

Why this guide?:

I made this summary based on my own desire to have all the BCC council roles defined in one place, both for explaining to others and as a handy guide. It is essentially a consolidation of relevant bylaws and current commission descriptions. Please refer to original bylaws for anything missing! Feel free to distribute.

Standard disclaimer:

This is a pretty good guide. It is not the definitive guide - not sure the definitive guide exists in this world. Always let Jesus and your conscience be your guide. You are encouraged as always to ask questions, offer corrections, and do your own research of the original source materials.

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Council Composition: (BCC Bylaws: Article IV, Section 1).

Currently 17 elected + 2 ex-officio members

- a. The Church Council shall be composed of the president, the vice-president, the recording secretary, the financial secretary, the treasurer, the chairpersons of ministry commissions, the chairperson of the Pastoral Relations / Personnel Board, the chairpersons of the boards of auxiliary programs and two members at large elected by the congregation.
- b. Full time pastors shall be ex-officio members of the Church Council. Directors of auxiliary programs and members of the program staff shall be advisory members of the Church Council.

Officers: (BCC Bylaws: Article V)

The President of the Congregation

The president shall preside at all business meetings of the congregation and the Church Council. The president shall also lead worship services or arrange for leadership thereof when pastors are unavailable to do so. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all ministry commissions and committees of the church.

The Vice-President

The vice-president shall assist the president and shall assume the duties of the president in the president's absence.

The Recording Secretary

The recording secretary shall record and preserve minutes of all business meetings of the congregation and of the Church Council and shall receive and ensure the preservation of documents and official correspondence of the church.

The Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be responsible for recording and safeguarding all monetary receipts of the church, supervising bank deposits and maintaining pledge records. The financial secretary shall also be an ex-officio member of the Church Council and the ministry commissions responsible for solicitation of monetary pledges and oversight of financial operations. The financial secretary shall present a written report of receipts to each regular business meeting of the congregation.

The Treasurer

The treasurer shall make disbursements of church funds as authorized by the congregation or the Church Council. The treasurer shall present a written report of receipts and expenditures to each regular business meeting of the congregation. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council and of the ministry commissions responsible for solicitation of monetary pledges and oversight of financial operations.

Chairpersons:

Chairperson of Board of Pastoral Relations/Personnel (BCC Bylaws: Article VII)

From Bylaws: Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall consist of four members. Members of the board shall be elected to four year terms in such manner that the term of one member expires each year. The board shall elect its own chairperson annually. The chairperson shall be a member of the Church Council. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall be accountable to the congregation.

From 2019 Description: The Pastoral Relations Board conducts annual staff reviews with feedback collected from the congregation, meets quarterly with ministry staff for support and feedback, and mediates concerns between congregation and staff.

Duties: (BCC Bylaws: Article VII, Section 2)

- a. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall provide support to the pastors and staff to enable them to fulfill their ministries. The board shall encourage communication and seek to resolve issues between pastors, staff and congregation. The board shall hold matters which come before it in confidence.
- b. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall meet individually with each staff member at least annually and shall meet individually with each pastor at least quarterly. An opportunity shall be afforded to the spouse (if any) of each pastor to meet with the board at least annually.
- c. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall establish and maintain procedures for a formal written annual performance appraisal for pastors and staff members. The board shall conduct the performance appraisal for the senior pastor and shall review performance appraisals conducted for other employees.
- d. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall submit salary and allowance recommendations for pastors and staff members to the ministry commission charged with formulating the operating budget. One of its members shall participate in the budget development process.
- e. The Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board shall be available to meet with any employee or church member. The Board may also request to meet with any employee or church member concerning issues related to its charter.

Chairperson of Board of Bethlehem Child Care Center (BCC Bylaws: Article IX)

(Auxiliary Program of Church as defined in Bylaws)

Section 1: Purpose

The Bethlehem Child Care Center is an auxiliary program of the church as defined in Article VIII. Its mission is to provide children of the community and the church family with such care and instruction as will contribute to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Section 2: Organization

- a. The Bethlehem Child Care Center is governed by a board of directors which is regulated by "Guidelines for Bethlehem Child Care Center Board of Directors" and approved by the Church Council. The Board of Directors is composed of seven members: three representatives of ministry commissions having interests in common with the Center, two appointed by the Church Council to represent the Church at large, and two parents of children currently enrolled in the Center's programs. The latter two are appointed by the sitting members of the Board and need not be members of the church. The chairperson of the Board is elected by its sitting members, and must be one of the members of the church serving on the Board. The chairperson of the board shall be a member of the Church Council. The program director of the Child Care Center shall be an advisory member of the Council.
- b. The Board of Directors shall be accountable to the Church Council.

Editorial note: It appears that currently, the role of Child Care Center Liaison is acting in the voting role of the Chairperson of the Board of Bethlehem Child Care Center, representing the interests of the board. This appears to be acceptable and is working, but should probably be clarified through amendment of the bylaws. Happy to receive more insight/correction on this as I may have missed the memo.

[Members At Large:](#)

Members At Large (2) (Article IV, Section 1)

Those who are elected Members At Large, are chosen to serve as representatives of the congregation. Their vote and voice is recognized as how the congregation speaks on issues and decisions of ministry. This member is encouraged to talk with others in the congregation about their hopes and concerns and share these with Church Council.

[Ex-officio Members \(BCC Bylaws: Article III, Section 1\)](#)

Full-Time Pastors

Ex-officio literally means "by virtue of one's position or status.", and as such, full-time pastors are ex-officio members of council by virtue of their position at BCC. Robert's Rules (which govern as per church bylaws Article X, Section 6) indicate that ex-officio members do have full member rights and privileges, including right to vote by virtue of church membership ("membership in the society"). This may differ from historical precedent and there may be parliamentary quibble regarding whether ex-officio members factor in quorum.

Ministry Commissions (revised 2019) (BCC Bylaws: Article VI)

SECTION 1. Composition

Each ministry commission shall be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation and non-elected persons of such number and qualifications as appropriate to the scope and nature of assigned responsibilities. Non-elected members may be volunteers or recruits and they may be church members or interested persons who are not church members. Non-elected members may serve on more than one commission. The Council shall actively recruit non-elected commission members if volunteers are insufficient to fill all roster positions. The majority of every commission shall be members of the church. The Church Council shall formalize the appointment of all non-elected commission members.

SECTION 2. Organization

- a. The continuing and newly elected commission chairpersons shall meet with the nominating committee soon after the annual election of officers and commission chairpersons to coordinate recruitment of members of the various commissions.
- b. The chairperson of each commission shall convene a meeting of its members early in the term to review the commission's purpose and functions, to assign individual responsibilities, to define priorities, establish goals, and construct schedules and benchmarks. Priorities and goals shall be consistent with objectives embraced by the congregation, the pastors, and the Council, and they should be brought to the Council to verify their compatibility with those developed by other commissions.

SECTION 3. Duties

- a. Each commission shall be responsible for the functions and duties specified in its job description, consonant with agreed priorities and schedules. Personnel shall be recruited to perform those functions which require staffing or special skills. Inability to secure resources to satisfy fully the expectations of the job description shall be reported to the president immediately so that the Council may arrange for assistance or relief.
- b. Ministry Commissions shall be accountable to the Church Council.

Properties Commission

Oversees the maintenance of all church facilities and physical assets, custodial and groundskeeping services, and building repair. Properties Commission provides direct oversight for the contracted building supervisor. *Staff Support: Properties Manager*

Finance Commission

Oversees bookkeeping, offerings and deposits, budget, memorials, capital campaign, endowment, and stewardship campaign. Finance commission works to do financial forecasting for the church as well as advising matters regarding insurance and other liabilities. The commission provides direct oversight of assistant treasurer. *Staff Support: Assistant Treasurer*

Strategic Planning Commission

Steering the council and congregation towards congregational vitality by way of conducting pulse survey, evaluating critical success factors, neighborhood research, long-term planning, and progress measurements. *Staff Support: Lead Pastor*

Communication

Supports the office staff for distributing information about church ministries through signage, advertising, publications (newsletter, bulletin, mailings), website, welcome desk, and Social Media. Communication Commission crafts a strategy for publicizing Bethlehem ministries both within the congregation and to the wider community. *Staff Support: Office Staff*

Congregational Life

Mobilizes members of the congregation for service and fellowship by providing opportunities for community building, volunteer recruitment, "Time & Talents", and spiritual gift evaluation. Oversees wedding and funeral ministries as well as food and coffee service at Sunday coffee hour, Wonderful Wednesday suppers, and other occasions for fellowship. *Staff Support: Office Staff, Associate Pastor, Lead Pastor*

Celebration and Spiritual Life

Oversees receiving new members, reconciling membership rolls, visitation ministries for the homebound and hospitalized, sacraments (communion preparation and serving), care ministries (prayer chain, Befrienders, etc). Also gives supervision to worship ministries of the church including music and decoration, and oversight of music staff. *Staff Support: Lead Pastor and Music Staff*

Christian Formation

Responsibility for seeing to the discipleship and Christian growth of the congregation including Children's ministry (Sunday school, Children's Church, VBS, camp, etc.) Youth ministry (youth group, confirmation, special events), adult Sunday school, small groups, educational opportunities, and the church library. Supports and advises the work of children's and youth staff. *Staff Support: Associate Pastor and Youth Director*

Outreach

Outreach commission gives direction to the missional work of Bethlehem including the sponsorship of our Covenant World Missionaries, global relief work (Paul Carlson Partnership, Covenant World Relief), the work of the local outreach team towards ministries of compassion here in the Twin Cities (Loaves & Fishes, Meals on Wheels, Ace in the City, etc), and mobilizing the congregation for evangelism. *Staff Support: Lead Pastor*

Council Duties (BCC Bylaws: Article IV, Section 2)

- a. The Church Council shall formulate proposals for consideration by the congregation, manage implementation of decisions of the congregation, and coordinate and integrate the ongoing ministries of the Church assigned to and effected by the commissions. The Church Council shall support the pastors and program personnel in their efforts to fulfill the responsibilities of their offices.
- b. The Church Council shall create, modify, and consolidate ministry commissions as required to support optimally the current and emerging priorities of the congregation. The Church Council shall monitor the performance of commissions and shall procure additional resources as may be needed to ensure achievement of objectives.
- c. The Church Council shall review proposals which originate in commissions and require congregational approval for implementation before they are brought to the congregation for consideration. Proposals in which the Council concurs shall be recommended jointly by the originating commission(s) and the Council. Proposals in which the Council does not concur may be brought to the congregation by the originating commission(s) and the Council shall advise the congregation of its reasons for withholding endorsement.
- d. The Church Council shall not review or critique proposals developed by committees or task forces named by the congregation for special purposes unless the congregation directs such involvement by the Council.
- e. The Church Council shall arrange for creation and maintenance of a management handbook detailing policies and procedures to be employed in the operations of the church, This handbook shall be consistent with provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, and shall serve to consolidate, standardize, clarify, and formalize practices and responsibilities characteristic of disciplined management. It shall include but not be limited to job descriptions for the Church Council, the church officers, and the ministry commissions.
- f. The Church Council shall convene a nominating committee to prepare a ballot for presentation to the congregation at the regular business meeting of the congregation scheduled to be held in April of each year.

Meetings/Quorum: (BCC Bylaws: Article XI, Section 1)

- a. Thirty-five members of the church, including at least two officers, shall constitute a quorum for business meetings of the congregation. Unless otherwise specified herein, the affirmative vote of members present and voting is required for passage of a motion.
- b. Fifty percent of the membership of the Church Council and commissions shall constitute a quorum for their respective meetings. The affirmative vote of the majority of members present is required for passage of a motion.

Dan's Pretty Good Guide to BCC Council Roles

Section 6: Parliamentary procedures

Roberts Rules of Order shall regulate official meetings of the congregation and Church Council.

Meetings: (BCC Bylaws: Article X)

SECTION 1. Congregation

The congregation shall schedule four regular business meetings each year. They shall be convened in or near the months shown below, and their agendas shall give high priorities to the issues indicated.

January:

- The official annual meeting of the church
- Comprehensive and audited financial reports
- Pastors' Annual Reports
- Presentation and discussion of pastors' challenging and quantified objectives for the church during the new year

April:

- Election of officers and commission chairpersons
- Year ending report of president of congregation
- Reports from ministry commissions and auxiliary programs including performance versus goals for preceding year

August:

- Presentation by council and commissions of comprehensive plans for programs to commence in September. Measurable goals shall be defined. Correlation with pastors' earlier objectives will be described

December:

- Enactment of budget for ensuing year

Special business meetings of the congregation may be convened by the President. Members shall be notified in writing at least five days in advance of both regular and special meetings of the congregation. Such notice may be communicated by conventional or electronic mail, or by highlighted announcement in a periodic newsletter issued to all members for whom current addresses are known.

SECTION 2. Church Council

The president shall announce a schedule of monthly meetings of the Council. The president shall convene additional meetings if requested by any member of the Council or if deemed by the president to be warranted.

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SECTION 3. Ministry Commissions, Pastoral Relations/Personnel Board

To the extent that their workloads can be spread relatively uniformly over time, these organizations shall meet each month. Since that will not be feasible in all cases, meetings shall be scheduled as required to fulfill assigned responsibilities.

SECTION 4. Planning

The Church Council and ministry commissions shall meet in extended session at least once each year for sharing and planning.

SECTION 5. Records

Minutes of meetings of the congregation and the Church Council shall be recorded for preservation. Decisions and actions of the Pastoral Relations / Personnel Board shall be documented and kept confidential when appropriate.

Helpful Resource: <https://robertsrules.com>