes that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of the believers, creating and sustaining the church through the gospel, giving guidance and comfort and uniting believers with the Lord and with one another;
4. Considers that all members of the congregation of the body of believers are responsible for the total ministry of the church;
5. Maintains that the New Testament is its only creed and rule of faith. In the Holy Scriptures is recorded God's search for man which is climaxed in God's redemptive act in and through Jesus Christ. Through His holy word, God still speaks and continues to accomplish His redemptive purpose;
6. Believes that the Holy Gospel is, "the Good News", that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Through the gospel, God's sovereign will and Christ's redeeming grace are revealed;
7. The congregation holds that the church is the body of Christ, under the Lord's mandate to be faithful in accepting and transmitting the gospel by word and by deed; and
8. Accepts that the ministry of the church is to be the proclamation and fulfillment of the gospel for all people both near and far and for the nurture of the individual believers in the Christian faith and life.

C. MISSION

God is calling our Church to be His servants striving to develop Christ like attributes in our Christian walk through the teachings of His Holy Spirit.

D. VISION

God is calling us to lead others to grow in Jesus by:

1. Putting Him first in our lives, individually and as a body develop a personal relationship with Him through prayer and reading His Holy Word,
2. Putting others before ourselves and demonstrating unconditional, Christian love for one another,

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D. VISION (Continued)

3. Using the spiritual gifts that by His grace we have received for His purposes
4. Demonstrating the gifts of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) which we receive by His grace and by being his faithful servant, and
5. Implementing God's Great Commission by sharing the message of Jesus Christ with others and growing disciples.

ARTICLE III BAPTISM

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward belief. Through belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and through confession of sin and repentance to Jesus Christ, one receives baptism of the heart. Upon baptism, the Holy Spirit will dwell with in one's heart. Baptism as practiced by the Arcadia Church of the Brethren is in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and is by immersion. Request for baptism by trine immersion shall be honored by the pastor.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Church membership is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. Membership in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren congregation is a way in which we affirm and live out our membership in Christ's larger body as directed by the Holy Scriptures. Through our interrelatedness with other Christians of the congregation:

1. We experience the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit.
2. We discover ways to be faithful to our covenant with God and each other.
3. We are able to support one another in carrying out our common calling as the people of God.

To make membership meaningful and significant, an individual is encouraged to attend a membership class. Also to make membership meaningful and significant, the congregation and the member shall diligently strive to attain mutual accountability to one another. The congregation has a covenant responsibility:

1. To instruct each individual in the Word of God and the faith and practices of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren prior to being received into membership.
2. To encourage growth in freedom and discipleship.
3. To help members discover their gifts and find ways for them to serve in Christ's ministry.
4. To provide ministries that respond to both spiritual and physical needs.

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ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP (continued)

Likewise each member has a covenantal responsibility:

1. To actively seek participation in the life of the congregation.
2. To seek the counsel of the church in living out the way of Christ.
3. To challenge the church to greater accountability to its calling.
4. To respond to opportunities to serve in the congregation and beyond.
5. To be faithful to the church by way of their attendance at regular services and by their stewardship of time, talent and financial support.

Each individual member and the congregation shall love God and follow the teachings and commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. BECOMING A MEMBER

It is the responsibility of the congregation to reach out to others, to share with them the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ and to invite them to enter into the life of Christ's body. After an individual has expressed a desire to become a member, they will then have the opportunity to learn about the Arcadia Church of the Brethren and will receive a sponsor to be a mentor to/for them. Individuals may be received into the church in one of three ways.

1. CONFIRMATION OF FAITH

An individual may enter into membership of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren through confirmation of faith, full confession in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and evidence of baptism into the Christian Faith.

2. TRANSFER

An individual may enter into membership of the church by letter of transfer from another congregation of the Church of the Brethren or from any other evangelical denomination upon proof of confession of faith and baptism into the Christian Faith.

3. EXCOMMUNICATED FROM ANOTHER CHURCH

An individual who at the time of application for membership is excommunicated from his/her church shall be received into membership upon his/her acceptance of faith and baptism as practiced by the Arcadia Church of the Brethren and full confession in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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B. MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

The Arcadia Church of the Brethren shall annually review the membership classification.

1. **ACTIVE MEMBERS**

Active members of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren are those individuals who are faithful to the church by way of their attendance at regular services and business meetings and by their stewardship of time, talent and financial support.

2. **INACTIVE MEMBERS**

Inactive members of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren are those individuals:

- a) Who live within proximity of the church facility and activities of the church but do not comply with the requirements for active membership for two consecutive years; or
- b) Who live at such distance from the church as to make it impossible or impractical for them to discharge their membership responsibilities but do not wish to move their membership.

3. **ABSENTEE MEMBERS**

Separated or absentee members are those members whose residence cannot be ascertained for three consecutive years shall have their names placed upon “absent” list and may not be counted in the statistical list.

C. MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

Membership in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren may be terminated by death, transfer, withdrawal or removal.

1. **DEATH**

At the death of a member, a termination of membership in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren will be noted and at the beginning of each year such terminations for the previous year shall be reported to the Arcadia Church of the Brethren Church Board.

2. **TRANSFER**

Request for a transfer of membership may take place by means of a letter transferring the individual’s membership from the Arcadia Church of the Brethren to another receiving congregation.

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C. MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION (continued)

3. WITHDRAWAL

Upon the written request of an individual member to withdraw his/her membership from the Arcadia Church of the Brethren and not transfer to another congregation, the individual will be removed from the membership list and at the beginning of each year such terminations for the previous year shall be reported to the Arcadia Church of the Brethren Church Board.

4. REMOVAL

The congregation of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren may remove the name of a member when:

- a. The member has joined another church, but failed to request a letter of transfer;
- b. The member is classified as a Separated or Absentee Member; or
- c. After review by the Deacons', sufficient cause for taking such action is warranted.

ARTICLE V CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. The Church Council (also called The Council) is the governing body of the congregation of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren. It is the church in business session and is recognized to be the final authority.
- B. The Council is composed of those individuals who are active in the local congregation and who are faithful to the Arcadia Church of the Brethren by way of their attendance at regular services and business meetings and by their stewardship of time, talent and financial support and thus are eligible to vote unless otherwise stated.
- C. Officers of the Council are:
 1. The moderator,
 2. The church clerk,
 3. The church treasurer and
 4. The chair of the Church Board
- D. The church year shall begin January 1 and end December 31 of each year.
- E. The Church Council delegates to the Church Board the authority and responsibility to review and/or revise the Arcadia Church of the Brethren By-Laws and Team Charters at least every three years. If two or more Church Board members believe a proposed revision should not be decided by the Church Board, the proposed revision will be taken to the Church Council to render a decision.

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ARTICLE VI LEADERSHIP BOARD

There shall be a Leadership Board of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren which shall be called the Church Board. The Church Board shall have five (5) elected individuals who are members in good standing of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren. They shall also serve as the Finance Team. Elected Board members shall not be restricted by gender. Representation from various leadership teams and positions of the Church are also members of the Church Board. All members of the Church Board may vote provided they are members in good standing of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren. The Church Board is accountable to the Church Council and shall assure that the mission and vision of the congregation are fulfilled. The Church Council has given authority to the Church Board to review and/or revise the Church By-laws and Team Charters with the following caveat: If two or more Church Board members believe a proposed revision should not be decided by the Church Board, the proposed revision will be taken to the Church Council to render a decision. Objectives and responsibilities of the board are stated in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren By-Laws and Team Charters.

ARTICLE VII LEADERSHIP TEAMS

There shall be a minimum of four Leadership Teams of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren. The individuals on each team are not restricted to Church membership but must be active in the church congregation as described in Article V. Responsibilities and objectives of each team are stated in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren By-Laws and Team Charters.

A. TRUSTEE TEAM

The Trustee Team members serve as directors who are responsible for the physical care of the buildings, grounds, and hired personnel that maintain and/or repair such. The Trustee Team is accountable to the Church Board and the Church Council.

Members of the Trustee Team are also the legal officers of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. (the corporation) and thus the Team is required to have three or more team members who are members of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren to serve as legal officers. The chairperson and the vice-chairperson of the Trustee Team, if they are members of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, shall serve as President and Vice-President of the Church Corporation. In the event the Chairperson and vice-Chairperson are not members of the Church then the Team shall appoint team members who are, to be the President and Vice-President of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. (the corporation).

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ARTICLE VII LEADERSHIP TEAMS (continued)

B. MINISTRY TEAM

The Ministry Team shall function as the pastoral relations liaison for the congregation and shall be accountable to the Church Board. This Team shall also function as the worship team and assists the Pastor in all facets of worship services.

C. THE MISSIONS TEAM

The purpose of the Missions Team is to provide benevolent opportunities for the congregation to demonstrate their love and care for others. Such opportunities, may be, but are not limited to;

1. Opportunities for outreach to the community,
2. Assistance to the physical needs of the church family,
3. Assistance to those who are victims of a disaster,
4. Visitations to shut-ins and/or church members,
5. Social events and celebrations, etc.

The Missions Team is accountable to the Church Board.

D. EDUCATIONAL TEAM

The Education Team shall function as the leadership team for all Church School classes and children's activities. The team shall assume active participation in the church school programs. They are accountable to the Church Board.

E. FINANCE TEAM

The Finance Team shall develop an annual Church budget and give counsel to the Church Board on anticipated resources and expenditures in annual budget preparations. The Finance Team is responsible to the Church Council.

ARTICLE VIII CHURCH SPIRITUAL LEADERS

A. PASTOR(S)

The congregation shall employ a pastor when needed, a person whose faith, aptness to teach, preach, counsel, and administer, and whose educational qualifications have been examined in consultation with the appropriate authorities in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren.

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The pastor shall be properly educated and/or ordained (In special situations a licentiate, or a minister from another denomination, may serve). The pastor shall accept and adhere to the faith and the practices of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren as set forth in this constitution. The pastor's life and conduct shall witness to Christian faith.

The pastor shall be the spiritual shepherd of the congregation and the executive director of the church program. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the board and teams. The resident Pastor in this congregation may be called to other specific responsibilities without forfeiting his or her status as pastor. The pastoral year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

B. CHURCH DEACONS

The Deacons of the Church are the spiritual leaders elected by the congregation in council session. They are concerned with the spiritual and emotional well-being of the congregation. Deacons may serve on other teams and/or perform specific duties without forfeiting their status as Deacon.

ARTICLE IX SERVICE TEAMS

Service Team Leaders shall be elected by the Church Council and shall include, but are not limited to, the Nominating Team and the Auditing Team

Church membership is not required to be a member of a Service Team. Each Service Team shall submit at least annually to the Church Board and the Church Council an evaluation of the team's activities for the year. Responsibilities and objectives of each team are as stated in the Arcadia Church of the Brethren By-Laws and Team Charters.

ARTICLE X FELLOWSHIP TEAMS

Fellowship Teams shall function as teams that provide interaction with one another for purposes of like or similar service, causes, studies or learning. Fellowship Teams may include:

1. The Women's, Men's and/or Youth Fellowships,
2. Home Fellowship
3. Bible Study Teams and
4. Social Activities Teams.

Each Fellowship Team shall submit at least annually to the Church Board and the Church Council an evaluation of the team's activities for the year and a list of the team's projected activities for the next year.

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ARTICLE XI PROJECT GROUPS

Project Groups shall be authorized by the Church Council, Church Board and/or any Leadership Team for short term projects that carry out specific assignments. When the specific assignment is achieved, the project group shall be dismissed by the authorizing entity. Short-term Project Groups are accountable to the Church Council, Church Board or Leadership Team that authorized the formation of the group.

ARTICLE XII RECORDS

A. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

The following official documents related to the ongoing activities of the congregation shall be preserved with an on-site copy available at the ACOB:

1. Deeds, contracts, and other legal and governing documents.
2. Minutes of the Church Council, Church Board, Trustees Team and the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. (the corporation).
3. Records of members, including name, date received into membership, and date and reason for removal from the roll.
4. Records of ordinations, births, baptisms, weddings, and deaths.
5. Records of worship and Sunday School attendance, annual statistical reports and financial statements

B. OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS

All correspondence and records are the property of the congregation held in trust for the use and benefit of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren. Arrangements shall be made for responsible and safe care of all records and documents of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren.

ARTICLE XIII DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

The Arcadia Church of the Brethren incorporated as the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. is affiliated with the Church of the Brethren Denomination with its national office in Elgin, IL. The local congregation shall, when possible, send delegates to annual meetings, district meetings, local church meetings and church and/or community betterment meetings.

The Arcadia Church of the Brethren congregation reserves the right to support or not support, in whole or in part, the overall program of the Church of the Brethren denomination. This congregation considers it in its best interest to reserve the right to make its own decisions as to what part or parts of the overall denominational program we can or cannot conscientiously support.

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ARTICLE XIV AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership present and accounted for at two (2) consecutive Council meetings scheduled fourteen (14) days apart. Notice of the pending amendment(s) shall be distributed by printed and/or electronic copies to the congregation not less than fourteen (14) days or more than thirty (30) days prior to the Council meeting at which it is proposed to consider the amendment(s). The required second Council meeting may be omitted by a two-thirds vote of the membership present at the first Council meeting.

ARTICLE XV DISPERSAL OF CHURCH PROPERTY

In the event the Trustee Board and members of the congregation of the corporation elect to dissolve the corporation, or become an inactive congregation and corporation, all existing properties and assets over and above those needed to pay off any debts and liabilities of the corporation such as real estate, buildings, savings accounts, memorial funds, church personal property and any and all other such property as the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. of Arcadia, Indiana may own, shall, without exception, be placed in trust. A Trustee(s) shall be established by the Arcadia Church of the Brethren Church Council at the time the Church Council votes to disperse of the property of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. (The Corporation). Guidelines for the dispersal of the property of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren, Inc. shall be established by Arcadia Church of the Brethren Church Council and entrusted to the appointed Trustee(s) for dispersion.

Implementation of Article XV of this constitution requires three-fourths majority vote of the membership at three (3) consecutive Council meetings spaced at least six (6) months between Council meetings. Notice of the pending action(s) shall be distributed (by printed and/or electronic copies) to the congregation not less than thirty (30) days or more than (60) sixty days prior to the Council meeting at which it is proposed to consider the action(s).

ARTICLE XVI REVIEW/REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

This document shall be reviewed and/or revised at least every three (3) years. A Project Team shall be appointed by the Church Board to execute this process. The project must be completed within one year.

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ARTICLE XVII SIGNATURES

The foregoing constitution of the Arcadia Church of the Brethren of 8989 E. 266th Street, Arcadia, Indiana, 46030, has been approved by the Church Council on December 22, 2013 and accepted by the elected Church Board, to which they have affixed their signatures.

RODNEY RULON
PRESIDENT

BILL HAWORTH
VICE PRESIDENT

DON KNAPP
BOARD MEMBER

ROBIN HILDEBRAND
BOARD MEMBER

COLLEEN FREEMAN
BOARD MEMBER

DIANA COWAN
CHURCH CLERK

Signed and Dated the 12th Day of January in the year of our Lord 2014.