Rochester Mennonite Fellowship Bylaws

Article I. Name

The name of the organization is Rochester Mennonite Fellowship, hereinafter also called “the church” or “the congregation”.

Article II. Purpose

Rochester Mennonite Fellowship is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, 1986, or the corresponding provision of any future federal law.

Article III. Mennonite Church Affiliations

Rochester Mennonite Fellowship is a member congregation of New York Mennonite Conference, and through that Conference, of Mennonite Church USA, within the meaning of their respective bylaws and organizational documents.

Article IV. Membership and Covenant

1. Membership in Rochester Mennonite Fellowship comes from affirmation of the church’s Covenant.
2. Every person who affirms the Covenant, by signing the Covenant document or by some other public declaration, intending to abide by the terms of the Covenant and to help other members to also keep their Covenant commitments, is a member of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship for that year.
3. Every member of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship who is an adult or an older teenager may participate in decision-making at congregational meetings.
4. The Covenant shall be made available for signing annually at a special worship service, and at other times as needed for those who wish to affirm it by signing before the next recovenanting ceremony.
5. The Covenant shall be reviewed for relevance and faithfulness to the church’s fundamental character at intervals of not longer than five years, and modifications proposed as deemed necessary.

Article V. Authority of the Congregation

1. All authority resides in the congregation.

2. Decisions shall be made by the church at its congregational meetings described below; or on behalf of the congregation by its leadership bodies described below; or on behalf of the congregation by other bodies as may from time to time be created and authorized to make such decisions. All such decisions shall be publicly recorded, although some details may be kept confidential.

3. Questions appropriate for congregational decision are those pertaining to the congregation as a whole, and include, but are not limited to, those of mission, vision, leadership, finance, Covenant, and bylaws.

Article VI. Leadership and Administration

1. The life of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship is directed and coordinated by a Leadership Team and by teams working in these ministries:

Worship Ministry	Leads the gathered body in its formal and ritual response to God.
Outreach Ministry	Determines how and when the church can serve our neighbors and the different circles of community around us.
Inclusion and Anti-Racism Ministry	Helps the church develop an anti-racist identity and offers strategies for becoming an inclusive faith community.
Pastoral Care Ministry	Cares for the spiritual, physical, and emotional growth of the congregation.
Education Ministry	Oversees the teaching of our children and adults.
Stewards Ministry	Cares for our financial and physical resources.

2. The preceding descriptions of the ministries are minimal and suggestive rather than limiting and directive. Each new ministry team shall decide for itself how it will understand and undertake its mission, in conversation with other ministry teams and the Leadership Team, and in light of the work of the previous ministry team and the needs of the church. It should seek to interpret its mission broadly rather than narrowly.
3. Depending on the needs and resources of the congregation, at any given time a ministry team may or may not be in place.
4. A ministry team consists of at least two persons, each of whom normally serves a term of at least one year.
5. Ministry team members may volunteer to serve or accept that calling from others.

6. Whenever possible, one member of each of the ministry teams is also a member of the Leadership Team, so as to help coordinate communication among the teams.
7. Leadership Team
   A. The mission of the Leadership Team is to develop and maintain the congregation's vision and mission, and to help coordinate and support the work of its ministries; and also to oversee the day-to-day operation of the church.
   B. The Leadership Team is normally composed of one or more representatives of each of the other ministry teams. However, the Leadership Team may function without representation from all the ministry teams, as long as it consists of at least four persons.
   C. Leadership Team members are chosen by discernment of gifts of the members of the church, in the same way as members of the ministry teams. The normal term of membership is one to three years.
   D. The Leadership Team may contract with persons or organizations outside the church for consultation or provision of other services for the congregation.
8. Administrator
   A. The Administrator is a member of the Leadership Team whose primary tasks may include performing administrative and clerical functions for the church and the ministry teams, facilitating communication between the Leadership Team and the rest of the church, and being the main channel of communication between the church and persons and organizations outside it.
   B. The Administrator is selected by the Leadership Team and affirmed by the congregation, and may be paid compensation at a mutually agreed upon amount.
9. Treasurer and Finance Committee
   A. The Treasurer shall receive, have custody over, and be accountable for all monies belonging to the congregation, and make payments on behalf of the church as necessary.

B. The Finance Committee consists of two to three persons, chosen in the same way as members of the ministry teams. This Committee meets with the Treasurer throughout the year, as needed, to prepare the annual budget proposal and address other financial matters.

C. The Treasurer and Finance Committee are directly accountable to the Leadership Team.

D. The Treasurer is chosen in the same way as other members of the ministry teams, but not necessarily with the same term of service.

10. Other temporary or ad hoc offices of leadership and administration may be created as deemed necessary and appropriate by the congregation, to be accountable directly to the congregation unless otherwise defined.

Article VII. Trustees

1. Trustees sign legal documents on behalf of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship.
2. There shall be at all times three Trustees, each of whom shall serve a three-year term without pay. Each year at the spring congregational meeting a new Trustee shall be chosen to replace that person whose term has expired. Vacancies shall be filled by decision of the congregation.

Article VIII. Congregational or Business Meetings

1. The congregational meeting is the final authority in all congregational matters.
2. Regular congregational meetings for conducting the church's business shall be held in January, in the spring, and in the fall, or at other times agreed upon by the congregation, provided that there be at least two weeks' prior notice.
3. Additional congregational meetings for any purpose may be held at any time when called for by the Leadership Team, provided that there be at least two weeks' prior notice.
4. The members present at a duly called congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum, provided there be at least six.
5. The Leadership Team shall develop the agenda for each congregational meeting, incorporating proposals and other items requested by other members as appropriate. The agenda shall be distributed in written form at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. On the agenda, any proposal for consideration shall have indication of whether or not it should be decided upon at that meeting. The agenda may also include topics of discussion and reports or other dissemination of information, and other items of interest for which no decision need be made.

6. Decisions at all congregational meetings shall be made by consensus, but if consensus is not achieved on a proposal, it may be decided by a vote. A two-thirds majority is required for passage of the proposal. Abstentions are not counted to determine a majority.
7. Ordinarily a vote, should it be necessary, will be taken immediately following the discussion. However, if the vote is not taken, as on a proposal presented or developed without two weeks' notice, the vote may take place at a later congregational meeting called for that purpose. Only in the case where a vote is taken without discussion having happened are absentee ballots accepted.
8. The Leadership Team shall make record of congregational meetings, distribute and store those records, and ensure that decisions and action items produced by the meetings are implemented.

Article IX. Fiscal Policies

1. The fiscal year of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship shall be January 1 to December 31.
2. The budget of Rochester Mennonite Fellowship shall be developed by the Treasurer and the Finance Committee, in light of the church's vision, mission, and/or values, and be presented to the congregation for affirmation at a congregational meeting prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year.
3. If, at the close of the fiscal year, there is a surplus, the Finance Committee shall prepare a plan to disburse the surplus and will present that plan for congregational approval.
4. Rochester Mennonite Fellowship shall not require dues from its members.
5. Rent payments for use of the church building should be set to more or less cover congregational expenses, as of utilities and cleaning, and not to generate profit.

Article X. Safety of Children

The Safe Ministry Committee, composed of the Leadership Team and one member of the Education ministry, works to help provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth in the church by adopting an appropriate screening process for everyone who wishes to work with children and youth, and by developing an annual training program for those workers.

Article XI. Dissolution

If Rochester Mennonite Fellowship be dissolved and there remain any property after satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, the property shall be given to New York Mennonite Conference.

Article XII. Amendments

The Leadership Team shall periodically (but at intervals of no longer than three years) review these bylaws for accuracy, completeness, and relevance, and propose amendments as necessary.

Adopted 26 January 2014

Revised 19 March 2017

Revised 21 March 2021

Revised 19 September 2021

Revised 19 January 2025

Revised 18 May 2025

Revised 15 November 2026