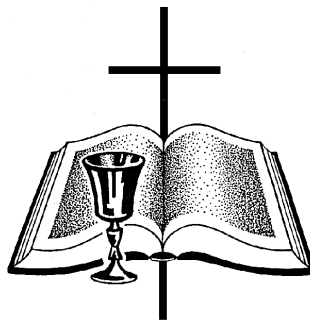


**CONSTITUTION
AND
BY-LAWS
OF THE
WALL BRETHERN CHURCH**



February, 1976
First Revision March, 1989
Second Revision October, 1995
Third Revision March, 2008
Fourth Revision October, 2011
Fifth Revision March, 2018

NOTE: Whenever the word "he" is used in this Constitution and By-Laws of the Wall Brethren Church its meaning is inclusive; both male and female are implied

Table of Contents

	Page
Preamble	1
Article I: The Name and Place of This Congregation.....	1
Article II: Purposes	1
Article III: Confession of Faith.....	2
Article IV: Reception of Membership into This Congregation	2
Article V: Classification of Membership.....	3
Article VI: Rights and Privileges of Members	4
Article VII: Duties and Responsibilities of the Member	5
Article VIII: Discipline and Dismissal of Members	6
Article IX: Congregational Administration	6
Article X: Calling and Constituting the Congregational Meetings.....	7
Article XI: Rules of Order In Conducting the Congregational Meetings.....	8
Article XII: Congregational Meeting Agenda	9
Article XIII: The Board of Elders.....	11
Article XIV: The President of the Board of Elders and His Duties.....	14
Article XV: The Vice-President of the Board of Elders and His Duties	15
Article XVI: The Secretary of the Board of Elders and His Duties.....	15
Article XVII: The Treasurer of the Board of Elders and His Duties	16
Article XVIII: The Financial Secretary of the Board of Elders and His Duties	16
Article XIX: The Historian of the Board of Elders and His Duties.....	17
Article XX: The Head Usher and His Duties.....	17
Article XXI: The Head Custodian and His Duties.....	17
Article XXII: The Pastor and His Duties.....	18
Article XXIII: Relation of This Congregation to the Unity of the Brethren and Its By-laws ...	21
Article XXIV: The Property of This Congregation	22
Article XXV: Administering the Sacraments and Rites of the Church	22
Article XXVI: Organizations within This Organization.....	24
Article XXVII: Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.....	25
Article XXVIII: Amending This Constitution and By-laws.....	26

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE WALL BRETHERN CHURCH

PREAMBLE

In the name of God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Whereas it is the Christian privilege and duty that the followers of Christ should join together in the fellowship of a church so that they may work together more effectively for Christ and His Kingdom, WE, the members of this congregation, previously organized and established, do hereby ordain this Constitution and By-Laws to be our fundamental law and declare the same to have authority over all our members, officers, organizations and pastors.

ARTICLE I THE NAME AND PLACE OF THIS CONGREGATION

The name of this congregation is the WALL BRETHERN CHURCH, INC., located at Wall, Tom Green County, Texas, and is a member congregation of the Unity of the Brethren, but is independent in its administration of local affairs. The congregation was established in 1929; officially organized and admitted into the Unity of the Brethren in 1933; and incorporated on January 31, 1974. (See further Art. XXIII for special provisions)

ARTICLE II PURPOSES

The purpose of this congregation shall be:

1. To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ -- thus carrying out the commission of our Lord in the community and throughout the world.
2. To challenge and aide its membership and all in the community in living a Christian life through preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments and other means of grace.
3. To unite the efforts of its individual members in the common goal of service and discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. To be of aide and service in the name of Christ to those in need of help.
5. To carry out religious and moral instruction of its members and the young children under its care in accord with the teaching of the Bible.
6. To provide opportunities of Christian fellowship to its membership and others in the community who desire the blessings of such fellowship, regardless of race.
7. To acquaint its membership and the community with the historical heritage of the Christian Church and that of the Unity of the Brethren.
8. To co-operate with other churches in the community in advancing the cause of Christ and the common good of all these churches.

ARTICLE III CONFESSION OF FAITH

As a member congregation of the Unity of the Brethren, this church accepts all the canonical books of the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of learning, of faith and life. The Confession of Faith and the Catechism of the Unity are set forth as the summary of the teachings of the Word of God. Wherever they fail to fulfill their intent, the Word of God must be the sole arbiter according to the historic Protestant principle - freedom of conscience. The Christian life, the only true evidence of doctrinal perfection, has been, from the earliest beginnings, the object of the Unity of the Brethren. Being fully convinced that ultimately "Truth Shall Win", we wish to strive for a more perfect knowledge of the Word of God, using for the purpose the evangelical right of freedom of thought. In the matters of doctrinal beliefs and the Christian life, this congregation endeavors to practice the following principles:

*In essentials, unity; In non-essentials, liberty;
In all things, love.*

ARTICLE IV RECEPTION OF MEMBERSHIP INTO THIS CONGREGATION

- Section 1. Any person may request admission to this congregation as a member who:
- (a) willingly and publicly will profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and promise to be His faithful follower, and
 - (b) promise to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of this congregation and that of the Unity of the Brethren.
- Section 2. Application for membership is made to the Pastor or any member of the Board of Elders.
- Section 3. The Board of Elders and the Pastor shall act jointly in approving or rejecting applicants. They are to exercise great care in examining the sincerity of the applicant and in outlining the duties which membership places upon the applicant.
- Section 4.
- (a) Unbaptized adults and young people shall be received by public PROFESSION OF FAITH in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and then receive the sacrament of ADULT BAPTISM. (See Art. XXV, Sec. 1)
 - (b) Those adults having been baptized in infancy, but who have never confirmed or ratified the vows made by their parents by a personal profession of faith, shall be received by such a public PROFESSION OF FAITH IN CHRIST.
 - (c) Those who have been church members at one time, but have become delinquent and permitted their membership to lapse, shall be received by public RE-AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.
 - (d) Communicant members from other Unity of the Brethren congregations and other evangelical denominations are received by the right hand of fellowship after they have been accepted for membership upon presentation of a favorable TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP letter. If the applicant come from congregation of a denomination which does not provide a letter of transfer, he shall be received by Re-affirmation of Faith.

- (e) Children are received into Active Communicant Membership through the rite of CONFIRMATION. (See details in Art. XXV, Sec. 3 and Art. V, Sec. 6)

ARTICLE V CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. The membership of this congregation is to be grouped as follows:
- (a) Active Communicant Members
 - (b) Inactive Communicant Members
 - (c) Non-resident Communicant Members
 - (d) Associate Members
 - (e) Baptized Children
- Section 2. ACTIVE COMMUNICANT MEMBERS are all young people and adults who have made a profession of faith, undergone membership instruction and training such as Confirmation or its equivalent, and have been admitted to Holy Communion; who regularly and faithfully support the work and worship of this congregation and thereby enjoy the full privileges of membership.
- Section 3. INACTIVE MEMBERS are those who have been placed in such a status by the Board of Elders because of their failure to attend at least eight (8) worship services of the congregation during a period of one calendar year when there is no legitimate reason for their absence. (*Amended from (4) worship services during a calendar year at the Fall Congregational Meeting, October 16, 2011.*) In cases of illness, old age, etc., Active and Inactive Membership will be decided on an individual basis.) Resident and Non-resident Members who contribute only financially, but do not attend worship services, MAY be placed in this status. Inactive Members do not have voting privileges. (See further Art. VIII, Sec. 3 &4)
- Section 4. NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS are those who have moved from the Wall vicinity (not within feasible traveling distance to worship regularly.) If Non-resident Members choose to keep their membership in this congregation, they shall maintain this connection by correspondence with the Pastor or the Board of Elders, contribute to the financial needs of this congregation and attend worship services when they are in the city. They do not have voting privileges unless they attend a minimum of four worship services during the year. (Armed forces personnel, students and some other circumstances are exceptions to this rule and should be treated on an individual basis.)
- Section 5. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS are those who desire to retain their membership in another congregation, yet wish to take an active part in the worship and work of this congregation. Such persons enjoy all the rights and exercise all responsibilities as full members except that they cannot hold the office of Elder, nor be elected as a delegate, nor have the privilege to vote. The voting privilege may be granted them by the Board of Elders if they lose this right in their home congregation as non-residents and they are active in the work of this congregation.

Section 6. BAPTIZED CHILDREN, who have neither been Confirmed nor received equivalent membership instruction and training, are to be considered as members under special care of this congregation. They do not have voting privileges. Baptized children of all members automatically fall into this classification. Children of non-members who are members of the Sunday School, therefore under the care of this church, may be regarded in this classification also. This classification is maintained in order to emphasize the responsibility of the church to all adults and children under its care.

Children, Baptized and having professed their faith in Jesus Christ, shall be allowed to receive Holy Communion (Unity By-laws, Art. XXII, Sec. A). Admission to this First Communion shall be granted only after a period of appropriate instruction. (EXCEPTION: See Art. XXV, Sec. 2.b) The Unity of the Brethren publication "How To...A Policy Guide About Children and Communion in the Unity of the Brethren", or its equivalent, shall serve as a guide for this instruction.

Once having publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ, the child is considered a "Baptized, unconfirmed Member" of this congregation. Active voting membership will later be encouraged through:

- (a) Confirmation and Catechism class, at the appropriate age (Art. XXV, Sec. 3.d), or
- (b) Membership training and Re-affirmation of faith.

ARTICLE VI RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

- Section 1. Membership in the congregation is completely voluntary. It begins and ends according to the wishes of the member himself as he adheres to the regulations of the Constitution and By-laws of this congregation. (EXCEPTION: the discipline and dismissal of members is found in Art. VIII.)
- Section 2. Every member becomes a co-owner of all congregational property, but in case of his leaving this congregation, or being dismissed from it, he loses all claims to the said property and also his claim to all of his gifts and donations. It is also expected that any member who wishes to leave this congregation shall take care of his obligations to this congregation up to the time of his separation.
- Section 3. The right to vote belongs to every Active Communicant Member as outlined and defined in Art. V, Sec. 2. Under certain conditions found in Art. V, Sections 4 and 5, Non-resident and Associate Members may be granted the right to vote.
- Section 4. To be eligible for election to the Board of Elders a member must be eighteen (18) years of age or older, and a resident Active Communicant Member for at least six (6) months when he takes office.
- Section 5. A new member, coming by Profession of Faith or Re-affirmation of Faith, has the right to vote immediately. A person transferring membership from another congregation of the Unity of the Brethren, or a person transferring from another denomination, having been a member of good standing in the congregation from whence he comes, has the right to vote immediately.

ARTICLE VII DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBER

As a Christian, each member of this congregation has certain responsibilities to God and His Church, to his fellow-members, to the Unity of the Brethren, to other Christians in the community, to those outside the Christian fellowship and also to himself personally.

- Section 1. Since church members promise to follow Christ, Christians are so to live that they may demonstrate a godly Christian life, and others "may see their good works, and glorify their Father in heaven." Church members are, therefore, expected to lead clean, honest, sober, upright and dedicated lives in Christ.
- Section 2. Each member should be mindful of the needs of his own spiritual life. He should read the Scriptures and pray daily, worship on the Lord's Day and other appointed services and should cultivate all the graces of the Christian life. All church members are encouraged to attend the Sunday School to learn more of the Bible and the Christian life.
- Section 3. Each member is to concern himself that he shares in the work of the Church by freely giving his time and talents to the Lord's work. It is, therefore, the solemn duty of each member to attend congregational meetings in order that all may take an active part in planning the work and program of the church.
- Section 4. Every member should be concerned about the financial welfare of the congregation and its program; should be liberal in his gifts for the Kingdom of God and should voluntarily and regularly contribute to the support of this church and be encouraged to tithe as the Lord has prospered him.
- Section 5. The responsibilities of each member also include the support of the various denominational funds and ministries of the Unity of the Brethren. Included here is the responsibility of each member to pay annually the Brethren Fund dues. (This contribution shall be so designated in order that the financial secretary can make an accurate record of the Brethren fund payments in the church books.)
- Section 6. Each member should also realize that his obligation as a Christian extends to the world-wide Christian Church. He should concern himself with the various ministries undertaken by the church as a whole and, as often as possible, endeavor to support them. Each member should also concern himself with the spreading of the Gospel in distant lands by contributing to the Missionary effort of the church.
- Section 7. It shall be the duty of each member to persuade others to accept Christ and unite with the Church, thus enabling the Church to fulfill the commission of Christ when He said, "Be my witnesses."

**ARTICLE VIII
DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

- Section 1. When members desire to terminate their membership in this congregation, they are expected to notify the Pastor. Letters of Transfer are granted to members in good standing whenever such requests are made.
- Section 2. If any member should openly proclaim un-Christian thinking or display un-Christian actions, neglect attendance upon services, or abuse the law of the Church and its sacraments and resist the resolutions of the congregation, he should first be admonished by the Pastor or one of the Elders privately. If the member should not heed then he should be admonished in the presence of witnesses. If even then the member does not reform, his offense should be brought before the congregation and the member dismissed. (Mt. 18:15-17)
- Section 3. A dismissed person may be re-admitted as a member only upon the assent of the Elders, and only when the member promises real reform and confirms the same by his living. It will be the duty of the Board of Elders, in giving its assent, to extend an invitation to the dismissed person to rejoin.
- Section 4. By resignation or dismissal from membership, the person loses all rights and privileges extended to members and is, therefore, not entitled to any damages or any part of the congregation's property.

**ARTICLE IX
CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

- Section 1. The general administration of the affairs of this congregation is founded upon the Biblical teachings of the "Equality of all Believers". It is thus the privilege and the responsibility of all Active Members to attend and participate in the congregational meetings.
- Section 2. The highest authority in this congregation rests in the Congregational Meeting, Regular and Special. There are two Regular Congregational Meetings:
(a) The FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING held anytime during October, and
(b) The SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING held anytime during March.
- In addition to the Regular Congregational Meetings, there may be SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS, as are required. The Board of Elders sets the exact date of these meetings. (See also Art. X, Sec. 1)
- Section 3. To carry out the general policies and administer the affairs of the congregation, the Fall Congregational Meeting elects a Board of Elders to manage current and routine matters of administration, to guide the spiritual life of the congregation and to carry on such responsibilities as this Constitution and By-laws designates.
- Section 4. Important decisions on policy and large expenditures shall be referred by the Board of Elders to the Congregational Meeting for decision.

ARTICLE X
CALLING AND CONSTITUTING THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- Section 1. All congregational meetings should be held at the church. If it is necessary to hold the meeting elsewhere, the Board of Elders is obligated to clearly notify all voting members of the change.
- Section 2. Proper notice for all Congregational Meetings must be given at least two (2) weeks prior to the holding of Regular Meetings and one (1) week prior to the holding of Special Meetings. This notice shall be:
- (a) Announced at the worship services, and
 - (b) Mailed to all members
- Section 3. One-third (1/3) of the eligible voting members (See Art. V) constitutes a QUORUM for the purpose of taking official action. The exact number of members which constitutes a quorum shall be determined previously by the Elders. A record of the number of members in attendance shall be made by the secretary. If a quorum is not present, those in attendance may, on an unofficial basis, hold a Caucus Meeting. Any decision reached in this caucus is subject to congregational approval by an official church meeting.
- Section 4. If a quorum (as specified in Sec. 3 above) is not present on the date announced, the Congregational Meeting will be held a week later if possible with the eligible voting members in attendance constituting a quorum. Announcement of this postponement, or a later postponement when absolutely necessary, shall be sent to all members through the mail.
- Section 5. Additional Provision for Calling a SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: In addition to the general provisions for calling and constituting a congregational meeting found in the above four sections, the following provisions apply to calling a Special Meeting:
- (a) A Special Congregational Meeting (hereafter called the Special Meeting) may be called whenever the Board of Elders deems it necessary.
 - (b) The Board of Elders is obligated to call a Special Meeting also when requested by twenty (20) Active Members in the form of a signed petition stating the purpose of such a meeting.
 - (c) In announcing Special Congregational Meetings and at the convening of such meetings, the purpose or purposes of the meeting shall be clearly stated. Proper notice of such meetings must be made at least one (1) week prior to the meeting at the worship service and by mail, postmarked no later than three (3) days prior to the meeting.
EXCEPTION:
In case of some emergency when congregational action on a matter needs attention immediately and there has not been time for a week's notice, a Special Meeting after the worship service may make a decision provided that decision received approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the eligible voting members present at that meeting. (Regulations regarding a quorum shall also be observed.)

- (d) In Special Meetings, only the stated purposes and directly related items can be considered and acted upon.
- (e) If the matter for congregational consideration will take only a few minutes time, the Board of Elders may call the Special Meeting before or after a worship service. Otherwise, a time especially set for the Special Meeting shall be designated.
- (f) Other regulations, such as the quorum, voting, etc. shall be the same as for the Regular Meeting. (See Sections 3 & 4 of this Article.)

ARTICLE XI

RULES OF ORDER IN CONDUCTING THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- Section 1. The following general rules apply to the conduct of congregational meetings. In all other cases Robert's Rules of Order shall apply.
- Section 2. The President of the Board of Elders is also the President of the Congregation and, therefore, the presiding officer at all congregational meetings. In his absence, or at his request, the Vice-President shall preside. In some cases, the President may ask the Pastor to preside.
- Section 3. The Secretary of the Board of Elders, or, in his absence, a secretary appointed for this purpose, keeps an accurate record of all deliberations and decisions in the form of minutes of the meeting. He also makes a careful record of the exact number of members attending the meeting. The Secretary reads at least the important decisions of the meeting at the close of the meeting. (This is to be done in order that at least the important decisions reached will be correctly recorded to the satisfaction of the members present.)
- Section 4. **VOTING** in the Congregational Meetings:
- (a) Early voting shall be permitted on motions appearing in the published agenda. Such early voting shall be permitted only to active communicant members who are homebound due to illness or physical disabilities. Such early voting must be requested by said individuals at least one week prior to the congregational meeting and submitted to the Board of Elders prior to the meeting.
 - (b) A simple majority (one more than one-half) of the voting members present is required to make decisions in most cases. In some extremely important issues such as the calling of a Pastor where it is to the congregation's welfare to have a greater unanimity, a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present at the meeting may be requested by the presiding officer.
 - Changes in these By-laws automatically require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present at the meeting.
 - Major expenditures of \$10,000.00 or more (for example, building programs and expansions) shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the membership present at the meeting.
 - The apportionment of the net proceeds from the Harvest Festival (when held) will be decided at the Fall congregational Meeting and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the membership present at the meeting.

Decisions regarding the disposition of church property are found in another section (Art. XXIV) and in the By-laws of the Unity of the Brethren (Art. II, Sec. I).

The decision to dismiss a Pastor from his charge as pastor of this congregation shall not take more than a simple majority in the Congregational Meeting. (See Art. XXII, Sec. 3.d)

- (c) All important elections, such as the election of the Pastor, members of the Board of Elders, delegates and other officers, along with decisions on important issues shall be conducted by secret ballot UNLESS the meeting unanimously agrees to do otherwise. Less important deliberations may be passed or rejected by acclamation; however, a secret ballot must be taken whenever one (1) member requests such.
- (d) Nominations are made from the floor. Anyone nominated, who would not accept the office to which he is nominated, should reply to that effect immediately or before the balloting begins. If a person declines a nomination after the nominations are closed, the presiding officer shall re-open the floor for further possible nominations.
- (e) If a member is nominated who is not present at the meeting, the person who places his name in nomination must give assurance that the nominee was contacted and that he would accept the office if elected.
- (f) Whenever a tie vote occurs where only two candidates are being voted upon, or whenever a tie vote occurs in a vote upon an issue, the decision is made by the presiding officer, either by casting a vote or drawing lots, whichever he chooses.

ARTICLE XII CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA

Section 1. The FALL and SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS shall follow a printed Agenda. All items to be discussed at the meeting shall be submitted to the Board of Elders no less than 30 days prior to the meeting. The agenda shall be printed and made available to the congregations no less than two weeks prior to the meeting. Any item not appearing on the printed agenda shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the membership present for consideration.

Section 2. The FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING shall follow as closely as possible the following agenda:

- (a) Prayer or short devotional at the beginning of the meeting.
- (b) Reading and approving the minutes of the last Congregational Meeting.
- (c) Minutes of the Board of Elders meetings are available upon request.
Request must be made at least two weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting.
- (d) Reports:

The following shall give a report of the work entrusted to them:

The Pastor

The President, Secretary, Treasurer, and any other member of the Board of Elders who has a special responsibility.

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) Chairman

Any committees appointed by a congregational meeting.

The following may also be notified in advance and called upon for reports:

Sunday School Superintendent
President of the Youth Fellowship
Secretary of the Mutual Aid Society Local
President of the Christian Sisters
Outreach Committee

Any other officer of an organization of the church whose report would be of general interest to the church.

Written financial reports of the Treasurer of the Board of Elders and any other pertinent reports shall be distributed at the meeting, or if possible, before the meeting.

- (e) Old Business.
- (f) The setting of the Pastor's salary and vacation.
- (g) New Business. This will include recommendations from the Board of Elders such as the proposed expenditures, and all matters of general interest to, and welfare of, the congregation for the coming year.
- (h) Elections:
 - Board of Elders: Filling vacancies of those whose terms expire.
 - Ministry of Music: Positions such as Organist, Pianist, Choir Director and their assistants, unless the congregation delegates the responsibility of making these appointments to the Board of Elders.
 - Other personnel: Such as Deaconesses, The Brethren Journal agent, Mission Fund representative, and any other the congregation feels necessary. These are to be appointed by the Board of Elders.
- (i) Reading of the important decisions of this meeting before adjournment as provided in Art. XI, Sec. 3.
- (j) Closing prayer.

Section 3. The SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING shall follow as closely as possible the following agenda:

- (a) Prayer or short devotional at the beginning of the meeting.
- (b) Reading and approving the minutes of the last Congregational Meeting.
- (c) Minutes of the Board of Elders meetings are available upon request.
Request must be made at least two weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting.
- (d) Summary reports of the income and expense for the full twelve (12) months (March thru February).
- (e) Old Business
- (f) The Spring Meeting also makes decisions regarding the number of worship services, the time of these services, etc., unless the congregation delegates these decisions to the Board of Elders.
- (g) Any other new business of general interest to the congregation, such as the election of delegates to the church conventions (in years in which the convention is held).
- (h) Reading of the important decisions before adjournment.
- (i) Closing prayer

- Section 4. The SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING shall follow as closely as possible the following agenda:
- (a) Prayer or short devotional at the beginning of the meeting, unless this Special Meeting will be a short meeting following a worship service.
 - (b) Reading and approving the minutes of the last congregational meeting, unless this is to be a short meeting and the reading and approval of minutes are to be delayed to the next meeting.
 - (c) Stating and explaining the purpose(s) of the meeting.
 - (d) Presenting any reports necessary or relative to the business at hand.
 - (e) Discussion and decision on matters related to the purpose(s) of the meeting.
 - (f) Reading the important motions and decisions before adjournment.
 - (g) Closing prayer.

ARTICLE XIII THE BOARD OF ELDERS

- Section 1. The Scripture gives ample evidence that there was a division of responsibility in the early Christian Church between Elders and Deacons. (Acts 6:3; 11:30; 15:2; Philippians 1:1; I Tim. 5:8; 5:17; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1) Since this congregation is small at the time of adoption of this Constitution and By-laws, it is advisable to have only one board, the Board of Elders, which carries out a two-fold responsibility; that of Elders and that of Deacons. Whenever the Congregational Meeting deems it advisable, it shall make provisions for two boards by amending these By-laws and dividing responsibilities between the two boards.
- Section 2. Until the congregation establishes a Board of Deacons, the Board of Elders shall carry out the following two-fold responsibility:
- (a) AS ELDERS:
- (1) They are charged with the spiritual care and oversight of the church and its program that no corruption of doctrine and morals shall occur.
 - (2) They are charged with concern and oversight of the Christian nurture and teaching of all people under the care of this church. It shall be their concern that children, youth, and adults be instructed in the Christian faith through the Sunday School, Membership Training classes, Bible Study, etc. They shall appoint a committee to care for the comfort of the sanctuary prior to worship services, such as heating, cooling, etc.
 - (3) They shall see that the public means of grace, such as worship services, the sacraments, and rites of the church are regularly held according to the general custom of the Unity of the Brethren and as directed by the Congregational Meeting. Whatever matters the Congregational Meeting does not decide specifically concerning worship services, shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders. They shall appoint all necessary personnel to carry on worship, such as the organist and pianist and their assistants, the choir director and assistant, child care attendants, and others, unless the Congregational Meeting specifically makes these choices. They may also assist the Pastor in the administration of the sacraments. The Board of Elders is also responsible for appointing a Card and Flower committee to represent the congregation in times of illness and bereavement. It is recommended that the Board of Elders should plan

a tentative worship service schedule for the year at the beginning of the year. Attention should be given to special days and seasons of the Christian calendar, Special Revival Services, observances of the Lord's Supper, etc., in addition to the regular Sunday morning worship.

- (4) In the absence of the Pastor or when a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Elders shall arrange the public worship services of the congregation. They shall be responsible for securing a guest Pastor or speaker, and/or conduct, or assist in conducting, the public worship services themselves until a Congregational Meeting makes some definite decisions in this matter.
- (5) They shall act on matters pertaining to the membership of the congregation such as determining Active and Inactive status, the admission of new members, and the transfer of current members.
- (6) They shall be assistants to the Pastor as he ministers to the membership of this congregation and the people of the community. They are to cultivate the ability to teach the Christian faith, especially in personal witnessing; cultivate the ability of leading in public prayer and ministering to those in need of God's comfort. They shall endeavor to visit members of the congregation, especially the ill, the sorrowing and the indifferent. They shall have a concern about those outside the Church, that these might be brought into the knowledge of Christ and the fellowship of the Church.

(b) AS DEACONS:

- (1) They are charged with the oversight of the temporal affairs of this congregation. They shall endeavor to be prompt in paying all salaries, dues and bills, and shall endeavor to see that sufficient means are raised for the adequate financial support of all the congregation's needs.
- (2) They shall keep all church property, including the buildings and grounds in good repair and in an attractive condition. In this matter they shall secure the services of a custodian unless the Congregational Meeting decides otherwise.
- (3) At the end of each year they shall appoint an Auditing Committee to audit all financial books unless this is done by the Congregational Meeting. This committee is to consist of three (3) members appointed in the following way: two (2) by the President and one (1) by the Vice-President.
- (4) They shall be concerned about helping members of the congregation who are in need of assistance.
- (5) They shall foster the practice of Christian stewardship among the membership of the congregation by informing the members about income and expenses from time to time. They shall challenge the membership in the matter of tithing and shall outline the needs of the church and its program by presenting proposed expenditures to the Fall Congregational Meeting for action by that body.
- (6) They shall determine when and by whom the church building and property may be used. If requests are received at the same time, members of the congregation shall have priority over non-members. Scheduled worship services and regular activities in the church program have priority over private use.
- (7) For causes other than Unity of the Brethren funds, they shall determine what collections or offerings can be taken for such causes outside the

work of this congregation, unless the Congregational Meeting has issued a directive in this matter.

- (8) They shall represent this congregation as Trustees in official and legal documents and before the civil law whenever this is required.

Section 3. Qualifications and eligibility of Elders:

- (a) Scriptural qualifications and responsibilities are found in I Timothy 3:1-7; 3:9-13; Titus 1:6-9; James 5:14-15; and I Peter 5:1-3. These may be summarized in the following manner: good moral character, good manager of his own home by maintaining loving discipline of his children, not a recent convert, well respected by people outside the church, be grounded in the Christian faith and doctrine in order that he might be able to judge between truth and error. He must be mindful so to live that he would be an example for others in speech and conduct. Since he also exercises the office of deacon, he should be an example of a Christian steward and be faithful in managing the finances of the church - for these are given to the Lord's work. It is recommended that he attend Sunday School since it falls to him and his
- (b) To be eligible for election to the Board of Elders a person must be eighteen (18) years of age when he assumes the office. He must have been a professing Christian for at least a period of two (2) years and a resident Active Communicant Member of this congregation at least six (6) months. The Congregational Meeting should be concerned that some members of the Board have been members of the congregation for longer than this minimal period of time.

Section 4. Constituting the Board of Elders:

- (a) The Board of Elders shall consist of twelve (12) members plus the Pastor. The Pastor is an ex-officio member. Each of the twelve members is elected for a period of three (3) years. Each year four (4) members terminate their three year term of office and the Fall Congregational Meeting fills the positions thus vacated. The newly elected Elders take office at the "New Business" portion of the first regular meeting of the Board following the Fall Congregational Meeting. After serving one 3-year term as an Elder, a person is not eligible for election to this office until one year has passed.
- (b) After the Fall Congregation Meeting has filled the vacancies on the Board for the coming fiscal year, the Board of Elders shall elect from the twelve members on the Board the President; Vice-President; Secretary; Financial Secretary; Treasurer; Historian; Head Usher and one (1) assistant; and the Head Custodian and three (3) assistants. This election shall take place at the beginning of the "New Business" portion of the next regular meeting of the Board following the Fall Congregational Meeting. The First Alternate to the Board will be the person receiving the 5th highest vote of the nominees for the four vacated positions on the Board. The Second Alternate will be the person receiving the 6th highest number of votes.
- (c) The Board of Elders meets once a month and as often as is necessary. Seven (7) Elders constitute a quorum.
- (d) If a vacancy occurs on the Board, after the first and second alternates have been instated, the vacancy shall be filled at the next bi-annual Congregational Meeting (Spring or Fall). The Board carries on with the remaining

- membership unless three (3) or more vacancies occur, at which time they call a Special Congregational Meeting.
- (e) The Board of Elders shall be installed into office on the last Sunday of the year, or on the first Sunday of the new fiscal year, during a public worship service.

ARTICLE XIV THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the President has the following specific duties:

- Section 1. Since the President of the Board of Elders is also the President of the congregation, by virtue of his office he is ex-officio member of all the organizations and committees of the church. It is his responsibility to preside at all Congregational Meetings as well as meetings of the Board of Elders. In his absence, or at his request, the Vice-President shall preside. In some cases, the President may ask the Pastor to preside. (Art. XI, Sec. 2)
- Section 2. As president, he has the general oversight over all the work of the Board. The books of all the officers of the Board shall be made available to him for inspection at any time. He shall exercise watchful care over all matters of the congregation and bring before the Board all such matters that need attention in order that the welfare and the program of the congregation may be effectively carried out.
- Section 3. The President, with the consent of the other members of the Board, shall represent the entire congregation in cases of legal or other matters where only one person is required for such action.
- Section 4. The President, along with the Secretary and the Pastor, shall be responsible for all reports of the congregation to the Unity and other reports and documents of the congregation. He shall affix his signature to all approved minutes of the Board of Elders and Congregational Meetings.
- Section 5. The President shall give a summary report to the Fall Congregational Meeting on the work of the Board during the year.
- Section 6. At the end of each fiscal year, the President shall appoint two (2) members (from the list of resident Active Communicant Members) to serve on the Audit Committee to audit the financial books of the congregation. (The Vice-President shall be responsible for appointing one (1) member to this committee.)

ARTICLE XV
THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Vice-President has the following specific duties:

- Section 1. The Vice-President shall assume the office and duties of the President if the office of President becomes vacant. He shall also preside at meetings of the Board of Elders and the congregation in the absence of the President or at his request.
- Section 2. He shall assist the Pastor in developing a visitation program within the membership of the congregation and in evangelistic outreach to the unchurched in the community.
- Section 3. He shall serve as an assistant to the President, especially upon the request of the President.
- Section 4. The Vice-President shall from the list of resident Active Communicant Members, appoint one (1) member to serve on the Auditing Committee.
- Section 5. The Vice-President shall be responsible for seeing that a devotional is presented at each regularly scheduled Elders meeting.
- Section 6. The vice-President shall serve as chairman of the PPRC committee.
(Art. XXVII)

ARTICLE XVI
THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Secretary has the following specific duties:

- Section 1. He shall carefully record all minutes of the Congregational Meetings and meetings of the Board of Elders, and shall preserve these minutes as a permanent record of the congregation. He shall read these minutes as requested by the presiding officer at any meeting. He shall affix his signature to all minutes. At the conclusion of all Congregational Meetings he shall read the important decisions of that meeting before adjournment. He further shall keep an exact record of all members present at the meetings of the Board of Elders.
- Section 2. The Secretary receives and carries out all correspondence of the congregation and the Board of Elders, except such correspondence as the other members of the Board carry out themselves in fulfilling their particular duties.
- Section 3. With the President and the Pastor, the Secretary shall carefully and accurately make all necessary reports to the Unity and any other reports or documents of the congregation, and send them to their proper place or put them in safekeeping if they are permanent records of the congregation.

ARTICLE XVII
THE TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Treasurer has the following specific duties:

- Section 1. The Treasurer and the Financial Secretary shall receive all collections made at the church and make a notation of the amounts. (If the Treasurer is not present, the Financial Secretary shall select another Elder to help with this matter.) He makes an accurate entry in his books of all funds received.
- Section 2. The Treasurer pays all bills and makes all other disbursements as authorized by the Board of Elders or the Congregational Meeting. He shall make no disbursements unless he has been so authorized, except as and when the other Board members give him a "blanket" authorization to pay salaries and routine current operating expenses whenever they become due.
- Section 3. The books of the Treasurer shall be open for inspection by the President at any time upon his request.
- Section 4. The Treasurer shall make a summarized report to the Fall Congregational Meeting of all finances received from the Financial Secretary and all disbursements made by himself up to the time of such Congregational Meeting. This report should be distributed at the meeting or even before the meeting when possible.
- Section 5. The Treasurer shall check with the Financial Secretary from time to time to see that their books correspond regarding income. The books of the Treasurer are to be submitted to the Auditing Committee at the end of the fiscal year or whenever the Board of Elders or Congregational Meeting so require.

ARTICLE XVIII
THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Financial Secretary has the following duties:

- Section 1. He shall along with the Treasurer, receive all collections made at the church and make a notation of the amount. In the absence of the Treasurer, he shall select another Elder to help with this task. Upon completion he shall take the collection and deposit it in the bank in the congregation's name, and report the amount of the deposit to the Treasurer. He shall receive all other funds and contributions to the church and likewise deposit them in the Congregation's name and report the amount of the deposit to the Treasurer.
- Section 2. The books of the Financial Secretary shall be open for inspection to the President at any time upon his request. Other members of the Board of Elders shall be

permitted to see the books of the Financial Secretary in order that they may see how all members are carrying out their financial obligations and what might be done to prompt a continuing stewardship program in the church. However, the Board of Elders are each duty bound to keep information about what each member gives in confidence. Any member of the congregation may see his own record of contributions when he makes such a request of the Financial Secretary. He shall also send each member a record of that member's total contribution at the end of the calendar year if requested.

Section 3. He shall acknowledge by correspondence all memorial donations received. Acknowledgment shall be sent to the donors and to the family of the bereaved.

Section 4. The Financial Secretary shall check with the Treasurer from time to time to see that their books correspond regarding income. The books of the Financial Secretary are to be submitted to the Auditing Committee at the end of each year or whenever the Board of Elders or Congregational Meeting so requires.

ARTICLE XIX THE HISTORIAN OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Historian has the following duties:

Section 1. He shall be responsible for the Official Record Book of the Congregation which contains the official copy of the Constitution and By-laws, the listing of the membership, death records, and other vital official information.

ARTICLE XX THE HEAD USHER AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Head Usher shall have as his responsibility the overseeing of the ushering task at worship services and other occasions. Such matters as ushering people to their seats, properly distributing hymnbooks, bulletins, collections, etc., regulating the heating and cooling systems, and other related duties shall be under his care.

In carrying out the duties of the Head Usher, this Elder is not expected to do all this by himself, but may ask other Board members to assist him. He may also ask members of the congregation who are not Board members to assist him in the responsibilities of ushering. However, it is his responsibility to see that these duties are carried out by someone under his general supervision.

ARTICLE XXI THE HEAD CUSTODIAN AND HIS DUTIES

In addition to the general duties which belong to every member of the Board of Elders, the Head Custodian shall have the following duties:

Section 1. He shall be in charge of opening and closing the church building.

Section 2. He shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of church property, grounds and parsonage.

In carrying out all of the above mentioned duties, this Elder is not expected to do all of this by himself. He may ask other Board members or other members of the congregation to help fulfill these responsibilities. He also has the power to negotiate work done by contractors, subject to the Board's approval. He shall also be in charge of any other related duties which are placed under his care.

ARTICLE XXII THE PASTOR AND HIS DUTIES

Section 1. Qualifications and eligibility of the Pastor of this congregation are:

- (a) As a member congregation of the Unity of the Brethren this church shall have as its Pastor one who is properly associated with the Unity. (See Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. B. 4 and Unity By-laws, Art. III, Sec. D.9,10,11.)
- (b) Theological training and other qualifications of the Pastor as specified in the Constitution and By-laws of the Unity of the Brethren, especially in Art. III of the Unity By-laws, shall apply in this congregation and should be referred to for details.
- (c) The same scriptural qualifications and duties that apply to members of the Board of Elders in this Constitution and By-laws shall apply to the Pastor of this congregation.

Section 2. The Pastor's position and duties in this congregation are:

- (a) "In the Unity there is no special priestly order. On the basis of words of the Master in Matt. 23:8, 'But be not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are Brethren', there is no recognition of difference between the brethren and the ministers." (Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. C)
- (b) "The ministers shall accept their office with joy from their Heavenly Master Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:15) and from the will of the people, not to rule or have privileges, but to serve in preaching the Gospel and sharing the mysteries of the Grace of God, as the apostle Paul writes: "let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (I Cor. 4:1)" (Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. C.1)
- (c) "As true servants of their Lord, pastors shall conscientiously endeavor to preach to the congregation entrusted to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its purity and simplicity; to fulfill the responsibility of teacher, pastor and counselor; and to live an honorable and devout life as the Word of God repeatedly exhorts." (Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. C.2) Thus the work of the Pastor in this congregation can be generally described in the following points:
 - (1) He shall pray and study God's Word and other edifying material in order that he might himself be better prepared to exercise the responsibilities of his office.
 - (2) He shall pray for and with his flock. He shall read and preach the Word of God to those entrusted to his charge and shall lead the congregation in worship on the Lord's day and other appointed days of the Christian calendar.

- (3) He shall administer the sacraments and rites of the Church in accord with the general order of the Unity of the Brethren.
- (4) He shall instruct members of the Confirmation classes and adult membership classes in the doctrines of the Christian faith as outlined in the Catechism of the Unity and shall also acquaint prospective members with the history and background of the Unity of the Brethren.
- (5) He shall be vitally concerned about the Christian Education of the Sunday School and other teaching ministries and opportunities of the congregation in order that the membership might grow in grace and knowledge of Christ and the Christian life.
- (6) The Pastor shall be an evangelist in seeking out the unchurched and unsaved in the community and shall strive to challenge them to commit their lives to Christ and the Church. He shall also enlist other members of the church to help in this outreach ministry of the church in the community.
- (7) He shall make pastoral calls upon the members of the church, with special attention to the aged, afflicted, ill, sorrowing, troubled and dying, and shall be available at all times for private consultation. The Pastor is bound to secrecy in confidential personal matters by ministerial ethics and personal trust.
- (d) With the Board of Elders the Pastor exercises joint authority of church government granted by the Congregational Meeting and this Constitution and By-laws.
- (e) The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all the organizations and committees of the church.
- (f) The Pastor shall carefully record in the Book of Official Records all Baptisms, names of all Confirmed persons, receptions of members, marriages, funerals, and other vital information. He shall work with the Secretary, Historian, and the President of the Board of Elders in faithfully preserving all records, papers and documents of value that belong to the congregation.
- (g) It is taken for granted that the Pastor of this congregation shall officiate at all Baptisms, marriages, funerals of members and other such official rites. To have someone else officiate is permissible and understandable, but this shall require the consent of the Pastor of this congregation. (Unity By-laws, Art. III, D.2)
- (h) The Pastor of this congregation is discouraged from belonging to any secret organization. (Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. C.3)
- (i) The Pastor shall give a report to the Congregational Meeting of the general spiritual welfare of the congregation and more specifically on his work as the pastor of the congregation. Such items should be included as: the number of services and the number of official functions, such as Baptisms, receptions of members, marriages, funerals, observances of Holy Communion, etc. He shall also give a report of his pastoral visits and the picture of the general outreaching ministry of the church during the year.

Section 3. The election of the Pastor of this congregation:

- (a) If this congregation is left without a Pastor for any reason, it shall consult with the Pastor Relations Committee and request aid in filling the vacancy. The congregation shall not issue a Call to a Pastor except through the Pastor Relations Committee. (Unity By-laws, Art. II, Sec. L) Calls are for an indefinite duration and are terminated by the Pastor or congregation with one (1) month notice or by mutual agreement. (Unity By-laws, Art. XII, Sec. E.3)

- (b) If this congregation wishes to have a Vote of Confidence regarding the Pastor, or have a motion to dismiss the Pastor, then one of the following procedures shall apply:
- (1) Concerning the Vote of Confidence: A motion must be moved and duly seconded during a congregational meeting that a Vote of Confidence be held concerning the Pastor. The motion passes if it receives a simple majority of those eligible voting members present at the meeting. If the motion passes then the Vote of Confidence shall be held only after proper notice of such Vote of Confidence has been given. Proper notice must be made in the worship service at least one (1) week prior to the meeting in which the Vote of Confidence is held, and by mail, postmarked no later than three days prior to the meeting.
 - (2) Concerning the motion to dismiss the Pastor: A motion must be moved and duly seconded during a congregational meeting that a vote to dismiss the Pastor from his official position as Pastor be held. The motion passes if it receives a simple majority of those eligible voting members present at the meeting. If the motion passes then the vote to dismiss the Pastor shall be held only after proper notice of such vote of dismissal has been given. Proper notice must be made in the worship service at least one (1) week prior to the meeting in which the vote to dismiss the Pastor is held, and by mail, postmarked no later than three days prior to the meeting.
- Or,
- (3) The Board of Elders is obligated to call a Special Congregational Meeting when it receives a petition signed by at least 20 Active Communicant Members requesting a Vote of Confidence and/or the dismissal of the Pastor from his official position as Pastor. (By-laws Art. X, Sec. 5b.) A motion must be duly made and seconded during this Special Called Congregational Meeting to hold a Vote of Confidence and/or dismiss the Pastor from his official position as Pastor. If the motion is to have a Vote of Confidence, and it passes, then the Vote of Confidence will be held during that meeting since, in accordance with the provisions for calling a Special Congregational Meeting (Art. X, Sec. 5c), prior announcement of the meeting will have been made. Likewise, if the motion is to dismiss the Pastor from his official position as Pastor, and it passes, then the Pastor is dismissed according to the provisions of Sections 3a, 3e, and 3g of this Article.
- (c) It is desirable that a new Pastor receives a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present at the Congregational Meeting before a Call is issued to him. This majority may not be two-thirds at the beginning of the balloting, but it should be reached before a Call is issued to a new Pastor in order that the best interest of the congregation may be preserved in thus demonstrating this evidence of unity. However, this approach is not mandatory, and a Call may be issued without the two-thirds majority vote of those present at the meeting when it does not seem possible.
- (d) The dismissal of a Pastor from his official position as Pastor of this congregation shall not require more than a simple majority of the Congregational Meeting since the Pastor cannot effectively serve the best interest of this congregation with this much disagreement and opposition.

- (e) The By-laws of the Unity further state: "In the calling of a minister the congregation shall counsel with the Pastor Relations Committee and issue any call through that committee. The Pastor Relations Committee is in a position to keep the pastoral picture of the entire Unity in mind as it gives suggestions to congregations regarding the choice of ministers. Final decision is made by the congregation." (Unity By-laws, Art. II, Sec. M)
- (f) The Congregational Meeting does make decisions regarding the number of services, the annual salary of the Pastor, his vacation and other items relative to these matters.
- (g) If the congregation concludes that it would be in the best interest of its work for the Pastor to be dismissed, consultations should be set up with the Pastor Relations Committee. (Unity By-laws, Art. XII, Sec. C.1,2)

**ARTICLE XXIII
RELATION OF THIS CONGREGATION TO THE
UNITY OF THE BRETHERN AND ITS BY-LAWS**

- Section 1. This congregation is a member congregation of the Unity of the Brethren and as such acknowledges and will abide by the Constitution and By-laws of the Unity. In all matters where the Constitution and By-laws of the Wall Brethren Church are in conflict with the Constitution and By-laws of the Unity of the Brethren then the Constitution and By-laws of the Unity shall govern this congregation. This congregation shall endeavor to meet all its responsibilities toward the Unity and adjust its own Constitution and By-laws to that of the Unity when this becomes necessary.
- Section 2. The Unity Constitution provides: "The management of local congregational affairs as well as the election of its minister and ownership of property shall be under the jurisdiction of each individual congregation." (Unity Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 5)
- Section 3. This congregation shall be faithful in its financial support of the work of the Unity in contributing to the funds of the Unity and supporting special financial appeals of the Unity.
- (a) Special attention should be given by the Board of Elders in accurately reporting the membership of this congregation and submitting at least the required dues for each member to the Brethren Fund as prescribed by the Unity Conventions. This amount shall be paid out of the General Fund, unless some other means is prescribed by the Congregational Meeting.
 - (b) Other funds of the Unity should be supported as a responsibility and opportunity, either by providing such support in the budget of the congregation or by free will offerings or in both ways.
 - (c) All contributions to the Unity funds and causes shall be sent to the Financial Secretary of the Synodical Committee.
- Section 4. If the congregation wishes to sever its connection with the Unity of the Brethren, this action must be approved by at least two-thirds (2/3) of all the eligible voting members of the congregation. (Further regulations for this type of action are prescribed in the Unity By-laws, Art. II, Sec. H, I)

- Section 5. For further regulations concerning the relationship between this congregation and the Unity, see the Unity Constitution and By-laws.

**ARTICLE XXIV
THE PROPERTY OF THIS CONGREGATION**

- Section 1. The Unity By-laws provide the following regulations in the matter of a congregation's real estate property:
- (a) "The property of the congregation is indivisibly administered by the church's governing body. To prevent an imprudent disposition of congregational property, two-thirds (2/3) of ALL members (not only those present) who are eligible to vote, according to congregational records, shall approve the decision concerning any disposition of property. " (Unity By-laws, Art. II, Sec. F) If, at the meeting, a two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote of the total membership is not reached, and a greater than one-third (1/3) vote of the total membership against the decision is also not reached, then an Absentee Ballot shall be taken of eligible voting members not present. This Absentee Ballot shall be administered by the Board of Elders no later than four (4) weeks after the meeting.
 - (b) "If for any reason a congregation should disband, the Unity shall take over the abandoned property into administration. Should a new Brethren congregation come into being in that locality within two (2) years, the Unity shall transfer the abandoned property to the new congregation for full possession. If a new Brethren congregation should not arise in that locality within two (2) years, the abandoned property shall become the property of the Unity." (Unity By-laws, Art. II, Sec. K)

**ARTICLE XXV
ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS AND RITES OF THE CHURCH**

- Section 1. The Sacrament of Baptism:
- (a) Baptism is a sign and pledge of grace, a covenant between the Lord and the believer.
 - (b) In this sacrament the use of water in the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the sign of the cleansing of the soul from sin, through the blood of Christ.
 - (c) The primary and usual form of Baptism is the sprinkling of water. Pouring of water is also acceptable. Immersion is not usually practiced, however, if some believer feels very strongly about being personally Baptized by immersion, the Pastor shall make arrangements for this form of Baptism. However, it should be clearly understood by the person desiring immersion that he not object to the practice of sprinkling for all other members.
 - (d) An adult desiring to be Baptized shall publicly profess his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He then receives the sacrament of Baptism and becomes eligible for communicant membership in this congregation. If the person being Baptized had previously stated his desire to become a member of this congregation, and it has been approved by the Elders, he becomes a member upon his Baptism.

- (e) When a child is Baptized, he is dedicated to the Lord by the parents; and placed within the covenant of grace under the care of the Church. The Pastor shall impress upon the parents of the children being Baptized the serious responsibilities they take upon themselves in presenting their children for Baptism.
- (f) Infant Baptism is more than dedication of the child to the Lord. While the child is too young to know the meaning of the sacrament, he is not too young to be set apart for Christ in this sacrament where the parents claim for their child the forgiveness of original sin through the blood of Christ, the conditional promise of salvation provided the child makes his own profession of faith when moved by the Holy Spirit, and the promise that children of believers are to be numbered with the people of God.
- (g) While it is expected that parents of children will wish to claim for their children the promises of cleansing and redemption through the blood of Christ as early as possible, it is not required of members that they Baptize their children as infants.
- (h) Since the sacrament of Infant Baptism is a Covenant Agreement between God and his faithful followers (and their children) through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Pastor of this congregation is authorized to Baptize only the children of parents who have made a profession of faith in Christ and who are members of some Christian Church. Thus at least one of the parents must be a member of a church, and is best that both parents be members; otherwise, it is unlikely they can fulfill the promise of training the child in the Christian faith and setting before the child a Christian example if they are not professing Christians who are likewise active in some church.
- (i) The Sacrament of Baptism of infants and adults shall be administered publicly in the place of worship and during a worship service whenever possible. (Unity By-Laws Article I, Section A.1)

Section 2. The Sacrament of Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper:

- (a) The Catechism of the Unity of the Brethren defines the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as follows:
 - (1) It is a memorial of the death of Christ and an anticipation of His return.
 - (2) It is a spiritual communion of the believer with Christ and with his fellow believers.
 - (3) It is a symbol of the new covenant and a pledge of the benefits of Christ's atonement.
 - (4) It is the renewal of the public profession of one's faith.
 - (5) In this sacrament the visible signs are the bread and wine, signifying Christ's body and His blood, the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
- (b) The By-laws of the Unity of the Brethren states: "The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every congregation a minimum of four times a year. A service should be held preparatory to it. The elements used shall be bread and wine. Bread shall be both, or either, leavened or unleavened. Wine shall be either fermented or unfermented, mixed with water. All who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ including members of other denominations, shall be invited to participate." (Unity By-laws, Art. 1, Sec. A.2) Children, baptized and having professed their faith in Jesus Christ shall be enrolled as unconfirmed members; allowed to receive communion and instructed in the Christian way of life. (Unity By-laws,

Art. XXII, Sec. A.)

Children who come from other denominations and who have already been receiving Communion according to their custom are permitted to receive Communion in the Brethren Church.

- (c) The Pastor and the Board of Elders shall determine the times for the observance of Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. Attention should be given to scheduling according to the Christian calendar. It is recommended that times for such observances be: at the beginning of the Lenten season, during Holy Week, on World-Wide Communion Sunday (1st. Sunday in October), at Christmas season and once or twice during the summer months.
- (d) The custom of the Brethren Church is for communicants to come to the Lord's Table and stand around the table as they partake of the Lord's Supper. However, the practices of serving the elements to communicants in the pews or serving the elements to communicants kneeling (if a kneeling rail is provided) are also acceptable.

Section 3. The Rite of Confirmation:

- (a) The By-laws of the Unity of the Brethren state: "The rite of confirmation admits persons into communicant membership through the public confirmation of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Before admitting applicants for confirmation into full communion with the Church, the Elders shall be satisfied that the candidates understand the fundamental truths of the Christian religion and are governed by them in their life and conduct. " (Unity By-laws, Art. I, Sec. B.2)
- (b) The church and parents should take great care in preparing the children for this important event in their lives by cooperating in a period of intensive instruction.
- (c) In most cases the membership of the Confirmation Class shall be closed and no additional members admitted during the last eight (8) months of the instruction period. Only in unusual cases the Pastor and the Board of Elders may grant otherwise.
- (d) "Children should be at least 14 years of age before they are confirmed, and only in an unusual situation earlier than that." (Unity By-laws, Art. 1, Sec. B.2) This provision is important especially in this congregation since all Active Communicant Members are voting members. (Art. VI, Sec. 3)
- (e) If the Pastor of the congregation does not teach the Confirmation Class during the Sunday School hour, the Board of Elders shall appoint a teacher.
- (f) Every young person who is confirmed is expected to attend worship services and support the work of the church as any adult member. In cases of neglect in attending worship services after Confirmation, the young person shall be admonished and treated as any other member of the congregation, even to the point of exclusion from membership.

**ARTICLE XXVI
ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION**

- Section 1. All organizations and programs in the congregation, such as the Sunday School, the Christian Sisters, the Men's Brotherhood, the Youth Fellowship, etc., elect their own officers, adopt their own rules and keep their own records and funds.

- Section 2. These organizations should bear in mind, however, that they stand under the general oversight of the congregation and its Board of Elders. It is expected, therefore, that everything in the statutes and practices of these organizations shall be kept in strict accord with the spirit, principle, and purpose of this congregation.
- Section 3. The Board of Elders, in exercising their concern and interest in the total program of the congregation, and especially the teaching of God's Word in the Sunday School, are to assist the Sunday School Superintendent in any way possible.
- Section 4. It is suggested that the Board of Elders call a meeting of all the officers of the various organizations within the congregation sometime at the beginning of a new calendar year for the purpose of discussing and planning an integrated program and schedule of activities for the year.

ARTICLE XXVII PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee interprets the congregation to the Pastor and the Pastor to the congregation. In general, it evaluates and gives support to the Pastor and staff; recommends to the Board of Elders salaries of Pastor; recommends to the Board of Elders new and/or revised programs of congregational ministry and study; consults with the Board of Elders upon Pastoral changes; and co-ordinates efforts to allow for smooth transitions for new Pastors and staff members.

1. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall be composed of seven (7) members:
 - The Vice-President of the Board of Elders shall be a member and serve as Chairman.
 - Three members of the congregation at large appointed by the Board of Elders.
 - Three members of the congregation at large appointed by the Pastor.
 Each of these six (6) members is appointed for a period of three (3) years, the term of each member shall expire in November. Each year two (2) members [one (1) member that was appointed by the Board of Elders and one (1) member that was appointed by the Pastor] terminate their three (3) year term and the November Elders meeting fills the vacancies (the Board of Elders appoints one (1) member and the Pastor appoints one (1) member).
2. After serving one three-year term as a committee member, a person is not eligible for appointment until one year has passed.
3. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the Board of Elders, the Pastor or any staff member, or the Chairman of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the Pastor and/or Board of Elders. It may meet with the Board of Elders without the Pastor being present; however, when the Pastor is not present, the Pastor, or any member of the staff under consideration, shall be informed prior to such a meeting and immediately thereafter be brought into consultation either by the committee or by the Board of Elders. Each meeting of the committee shall be in closed session, unless request for an open meeting shall have been made to the Chairman prior to the meeting and approved by a majority of the committee members.
4. The duties of the committee shall include the following:
 - a. To confer and counsel with the Pastor and staff in making an effective ministry by being available for counsel, keeping the Pastor and staff advised concerning

conditions within the congregation as they affect relations between the Pastor/staff and the people, and continually interpreting to the people the nature and function of the ministry.

- b. To counsel with the Pastor and staff on matters pertaining to their relationship with the congregation, including priorities to be given in the use of their time and skill in relation to the goals and objectives set for the congregation's mission and the demands for the ministry as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Wall Brethren Church, especially Articles II, VII and XXII.
- c. To evaluate annually the effectiveness of the Pastor and staff, and to confer with the Pastor and/or other staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the congregation and Pastor will be best served by a change of Pastor, and to co-ordinate efforts to allow for smooth transitions for a new Pastor and/or staff member.
- d. To recommend to the Board of Elders the annual salary of the Pastor and/or staff.
- e. To recommend to the Board of Elders new and/or revised programs of congregational ministry and study.

ARTICLE XXVIII AMENDING THIS CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

- Section 1. It is understandable that this Constitution and By-Laws would need revision and amendment. This action may be carried out only by the Congregational Meeting, Regular or Special.
- Section 2. A two (2) week notice of any proposed amendment must be given stating the nature of the amendment, when the meeting is, and what change is to be considered.
- Section 3. An amendment shall be valid only after it has received two-thirds (2/3) vote of the eligible voting members at the meeting. (Art. X, Sec. 3) After an amendment has received the necessary majority, it becomes valid immediately.