

Bridge Fellowship Proposed Constitution

Here's a summary of the key changes being proposed:

- MARBC will be using the operating name of “Bridge Fellowship.”
- Churches that are not Baptist in name may now join the fellowship, provided they are baptistic in faith and practice.
- Churches may now be removed from the fellowship for reasons beyond doctrinal differences.
- Robert’s Rules of Order will be replaced with “Robbie’s Suggestions.”
- The “Council of 15” will be renamed the “Oversight Team.”
- The purpose and basic responsibilities of the Oversight Team have been clarified.
- The Oversight Team will include at least six members-at-large and one representative from each regional association.
- The Oversight Team will serve as the Nominating Committee for new Board members. Churches may still submit recommendations, but the Board will not be bound by them.
- During the Annual Meeting, when officers are selected, the Executive Director is expected to be involved.
- The previous statement regarding (possible) mileage reimbursement for Council members has been removed. This can be addressed through policy and included in the budget if desired.
- The Executive Director’s job description now includes affirmation of the fellowship’s doctrinal statement.

Thank you for taking the time to review this—we greatly appreciate your feedback. Our plan is to bring this to a vote in 2026.

Please send your comments and suggestions to

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**The Constitution of the
Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches**

(Adopted 11/1/49; Amended 11/25/49, 10/66 & 10/68, 10/09, 10/15/24)

ARTICLE I

The Name

The Name of this organization shall be the “Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches.”

ARTICLE II

Mission and Vision

Our Mission: The MARBC, compelled by the Word of God to reflect the glory and grace of Jesus Christ, exists to foster the mutual unity, partnership, and enrichment of our churches.

Our Vision: We are the MARBC, an association of autonomous local congregations with a commitment to stand together for the Faith and thereby impact our world with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This commitment requires cooperation among us in the *planting, nurturing, and strengthening* of churches.

Church Strengthening – providing resources and opportunities to all MARBC churches.

Church Nurturing – providing assistance and support to MARBC churches in need.

Church Planting – conceiving and birthing new MARBC churches.

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ARTICLE I

The Name

The name of this organization shall be the “Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches,” *hereinafter referred to as “Bridge Fellowship.”*

ARTICLE II

Mission and Vision

Our Mission: **Bridge Fellowship**, compelled by the Word of God to reflect the glory and grace of Jesus Christ, exists to foster the mutual unity, partnership, and enrichment of our churches.

Our Vision: We are the **Bridge Fellowship**, an association of autonomous local congregations with a commitment to stand together for the Faith and thereby impact our world with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This commitment requires cooperation among us in the *planting, nurturing, and strengthening* of churches.

Church Strengthening – providing resources and opportunities to all **Bridge Fellowship Churches**

Church Nurturing – providing assistance and support to **Bridge Fellowship Churches** in need.

Church Planting – conceiving and birthing new **Bridge Fellowship Churches**

ARTICLE III
Fellowship and Voting Privileges

Section 1

Any Baptist Church in Michigan which has endorsed the doctrinal position of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches shall be eligible to affiliate with this Association.

Section 2

Any Baptist Church qualifying under Article III, Section 1, and approving the constitution and bylaws of this association shall submit to the Council written official notice to the effect that it desires fellowship in this Association; such application(s) shall be recommended to the Association by the Council at the Annual meeting of the Association.

Section 3

This fellowship between the church and the association may be dissolved by: (a) The action of the local church, notifying the Council of this intent. (b) By a majority vote of the messengers at any annual meeting upon proof of a serious departure from the Doctrinal Statement or from the provisions of our constitution.

Section 4

Each church shall designate three of its members who shall be entitled to vote at all sessions of the Annual meeting. However, there shall be no limitation to the number of messengers any church may wish to send.

ARTICLE III
Fellowship and Voting Privileges

Section 1

Any church in Michigan that affirms the doctrinal position of the Bridge Fellowship and adheres to those historic Baptist distinctives contained therein will be eligible to associate with this Fellowship.

Section 2

Any **qualifying church** under Article III, Section 1, and approving the constitution and bylaws of this association shall submit to the **Oversight team** a written official notice to the effect that it desires fellowship in this Association; such application(s) shall be recommended to the Association by the **Oversight Team** at the Annual meeting of the Association.

Section 3

This fellowship between the church and the association may be dissolved by: (a) The action of the local church, notifying the **Oversight Team** of this intent. (b) By a majority vote of the messengers at any annual meeting ~~upon proof of a serious departure from the Doctrinal Statement or from the provisions of our constitution.~~

Section 4

Each church shall designate three of its members who shall be entitled to vote at all sessions of the Annual meeting. However, there shall be no limitation to the number of messengers any church may wish to send.

ARTICLE IV
Annual Meeting

Section 1

The fiscal year of the Association shall commence on January 1st and conclude on December 31st. The Association shall hold its annual meeting in the month of October.

Section 2

All business of the Association shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE IV
Annual Meeting

Section 1

The fiscal year of the Association shall commence on January 1st and conclude on December 31st. The Association shall hold its annual meeting in the month of October.

Section 2

Robert's Rules of order shall be the general rule to be followed at all business meetings. However, Christian spirit and principles should prevail over Robert's rules of order at all meetings.

ARTICLE V Council

Section 1

The Council shall be composed of nine members at large to be elected from the fellowshiping churches at the annual meeting and one representative from each of the local area MARBC associations. The nine council members at large elected at the annual meeting of the MARBC shall be eligible to succeed themselves a second term. Their terms of office shall be for three years arranged so that three are elected each year. The election of the other council members by their own respective associations will allow the person to succeed himself as often as the local association desires.

A split ballot will be used in order to increase the number of Associate Pastors serving on the Council of 15. Two pastors will be elected annually to serve as at large members of the Council of 15, and one associate pastor will be elected annually to serve as an at-large member of the Council of 15.

Section 2

Election: Each fellowshiping church shall be requested to send to the Council a list of seven (7) names chosen by the church. From the aggregate list, the Secretary shall record the ten (10) highest names (those occurring most frequently in the lists) who shall be considered the nominees for the council members at large to be voted upon by the messengers at the Annual meeting of the Association.

Section 3

Organization: The Council shall meet after the election and during the Annual meeting to select from the Council members at large a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and a treasurer.

Section 4

The Council can be called together as often as the chairman deems necessary. The Council may pay its members mileage driven to the council meetings. After the annual meeting and at the first council meeting the Executive Director will present appointments to such standing committees as may be deemed necessary for the approval of the Council.

ARTICLE V Oversight Team

Section 1

The oversight team is responsible for overseeing the ministry, the executive director, and the finances of Bridge Fellowship. In the event that a director is absent, the oversight team will take on the responsibility of nominating a new one.

The oversight team shall be composed of at least six members at large and one representative from each of the regional associations.

Section 2 – Nominations and election:

Each fellowshiping church will be asked to submit recommendations for the oversight team. The oversight team will act as the Nominating Committee for the members at large, selecting candidates to be voted on by the messengers at the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship.

The members at large will be elected at the annual meeting and are eligible to serve a second consecutive term. Terms are three years in duration, with elections held so that at least one member is elected each year. At least one associate pastor will serve as a member at large.

The selection of the regional representatives by their own regional associations will allow the person to succeed himself as often as the regional association desires. Regional representatives will be affirmed by a yes or no vote at the annual meeting each year.

Section 3 – Organization:

Following the election and during the Annual Meeting, the executive director and council will convene to elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Regional Representatives are tasked with implementing the vision of Bridge Fellowship within their respective regions.

Section 4 – Meetings:

The Oversight Team may be called together as often as the Chairman deems necessary. ~~The Council may pay its members mileage driven to the council meetings.~~ After the Annual Meeting, at the first Team meeting, the Executive Director will present appointments to any standing committee deemed necessary, subject to approval by the Oversight Team.

ARTICLE VI
Executive Director and Employed Staff

It shall be the duty of the Council to secure the services of the Executive Director (aka "State Representative"). The Executive Director will serve under the direction of the Council and will provide leadership in implementing the goals, ministries, and policies of the MARBC. He should meet the Biblical qualifications for pastoral ministry, and demonstrate enthusiasm for the mission, vision, and values of the MARBC. There is no time limit on the term of office of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will give at least one month written notice of his resignation to the Council.

Employed staff positions of the MARBC must be approved by the Council. The Executive Director will provide oversight of any staff secured by the MARBC. A staff member must give at least two weeks written notice of their resignation to the Executive Director.

ARTICLE VII
Amendments

Any amendments or alterations to this constitution shall be submitted to the fellowshipping churches by the Council at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting. Such changes must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting messengers present at the annual meeting of the Association.

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It shall be the duty of the **oversight team** to secure the services of the Executive Director (aka "State Representative"). The Executive Director will serve under the direction of the **Oversight Team** and will provide leadership in implementing the goals, ministries, and policies of **the Bridge Fellowship**. He should meet the Biblical qualifications for pastoral ministry, and demonstrate enthusiasm for the **doctrine**, mission, vision, and values of the **Bridge Fellowship**. There is no time limit on the term of office of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will give at least one month written notice of his resignation to the **Oversight Team**.

Employed staff positions of the **Bridge Fellowship** must be approved by the **Oversight Team**. The Executive Director will provide oversight of any staff secured by **the Bridge Fellowship**. A staff member must give at least two weeks written notice of their resignation to the Executive Director.

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