
Handbook

on Faith & Life

Part 2

- **Articles of Government**

(BOD APPROVED NOV 2018)



BE IN **CHRIST**
CHURCH OF CANADA

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ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT

OVERVIEW

The Articles of Government form one part of the Be In Christ Canada Handbook on Faith and Life, which is also comprised of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Be In Christ Canada and its corporate documents (namely its Articles of Continuance and General Operating By-law under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, as amended from time to time). In addressing any issue, the reader should, in addition to consulting the Articles of Government, review the balance of the Be In Christ Canada Handbook on Faith and Life. The Articles of Government are amendable by action of the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors.

DIVISION 1. LOCAL CHURCH POLITY AND PRACTICE

ARTICLE 1. CONGREGATIONS

Section 1. Affiliate Congregation

A congregation which is not a member of the Be In Christ Church of Canada may affiliate with Be In Christ Canada upon approval of the appropriate Team Leader, the Senior Resource Team and the Governing Board of the local Church. Affiliate congregations are not members of Be In Christ Canada and, therefore, while able to attend the Annual General Meeting of Be In Christ Canada, they may not formally send delegates or vote at the Annual General Meeting. An affiliate congregation generally will:

- Agree in principle to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Be In Christ Canada
- Provide the time and money for pastors to participate in regular pastoral events hosted by Be In Christ Canada or its various expressions
- Support the national and global ministries of Be In Christ Canada through giving to Be In Christ Canada and BIC Canada-Global
- When contemplating joining Be In Christ Canada as a member church, the affiliate will sign a memorandum of understanding with Be In Christ Canada which will expire at the end of a defined term.

Section 2. Church Plant

A church plant is a new congregational expression that is sponsored either by Be In Christ Canada, a member church, or other ministry affiliated with Be In Christ Canada that receives the general oversight, financial support, and administrative resourcing of one or more of these sponsoring groups. A church plant will be defined as a congregation as it achieves separate charitable status, establishes its own governing board, and becomes either incorporated or, through application, is accepted as an unincorporated member of Be In Christ Canada.

Section 3. Local Congregation

A Be In Christ Canada congregation is the local expression of the larger church and a focused setting where the common purpose of Be In Christ Canada to be “a growing faith community - following Jesus, sharing his message, and extending his peace around the world” is applied or pursued. It carries the responsibility to develop a relevant missional presence in its community and beyond, in partnership with the larger church.

ARTICLE 2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRACTICE

Section 1. Organization

It is the understanding of Be In Christ Canada that:

1. a local Be In Christ church has the responsibility to conduct its own affairs subject to the doctrine, polity and governance of Be In Christ Canada;
2. a local Be In Christ Canada church may have its own governing document that does not contravene the governing document(s) of Be In Christ Canada and has been approved by the Board of Directors of Be In Christ Canada;
3. a local Be In Christ Canada Church is to be either an incorporated entity or an unincorporated association;
4. the affairs of a local church are governed by its governing board as authorized by the local church governing document and in compliance with all aspects of the doctrine, polity and governance of Be In Christ Canada;
5. the ministry of the local church is the responsibility of all its members, and;
6. No local decision may be made that is contrary to the polity and practises of Be In Christ Canada.

Section 2. Local Church Membership

There will be official membership (or equivalent) established in a local church. This is a legal requirement of a Canadian charity and/or non-profit. An individual seeking official membership in a local Be In Christ Canada church will:

- a. have expressed a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord; and
- b. have been baptized as a follower of Jesus; and

- c. express a commitment to the local Be In Christ Canada Church, the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Be In Christ Canada, and a readiness to engage fully in the life of the church through their prayers, serving with their gifts and abilities, giving financially; and
- d. further the mission of the church in a spirit of humility and unity, willing to follow the leadership of the local and national church, submitting to its doctrines, practices and polity; and
- e. be approved by the local church governing board of directors (or equivalent) in compliance with any further requirements or process for membership as determined by the local church and affirmed by Be In Christ Canada; and
- f. exceptions to these requirements may be granted by the appropriate Be In Christ Canada team leader.

Section 3. The Governing Board

1. Governing Board

The board is to administer the affairs of the local church in accordance with its governing document and AGM and to fulfil its fiduciary responsibilities including the matters pertaining to finances and any holding of assets. The governing document of a local BIC church must be in compliance with the polity and practises of Be In Christ Canada and must be approved by Be In Christ Canada. The following minimum practices are expected:

- a. There must be a minimum of five members;
- b. All members of the board must be official members of the local church;
- c. Men and women are expected to be members of the governing board. It is expected that each church board will have a minimum of its membership be 25% of each gender;
- d. Board members are limited to four consecutive terms of two years each and, at the conclusion of which, they must not serve for at least one year before being eligible for further board service;
- e. The board will organize annually;
- f. The chair will not be a person employed by the local church;
- g. The Senior or lead pastor of the local church is to fully participate in all meetings of the board, in a non-voting capacity;
- h. The board will not have two or more members from the same family (either immediate or extended). Exceptions to this may be made only with the approval of the appropriate Be In Christ Canada Team Leader.

2. Nomination of the Governing Board of the Local Congregation

- A. The board will establish each year a nominating committee. The Senior Pastor is a member of the nominating committee.
- B. The Church Board will indicate to the nominating committee the type of candidates they are looking to have served on the board in terms of skill, gender, age, diversity, etc. The church board is encouraged to consider the type of issues they will be dealing with in the years ahead and ask the nominating committee to consider candidates who can best help with the particular issues.
- C. The nominating committee is encouraged to invite the congregation to submit names that fit the profile being looked for.
- D. In the evaluation of suggested names for the Church Board the nominating committee will consider potential candidates:
 - a. Fit with the profile given to the nominating committee by the church board
 - b. Spiritual maturity
 - c. Relational skill
 - d. Reputation in the church and the community
 - e. Ability to relate well with continuing members of the board of directors and the Senior Pastor.
 - f. The candidate's support for the ministry and direction of the church and its leadership.
 - g. History of active service within the life of the church.
- E. The nominating committee will submit to the church board a list of potential candidates for consideration.
- F. The Church Board or their designate will approach selected candidates to ascertain their willingness to serve. If a candidate agrees to serve, their name will be submitted to the congregation for a vote of affirmation.
- G. The Governing Board will bring one name for each open spot on the governing board. An election where two people run for the same office or space on the governing board is not to be held.
- H. Variances to the process of nominations for the governing board must be cleared with the appropriate Be In Christ Canada team leader.

Section 4. Minimal Organizational and Governance Standards for Churches within Be In Christ Canada

1. **Variations:** If a church wishes to vary its operational and governing patterns from those outlined in the Articles of Government, they need to have the written approval of the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada or his/her designate.
2. **Annual Meeting:** There will be an annual meeting of the official members of the local church where members are expected to vote on legal, financial, and other matters pertaining to the healthy functioning of the local church as presented by the governing board. Adherents of the congregation may be invited to attend and participate fully in the meeting with the exception of voting on motions presented to the AGM.
3. **Budgeting:** Each local church will have a procedure for the preparation, adoption and control of the annual budget.
4. **Accounting Records:** A local church will maintain records of the general ledger and supporting journals, detailed records of pledges, investments, loans, yearly budget reports and annual financial reports including record of annual audit or review, with records or reports sent to Be In Christ Canada yearly.
5. **Administrative Records:** Each local Be In Christ Canada church will have securely maintained records which will include governing board minutes, annual general meeting minutes, personnel files, employment records, governing and/or legal documents, and all financial or other documents according to federal or provincial government requirements.
6. **Policies and Procedures:** A local Be In Christ Canada church will create, implement and publish any necessary policies and procedures such as job descriptions, staff acquisition procedures, staff evaluations, risk management, etc. These must be in compliance with and not contravene policies and procedures established by Be In Christ Canada.
7. **Property and Facilities:** All facilities, including any property stewarded on behalf of Be In Christ Canada, will be well maintained and in accordance with local building and fire codes. Adequate risk and liability insurance will be secured and periodically reviewed. Local church insurance policies will add Be In Christ Church of Canada as an additional named insured on property coverage as well as on liability coverage. Adequate security for the public will be provided.
8. **Publicity and Development:** Development efforts for every local Be In Christ Canada church will demonstrate Biblical values, ethical standards and donor responsibility. All initiatives should engender good public relations and confidence in the organization of Be In Christ Canada, its expressions and its local congregations.

9. **Reporting:** The local church will provide to Be In Christ Canada such reports as requested for its healthy functioning. It is also expected that a local church will satisfy all legal reporting obligations.
10. **Rental Policies:** Each local congregation will provide to Be In Christ Canada a copy of its adopted rental policies. Rental policies at a minimum need to include the following:
 - a. Proof of Insurance by the rental group naming both the local church and Be In Christ Church of Canada as additional insured;
 - b. Limits on the use of the facility;
 - c. Release of liability expectations.

Section 5. General Polity and Practices Governing Local Congregations

- A. No congregational business meeting (regular or scheduled) may be called or held without the consent of the church board. A public notice must be given in at least one regularly scheduled service with a minimum of 72 hours prior notice before the business meeting can be held.
- B. All items for the congregational business meeting will be presented to the church board, which will be responsible to prepare the agenda for release in a regular service prior to the council.
- C. Should a matter of business be presented to the church board for the congregational business meeting and the church board declines to place the item on the agenda, the church board must give written rationale for the decision to not place the item on the agenda of congregational business meeting to the individual(s) who made the request. The person who presented the request, if unwilling to accept the decision of the church board, may appeal to the appropriate Team Leader of Be In Christ Canada for disposition of the issue. If still unsatisfied, the individual may appeal the decision to the Senior Resource Team of Be In Christ Canada through the office of the Executive Director. All correspondence involved in the decision by the local church board will be submitted to the Senior Resource Team of Be In Christ Canada by the Executive Director. The decision made in the matter by the Senior Resource Team for Be In Christ Canada will be final and is unappealable.
- D. Delegates should be nominated and affirmed annually by the local church to represent the member church at the annual AGM of Be In Christ Canada as directed by General Operating Bylaw 1. Section 2.04.
- E. All group activities carried on within the congregation will be subject to the approval of the pastor and the church board and will be correlated with the total program of the church.

- F. Same-sex unions, and/or blessings may not be performed in Be In Christ Canada congregational facility(ies).

Section 6. Ordinances and Practices of the Local Congregation

Member churches practice the following ordinances and practices of faith:

A. Ordinances of the Church

Baptism by water is a public sign that a person has repented of sin, received forgiveness, died with Christ, and been raised to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is also a public declaration of a believer's intent to follow Jesus fully with their life.

We practice baptism through a triune immersion forward.

In obedience to Christ, the church observes the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of his atoning death and to celebrate forgiveness, new life, and the fellowship and unity of all believers.

B. Practices of the Church

Foot washing is something modeled by Christ as a demonstration of servanthood. The foot washing service seeks to demonstrate love, humility and service to one another.

Child dedication is an opportunity for parents to express their desire to nurture their children in the knowledge, training and the way of the Lord. It is an opportunity for the church to affirm the significance of children in the life of the congregation and to commit to pray for the parents in the nurturing of the children's faith.

The church also affirms and practices the laying on of hands, praying for and anointing with oil the sick and infirm.

Section 7. Children and Youth Ministry Expectations

Member churches that engage in children and youth ministries will establish policies and procedures that provide for the care and protection of children and youth participating in these ministries. The "Child Protection Plan" as established by Be In Christ Canada is provided as a helpful resource to member churches. Congregations may from time to time be asked to produce their current child and youth protection policies and procedure guidelines.

Section 8. Vulnerable People

Member churches are expected to take appropriate measures to ensure that all vulnerable persons (a person dependent upon on others or any person at greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person or people who are in a position of trust) are protected and appropriate measures have been established to ensure their protection. This would include measures such as vulnerable sector background checks for volunteers who would come into contact with the vulnerable person.

Section 9. Conflict and Discipline in the Local Church

The church is called to experience unity and harmony in the body of Christ. A breadth of human experience and perspective is evident as believers share in the life of a local church and the broader denomination. Conflict is a normal element in all human relationships including church life. The Scriptures give us guidelines for moving conflicted members of the body toward reconciliation and peace. In the event of seemingly unresolvable conflict, the appropriate team leader will be engaged and work for an amenable resolution.

ARTICLE 3. INTERVENTION IN A LOCAL CHURCH

In accordance with Be In Christ Canada ethos, polity and practice, local congregations function under the oversight of Be In Christ Canada leadership and, therefore, Be In Christ Canada leaders are welcome partners in the healthy functioning of a local church. As ministry partners, Be In Christ Canada leaders are welcome to meet with a local church governing board, pastoral leaders, and congregations at large, in order to appropriately resource, encourage and counsel pastors, governing boards and congregations as deemed necessary by Be In Christ Canada leadership.

In instances of significant congregational distress that, in the judgment of Be In Christ Canada, compromise the ability of the pastor and/or local governing board to serve the congregation, the Canadian Executive Director, in consultation with the Senior Resource Team, may select and convene a review board of three (3) persons appointed by the Canadian Executive Director. Members of the Review Board must be uninvolved in the conflict. The Review Board will apply biblical principles in its resolution of the situation. The Review Board will make recommendations to the Canadian Executive Director. Recommendations may include, but are not limited to, the appointing of a mediation team, mandating arbitration, prescribing changes in congregational life and practice, suspending or removing a pastor, suspending a governing board member(s) or other member(s), making provision for interim leadership, and any other recommendation deemed necessary to return the congregation to health.

Upon receiving the report, the Canadian Executive Director will consult with the Senior Resource Team and act upon the recommendations of the Review Board. Any action will be reported to the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 4. LOCAL CHURCH INCORPORATION

All congregations and entities of Be In Christ Canada may incorporate under the applicable laws of the federal government of Canada and/or of the province in which they operate. Incorporation does not necessitate the transfer of property from Be In Christ Canada to the local church but is a requirement for any potential transfer of property from Be In Christ Canada to the local church.

The primary incorporation document of a local church will include the following provisions:

- A. a statement that the corporation and the church property are subject to the Articles of Government of Be In Christ Canada and that the local church governing document may be modified (other than registering a change of address) only with the approval of Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors. This sample language may be included: The corporation and all church property including real property are subject to the provisions of the Articles of Government of Be In Christ Canada. This governing document may be amended (other than registering a change of address) only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors.
- B. a clause providing that, upon dissolution of the local corporation, the assets of the dissolving corporation will be distributed to Be In Christ Canada if the assets are local church property.
- C. any other provisions required or recommended for a non-profit, tax-exempt organization which do not conflict with the Articles of Government.

Obtaining the guidance of Be In Christ Canada and legal counsel prior to incorporation is recommended.

Congregational governing documents must receive approval of the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors prior to being enacted.

ARTICLE 5. THE PROCESS FOR DISSOLUTION OF A LOCAL CHURCH

There are times when local church leadership, working in partnership with the appropriate leadership of Be In Christ Canada, determines that the best course of action for the congregation is dissolution. A congregation considering dissolution must pursue the following steps:

1. Upon receiving counsel and direction from Be In Christ Canada leadership, the local governing board will recommend dissolution.
2. Notify the head office of Be In Christ Canada of this recommendation of dissolution at least 30 days prior to any congregational meeting in which this motion to dissolve will be presented. Any motion to dissolve before such notice is out of order.
3. Provide at least 10 days written notice and 2 Sunday announcements of a congregational meeting (in which a motion to dissolve will be presented) to all members of the congregation entitled to vote. The written notice and announcement will state the time, place and purpose of the meeting.
4. Grant a vote to all official members of the local church, present at the duly called meeting, who are sixteen years of age or older and who have held membership for at least one year prior to the meeting.

5. If a motion to dissolve carries by a simple majority (50% plus one) vote of those members present, Be In Christ Canada will immediately exercise organizational responsibility and control.
6. If a motion to dissolve does not carry, Be In Christ Canada will immediately appoint a transition committee who will work under the direction of the team leader. The transition committee will be responsible to establish practises and guidelines leading to health and sustainable ministry.
7. If health and sustainable ministry is not realized within one year, the church will be considered in distress and Article 4 of the Articles of Government will be instituted.
8. In the event of dissolution, all assets of the local church, after payment of its liabilities, will be distributed to Be In Christ Canada.

ARTICLE 6. THE PROCESS OF WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP BY A LOCAL CHURCH

It is desirable that people can, in good faith, walk together in the common cause of the Gospel. However, history tells us there are circumstances in which a local congregation deems that membership withdrawal is the best course of action. The following process is established to:

1. establish good faith attempts at reconciliation and understanding;
2. ensure, to the satisfaction of Be In Christ Canada, that a congregational vote to withdraw is truly representative of the stakeholders in the local congregation;
3. clarify and discharge all outstanding obligations to Be In Christ Canada; and
4. seek to maintain a relationship of good grace that neither brings reproach upon the name of Christ nor hinders the fulfilment of the mission of Be In Christ Canada or the local congregation.

A congregation may withdraw from membership in Be In Christ Canada in the following manner: a local church governing board intending to bring a motion to withdraw before the local congregational membership must give the Be In Christ Canada Executive Director written notice at least ninety (90) days before the meeting at which such a motion will be made;

1. At least 14 days advance written notice of such a meeting will be given to all members of the congregation entitled to vote. In addition to written notice, announcement will be made on two (2) Sundays immediately prior to the congregational meeting at which the question of withdrawal will be considered. The announcement will state the time, place and purpose of the meeting;

2. Voting for the purpose of withdrawal will be restricted to members of the local church who are at least sixteen years of age and who have held membership for at least two years prior to the meeting;
3. A representative of Be In Christ Canada leadership will be present and permitted to participate in the meeting in a non-voting capacity;
4. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority support of the motion to withdraw is required to continue the process of withdrawal;
5. Notification of the result of the vote will be delivered to the Be In Christ Canada offices;
6. The Be In Christ Canada Executive Director will assign persons to partner with the local church to negotiate the terms of withdrawal (if the vote did receive the seventy-five percent majority) or to seek resolution of the issues that led to the motion to withdraw (if the vote did not receive the seventy-five percent majority);
7. The terms of withdrawal must be approved by the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors at a regular meeting and by the local church Board of Directors;
8. The motion to withdraw must be re-confirmed by the local congregation by a seventy-five percent (75%) majority in a duly called meeting following publication of the agreed upon terms of withdrawal with Be In Christ Canada leadership present;
9. Any outstanding financial obligations will be settled within sixty days;
10. All property and assets owned by Be In Christ Church of Canada are retained by Be In Christ Church of Canada.

ARTICLE 7. WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF A LOCAL CHURCH INCORPORATED WITH LOCAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

It is desirable that people can, in good faith, walk together in the common cause of the Gospel. However, history tells us there are circumstances in which a local congregation deems that membership withdrawal is the best course of action. The following process is established to:

1. establish good faith attempts at reconciliation and understanding;
2. ensure, to the satisfaction of Be In Christ Canada, that a congregational vote to withdraw is truly representative of the stakeholders in the local congregation;
3. clarify and discharge all outstanding obligations to Be In Christ Canada; and

4. seek to maintain a relationship of good grace that neither brings reproach upon the name of Christ nor hinders the fulfilment of the mission of Be In Christ Canada or the local congregation.

A congregation who is incorporated and directly owns property may withdraw from membership in Be In Christ Canada in the following manner: a local church governing board intending to bring a motion to withdraw before the local congregational membership must give the Be In Christ Canada Executive Director written notice at least ninety (90) days before the meeting at which such a motion will be made;

1. At least 60 days advance written notice of such a meeting will be given to all members of the congregation entitled to vote. In addition to written notice, announcement will be made on three (3) Sundays immediately prior to the congregational meeting at which the question of withdrawal will be considered. The announcement will state the time, place and purpose of the meeting;
2. Voting for the purpose of withdrawal will be restricted to members of the local church who are at least sixteen years of age and who have held membership for at least two years prior to the meeting;
3. A representative of Be In Christ Canada leadership will be present and permitted to participate in the meeting in a non-voting capacity;
4. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority support of the motion to withdraw is required to continue the process of withdrawal;
5. Notification of the result of the vote will be delivered to the Be In Christ Canada offices;
6. The Be In Christ Canada Executive Director will assign persons to partner with the local church to negotiate the terms of withdrawal (if the vote did receive the seventy-five percent majority) or to seek resolution of the issues that led to the motion to withdraw (if the vote did not receive the seventy-five percent majority);
7. The terms of withdrawal must be approved by the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors at a regular meeting and by the local church Board of Directors; no withdrawal may occur until this meeting has occurred.
8. The motion to withdraw must be re-confirmed by the local congregation by a seventy-five percent (75%) majority in a duly called meeting following publication of the agreed upon terms of withdrawal; Be In Christ Canada leadership will be present at this meeting and permitted to participate in the meeting in a non-voting capacity.
9. Any outstanding financial obligations will be settled within sixty days;
10. All property and assets owned by Be In Christ Canada are retained by Be In Christ Canada.

ARTICLE 8. LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Section 1. Title

- A. All property of a local congregation will be held in the name of Be In Christ Canada. All property will be held by the local congregation in trust only.
- B. Where an incorporated local congregation owns property, it will beneficially own and hold title to all real and personal property over which it exercises direct control and governance.

Section 2. Transfer of Property from Be In Christ Canada to the Local Church

- A. Property may be transferred to the local church upon satisfactory incorporation or other organizational provision (such as trustees) in accordance with the laws of the Province in which it is located. The eligibility of a congregation to receive the transfer of such property from Be In Christ Canada to the local congregation will be determined on the basis of a successful application and the meeting of all published criteria for local church ownership of property.
- B. A congregation wishing to own property locally should contact the office of the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada for the necessary paperwork and procedures.
- C. No property owned by a local church will be charged with or encumbered by the debts and liabilities of Be In Christ Canada.

Section 3. Discontinuance of a Local Church with Property

A member congregation of Be In Christ Canada will have in its incorporation and/or similar governance documents or in its bylaw, a provision such as the following:

“In the event of dissolution or conclusion of the (name), all its remaining assets after payment of its liabilities will be distributed to Be In Christ Canada or its successor.”

Section 4. Capital Projects of Unincorporated Congregations or Incorporated Congregations desiring a Loan for a Capital Project

- A. An unincorporated congregation desiring to complete a capital project with an estimated value greater than 40% of their previous year annual receipts needs to seek the approval of the Be In Christ Canada Senior Resource Team. Prior to beginning the project, the Be In Christ Canada office should be notified and asked for the required paperwork and conditions of approval.
- B. Any local congregation – incorporated or unincorporated seeking a loan to facilitate a capital project with a loan value greater than 25% of their previous year annual receipts must seek the approval of the Be In Christ Canada Board of Directors. Prior to

beginning the project, the Be In Christ Canada office should be notified and asked for the required paperwork and conditions of approval.

DIVISION 2. PASTORS, STAFF AND THEIR ROLES

ARTICLE 1. SOLE AND SENIOR PASTORS

Section 1. The Pastor

The Senior or Solo Pastor serving in a congregation is considered the primary spiritual overseer of the local church, and is responsible for directing the life and ministries of the congregation. The Solo or Senior Pastor will carry out duties as agreed upon by the governing board and in compliance with the Handbook on Faith and Life

Section 2. Hiring of the Solo or Senior Pastor

The appropriate member of the Be In Christ Canada Senior Resource Team, as designated by the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada, working in partnership with the governing board of a member church, will oversee the search and hiring process of a senior or lead pastor.

No hire of a Senior or lead pastor is final until the candidate has been approved by the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada and provisional credentials have been granted.

An initial term of service for a pastor will be set by the Canadian Executive Director, or his or her designate, the pastor, and the governing board of the congregation. The continuance of a pastor's service following the initial term of service will become a joint consideration of the appropriate team leader from Be In Christ Canada, the pastor, and the governing board of the congregation. The congregation will be consulted as determined by the team leader and the governing board of the local church. Further terms of service will be based upon a one to five-year term as may be mutually agreed upon. A five-year term will be the maximum for any one period of assignment. New terms are not extended without the appropriate evaluation and the mutual agreement of Be In Christ Canada through the Team Leader, the Governing board of the local congregation and the Pastor.

Section 3. Accountability

The solo or Senior pastor is accountable to the governing board through its chair for the daily work of the congregation. The pastor is accountable to the appropriate team leader on issues of theology, polity, compliance with the Handbook and Faith and Life and congregational issues which may arise from time to time.

In Church Plants that do not yet have a church board, the pastor is accountable in full to the appropriate team leader.

Section 4. Credentials

The solo or Senior pastor serving a congregation, church plant, or affiliated congregation will be credentialed by Be In Christ Canada prior to the commencement of service.

Section 5. Review of the Solo or Senior Pastor

The Canadian Executive Director or his/her designate will ensure that a proper Senior Pastor review process is enacted at each end of term. Such review may include congregational feedback when it is deemed to be prudent and helpful to do so.

Section 6. Accusations involving Credentials

Accusations in matters involving a pastor's right to hold office as a pastor with Be In Christ Canada; their morality, integrity, judgement or doctrinal soundness must be made to the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada in writing and properly signed by one who is willing to appear in person and give testimony concerning the accusations. Accusations will be dealt with according to provisions in the Discipline and Restoration Manual.

Depending on the nature of the accusation against the pastor, the Executive Director may suspend the pastor from further service immediately, with or without pay, pending the outcome of the appropriate investigation.

Section 7. Membership

Pastors will automatically become a member of the local congregation being served upon commencement of their service.

Section 8. Duties

The duties of pastors will be:

- a. To ensure the spiritual health of the local congregation. This includes establishing a clear discipleship strategy for the church, engaging people in worship, encouraging spiritual growth and connecting people with service and volunteer opportunities that fulfil their God given mission to make disciples.
- b. To clarify and champion the vision, mission and values of the local church. To ensure congregational movement in a unified direction towards the fulfilment of local vision, mission and values.
- c. To ensure that all worship experiences are executed with excellence considering the location of the church. Each worship experience should call people to follow Christ fully, engage both the heart and mind and encourage people towards fulfilment of their God given mission to make disciples.

- d. To ensure the local church has an intentional plan to invest in the community in which it resides. Pastors are expected to help congregations answer the question, "What would be lost if our church no longer existed?"
- e. When a local church has multiple staff, the Senior Pastor will lead, evaluate and mentor staff in their area of service and ministry.
- f. To provide regular reports to the governing board, as well as those required by Be In Christ Canada.
- g. To fully support, promote, and participate in the broader ministries of the church as requested by Be In Christ Canada.
- h. To be a life-long learner, pursuing personal and professional development by participating in the programs offered by Be In Christ Canada, as well as other agencies.

It is recognized that individual churches will have different expectations of pastors and Be In Christ Canada encourages well written and clear role descriptions be developed.

Section 9. Conclusion of Term

Pastors serve with an understanding that their employment is set out in terms. There is no expectation of additional terms as one term concludes. Continuation into a new term of service is a joint decision of the pastor, governing board and Team Leader for Be In Christ Canada.

Section 10. Removal From Office

In case of serious disagreement between the local governing board and the solo or Senior pastor, the matter will be submitted to the appropriate team leader of Be In Christ Canada. If satisfaction is not attained, the Executive Director will make disposition of the matter.

Those serving in Senior Pastoral roles may not be dismissed without the prior approval of the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada or his/her designate.

ARTICLE 2. STAFF PASTORS

Section 1. Staff Pastors

Increasingly churches are hiring associate staff to carry out a variety of pastoral functions within the life of the church. Be In Christ Canada affirms this. At the same time, when considering the hiring of additional staff, churches are encouraged to consider a number of issues in the process:

- a. Are the resources in place to provide a secure means of income for the staff member for the full term of the contract?

- b. Is it necessary to hire a credentialed pastor or could needed assistance be accomplished through a ministry director?
- c. Is it clear what the outcomes will be for the position being considered?
- d. Will this in any way inhibit funds for other areas of ministry?
- e. Is the church currently in the practise of giving 10% of its yearly budget to the Shared Ministry of Be In Christ Canada?

Section 2. Hiring of Associate Staff

- a. The Senior Pastor, in relationship with the governing board, will determine the process of hiring.
- b. The Senior Pastor, in relationship with the governing board, will lead the process of hiring all ministry staff.
- c. All offers of employment for pastoral positions must be contingent upon the successful granting of provisional ministry credentials. Senior Pastors are encouraged to meet with their team leader early on in the process.
- d. A contract outlining the terms of employment including provisions in the event of termination must be completed.

Section 3. Accountability

Staff pastors are directly accountable to the Senior Pastor.

Section 4. Accusations involving Credentials

Accusations in matters involving a pastor's right to hold office as a pastor with Be In Christ Canada; their morality, integrity, judgement or doctrinal soundness must be made to the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada in writing and properly signed by one who is willing to appear in person and give testimony concerning the accusations. Accusations will be dealt with according to provisions in the Discipline and Restoration Manual.

Depending on the nature of the accusation against the staff pastor, the Executive Director may suspend the pastor from further service immediately, with or without pay, pending the outcome of the appropriate investigation.

Section 5. Accusations not involving Credentials

Accusations in matters of performance, judgement or lifestyle choices of a disputable nature will be handled by the Senior Pastor in relationship with the appropriate team leader and governing board chair.

Section 6. Discipline

All staff pastors and ministry staff agree to submit to discipline as expressed in the Discipline and Restoration Manual.

Section 7. Membership

Pastors will automatically become a member of the local congregation being served upon commencement of their service.

Section 8. Removal

In case of serious disagreement between the Senior Pastor and a Staff pastor, the matter will be submitted to the Chair of the governing board. If satisfaction is not attained by both parties, the appropriate team leader will make disposition of the matter. A final appeal may be made to the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada.

DIVISION 3. PASTORS, CLERGY AND CREDENTIALLING

ARTICLE 1. CLERGY

Section 1. The Office of the Credentialed Pastor and Clergy

Persons holding valid Be In Christ Canada issued credentials may serve in a variety of roles including as Senior or Solo pastor of a local church, associate or staff pastor, institutional chaplain or in any role approved for credentials by the appropriate team leader and the Executive Director of Be In Christ Canada. Any person holding credentials agrees to conduct themselves in accord with the provisions outlined in this Division of the Articles of Government.

Section 2. Qualifications

Clergy are persons called of God to serve the Church of Jesus Christ in an official leadership capacity. Scripture clearly indicates in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-16 that there are standards against which Christian leaders are measured and held accountable. Clergy must be committed followers of Jesus Christ and clearly indicate a sense of God's leading to serve in vocational ministry. The scriptural directives relating to ministry leaders speak to the importance of exemplary godly living. As a testimony to the importance of the home, attention must be given to the scriptural qualifications of wholesome marital and family relationships which include a commitment to the lifelong bond of marriage. They should be able to teach and lead others and give evidence of God's call to this role. They must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Be In Christ Canada, its vision and mission, fully support its leadership, and willingness to be directed by the decisions of Be In Christ Canada and its leadership.

To ensure a person's qualifications and credibility for service, Be In Christ Canada engages in the formal credentialing of those called to serve.

The credentialing process for vocational workers within Be In Christ Canada affirms:

- The biblical pattern of the gifting, character and calling of persons to specific ministry roles within the community of faith in order for its strengthening and the functioning of its mission (Exodus 3, Psalm 78:70-72; Isaiah 6; Acts 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-19, 1 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:5-9) within an overall acknowledgement of the “priesthood of all believers” (I Peter 2:4-10).
- The current and continued partnership role of the community of faith in discerning and affirming the calling, gifting, character and competency of persons to places of service within the church (Acts 13:1-3; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- The necessity of equipping and training for roles of service (Psalm 78:70-72; Ephesians 4:11, 2 Timothy 1:6, 2:15; 3:14-4:8).
- The need for alignment with the core values, the theological understandings, and the vision and mission of Be In Christ Canada in order for healthy and effective service (I Timothy 3:1-7).
- The value of being set apart and commissioned for service in a manner that affirms the person and assures the community of faith (Psalm 78:70-72; Acts 6:1-7, Acts 9:15, Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1 Timothy 5:17, 2 Timothy 1:11) of the individuals preparation and suitability for ministry leadership.

Section 3. Duties and Privileges

- A. It will be the duty of those who hold credentials to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, prayerfully strive to lead persons to the Saviour and into a life of full commitment to Jesus as empowered by the Holy Spirit, and earnestly endeavour to build up the body of Christ.
- B. It will be the duty of those holding credentials to live a life that is in full accord with the Articles of Faith and Doctrine.
- C. Those holding credentials are eligible to perform official duties within the limits of their credentials.
- D. Those holding credentials are able to serve with in the office of Pastor, Associate Pastor or other ministerial role with in a local church or in an ecclesiastical role within the denomination or other approved ministry placement.
- E. Those holding credentials are able to serve in the office of Chaplain in a variety of different institutions with the full support of the Church.

- F. It is the privilege of the clergy to officiate at the marriage of persons who, after adequate instruction and counsel, can affirm the principles of Christian marriage, including a lifelong commitment to the marriage relationship.

Section 4. Limits and Responsibilities that come from having Credentials

- A. Clergy are not obligated to officiate at marriages which violate their consciences or otherwise are not in harmony with their understanding of scriptural principles. When there is a question regarding the clergy's conducting a marriage, it is advisable for the clergy to consult with Be In Christ Canada leadership.
- B. It is a violation of the spirit with which the credentials are granted to indicate to anyone that they allow other services to be provided such as counselling, etc.

Section 5. Understandings When Holding Be In Christ Canada Credentials

Maintaining credentials with Be In Christ Canada requires and implies compliance with the General Operating Bylaws, the Articles of Government and the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Be In Christ Canada. Compliance includes submission to the discipline laid out therein. The following understandings are agreed to by all credentialed persons:

1. I have read, in full, the "Articles of Government" and the "Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Be In Christ Canada" and have given particular attention to the doctrinal statement, and will support the polity and doctrine of the church.
2. I understand the ministry purpose statement of Be In Christ Canada to be:

"We are a growing faith community following Jesus, sharing his message and extending his peace around the world."
3. I recognize the executive leadership of Be In Christ Canada and am willing to come under its authority and the polity of the denomination in all matters pertaining to credentialed ministers and in all matters relative to the local church.
4. I understand the requirements for credentialing and will commit myself to completing these in a timely order.
5. I will lead in my ministry setting in such a way that the leadership and ministries of the denomination are fully supported.
6. I agree to attend Be In Christ Canada Annual General Meeting, Theological Study Days, Fall Ministry Day and other resourcing events. If I cannot attend, I will let the appropriate team leader know in advance.

7. I understand that it is the desire of Be In Christ Canada and our local churches to have a team of credentialed leaders who are constantly leading, learning and loving. Therefore I commit to:
 - a. Lead in the setting I am placed with excellence and a shepherd's heart.
 - b. Continually be about the work of learning new things. I will strive to have a mind that is inquisitive and asks questions.
 - c. I will seek to love God, others and myself in ways that are healthy and hope filled.

Section 6. Discipline

A Be In Christ Canada credential implies agreement to submit to discipline as outlined in the Discipline and Reconciliation Manual. Notwithstanding anything else contained herein, a ministerial credential is given upon the strict condition that disciplinary proceedings and the results thereof and any other proceedings or matters carried in accordance with the Articles of Government and with the Articles of Faith and Doctrine will not give a minister cause for any legal action against either Be In Christ Canada, any staff member, director or officer of Be In Christ Canada, and the acceptance of credentials will constitute conclusive and absolute evidence of a waiver by the minister of all rights of action, causes of action, and all claims and demands against the aforementioned.

ARTICLE 2. CATEGORIES OF CREDENTIALS

Section 1. Licensed Minister

- a. Purpose - Licensure is the entry point for all pastors new to the Be in Christ Church of Canada who do not meet the requirements for Ordination.
- b. Minimum requirements to receive Licensure:
 - Successful completion of a vulnerable sector background review.
 - Completion of all requirements for licensure including things such as orientation, core course(s), required readings and writing, etc.
 - Adherence to the Be In Christ Canada Pastoral Way document
 - License will only be issued upon successful placement in a Be In Christ Canada Church and a ministry assignment outside Be In Christ Canada which has been approved by the Senior Resource Team.
- c. Maintaining Credential Status – Complete the required educational and core class requirements within 5 years, in order to receive Ordained status. Failure to complete expectations within five years will cause license to lapse and eligibility for BIC Benefits

and CRA Clergy Residence Deduction, and License to Perform Weddings to discontinue.

Section 2. Ordained Minister

- a. Purpose - Ordination is for those who are uniquely called by God and equipped to serve the local church and the general church in primary leadership, teaching roles and ministry.
- b. Roles served through Ordination - Generally ordained persons will serve as Senior Pastor, Lead Pastor, Associate or Staff Pastor (Youth, Children, Pastoral Care) in a local church/site context (preaching, teaching, leading, spiritual oversight over congregation or groups within congregation, would be expected functions of an ordained minister). Ordained ministers may also serve as a global worker, chaplain, spiritual director, theological educator, etc., at an approved ministry site.
- c. Minimum requirements to receive Ordination status
 - Successful completion of a vulnerable sector background review.
 - Demonstration that the theological educational requirement has been fully completed.
 - Completion of all requirements for ordination including things such as orientation, core course(s), required readings and writing, etc.
 - Adherence to the Be In Christ Canada Pastoral Way document
 - Ordination will only be issued upon successful placement in a Be In Christ Canada Church and a ministry assignment outside Be In Christ Canada which has been approved by the Senior Resource Team.

ARTICLE 3. CREDENTIALLED STATUS

Whether ordained or licensed, Be In Christ Canada Credentials all have one of five statuses:

Active – This is the status of all credentialed persons who are currently serving as a pastor, a chaplain or in another approved role.

Inactive – This is the status of all persons who have received credentials but are not currently serving in an approved role or as a pastor, or chaplain.

Suspended – This is the status of a person whose credentials have come under review due to an alleged ethical, moral or financial failure. Pending the outcome of the investigation or review credentials may be continued with the suspended status, removed or restored.

Removed – This is the status of a person who has had credentials suspended and after an adequate investigation it has been determined the individual is no longer fit for service as a credentialed person with Be In Christ Canada. The decision to remove credentials will be made by the Senior Resource Team under the direction of the Executive Director.

Emeritus – This is the status of a person who has attained credentials and served with Be In Christ Canada credentials for 25 years or more and no longer serving in a pastoral role. Their service may be within a Be In Christ Canada congregation, an approved ministry location or with a related (BIC) conference around the world.

ARTICLE 4. MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Be In Christ Canada Pastoral Way

The BE IN CHRIST CANADA Pastoral Way outlines how we aspire to live our lives and calling as credential holders. The Pastoral Way is the accumulated wisdom that has been faithfully lived out and handed down by our credential holders over the past 200 years. Clearly, this Way will change and shift with time and context but the essential wisdom stays the same. The Way is descriptive of the kind of people we are looking for who can help the Church navigate her way forward into the complexities of the 21st Century.

These best practices are in the three categories of Loving, Leading, and Learning. Each aspect takes on a personal and professional best practice for clergy to thrive in their respective roles. Each person applying for credentials will be asked to sign the current edition of the BE IN CHRIST CANADA Pastoral Way.

ARTICLE 5. PROCESS FOR RECEIVING CREDENTIALS

The process of receiving credentials will be overseen by the Executive Director:

1. The Senior Resource Team will approve all applications for credentialing in the denomination.
2. The Senior Resource Team will formulate all examination forms and establish procedures to be used in their work.
3. The Senior Resource Team will provide the standards and requirements for ministerial licensing and/or ordination and continuation therein, and will approve the meeting of such requirements by candidates before credentials are received.
4. The Senior Resource Team will ensure that an appropriate doctrinal examination of persons applying for credentials has been conducted.

DIVISION 4. BE IN CHRIST CANADA

ARTICLE 1. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors serves as the policy-making board between meetings of the Annual General Meeting and within the will of the Annual General Meeting.

Section 1. Qualifications to Serve on the Board of Directors

- A. One whose life gives evidence of spiritual maturity and desire to live both peacefully and honestly with others.
- B. One who is a committed and active member of their local Be In Christ Canada congregation.
- C. One who has demonstrated leadership gifts in other non-profit organizations.
- D. One who has demonstrated a commitment to the mission, ministry and work of Be In Christ Canada.
- E. One who meets the statutory requirements as described in the General Operating Bylaw One.

Section 2. Selection of Personnel to serve on the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors serves as the nominating committee for the denomination (GOB: Section 4, Paragraph 1). When nominating candidates for recommendation to the Annual General Meeting, the nominating committee will take effort to ensure the presence of diversity on the board by means of gender, race, region and expression.

Credentialed persons will not serve on the Board of Directors. Exceptions to this may be made with the consent of the Board of Directors and by the successful approval of the nominee by the Annual General Meeting. The nominee's status as a credential holder should be noted in the nomination process.

Section 3. Duties of the Board of Directors

- A. To study, coordinate and promote the total program of the church.
- B. To review the program and overall functioning of the church and to bring recommendations to the Annual General Meeting which will seek to increase the effectiveness of the church in achieving missional success.
- C. To receive and approve recommendations from the Senior Resource Team of the denomination.
- D. To carry responsibility for the business of the church in between Annual General Meetings.

- E. To approve budgets and ministry plans and forward the necessary recommendations to the Annual General Meeting.
- F. To hire the Canadian Executive Director and provide for the appropriate review process on a bi-annual basis (even years).
- G. Nominate or appoint persons to serve on teams, committees or boards of the denomination and its related entities. This includes directly related ministries such as Camp Kahquah, the Financial Services Team, the BIC Fund or their legal successors. It also includes indirectly related ministries such as Mennonite Central Committee and Niagara Christian Community of Schools or their legal successors.
- H. To receive reports and address recommendations from teams, committees or boards of the denomination and its related entities. This includes directly related ministries such as Camp Kahquah, the Financial Services Team, the BIC Fund or their legal successors. It also includes indirectly related ministries such as Mennonite Central Committee and Niagara Christian Community of Schools or their legal successors.
- I. The Board may establish from time to time any team it deems necessary and helpful to the work of the church and designate the terms by which it functions.
- J. To serve as the legal membership body for related institutions as required by their bylaws or articles of incorporation.

ARTICLE 2. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Section 1. Qualifications of the Executive Director

In addition to the qualification requirements set out in General Operating By-law No. 1 of Be In Christ Canada, the following qualifications are to be fulfilled by any prospective Executive Director:

1. Spiritual maturity to lead the growth of a healthy church movement.
2. A graduate degree in theology or divinity preferred, with openness to pursue further education.
3. An ordained Be in Christ minister, with experience in pastoral ministry.
4. Ability to develop and cast vision in alignment with the wider Be In Christ Church.
5. Possess strong relational and communication skills.
6. Strong strategic, organizational and leadership skills.
7. A demonstrated history of working with, overseeing and developing leaders.

8. Healthy problem-solving skills within a team environment.
9. Able to manage complex conflict situations effectively and with grace.
10. Proven experience in leading a growing organization.
11. Able to live out the values of who we are as the Be in Christ Church of Canada.
12. Committed to who we are as an Anabaptist church in Canada with an evangelistic fervor.

Section 2. Duties of the Canadian Executive Director

In addition to the duties set out in General Operating By-law No. 1 of Be In Christ Canada, the Executive Director shall have the following duties:

- Partnering with the Board of Directors, will develop vision, mission and strategic direction in alignment with the overall vision of the church.
- Select and oversee the Senior Resource Team (executive leaders), and other national office staff, facilitating effective management, evaluation and development of leaders and staff.
- Ensure that there is an effective credentialing system in place and to manage and oversee the credentialing process.
- Working as a team with the Senior Resource team:
 - provide overall administrative leadership to Be In Christ Canada, including management of the national budget and oversight of ministries of Be In Christ Canada
 - ensure the development and implementation of an overall vision and mission for Be In Christ Canada
 - ensure that an appropriate system for pastoral development, selection, placement and care is in place for all expressions in Be In Christ Canada
 - ensure that a plan for expansion of Be In Christ Canada's congregations and ministry is in place and successfully advancing in all expressions of Be In Christ Canada
 - ensure that the Senior Resource Team operates in an effective, harmonious manner in order to maximize the successful accomplishment of mission, vision and goals
- Represent Be In Christ Canada at appropriate national and ecumenical organizations.

- Facilitate fundraising and promotion of our ministries for the accomplishment of common ministry and mission as expressed through Be In Christ Canada
- Continuously investigate new leading edge organizations and networks to seek ways to improve and innovate in our purpose, strategy and mission
- Ensure that all legal and regulatory obligations for the organization are met and actions of the organization and employees meet all applicable laws
- Be generally available for teaching, resourcing and engagement as necessary and requested
- Be the spokesperson on behalf of Be In Christ Canada.
- To guide and ensure an effective and coordinated global ministry.
- To collaboratively work with local churches in the discipline and restoration processes as required.

ARTICLE 3. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Internationally, Be In Christ Canada relates to and cooperates with similar national bodies of Brethren in Christ churches in other countries to foster fellowship and to engage in joint ministries in the pursuit of its objects. In particular, Be In Christ Canada seeks to enhance and forward the work of the International Brethren in Christ Association.