



 Mennonite  
Church  
Canada  
GATHERING  
**2025**  
JULY 2-5

# REPORT BOOK

# Welcome - Bienvenue to Eastern Canada!

## A word from our hosts

On behalf of the 109 congregations that make up Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC), we warmly welcome you, our siblings from across the country. We gather here, in the Grand River watershed on land nestled between three Great Lakes to reconnect and to experience the gifts God has given our nationwide church.

MCEC congregations stretch from New Brunswick to Quebec and to Ontario. We worship in more than 20 languages united by our shared Anabaptist faith. Together we work to energize congregations in worship, discipleship and mission; to encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation; and to embody God’s reconciling ministry for all creation.

For a long time, the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples that occupied this land sought to abide by the Dish with One Spoon Covenant—a commitment to share the land for the benefit of all its inhabitants. We hear a resonance of this tradition in I Peter 4:10, which encourages us to be “bons intendants des diverses grâces de Dieu” and to “mettez chacun au service des autres le don que vous avez reçu.”

Indeed, God has given our nationwide family of faith many gifts. We look forward to celebrating those together and to exploring new ways of serving each other, so that God’s healing and hope might flow through us to the world.



**Anthony Siegrist**

Executive Minister,  
Mennonite Church  
Eastern Canada



**Ben Cassels**

Moderator,  
Mennonite Church  
Eastern Canada

## Gathering at a glance:

The theme “Each Has a Gift” (1 Peter 4:10), invites us into a vibrant, intercultural experience of worship, learning, and community.

- Immerse yourself in diverse worship experiences that honor the unique gifts each person brings. Through music, storytelling, and ritual, we celebrate our unity in Christ and rich tapestry of our community.
- Engage in meaningful conversations as we reflect on our collective journey. Through reports and discernment sessions, we listen deeply, share openly, and seek God’s guidance.
- Come curious and leave energized as U30 engage in unique spaces to connect, question, lead or attend the post-retreat at Hidden Acres focusing on fun, peacemaking and purpose.
- Participate in workshops that offer fresh perspectives on faith, justice, inclusion, and leadership. Come ready to listen, share, and discover new ways to nurture your gifts and engage with the world’s needs.
- Discover the exhibit hall as a hub of inspiration, showcasing the work and witness of our ministries alongside our broader community.
- Stay connected with “The Gift Exchange”- a daily newsletter that captures the spirit of each day, keeping you informed and engaged.
- Celebrate as youth gather in a vibrant community of worship, laughter, learning, and late-night dorm talks. This is a space where gifts are noticed, named, and nurtured. Expect connection, creativity, and a whole lot of fun.

May we all recognize and celebrate the gifts each person brings, building a community rooted in love, service, and mutual respect.

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# Governance

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**



**Geraldine Balzer**  
Moderator, Mennonite Church Canada

## Moderator's Report

Welcome to Gathering 2025, where we will celebrate Each Gift within our diverse and vibrant MC Canada community. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us that "Each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God."

This year we commemorate the radical reformation by remembering the first rebaptism in Zurich on January 21, 1525. I wonder if those early Anabaptists had any idea of what the future held. Born out of a desire to understand the Jesus-centered message within a voluntary community and to follow Jesus in faith and life through all of the counter cultural implications, those first Anabaptists professed their belief through the act of rebaptism. Like reformers before them, they were called radicals and heretics.

This year, 500 years later, thousands will gather in Zurich to commemorate those small beginnings. Today, Mennonite Church Canada is one of 110 conferences in this global fellowship that spans 61 countries, and together we are more than 10,000 congregations of approximately 1.45 million baptized members.

Even though we are one small part of that global fellowship, in many ways our congregations mirror the global church. We have become a theological tradition encompassing many cultural traditions. Together, we continue to discern the meaning of the Biblical text, determining not only how we live out our mission, but discerning what that mission is.

For this reason, back in January of 2023, the Joint Council decided to make, "Becoming an Intercultural Church" the focus of Gathering 2025. A growing number of new Canadian congregations is widening our cultural diversity, and this calls for a response: We want to discern together how we shift our structures and our

understandings from a primarily euro-centric location to a space where congregants from our many cultures can feel at home in Mennonite Church Canada. The 1 Peter 4:10 text gives us the essence of how we engage the conversation: Each person has a gift.

Over the past several years, MC Canada has grappled with the challenges of our new structure, adopted in October of 2017. We spent the first three years trying to understand and implement the structure. Then the COVID-19 pandemic happened, and our task was survival and support of the nationwide and global church.

Following Gathering 2022, we began a careful analysis of the places where this new structure rubbed against our skin. Instead of becoming a favourite sweatshirt, it gaped in places, and bound in others. In May of 2023, the Joint Council took the bold step of imagining alterations for this garment.

We did not go into this lightly or rapidly, with scissors and thread at the ready, but entrusted five of our companions on the Joint Council to spend careful and prayerful time to rethink and reimagine the good fabric we had been given. Many thanks to Bruce Baergen, Jennifer Regehr, Ann Schultz, Gerry Grunau, and David Wiens for the care they took in reshaping the structures to better fit the bold vision of 2017.

We have lived a year of experimentation, testing the proposed alterations, ensuring that the vision of 2017 is realized in the work we do. We can move forward with confidence. Here are six (of the 11) recommendations.

**Identity:** In 2017, Mennonite Church Canada was redefined as the five Regional Churches coming together. Now, Mennonite Church Canada's identity is defined by the five Regional Churches coming together and is further shaped by what our global companions and ecumenical partners are calling us to be.

## Moderator's Report | page 2/2

**Decision making:** Regional decisions are centred at the Regional Church level. Nationwide decisions are made by the Joint Council and now operationalized by nationwide staff. The Joint Council's decisions that have implications for the Regional Churches are to be embraced in all the regions. This adjustment has enabled MC Canada ministry directors and coordinators to be responsive to what the congregations and regions are requesting, but also to initiate and follow through with ideas that resource and support the regions in their area of ministry.

**Stewarding Connections with Partner Organizations:** The Executive Ministers Group (EMG) now provides valuable discernment for the Joint Council through its regular meetings where advice and counsel are shared. The Joint Council has the final authority to approve partnerships (i.e. global companions), though it no longer requires the uniform voice of the five Regional Churches.

**Revenue/Resource Generation:** No longer the sole responsibility of the Regional Churches, collaborative efforts with MC Canada staff are underway to profile the ministries and programming, and make it easier for congregations and individuals to offer financial support. As you will see, these efforts have shaped the development of our FYE 2026 budget.

**Communications:** The Communications report will detail this further, but we recognize the need for a more robust communications system that ensures the stories of MC Canada, local, regional, nationwide and global, are shared. This is key to maintaining our connectedness to each other and the broader Mennonite and ecclesial world.

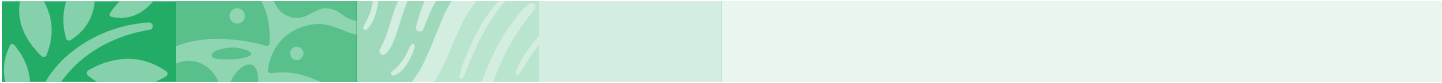
**Nationwide Gatherings:** Following Gathering 2022 in Edmonton, we realized that the voice of congregations was lacking in the new structure. For some, it felt as if there was a deliberate attempt to silence those without Regional Church delegate status. Including Congregation Representatives at Gathering 2025 may be the most visible change to our constituents. Each congregation has been invited to send representatives to participate in discernment at the nationwide level.

After a year of living into experimentation and testing these alterations, the garment fits much better. We are confident that the changes will lead to a stronger, more robust nationwide church. The sweatshirt may still gape in places and bind in others; we would never want to be too comfortable or complacent. We must be continually responsive to the emerging and changing needs of our community.

By the time we gather in Kitchener in July, several of us will have attended the Anabaptist 500 Commemoration in Zurich. In organizing this commemorative event, Mennonite World conference has ensured that the global Mennonite church is included and will be present.

The intercultural church focus of Assembly 2025 recognizes the diversity of our global church and the ways in which it is reflected in MC Canada – and I am excited about that.

As we continue to live into our faith, may we be welcoming and inclusive, reflecting the example of Jesus and the vision of our denominational ancestors.



**Mennonite Church Canada**

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## Our Vision

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.

*This statement is shared by MC USA and MC Canada (1995)*

## Statement Of Identity and Purpose

God calls, equips, and sends the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a community of disciples of Jesus, a part of the Body of Christ covenanted together as congregations, regional Churches\* and a nationwide church body.

Gratefully responding to God’s initiatives and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves and our resources

to calling, equipping, and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*\*In recognition and affirmation that church happens at many levels beyond the congregation, including the regional and nationwide church, this vision and statement of identity and purpose is shared by Mennonite Church British Columbia, Mennonite Church Alberta, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Mennonite Church Manitoba, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and Mennonite Church Canada.*

## Our Priorities

### To be a People of God who

Pursue God’s **CALLING** – to join in the restoration of all creation

Embrace our **COMPANIONS** – creating spaces where God’s welcome, generosity, and forgiveness are known.

Cultivate a **CULTURE** – as multi-voiced, intercultural communities, empowering each other to live, grow, and share the peace of Jesus Christ with joy.

## Objectives for Priorities

### As a people, God is CALLING us to

- Live out an understanding of the gospel that is Good News.
- Share with our neighbors how this gospel is a path to peace with God and all of creation.
- Devote ourselves to the ministry of peace and reconciliation - globally and locally.
- Inspire Christian faith and spiritual disciplines by providing resources and support for the church.
- Support the growth of communities of faith that are a foretaste of God’s reign.

### Together with Our COMPANIONS, those with whom we share bread - we will

- Nurture our covenant partnership as MC Canada (5 regions).
- Strengthen Anabaptist/Mennonite communities locally and globally.
- Partner with other Anabaptist/Mennonite groups, ecumenical bodies, and the global church.
- Seek justice alongside the First Peoples of Canada.
- Engage in ministry with the marginalized of society fostering belonging and responses that bring wholeness.

### We will cultivate a CULTURE that is inspired by living and growing as multi-voiced, intercultural communities to

- Discover the God-given gifts in each person.
- Cultivate a culture of call to serve Christ and the Church in particular tasks within the church, within the broader church, and within the global church.
- Live joyfully as counter-cultural citizens in the world as people of God’s peace.

*In January 2023, the Joint Council requested that the 2007 wording of the MC Canada Priorities, Objectives, and Initiatives be updated. The MC Canada staff updated the wording of the priorities and reframed the objectives to reflect an understanding of their work in supporting the initiatives of the various regional churches. This working draft was presented to Joint Council in May 2023.*



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## Our Covenant

**Mennonite Church Canada** is a covenanted partnership among:

- Mennonite Church Alberta
- Mennonite Church British Columbia
- Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
- Mennonite Church Manitoba
- Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

The partnership is guided by **Vision: Healing and Hope**

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and,  
By the power of the Holy Spirit,  
To grow as communities of grace, joy and peace,  
So that God's healing and hope flows through us to the world.

And our **Statement of Identity and Purpose**

God calls, equips and sends the church to engage the world  
with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.  
We are a community of disciples of Jesus,  
a part of the Body of Christ,  
covenanted together.  
as congregations,  
regional churches, and  
a nationwide body,  
Gratefully responding to God's initiatives  
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,  
we commit ourselves and our resources  
to calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world  
with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As Regional Churches that form Mennonite Church Canada, we commit to;

- Love, care for, pray for and encourage each other as a nationwide family of faith in a spirit of generosity and reciprocity.
- Join together in mutual prayer, fellowship, worship and discernment
- Bless and support each other's ministries embracing them as our uniquely expressed, but collective work of the nationwide church.
- Consider nationwide ministries and priorities we share as one with our regional ministries and priorities thereby holding the nationwide body as the work of all
- Meet our volunteer and financial commitments that support our nationwide ministries and priorities
- Uphold the statements and agreements that we make together
- Develop resources and practices that strengthen our Anabaptist Mennonite identity and form us as a people of God
- Engage in witness efforts locally and globally
- Develop our nationwide agenda through attending to the needs identified by our congregations via the Regional Churches and by our siblings in the global church

# Guiding Understandings for Nationwide Decision-Building and Operations<sup>1</sup>

When building decisions around nationwide programs, staffing, and budgeting, we seek to be guided by the following understandings. These also serve as guiding operational understandings.

## 1. Centred on Jesus

- How is this initiative or action shaped by our Mennonite understanding of Jesus and the good news he proclaimed? How does it grow out of our desire to be faithful followers of Jesus in his teachings and way of life?
- How does it reflect Mennonite values which we believe grow out of this Jesus-centeredness, values like nonviolence, simplicity, concern for the vulnerable, communal discernment, desire for the common good, pursuit of a just peace, and so on?

## 2. Focused on congregations

- How does this initiative or action support and resource our local congregations, which we believe to be the primary locus of the church's ministry in the world? How does it strengthen the worship, learning, care, service, outreach, witness, and leadership of our congregations? How does it nurture the overall spiritual health of our congregations?
- How does it coordinate our local congregations, enabling them to work together for these goals?

## 3. Rooted in relationships

- How is this initiative or action grounded in local and direct relationships, relationships with people "on the ground" and those most impacted by the initiative or action?
- How is it connected into relationships local congregations have within their immediate communities, relationships regional churches have with regional bodies, and the nationwide church with national and international bodies?
- How does it nurture these relationships in meaningful, non-utilitarian ways?

## 4. Leaning into partnerships

- How does this initiative or action lean into already existing partnerships with like-minded people and organizations at the local, regional, and nationwide levels? How does it create new partnerships?
- How does our role in these partnerships effectively use our distinctive gifts as a church (theology, liturgy, ethics, service) while celebrating and relying on the distinctive gifts of our partners?
- How can these partnerships be mutually beneficial to accomplish shared goals?

## 5. Sharing our power

- How does this initiative or action utilize the power we possess to influence change in order to reflect the above understandings?
- How does it empower our local churches and their members to influence change to reflect these understandings?
- How does it empower those who are often marginalized and thus disempowered in these ways?
- How does it enable an equilibrium of power so there is an appropriate "push from the bottom/pull from the top" dynamic for this change, which we believe best reflects our Mennonite understandings of leadership and the nature of the church?

<sup>1</sup> Developed by the MC Canada Executive Ministers Group, November 30, 2021. Affirmed by Joint Council, January 30, 2022.

# Information for Congregation Representatives, Regional Delegates, and Participants<sup>1</sup>

## CONGREGATION REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

### 1. RATIONALE

- This function will be proposed in the Bylaw Changes in Gathering 2025 and is consistent with the philosophical construct of MC Canada where the individual congregations are the primary locus of the church's ministry in the world.
- It enables congregations to speak into the discernment process for determining the focus of the ministry of the nationwide church within the context of Mennonite Church Canada's Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement.

### 2. SELECTION

Each congregation may appoint up to three Congregation Representatives and is encouraged to send a pastor/leader, a person who understands congregational and regional dynamics and a person under 35 years of age. Congregations are responsible for paying the attendance costs of their representatives.

3. **ROLE.** Congregation Representatives have a significant role in discerning priorities and shaping long-term goals.

#### A. PREPARE

- Register, read the information on the website, read the report book and information sent via email in the weeks ahead.

- Engage your congregation, making observations and recording ideas/questions related to the Nationwide Priorities.

#### B. REMEMBER

- Pray for the Gathering and the work of our nationwide community of faith.
- Your role is to represent your congregation.
- When sitting at the discernment table, it is important for a Congregation Representative to identify when they are speaking from a personal point of view.

#### C. PARTICIPATE

- Attend Gathering 2025 and participate in a generative capacity.
- Together with Regional Delegates and other participants, listen to the ministry reports and join discussion tables to discern where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church.
- The Gathering discernment at each table will be documented, submitted for collating into a triennium report that provides guidance to the Joint Council for decision-making.
- It is anticipated that Congregation Representatives will be present at the MC Canada Virtual 2-hour AGMs to ensure accountability.

#### D. REPORT

- Following the Gathering, share the experience and main highlights with the congregation. Summaries, both written and video, will be made available to assist you.

## REGIONAL DELEGATE ROLE *(next page)*

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed and approved by Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council Executive, March 5, 2025

## REGIONAL DELEGATE ROLE

### 1. SELECTION

For Gathering 2025, Regional Delegates are appointed by the Regional Church as outlined in section 8 of the current Mennonite Church Canada Bylaws:

- a. 8.1 Each Regional Church can have the following delegates attend a Delegate Gathering on its behalf:
  - six (6) members of the board of directors of each Regional Church;
  - five (5) delegates, as appointed by each Regional Church; and
  - additional Regional Church delegates appointed by each Regional Church based on one (1) delegate per one thousand (1000) Congregation Members, rounded upward to the next one thousand. For example, if a Regional Church has 2100 Congregation Members, it can appoint three (3) additional delegates. If a Congregation does not maintain a formal membership list of its Congregation Members, then the number of regular attendees can be used in place of the number of Congregation Members. The congregation can define who is a "regular" attendee. (i.e. MCEC has 12,950 members so this is 13 additional delegates = TOTAL MCEC Regional delegates: 24 delegates)
- b. 8.2 Delegates must be Congregation Members. There are no other restrictions on who may be a delegate.

#### Important notes for Regional Delegate:

- In our current governance structure, motions/resolutions come to the Gathering floor via the Joint Council. Regional Delegates are encouraged to offer recommendations on any item in the agenda.
- MC Canada Regional Delegate role and representation changes were presented as a Bylaw change to Regional Churches (via the Joint Council) 2 months before the delegate sessions and will be voted on by Regional Delegates at Gathering 2025.

### 2. ROLE

#### A. PREPARE

- Register, read the information on the website, read the report book and information sent via email in the weeks ahead.
- Discuss questions with other delegates from your region.

#### B. REMEMBER

- Delegates think about what is in the best interest of MC Canada – who we are together as 5 regions in the context of the global church. Whatever is in the best interests of the regions together will be in the best interests of MC Canada.
- When sitting at the discernment table, it is important for a Regional Delegate to identify when they are speaking from a congregational or a personal point of view.
- Pray for the Gathering and the work of our nationwide community of faith.

#### C. PARTICIPATE

- Listen to Ministry reporting and consider the table questions for discernment times.
- Together with Congregation Representatives, engage in discernment sessions related to collective ministry as a nationwide church to provide guidance to Joint Council for decision-making.
- Fiduciary responsibilities for Gathering 2025 include receiving and voting on:
  - ◇ Acceptance of Ministry Reports
  - ◇ Acceptance of of Financial Statements FYE 2025
  - ◇ Acceptance of Financial Auditor for FYE 2026
  - ◇ Approval of AGM minutes –2023, 2024
  - ◇ Ratify Joint Council Actions between August 2022 – June 2025
  - ◇ Approval of FYE 2026 Budget
  - ◇ Approval of Bylaw Changes
  - ◇ Approval of Nomination Slate
  - ◇ Approval of Discernment Process Next Steps

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Information for representatives, delegates, and participants | page 3/3

## **GATHERING PARTICIPANT ROLE** (those who are neither a Regional Delegate nor a Congregation Representative)

*Thank you for your curiosity and care for the nationwide community of Mennonite Church Canada and your decision to attend Gathering 2025!*

### **ROLE**

#### **A. REMEMBER:**

- Everyone who attends the Gathering is valued, whether you are part of a specific church community or not.
- Pray for the Gathering and the work of the nationwide community of faith.

#### **B. PREPARE:**

- Register, read the information on the website, and read the report book and information sent via email in the weeks ahead.
- Engage in conversation with your congregational representatives or with those who attend a congregation or work for the church.

#### **C. ROLE:**

- You are welcome to join and participate in the discussions around the discernment tables. Although you can speak about your congregational experience and have your thoughts recorded, you will not be identified as a Congregation Representative.

## Resolution Information

### Guidelines for Presenting and Processing Resolutions

In 2017, Mennonite Church Canada was redefined as “an integrated system, beginning with congregations, which form Regional Churches, which covenant together as Mennonite Church Canada for a common mission...” (Operating Agreement 4.1)

Therefore, any resolution that affects identity, governance, programs, or budgets should first be reviewed by Regional Church leadership, and then by the Joint Council, before it can be presented to the Mennonite Church Canada delegate body for a decision. Consequently, the resolution may need to be written as a recommendation for the Joint Council, instructing them to bring it forward for discussion at the next annual Gathering.<sup>1</sup>

The Resolutions Committee will consider resolutions submitted in advance of the Gathering and, as appropriate, edit the resolutions and will make them available to delegates prior to the Gathering.

During the Gathering, the Resolutions Committee has three tasks:

1. It prepares procedural resolutions such as recommending floor privileges, thanking hosts, etc.
2. It formulates motions when asked by the delegate body or the moderator.
3. It receives resolutions from delegates and ensures that they are clear and appropriate.

Instructions for submitting resolutions. Resolutions must be

- submitted in time for the Resolution Committee to process them adequately and for the moderator to schedule them into the business sessions,
- worded in language that is accessible to all delegates, avoiding formality and lengthy introductions.
- include the names of the mover and seconder.

<sup>1</sup> Delegates are chosen by the Regional Churches. Congregation Representatives are not Delegates and therefore cannot bring resolutions. Congregation Representatives are encouraged to voice any recommendations or concerns during the table discussion times. All of those comments will be tabulated and will inform the Joint Council over the next 3 years.

# Joint Council (JC) Members



**Geraldine Balzer**  
MC Canada  
Moderator



**Bruce Baergen**  
MC Canada  
Assistant  
Moderator



**Paul Gilbert**  
MC Canada  
Secretary  
Treasurer



**Ben Cassels**  
MCEC  
Moderator



**Chung Vang**  
MCEC Regional  
Representative



**Cheryl Braun**  
MCM  
Moderator



**David Wiens**  
MCM Regional  
Representative



**Brent Guenther**  
MC Sask  
Moderator



**Charlene Krahn**  
MC Sask  
Regional  
Representative



**Keith Ratzlaff**  
MCA  
Moderator



**Matthew Wiens**  
MCA Regional  
Representative



**Gerry Grunau**  
MCBC  
Moderator



**Jennifer Regehr**  
MCBC Regional  
Representative



# Ministries

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**



**Doug Klassen**

Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Executive Minister's Report

I have had the privilege of serving in ministry within Mennonite Church Canada since 1992. During this time, I have pastored in multiple regional churches, including Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC), Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM), and Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA). Six years ago, Rose and I moved to Manitoba – our third time doing so – when I accepted the call to my current role.

While pastoral ministry in large urban centres provided a wide array of opportunities and engagements, stepping into a role that encompasses the national and global breadth of Mennonite Church Canada's work required a significant period of adjustment.

Early in my transition, I recalled a story shared by a former MCA moderator at an annual general meeting. She spoke of her experience as a health professional working in northern Indigenous communities. One day, overwhelmed by her demanding schedule, she told an elder, "I have so much going on, so many things to do, I just need more time." He replied, "You don't need more time. You just need focus."

The recommendations of the Future Directions Task Force (FDTF, 2012–2017) and the subsequent delegate decisions in October 2017 led to a substantial downsizing of Mennonite Church Canada's national office. The intention was for the Regional Churches to assume responsibility for both regional ministries and many of the functions previously managed by national staff, councils, and committees. Implementing these changes and establishing new systems was a significant challenge.

As it became clear that the Regional Churches could not sustain the increased workload, further

adjustments were necessary. Now, after more than seven years of transition, we're finding ourselves at a point where we can thoughtfully ask: How do we refocus?

Mennonite Church Canada continues to face mounting pressures to engage in ministries that, while important, may fall outside the core of the church's primary calling. In light of the deep pain and suffering in the world, we are frequently asked to engage more directly in advocacy and justice work—areas we have historically approached in partnership with organizations like Mennonite Central Committee. Additionally, we are often asked to produce statements, theological responses, or studies on a range of societal issues, from Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) to nationalism and vaccinations.

In the face of these requests, we continually ask ourselves: Do we need more time or more staff? Or do we need focus?

Mission drift is a constant challenge when the need is so great. Charitable organizations can easily drift away from their primary mission. As passionate Jesus followers, it can be tempting to expand and grow the ministries we already have or start new ones that further extend our reach. Discerning what it is that we are called to do and what we have capacity to do is challenging. Asking for patience in response to an invitation or initiative is one of the more difficult things we must sometimes do.

Steven Covey says, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." Our "main thing" is articulated in the Vision: Healing and Hope statement that we hold together with our siblings in MC USA.

Vision (Healing and Hope): God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flows through us to the world.

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To keep “the main thing the main thing” means staying centred on Jesus Christ, and through the empowerment of the Spirit, **to grow communities** that share God’s healing and hope in the world. As nationwide leaders, we think of this in several ways:

**1. Keep Christ at the Center**

As communities, consistently engaging the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the core of faith and practice.

Make decisions – personal, communal, and institutional – through the lens of our collective discipleship commitments.

**2. Live Out the Values of Grace, Joy, and Peace**

Cultivate communities that model forgiveness, mutual care, and joy even amid challenges.

Practice peace not just in advocacy, but within ourselves, our families, congregations, and the broader community.

Recognize that these values evoke reciprocity and be open to receiving what God is bringing to us through others.

**3. Be a Channel of Healing and Hope**

As communities, engage in restorative practices, reconciliation, and service in our neighbourhoods, rural settings, with the First Peoples of Canada and globally.

Ask continually: Are we listening well – to God and to our companions? Are we offering healing where there is brokenness? Are we offering hope where there is despair?

**4. Stay Rooted in the Spirit’s Power**

Recover the centrality of prayer to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church and to rely on the Spirit to guide the design of strategic planning.

**5. Avoid Distractions from the Core Vision**

Don’t let internal politics, institutional survival, or cultural pressures override the call to be a Jesus-centered, outward-focused people.

Regularly ask: Is this initiative helping us follow Jesus more fully and embody God’s healing and hope? Is this effort communicating the beauty and joy of knowing Jesus?

Interestingly, in my visits to congregations across the country, I consistently encounter conversations – in one-on-one interactions, small groups, adult education settings, and during worship – that reflect the principles outlined above. I have witnessed these five key points being thoughtfully articulated and actively lived out, whether I am at Petitcodiac Mennonite Church in New Brunswick, First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, or Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver, British Columbia. This shared commitment speaks to a remarkable sense of unity across our nationwide church, and for that I praise God!

Whether you are coming to Gathering 2025 as a member of the Joint Council, or Executive Minister’s Group, national or regional staff, Regional Church delegate, congregation representative or participant, thank you, and God bless you! “Each has a gift” to bring to the church (1 Peter 4:10). We are so grateful that God has given us what we need to be a people of healing and hope in the world.

<b>Congregational Leadership Ministers</b>							
	<b>Al Rempel</b>	<b>Shelby Boese</b>	<b>Tim Wiebe-Neufeld</b>	<b>Len Rempel</b>	<b>Jeff Friesen</b>	<b>Marilyn Rudy-Froese</b>	<b>Doug Klassen</b>
	MC Canada	MC British Columbia	MC Alberta	MC Saskatchewan	MC Manitoba	MC Eastern Canada	MC Canada

# Congregational Leadership Ministers' Report

I am delighted to share updates and insights regarding our leadership ministries. The Church Leadership Ministers (CLM) group, comprising Shelby Boese (MCBC), Tim Wiebe-Neufeldt (MCA), Len Rempel (MC Sask), Jeff Friesen (MCM), Marilyn Rudy-Froese (MCEC) and Doug Klassen (MC Canada), meets monthly to provide advice, counsel, and effort in this area of ministry. Together, regional churches and the nationwide church aim to serve congregations and credentialed leaders.

**Context:**

Congregations continue to seek ministers who are called, prepared, and supported in their roles. However, we are observing trends and pressures that impact these expectations and our responses. Notably, fewer individuals are entering traditional education programs that lead to pastoral positions, resulting in fewer candidates for pastoral openings. Additionally, many available positions are part-time due to smaller congregations and rising compensation costs.

**Responses:**

The CLM is addressing these trends with three initiatives:

**Resource Development:**

We are creating resources for congregations to encourage individuals to explore their calling. Inspired by the Gathering theme, we believe every person has a gift, and focusing on vocation can

help congregations guide people towards pastoral leadership roles.

**Leadership Day at Gathering 2025:**

This day will be dedicated to asking questions and receiving feedback from both credentialed leaders and others. We aim to understand the trends they observe, how best to support them, and gather advice for future initiatives.

**Educational Partnerships:**

We are collaborating with educational institutions to explore questions regarding preparation, ongoing support, and enrichment for those called to credentialed ministry.

We recognize that traditional models no longer adequately match current trends. The CLM seeks the discernment of the whole church as we continue to call and encourage individuals to use their gifts for God's kingdom.

**New and Ongoing Efforts - Two notable items:**

**1. Transition into Ministry (TiM) Program:**

We launched a revised TiM Program for Mennonite Church Canada, partnering with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). The program includes three didactic/training sessions interspersed with four group coaching times. Participants also take a course, workshop, or training event from our education partners, supported by a \$500 grant. We thank the participants, mentors, and instructors for their involvement and look forward to the second year for the first cohort and welcoming a new cohort. Special thanks to the Company of 1000 for their financial support beyond the \$600 each congregation contributes annually.

Congregational Leadership Ministers' Report | page 2/2

## 2. Guiding Ministerial Leadership in Mennonite Church Canada (GMLC) Policy:

Approved by the Joint Council in October 2024, this policy has significant implications:

The CLM is responsible for ensuring each credentialed minister agrees with the Code of Conduct and Ethical Practice outlined in the GMLC, using a new registration process.

Credentialed ministers must update their Boundary training every three years. Previously provided independently by regional churches, this resource is now offered cooperatively.

The CLM will continue to provide counsel and insight, addressing challenges and proposing revisions based on the first year of the policy's implementation.

I am excited about our collaborative efforts as a nationwide church, regional churches, and congregations to encourage, inspire, and support leadership ministries. We are blessed with many talented and visionary individuals responding to God's call. Our hope is to use our gifts to build communities of healing and hope.

*Submitted by Al Rempel, Associate Executive Minister, Mennonite Church Canada on behalf of the Congregational Leadership Ministers.*

### In preparation for Gathering - consider...

How has your congregation identified and nurtured future leaders of the church? What opportunities do you envision for collaborating in the discernment and support of these leaders?



**Doug Klassen**  
Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Communications Report

The moderator's report referenced the outcomes of a recent governance review, which identified the need for a comprehensive communications strategy. This strategy should be shaped by how best to share the story of the nationwide church.

A Winnipeg-based journalist and communications specialist recently observed: *"We used to say, 'Communications tells your organization's story.' Now we say, 'Communications is your story.'"*

While this may be something of an overstatement, it reflects an important shift: communications today is not merely about announcements or press releases – it is a critical strategic component of organizational identity and mission.

Over the coming months, a consultative process will be undertaken with the goal of:

- Sustaining Synergy Across Regional Churches
- Continuing to foster collaboration among Regional Churches, seeking alignment and mutual support.
- Raising the Profile of Nationwide and International Ministries
- Identifying effective methods to increase visibility and awareness of our broader witness and outreach efforts.

Our objectives include:

- Telling a Coherent, Compelling Nationwide Story
- Storytelling is fundamental to our identity. By highlighting the people, congregations, ministries, and impact across the church, we will aim to inspire imagination and offer hope.
- Establishing Shared Communication Principles

A common set of values and guidelines will bring clarity and consistency to our communication efforts, including branding and messaging – both internally and with the public.

### Developing a Comprehensive Communications Strategy

In collaboration with invested Regional Churches, we will co-create a strategic framework that reflects both regional distinctives and nationwide priorities.

### Supporting Resource Generation

Communications will serve as a key support for fundraising and engagement by producing materials that feature congregational stories, regional initiatives, and the work of the nationwide church.

### Maintaining a Current and Engaging Online Presence

We are committed to ensuring our website remains up-to-date, user-friendly, and reflective of our mission and values.

### Resolving Database and CRM Challenges

We will address current issues with CRM (constituent relationship management) to ensure reliable, accessible data that supports our operational and strategic needs.

We have a compelling story. It is a story of a faithful people of God, seeking to live and grow as communities of Jesus Christ in rural settings, suburban neighbourhoods and urban centres. It is a story of gift sharing with companions around the world that have also experienced their communities growing and flourishing.

Watch for it in the coming months!



### Sandy Plett

Climate Action Coordinator,  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Climate Action

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about our shared Climate Action Ministry.

Currently, each region of MC Canada has a dedicated group of volunteers forming a working group that relates to the Climate Action ministry. MCBC, MCA and MCEC each have a “Creation Care” working group, MCM has a “Climate Action” working group and MC Sask has a group called the “Climate Emergency Response Team.” Leaders from these groups meet together quarterly to share ideas, challenges and initiatives with each other. This budding network has begun to bear collaborative fruit as these groups share resources and encouragement with one another.

### Context:

Since November 2022, when Climate Action Ministry formally became part of our nationwide work, more and more names and congregations are appearing in my inbox and in conversations. We see many pastors, leaders and lay people applying their energy to address a wide variety of aspects of the climate crisis.

Through the MC Canada Environmental Sustainability Report we have learned that for many of our churches, the Creation Story in Genesis 1 provides a strong Scriptural foundation for the centrality of both Creation Care and Stewardship. We also learned that “Justice and care for vulnerable people who are affected by environmental harm” appears to be predominantly a secondary theme. These findings might help us to know where we have room to grow in our theological understanding of who we are in the world in 2025.

Members of our working groups on Climate and Indigenous Relations are calling MC Canada to live into the overlapping spaces of these two ministry areas – noting that responding with integrity

to Indigenous neighbours goes hand in hand with advocating for and conserving sustainable lifeways.

### Responses:

The Climate Action Ministry is responding to both this growing interest and this call for collaborative ministry engagement in a few ways:

1. **Education and Support for all parts of the congregation:** Since early 2023 we’ve held Zoom workshops (including Green Burial and Preaching Hope in the Climate Crisis, and the “Solar Panel Panel”) and two book studies (In Deep Waters and So We and our Children May Live). These events have been joined by over 140 individual participants in the last two years.
2. **Ongoing support for working groups and other leaders**
  - The Regional working group leaders gather quarterly via Zoom and in October of 2024 met in person in Pinawa, Manitoba (below) for the first time. This gathering strengthened cross-regional connections for leaders of both Climate and Indigenous Relations working groups.



- Climate Action has supported “youth ambassadors” from across the regions to attend youth and young adult initiatives in MCBC, MCM and at AMBS.

## Climate Action | page 2/2

These gatherings have sparked creative collaboration between participants that today are bringing new energy to the church.

3. **Involvement with the broader church:** We are collaborating with other faith-based organizations addressing climate justice issues. Collaborators include Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, For the Love of Creation, and A Rocha. We are also working with Anabaptist Climate Collaborative to build a Binational Mennonite Climate Network. This new network is growing in the gap left by Mennonite Creation Care Network, which formally ended in 2023. One initiative sparked by this new partnership was “Climate Jazz”, a gathering of Anabaptist organizations addressing climate change in Canada and the U.S.
4. **Resourcing:** Supported by many partners including the Sustainability Leadership Group, CommonWord, and Leader Magazine, we are working to create and distribute resources to support the church in discerning its faithful response to the climate crisis.

**New and ongoing efforts:**

1. **Faithful Leadership in the Climate Crisis:** Responding in Hope: 18 Pastors and leaders joined Faithful Leadership in the Climate Crisis, a six-month learning cohort beginning in February of 2025. This cohort is co-led by MC

Canada Climate Action and Anabaptist Climate Collaborative.

2. **Resource Day at Gathering 2025:** On July 2, starting at 9 am we are gathering for a conversation called “What does the Lord require of us?” This day will invite participants to consider how we might link arms as an intercultural church in our shared ministries of restoration. Climate Action and Indigenous Relations will host the event.
3. **Emissions Reduction Grant:** The Emissions Reduction Grant program has dispersed over \$41,000 to 15 congregations in two years for green building upgrades. Supported by MC Canada’s Sustainability Leadership Group, this program has sparked fresh conversations and many additional conversations with congregations looking to reduce emissions. In an effort to build on this momentum, we’ve been working to connect congregations with each other to share expertise via Zoom gatherings and video story telling.

As it’s been said, the shape of a “faithful response to the climate crisis” depends on the respondent – each of us in our own lives, our social groups and our congregations has gifts and talents that can guide us to the work that is ours to do. Unique like fingerprints, our response to the crisis needs to grow from who we are, to challenge us and then help us to move as the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

**In preparation for Gathering - consider...**

How have you and your congregation engaged with climate action/creation care and what might help you envision pathways towards deeper engagement?



**Jonathan Neufeld**  
 Indigenous Relations Coordinator,  
 Mennonite Church Canada

# Indigenous Relations

The Canadian Mennonite story of relationship with Indigenous Communities across the nation spans decades, when measured in terms of Denominational Ministries. It spans centuries if you measure the relationship in waves of Mennonite migration to Canada. Which means that we live

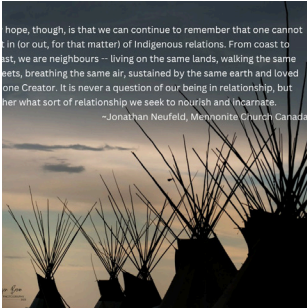


Photo: Ruth Bergen Braun

today embedded in the long journey of Creator’s faithfulness and invitation in 1 Corinthians 5:18, in which Jesus’ followers are called into ‘the ministry of reconciliation’.

Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in particular, Canadians generally and Churches especially have been helped to understand the importance of hearing hard truths and learning about our part in the history and impacts of colonization. And it is also true that the long story of Mennonite relations with Indigenous Peoples is not solely one of pain and regret but also marked by God’s fingerprints of trust, companionship, familial bond and peacemaking. This is powerfully described by Indigenous Christians who mentor me: Continuing to walk with Creator on the path of reconciliation is ‘not about oppression hunting and punishing colonizers, it’s about celebrating the good things of justice and belonging already happening and building on them’.

We can never know the potential future impact that reconciliation efforts today will enable.

Early in my time with Mennonite Church Canada, the Manitoba community was rocked by the emerging news of the bodies of murdered Indigenous women, believed to be in a local

landfill. As the calls and movement to search the landfill grew, news feeds told us that the national leaders of four Christian denominations were going to hold a press conference at the landfill (pictured) and call on governments and law enforcement to search the Prairie Green Landfill: the Evangelical Lutherans, United, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. Mennonite Church Manitoba constituents started calling the office, wondering why we were not showing up.



Then a call came from a member of a family who had lived and served in Cross Lake/Pimicikamak with, as it was then called, Native Ministries workers, over 50 years ago. During that season, a young Cathy Merrick had lived with this Mennonite family for periods of time. The late Cathy Merrick – who became Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs – noticed we were not on the list, that we were not standing up.

Cathy called a member of the family she had lived with as a youth and asked ‘Where are the Mennonites?’ If these Ministry Workers had not been animated by God’s compassion, offering respite and a home in teenage Cathy’s life, would such a call and question ever have come our way?

We can’t know for sure. but I believe it is powerful evidence of God’s fingerprints in the ministries of the past, and the ministries of the present, that create pathways and possibilities for reconciliation we can’t even imagine. Cathy’s question was relayed to MCM staff, and in response MCM asked all 5 regional churches to affirm a MC Canada wide call, to lend our voice to the ecumenical choir and affirm the families and activists who were doing the heavy lifting of maintaining a presence and call to treat Indigenous and all victims of violence with dignity.

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Let's fast-forward to today: What about at this current moment? What seeds are being planted today that generations to come will feed and water? Where are God's fingerprints of justice, reconciliation and belonging being left behind right now, and where have I seen the family of MC Canada adding to them?

Let me share with you what I have witnessed...

- I have the privilege of a front row seat in supporting the Indigenous Relations Working Groups of the Regional Churches, and through them witnessing the ways households, congregations and regional collaborations add their time, energy and passion to the intergenerational stream of reconciliation and repair.
- I have witnessed Prairie farmers collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to enable responsible harvesting of medicines and animals.
- My heart has stirred as I have discovered worship materials written for distribution through Commonword.

Still others are supporting a scholarship fund for Indigenous ministry students, and congregations are attending Powwows and Culture Camps.

- We have congregations coming together with Ojibwe Knowledge Keepers to learn about the history of Treaty.

- I have learned of congregations designating 1% of their annual budgets to Indigenous-led projects in their community.

Across Mennonite Church Canada, we are living into opportunities for kinship building, activism, and peacebuilding in countless ways, as we follow God's reconciling lead.

When we are talking among working groups, we also wrestle with challenges and barriers to the growth and development of these efforts in our congregations; some wonder how MC Canada can be a support and resource. How will Indigenous Relations grow beyond the choir of congregations already engaged and invested? What are the ways we can talk honestly and vulnerably with one another about our resistances and questions? What formation and learning strategies can we develop that help us lean into reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples as an essential movement of holistic discipleship? How do we hold hard truths in a way that doesn't end in paralysis, denial or defensiveness, but invites courageous, restorative, hope and action?

God does indeed call us to be followers of Christ and have healing and hope flow through us to the world. May we continue to align ourselves with God's Spirit of Life, adding our fingerprints to God's imprint of healing and hope.

### In preparation for Gathering - consider...

How have you and your congregation engaged in reconciliation with Indigenous communities and where are you hearing invitations for deeper relationship and growth in understanding?



**Jeanette Hanson**

Director,  
International Witness

## International Witness

Mennonite Church Canada International Witness focuses on building global relationships to share God's gifts with one another.

As we get to know each other, we find gifts that fit together, and complement one another. God has given the global church everything needed to be a blessing to the world we live in.

How are we working so that those gifts are not lost or silenced in a world where money and power speak loudly? In the accompanying reports, I'll bring you up to date with the latest information and inspiration we have received from our companions in ministry.

### Myanmar

In a nation scarred by civil war and shaken by natural disaster, Bible Missionary Church Mennonite continues to share the gifts it has received. Their witness stands out – unique, a mark of peace, hospitality, and resilient hope – as they plant churches, nurture new disciples, train leaders, and extend care to displaced communities, all rooted in the peaceable way of Jesus.

Norm Dyck, Mennonite Church Canada Witness liaison worker for Myanmar, says, "In the midst of chaos, they offer a quiet but courageous reminder: wherever God's gifts are shared, life and peace take root."

### Ethiopia

The witness of Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) is a unique gift of Christ's peace in the tumultuous story of Ethiopia. In a time when civil war threatened to tear the nation apart, MKC refused the pressure of partisanship, competition, division, and hierarchy. Instead, they pledged their ultimate allegiance to Christ alone.

Their resilient, prayer-soaked discipleship became a living signature of hope, forging unexpected bridges

of reconciliation across fractured ethnic divides. Like a fingerprint, their faithfulness is distinct – shaped by relentless prayer to the Prince of Peace and leaving a mark that no turmoil could erase.

At the heart of this journey are students – future pastors, peacebuilders, and community leaders – many of whom come from regions impacted by conflict, poverty, or displacement. Their faithfulness inspires us.

One chapter of MC Canada's relationship to MKC marked its close when Witness workers Werner and Joanne DeJong finished their assignment as MKC teachers in 2024. But other chapters are yet to be written as MC Canada continues sharing the gift of scholarships for students. One special scholarship from MCA supports seminary studies for two South Sudanese students.

### South Africa

The work of Iziko Lamaqabane emerged directly from the rich histories of both the organizational evolution of Anabaptist Network in South Africa and the call for a more indigenous expression of Anabaptists witness.

Tany Warkentin, Mennonite Church Canada liaison worker for Africa, says "Our Iziko Lamaqabane companions are well placed to help us discern how to show and grow solidarity, despite many challenges and complications."

They invite us to walk with them in a solidarity pilgrimage in Fall, 2026. They also host an online conversation on decolonization and invite participants from around the world to join them in imagining an alternative to the colonial structures around us.



Choir members joyfully join in song at Meserete Kristos College and Seminary, Ethiopia.

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## Burkina Faso

Mennonites in Burkina Faso are well known for their gifts as peacemakers in how they solve conflicts with neighbours, intentionally collaborate with Muslim groups – and speak out against war taxes.



The children's choir praise God at the Foyer Evangelique Mennonite de Ouagadougou, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso is a country embroiled in a war with neighbouring countries that seek territorial expansion. When the government asked the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Burkina Faso (FEME) to comply with a military tax, Mennonite leaders explained to them our historic opposition to supporting armed conflict.

The leaders said, 'We must silence the sound of weapons to listen to ourselves as humans.' FEME leadership allowed that the Burkina Mennonites could instead assist internally displaced people. The Mennonite leaders offered more: they said, "... Mennonites have expertise in peacebuilding and trauma healing, and we would like to offer these gifts to our communities."

Being part of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission means that these gifts, can be shared with others in their region as well as with Mennonites from France and North America. We meet annually to pray, worship and collaborate on strengthening the message of God's peace. Coming together to make plans for the next year is a way to encourage and walk in companionship, supporting each other.

## Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission/Democratic Republic of Congo

Following a wave of violence that has caused many to flee their homes, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) is working to respond to the challenges of the Goma and Bukavu regions with huge, displaced populations. AIMM includes three Mennonite conferences in D.R. of Congo.

These three conferences continue, with the support of generous donors in Canada, a large women's literacy training program. This is a gift to their communities as women support each other in learning and teacher training.

## Philippines

As twenty years of service draws to a close for Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja (pictured right), they reflect on the gifts of companionship they have received throughout their ministry in Mindanao, Philippines.



Joji talks about the gift of learning from the rich tapestry of cultures that surround them and with whom they engage on a daily basis.

She said, "Learning about something as simple as headgear is important to know how to engage with people. Each design says something about the status of the person and tells a cultural story."

The people in Mindanao have the gift of knowing how to be sensitive to cultural cues and to use those in communication. Learning these lessons has been vital as the Pantojas worked with indigenous, Islamic and settler groups in Mindanao.

Growing just peace in a region with a long history of civil unrest and armed conflict seemed unimaginable when the Pantojas arrived in 2006. Going into such areas was a step of faith for Dann and Joji, as well as for MC Canada.

In response they formed PeaceBuilders Community (PBCI), established Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) teams to provide training, brought together Muslim leaders, Christian pastors, and Indigenous elders. The subsequent conversations planted seeds of reconciliation.

Today these leaders are meeting absent the listening ears and guidance the Pantojas previously offered. Local leaders discuss how to work out issues of human rights, health care, and education in regions that are newly autonomous. Coffee for Peace, an economic development ministry of PBCI, strengthens progress by training local farmers in sustainable agriculture and income generation for people in

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mountainous areas whose voices were silenced for many years.

For example, Bagobo-Tagabawa farmers on the sacred slopes of Mt. Apo are leading an ambitious agroforestry initiative. Guided by traditional ecological wisdom and supported by shared resources and learning, they are restoring ancestral lands while strengthening local livelihoods. Coffee trees and native forest species are planted side by side — not just to harvest crops, but to renew hope, reclaim stewardship, and sow peace for the next generation.



Benedikt Isert Bender, PBCI Intern, interviews Datu Romeo and Bai Gemma, spiritual leaders of the Obo Manobo Indigenous People

One recent area of focus is the IncluDev Learning Community, which brings together young adults from both the Philippines and Canada in a mutual journey of discovery, faith, and action. These future leaders are formed not through imported models, but through co-learning, rooted in their local context and nurtured through global friendships. In walking together, we each grow more deeply into the call of Christ to be peacebuilders and reconcilers.

The ongoing development of the Malipayon Peace Hub is laying the foundation for a long-term peace presence in the area. The Peace Hub is a centre for training in peace and reconciliation as well as coffee production and processing. PBCI continues to work in developing PAR teams in communities across Mindanao and in other parts of the Philippines.

South Korea

Witness workers Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park note that the first words spoken by the resurrected Jesus were, “Peace be with you.”

These were not mere words, but a call to imperative action for his disciples. Peace, in this context, is not simply a comforting phrase, but a command and an invitation from Jesus himself.

Korean Anabaptists have earnestly sought to embody this peace, striving to put it into practice through restorative justice in schools, police stations, local communities, and in the rhythms of daily life. In recent times, they have come to call this “everyday peace.”

“We envision peace flourishing in every corner of our lives, echoing through every Korean street, even in times of national upheaval, such as during the impeachment of a president. Peace, for us, is not a distant ideology or theology but a living reality, an action we are called to practice each and every day.”

Thailand

Tom and Christine Poovong, Witness workers (pictured right), have discovered a deep commitment in relationships with God and with each other as they live and work with the Isaan people of northeastern Thailand. They describe it as a yieldedness to God’s will and a humble, meek attitude toward others. German speakers will know that yieldedness translates as “gelassenheit.”



Tom says, “I see gelassenheit in my Thai co-workers often as they interact with those of other faiths.”

While it may seem unusual to hear Tom use the word “gelassenheit” while speaking Thai or Isaan, the gift of yieldedness is precisely what the house church groups of Jesus followers here are nurturing.

Income generation, sustainable agriculture, leadership mentoring and church planting add to Poovong family’s life of ministry. In 2025 they moved to a new area of the Isaan region while continuing to mentor leaders in the house churches in the Khan Kaen area where they formerly resided.

As part of the Friends of Grace church network, a small Bible school is available to leaders for one week of classes each month. A handful of house church leaders are also involved in study through the Journey program of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Thai and Lao pastors study online and gather in-person several times every year for intensive courses.

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## Japan

The Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches (TAFMC) has been a long-time companion of Mennonite Church Canada. Gerald and Rie Neufeld and family live and work in Tokyo at the Tokyo Anabaptist Centre and relate to TAFMC congregations.



Rie and Gerald Neufeld, Liaison Workers (front row, second & third from bottom), meet with members of the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches at Misato Mennonite Church, Tokyo, Japan.

They report that, "In an environment where Christians are less than one per cent of the population, we see the strong faith of people who have chosen to follow Jesus. Rather than pushing one's own ideas, they value being patient with others and often work well accomplishing things as a group."

There is a growing relationship between the Tokyo Anabaptist Centre and a large Christian university in Tokyo, which has a peace studies centre and is asking for input from Mennonites.

## Benin

The long-term relationship between congregations in Ontario and the Benin Bible Institute has influenced both sides of this relationship. Benin Bible Institute has been able to provide consistent, high-level training for pastors in their region.

## Colombia

Isaias Rodriguez grew up in the Colombian Mennonite Church (IMCOL). After moving to Canada, he became active in MCBC and is now a part time Mennonite Church Canada Witness liaison for Colombia.

IMCOL is mindful of the long companionship of

Mennonite Church Canada and is eager to deepen that relationship. In 2025 they hosted a joint learning tour of Canadian Mennonite University and Mennonite Church Canada.

## SEMILLA/Cuba

SEMILLA, or the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (Guatamala City), supports theological training in Cuba and other Latin American and Caribbean conferences. SEMILLA has connected with Mennonite Church Canada in various ways, such as hosting students from Canadian Mennonite University and Rosthern Junior College, and providing a place for sabbaticals and study.

In spring 2025, these connections were drawn together to form a Witness Support Network that will work with SEMILLA to deepen the relationship, increase the opportunities for exchange, and increase financial support for this important regional seminary.

## China

The growing interest in Anabaptist teaching in China is drawing requests for our gifts of scholarship and teaching as we look for ways to support the few Anabaptist pastors and teachers there.

While the situation requires careful and sensitive attention to connections, many ways are still open to share gifts with these congregations of believers. In the stories of Anabaptists from 500 years ago, they see a kinship and look at this teaching as a good fit for modern Chinese culture. They see this as a gift to the larger Chinese church where teaching of Christendom often puts them in a collision course with the Chinese government. Something about Anabaptist teaching is resonating here and we want to lean into these relationships to see what it means to follow Jesus in the way of peace when the church is on the margins of society.

## Palestine-Israel Network (PIN)

Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza in October 2023, the MC Canada Palestine-Israel Network (PIN) has heard intensified calls from Palestinian Christian leaders to respond more robustly to unimaginable suffering and injustice in the region.

PIN's regional working groups and individuals

International Witness | page 5/6

in Canada continue to amplify Palestinian voices through church presentations and webinars; ongoing partnerships with Bethlehem Bible College and its new Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice, and with Jerusalem’s Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre; and political advocacy in partnership with local and national groups.

**Asia Anabaptist Theological Education Network**

For many years, Anabaptist and Mennonite groups in Asia have been talking about Asia based Anabaptist education. In the last two years, conversations have started online and then in person with representatives from more than ten Asian church conferences.



Sook Kyoung Park and Bock Ki Kim, Witness Workers in South Korea, meet with former AMBS classmate Yin Hongtao who teaches Anabaptism for church leaders in China.

The Asian conferences see the development of an Asia-based Anabaptist education and resource hub not only as a way to deepen the Anabaptist faith in their congregations, but also as a gift for other Jesus followers as an Asian expression of Anabaptism emerges. What a privilege to be at the table as this group comes together to share with each other!

We are invited to share gifts of scholarship, teaching, and experience.

**Mennonite Church Canada Liaison Workers**

International Witness is facing a challenge: The appetite for sending long-term, cross-cultural specialists and Witness workers is waning, while invitations for companionship from the international community are growing.

How shall we respond? Who has the gifts and the desire to help maintain and grow healthy relationships globally?

In the past few years, we have responded by building a community of liaison workers that represent Mennonite Church Canada in companionship with others around the world.



Liaison Workers Nhien Pham and Garry Janzen (second & third from left) from MCBC relate to the Evangelical Mennonite Church Vietnam (EMCV).

What gifts do these Liaison Workers bring? Some bring gifts of deep listening and are available to walk with a global companion for a period of time. They understand the context, language and culture of their companion. They know the background and ethos of MC Canada and bridge relationships as friends in faith. Liaison Workers may work as volunteers, or as minimally part time staff.

What does a Liaison Worker do? These individuals accompany fellow companions in the global church. What they ‘do’ is shaped by a complementary intersection of gifts from Mennonite Church Canada and the global companion. As representatives of MC Canada, they draw on our rich history of strong educational institutions that have provided theological training for several generations. They lean into the generosity of congregations in responding to specific needs in the global community. They might bring those with gifts and experience in sustainable income generation, leadership development, restorative justice, or lay leadership mentoring to complement local gifts.

One example of Liaison Workers are Nhien Pham and Garry Janzen in MCBC. For decades, these two now retired pastors and church leaders have related to the Evangelical Mennonite Church Vietnam (EMCV). As volunteers, they continue building this companionship model to walk with Vietnamese siblings in faith. Besides exchange visits, they work with Vietnamese leaders to develop Anabaptist teaching resources that are being used in Vancouver and in Vietnam. Nhien also does weekly leadership training online. Together, Nhien and Garry visit and encourage leaders of EMCV, and look for more ways to work together.

International Witness | page 6/6

**Opportunities for individual involvement**

There are other global companions who welcome pastors on sabbatical and short-term exchanges to encourage and build each other up. There are rich online conversations where global companions are willing to engage in discussions on de-colonialization of our faith and structures.

There are also opportunities via internships with global companions who are willing to host young people in cross cultural learning and faith discipleship.

**Witness Support Networks**

Because we walk together as Mennonite Church Canada, individuals and congregations need not carry a global companion relationship on their own. Many hands, hearts, and minds work together to

form these working relationships.

Mennonite Church Canada invites every congregation to be part of a Witness Support Network that deepens relationship with one of our global companions. A Witness Support Network means joining with other congregations across Canada to hear directly from global companions via Zoom meetings, visits, newsletters, and prayer request exchanges.

As these networks form relationships, unique gifts of each congregation help to determine how the engagement happens. Some congregations bring gifts of language and communication. Others bring gifts of resource development/fundraising. Some bring gifts of scholarship and teaching or administration or media competence. There are many gifts, but the same Spirit!



Jeanette Hanson  
Director



Norm Dyck  
Liaison Worker



Tany Warkentin  
Liaison Worker  
Africa



Isaias Rodriguez  
Liaison Worker  
Latin America

**In preparation for Gathering - consider...**

How have you and your congregation engaged with the global church and how can you imagine responding to invitations from our global companions for deeper engagement?



**Arlyn Friesen Epp**  
Director,  
Commonword

**CommonWord**  
Bookstore and Resource Centre

## CommonWord

In 2024, CommonWord celebrated its tenth anniversary and 50+ years of ministry<sup>1</sup> when including our formative predecessors.

That's five decades of multiplying God's gifts to our community by sourcing learning, sharing wisdom, and even creating inspiration in multi-media formats! We are grateful for the gifts of writers, artists, musicians, composers, graphic designers, film makers, and digital content creators we represent on our shelves and on your screens.

In CommonWord's first ten years, we have worked diligently to integrate the services of a bookstore and resource centre, by providing retail sales, resource loans, digital materials, and quality customer service, for anyone across Canada. In that time, about 30,000 loan items have circulated across the country, and we have served nearly 93,000 retail customers. Our digital items, on average, have been downloaded 48 times/day.

*"It's hard to imagine the personal and congregational growth the numbers represent!"*

We have built a strong partnership with Together in Worship, a bi-national volunteer team, that helps curate and catalogue thousands of free Anabaptist digital worship resources. This has become the vehicle for "community developed" materials that you regularly submit. We gladly welcome original contributions – words, music, videos, visuals for worship. These materials are shared on both Together in Worship and

CommonWord online platforms.

Our uniquely integrated website has seen significant customer-focused enhancements in its 21 years of life. Upgrades happen regularly and back-end infrastructure is continually improved for better partnerships and connections. Currently, we are in the process of building an important mechanism to transfer Mennonite Church Canada's archived digital resources from CommonWord to the Mennonite Heritage Archives.

CommonWord partners with MennoMedia so users can buy or borrow all Herald Press titles from us. We have played a key role in distributing three recent large-project titles: the Voices Together hymnal, The Peace Table storybook Bible, and the Anabaptist Community Bibles. At Gathering 2025, we will have the full complement of MennoMedia's Anabaptism at 500 suite of resources, in addition to all recent Herald Press books.

We also partner informally with Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite World Conference, Canadian Mennonite, and many other resource providers to catalogue their materials at CommonWord for ease of searchability and access.

Since 2015 we have also navigated several challenging and unpredictable circumstances: the sharp decline of textbook sales due to changing enrollment demographics and greater demand for offsite digital products, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the loss of Ten Thousand Villages gift shop merchandise. For the most part, we have come out of these difficulties as a stronger entity. Retail sales apart from textbooks have increased 195%, and in place of Ten Thousand Villages fair-trade goods, we have pivoted toward selling Indigenous-created crafts to complement our offering of

<sup>1</sup> See the anniversary paper, "50+ Years of Service: A Look Back at CommonWord and How It Got Here," at <https://www.commonword.ca/go/3828>

CommonWord | page 2/3

Indigenous-authored books. Those sales are 53.9% higher than what we achieved earlier with Ten Thousand Villages. And, thanks to the CommonWord user community, retail sales have rebounded to pre-covid levels. After dropping 43% during Covid, the number of retail customers are again comparable to 2018 and 2019.

Through all the turbulence, we're grateful that our general book sales (arguably our main reason for being) have increased and stayed steady, even when we exclude the special project sales from

*"My theology has matured over the years because of the books I have received from CommonWord. They opened my eyes to a true loving God, one that I could finally love."*

MennoMedia. Nonetheless, we remain vigilant of our uncertain economic times and are watching tariff related news carefully.

Our loan circulation has not fully recovered after Covid. Whereas we lost 43% in overall loan circulation during the height of the pandemic, we have only managed to rebound by 15% since 2020. We have seen the dip across all regional churches but it's more pronounced in MC Sask, MCM and MCEC. Is this a new trend? Are congregations fully aware of this service? Regardless of final totals, we're reminded daily how critical this free library service remains to so many across Canada. A customer recently wrote, "My theology has matured over the years because of the books I have received from CommonWord. They opened my eyes to a true loving God, one that I could finally love." Please let others know that this service is there for everyone.



Hosting public events continues to be a growing niche. CommonWord has hosted 43 book launches (totaling 2,500 attendees), 16 in the past three years. One highlight was sharing a special moment between two Canadian author icons – Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Atwood. Most of the events have been livestreamed, video-recorded, or hosted on an online platform, giving these resources longevity and a cross-national reach. Public events have broadened CommonWord's exposure to a wider audience. For recordings of past events, see <https://www.commonword.ca/go/4173>.

I'm grateful for growing ecumenical connections as invitations to the Lutheran Synod clergy conference and the Hutterite educators conference illustrate. Loan circulation among ecumenical borrowers has increased. We are frequently reminded by other church denominations how fortunate we are to have a bookstore and resource centre.

*"I love what you folks have done. It looks truly incredible from an outsider's perspective. I have surveyed most of the denominational resource offerings across Canada and I would say what you have done looks like it is the best stuff out there."*

One Anglican priest recently noted, "I am astonished by the terrific service you folks offer. I only recently figured this out [through an Anglican colleague]." A Baptist denominational leader wrote, "I love what you folks have done. It looks truly incredible from an outsider's perspective. I have surveyed most of the denominational resource offerings across Canada and I would say what you have done looks like it is the best stuff out there." We are glad to share our services.

I'm thankful for our dedicated staff and volunteers, many of whom have been with us from the beginning. This year we said goodbye to Josh Paetkau, our graphic designer and social

## CommonWord | page 3/3

media communicator who has been sharing our message for the past seven years. Thanks Josh! Staff transition can be difficult but also opens opportunities for exploration and strategic planning. I'm grateful for a committed executive team to help steer the conversation as we continue to equip CommonWord with what it needs to help carry out this part of Mennonite Church Canada's ministry.

I invite you to put your fingerprint on the resource offerings at CommonWord. Take full advantage of the abundant gifts we are fortunate to share with you and your congregation as your partner in our joint ministry of Christian formation.



Staff (L to R):

Arlyn Friesen Epp, Anita Neufeld,  
Josh Petkau, AnaSara Rojas

**In preparation for Gathering - consider...**

How do you and your congregation engage with Christian formation and where might CommonWord assist you in this important ministry?



**Byron Rempel-Burkholder**

Chair  
Palestine-Israel Network

## Palestine-Israel Network (PIN)

Solidarity with the churches and people of Palestine has been especially urgent since the eruption of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza in October 2023. "Where is God?" ask our Palestinian siblings in faith. "What is the church's response?" Bethlehem pastor Munther Isaac has declared that we find Christ "in the rubble" as we stand with the victims of oppression and violence. Through our regional PIN working groups and reps, that call has been our focus these last two years:

**Lament, Prayer and Action.** In March 2024, we promoted the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage (GCF)—a global Lenten response to a "call to repentance" from Palestinian Christian leaders. Mennonites joined prayer walks in several locations across Canada. The initiative inspired a May delegation of denominational leaders, including our own, to mount an ecumenical prayer walk and vigil on Parliament Hill and meet with MPs.

**Partnerships.** We participated in, and were resourced by, Canadian Friends of Sabeel, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Independent Jewish Voices, local Palestinian associations, and other advocacy groups, including Mennonite Action, a North American response to the Gaza war. Our collaboration with people of many religious and ideological backgrounds has lent credibility to the witness of the church.

**Activism.** We joined rallies and vigils, met with politicians, and wrote letters to MPs and corporations. We called for a ceasefire, and for a peace based on justice and equal dignity for all. This winter and spring, PIN and Mennonite Action in Manitoba hosted a series of prayer walks at Magellan Aerospace Winnipeg, which manufactures parts for fighter jets used in

bombing Gaza.

**Resourcing.** Through the MC Canada communications and web pages we offered timely prayer requests and liturgical resources for congregational use. Our monthly PIN Update was a key source of information and calls to action and prayer, and reached a circulation of over 400. We tested an updated version of the Palestinian Land Exercise (PLE), a hands-on group activity that brings to life the decades-old quest for justice in the Holy Land.

**Speakers, webinars, and film.** We hosted and promoted in-person events, webinars, film showings, and, in our churches—sermons, adult education classes and services of lament and prayer. We amplified Palestinian voices and drew upon the biblical scholars and activists among us.

**Pilgrimage.** In November 2024 five of us joined a Sabeel ecumenical solidarity pilgrimage to Palestine. We met with human rights leaders, pastors, and academics, and observed the signs of deepening Israeli control and apartheid in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**On the horizon:** Strengthen partnership with Bethlehem Bible College and its peace institute, and Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre. Continue to push our governments to action in regard to international law and human rights in Palestine. Strengthen our hearts and hands for prophetic witness and action.

**Welcome!** Learn about our mandate, regional groups, and events here. Contact your regional PIN rep here if you'd like to get involved. Subscribe to the monthly Update here. Give generously to relieve suffering in Gaza. Pray for the people and churches of Palestine and Israel. Together to form these working relationships.

## Sustainable Leadership Group Members



Ian Funk

MCBC



Joanne Moyer

MCCN / MCA



Matthew Braun

MC Sask



Marta Bunnett Wiebe

MCM



Tim Wiebe-Neufeld

Executive Ministers Group (EMG)



Sandy Plett

MC Canada Staff

## Sustainability Leadership Group

The SLG was established by MC Canada's Joint Council to contribute to MC Canada's efforts in caring for creation and enhancing its environmental sustainability practices. Currently its membership includes Ian Funk (MCBC), Joanne Moyer (MCA), Matthew Braun (MC Sask), Marta Bunnett Wiebe (MCM), Tim Wiebe-Neufeld (EMG), and Sandy Plett (MC Canada Staff).

**1. Representation.** This spring the SLG set a goal to add to its membership, and in March welcomed Matthew Braun as a new representative. We are currently seeking to add a member from MCEC. Adding a representative from Joint Council would benefit the work of the SLG and its connection to the MC Canada structure.

### 2. Major work of 2024 and Plans for 2025

a. Emissions Reduction Grant. Launched in 2023, this program has been highly successful in engaging congregations in conversations about environmental impacts and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2024 the ERG continued to be valued as a source of encouragement for putting creation care efforts into practice, with 6 congregations received grants totalling \$18,000. The stories shared by grant recipients show deep appreciation for MC Canada in providing leadership in this area. Many thanks to Sandy Plett for the administrative work that makes this program possible! Which brings us to...

b. Supporting the Work of Sandy Plett, Climate Action Coordinator. It is invaluable to have Sandy Plett meeting as part of the SLG and it is good to see this position continuing. Sandy provides encouragement to SLG and helps SLG ideas come to life. Sandy has kept SLG in the loop in the planning of activities such as:

- i. A book study using "So we and our Children May Live", a joint effort with Indigenous Relations that took place in the spring of 2024.
- ii. A retreat that brought together Creation Care and Indigenous Relations in October 2024
- iii. Faithful Leadership in the Climate Crisis, a 6-month program taking place in the first half of 2025 for pastors and other church leaders looking to develop leadership skills in addressing climate change.

- c. MC Canada Gathering. SLG has supported the communication of "Green Gathering Guidelines" to assist planners for Gathering 2025 in taking steps to reduce the environmental impacts of these events. SLG is also planning a workshop at the Gathering focused on sharing ideas for creation care actions being undertaken by congregations and individuals.
- d. Reflection on the MC Canada Environmental Sustainability Report by Joanne Moyer et al. This research highlighted areas of interest, success, and yearning within MC Canada congregations for engagement with creation care. This report is informing the SLG as it considers next steps and actions.

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Sustainability Leadership Group | page 2/2

- e. Writing of a “Season of Creation” worship series for Leader magazine. The ecumenical “Season of Creation” takes place each year during the first 5 weeks of September. SLG is organizing a writing team to put together a worship series for Leader magazine for publication in 2026.
3. **Continued Resources and Networking.** SLG continues to attune itself to developments in creation care within the MC Canada system.



**Doug Klassen**  
Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Intercultural Church Steering Committee

“It feels like we need to try something different,” remarked Leah Reesor-Keller, then Executive Minister of MCEC, during a conversation on diversity within the church. Her words echoed a broader realization shared among leaders across Mennonite Church Canada.

In the 2017 Mennonite Church Canada Operating Agreement, the Regional Churches committed to collaboratively implementing goals related to diversity and inclusion. However, translating that commitment into meaningful action proved to be a significant challenge for each Regional Church.

Leah proposed a way forward: “What if we form a steering committee to guide the Joint Council in its efforts?” That suggestion resonated—and thus, the Intercultural Church Steering Committee (ICSC) was born.

Over the past four years, while the committee’s membership has evolved, its influence has remained strong. Notably, the ICSC played a role in shaping the updated 2023 Operating Agreement, which now affirms: “MC Canada strives to be an intercultural church, with values of equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels...”

In addition to policy contributions, the ICSC selected the theme “Each Gift,” inspired by 1 Peter 4:10, and chose the accompanying fingerprint logo—designed by Anne Boese—to symbolize the uniqueness of every individual’s contribution to the life of the church.

The ICSC has been prayerfully preparing for this Gathering for many months. It is our heartfelt hope that, as a nationwide church, we may experience something akin to Acts 2—what Fanosie Legesse describes as “a moment when the Spirit of God opens everything up to all peoples and cultures, and everyone is touched by the movement of the Holy Spirit. Not only are lives transformed, but the world around them is changed.”

### Meet the current ICSC:



**Fanosie Legesse** is the Intercultural Minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada for the last five years. He served as a pastor of Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira Ontario for four years. He, his wife Dianne and their two children served as Mennonite

Church Canada witness volunteer workers at the Meserete Kirstos College in Ethiopia for three years. Fanosie taught Intro to African Traditional Religion (ATR), New Testament Greek and other Bible Courses at the MK College. He grew up in Ethiopia. Fanosie was a member of The Meserete Kristos Church (Ethiopian Mennonites). He served as a pastor of Sire Meserete Kristos Church in the Oromia region of Ethiopia for three years. Fanosie has lived through 19 winters in Canada. He is passionate about becoming an intercultural body of Christ. You can contact Fanosie directly via his work email: [flegesse@mcec.ca](mailto:flegesse@mcec.ca). Fanosie and his family live in Fergus, Ontario.



**Joon Park**, a Christian writer, intercultural consultant, and social entrepreneur, completed his intentional interim pastorate at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton in 2024. Accompanied by his musician wife, Shim, he has returned to his hometown of Abbotsford, BC, and his home congregation Emmanuel. He is now awaiting the next stage of ministry, where he will be called and engaged based on the intercultural needs of local congregations.



**Josh Wallace** is a pastor and educator in Saskatoon in Treaty 6 Territory. He and his wife Cindy Wallace (along with their two kids) lead a small new church that meets in their backyard (or living room when the prairie weather gets too cold). Josh teaches in the Religion & Culture department at St Thomas More College with the University of Saskatchewan.

## Intercultural Church Steering Committee | page 2/2

He earned his DMin in Contextual Theology at Northern Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. He loves drinking good coffee, roasting his own coffee, listening to good jazz, and hiking in the mountains of Montana, where he grew up.



**Suzanne Gross** began her journey as Bridgebuilding facilitator in Mennonite Church Alberta in 2021. More recently, she was called into a part-time pastoral role at Holyrood Mennonite Church – an Intercultural church in Edmonton.

In both of these roles, she brought with her a background in musicology focusing on cultural identity through our sacred hymn traditions, and 20 years of experience working in a settlement agency in the areas of ESL, employment, and family

connections. From 2015 to 2020, she played a role in bridging Indigenous knowledge into the settlement spaces of newcomers in Edmonton. Having grown up in Switzerland, she is bilingual in French and English and fluent in German and Spanish. Her undergraduate degree from Goshen College and her lay leadership roles at Hyattsville Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church (Edmonton) in the areas of music ministry, worship leading and preaching have given her the experience necessary to imagine taking on a formal pastoral leadership role in Mennonite Church Alberta.

Suzanne is married to Asher Kirchner, a retired linguistics professor, and a practicing Jew and Quaker. They have two grown daughters Miriam (Vancouver, BC) and Naomi (Sommerville, MS).

# Global Youth Summit 2025

## Transformational Opportunities

Guided by the theme “Empowered by love” (1 John 4:11), the Global Youth Summit (GYS) 2025 in Germany offers Anabaptist young adults a rare opportunity to worship, reflect on faith across cultures, and grow together in global community. Held from May 30–June 1, 2025, and organized by Mennonite World Conference (MWC), GYS invites young adults aged 18–25 from across the world to participate. This year’s summit coincides with the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism, marked by a celebration of Anabaptism at 500 on May 29 in Zurich, Switzerland.

Doug Klassen notes the GYS is “powerfully transformative for young leaders and for the congregations they return to.” In this spirit, Mennonite Church Canada selected five young adults—one from each regional church—from a pool of 20 applicants to form a nationwide team representing Canada. Each received \$1,000 in support from the nationwide office, with additional fundraising supported through each Regional Church.

The selected representatives bring diverse experiences and deep passion for the church:



Caleb Yang (MC British Columbia), of Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, sees Anabaptism as “finding home after a long journey of wandering.” As an intentional community member, he offers a counter-narrative to individualism and consumerism.



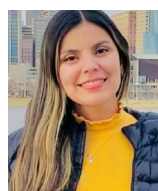
Liam Kachkar (MC Alberta), from First Mennonite Edmonton, has long dreamt of attending GYS. He reflects, “Sometimes I forget that I’m not just a church attendee in Alberta but instead part of a larger story.”



Shenyce Buhler (MC Saskatchewan), a worship leader at Nutana Park Mennonite, hopes to “meet other young adults from around the world” and deepen her understanding of belonging in the Anabaptist community.



Danika Warkentin (MC Manitoba), of Home Street Mennonite, brings her global and academic background, sharing, “To be able to participate in meaningful conversations with other young adults... is what intrigues me most.”



Laura Rodriguez Reyes (MC Eastern Canada), of First Mennonite Kitchener, will also serve as MC Canada’s Young Anabaptist (YAB) delegate. Born in the Global South and now living in Canada, she brings a passion for faith-based service and global justice. “Overall,” Laura comments, “attending the summit offers a unique platform to connect with like-minded individuals, deepen my understanding of Anabaptist faith and values, and discern how I can contribute to positive change in my community and the world.”

In preparation for GYS, the YAB delegates from each MWC country were asked to prepare a report based on research options MWC provided. Laura led the MC Canada GYS team in researching why some young adults were leaving the church while others were staying. By collecting feedback from young adults across Canada, the data reveals that many young adults stop attending church after age 18 due to life transitions, lack of inclusivity, and limited space for open dialogue. However, those who stay are drawn by a strong community, meaningful involvement, and a feeling of being valued. The findings suggest that churches can better engage young adults by fostering authentic relationships, embracing inclusivity, modernizing practices, and creating spaces that reflect both faith and the values of a new generation. This report will be shared, in some form during the delegate sessions and the Global Youth Summit.

You will be reading this just as GYS is ending. These young leaders will return with

## Global Youth Summit | page 2/2

transformative insights, and congregations are encouraged to engage them in your congregational storytelling opportunities. They have had an opportunity to worship, learn and observe how global stories of love have empowered communities of faith in troubled times. This report is only the beginning of the

story. There is so much to learn –interculturally and intergenerationally as this experience is shared and engagement in faith formation and leadership is encouraged. Is there an opportunity for one of these GYS participants to engage with your congregation or in your region?

**Global Youth Summit 2025 in Germany.**

Mennonite Church Canada team:

Left to Right: Danika, Laura, Liam, Shenyce, Caleb



# Regional Churches

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**

# Executive Ministers Group and Church Leadership Ministers



**Doug Klassen**  
MC Canada  
Executive Minister



**Al Rempel**  
MC Canada  
Associate  
Executive Minister



**Anthony  
Siegrist**  
MCEC Executive  
Minister



**Marilyn  
Rudy-Froese**  
MCEC Church  
Leadership  
Minister



**Michael Pahl**  
MCM Executive  
Minister



**Jeff Friesen**  
MCM Church  
Leadership  
Minister



**Len Rempel**  
MC Sask  
Executive  
Minister & Church  
Leadership



**Tim Wiebe-  
Neufeld**  
MCA Executive  
Minister & Church  
Leadership



**Shelby Boese**  
MCBC Executive  
Minister & Church  
Leadership



**Anthony Siegrist**  
Executive Minister,  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada



## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### 2024 in Review

#### We celebrate congregations and pastors.

##### 108 congregations

- Welcomed 5 congregations to provisional membership: FreeChurch Toronto; Mennonite Disciples Swahili Church (Ottawa-Gatineau); Rehoboth Inner Healing Church; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Guelph; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Windsor.
- Congregations Closed - Hawkesville Mennonite Church (June 2024); Agape Fellowship (July 2024). We appreciate the generosity of these congregations and their support of MCEC through their legacy gifts.

##### 196 pastors serve as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other capacities

- 14 pastors installed in congregations
- 6 pastors licensed toward ordination
- 3 pastors ordained

#### We are inspired by ministry throughout MCEC.

- At the Annual Church Gathering in Leamington, 236 delegates and congregational leaders were inspired by the hope we find in Jesus as we came together to worship and collaborate in community. We grow, learn and serve best in relationship with others, listening for God together.
- In the area of youth engagement, 150 voices contributed to a research project focused on ways to better engage youth in the

church. Alongside our partners, junior youth gatherings in Kitchener and Leamington brought together 144 junior youth and their sponsors for meaningful connection and growth. This effort reflects our commitment to leadership development, intergenerational discipleship, collaborating with our partners to nurture both the current and future generations of the church.

- To encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation, 39 pastors attended renewing retreats, focused on the seasons of Lent and Advent. Additionally, 50 pastors participated in Healthy Boundary Workshops online, equipping them to maintain healthy boundaries while leading with integrity and care.
- The INNOVATE Ministry concluded after a decade of impactful service. Over the past 10 years, 48 MCEC congregations have participated in discipleship events and workshops, fostering growth and renewal. Additionally, the Transitioning in Ministry (TiM) Program saw the graduation of 5 pastors this year.
- We are privileged to journey alongside congregations during transformative moments, whether it's through pastoral searches, discernment processes, revitalizing mission, or reimagining facilities. A wonderful example of this is the shared co-ownership journey of Shalom Worship & Healing Centre and First Mennonite Church.
- We celebrate the hiring of Anthony Siegrist as Executive Minister, effective February 1, 2025.



We are grateful for the ongoing support of congregations, pastors and leaders through prayer, time and finances. We continue to grow into the future as a transformed, inspired and



**Michael Pahl**  
Executive Minister,  
Mennonite Church Manitoba



## Mennonite Church Manitoba 2024 Year in Review

Forty congregations have covenanted together to be Mennonite Church Manitoba, and we are grateful to God for these relationships of common identity, mutual support, and shared ministry. This includes one new congregation which joined MCM at our 2024 Gathering at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler, where delegates reflected together on what it would mean for us to be an intercultural church..

2024 saw the launch of two new initiatives among us. Hope and Courage is a two-year visioning process for MCM, prompting us as congregations and as a regional church to explore who God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to do at this time. This process includes focus groups, surveys of constituents, and our upcoming 2025 Gathering exploring one aspect of our core identity as Anabaptist Mennonites.

We also launched Light the Fire, a once-a-generation, multi-year, grassroots-based capital campaign to upgrade our facilities at Camps Assiniboia and Koinonia. In 2024 we celebrated 75 years of camping ministry with a wonderful weekend of singing, reflections, and activities; with Light the Fire we are looking to extend our camping and retreat ministries for another 75 years. Our summer camps this year saw 520 campers attend, including 178 adults with disabilities, led by 83 summer staff with 14 leadership staff. In 2024, Camps Assiniboia and Koinonia hosted over 180 guest groups representing nearly 8500 people.

Our Leadership Ministries Co-Directors, Jeff Friesen and Karen Schellenberg, supported our pastors through all the transitions of life and ministry during 2024. This year saw one pastor

ordained, while four pastors received other forms of credentialing. Nine new pastors were installed in congregational ministry, while two retired from ministry. There were six pastors new to MCM in 2024.

Our shared Mission Ministries as a regional and nationwide church continued strong through this past year. International Witness currently works with partners in 16 countries around the world, and congregations across Canada share in this work through mission networks. Closer to home, Director of Mission Engagement Melanie Neufeld worked with elder David Scott of Swan Lake First Nation, along with members of our Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity, to tell David's story of a "Secret Treaty" between early Mennonite settlers and the Ojibwe people. Reception of this story has been overwhelmingly positive in encouraging reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours in Manitoba.



This past year saw the retirement of a much-loved staff member, Kathy Giesbrecht. She served for many years as Associate Director of Leadership Ministries, and for the past two years as Director of Congregational Ministries. We are grateful for her work in supporting our pastors and congregations over the years. Her work carries on in a scaled-back capacity, shared among other MCM staff.

We are looking forward to Gathering 2025, when we will come together for worship, information, and inspiration around the theme, "Looking to Jesus," based on Hebrews 12:1-2. Join us as we explore what it means for us to be Jesus-centered as congregations and as a regional church.

You can keep up with current MCM news by subscribing to our weekly MCM Update, which highlights prayer items and upcoming events, and our MCM Monthly, an online newsletter telling



**Len Rempel**  
Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan



## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan 2024 Annual Report

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is a family of 21 congregations, united in our commitment to being Christ-centered and sent into the world. Together, we prayerfully support one another, collaborating in ministry with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite World Conference, trusting that God's healing and hope flow through us to all the world.



*"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." Romans 12:4-5*

These words from Romans guided us as we gathered for the Annual Delegate Session in Drake, hosted by North Star Mennonite with help from Pleasant Point and Grace Mennonite Churches. Under the theme "Rekindling Relationships," and led by Doug Klassen, Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada, we experienced this spirit of renewal through worship, storytelling, discussion, and fellowship.

Looking back at 2024, we reflect on a busy and transitional year, shaped by challenges and opportunities. Leadership changes continued to define this season, and we thank God for all who serve in so many ways with MC Sask, using their various gifts. In May, Gary Peters concluded his role as Interim Executive Minister, with Len Rempel stepping into the position in June. In August, Kirsten Hamm-Epp concluded her time as Youth Minister, with Evan Bueckert beginning as Interim Youth Minister in October. Josh Wallace completed his work as Congregational Engagement Minister on December 31, 2024. Marianne Siemens kept everything running smoothly as Office Administrator.

Transitions within our congregations also reflected God's ongoing work. We celebrated the licensing toward ordination with one pastor and welcomed a pastor who was new to MC Sask. There were pastors who moved from one congregation to another, some pastors who ended their time with congregations, and pastors who retired. While all these transitions represent challenges, we thank God for raising up leaders from within our midst and elsewhere, and for the continued perseverance and faithfulness of our congregations.



Throughout the fall, the MC Sask Council led Town Hall meetings across the province to engage congregations in discussions on youth ministry, finances, volunteering, and connectedness. It was a great opportunity to hear from the 'folks in the pews' and better understand who we are as Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

In November we partnered with Canadian Mennonite University to host the Healing Haunted Histories course with Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, fostering deep reflection on the ways our histories intersect with Indigenous stories and what this means for the future.

The MC Sask youth events, Mega Menno, have continued to engage youth with opportunities to learn, have fun, and explore their own relationship with God.

The end of another year gives us the opportunity to look back on how God has led us as a church, through challenges and transitions. We are also invited to look forward, to be participants in this movement of God's spirit as we seek to live out our mission, so that God's healing and hope may flow through us to the world.



**Tim Wiebe-Neufeld**  
Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Alberta



# Mennonite Church Alberta Annual Report

## MCA ministries focus on:

### Supporting Congregations

A community of 1300 participants in 11 congregations, worshipping in 4 languages

- Financial aid helped provide rental space for Edmonton South Sudanese Mennonite, assisted Bethel in supporting their bi-vocational pastor, and helped Holyrood hire their interim pastors.
- MCA walked with the Edmonton Christian Life Community Church, which closed in April after several decades of Chinese-language ministry; with Holyrood in its process of discernment; and with Trinity and Bergthal in their pastoral searches.
- 19 credentialed leaders, as Pastors Council, served as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other ministry capacities
- Terry Fach was installed as interim pastor at Trinity, while at Foothills, Bill Christieson’s Ordination was officially recognized, and Aiden Scherzinger was Licensed Toward Ordination.
- At Camp Valaqua 32 young people served as staff, growing in faith and developing leadership skills to serve the church.

### Nurturing Connections

Part of MC Canada, including over 200 congregations in its 5 regions.

- Annual Delegate Sessions at Holyrood saw 100 participants from across MCA come to worship and learn about MCA ministries. Speaker Joon Park outlined Christ’s calling to reach across cultural boundaries and join together in faith. The Saturday evening cross-cultural worship featuring music from Edmonton congregations was a highlight.
- Pastors Council met 5 times for relationship building, prayer, and peer support. A Faith Studies event in May focused on Creation Care, a fall retreat included personal sharing and discussions about anger, and pastors joined an online Boundary Training, hosted by MC Sask.
- “Come Together” events in Edmonton and Calgary brought together people to hear stories of transformation through MCA’s ministries, raise funds, and have a good time!



*Mennonite Church Alberta. A community of Anabaptist-Mennonite congregations growing as communities of grace, joy, and peace as we seek to embody Jesus Christ in the world.*

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### *Celebrating Faith in Action*

Serving in ministries across the street and around the world.

- At Camp Valaqua 365 campers experienced God in creation, supported by 60 volunteers and staff.
- In Ethiopia, Werner and Joanne De Jong concluded 3 years of teaching and support for students at the Meserete Kristos Seminary (MKS), while Tom and Christine Poovong continued their ministry in Thailand. Through MC Canada Witness MCA helped build the church in 16 countries around the world.
- MCA continued to facilitate the training of two South Sudanese pastors at MKS.
- Bridge Building organized the annual dialogue with Christians and Muslims in Edmonton, which featured the study of the prophet Jonah. Bridge Building increased its focus on Indigenous Relations and offered "Powwow Prep" encouraging people to attend these open events.
- In August Bethel, Holyrood, and a few from First Mennonite Edmonton gathered to witness the baptism of 5 young people from Bethel in the river at a nearby park.

*We are grateful for the ongoing commitment we share as congregations, pastors and leaders walking with each other in our service to Jesus Christ!*



**Shelby Boese**  
Executive Minister, Mennonite Church British



## Mennonite Church British Columbia

Greetings to our family across  
Canada!

### MCBC in 2024:

- Started a new congregation in Kelowna, Valley Road Church 23 Churches plus 1 developing congregation
- Celebrated many baptisms in our churches in 2024
- Our average weekly main worship attendance: 61 in 2023 - 67 in 2024
- Kids, youth, and young adults are around 14% of our total engaged constituents
- The average total of people engaged is roughly 131 if spread evenly between churches
- Average membership: 90

### Our Executive Minister's primary areas of focus:

- New Congregations and Revitalization
- Pastoral and Church Leadership Support, Training
- Development Funding Long-term Vision (get out of structural deficit mode)
- Centre-Set Approach to Unity: Jesus.

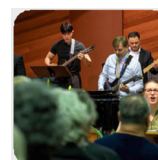
### Other items of note:

- We have partnered with a parachurch ministry for health assessments and revitalization work. Our forward-leaning simplification and prioritization of building a people continues.

- The proposed New Congregational Categories bylaw will be before our Regional Church delegates at our AGM. We are wrestling with creating more of a network orientation and less denominational, given the post-denominational realities of thriving churches across North America. Currently, we have one category called "recognized congregation" and given our unique tensions and history, this has not served us well when engaging in church planting or established churches looking for a network home. So the proposal includes creating two categories of non-member congregations:
  - ◇ Developing congregation. Which would be for churches being "birthed" and in their initial years of life. And,
  - ◇ Exploring congregation. Which is for those established churches looking for a Jesus-centred Anabaptistish network. This would require assent to the Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions and then a mutually established process for discernment between that congregation and existing MCBC congregations over a period of up to 5 years.

Our hope is that these open us more to the wider work of the Holy Spirit in new and other areas of the church.

- We continue to explore ways to encourage the calling and growth of pastors with our Columbia Bible College and other partnerships.
- Finally, our task groups around pressing local church social and spiritual issues are doing good work. Sign up for our regional newsletter at [mcbc.ca](http://mcbc.ca) for more details.





# Finance

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**



**Paul Gilbert**

Secretary/Treasurer  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Secretary/Treasurer Report 2025

The main responsibilities of the Secretary role (within the Secretary/Treasurer position) are to produce minutes for the Joint Council and to conduct official correspondence for the Joint Council as directed. The production of minutes is greatly helped by a staff member (usually Susan Reynar, Executive Coordinator) recording the working notes. Approved minutes of Joint Council meetings are available on the CommonWord website ([www.commonword.ca](http://www.commonword.ca)) by searching for "Joint Council Minutes". Approval of the minutes of a meeting occurs at the following meeting, so approved minutes are not available until after that meeting.

### Finance Organization and Personnel

Currently we are sharing finance department roles between MC Canada and MC Manitoba. Long time payroll and benefits accounting coordinator Laura Zacharias continues in her role, which includes processing payroll for both MC Canada and MC Manitoba. Since 2022, Zachary Entz and Steffi Friesen have performed finance, accounting and bookkeeping roles for both MC Canada and MC Manitoba.

### Financial Policy and Audit Committee

The Secretary/Treasurer is Chair of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee (FPAC). The duties of this committee are outlined in the MC Canada Bylaws. FPAC currently consists of myself as Chair (part of my Secretary/Treasurer role), and Tony Schellenberg. The Nominating Committee is recommending JD Penner as a member which if approved, will bring the committee to full complement.

FPAC meets at least twice yearly and has met more frequently in the past two years. To facilitate more frequent meetings and to minimize related

expenses and environmental impact FPAC has been meeting via Zoom. In addition to routine duties related to meeting with our auditors and reviewing financial results, FPAC also works on keeping MC Canada's Financial Policies up to date with MC Canada programs by bringing recommendations for changes to Joint Council.

FPAC meets with the external auditors in a planning meeting for the Financial Statement audit in the fall. When the audit is complete FPAC meets with them again to review the Audit Report and the audited Financial Statements and to receive the auditor's management report. When satisfied with the audited Financial Statements FPAC recommends them to Joint Council for approval. Previous years audited Financial Statements are available on the CommonWord website ([www.commonword.ca](http://www.commonword.ca)).

In early 2024 staff worked with FPAC and developed a new Investment Policy Statement which was approved by consensus by Joint Council in May 2024. MC Canada subsequently changed investment advisors and investment managers and has established its investment portfolio consistent with the new policy. Investment returns have improved substantially from prior experience with cumulative returns (including realized and unrealized gains) to the end of April 2025 of 6.7%.

### Support Services – Including Pension and Benefit Plans

MC Canada administers both a Pension Plan and a Benefits Plan that our churches and pastors, as employers and employees, can participate in. The large pool of pastors and other employees that we have nationwide allows us to offer these plans at a substantially reduced cost compared to what individual churches could purchase on their own. The Benefits Plan is reviewed twice yearly by FPAC. The Pension Plan is also reviewed twice yearly by FPAC and two additional members (one is an active plan member, and one is an inactive plan member) who make up the Pension Advisory

## Secretary/Treasurer Report | page 2/3

Committee. While the plans are administered by large insurance and pension companies, Laura Zacharias helps with enrollment, administration questions and billing. If your church is not currently participating in either of these plans or you would like more information on them, please contact Laura at our Winnipeg office.

MC Canada also publishes a Pastor's Salary Scale and Benefits Guideline on an annual basis. The update to the Salary Scale and Guidelines is usually available at the end of summer, so that churches can review changes prior to their next calendar-year budget planning.

### MC Canada Salary Structure Review

At its January 27, 2024, meeting Joint Council passed a resolution instructing staff to do a competitive analysis of MC Canada's job description system and remuneration levels and recommend changes for review by the Joint Council Executive and recommendations to the Joint Council for approval.

Research was conducted over the summer which demonstrated that MC Canada's salaries were below market and particularly so at the most senior levels. A report was developed documenting the research findings and recommendations for changes to bring MC Canada's structure into competitive alignment. The report was reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Committee. It was then presented to Joint Council at its October 2024 meeting where it was approved by consensus for implementation for fiscal 2026. Adjustments are being implemented in two steps. The Joint Council approved a budget for 2026 that includes 75% of the competitive adjustment effective April 2025, plus traditional COLA which was 2.5% based on CPI calculations. The remaining 25% adjustment will be implemented in April 2026, again with traditional COLA in addition.

### Operating Fund Results for Fiscal Year 2025

The Operating Fund is the fund in which most of the day-to-day work of MC Canada is reflected. Fiscal year 2025 results produced a deficit of \$87,000 which was \$79,000 better than the approved budget deficit.

Total Revenue exceeded budget by \$58,000. All Regional Churches exceeded their budgeted contribution commitments under the Shared Revenue Agreement. Individual Bequests exceeded budget by \$43,000 and Relational Witness Funding exceeded budget by \$26,000 both due to significant bequests received. By policy, 10% of such bequests is taken into current year income.

Most expenses tracked close to budget for the year. Joint Council and EMG Travel was \$18,000 under budget as two in person meetings had been budgeted whereas only one in person meeting was held and the other was conducted virtually. Work is ongoing to increase revenue and manage expenses to bring operations into a balanced budget and sustainable financial space.

### Operating Fund Budget

The fiscal 2026 Operating Fund Budget anticipates a deficit of \$50,000. This budget is developed by MC Canada staff, based on the programs and priorities requested by the Regional Churches and the financial contributions that they commit to making to MC Canada. As such the budget cannot be reviewed for recommendation by Joint Council until the Regional Churches have approved their budgets (which include a committed contribution to MC Canada). Operating Fund Budget revenues include budgeted contributions from each Regional Church, and Relational Witness Funding. There is also a category marked "Individual Contributions," are individual and corporate donations that cannot be attributed to a particular Regional Church. Under the Shared Revenue Agreement, adopted in the fall of 2021, each Regional Church makes a commitment based on a percentage of their previous fiscal year's revenues. Witness Relational Funding covers a portion of the costs of MC Canada's witness workers and programs.

Budgeted expenses are grouped into two major categories: Partner Ministries (budgeted amounts sent to other partner charities) and Operating Fund (amounts where MC Canada personnel do the work and control the expenditures).

MC Canada also has agreements with several organizations whereby MC Canada receives and

## Secretary/Treasurer Report | page 3/3

receipts donations, then forwards these donations to the designated organization or fund. The agreements also require that MC Canada review that the funds are spent as indicated in the agreement. Examples of these organizations are AMBS and Meserete Kristos Seminary. Since the amount sent depends entirely on the amount of the designated donations, these amounts are not included in the MC Canada budget.

The Operating Fund Budget has been reviewed and approved by Joint Council and is recommended for Delegate approval at Gathering 2025. Joint Council's approval indicates that the budget reflects the priorities of the Regional Churches for nationwide work, given realistic revenue constraints. Below are some key items for you to be aware of as you review the 2026 budget.

Regional Church Contributions under the Shared Revenue Agreement are down approximately \$50,000 in total from 2025 actuals. MCBC is the only region whose Contributions is increasing.

We cannot anticipate how many Individual Contributions will be received in the coming year and traditionally budget for \$20,000.

We are budgeting for higher Relational Witness Funding and have fundraising initiatives planned to help achieve that result.

We are budgeting for \$65,000 in Climate Action funding and anticipate these funds will be generated through nationwide fundraising efforts to support this ministry. This initiative is a result of the regional churches advocating for this role and inviting direct fundraising for this ministry. We are thankful for your anticipated generosity.

Staff salaries throughout the Expense Schedules reflect April 1, 2025, increases from implementing 75% of the new MC Canada Salary Structure adjustments as referenced above in addition to regular COLA adjustments. Also, the budget reflects the salary of the Associate Executive Minister (AEM) who became a full-time employee of MC Canada effective February 1, 2025, which is split 40% Executive Office, 40% Leadership Formation and 20% Support Services.

*Executive Office (Schedule 1)*

Reflects Gathering 2025 Revenues and Expenses. The Transfer in from Other Funds reflects a draw on General Reserves of \$50k to subsidize Gathering registrations and \$50k to fund a portion of the AEM position for the year and other initiatives in the areas of Development and Communications. Executive Office Joint Council & Executive Ministers Group Travel is up significantly from 2025 actuals as two in person meetings will occur with Gathering 2025 and the regular meeting in Winnipeg in October, whereas expenses for only one in person meeting are reflected in fiscal 2024.

*Leadership Formation (Schedule 2)*

Revenue is budgeted significantly higher reflecting implementation of Pastor Annual Registration Fees related to maintaining credentials. Transfer in from Other Funds reflects transfers from Company of 1000 for Pastor education and Transition Into Ministry course fees for new Pastors.

*International Witness (Schedule 3)*

Recognized Deferred Contributions reflects a prior donation designated to International Witness primarily in Myanmar which will fund most of the \$52,595 budgeted program expenses for that country in 2026. Ethiopia country expenses are lower reflecting the return of the DeJong's from that country. In preparing the 2026 budget, relevant portions of Staff Salary and Payroll Expenses and Staff Travel and Expenses have been allocated to the respective countries where staff allocate significant portions of their time, so are not directly comparable to 2025 actuals.

*Communications (Schedule 6)*

An effort to build the communications strategy with tools and personnel is underway. The budget at this point has not projected significant increases for FYE 2026 which may change in FYE 2027 and following.

*Support Services (Schedule 7)*

Self-Generated Revenue and Cost Recovery is substantially higher reflecting increases in pension and benefits plan administrative fees effective April 1, 2025. These fees had not been adjusted for many years and the new rates better align with increased actual costs and market standards.

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## Audited Financial Statements

*These financial statements are still being audited. They will be added to the report around June 17. You can download an updated version of the Report Book after that. The Report Book download link on our website will indicate when it is revised.*

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**Audited Financial Statements** PAGE 1/12

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**Operating Budget Financial Statements** PAGE 1/5

**Mennonite Church Canada**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**March 31, 2025**

# Operating Budget Financial Statements PAGE 2/5

## STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD ENDED March 31, 2025

	ACTUAL YEAR TO DATE \$	BUDGET YEAR TO DATE \$	OVER (UNDER) BUDGET \$	BUDGET CURRENT YEAR \$
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Revenue - MCEC Contributions	\$490,459	\$495,927	(\$5,468)	\$495,927
Revenue - MCM Contributions	\$295,081	\$294,532	\$549	\$294,532
Revenue - MCSASK Contributions	\$106,665	\$105,980	\$685	\$105,980
Revenue - MCA Contributions	\$89,936	\$88,240	\$1,696	\$88,240
Revenue - MCBC Contributions	\$55,900	\$51,945	\$3,955	\$51,945
Revenue - Individuals/Bequests	\$63,253	\$20,000	\$43,253	\$20,000
Relational Witness Funding	\$357,098	\$331,000	\$26,098	\$331,000
Revenue - Climate Action Donations	\$5,777	\$0	\$5,777	\$0
Transfer In from General Bequest Fund	\$124,908	\$124,794	\$114	\$124,794
Transfer in from MI IR Fund	\$55,972	\$75,258	(\$19,286)	\$75,258
Revenue - Interest Income	\$190	\$0	\$190	\$0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUND REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,645,239</b>	<b>\$1,587,676</b>	<b>\$57,563</b>	<b>\$1,587,676</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
<b>Partner Ministries</b>				
Mennonite World Conference	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000
CommonWord	\$130,104	\$130,000	\$104	\$130,000
Mennonite Heritage Archives **	\$36,683	\$35,000	\$1,683	\$35,000
Canadian Mennonite	\$79,258	\$85,526	(\$6,268)	\$85,526
Canadian Council of Churches	\$12,495	\$12,750	(\$255)	\$12,750
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada	\$5,724	\$6,000	(\$276)	\$6,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Partner Ministries</b>	<b>\$299,264</b>	<b>\$304,276</b>	<b>(\$5,012)</b>	<b>\$304,276</b>
<b>Operating Fund</b>				
Executive Office (Schedule 1)	\$257,982	\$264,950	(\$6,968)	\$264,949
Leadership Formation (Schedule 2)	\$91,586	\$90,986	\$600	\$90,986
International Witness (Schedule 3)	\$686,095	\$658,117	\$27,977	\$658,117
Indigenous/Settler Relations (Schedule 4)	\$41,052	\$51,621	(\$10,569)	\$51,621
Climate Action (Schedule 5)	\$61,748	\$75,258	(\$13,510)	\$75,258
Communications (Schedule 6)	\$52,705	\$67,000	(\$14,295)	\$67,000
Support Services (Schedule 7)	\$165,578	\$166,998	(\$1,420)	\$166,998
Occupancy (Schedule 8)	\$76,055	\$74,848	\$1,207	\$74,848
<b>Total Operating Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,432,800</b>	<b>\$1,449,778</b>	<b>(\$16,978)</b>	<b>\$1,449,778</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations</b>	<b>(\$86,825)</b>	<b>(\$166,378)</b>	<b>\$79,554</b>	<b>(\$166,378)</b>
Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Partner Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
MC Canada General Reserve Fund Draw	\$86,825	\$166,378	(\$79,553)	\$166,378
<b>Net Operating Fund revenue (expenditures)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

# Operating Budget Financial Statements PAGE 3/5

## SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD ENDED March 31, 2025

	ACTUAL YEAR TO DATE \$	BUDGET YEAR TO DATE \$	OVER (UNDER) BUDGET \$	BUDGET CURRENT YEAR \$
<b>Executive Office (Schedule 1)</b>				
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$4,456)	\$0	(\$4,456)	\$0
Revenue - Gathering Registrations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Recognized Deferred Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transfer in from Other Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$206,302	\$194,539	\$11,763	\$194,539
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$24,866	\$24,460	\$406	\$24,460
Staff Training and Development	\$3,223	\$4,500	(\$1,277)	\$4,500
Joint Council & Executive Ministers Group Tra	\$17,604	\$35,800	(\$18,196)	\$35,800
Gathering Expenses	\$3,318	\$3,000	\$318	\$3,000
Program Expenses	\$7,124	\$2,650	\$4,474	\$2,650
	<b>\$257,982</b>	<b>\$264,949</b>	<b>(\$6,967)</b>	<b>\$264,949</b>
<b>Leadership Formation (Schedule 2)</b>				
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$13,910)	(\$2,800)	(\$11,110)	(\$2,800)
Transfer in from Other Funds	(\$11,322)	(\$11,386)	\$64	(\$11,386)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$89,122	\$72,472	\$16,650	\$72,472
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$2,594	\$4,500	(\$1,906)	\$4,500
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$2,000	(\$2,000)	\$2,000
Program, Education, and Training	\$25,102	\$26,200	(\$1,098)	\$26,200
Dues & Subscriptions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	<b>\$91,586</b>	<b>\$90,986</b>	<b>\$600</b>	<b>\$90,986</b>
<b>International Witness (Schedule 3)</b>				
Recognized Deferred Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Co-Ministry Fees	(\$32,278)	(\$25,000)	(\$7,278)	(\$25,000)
Transfer In from Other Funds	(\$107,960)	(\$108,800)	\$840	(\$108,800)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$117,339	\$114,366	\$2,973	\$114,366
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$52,781	\$33,500	\$19,281	\$33,500
Staff Professional Development	\$50	\$0	\$50	\$0
Itineration Expenses	\$12,085	\$17,600	(\$5,515)	\$17,600
Publicity and Promotions	\$860	\$2,000	(\$1,140)	\$2,000
Membership Fees	\$3,276	\$3,300	(\$24)	\$3,300
Program Expenses	\$493	\$0	\$493	\$0
<b>Witness Programs</b>				
Angola	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Benin	\$11,350	\$15,000	(\$3,650)	\$15,000
Burkina Faso	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
Congo	\$34,800	\$34,000	\$800	\$34,000
Ethiopia	\$40,432	\$31,265	\$9,166	\$31,265
Sierre Leone	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
South Africa	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
China	\$107,820	\$104,671	\$3,149	\$104,671
Japan	\$17,981	\$21,098	(\$3,117)	\$21,098
Myanmar	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Phillipines	\$163,450	\$164,961	(\$1,511)	\$164,961
South Korea	\$106,606	\$106,920	(\$314)	\$106,920
Thailand	\$124,577	\$114,236	\$10,341	\$114,236
Vietnam	\$7,333	\$5,000	\$2,333	\$5,000
SEMILLA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Colombia	\$20,150	\$20,000	\$150	\$20,000
Cuba	\$950	\$0	\$950	\$0
	<b>\$686,095</b>	<b>\$658,117</b>	<b>\$27,977</b>	<b>\$658,117</b>

# Operating Budget Financial Statements PAGE 4/5

## SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD ENDED March 31, 2025

	ACTUAL YEAR TO DATE \$	BUDGET YEAR TO DATE \$	OVER (UNDER) BUDGET \$	BUDGET CURRENT YEAR \$
<b>Indigenous Relations (Schedule 4)</b>				
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$7,424)	(\$2,000)	(\$5,424)	(\$2,000)
Transfer in from Other Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Self-Generated Revenue	(\$5,053)	(\$3,500)	(\$1,553)	(\$3,500)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$38,681	\$38,871	(\$190)	\$38,871
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$3,598	\$4,000	(\$402)	\$4,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	\$1,000
Indigenous Training & Leadership Developme	\$1,811	\$1,500	\$311	\$1,500
Publicity & Promotion	\$0	\$750	(\$750)	\$750
Program Expenses	\$9,438	\$11,000	(\$1,562)	\$11,000
	<b>\$41,052</b>	<b>\$51,621</b>	<b>(\$10,569)</b>	<b>\$51,621</b>
<b>Climate Action (Schedule 5)</b>				
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$41,131	\$41,258	(\$127)	\$41,258
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$3,002	\$4,000	(\$998)	\$4,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Publicity & Promotion	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Costs	\$17,615	\$30,000	(\$12,385)	\$30,000
	<b>\$61,748</b>	<b>\$75,258</b>	<b>(\$13,510)</b>	<b>\$75,258</b>
<b>Communications (Schedule 6)</b>				
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$3,873)	(\$5,000)	\$1,127	(\$5,000)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$30,145	\$40,000	(\$9,855)	\$40,000
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Costs	\$24,487	\$25,000	(\$513)	\$25,000
Publicity & Promotion	\$1,946	\$7,000	(\$5,054)	\$7,000
	<b>\$52,705</b>	<b>\$67,000</b>	<b>(\$14,295)</b>	<b>\$67,000</b>
<b>Support Services (Schedule 7)</b>				
Self-Generated Revenue & Cost Recovery	(\$152,251)	(\$151,000)	(\$1,251)	(\$151,000)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$236,685	\$241,748	(\$5,063)	\$241,748
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$0	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	\$1,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Office and Admin Expenses	\$49,898	\$51,750	(\$1,852)	\$51,750
Legal & Audit Expenses	\$31,246	\$23,500	\$7,746	\$23,500
	<b>\$165,578</b>	<b>\$166,998</b>	<b>(\$1,420)</b>	<b>\$166,998</b>
<b>Occupancy Costs (Schedule 8)</b>				
Rental Revenue	(\$26,746)	(\$26,746)	\$0	(\$26,746)
Rent & CAMS	\$18,046	\$17,500	\$546	\$17,500
Office & Building Maintenance	\$29,035	\$31,000	(\$1,965)	\$31,000
Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
Insurance	\$21,625	\$19,000	\$2,625	\$19,000
Depreciation	\$14,094	\$14,094	\$0	\$14,094
	<b>\$76,055</b>	<b>\$74,848</b>	<b>\$1,207</b>	<b>\$74,848</b>

## Operating Budget Financial Statements PAGE 5/5

### Mennonite Church Canada as of March 31, 2025 BALANCE SHEET

#### Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$418,720
Accounts Receivable	\$24,796
Prepaid Expenses	\$55,490
iA Relocation Fund	\$70,864
IPC Investments	\$3,553,251
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,123,121</b>

#### Long Term Assets

Capital Assets	\$1,729,194
Accumulated Depreciation	(\$1,586,161)
Investment in Common Word	\$47,434
<b>TOTAL LONG TERM ASSETS</b>	<b>\$190,467</b>

#### TOTAL ASSETS

**\$4,313,588**

#### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$636,707
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$25,754
Deferred Revenue	\$115,857
Relocation Benefit Payable	\$70,864
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$849,182</b>

#### Equity

General Operating Equity	(\$2,020)
General Capital Equity	\$0
Reserve Fund Equity	\$529,929
Bequest Fund Equity	\$2,185,155
Endowed Fund Equity	\$120,291
Restricted Fund Equity	\$631,051
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$3,464,405</b>

#### TOTAL LIABILITES + EQUITY

**\$4,313,588**

# Mennonite Church Canada FYE26 Budget PAGE 1/3

	<b>FYE25 Actuals</b>	<b>FYE25 BUDGET</b>	<b>FYE26 BUDGET</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Revenue - MCEC Contributions	\$490,459	\$495,927	\$465,000
Revenue - MCM Contributions	\$295,081	\$294,532	\$280,509
Revenue - MCSASK Contributions	\$106,665	\$105,980	\$97,500
Revenue - MCA Contributions	\$89,936	\$88,240	\$89,300
Revenue - MCBC Contributions	\$55,900	\$51,945	\$59,000
Revenue - Individuals/Bequests	\$63,253	\$20,000	\$20,000
Relational Witness Funding	\$357,098	\$331,000	\$390,500
Revenue - Climate Action Donations	\$5,777	\$0	\$65,000
Transfer In from General Bequest Fund	\$124,908	\$124,794	\$127,000
Transfer in from MI IR Fund	\$55,972	\$75,258	\$20,000
Revenue - Interest Income	\$190	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUND REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,645,239</b>	<b>\$1,587,676</b>	<b>\$1,613,809</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
<b>Partner Ministries</b>			
Mennonite World Conference	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
CommonWord	\$130,104	\$130,000	\$140,000
Mennonite Heritage Archives **	\$36,683	\$35,000	\$35,000
Canadian Mennonite	\$79,258	\$85,526	\$73,475
Canadian Council of Churches	\$12,495	\$12,750	\$12,750
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada	\$5,724	\$6,000	\$6,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Partner Ministries</b>	<b>\$299,264</b>	<b>\$304,276</b>	<b>\$302,225</b>
<b>Operating Fund</b>			
Executive Office (Schedule 1)	\$257,982	\$264,949	\$277,700
Leadership Formation (Schedule 2)	\$91,586	\$90,986	\$53,700
International Witness (Schedule 3)	\$686,095	\$658,117	\$617,665
Indigenous/Settler Relations (Schedule 4)	\$41,051	\$51,621	\$55,600
Climate Action (Schedule 5)	\$61,748	\$75,258	\$66,500
Communications (Schedule 6)	\$52,705	\$67,000	\$68,500
Support Services (Schedule 7)	\$165,578	\$166,998	\$145,500
Occupancy (Schedule 8)	\$76,055	\$74,848	\$76,848
<b>Total Operating Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,432,800</b>	<b>\$1,449,778</b>	<b>\$1,362,014</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations</b>	<b>(\$86,825)</b>	<b>(\$166,378)</b>	<b>(\$50,430)</b>
Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Partner Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0
MC Canada General Reserve Fund Draw	\$86,825	\$166,378	\$50,430
<b>Net Operating Fund revenue (expenditures)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

# Mennonite Church Canada FYE26 Budget PAGE 2/3

	<b>FYE25 Actuals</b>	<b>FYE25 BUDGET</b>	<b>FYE26 BUDGET</b>
<b>Executive Office (Schedule 1)</b>			
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$4,456)	\$0	\$0
Revenue - Gathering Registrations	\$0	\$0	(\$176,000)
Recognized Deferred Contributions	\$0	\$0	(\$8,000)
Transfer in from Other Funds	\$0	\$0	(\$100,000)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$206,302	\$194,539	\$261,500
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$24,866	\$24,460	\$25,500
Staff Training and Development	\$3,223	\$4,500	\$4,500
Joint Council & Executive Ministers Group Travel	\$17,604	\$35,800	\$41,500
Gathering Expenses	\$3,318	\$3,000	\$226,000
Program Expenses	\$7,124	\$2,650	\$2,700
	<b>\$257,982</b>	<b>\$264,949</b>	<b>\$277,700</b>
<b>Leadership Formation (Schedule 2)</b>			
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$13,910)	(\$2,800)	(\$35,500)
Transfer in from Other Funds	(\$11,322)	(\$11,386)	(\$23,000)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$89,122	\$72,472	\$77,700
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$2,594	\$4,500	\$4,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$2,000	\$1,000
Program, Education, and Training	\$25,102	\$26,200	\$29,500
Dues & Subscriptions	\$0	\$0	\$0
	<b>\$91,586</b>	<b>\$90,986</b>	<b>\$53,700</b>
<b>International Witness (Schedule 3)</b>			
Recognized Deferred Contributions	\$0	\$0	(\$48,000)
Co-Ministry Fees	(\$32,278)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)
Transfer In from Other Funds	(\$107,960)	(\$108,800)	(\$135,400)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$117,339	\$114,366	\$79,800
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$52,781	\$33,500	\$9,000
Staff Professional Development	\$50	\$0	\$0
Itineration Expenses	\$12,085	\$17,600	\$5,000
Publicity and Promotions	\$860	\$2,000	\$19,000
Membership Fees	\$3,276	\$3,300	\$3,300
Program Expenses	\$493	\$0	\$12,000
<b>Witness Programs</b>			
Angola	\$0	\$0	\$1,113
Benin	\$11,350	\$15,000	\$19,450
Burkina Faso	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$6,225
Congo	\$34,800	\$34,000	\$46,238
Ethiopia	\$40,432	\$31,265	\$17,000
Sierre Leone	\$0	\$0	\$1,113
South Africa	\$0	\$0	\$3,113
China	\$107,820	\$104,671	\$79,563
Japan	\$17,981	\$21,098	\$20,835
Myanmar	\$0	\$0	\$52,595
Phillipines	\$163,450	\$164,961	\$183,077
South Korea	\$106,606	\$106,920	\$113,885
Thailand	\$124,577	\$114,236	\$115,880
Vietnam	\$7,333	\$5,000	\$6,980
SEMILLA	\$0	\$0	\$1,090
Colombia	\$20,150	\$20,000	\$23,720
Cuba	\$950	\$0	\$6,090
	<b>\$686,095</b>	<b>\$658,117</b>	<b>\$617,665</b>

**Mennonite Church Canada FYE26 Budget** PAGE 3/3

	<b>FYE25 Actuals</b>	<b>FYE25 BUDGET</b>	<b>FYE26 BUDGET</b>
<b>Indigenous Relations (Schedule 4)</b>			
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$7,424)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)
Transfer in from Other Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Self-Generated Revenue	(\$5,053)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$38,681	\$38,871	\$43,100
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$3,598	\$4,000	\$5,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Indigenous Training & Leadership Development	\$1,811	\$1,500	\$1,500
Publicity & Promotion	\$0	\$750	\$500
Program Expenses	\$9,438	\$11,000	\$10,000
	<b>\$41,051</b>	<b>\$51,621</b>	<b>\$55,600</b>
<b>Climate Action (Schedule 5)</b>			
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$41,131	\$41,258	\$45,750
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$3,002	\$4,000	\$4,000
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Publicity & Promotion	\$0	\$0	\$750
Program Costs	\$17,615	\$30,000	\$15,000
	<b>\$61,748</b>	<b>\$75,258</b>	<b>\$66,500</b>
<b>Communications (Schedule 6)</b>			
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	(\$3,873)	(\$5,000)	\$0
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$30,145	\$40,000	\$36,500
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Costs	\$24,487	\$25,000	\$25,000
Publicity & Promotion	\$1,946	\$7,000	\$7,000
	<b>\$52,705</b>	<b>\$67,000</b>	<b>\$68,500</b>
<b>Support Services (Schedule 7)</b>			
Self-Generated Revenue & Cost Recovery	(\$152,251)	(\$151,000)	(\$215,000)
Staff Salary & Payroll Expenses	\$236,685	\$241,748	\$284,000
Staff Travel and Expenses	\$0	\$1,000	\$500
Staff Professional Development	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Office and Admin Expenses	\$49,898	\$51,750	\$49,000
Legal & Audit Expenses	\$31,246	\$23,500	\$26,000
	<b>\$165,578</b>	<b>\$166,998</b>	<b>\$145,500</b>
<b>Occupancy Costs (Schedule 8)</b>			
Rental Revenue	(\$26,746)	(\$26,746)	(\$26,746)
Rent & CAMS	\$18,046	\$17,500	\$17,500
Office & Building Maintenance	\$29,035	\$31,000	\$31,000
Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Insurance	\$21,625	\$19,000	\$21,000
Depreciation	\$14,094	\$14,094	\$14,094
	<b>\$76,055</b>	<b>\$74,848</b>	<b>\$76,848</b>



# Delegate Information

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**

# Mennonite Church Canada Minutes

## 2023 Zoom AGM Final Minutes

*The Minutes from Gathering 2022 were approved at the 2023 AGM and are found at [CommonWord](#).*

June 24, 2023 | 12:00 – 1:30 CDT

Present: 24

**JC Members** (10 Delegates): Bruce Baergen, Geraldine Balzer, Jennifer Regehr (MCBC), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (MCA), Margaret Kruger-Harder (MCA), Sharon Schultz (MCSask), David Wiens (MCM), Cheryl Braun (MCM), Ben Cassels (MCEC), Yoel Masyawong (MCEC)

**EMG** (4): Gary Peters (MCSask), Michael Pahl (MCM), Ann Schultz (MCEC), Tim Wiebe-Neufeld (MCA)

**MC Canada Staff** (7): Doug Klassen, Al Rempel, Ken Dueck, Zachary Entz, Susan Reynar, Jeanette Hanson, Sandy Plett

**Other registrants:** (4/13): Travis Martin (MCBC), Cornel/Martha Rempel (MCM), Byron Rempel Burkholder (MCM), Allen Harder (MCBC), Garry Janzen (MCBC),

Regrets: JC: Paul Gilbert, Gerry Grunau, EMG: Kevin Barkowski

### Amended Agenda:

#### 1. Welcome/Call to Order

- Bruce called the meeting to order and gave meeting instructions.
- Regions have appointed their Joint Council representatives and moderators as delegates.
- Questions for discussion can be raised by delegates and by non-delegates.

- For voting, please use the Zoom raise hand feature, and by telephone that is done by \*9.
- The meetings are being recorded by Fathom, which also transcribes.

#### 2. Devotional

Psalm 104: 1-15, 24. The backdrop of this Psalm calls forth some of the OT covenants, starting with Noah (that the waters shall not again flood the earth). With these covenants, humankind is called to be a people of God to engage as caretakers of the earth, to name what God has created, to name the praises of God, and to articulate what God has done. Galatians 4:4 In the fullness of time, God sent the Son Jesus Christ, who lived, ate, slept, traveled, and taught among us... offering himself up on the cross, and in so doing, he showed us the way to redemption that is not through power over something, but yielding ourselves and taking the path of love. Last summer at our gathering in Edmonton, Phil Campbell Enns offered us a song that spoke to the good news of God's actions in the world and God's actions in Jesus Christ. But this song also lamented how we've gotten it wrong, sometimes in small ways and other times in catastrophic ways. These are the words drawn from the interaction between Philip and Nathaniel, where Nathaniel says, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" ... and further on in the Gospel of John where Jesus told his disciples that he would be departing and said "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. We are one". And then Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do...And in fact greater works than these" which are words captured in the following song that Phil wrote for Gathering 2022. It is an invitation to be part of a faith community, more than inviting them to a community as a place to belong. We shouldn't diminish that because there are so many people that don't belong anywhere that need a place to belong. But it's more than just

being together. It's about joining together as a people of God, joining with God in the project of the redemption of all things. Some things along the way will be reflective of who Jesus was and is among us, some things will be greater than what his disciples saw. And we praise God for this today that we live with this as our mission and our vision for the church, and we also meet today with the hope of this expectation.

3. Song: "Greater Things than These" written by Phil Campbell Enns

4. Agenda Approval

Motion: That the agenda be approved as amended with the addition of the Proposed Date Changes for the next Delegate Gathering as number 12 on the agenda.

Moved by Ben, seconded by Jen Regehr.  
Approved by Consensus

5. Introduction/Recognition of MC Canada Joint Council Reps as listed above by Geraldine.

6. Approval of July 30 and Aug 1, 2022, AGM Delegate Session Minutes

Motion: that the minutes of the July 30 and Aug 1, 2022, AGM meeting in Edmonton be approved as distributed with the addition of the year 2022 after the dates at the top of the minutes.

Moved by Bruce, seconded by Margaret.  
Approved by Consensus

7. Moderators Report (Geraldine Balzer)

- It has been a fruitful year in continuing to process the documents for the 2017 structure change.
- Significant transition at the Joint Council table with Bruce and Paul and Jennifer on the JC executive and 5/10 new JC members from across the country. This has been a time of learning for everyone.
- Thankful for the ways we are supported by our congregations with prayers and

financial gifts.

8. Executive Staff Reports

a. Minister's Report (Doug Klassen)

- It is hard to know where to begin to cover the good that is happening in the Nationwide Church. Reports on pg. 14 – 19 give the highlights.
- This was a Covid catch-up year. Last year at this time international travel opened and we had situations to attend to overseas which led to a lot of travel to visit international partners.
- It was amazing to see how God is working. There is so much to celebrate in the global church.
- Financially we are still in lean times, as noted in the FS, reports. Across the country all regions are in a deficit position.
- Canada travel: Doug has been at each region for their AGM as well as one or two additional trips to meet with boards, councils, and donors – amazed at the dedication to the Nationwide church.
- Al Rempel has started as AEM.

b. Associate Executive Minister (Al Rempel)

- Serving as MC Canada staff is a homecoming, but it is also different than what it was 15 years ago. A steep learning curve but grateful for the Executive team (Doug, Susan) and colleagues in CLM who have given orientation and helped shape the agenda at hand.
- Company of 1000 award letters were sent for Forgivable loans and 50% tuition to provide an opportunity for study towards tasks of leadership in the church. We are hoping to invest more energy and creativity, promotion, and support into this fund in the coming years.

2023 Mennonite Church Canada AGM Zoom Final Minutes | page 3/5

- A significant project is the shared polity statements with MC USA related to the prevention of ministerial harm and accountability and the use of power. A larger reference group is in place and the hope is to test new policy with regional churches this fall.
- If we do the work well, it won't be seen. I have a vision for the tasks before me and a strong desire to be at the table with a heart that is set on discernment.
- God is moving and it is our job to somehow keep up and to notice. As we move forward, we're grappling with questions, and I'm hoping that God is working in advance of us. And I'm trusting that if we come with hearts of discernment, we will see how God is taking initiative, opening opportunities, and creating a path for us.

c. Comments/Questions: None.

9. Ministry Presentations (Videos)

- a. CommonWord (Arlyn Friesen-Epp)
- b. Indigenous Relations (Jonathan Neufeld)
- c. Climate Action (Sandy Plett)
- d. Living Hope Video
- e. Comments/Questions: none

10. Finance: led by Bruce Baergen in the absence of Paul Gilbert, Treasurer, and FPAC members.

Bruce gave a strong endorsement for Paul's attention to detail and process and the preparation of the following notes:

- a. Audited Financial Statements 2023
  - These were considered at the last Joint Council meeting.
  - The delegates at Gathering 2022 in August approved changing the MC Canada fiscal year end to March 31.

- These Financial Statements reflect the financial position of MC Canada as a March 31, 2023, and the results of operations for the 14 months then ended. What we weren't anticipating was that Sean East Financial Manager at MCEC, who also served as our accountant, would leave his role mid-year. This led us to reorganize Zachary Entz's responsibilities and so Zachary's first year with MC Canada was a 14-month fiscal year.
- KPMG has audited our Financial Statements and has given us a clean audit opinion.

Balance Sheet

- Assets have increased to \$5.7 million from \$4.7 million at last year's end. This was contributed to by 2 large bequests during the year totaling over \$900k. We have a solid balance sheet.

Operating Results General Funds operations resulted in a deficit of \$3k relative to a budgeted deficit of \$95k.

- Contributions from all 5 regional churches exceeded budget, most significantly in BC which was 40% over.
- Individual contributions exceeded budget by \$90k because of the 2 large bequests from which 10% is taken into operating income in the year received according to financial policy. These are not something we can plan for.
- International Witness contributions fell short of budget by \$35k.
- Gathering 2022 generated a loss of \$75k. Registrations fell short of the plan by \$15k due to fewer people registering than anticipated, and expenses exceeded the plan by \$60k as the contract with the hotel where the event was held had to be honored despite the shortfall in registrations. Gatherings are budgeted to break even.

2023 Mennonite Church Canada AGM Zoom Final Minutes | page 4/5

- Leadership Formation expenses were under budget by \$40k primarily due to the unanticipated delay in hiring the Associate Executive Minister.
- Witness expenses exceeded budget by \$127k. The biggest variances by country occurred in Ethiopia (\$58k), the Philippines (\$38k), South Korea, and Thailand (\$14k each). Many of these overages relate to unanticipated adaptations that needed to be made coming out of the pandemic.
- Travel exceeded budget by \$43k because when Covid restrictions were relaxed there was great demand for Doug and Jeanette to visit church partners and witness workers internationally, as travel had been curtailed by Covid for 2 years.
- Support Services expenses exceeded budget by \$33k because an FPAC approved reduction in pension admin fees recovered from the churches was not reflected in the budget.
- Occupancy costs exceeded budget by \$30k as maintenance costs were higher than expected and the budget had not provided for depreciation.
- Comments/Questions: None

Motion: That the audited financial statements for the 14 months ending March 31, 2023, as presented in the meeting today, be approved by the delegates.

Moved by David Wiens Seconded by Ben.  
Approved by Consensus.

b. Approval of MC Canada Budget 2023-24

- The 2024 Budget is for the 12-month fiscal year ending March 31.
- This budget was approved by FPAC (Financial Policy and Audit Committee) and recommended to the Joint Council. The Joint Council is also in agreement and recommends it to the delegates today.
- Regional church contributions are budgeted

consistent with 2023 actual shared revenue and percentages as outlined in the Shared Revenue Agreement, except in the case of Manitoba which has budgeted using 27.5% rather than 30% as outlined in the agreement. Manitoba is still aiming for 30%, but it is not reflected in the budget which increases our deficit.

- General Bequest Fund Amortization Revenue is increased substantially because the large bequests received in 2023 have created a much larger General Bequest Fund balance which is amortized to operations at 10% by policy.
- While MWC expense is budgeted at \$35k we expect that individual contributions flowing through MC Canada to MWC will produce actual results, like previous years. This still falls short of the requested amount in the Fair Share Agreement that is designed by MWC. We are continuing conversations with MWC about how significant personal donations from individual MC Canada congregants, outside of the MC Canada budget, augment that number. We expect that donations to MC Canada for MWC from constituents will enable exceeding this budget.
- Leadership Formation expenses reflect the Associate Executive Minister role for the full year.
- International Witness expenses are expected to reduce to more normal levels as there won't be "COVID catch-up" travel this year.
- Climate Action expenses will be funded by a draw on the Missional Initiatives Fund reserve as approved by JC for the first 2 years of this new program.
- Philippines capital project is shown on both the revenue side and expense side. We are fundraising for this.

General Observations:

- We are in structural deficits across the

country (every region and the MC Canada budget) though some regions have sizable reserves. By design in this new structure, MC Canada should not be running a surplus or deficit budget. We will need to work hard moving forward so that we plan such that we don't do this on an ongoing basis.

- Do we have a revenue problem, or do we have an expense problem? The regions and MC Canada will need to address this.
- At our October JC meetings, we will begin to talk about what ministry efforts we are going to carry forward and which ones we cannot. OR...we are going to need to find a way to move more funds up to the nationwide level to support ministries.
- Responsibility for resource generation/fundraising was claimed by the Regional Churches in the 2017 restructuring. At this point, we don't have enough money to do what the regions want to do together at the MC Canada level and our senior staff still have far more to do than they have time to do it.
- NO Questions/Comments

Motion: "That the FYE 2024 Operational Budget and Capital Budget be approved as presented.

Moved by Ben, seconded by Jen. Approved by Consensus.

c. Approval of Appointment of Auditors – KPMG

Motion: That KPMG LLP be appointed as auditors of Mennonite Church Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

Moved by Yoel, Seconded by Dave. Approved by Consensus.

11. Approval of Bylaw Changes

- These were circulated earlier. Housekeeping to deal with procedures.

- Comments/Questions: none

Motion: That the proposed Bylaw changes be approved as sent to the Regional Church Moderators on April 18, 2023 - 60 days in advance of this meeting– and recommended and submitted by Joint Council for this meeting.

Moved by Ben, Seconded by Bruce. Approved by Consensus.

12. Gathering 2024 – Proposed date change

Geraldine noted that conversations with MCEC's Executive Council, MCEC staff, and MC Canada staff led to the recognition that to host the MC Canada Gathering well in MCEC, which is our intent, we really do need to delay it by a year. It allows for various pieces to fall into place and resolve themselves and for us to give planning the attention that it deserves. Geraldine noted that this shift allows the Gathering to be off-cycle with MWC again and allows MC Canada to do some of its strategic planning work.

Motion: That there be a delay to Mennonite Church Canada Gathering hosted by MCEC by one year until Summer 2025.

Moved by Margaret, seconded by Jen. Approved by Consensus.

13. Reflection/prayer – Doug

Thank you to the staff for their work on the AGM and for all those (staff/volunteers) who do the work of the church.

14. Closing Song: "Our Eternal Host" written by Phil Campbell Enns

15. Adjournment at 1:15 pm.

# Mennonite Church Canada Minutes

## 2024 Zoom AGM Final Minutes

June 22, 2024 | 12:00 – 1:30 CDT

### PRESENT:

**Joint Council (Delegates):** Bruce Baergen (Assistant Moderator); Paul Gilbert (Secretary/Treasurer); Cheryl Braun (Moderator MCM); Keith Retzlaff (Moderator MCA); Sharon Schultz (Interim Moderator MCSK); Gerry Grunau (Moderator MCBC); Ben Cassels (Moderator MCEC); Jennifer Regehr (MCBC); Yoel Trakoon Masyawong (MCEC); David Wiens (MCM); Charlene Krahn (MC Sask). **Regrets:** Geraldine Balzer (Moderator); Margaret Kruger-Harder (MCA).

**Nationwide and Regional Staff:** Doug Klassen (EM MC Canada); Al Rempel (AEM MC Canada), Jeanette Hanson (International Witness Director), Jonathan Neufeld (Indigenous Relations Coordinator); Ken Dueck (Communications Coordinator), Susan Reynar (Executive Coordinator), Tim Wiebe-Neufeld (EM MCA); Len Rempel EM MCSK); Shel Boese (EM MCBC); Ann Schulz (Interim Executive Team Leader MCEC); Michael Pahl (EM MCM).

**Partners:** Cheryl Pauls (President, CMU), Tobi Thiessen (Publisher, Canadian Mennonite).

**Constituents** (17/28 registrations): Abraham Buhler (BC), Bill Christieson (AB), David Martin (ON), Derek Cook (AB), Don Rempel Boschman (MB), Donna Schulz (SK), Garry Bueckert (MB), Gerda Krause (BC), Ginny Hostetler (ON), Kathy Bergen (ON), Kevin Drudge (MB), Mary Anne Loepky (MB), Rachel Krause (MB), Peter Peters (SK), Stephen Cox (ON), Tony Schellenberg (MB), Veronica Dyck (BC).

### Agenda

1. Welcome/Call to Order (Bruce Baergen)
2. Devotional (Doug Klassen)

AGMs, while sometimes seen as repetitive or predictable, are vital for an organization, serving as a time to review results and discuss future possibilities. Drawing a parallel with John 4, where Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well during a routine visit and initiated transformation, we too can find significance and divine guidance in our routine AGM activities, trusting Jesus to meet and bless us as we discuss reports and financials.

Prayer: O God, who in Christ has filled all in all, infusing the universe, your creation, with your goodness and love. You have also filled and empowered your church to be the herald, the signpost, the foretaste of your kingdom, a kingdom of which we are members and also witnesses. As in Jesus, you approach the well in the gospel story. So now approach us in this routine practice and turn our practice into a time of drawing deep from overflowing living water abundance. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

3. Song - "Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land" Ens Family, Bethel Mennonite Church
4. Agenda Approved by consensus
5. Introduction of MC Canada Joint Council Reps (Bruce Baergen)
  - Joint Council Members are the delegates for AGMs held on Zoom (see Bylaws).
  - Keith Retzlaff is the new Moderator of MC Alberta, and this is his first AGM in this role.
  - Correction (p. 3): Charlene Krahn is the Representative for MC Sask, not MCM.
6. Review of June 24, 2023, AGM Delegate Session Meeting Final Minutes (p.5-9)

## 7. Moderators Report

Geraldine Balzer’s moderator’s report was read, highlighting the work and dedication of staff, regional church leaders, and the Joint Council. She noted both successes and challenges in living into the 2017 restructuring, and the ongoing efforts to refine the structure and operations, and test over the next year with the aim to adopt changes at the 2025 Assembly in Kitchener.

## 8. Executive Minister’s report

Doug is energized by a stellar Joint Council, the wisdom of the Executive Ministers Group, dedication of the staff in ministries and behind-the-scenes work, and hospitality of constituents during regional visits. It is a privilege to serve this Nationwide family of faith through the work of MC Canada’s three priorities:

- i. Pursuing Gods CALL to restore all of Creation,
- ii. Embracing our COMPANIONS, and
- iii. Cultivating a CULTURE that is multi-voiced, intercultural and reminiscent of Acts.

## 9. Ministry Presentations: Videos and Printed Report (p. 10-13)

- a. Executive Minister, Doug Klassen
- b. Leadership Ministries, Al Rempel and Doug Klassen
- c. CommonWord, Arlyn Friesen-Epp
- d. Climate Action, Sandy Plett
- e. Indigenous Relations, Jonathan Neufeld
- f. International Witness, Jeanette Hanson
- g. Comments/Questions

Emission Reduction Grants are available through an application process for congregations wanting to upgrade energy efficiency for their building.

## 10. Finance Report (Paul Gilbert)

- a. Approval of Audited Financial Statements

## FYE 2024 (p. 14-33)

These Financial Statements reflect the financial position of MC Canada as a March 31, 2024, the results of operations and changes in fund balances and cash flows for the 12 months then ended. They were reviewed with KPMG by FPAC on June 8, presented to and approved by Joint Council on June 11. KPMG has given us a clean audit opinion. Zachary Entz and the finance team have done a great job with our financial records and in supporting KPMG’s audit efforts. KPMG was complimentary of the team and the support provided.

## Balance Sheet

No substantial changes in assets year over year. The reduction in cash is offset largely by the increase in investments. We have a solid balance sheet.

## Statement of Changes in Fund Balances

Effective March 31, 2024, the Joint Council terminated the externally restricted Church Building Fund (note 6). In accordance with the contribution agreements of the fund, on termination, the Joint Council has the discretion on how the remaining funds can be spent by the MC Canada. \$100,000 was transferred to the General Fund’s internally restricted Creation Care Fund to cover future program expenses. The remaining \$153,263 was transferred to the General Fund’s Other Internally Restricted Funds to cover future program expenses which will be determined during fiscal 2025.

## Operating Results

- General Funds operations resulted in a deficit of \$59,000 relative to a budgeted deficit of \$119,000. We tracked much closer to budget throughout the year as we were working with a 12-month fiscal period and more experienced finance staff.
- Contributions from all 5 regional churches exceeded budget.

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- Relational Witness funding exceeded budget by \$39,000.
- Leadership Formation expenses were under budget by \$40,000 – 1) no misconduct investigations, 2) training for implementing the new Misconduct Policy delayed to this year.
- In International Witness, there was a \$60,000 shortfall in donations to fund the Malipayon Coffee for Peace project (separately budgeted) which was charged to the Witness Bequest Fund rather than remaining in and negatively impacting the General Fund operating results.
- Comments/Questions: none

Motion: That the audited financial statements for the 12 months ending March 31, 2024 as presented be approved by the delegates.

Moved by Paul Gilbert, Seconded by Charlene Krahn, Approved by consensus.

### b. Approval of MC Canada Budget 2024-25 (p. 34-36)

- This budget was approved by the Financial Policy and Audit Committee and recommended to the Joint Council. The Joint Council has approved the budget for recommendation to the delegates today.
- It reflects a deficit for the year of \$167k. Deficit budgeting is not sustainable. Joint Council has been working hard in the past year to better position the church to change the budget trajectory moving forward.
- Regional church contributions are budgeted consistent with 2024 actual shared revenue and percentages as outlined in the Shared Revenue Agreement.
- An agreement has been made that \$100,000 from a bequest to CMU that was designated to the Archives, will be allocated at the rate of \$20,000/year toward MC Canada's Archives funding commitment, temporarily reducing our related expense

for the next five years.

- Leadership Formation expenses reflect the addition of a half-time administrative support position and expenses related to the implementation of the new Misconduct Policy.
- In Climate Action, the 2024 budgeted retreat/workshop with the regions did not happen. Sandy is jointly planning such an initiative with ISR for the 2025 budget.
- Questions/Comments: None

Motion: "That the FYE 2025 Operational Budget be approved as presented.

Moved by Paul Gilbert, Seconded by Ben Cassels, Approved by Consensus.

### d. Approval of Auditors – KPMG

The Financial Planning and Audit Committee works closely with the auditors in developing the audit plan and it meets with them at least twice a year. We are very pleased with the service that they're providing and it's a mutually agreeable arrangement.

Motion: That KPMG LLP be appointed as auditors of Mennonite Church Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Moved by Paul Gilbert, Seconded by Keith Retzlaff, Approved by consensus.

### 11. MC Canada Governance and Operations Update (Bruce Baergen)

In the minutes of the October 2017 Special Assembly, it was noted several times that delegates were being asked to approve agenda items "in principle" as leadership was unable to accurately anticipate how various parts of the new structure would work. As stated on pg. 17 of Covenant New: Background to the Discernment Guide, "Only time will tell if the structure will work as anticipated."

As has been stated in previous MC Canada AGM's, aspects of the 2017 restructuring have

worked very well. Here are just a few things:

- Communication and sharing between the Regional Churches have been strengthened significantly.
- Having a common communications and web platform has been very helpful, especially for the smaller regions.
- Executive Ministers and Church Leadership Ministers continue to benefit from regular meetings and working at agenda together.

Some aspects of the new structure have been problematic. Over the past few years, we have made some adjustments. Here are a few:

- One of the more significant ones was to the Executive Staff Group (ESG). The change to the Executive Ministers Group (EMG) respects the variances as to how the executive ministers function in their respective Regional Churches.
- Another change was to how the nationwide church was funded. Further work led us to develop a Shared Revenue Agreement using percentages based on the 2017 roles and responsibilities.
- We also saw the need for the development of an Intercultural Church Steering Committee (ICSC) to address diversity concerns that were not being met as hoped for. This committee has contributed significantly to the shaping of the theme for Gathering 2025 – “Each has a gift”.
- And we developed a Witness Advisory Group to help inform decisions for International Witness.

In October 2023, the Joint Council discerned the need to adjust a few more things. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed that became known as the Group of 5. The name was an allusion to Canada’s famous Group of 7 artists, because we knew that there is an art to adjusting structures.

The committee came back to the Joint Council

in May with a list of recommendations. Here are the more significant ones that were discussed and then accepted at our meeting on June 11.

- The 2017 documents stated that the identity of Mennonite Church Canada is defined by the collective of the Regional Churches and congregations. We have now broadened that to acknowledge that our partners (whom we are starting to refer to as companions) both in Canada and globally also shape who we are as a nationwide church.
- Second, in 2017 decision-making was centred at the Regional Church level, with the Joint Council offering “recommendations” to Regional Churches. It became very difficult to implement nationwide decisions when some Regional Churches would embrace the decisions and others delayed or chose not to implement them. We have now adjusted our wording to say that, in the spirit of the Covenant that we hold together, we will all follow through on the decisions we make collectively at the Joint Council.
- Third, and this one will affect congregations and local church members most directly... we are moving to include congregational delegates at nationwide Gatherings. In 2017, the decision was made to have discernment on nationwide agenda at Regional Church gatherings so that congregations (who were termed as the locus or foundational unit of the church) would be able to speak to nationwide issues – like those raised in all the video reports that we just watched. As it has turned out, it has been too difficult to expand the Regional Church AGM’s or truncate the Regional Church agenda to make space for congregational discernment on nationwide agenda. As a result, nationwide agenda has come to take second place to Regional Church agenda, and that was not the intention of the 2017 restructuring.

Changing nationwide Gatherings to include congregational delegates (along with Regional Church delegates) should help us correct this. Now you might wonder, “What can these delegates decide?”, because our bylaws and Operating Agreement say that the Regional Churches together make the decisions on these things. In January 2023, when the Joint Council reflected on Gathering 2022 in Edmonton, we all agreed a change needed to be made. At that meeting, we agreed to shift toward using a “forum” model for Nationwide Gatherings. In brief, the forum model would create space for delegates to discern nationwide agenda. That discernment then would be used to guide the Joint Council in its decision-making. The forum model would function in a way that discernment wouldn’t be at cross purposes with the Regional Churches. For example, the delegates might be asked how we can best grow leaders for the church. But they wouldn’t be asked to approve a funding model for it to happen. Budgeting decisions would remain the responsibility of the Joint Council because budgets are formed by what the Regional Churches supply to Mennonite Church Canada through the Shared Revenue Agreement. Likely you have more questions about this, and we do too, as we are still shaping this, but this is the direction we will be going for Gathering 2025.

Thanks for receiving this report. We will be putting out a press release next week so that it can be easily referenced. Questions/comments?

Process outlined in further comments:

- Positive feedback received at the May 2024 Joint Council meeting helped strengthen the report.
- Adjustments were made and recommendations, above, were approved by Joint Council in June for presentation at the AGM.

- A press release will be issued.
- There is an open invitation for discussion with Bruce or Doug.
- Initiatives will be tested over the coming year to evaluate effectiveness.
- Based on the testing results, initiatives will be refined with the aim of presenting solid, vetted proposals for approval at Gathering 2025 along with additional updates.
- No policy changes will be implemented until approved at the 2025 Gathering. Acknowledgment was given for extensive work done by the Group of Five, staff, and Joint Council.

## 12. Gathering 2025 Update and Invitation (Doug Klassen)

Theme:

The theme, developed by the Intercultural Church Steering Committee, is inspired by 1 Peter 4, emphasizing that each person has a unique gift to serve the church. The focus will be a celebration of gifts from both long-standing Eurocentric churches and newer diaspora (new Canadian) churches. We’ll examine how structures and avenues for involvement can make it easier and more hospitable for diaspora churches and leaders to be part of shaping who we are. Expect wonderful worship, celebration, and engaging speakers. In anticipation of Gathering 2025, all regional churches will have engaged the intercultural theme in their regional AGMs.

Event Details:

- July 2-5, 2025, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener Ontario.
- The logo, with a thumb print to represent unique gifts, was designed by Anne Boese.
- Thanks were extended to Ann Schultz, Ben Cassels, and MCEC staff for early preparations in hosting this event.

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13. Reflection/prayer (Doug Klassen)

Thank you to everyone who has taken time out of their Saturday to join this meeting and hear about the church's work. Your presence and support, including prayers and participation in congregational activities, are deeply appreciated. Thank you to church administrators for sharing announcements and to those who support itinerant witness workers. There are many opportunities for resource generation, and with more funds, we could do even more for God's kingdom.

14. Closing Song – "Go in Peace" Camps with Meaning

15. Adjournment: 1:15 pm CDT

# Approval of Joint Council Actions

## August 2022 - June 2025

*NOTE: Complete Joint Council Meeting Minutes are available in CommonWord after they have been accepted. The following list does not include routine items like the adoption of minutes.*

### July 28, 2022 – In Person, Edmonton

**CONSENSUS:** To lend our support to the study Joanne is proposing. (Refers to Joanne Moyer's sabbatical proposal on the history of creation care concerns in MC Canada.)

**MOTION:** That we recommend the revised SRA as distributed and amended to the regional boards for approval prior to the Joint Council October 2022 meeting. Passed with no one blocking, but some reservations expressed.

**CONSENSUS:** The Joint Council affirms the 2022 Nominating Committee report as presented in the Gathering Report Book.

**CONSENSUS:** The Joint Council affirms the 2022-24 Nominating Committee slate as presented in the Gathering Report Book.

### August 1, 2022 – In Person, Edmonton

**CONSENSUS:** The Joint Council approves the edited document of July 31, 2022, as an interim measure until the new policy is passed. Until that new policy is in place, there is a moratorium on investigations or accusations against someone deceased. (Section 3 – Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure)

**CONSENSUS:** To remove the signing authority of Calvin Quan and Allan Hiebert as soon as possible and add a new Executive as soon as possible.

### September 30 and October 1, 2022 – In Person, Winnipeg

**CONSENSUS:** Esther Kern be MC Canada's representative on the CPT Board.

**CONSENSUS:** The August Financial Statements be accepted as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** Cheque signing authority be given to Doug Klassen, Zachary Entz, Laura Zacharias, and removing Allan Hiebert and Calvin Quan.

**CONSENSUS:** Joint Council agrees to an 18-month extension of the covenant with CMPS to end of June 2024.

**CONSENSUS:** Re-Affirmation with all parties concerned, to be implemented in this next fiscal budget year and going forward. (Refers to approval and implementation of Shared Revenue Agreement.)

**CONSENSUS:** The Existing Covenant be extended for another year and set up the covenant for review in 5-year periods.

### January 28, 2023 – Zoom

**CONSENSUS:** The revised Authorized Signing Officers Policy was approved as distributed by the Secretary-Treasurer.

**CONSENSUS:** We will not make a final decision today (about the MWC Fair Share), but we will design budgets with options 1 and 3 in mind and re-evaluate at the May meeting when we have a clearer sense of the financial picture.

**CONSENSUS:** The MC Canada Covenant was approved.

**CONSENSUS:** The MC Canada Operating Agreement June 8, 2022, revision 3 was approved.

**CONSENSUS:** The MC Joint Council appoints representation to CMPS, MWC and MCUSA Joint Exec and recommends appointments for AMBS and MennoMedia. Other external partner relationships are maintained through the EM's office and fall under three categories: 1) those that the EM represents directly, 2) those who have representatives appointed by the EM, and 3) those with whom the EM maintains a relationship through meeting invitations or reporting but has no responsibility for appointments.\*

**CONSENSUS:** The responsibilities of the MC Canada Nominating Committee as outlined in the Bylaws 14.2c be shifted from "vacant MC Canada staff

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position” to “vacant positions on external partner boards where the Joint Council is responsible for appointing or recommending a representative”.

**CONSENSUS:** The Joint Council affirms the recommendation to appoint Chris Steingart (MC Canada) as MennoMedia Board Chair.

### May 5-7, 2023 – In person, Saskatoon

**CONSENSUS:** That the Malipayon Peace Hub proposal be accepted as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** In order for the work to begin ASAP, the Joint Council authorizes the use of reserve funds to be advanced for the Coffee for Peace project based on the understanding that it will be completely repaid via fundraising with a target of full repayment by March 31, 2024. Excess donations will be used for ongoing peace projects.

**CONSENSUS:** With the recommendation of the Sustainability Leadership Group of Mennonite Church Canada, the Joint Council formally endorses “For the Love of Creation”.

**CONSENSUS:** That MC Canada be charged with coordinating a consistent and nationwide approach to giving.

**CONSENSUS:** That the redline version proposed by Paul adjusted to place the definition of Shared Revenue following the GENERAL section in the document, be approved.

**CONSENSUS:** MC Canada endorses David Boshart as President of AMBS for a second term.

**CONSENSUS:** That International Witness reserve fund be used to fund liaison and catalyst position(s).

**CONSENSUS:** To delay the budget recommendation for the MC Canada AGM on June 24, 2023, for approval of the delegates, to the special June 10 JC Zoom meeting.

**CONSENSUS:** That the proposed Bylaw changes be recommended to the 2023 MC Canada AGM for approval.

**CONSENSUS:** The Menno Media Bylaw changes are accepted as presented.

### May 22, 2023 - Email Vote

**CONSENSUS:** Joint Council approves the appointment of Jennifer Regehr as the fourth member of the Joint Council.

### June 10, 2023 - Zoom

**CONSENSUS:** The audited financial statements for the 14 months ended March 31, 2023, as presented and approved by FPAC be approved for recommendation for approval by the delegates at the AGM on June 24, 2023.

**CONSENSUS:** The Inter-fund transfers in the KPMG audited financial statements Note 6 and as detailed in the supporting schedule prepared by Zachary and distributed to JC be approved.

**CONSENSUS:** The 2024 budget, as distributed and recommended by FPAC to Joint Council, be recommended to the delegates at the AGM on June 24 with the understanding that Manitoba’s contributions to the 2024 budget at 27.5% of 2023 shared revenue (rather than 30% as specified) is an exception to the SRA for this budget only.

**CONSENSUS:** To bring the 2024 budget forward to the delegates as approved above.

### October 14–15, 2023 – In person, Winnipeg

**MOTION:** That Joint Council approve the proposal as presented [MC Canada hires 1.0 FTE Director of Development and Communications using option A over 3-years].

**CONSENSUS** to move forward with one expressing reservation.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the proposal as presented [to reorient relationship with CMU, CGUC, and AMBS, and acknowledge CGUC as national school].

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the proposal to engage in further dialogue with the Anglican Church of Canada.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council endorse moving forward with the development of a Canadian review team and endorse moving forward with testing the 3 procedures subject to a positive review by the EMG and CLM at their meeting in November.

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**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the minutes of the AGM of June 24, 2023, as distributed in the packet for approval of the delegates at the next Gathering.

**CONSENSUS:** Executive Committee will discern a task group from this body to work on the Schedule of Authority and revisit references to "Mennonite Church Canada" in foundational documents to ensure clarity.

**CONSENSUS:** Joint Council approve the additions as presented to the Policy on Speaking Publicly.

**MOTION:** That Joint Council approve the proposal that Regional Church employees .2FTE or less be eligible to serve as Regional Representatives on the Joint Council.

**CONSENSUS:** Approved with two abstentions.

**CONSENSUS:** Annika Krause is affirmed by the Joint Council for term renewal on the CMPS board.

**CONSENSUS:** That Tim Miller-Dyck be affirmed by Joint Council for a first term on the CMPS board starting January 2023 until April 2027.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the Financial Policy and Audit Committee's recommendations to; a) pursue obtaining proposals from several professional Investment Management companies; b) make changes to MC Canada's Investment and Interest policy to remove reference to a specific fund manager; c) provide notice to Abundance to satisfy the current contractual requirements for the potential withdrawal of our funds.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the protocol [Shared Revenue Agreement Clause #4] as proposed and that it be incorporated into the SRA as a footnote.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve a transfer of up to \$68,265 from the General Capital Reserve Fund to the General Operating Fund to finance the MC Canada offices improvements outlined in the spreadsheet included in the packet.

**CONSENSUS:** That JC approve FPAC's recommendations effective with the January 1, 2024, renewal to a) move health and dental benefits to a refund accounting basis; and b) raise the pooling limit on health benefits from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

**CONSENSUS:** In light of the decision regarding the Director of Development and Communication, JC supports the CMPS vision with funding commitment. Signing of covenant deferred until the remaining region responds.

### January 27, 2024 - Zoom

**MOTION:** That Joint Council approve the proposal by the Group of 5 ad hoc committee as revised.

**CONSENSUS:** with one person expressing reservations.

**CONSENSUS:** Joint Council instructs staff to do a competitive analysis of MC Canada's job description system and remuneration levels and recommend changes for review by the Joint Council Executive and for recommendation to the Joint Council for approval.

**CONSENSUS:** To formalize in the minutes of its meetings, the Joint Council's affirmation of the unanimous decision taken via Email in November 2023 establishing the following individuals as signing officers for MC Canada: Geraldine Balzer, Paul Gilbert, Doug Klassen, Al Rempel, Zachary Entz, Laura Zacharias.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the extension of the MC Canada Climate Action Position until the end of March 2025.

**CONSENSUS (in camera):** Joint Council approves that rather than pursuing an external consultant we direct staff to update the personnel policy.

### May 4–5, 2024- In Person, Waterloo

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve Neil Wieler for recommendation to the Delegate Assembly at the 2024 AGM for appointment to FPAC.

**CONSENSUS:** Joint Council affirms the direction of the Group of Five recommendations for 2024 as found on pages 6 and 7 of the Group of Five report. This forms the direction for our year of experimentation. It is understood that the wording in #1 and #2 needs to be clarified considering our conversation to ensure clarity. Joint Council further affirms the direction of engaging more directly with congregations and constituents on the areas of Nationwide Agenda and Programming. This will be carried out by:

- enabling representation from Congregations at National Gatherings
- enabling direct communication with Congregations about Nationwide priorities and needs
- researching other creative ways of engaging with the full range of congregations in our constituency

The refined wording of #1 and 2 and more clarity around the Congregational representation and discussion parameters for National gatherings will be presented before our June 11 Zoom meeting for further discussion and discernment.

The Group of Five invites email comments and questions on the rest of the points on pages 6–7.

There will also be further refinements on the rest of pages 6 & 7 as well as on the rest of the document in preparation for June 11.

## June 11, 2024 - Zoom

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve for recommendation to the delegates at the 2024 AGM the financial statements of Mennonite Church Canada for the year ending March 31, including the transfers outlined in note six to the financial statements. This includes the approval of the termination of the externally restricted church building fund as of March 31, 2024, and the transfer of the remaining fund balance as disclosed in note six.

**CONSENSUS:** to approve the operating budget for the fiscal year 2025, which includes a 3.27% annual salary increase for staff, for recommendation to the delegates at the 2024 AGM for their approval.

**CONSENSUS:** To formalize in the minutes of its meetings, Joint Council confirms the unanimous decision taken via email in May 2024 to approve the Investment Policy Statement that was distributed to JC by the Secretary-Treasurer.

## October 5–6, 2024 – In person, Winnipeg

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the MC Canada 2024 AGM Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2024, as distributed.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the appointment of Bruce Baergen as MC Canada Representative to MWC.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the proposed changes to the MC Canada Salary Structure for implementation on April 1, 2025, as recommended by the Joint Council Executive. Due to this being a new structure, there will be an annual management report to the Joint Council Executive on the structure implementation.

**CONSENSUS:** The Joint Council declares joint trust/support for the direction that Al Rempel is proposing for the Resource Generation Campaign as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the Guiding Ministerial Leadership in the Church Policy as distributed and subject to the one change with the addition of the word “teacher” on page 11.

**CONSENSUS:** That Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council accepts and approves the Group of 5 Final Report for use as a template by regional leadership in Regional Church engagement.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the “Proposal for MC Canada Gatherings and Delegate Representation” report. That Joint Council further approve the principle of the delegate body changes and communication of these proposed changes to Regional Churches and Congregations so that adequate preparation can be done in anticipation of the 2025 Gathering subject to ratification in January 2025.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council receive the “Environmental Sustainability in Mennonite Church Canada Member Congregations Report” authored by Joanne Moyer for discernment, recognizing that the report as presented does not necessarily reflect the views of the Joint Council.

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**CONSENSUS:** That the Climate Action Coordinator position be extended until the end of August 2025.

**CONSENSUS:** That the continuation of climate action as a nationwide priority be discerned by each regional church by the end of December 2024.

**CONSENSUS:** That Doug Klassen be approved to continue as Executive Minister for an open-ended term, beginning June 1, 2025.

### January 25, 2025 – Zoom

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the ongoing continuation of the Climate Action position to be funded by Creation Care fundraising efforts across the country.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the proposed Bylaw changes, (except for changes to Regional Church Delegate representation) for approval of the Delegates at Gathering 2025.

(Approved by consensus with the additional confirmation that clause 9.1.b.ii will be removed).

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the MWC Constitution update as proposed.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve Garry Janzen (MCBC) for recommendation to AMBS board.

### May 3, 2025 - Zoom

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the appointment of JD Penner as a new member of FPAC for a 3-year term and Tony Shellenberg for a final 1-year term for recommendation to the Delegates at Gathering 2025 for approval.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council affirm the appointment of Aaron Penner for a second term on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) Board.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council recommend Lynn Rempel for appointment by Menno Media as an MC Canada member of the Menno Media Board.

**CONSENSUS:** That the Terms of Reference for the Joint Council Regional Representative, revised in 2025 and presented in the docket, be accepted in

principle by the Joint Council to replace the Terms of Reference for 2nd Joint Council Rep adopted by the Joint Council in October 2018.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council affirm the continuance of Jennifer Regehr's role as the Joint Council appointment to the Executive Committee since first appointed to that role in 2023 and approve her appointment for the next year.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the proposed Bylaw changes as presented with the adjustment to making the term Bylaw plural (Bylaws) for approval of the Delegates at Gathering 2025.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council approve the fiscal 2026 Budget as presented with revisions for recommendation to the Delegates at Gathering 2025 for approval.

**CONSENSUS:** That Joint Council direct Mennonite Church Canada staff to explore and evaluate all methods of communication used to convey its message.

### June 12, 2025 – Zoom

*(approval of audited reports for presentation to delegates)*

*This schedule will be updated (at same time as audited financial statements) to reflect actions taken at the most recent Joint Council meeting.*

# Proposed Amendments to MC Canada Bylaws

Prepared by Paul Gilbert

Amendments to MC Canada Bylaws are recommended by Joint Council to the Delegates at Gathering 2025 in Kitchener for approval. This memo outlines the proposed amendments.

## Summary

The primary changes include:

1. Introduction of Congregation Representatives as new, key roles within Mennonite Church Canada.
2. Reducing the frequency of in-person Gatherings from every 2 years to every 3 years.
3. Reducing the number of Delegates appointed by Regional Churches to attend Gatherings.
4. Administrative adjustments to Bylaw wording to effect the above changes and edits to bring greater clarity and to accurately reflect existing practices.

These changes are further explained in the following sections.

## Congregation Representatives

Congregation Representatives will attend annual Gatherings and participate in a generative capacity in collaboration with traditional Delegates to discern where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church. This change is consistent with the philosophical construct of MC Canada where the individual congregations are the primary locus of the church's ministry in the world, and it enables congregations to speak into the discernment process for determining the focus of the ministry of the nationwide church within the context of

Mennonite Church Canada's Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement.

Each congregation may appoint up to 3 Congregation Representatives and is encouraged to send a pastor/leader, a person who understands congregational and regional dynamics and a person under 35 years of age.

The output of the Gathering discernment process will be a report that provides guidance to the Joint Council for decision making.

## Gathering Frequency

Gatherings will continue to be held annually, and in-person Gatherings will move to every three years rather than every two years to reduce the expenses associated with in-person Gatherings and the associated negative environmental impact. Non-in-person Gatherings will be held virtually using a facility such as Zoom. It is anticipated that both Congregations and Regions will endeavour to provide continuity in their respective appointments of Representatives and Delegates to optimize the effectiveness of appointees in the Gathering discernment processes.

## Regional Church Delegates

Delegates will continue to be appointed by the Regional Churches and will be entitled to vote at Gatherings. A revised approach for determining numbers of Regional Church Delegates will reduce the expenses associated with sending Delegates to in-person Gatherings and ensure effective Regional Church representation.

### Administrative Adjustments

Bylaw wording additions and edits to bring greater clarity and to accurately reflect existing practices include:

- Renaming the bylaws document as Mennonite Church Canada Bylaws from Mennonite Church Canada General Bylaws.
- Renaming Delegate Gatherings as Gatherings.
- Expanding the stated purpose of Gatherings to include discerning together where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church as reflected in Mennonite Church Canada's Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement.
- Removal of approving the budgets of MC Canada; monitoring adherence to Bylaws; and reviewing and ratifying the work performed by the Joint Council between delegate Gatherings from Duties and Powers of Voting Delegates.
- Inclusion of Financial Policy and Audit Committee members within Delegate responsibilities for election of Officers and members.
- Revision of officer terms from two years to three years and revision of eligibility to serve for up to two rather than three terms.
- Inclusion of reviewing and making recommendations at regular Gatherings for approval of financial statements and auditor's reports; and reviewing and approving operating budgets within the duties and powers of Joint Council.
- Removal of requirement for FPAC to meet in person at least once annually.
- Inclusion of oversight of the MC Canada insured group benefits plan in the duties of FPAC.

A clean version of the proposed amended MC Canada Bylaws and a red-lined version of the current Bylaws detailing all proposed wording changes are both provided for your information and reference.

# MC Canada Bylaws

## July 2025 Proposed Clean Copy

### PART I – DEFINITIONS

#### 1. Definition of Terms

1.1 In these Bylaws, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. "Act" means The Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, as amended by An Act to amend the Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and including any statute or regulations that may be substituted, as amended from time to time;
- b. "Bylaws" means any Bylaws of MC Canada in force and effect;
- c. "Congregation" means a body of persons who have responded to the call of Christ in repentance and in faith, who symbolize their unity through the practice of baptism and communion, and who are visibly grouped for the express purpose of implementing their obedience to Christ as head of the church;
- d. "Congregation Member" means a person who is a member of a Congregation of a Regional Church;
- e. "Congregation Representative" means a Congregation Member who has been appointed by that congregation to represent it at a Gathering;
- f. "Covenant" means the Covenant that is accepted and entered into by each Regional Church that becomes a member of MC Canada;
- g. "Delegate" means a Congregation Member appointed to represent a Regional Church at a Gathering or a MC Canada Officer who can vote on recommendations presented at the Gathering for decision;
- h. "Gathering" means a regular meeting or a special meeting of Congregation Representatives and Delegates, and such other persons as may be entitled or invited to attend;
- i. "Executive Minister" means the Executive Minister of MC Canada;
- j. "Joint Council" means that which is set out in Section 18 below;
- k. "MC Canada" means Mennonite Church Canada;
- l. "MC USA" means Mennonite Church USA;
- m. "Membership" means the collective Membership of MC Canada;
- n. "Moderator" means the person who possesses the leadership role in MC Canada or in a particular Regional Church, as the case may be;
- o. "Officer" means an officer of MC Canada as described in Section 22 below;
- p. "Policy Statements" mean the Policy Statements of MC Canada adopted under MC Canada's constitution;
- q. "Provisional Membership" means that which is set out in Section 6 below.
- r. "Regional Church" means a body of Congregations that have covenanted to form a denominational expression of the church, and that have joined the Membership of MC Canada by having agreed to work together with the other Regional Churches in the spirit of partnership and for the betterment of the collective Membership of MC Canada and further by having accepted and entered into the Covenant among the Regional Churches.

#### 2. Beliefs and Commitments

- 2.1 As a community of believers, we affirm that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and the foundation upon which we build. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

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2.2 The following statements identify whom God calls us to be, which guides our work and life together:

2.3 Vision: Healing and Hope, 1995:

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.

2.4 Statement of Identity and Purpose, 2005

God calls, equips and sends the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a community of disciples of Jesus, A part of the Body of Christ, covenanted together as congregations, regional churches, and a national church body.

Gratefully responding to God’s initiatives and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves and our resources to calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2.5 Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions - Adopted by MWC in 2006

By the grace of God, we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:

1. God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.
2. Jesus is the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world, and offers eternal life.

3. As a church, we are a community of those whom God’s Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and follow Christ in life.

4. As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God’s will for our obedience.

5. The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.

6. We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.

7. As a worldwide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God’s grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

2.6 In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modeled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ’s return and the final fulfillment of God’s kingdom.

## PART II – MEMBERSHIP

### 3. Eligibility for Membership

- 3.2 A Regional Church in Canada which is guided in their faith and life by the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, supports the Vision Statement and the Identity and Purpose Statement

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of MC Canada and accepts these Bylaws is eligible to become a member of MC Canada.

3.3 Any Regional Church that wishes to become a member of MC Canada is invited to submit a request in writing to the Executive Minister, who will then submit such request to the Joint Council which will, in turn, present the request and a recommendation at a Gathering for consideration and approval.

#### 4. Rights and Privileges of Members

4.1 Membership in MC Canada entitles Regional Churches to:

- a. appoint and send Delegates to a Gathering, with the right to vote;
- b. representation on the Joint Council as prescribed in these Bylaws; and
- c. participate in the programs of and receive services from MC Canada.

#### 5. Expectations of Members

5.1 Regional Churches are expected to:

- a. give faithful attention to the Scriptures;
- b. Listen to and be attentive to member congregations, giving opportunity for congregations to speak into Nationwide Church issues and priorities and for leaders to communicate what is heard into the Nationwide Church dialogue;
- c. tend to the health of their member congregations;
- d. encourage and guide MC Canada in the process of Biblical interpretation and spiritual discernment;
- e. be guided in their faith and life by the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective;
- f. uphold statements of Christian faith and life made by MC Canada;
- g. enter into and adhere to the Covenant;

- h. support the Vision Statement and the Identity and Purpose Statement of MC Canada and accept these Bylaws;
- i. respond to the invitation to become engaged in mission and service;
- j. support the programs of MC Canada and contribute to the spiritual life and growth of MC Canada by participating in MC Canada's life and work;
- k. participate in the church's life and mission through generous contributions of time and personal resources, all in commitment to Jesus Christ in response to the grace of God and in loving service to the church in which the Holy Spirit lives and works;
- l. support the Vision Statement of MC Canada, which expresses that God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so God's healing and hope flow through us to the world; and
- m. assume all duties as defined in these bylaws.

#### 6. Provisional Membership

6.1 Provisional Membership in MC Canada is open to any Regional Church which:

- a. meets the eligibility requirements contained in these Bylaws; and
- b. is not ready for full Membership in MC Canada but which wishes to evaluate the meaning of full Membership for itself.

6.2 Provisional Membership:

- a. may be requested in writing to the Executive Minister, who will submit such request to the Joint Council which will, in turn, present the request and a recommendation at a Gathering for consideration and approval;
- b. is restricted to a maximum of five (5) years;

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- c. carries with it the expectations listed in Section 5 of these Bylaws;
- d. provides all the rights and privileges of Membership listed in Section 4 of these Bylaws, except that:
  - i. Delegates of provisional members are not entitled to vote at a Gathering;
  - i. Congregation Members of Regional Churches that are provisional members may be appointed to a ministry, committee and/or other advisory body of MC Canada, but they may not serve on the Joint Council; and
  - i. participation in programs and services of MC Canada, and the costs associated with such programs and services, will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

## 7. Removal of Members

7.1 A Regional Church may be removed from Membership in MC Canada only on the recommendation of the Joint Council, after following the procedures defined in documents, guidelines and/or policies adopted by MC Canada to guide it in times of disagreement. Every attempt shall be made to resolve matters with the Regional Church, to avert the need for a recommendation of removal of the Regional Church from Membership in MC Canada.

Any such action to remove a Regional Church from Membership in MC Canada shall be done in the spirit of the Covenant and the Operating Agreement.

## PART III - GATHERINGS

### 8. Gatherings

- 8.1 Regular Gatherings shall be held:
- a. annually, though the Joint Council may call additional Gatherings as necessary;
  - b. at such place as may be determined by the Joint Council; and

- c. in-person every third year.

8.2 The purpose of regular Gatherings shall be to:

- a. discern together where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church as reflected in Mennonite Church Canada's Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement;
- b. receive written reports from the Joint Council as well as any committees, ministries and/or other advisory bodies of MC Canada with respect to their yearly activities, plans and relevant financial statements for consideration by Delegates and Congregation Representatives;
- c. act upon the slate of nominees for elected positions, as presented by the Nominating Committee of MC Canada and to hold such elections, except where the Joint Council determines it is necessary to hold such elections at a special Gathering; and
- d. transact any other necessary business.

8.3 A special Gathering may be called by the Joint Council, at such time and at such place as determined by the Joint Council. Notwithstanding Section 8.1 above or anything else contained in these Bylaws, representation at a Special Gathering is described in Section 9.

8.4 If the Moderator of MC Canada and the Assistant Moderator of MC Canada are absent from a Gathering, then the Delegates who are present and entitled to vote at such Gathering shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

8.5 If the Joint Council calls a Regular or Special Gathering, the Joint Council may determine that such Gathering shall be held entirely by means of telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all

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participants to communicate adequately with each other during such Gathering.

8.6 If MC Canada chooses to make available telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during a Gathering, any person entitled to attend such gathering may participate in the gathering by means of such telephonic, electronic or other communication facility. A person participating in a Gathering by such means is deemed to be present at the Gathering. Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, any Delegate participating in a Gathering who is entitled to vote at such gathering may vote by means of any telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that MC Canada has made available for that purpose.

9. Representation at Gatherings

9.1 Congregations and Regional Churches may be represented at both in-person Gatherings (every 3 years) and virtual Gatherings (other years) as follows:

- a. Representatives appointed by Congregations:
  - i. Maximum of 3 Congregation Members per Congregation.
  - ii. Each Congregation is encouraged to send:
    - 1. a pastor/leader
    - 2. a person who understands congregational and regional dynamics and
    - 3. a person under 35 years of age.
- b. Delegates appointed by each Regional Church:

Each Regional Church will be allotted 1 base Delegate plus additional Delegates based upon membership as follows:

Regional Church Membership - Delegates

- <5000 - 4
- 5000 – 9999 - 8
- >= 10000 - 12

9.2 If a Congregation does not maintain a formal membership list of its Congregation Members, then the number of regular attendees can be used in place of the number of Congregation Members. The congregation can define who is a “regular” attendee. Notwithstanding Section 9.1 above or anything else contained in these Bylaws, MC Canada Officers shall be considered Delegates entitled to vote at a Gathering, provided that the Moderator shall only be permitted to exercise his or her vote if the vote is equal.

9.3 Congregation Representative, Regional Church Delegate and Officer Delegate roles are mutually exclusive.

10. Duties and Powers of Congregation Representatives and Delegates

10.1 The primary purpose of the Congregation Representatives and Delegates at each Gathering is generative, to discern together where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church as reflected in Mennonite Church Canada’s Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement. This involves:

- a. Reviewing the work and ministry of MC Canada,
- b. Discussing budgeting priorities of MC Canada,
- c. Discerning issues facing the church and giving guidance to the Joint Council for decision-making.

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10.2 The additional fiduciary responsibilities of Delegates are to:

- a. Receive, accept (or reject) the Joint Council’s recommendations for:
  - i. Appointment of an auditor,
  - ii. Financial statements and auditor’s report,
  - iii. Changes related to the status of the Regional Churches that comprise MC Canada,
  - iv. Amendments to the MC Canada Bylaws.
  - v. Elect MC Canada’s Officers and members of the Nominating Committee and the Financial Policy and Audit Committee.

11. Notice of Gatherings

- 11.1 The date and place of the next regular Gathering shall be announced at the conclusion of each regular Gathering.
- 11.2 Notice of a special Gathering shall be given to Regional Churches not less than twenty-one (21) days in advance.

12. Voting at Gatherings

- 12.1 The quorum for a Gathering shall be at least fifty percent (50%) of all appointed Delegates. If a quorum is present at the opening of a Gathering, then the Delegates present may proceed with the business of such Gathering even if a quorum is not present throughout the said Gathering.
- 12.2 The business of a Gathering may be conducted:
  - a. by consensus, without a formal vote;
  - b. by a show of hands, at the discretion of the chairperson of the Gathering, or on the request of a voting Delegate; or
  - c. by ballot vote when directed by the chairperson of the Gathering, or when a motion to require a ballot vote is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion.

- 12.3 Unless otherwise provided for in these Bylaws, or if a motion to require a larger number is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion, a simple majority of the votes cast is sufficient to carry a resolution.
- 12.4 In the event of a ballot vote, the votes shall be counted by tellers who have been appointed in advance.

**PART IV – NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE & VACANCIES**

13. Qualifications for Elected Positions

- 13.1 Each person nominated for an elected position must be a Congregation Member.
- 13.2 If an elected person ceases to be a Congregation Member, that person’s term will expire immediately at that point.
- 13.3 No person may hold more than one elected position at the same time. Where a person who holds an elected position is elected to another elected position, that person is deemed to have resigned from his or her previously held elected position.
- 13.4 Staff of MC Canada are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.
- 13.5 Moderators and staff of each Regional Church are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.
- 13.6 Any question of eligibility for election shall be resolved by the Joint Council.

14. Nominating Committee

- 14.1 For each regular Gathering, each Regional Church shall nominate one (1) person to the Nominating Committee.
- 14.2 The Nominating Committee shall ‘stay in operation’ until the following Gathering’s Nominating Committee has been established.

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### 14.3 The Nominating Committee shall:

- a. in advance of a Gathering where elections are to be held, use its best efforts to prepare a slate of nominees consisting of one (1) nominee for each elected position that needs to be filled;
- b. recommend, upon the request of a committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada, persons to serve on such committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada;
- c. on request, suggest to the Executive Minister names of candidates for vacant positions on external partner boards where the Joint Council is responsible for appointing or recommending a representative.

### 15. Election Procedures

#### 15.1 The Nominating Committee will receive further nominations at a Gathering if:

- a. such nomination is endorsed by five (5) Delegates;
- b. the nominee has agreed to stand for the elected position; and
- c. such nomination is presented to the Nominating Committee at least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which the election is scheduled to take place.

#### 15.2 At least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which any elections are scheduled to take place, the Nominating Committee shall present its slate of nominees, including those nominated in accordance with Section 15(1) above, to the Delegates.

#### 15.3 Where only one (1) person has been nominated for a given elected position, that nominee shall be declared elected by acclamation.

#### 15.4 Where multiple nominations have been received for any elected position, there shall be a ballot vote.

### 16. Terms of Office

#### 16.1 Each member of the Joint Council appointed by a Regional Church in accordance with these Bylaws shall serve for such term as may be decided by his/her respective Regional Church.

#### 16.2 Officers shall serve for three (3) year terms and shall be eligible to serve for up to two (2) consecutive terms.

#### 16.3 A person's term begins at the end of the Gathering at which he or she is elected.

### 17. Vacancies

#### 17.1 Where a vacancy occurs in any elected Officer position between regular Gatherings, such vacancy may be filled by the Joint Council, at its discretion, until the next regular Gathering.

#### 17.2 Where a person has been appointed to fill a vacancy, the time spent completing that vacant term of office shall not be considered as a portion of any succeeding term.

## PART V - JOINT COUNCIL

### 18. Composition of the Joint Council

#### 18.1 The Joint Council shall consist of:

- a. the respective Moderators of each Regional Church;
- b. one (1) additional member appointed by each Regional Church. For greater certainty, such appointee shall not be a member of their respective Regional Church board; and
- c. three (3) Officers elected by the Delegates at a Gathering;

### 19. Meetings of the Joint Council

#### 19.1 The Joint Council shall meet at least four (4) times per year.

#### 19.2 If all the members of the Joint Council consent, then a member or members of the Joint Council may participate in a meeting of

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the Joint Council by telephonic, electronic or other communications facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during such meeting. A member of the Joint Council participating by such means is deemed to be present at that meeting.

20. Duties and Powers of the Joint Council

20.1 The Joint Council shall:

- a. act on behalf of MC Canada between Gatherings;
- b. act as the legal representative of MC Canada, authorize its Officers to sign contracts, cheques and other documents on behalf of MC Canada, and prescribe the limits, if any, of such authority;
- c. report to, and be accountable to its members at;
- d. between Gatherings, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in the Vision Statement and the Identity and Purpose Statement of MC Canada;
- e. facilitate the development of MC Canada's identity and vision by its members.
- f. create forums for interaction among the leaders of the Regional Churches;
- g. direct and coordinate the work of the ministries, committees and/or other advisory bodies of MC Canada;
- h. review and make recommendations at regular Gatherings for approval of financial statements and auditor's reports;
- i. review and approve operating budgets;
- j. make recommendations at regular Gatherings on the appointment of auditors for MC Canada;
- k. appoint, evaluate, and if necessary terminate the Executive Minister;
- l. at its discretion, fill vacancies in elected positions that occur between regular Gatherings
- m. process issues of Membership in MC Canada and make recommendations thereon at regular or special Gatherings;

- n. foster relationships with national and international bodies, including appointments as appropriate to:
  - i. MC USA;
  - ii. Mennonite World Conference;
  - iii. Mennonite Central Committee;
  - iv. other Mennonite church bodies;
  - v. Canadian Council of Churches; and
  - vi. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.
- o. review periodically the policies and procedures of MC Canada and ensure each of MC Canada's ministries, committees and/or other advisory bodies is aware of applicable policies and ensure that new policies are added as they are created;
- p. set long range goals and strategies to achieve those goals;
- q. plan, organize and call regular or special Gatherings;
- r. appoint other ministries, committees and/or advisory bodies of MC Canada at any time and delegate to such entities any powers and authority in the management of the conduct and affairs of MC Canada, provided that the task of any such entity does not interfere with or be inconsistent with the delegated authority of the ministries, committees or other advisory bodies established by these Bylaws;
- s. Oversee the administration and operations of MC Canada and oversee expenditure of MC Canada funds in general in accordance with the approved annual budget; and
- t. do any other thing which is likely to support and promote the mission of MC Canada.

20.2 No member of the Joint Council shall place himself or herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest between his or her duties as a member of the Joint Council and his or her other interests. A member of the Joint Council who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in a contract or transaction, or proposed contract or transaction with MC Canada, or who in any way finds himself or

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herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest shall declare such conflict of interest fully at a meeting of the Joint Council and withdraw from any discussion or vote thereon.

21. Joint Council Governance

20.1 The Joint Council shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which it shall operate.

**PART VI – OFFICERS**

22. Officers

22.1 The Officers of MC Canada shall be as follows:

- a. Moderator;
- b. Assistant Moderator;
- c. Secretary/Treasurer; and
- d. Other, as applicable.

22.2 The Officers shall be elected by the Delegates at a regular Gathering.

23. Duties of the Officers

23.1 The Moderator of MC Canada shall:

- a. preside at all Gatherings, whether regular or special;
- b. chair all meetings of the Joint Council and of the Executive Committee;
- c. act as the official representative of and spokesperson for MC Canada; and
- d. exercise such other powers and duties as may be assigned to the Moderator of MC Canada by the Joint Council.

23.2 The Assistant Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator of MC Canada:

- a. in the absence or incapacity of the Moderator of MC Canada; or
- b. at the request of the Moderator of MC Canada or of the Executive Committee.

23.3 The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- a. be responsible for recording all minutes of Gatherings as well as meetings of the Joint

Council and of the Executive Committee;

- b. conduct any necessary official correspondence, if and as instructed by the Joint Council; and
- c. oversee the Financial Policy and Audit Committee established by the Joint Council, and shall also perform such other duties as the Joint Council may specify.

23.4 The powers and duties of all other Officers, shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the Joint Council requires. The Joint Council may, subject to the Act, vary, add to or limit the powers and duties of any Officer.

23.5 The Officers shall be entitled to vote at a Gathering, provided that the Moderator shall only be permitted to exercise his or her vote if the vote is equal.

**PART VII – EXECUTIVE MINISTER**

24. Appointment

24.1 The Executive Minister shall be appointed by the Joint Council.

25. Duties of the Executive Minister (in relationship to MC Canada Governance. See Operating Agreement for more comprehensive duties).

25.1 The Executive Minister shall:

- a. lead and oversee the total program(s) of MC Canada;
- b. hire and supervise the staff of MC Canada;
- c. participate, without a vote, in meetings of the Executive Committee and the Joint Council;
- d. receive and record the credentials of all voting Delegates prior to each Gathering;
- e. publish the proceedings of each Gathering; and
- f. perform such other duties as the Joint Council may specify from time to time.

## PART VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### 26. Composition of the Executive Committee

26.1 The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- a. the Officers; and
- b. one (1) member of the Joint Council, to be appointed by the Joint Council from among its members, whose term shall be for one (1) year, and who shall be eligible to serve for up to six (6) terms.

### 27. Duties and Powers of the Executive Committee

27.1 The Executive Committee shall:

- a. act on behalf of the Joint Council with respect to emergency matters between meetings of the Joint Council;
- b. provide counsel to the Executive Minister on matters that he or she may present;
- c. deal with confidential matters in connection with MC Canada; and
- d. report its activities to the Joint Council.

## PART IX – FINANCIAL POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

### 28. Composition of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

28.1 The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall consist of three (3) persons:

- a. the Secretary/Treasurer of MC Canada, who shall act as chairperson of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee; and
- b. two (2) other persons selected by the Joint Council, and elected by the Gathering, whose term shall be for three (3) years, and who shall be eligible to serve for up to three (3) consecutive terms. For greater certainty, these persons need not be Delegates to the Gathering.

### 29. Duties of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

29.1 The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall meet as required to:

- a. review the financial statements (YTD) prepared by the staff of MC Canada and report to the Joint Council;
- b. recommend financial policies and procedures as needed;
- c. ensure that MC Canada has implemented appropriate systems to identify, monitor and mitigate significant business risks;
- d. monitor the review of senior management's expense claims;
- e. provide initial recommendations regarding the budgeting process for the upcoming year and review proposed budgets before submission to the Joint Council;
- f. act as an audit committee with the following responsibilities:
  - i. review and recommend the appointment of the external auditor;
  - ii. review annually the audit plan and fees presented by the external auditor;
  - iii. review the annual audited financial statements prior to submission to the Joint Council for their approval;
  - iv. in camera (privately held) meeting with the auditor;
  - v. review and report to the Joint Council the results of the external auditor's annual audit, including the management letter and significant issues encountered during the audit and how they were resolved; and
  - vi. review with management and the external auditors MC Canada's systems of internal control to ensure compliance with legal, ethical, regulatory and financial reporting requirements and report to the Joint Council as required.
- g. administer the MC Canada Pension Plan as part of the Pension Advisory Committee;
- h. oversee the MC Canada insured group benefits plan.

**PART X – OTHER COMMITTEES**

30. Other Committees

30.1 The Joint Council may from time to time appoint any committee, ministry, or advisory body it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and with such powers as the Joint Council sees fit. Any such committee, ministry or advisory body may formulate its own rules of procedure, subject to such regulations or directions as the Joint Council may make. Any member of any committee, ministry or other advisory body may be removed at the discretion of the Joint Council.

30.2 No member of any committee, ministry or other advisory body of MC Canada shall place himself or herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest between his or her duties as a member of such committee, ministry, or other advisory body and his or her other interests. A member of any committee, ministry or other advisory body of MC Canada who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in a contract or transaction, or proposed contract or transaction with MC Canada, or who in any way finds himself or herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest shall declare such conflict of interest fully at a meeting of his or her committee, ministry or advisory body and withdraw from any discussion or vote thereon.

**PART XI – OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

31. Fiscal Year

31.1 MC Canada’s fiscal year shall end on the 31st day of March in each calendar year.

32. Corporate Seal

32.1 The Corporate seal shall:  
 a. have inscribed thereon Mennonite Church Canada; and

b. be affixed to such signed documents as the Joint Council considers necessary or advisable.

33. Non-Profit

33.1 The organization will operate without purpose of gain for its members, and that any profit or other assets of the organization will be used solely to promote its objectives.

34. Indemnities

34.1 Every Officer, member of the Joint Council and/or member of a committee, ministry or other advisory body of MC Canada as well as their respective heirs, executors and administrators shall always be indemnified and saved harmless, out of the funds of MC Canada, from and against:

- a. all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such Officer or member sustains or incurs as a result of any claim, demand or proceedings made or brought against him or her for anything done, or omitted or permitted to be done, in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an Officer or member, except for any costs, charges and expenses sustained or incurred by the Officer or member because of the wilful neglect of such Officer or member; and
- b. all reasonable costs, charges and expenses incurred by such Officer or member while carrying out his or her responsibilities as an Officer or member.

**PART XII –AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS**

35. Amendments to these Bylaws

35.1 Notwithstanding Section 9 above or anything else contained in these Bylaws, these Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special Gathering where the representation of the members is as set out in Section 9; provided that the proposed amendments have been sent to the Regional Churches at least two (2) months in advance.

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Proposed Amendments to Bylaws - clean copy - | page 12/12

35.2 To pass, Bylaws amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast by Delegates at a Gathering.

36. Coming into force

36.1 These Bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the Gathering at which they are adopted.

36.2 Any subsequent amendments to these Bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the Gathering at which they are adopted.

Approved: July 14, 2001

Amended: July 6, 2002

Amended: July 9, 2005

Amended: July 6, 2007

Amended: July 2, 2010

Amended: July 9, 2011

Amended: April 14, 2012

Amended: July 12, 2012

Amended: October 14, 2017

Amended: August 1, 2022

Amended: June 24, 2023

**MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA**

**~~GENERAL BYLAWS~~**

JULY 2025 PROPOSED CHANGES- REDLINED

**PART I – DEFINITIONS**

**1. Definition of Terms**

1.1. In ~~this~~these Bylaws, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. **“Act”** means *The Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada*, as amended by *An Act to amend the Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada*, and including any statute or regulations that may be substituted, as amended from time to time;
- b. **“Bylaws”** means any Bylaws of MC Canada in force and effect;
- c. **“Congregation”** means a body of persons who have responded to the call of Christ in repentance and in faith, who symbolize their unity through the practice of baptism and communion, and who are visibly grouped for the express purpose of implementing their obedience to Christ as head of the church;
- d. **“Congregation Member”** means a person who is a member of a Congregation of a Regional Church;
- e. **“Congregation Representative”** means a Congregation Member who has been appointed by that congregation to represent it at a Gathering;
- f. **“Covenant”** means the Covenant that is accepted and entered into by each Regional Church that becomes a member of MC Canada;
- g. **“Delegate”** means a Congregation Member appointed to represent a Regional Church at a Gathering or a MC Canada Officer who can vote on recommendations presented at the Gathering for decision;
- h. **“Gathering”** means a regular meeting or a special meeting of Congregation Representatives and Delegates, and such other persons as may be entitled or invited to attend;
- i. **“Executive Minister”** means the Executive Minister of MC Canada;
- j. **“Joint Council”** means that which is set out in Section 18 below;
- k. **“MC Canada”** means Mennonite Church Canada;
- l. **“MC USA”** means Mennonite Church USA;
- m. **“Membership”** means the collective Membership of MC Canada;
- n. **“Moderator”** means the person who possesses the leadership role in MC Canada or in a particular Regional Church, as the case may be;
- o. **“Officer”** means an officer of MC Canada as described in Section 22 below;
- p. **“Policy Statements”** mean the Policy Statements of MC Canada adopted under MC Canada’s constitution;

- q. **“Provisional Membership”** means that which is set out in Section 6 below.
- r. **“Regional Church”** means a body of Congregations that have covenanted to form a denominational expression of the church, and that have joined the Membership of MC Canada by having agreed to work together with the other Regional Churches in the spirit of partnership and for the betterment of the collective Membership of MC Canada and further by having accepted and entered into the Covenant among the Regional Churches.

to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are a community of disciples of Jesus,  
 A part of the Body of Christ, covenanted together as congregations, regional churches\*, and a national church body. Gratefully responding to God’s initiatives and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves and our resources to calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**2. Beliefs and Commitments**

- 2.1. As a community of believers, we affirm that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and the foundation upon which we build. (1 Corinthians 3:11)
- 2.2. The following statements identify whom God calls us to be, which guides our work and life together:
- 2.3. Vision: Healing and Hope, 1995:  
 God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.
- 2.4. Statement of Identity and Purpose, 2005  
 God calls, equips and sends the church

- 2.5. Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions - Adopted by MWC in 2006  
 By the grace of God, we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:
  - 1 God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.
  - 2 Jesus is the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world, and offers eternal life.
  - 3 As a church, we are a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as

Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and follow Christ in life.

- 4 As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God's will for our obedience.
  - 5 The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.
  - 6 We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.
  - 7 As a worldwide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- 2.6. In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modeled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfillment of God's kingdom.

**PART II – MEMBERSHIP**

**3. Eligibility for Membership**

3.1. A Regional Church in Canada which is guided in their faith and life by the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, supports the Vision Statement and the Identity and Purpose Statement of MC Canada and accepts ~~this~~ these Bylaws is eligible to become a member of MC Canada.

3.2. Any Regional Church that wishes to become a member of MC Canada is invited to submit a request in writing to the Executive Minister, who will then submit such request to the Joint Council which will, in turn, present the request and a recommendation at a Gathering for consideration and approval.

**4. Rights and Privileges of Members**

- 4.1. Membership in MC Canada entitles Regional Churches to:
- a. appoint and send Delegates to a Gathering, with the right to vote;
  - b. representation on the Joint Council as prescribed in ~~this~~ these Bylaws; and
  - c. participate in the programs of and receive services from MC Canada.

**5. Expectations of Members**

- 5.1. Regional Churches are expected to:
- a. give faithful attention to the Scriptures;
  - b. Listen to and be attentive to member congregations, giving opportunity for congregations to



- i. Delegates of provisional members are not entitled to vote at a Gathering;
- ii. Congregation Members of Regional Churches that are provisional members may be appointed to a ministry, committee and/or other advisory body of MC Canada, but they may not serve on the Joint Council; and
- iii. participation in programs and services of MC Canada, and the costs associated with such programs and services, will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

## 7. Removal of Members

7.1. A Regional Church may be removed from Membership in MC Canada only on the recommendation of the Joint Council, after following the procedures defined in documents, guidelines and/or policies adopted by MC Canada to guide it in times of disagreement. Every attempt shall be made to resolve matters with the Regional Church, to avert the need for a recommendation of removal of the Regional Church from Membership in MC Canada.

Any such action to remove a Regional Church from Membership in MC Canada shall be done in the spirit of the Covenant and the Operating Agreement.

## PART III - GATHERINGS

### 8. Gatherings

8.1. Regular Gatherings shall be held:

- a. annually, though the Joint Council may call additional Gatherings as necessary;
- b. at such place as may be determined by the Joint Council; and
- c. in-person every third year.

8.2. The purpose of regular Gatherings shall be to:

- a. discern together where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church as reflected in Mennonite Church Canada's Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement;
- b. receive written reports from the Joint Council as well as any committees, ministries and/or other advisory bodies of MC Canada with respect to their yearly activities, plans and relevant financial statements for consideration by Delegates and Congregation Representatives;
- c. act upon the slate of nominees for elected positions, as presented by the Nominating Committee of MC Canada and to hold such elections, except where the Joint Council determines it is necessary to hold such elections at a special Gathering; and

d. transact any other necessary business.

8.3. A special Gathering may be called by the Joint Council, at such time and at such place as determined by the Joint Council. Notwithstanding Section 8.1 above or anything else contained in ~~this~~ these Bylaws, representation at a Special Gathering is described in Section 9.

8.4. If the Moderator of MC Canada and the Assistant Moderator of MC Canada are absent from a Gathering, then the Delegates who are present and entitled to vote at such Gathering shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

8.5. If the Joint Council calls a Regular or Special Gathering, the Joint Council may determine that such Gathering shall be held entirely by means of telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during such Gathering.

8.6. If MC Canada chooses to make available telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during a Gathering, any person entitled to attend such gathering may participate in the gathering by means of such telephonic, electronic or other communication facility. A person

participating in a Gathering by such means is deemed to be present at the Gathering. Notwithstanding any other provision of ~~this~~ these bylaws, any Delegate participating in a Gathering who is entitled to vote at such gathering may vote by means of any telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that MC Canada has made available for that purpose.

**9. Representation at Gatherings**

9.1. Congregations and Regional Churches may be represented at both in-person Gatherings (every 3 years) and virtual Gatherings (other years) as follows:

- a. Representatives appointed by Congregations:
  - i. Maximum of 3 Congregation Members per Congregation.
  - ii. Each Congregation is encouraged to send:
    - 1. a pastor/leader
    - 2. a person who understands congregational and regional dynamics and
    - 3. a person under 35 years of age.
- b. Delegates appointed by each Regional Church:
  - ~~i. One Delegate plus one additional Delegate per 2000~~

- ~~members or portion thereof.~~
- ii. ~~Appointments will consider congregations that may not have the resources to send Delegates, representation from diaspora congregations, demographic diversity, and particular knowledge-keepers.~~

Each Regional Church will be allotted 1 base Delegate plus additional Delegates based upon membership as follows:

<u>Regional Church Membership</u>	<u>Number of Delegates</u>
<u>&lt;5000</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>5000 – 9999</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>&gt;= 10000</u>	<u>12</u>

If a Congregation does not maintain a formal membership list of its Congregation Members, then the number of regular attendees can be used in place of the number of Congregation Members. The congregation can define who is a "regular" attendee.

9.2. Notwithstanding Section 9.1 above or anything else contained in ~~this~~ these Bylaws, MC Canada Officers shall be

considered Delegates entitled to vote at a Gathering, provided that the Moderator shall only be permitted to exercise his or her vote if the vote is equal.

9.3. Congregation Representative, Regional Church Delegate and Officer Delegate roles are mutually exclusive.

### 10. Duties and Powers of Congregation Representatives and Delegates

10.1. The primary purpose of the Congregation Representatives and Delegates at each Gathering is generative, to discern together where God is calling MC Canada to focus the ministry of the nationwide church as reflected in Mennonite Church Canada’s Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement. This involves:

- a. Reviewing the work and ministry of MC Canada,
- b. Discussing budgeting priorities of MC Canada,
- c. Discerning issues facing the church and giving guidance to the Joint Council for decision-making.

10.2. The additional fiduciary responsibilities of Delegates are to:

- a. Receive, accept (or reject) the Joint Council’s recommendations for:
  - i. Appointment of an auditor,
  - ii. Financial statements and auditor’s report,
  - iii. ~~Operating budget,~~

~~iv.iii.~~ Changes related to the status of the Regional Churches that comprise MC Canada,

~~v.iv.~~ Amendments to the MC Canada Bylaws.

~~b. Monitor adherence to the MC Canada Bylaw.~~

~~c.b.~~ Elect MC Canada's Officers and members of the Nominating Committee and the Financial Policy and Audit Committee.

~~d. Review and ratify the work performed by the Joint Council between Gatherings.~~

### 11. Notice of Gatherings

11.1. The date and place of the next regular Gathering shall be announced at the conclusion of each regular Gathering.

11.2. Notice of a special Gathering shall be given to Regional Churches not less than twenty-one (21) days in advance.

### 12. Voting at Gatherings

12.1. The quorum for a Gathering shall be at least fifty percent (50%) of all ~~appointed~~ Delegates ~~who are present in person~~. If a quorum is present at the opening of a Gathering, then the Delegates present may proceed with the business of such Gathering even if a quorum is not present throughout the said Gathering.

12.2. The business of a Gathering may be conducted:

- a. by consensus, without a formal vote;
- b. by a show of hands, at the discretion of the chairperson of the Gathering, or on the request of a voting Delegate; or
- c. by ballot vote when directed by the chairperson of the Gathering, or when a motion to require a ballot vote is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion.

12.3. Unless otherwise provided for in ~~this~~ ~~these~~ Bylaws, or if a motion to require a larger number is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion, a simple majority of the votes cast is sufficient to carry a resolution.

12.4. In the event of a ballot vote, the votes shall be counted by tellers who have been appointed in advance.

## PART IV – NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE & VACANCIES

### 13. Qualifications for Elected Positions

13.1. Each person nominated for an elected position must be a Congregation Member.

13.2. If an elected person ceases to be a Congregation Member, that person's term will expire immediately at that point.

13.3. No person may hold more than one elected position at the same time. Where a person who holds an elected position is elected to another elected position, that person is deemed to have resigned from his or her previously held elected position.

13.4. Staff of MC Canada are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.

13.5. Moderators and staff of each Regional Church are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.

13.6. Any question of eligibility for election shall be resolved by the Joint Council.

**14. Nominating Committee**

14.1. For each regular Gathering, each Regional Church shall nominate one (1) person to the Nominating Committee.

14.2. The Nominating Committee shall 'stay in operation' until the following Gathering's Nominating Committee has been established.

14.3. The Nominating Committee shall:

- a. in advance of a Gathering where elections are to be held, use its best efforts to prepare a slate of nominees consisting of one (1) nominee for each

elected position that needs to be filled;

- b. recommend, upon the request of a committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada, persons to serve on such committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada;

- c. on request, suggest to the Executive Minister names of candidates for vacant positions on external partner boards where the Joint Council is responsible for appointing or recommending a representative.

**15. Election Procedures**

15.1. The Nominating Committee will receive further nominations at a Gathering if:

- a. such nomination is endorsed by five (5) Delegates;
- b. the nominee has agreed to stand for the elected position; and
- c. such nomination is presented to the Nominating Committee at least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which the election is scheduled to take place.

15.2. At least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which any elections are scheduled to take place, the Nominating Committee shall present its slate of nominees, including those nominated in

accordance with Section 15(1) above, to the Delegates.

office shall not be considered as a portion of any succeeding term.

15.3. Where only one (1) person has been nominated for a given elected position, that nominee shall be declared elected by acclamation.

15.4. Where multiple nominations have been received for any elected position, there shall be a ballot vote.

**16. Terms of Office**

16.1. Each member of the Joint Council appointed by a Regional Church in accordance with ~~this~~ these Bylaws shall serve for such term as may be decided by his/her respective Regional Church.

16.2. Officers shall serve for three (3) year terms and shall be eligible to serve for up to two (2) consecutive terms.

16.3. A person’s term begins at the end of the Gathering at which he or she is elected.

**17. Vacancies**

17.1. Where a vacancy occurs in any elected Officer position between regular Gatherings, such vacancy may be filled by the Joint Council, at its discretion, until the next regular Gathering.

17.2. Where a person has been appointed to fill a vacancy, the time spent completing that vacant term of

**PART V - JOINT COUNCIL**

**18. Composition of the Joint Council**

- 18.1. The Joint Council shall consist of:
- a. the respective Moderators of each Regional Church;
  - b. one (1) additional member appointed by each Regional Church. For greater certainty, such appointee shall not be a member of their respective Regional Church board; and
  - c. three (3) Officers elected by the Delegates at a Gathering;

**19. Meetings of the Joint Council**

19.1. The Joint Council shall meet at least four (4) times per year.

19.2. If all the members of the Joint Council consent, then a member or members of the Joint Council may participate in a meeting of the Joint Council by telephonic, electronic or other communications facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during such meeting. A member of the Joint Council participating by such means is deemed to be present at that meeting.

**20. Duties and Powers of the Joint Council**

20.1. The Joint Council shall:

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- a. act on behalf of MC Canada between Gatherings;
- b. act as the legal representative of MC Canada, authorize its Officers to sign contracts, cheques and other documents on behalf of MC Canada, and prescribe the limits, if any, of such authority;
- c. report to, and be accountable to its members at Gatherings;
- d. between Gatherings, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in the Vision Statement and the Identity and Purpose Statement of MC Canada;
- e. facilitate the development of MC Canada's identity and vision by its members.
- f. create forums for interaction among the leaders of the Regional Churches;
- g. direct and coordinate the work of the ministries, committees and/or other advisory bodies of MC Canada;
- h. review and make recommendations at regular Gatherings for approval of financial statements and auditor's reports;
- i. review and approve operating budgets;
- j. make recommendations at regular Gatherings on the appointment of auditors for MC Canada;
- k. appoint, evaluate, and if necessary terminate the Executive Minister;
- l. at its discretion, fill vacancies in elected positions that occur between regular Gatherings
- m. process issues of Membership in MC Canada and make recommendations thereon at regular or special Gatherings;
- n. foster relationships with national and international bodies, including appointments as appropriate to:
  - i. MC USA;
  - ii. Mennonite World Conference;
  - iii. Mennonite Central Committee;
  - iv. other Mennonite church bodies;
  - v. Canadian Council of Churches; and
  - vi. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.
- o. review periodically the policies and procedures of MC Canada and ensure each of MC Canada's ministries, committees and/or other advisory bodies is aware of applicable policies and ensure that new policies are added as they are created;
- p. set long range goals and strategies to achieve those goals;
- q. plan, organize and call regular or special Gatherings;

- r. appoint other ministries, committees and/or advisory bodies of MC Canada at any time and delegate to such entities any powers and authority in the management of the conduct and affairs of MC Canada, provided that the task of any such entity does not interfere with or be inconsistent with the delegated authority of the ministries, committees or other advisory bodies established by ~~this~~ these Bylaws;
- s. Oversee the administration and operations of MC Canada and oversee expenditure of MC Canada funds in general in accordance with the approved annual budget; and
- t. do any other thing which is likely to support and promote the mission of MC Canada.

20.2. No member of the Joint Council shall place himself or herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest between his or her duties as a member of the Joint Council and his or her other interests. A member of the Joint Council who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in a contract or transaction, or proposed contract or transaction with MC Canada, or who in any way finds himself or herself in a position where there is a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest shall declare

such conflict of interest fully at a meeting of the Joint Council and withdraw from any discussion or vote thereon.

**21. Joint Council Governance**

21.1. The Joint Council shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which it shall operate.

**PART VI – OFFICERS**

**22. Officers**

22.1. The Officers of MC Canada shall be as follows:

- a. Moderator;
- b. Assistant Moderator;
- c. Secretary/Treasurer; and
- d. Other, as applicable.

22.2. The Officers shall be elected by the Delegates at a regular Gathering.

**23. Duties of the Officers**

23.1. The Moderator of MC Canada shall:

- a. preside at all Gatherings, whether regular or special;
- b. chair all meetings of the Joint Council and of the Executive Committee;
- c. act as the official representative of and spokesperson for MC Canada; and
- d. exercise such other powers and duties as may be assigned to the Moderator of MC Canada by the Joint Council.

- 23.2. The Assistant Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator of MC Canada:
- a. in the absence or incapacity of the Moderator of MC Canada; or
  - b. at the request of the Moderator of MC Canada or of the Executive Committee.

- 23.3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall:
- a. be responsible for recording all minutes of Gatherings as well as meetings of the Joint Council and of the Executive Committee;
  - b. conduct any necessary official correspondence, if and as instructed by the Joint Council; and
  - c. oversee the Financial Policy and Audit Committee established by the Joint Council, and shall also perform such other duties as the Joint Council may specify.

23.4. The powers and duties of all other Officers, shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the Joint Council requires. The Joint Council may, subject to the Act, vary, add to or limit the powers and duties of any Officer.

23.5. The Officers shall be entitled to vote at a Gathering, provided that the Moderator shall only be permitted to exercise his or her vote if the vote is equal.

**PART VII – EXECUTIVE MINISTER**

**24.Appointment**

24.1. The Executive Minister shall be appointed by the Joint Council.

**25.Duties of the Executive Minister (in relationship to MC Canada Governance. See Operating Agreement for more comprehensive duties).**

- 25.1. The Executive Minister shall:
- a. lead and oversee the total program(s) of MC Canada;
  - b. hire and supervise the staff of MC Canada;
  - c. participate, without a vote, in meetings of the Executive Committee and the Joint Council;
  - d. receive and record the credentials of all voting Delegates prior to each Gathering;
  - e. publish the proceedings of each Gathering; and
  - f. perform such other duties as the Joint Council may specify from time to time.

**PART VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**26.Composition of the Executive Committee**

- 26.1. The Executive Committee shall consist of:
- a. the Officers; and
  - b. one (1) member of the Joint Council, to be appointed by the Joint Council from among its members, whose term shall be

for one (1) year, and who shall be eligible to serve for up to six (6) terms.

(3) consecutive terms. For greater certainty, these persons need not be Delegates to the Gathering.

**27. Duties and Powers of the Executive Committee**

- 27.1. The Executive Committee shall:
- a. act on behalf of the Joint Council with respect to emergency matters between meetings of the Joint Council;
  - b. provide counsel to the Executive Minister on matters that he or she may present;
  - c. deal with confidential matters in connection with MC Canada; and
  - d. report its activities to the Joint Council.

**29. Duties of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee**

- 29.1. The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall meet as required to:
- a. review the financial statements (YTD) prepared by the staff of MC Canada and report to the Joint Council;
  - b. recommend financial policies and procedures as needed;
  - c. ensure that MC Canada has implemented appropriate systems to identify, monitor and mitigate significant business risks;
  - d. monitor the review of senior management’s expense claims;
  - e. provide initial recommendations regarding the budgeting process for the upcoming year and review proposed budgets before submission to the Joint Council;
  - f. act as an audit committee with the following responsibilities:
    - i. review and recommend the appointment of the external auditor;
    - ii. review annually the audit plan and fees presented by the external auditor;
    - iii. review the annual audited financial statements prior to

**PART IX – FINANCIAL POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**28. Composition of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee**

- 28.1. The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall consist of three (3) persons:
- a. the Secretary/Treasurer of MC Canada, who shall act as chairperson of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee; and
  - b. two (2) other persons selected by the Joint Council, and elected by the Gathering, whose term shall be for three (3) years, and who shall be eligible to serve for up to three



**32. Corporate Seal**

- 32.1. The Corporate seal shall:
  - a. have inscribed thereon Mennonite Church Canada; and
  - b. be affixed to such signed documents as the Joint Council considers necessary or advisable.

expenses sustained or incurred by the Officer or member because of the wilful neglect of such Officer or member; and

- b. all reasonable costs, charges and expenses incurred by such Officer or member while carrying out his or her responsibilities as an Officer or member.

**33. Non-Profit**

- 33.1. The organization will operate without purpose of gain for its members, and that any profit or other assets of the organization will be used solely to promote its objectives.

**34. Indemnities**

- 34.1. Every Officer, member of the Joint Council and/or member of a committee, ministry or other advisory body of MC Canada as well as their respective heirs, executors and administrators shall always be indemnified and saved harmless, out of the funds of MC Canada, from and against:
  - a. all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such Officer or member sustains or incurs as a result of any claim, demand or proceedings made or brought against him or her for anything done, or omitted or permitted to be done, in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an Officer or member, except for any costs, charges and

**PART XII –AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWs**

**35. Amendments to these Bylaws**

- 35.1. Notwithstanding Section ~~8.19~~ above or anything else contained in ~~this~~ these Bylaws, ~~this-these~~ Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special Gathering where the representation of the members is as set out in Section 9; provided that the proposed amendments have been sent to the Regional Churches at least two (2) months in advance.
- 35.2. To pass, Bylaws amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast by Delegates at a Gathering.

**36. Coming into force**

- 36.1. ~~This-These~~ Bylaws comes into force at the conclusion of the Gathering at which ~~it-isthey are~~ adopted.
- 36.2. Any subsequent amendments to ~~this~~ these Bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the Gathering at which they are adopted.

Approved: July 14, 2001

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Mennonite Church Canada General Bylaws - July 2025 Proposed Changes Redlined | 17/17

Amended: July 6, 2002

Amended: July 9, 2005

Amended: July 6, 2007

Amended: July 2, 2010

Amended: July 9, 2011

Amended: April 14, 2012

Amended: July 12, 2012

Amended: October 14, 2017

Amended: August 1, 2022

Amended: June 24, 2023

# Nominating Committee Report

## Role of the Nominating Committee (according to MC Canada bylaws)

### 14.3 The Nominating Committee shall:

- a. in advance of a Gathering where elections are to be held, use its best efforts to prepare a slate of nominees consisting of one (1) nominee for each elected position that needs to be filled;
- b. recommend, upon the request of a committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada, persons to serve on such committee, ministry and/or other advisory body of MC Canada;
- c. on request, suggest to the Executive Minister names of candidates for vacant positions on external partner boards where the Joint Council is responsible for appointing or recommending a representative.

### 15. Election Procedures

#### 15.1 The Nominating Committee will receive further nominations at a Gathering if:

- a. such nomination is endorsed by five (5) Delegates;
- b. the nominee has agreed to stand for the elected position; and
- c. such nomination is presented to the Nominating Committee at least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which the election is scheduled to take place.

#### 15.2 At least twenty-four (24) hours before the Gathering at which any elections are scheduled to take place, the Nominating Committee shall present its slate of nominees, including those nominated in accordance with Section 15(1) above, to the Delegates.

### Positions to be elected by delegates:

#### Executive Committee of Joint Council (3-year term) – see attached biographies.

1. Moderator – Geraldine Balzer (MC Sask), Incumbent, eligible for renewal
2. Assistant Moderator – Bruce Baergen (MCA) Incumbent, eligible for renewal
3. Secretary-Treasurer – Paul Gilbert (MCEC) Incumbent, eligible for renewal

#### Financial Policy and Audit Committee (3-year term, nominated by Joint Council, as per bylaws)

1. Tony Schellenberg (MCM) Incumbent, eligible for renewal for 1 year-term ending June 2026 to complete 9 years (3 terms).
2. J.D. (John David) Penner (MCEC) Term 1.

#### Nominating Committee (until Gathering 2028)

For each regular Gathering, each Regional Church shall nominate one (1) person to the Nominating Committee. (as per bylaws 14.1) To be presented to the Joint Council on June 12 for approval and amendment to Gathering Motions

1. MCBC - Heidi Epp  
Incumbent, eligible for renewal
2. MCEC - Charlene Jongejan Harder  
Incumbent, eligible for renewal
3. MCA – To be nominated
4. MCM – Harold Peters Fransen
5. MC Sask – To be nominated

**Further nominations** for the Joint Council Executive and Nominating Committee will be received until **9 a.m. (EDT) on Friday July 4, 2025**, following the bylaws (above). Nominations should be sent to [nominations@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:nominations@mennonitechurch.ca).

Respectfully Submitted by the Nominating Committee (Gathering 2022 - Gathering 2025):

Randy Hildebrand (MCM), Chairperson, Charlene Jongejan Harder (MCEC), Heidi Epp (MCBC), Joanie Neufeldt (MCA).

# Joint Council Executive Nomination Slate

## Nominees' Biographies



**Geraldine Balzer, Moderator (incumbent)**

Geraldine envisions MC Canada as a national organization that supports the work of a diverse group of congregations who have covenanted locally, regionally, and nationwide to work together, embracing cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and theological diversity, building on our strengths and learning from our weaknesses. She wishes to work toward reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Geraldine holds an MA from the University of Waterloo and a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Saskatchewan and is an alumna of Rosthern Junior College and

Conrad Grebel University College. She currently works as a professor of education at the University of Saskatchewan, teaching in the areas of English Language Arts and Curriculum theory with a focus on postcolonialism and decolonization strategies. Geraldine spent fourteen years as a teacher in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, resulting in a commitment to improving education for Indigenous students and a better understanding of Indigenous issues for all Canadians. She has served on a variety of boards including Rosthern Junior College and Conrad Grebel University College. Geraldine brings a deep commitment to the church and offers her gifts and skills in governance and strategic planning to the ongoing work of MC Canada.



**Bruce Baergen, Assistant Moderator (incumbent)**

Bruce is a partner and general manager with Western Canadian Software Inc. in Edmonton, Alta., a software company specializing in writing and implementing enterprise resource planning (ERP). He is a member of Edmonton First Mennonite Church, where he has been the Choir Director for over 30 years. He has also served as church moderator and as a deacon in addition to numerous other volunteer positions. Bruce has just finished 15 years serving on the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary board, where he served as the chair for the last 10 years. Prior to that he was chair of

the CMBC board in Winnipeg during the creation of Canadian Mennonite University. Bruce and his wife Debbie have three married children and two grandchildren.



**Paul Gilbert, Secretary-Treasurer (incumbent)**

Paul has an honors degree in business administration from the University of Western Ontario and holds a CPA, CA designation. He has worked in the financial services industry for all three current major Canadian life insurance companies and Scotiabank, in financial, operational and project management leadership roles. He is a member of Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo. He has volunteered as a board member with MCC Ontario and MCC Canada since 2007, most recently serving as Board Chair of MCC Canada from 2018 through 2021.

# Gathering 2025 Motions

## For Delegate Acceptance/Approval

### Acceptance of Ministry Reports:

Motion: That the ministry reports, as presented in the Report Book, be accepted.

### Acceptance of Financial Statements and Auditor's Report

Motion: That the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, and the Auditor's report as printed in the Report Book be accepted.

### Acceptance of Auditor for FYE 2026

Motion: That the appointment of KPMG LLP as auditors for the fiscal year 2026, as recommended by the Joint Council, be accepted.

### Minutes of Delegate Gathering 2023 (AGM)

Motion: That the minutes of the Delegate Gathering (AGM) held June 24, 2023, be approved as documented in the Report Book.

### Minutes of Delegate Gathering 2024 (AGM)

Motion: That the minutes of the Delegate Gathering (AGM) held June 22, 2024, be approved as documented in the Report Book

### Joint Council Actions from July 2022 – June 2025

Motion: That all actions taken by the Joint Council from July 28, 2022, to June 12, 2025, be ratified.

### Approval of Operating Fund Budget for FYE 2026

Motion: That the Operating Fund Budget for the fiscal year 2026, as printed in the Report Book, be approved.

### Approval of Bylaw Amendments

Motion: That the proposed amendments to the Mennonite Church Canada General Bylaws as detailed in the Report Book, be approved.

### Approval of Slate Presented by the Nominating Committee

Motion: That the slate of MC Canada Officers, members of the Nominating Committee and members of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, as presented by the Nominating Committee, be approved.

### Approval of Gathering Discernment Process Next Steps:

Motion: That the Gathering discernment process results be documented into a report to inform Joint Council decision-making.



# Resource Partners

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**

# Season of Change



**T**his past year has been one of transition, growth and new beginnings for *Canadian Mennonite*. With the sale of our longtime property in Waterloo, we've now moved into a new chapter in a shared space at 50 Kent Avenue, within the MCC Ontario offices. This move reflects both a practical step and a symbolic one—working side by side with others committed to peace, justice and community strengthens our identity as a publication rooted in Mennonite values.

We also mark the retirement of Tobi Thiessen, our publisher since 2017. Tobi has guided *Canadian Mennonite* with wisdom, care and deep commitment to thoughtful journalism. Wishing her well in the journey ahead, we give thanks for Tobi's years of service.

**MennoCreative**

This past year also marked the first full year of MennoCreative, a new initiative bringing together writers, designers and storytellers across our church to reflect on how creativity can serve faith, identity and community. The response was enthusiastic and inspiring, and we are eagerly anticipating our new crop of contributors for 2025-26.

**Award Winning Church Journalism**

This spring at the Canadian Christian Communicators Awards we received the prestigious A.C. Forrest Award for Magazines Under 10,000 Circulation. In addition, we earned Third Place in General Excellence – Magazine, First Place in Audio/Video Interview, and Third Place for Emily Summach's powerful first-person account—an outstanding recognition of our team's dedication to excellence in faith-based journalism.

**Thank You**

As *Canadian Mennonite* evolves and grows, I recognize that none of it is possible without our readers. We are so thankful for your ongoing support of *Canadian Mennonite*—through your financial gifts, your editorial feedback and your prayers. Your belief in the importance of a church-centered publication that values journalism, storytelling and theological reflection gives us energy to keep going.

We look to the coming years with hope. We're exploring new digital formats, investing in new voices and continuing to build relationships across regions and generations. *Canadian Mennonite* remains committed to its calling: to foster dialogue, nurture faith and connect Mennonites across Canada through faithful reporting and reflection.

Thank you for walking with us in this journey.

With gratitude,

Kathryn Lymburner  
Publisher



# CANADIAN MENNONITE

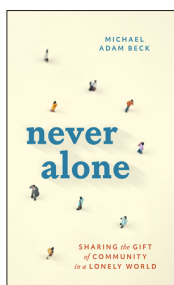


## Report to Mennonite Church Canada

Summer 2025

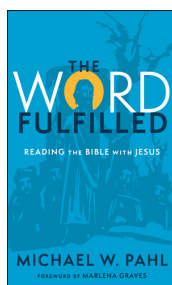
At MennoMedia, we publish curricula and books that call readers to follow Jesus in word and deed. We publish resources that are Jesus-centered, justice-oriented, and peace-seeking from an Anabaptist perspective. Our books, curricula, periodicals, and hymnals reach a broad spectrum of evangelical, mainline, and Anabaptist readers and congregations, cultivating passion for faith formation and an active life of discipleship.

### NEW RESOURCES FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH, FROM HERALD PRESS



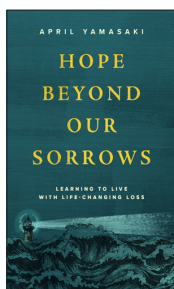
#### Never Alone

**Sharing the Gift of Community in a Lonely World**  
Isolation is the great soul wound of our time. As Christians, we know that the church has a unique gift to offer a hurting world: communal life in Jesus. This gift has the power to heal our loneliness and isolation. It is good news for the lonely, the isolated, the struggling. Michael Adam Beck unpacks how we can be spiritual guides who help people heal, love, and unleash imagination to create better lives and communities.



#### The Word Fulfilled

**Reading the Bible with Jesus**  
What does it mean to follow Jesus in the way we read Scripture? By exploring how Jesus engaged the Scriptures, we can learn better how we should read our Bibles today. *The Word Fulfilled* by Michael Pahl offers in-depth explorations of how Jesus used seven important passages in his life and ministry. By exploring how Jesus engaged the Scriptures, we can learn better how we should read our Bibles today.



#### Hope Beyond Our Sorrows

**Learning to Live with Life-Changing Loss**  
When April Yamasaki found herself grieving the death of her husband, she wondered how life could go on without him. Yet even in the depths of her sorrows, she experienced God's goodness and mercy—big enough for her soul's lament, longer and deeper and wider than our laments can ever be. When grieving a loss, you can find comfort in these short, easily digestible readings accompanied by prayers and spiritual practices.



#### Flyover Church

**How Jesus' Ministry in Rural Places Is Good News Everywhere**  
In *Flyover Church*, Brad Roth approaches rural ministry in a way that recognizes its soul-deep commonalities with the church in every place. He speaks a hopeful message into the distinct challenges and promises faced by rural communities. Tracing Jesus' ministry among rural and small-town people and places, Roth offers a vision for ministry tailored to rural settings.

### NEW FOR SUMMER: PATH TO PEACE CURRICULUM FROM SHINE

Shine's new *Path to Peace* summer curriculum allows teachers and children to follow the peace paths in *The Peace Table* storybook Bible. The curriculum includes faith formation materials for PreK-Kindergarten and Elementary age levels.

For 2025, the unit is built around the "Peace with God" peace path from *The Peace Table* and includes three 5-session modules. Each session includes songs, prayers, instructions for telling the Bible story, wondering questions, activities, and media connections. Churches will need a copy of *The Peace Table* for each classroom.



#### New for Families: "Follow the Peace Path" Cards

Extend learning and bring the Bible story home with a deck of "Peace with God" cards. Each of the 52 cards in the deck comes packed with ideas for families to do at home together. Whether a church has summer Sunday school or not, these cards are a great way to stay connected with families and provide parents and caregivers with an easy and fun faith formation resource. Purchase one deck of cards for each family.



**Learn more at [ShineCurriculum.com](http://ShineCurriculum.com).**



**Looking Back, *LIVING FORWARD***

The 500th anniversary of Anabaptism in 2025 gives the church a unique opportunity to celebrate the Spirit’s calling together of diverse people across all boundaries of culture and geography. New resources are designed to help North American Anabaptist Christians experience spiritual renewal in this milestone year.

**Learn more at [AnabaptismAt500.com](http://AnabaptismAt500.com)**

**The Anabaptist Community Bible**

**A STUDY BIBLE 500 YEARS IN THE MAKING**



*Now shipping!*

Embark on a transformative journey with the *Anabaptist Community Bible*. Features include the Common English Bible (CEB) translation; commentary from biblical scholars; marginal notes from scholars, early Anabaptists, and nearly 600 Anabaptist study groups representing many different faith communities; full-color maps; 40 original artworks, each inspired by a passage of scripture; and much more!

**MORE FROM THE ANABAPTISM AT 500 PRODUCT SUITE**



**Stitched Together**

A delightful tale of tradition, friendship, and the joy of making something meaningful together. A young girl begs to add a square to her church’s special

anniversary quilt as she learns from her grandmother’s quilting circle about the history of their faith. With the group, she discovers the rich tapestry of stories woven into each quilt square.

**Available April 8, 2025!**



**A Light to Share**

Stories of Spreading Love and Changing the World  
Author Natalie Frisk introduces 12 Jesus followers who discovered their gifts and shared them with the world.

These inspirational figures—from history through today—all found strength in their Anabaptist faith. With vivid, compelling art by Maria Diaz Perera, Anabaptist stories of faith come to life for children!

**Available April 8, 2025!**

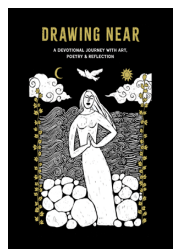


**Sparking Peace**

After breaking a neighbor’s window, a young child discovers friendship, transformation, and new beginnings in an unlikely story of peace. Gentle and moving,

this poetic tale offers readers a hopeful path in the face of gun violence and despair, showing kids how peacemaking can turn conflict into friendship and new beginnings—and forge guns into garden tools.

**Available April 8, 2025!**



**Drawing Near**

A Devotional Journey with Art, Poetry, and Reflection

*Drawing Near* invites you to slow down, to pause and ponder, and to explore the creative edges of your faith. This

unique devotional brings together 40 stunning original artworks that illustrate a particular biblical text or story. Each image is paired with its related scripture text and an original poem by a contemporary Anabaptist writer, along with questions or prompts for further reflection.

**Now available!**



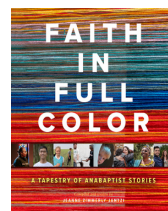
**Footsteps of Faith**

A Global Anabaptist Devotional

This 40-day devotional draws on insights from Anabaptist church leaders from around the globe and expands the vision of what it means

to follow in the footsteps of Jesus today. Daily readings from Scripture, combined with devotional reflections and inspiring testimonies, challenge readers to deeper forms of discipleship. Hear from a vibrant communion of saints all around the world.

**Available May 6, 2025!**



**Faith in Full Color**

A Tapestry of Anabaptist Stories

*Faith in Full Color* showcases the intersection of faith and life, showing how congregations, faith communities, and

individuals express their faith. Together, these stories written and compiled by Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi and accompanied by a diverse and engaging collection of photos address where we have been and, more importantly, where we are going as Anabaptist Christians.

**Available May 20, 2025!**



**Conrad Stoesz**

Archivist, Mennonite Heritage



600 Shaftesbury Blvd  
204.560.1998  
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[www.mhsc.ca](http://www.mhsc.ca)

## Mennonite Heritage Archives

For over 90 years the Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA) has been collecting, preserving, and telling stories for the Mennonite community. In 2017, Mennonite Church Canada brought on two new partners, adding Canadian Mennonite University and the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies to broadening the financial base for the MHA. As always, we are grateful for the ongoing support of private donors which is an important part of MHA's financial health.

The Mennonite Heritage Archives continues to value MC Canada congregations and their missions through the collection and preservation of records created through the life of the church. Records such as bulletins, minutes, reports, photos, and videos tell the story of a people striving to be faithful to God's callings. You can find the congregational records of many MC Canada congregations described here [www.mharchives.ca/archival-holdings](http://www.mharchives.ca/archival-holdings).

We continue to add new photos and descriptions of textual materials in the Mennonite Archival Information Database, [archives.mhsc.ca](http://archives.mhsc.ca), which has grown to include 17 partners from Canada, USA, and Paraguay. The MHA has invested in a new digital platform designed for digitized and digital born content. Some of the earliest materials posted include the Conference of Mennonite in Canada yearbooks and the magazine about MC Canada's relationships with Indigenous peoples, Intotemak. This material is accessible with a free user account here [collections.mharchives.ca](http://collections.mharchives.ca).

The Mennonite Heritage Archives has embarked on a new story telling podcast and radio program thanks to the support of Golden West Radio. Each week the MHA team of Dan Dyck, Caley Dyck, Graeme Unrau, and Conrad Stoesz brings you "Tales from the Mennonite Heritage Archives," a

podcast about people, places, and events from Mennonite history. You can find them on our website [www.mharchives.ca/tales-from-the-archives](http://www.mharchives.ca/tales-from-the-archives), Golden West Radio's AM stations 950, 1220, 1250 at 9:15 am Sundays, or on podcast platforms Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube. The program is a wide mix of story telling and interviews on themes such as relief work, inventions, migration, protest, music, pastimes, food, and the indomitable human spirit.

The MHA's staff includes Conrad Stoesz, who has been working at the MHA for over 25 years, and Graeme Unrau, along with two project workers, and over a dozen volunteers. The MHA is a busy place, receiving over 50 researchers and responding to over 100 requests for information a month. The Archives consists of over 600 meters of paper records, 40,000 photos, and over 5,000 hours of audio recordings.

Another current project is working closely with MC Canada's CommonWord as we prepare to host digital materials that CommonWord has identified as significant but not current. Examples include MC Canada produced reports, manuals, and teaching materials that have been replaced with new resources. For several years these materials have not been available to the public, but once in the archival system, they will again be made discoverable to the public.

We are grateful for MC Canada, area churches, congregations, and families for entrusting us to manage their community memories held within letters, journals, reports, photos, video, and audio recordings. Thank you for your ongoing support.





**Conrad Stoesz**  
President, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada



600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2

[www.mhsc.ca](http://www.mhsc.ca)

## Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada report to Mennonite Church Canada, May 2025

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC) is made up of denominations, historical societies, institutes, schools of higher learning, and museums, including Mennonite Church Canada. Since its founding in 1958, MHSC members have recognized the value of gathering for relationship building, and the pooling of resources and expertise to accomplish much more than we could individually.

The MHSC has produced important materials for the Mennonite community. This includes the Mennonite Archival Information Database [archives.mhsc.ca](http://archives.mhsc.ca) which now has 17 partners from 3 countries and the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, [www.gameo.org](http://www.gameo.org). Last year it had 394,000 active users engage with the site. The first project of MHSC was the three volume Mennonites in Canada series. The Society is now working on volume 4, Mennonites in Canada, 1970-2020, written by Brian Froese and Laureen Harder-Gissing.

The MHSC recognized Linda Huebert Hecht and Fred Lichti with the "Award of Excellence," which is an annual award given to people who "have made significant contributions to the advancement of Canadian Mennonite history by way of research, writing, organization, or the dissemination of Mennonite historical knowledge."

This year's meetings were hosted at Conrad Grebel University College. This year's learning field trips included a tour of some key historic sites in the Kitchener Waterloo area, sharing information and stories of prominent Mennonites who once lived there. The tour ended at First Hmong Mennonite Church, who welcomed their guests with a

traditional Hmong dinner prepared by church members. Two speakers shared moving stories about why they are Mennonite. Participants were also part of the Anabaptism at 500 event at Waterloo Kitchener United Mennonite Church and took in the Bechtel Lectures featuring Dr. Karl Koop who spoke about "Anabaptist Beginnings and the Stories we tell."

This year MC Canada representatives were Graeme Unrau and Sara Dyck, both who work at the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg. Sara said the event "expanded my awareness of the web of connections with historians, archivist, and sister institutions in the Mennonite historical world." Graeme said he "developed a much greater understanding of the Mennonite community in Ontario – how it connected and diverged from stories of Mennonites in western Canada."

The executive committee of MHSC for 2025 includes Conrad Stoesz, president; Laureen Harder-Gissing, vice-president; Jeremy Wiebe, treasurer; Linda Klassen, secretary; and Bruce Guenther, fifth member.



Conrad Stoesz, MHSC president (left) with award winners Linda Huebert Hecht and Fred Lichti



**Pieter Niemeyer**  
In This Together

## In This Together

In This Together (ITT) lives out the Anabaptist peace witness by seeking to reduce the harm that LGBTQ+ persons experience within Anabaptist communities. In doing this, we honour the principles of non-coercion and respecting a person's conviction of conscience before God. We envision and work toward a just world where LGBTQ+ people are fully integrated, recognized, respected, and valued in a spirit of mutuality in Anabaptist communities across Canada.

We facilitate connections and resource LGBTQ+ people, allies and communities across Canada. We resource individuals and congregations that are at various stages of the journey of accompanying LGBTQ+ persons through both in-person and online meetings. We seek connections with denominational bodies both formally and informally for the purpose of nurturing helpful conversations and the reduction of harm that LGBTQ+ persons experience.

ITT has a memo of understanding with Mennonite Church Canada in which we seek to network and resource the denomination through providing a presence at regional and national gatherings and, given the history of harm committed against the LGBTQ+ community, working toward reconciliation. ITT provided workshops at Mennonite Church Canada gatherings in Edmonton in 2022, as well as in Kitchener/Waterloo 2025.

ITT partners with other like-minded groups such as Beyond Binaries, Pastors in Exile and A Time to Connect for the purposes of promoting better understanding and creating safer spaces for LGBTQ+ persons. We raise awareness through the sharing of stories. We are currently developing a video library of stories from across the spectrum of Anabaptist communities as well as LGBTQ+ identity and geographic locations across Canada. These stories will be launched through a variety of means in the coming year of 2026. Stay tuned for more information through our website [Inthistogethernetwork.ca](http://Inthistogethernetwork.ca).

We facilitated a three-part webinar series entitled

*Faithfully at Variance: Engaging with the Confession of Faith from a Mennonite Perspective.* The first in the series highlighted Karl Koop and Ann Weber Becker on the role of confessions in Anabaptist history and how our current confession came into being. The second dove into how the lives of Queer Mennonites have been negatively impacted by the current confession. Eliot Chandler Burns, Anita Fast and Ness Schattman shared queer stories, both past and current, from across different generations. The third took on a working group format in preparation for the 2025 MC Canada gathering with a call for change to article 19 in the Confession of Faith from a Mennonite Perspective that upholds the value of marriage while removing the discriminatory stance toward same sex couples.

Such a change would recognize the current diversity of MC Canada congregations and not favour one hermeneutical perspective over and against another. Changing article 19 would work toward reducing both spiritual and physical harm LGBTQ+ persons experience within MC Canada while also holding a diversity of space that respects conviction of conscience before God.

We appreciate your ongoing support through prayers, volunteering, and financial aid. May the peace of Christ dwell in you richly as we move forward in this together.

*Report prepared by Pieter Niemeyer on behalf of the steering committee, Alissa Bender, Leah Harder, Matthew Froese, Mauricio Palacio.*





# Education Partners

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**



## Report to Mennonite Church Canada

AMBS, a seminary of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, has a long history of serving Canadian Mennonites and educating leaders for the church and other organizations.

Our programs integrate academics, spiritual formation and practice. Join us — in person or at a distance, full time or part time — and deepen your understanding of Scripture, faith and Anabaptist theology!

### Degrees and programs (\* = distance-friendly program)

- Master of Divinity\*
- Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism\*
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership\*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction\*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies\* (choose your own courses)
- Mennonite Education Agency Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology\* (in Spanish)
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program\* (undergraduate-level certificate)

[amsb.ca/degrees-and-programs](https://amsb.ca/degrees-and-programs)

We offer generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and matching grants for both full- and part-time graduate students. See also benefits for Canadian students!

[amsb.ca/canadian-students](https://amsb.ca/canadian-students)

### Leadership and enrichment

Grow your ministry skills and gain Anabaptist approaches to today's leadership challenges through our nondegree offerings. (\* = distance-friendly program)

#### Short-term options

- Practical Leadership Training modules\*
- Online Short Courses\*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS\*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference\*: Feb. 23–26, 2026

#### Offerings of one to two years

- Transition to Leadership\*: program for new pastors
- Ministry Reflection Circles\*: reflect on current ministry challenges with the support of a group
- Spiritual Direction Seminars\*



(Above) In May 2025, 15 women and 18 men from eight countries — Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand and the U.S. — graduated from AMBS. Nineteen completed part or all of their studies at a distance, including Lisa Heinrichs (MCBC) and Yoel Masyawong (MCEC).

### Mennonite Church Canada connections

- In 2024–25, four Canadian students were part of AMBS's 149-member graduate student body, which also included 82 U.S. students and 63 international students. Current students include Wendy Janzen, Rebecca Riek, Marilyn Rudy-Froese and Charles Tabena (all of MCEC).
- The undergraduate-level Journey program has 41 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, Uganda and the U.S., including participant/mentor pairs Maciel Hernandez/Sheryl Wideman (MCEC), Irankunda Laurence/Charles Tabena (MCEC) and Regina Lyn Sumatra (Philippines)/Darnell Barkman (MCBC).
- The AMBS Board of Directors includes Terry Stefaniuk (Vice Chair, MC Sask), Paul Bergen and Rachel Siemens (MCA), Myrna Miller Dyck (MCEC) and Garry Janzen (MCBC).
- Canadian Mennonite University and AMBS jointly publish *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* twice each year.

### Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course:
  - Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible
  - Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology
  - Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture
  - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication
  - Challenging Christian Nationalism
  - Biblical Interpretation Across the Two Testaments
- [amsb.ca/online-short-courses](https://amsb.ca/online-short-courses)
- Take a graduate-level course — online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first three credit hours! [amsb.ca/upcoming-courses](https://amsb.ca/upcoming-courses)
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn about what AMBS has to offer! [amsb.ca/visit](https://amsb.ca/visit)
- Stay connected: [facebook.com/followAMBS](https://facebook.com/followAMBS) • [instagram.com/amsb\\_seminary](https://instagram.com/amsb_seminary) •

# 2024/25 CMU Report to the Church

## Greetings to Mennonite Church Canada

**Thank you** to our church community for your steadfast support of CMU and the ways you partner with us in nurturing lives of faith, learning, and service. Your commitment to Christian education helps inspire and equip students to make a meaningful difference in the world.

### Undergraduate Degrees



- » Bachelor of Arts
- » Bachelor of Business Administration
- » Bachelor of Music
- » Bachelor of Music Therapy
- » Bachelor of Science
- » **NEW!** Bachelor of Social Work

### Graduate Degrees



- » Master of Divinity
- » Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- » **NEW!** Master of Arts in Spiritual Care
- » Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- » Master of Business Administration

### Geographical Representation



- » 75% from Manitoba (13% First Nations, Inuit, or Métis)
- » 25% from other provinces and international (30 countries)

### Faith Representation



- » 70% from Christian traditions, including 30% from Mennonite/Anabaptist traditions
- » 27 MC Canada congregations
- » 15 MB congregations
- » 15 other Mennonite congregations and Hutterite communities

### 2024/25 Enrolment



- » 10% overall increase in students on main campus (40% increase in incoming students)
- » 694 students on main campus (630 full-time equivalent)
- » 125 full-time equivalent students at Menno Simons College (CMU courses in UW degree programs)

### Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)



- » 100% of graduating students complete an experiential learning opportunity
- » 84 students completed their WIL placements in 2023/2024
- » Placements include: Assiniboine Park Zoo, Children's Hospital Research Institute, Legal Aid Manitoba, Sport Manitoba, Turning Leaf

### 25 Years of CMU

# 25

Join us in celebrating 25 years of CMU at Fall at CMU, September 19 and 20, 2025. Events include special celebratory program, Song Feast, alumni reunions, Farmers' and Makers' market and more. Learn more at [cmu.ca/fall](http://cmu.ca/fall).

### CMU Mission

Canadian Mennonite University is an innovative Christian university, rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition, moved, and transformed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through teaching, research, and service CMU inspires and equips for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.





God is doing incredible work in the lives of students who are seeking to lean into their faith and launch their lives in ways that glorify God. Here are just a few highlights:

**CELEBRATING 100+ GRADUATES:**

We celebrated God’s transformational impact in over 100 CBC students at a packed graduation celebration with family and friends in April. May God do more than we can ask or imagine in and through these graduates as they follow and serve Jesus in the decades ahead.



**100 STUDENTS LEARNING AND SERVING WEEKLY:**

Every week over 100 students are serving and supporting local churches, ministries and community organizations while learning in real-time through internships and student practicums.

**NEW CHURCH MINISTRY PROGRAM LAUNCHED:**

Students discerning or preparing for a call to church ministry can now focus their studies in our new Church Ministry Program with concentrations in Biblical Studies, Worship Arts or Youth Ministry.



**20 CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:**

A key focus for summer 2024 included updating our campus through over 20 improvement projects. We are working to modernize, increase accessibility and maximize the campus space.

**MINISTRY WORKER TASK FORCE LAUNCHED:**

Our churches need more young pastors and ministry workers ready to lead into the future. This task force is seeking to identify strategic steps to identify, equip and encourage more students to consider vocational ministry.



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President  
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**JOEL KUMAR**  
Vice President,  
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# MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ASSEMBLY REPORT – 2025



**Conrad Grebel**  
University College

**Greetings to Mennonite Church Canada** in this 500th anniversary year of Anabaptism. Our college is named for Conrad Grebel, who baptized George Blaurock in Zollikon, Switzerland on January 25, 1525 – the event that sparked the Anabaptist movement to life. Our connection to that movement continues to animate our mission: “to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society.”

In his valedictory address this year, Master of Theological Studies graduate Devin Hogg described the first course he took at Grebel. “We discussed important issues and challenging topics, collectively working towards increasing understanding and empathy, and identifying possibilities for increasing justice and love in the world,” he explained. “We worked to develop and model community.”

Building that kind of community is part of everyday life at Grebel, and this year our students demonstrated that in many ways – in serving for a week with Mennonite Disaster Service, in assembling a mass choir and orchestra for a term-end Chapel service, in staging four performances of a student-led musical, in advocacy for a variety of important causes, in late night Student Council meetings, and always around the dinner table in good conversation.

The financial environment for colleges and universities across Canada has become very challenging over the past few years, and like many institutions, Grebel has implemented cost-cutting and belt-tightening recently. Nevertheless, we have many reasons to be thankful at Grebel, and much to celebrate, including the following:

- » [Peace and Conflict Studies](#) is offering a new diploma and specialization in Restorative Justice.
- » [The Conflict Management Certificate Program](#) marked 25 years of offering workshop-based courses in conflict management, mediation, facilitation, dispute resolution, congregational leadership, and more.
- » [The Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement](#) celebrated their [10-year anniversary](#) with an afternoon to share stories that demonstrated a commitment to fostering peace and collaboration.
- » [The Music Department](#) directed eight ensembles that provide moments of shared joy to hundreds of talented UWaterloo students.
- » Grebel had enrolments of around 4000 UWaterloo students and supported a full residence community of 172 students.
- » [MTS Director Carol Penner](#) recently began serving as Grebel’s new Chaplain - nurturing faith development, providing pastoral care to students, and leading the Chapel program.
- » Grebel professors regularly share in community and church settings through lectures, presentations, workshops, adult and youth education, and sermons, via the [Grebel-to-Go program](#).

We have launched a \$4,000,000 fundraising campaign to renew our residence with new heating and cooling systems to improve comfort and dramatically cut our greenhouse gas emissions, as well as providing upgraded washrooms with new plumbing and efficient fixtures that improve accessibility, sustainability, and overall student experience.

We are delighted to host the MC Canada Youth Gathering on the UWaterloo campus this week, and trust that it will be both a fun and meaningful experience for all involved.

We’re grateful for the prayers, support, and partnership of the MC Canada family across the country. Our relationship to the Mennonite Church and its people is deeply valued. Your interest helps sustain a space where students can explore vocation, faith, and purpose in service to church and society.

*Marcus Shantz | President, Conrad Grebel University College*



# Ministry Partners

Mennonite Church Canada **GATHERING 2025**

**R E P O R T   B O O K**



**ANABAPTIST**  
Climate  
Collaborative

PO Box 1787  
Harrisonburg VA 22803  
(574) 536-6151  
[director@anabaptistclimate.org](mailto:director@anabaptistclimate.org)

ANABAPTIST

## Climate Collaborative

Douglas Day Kaufman,  
Executive Director

Because the changing climate intersects with other peace and social crises, Anabaptist Climate Collaborative equips and activates people to seek climate justice through Anabaptist values, community and faith. While ACC is still relatively new, we were founded in 2016 as the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions, a partnership of Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College, and Mennonite Central Committee. Three strategic priorities guide our work:

- Developing Emerging Leaders
- Amplifying Diverse Voices
- Building Partnerships

**Developing emerging leaders** includes two primary programs, one for university students and one for church leaders. The **student program** has provided support to 50 campus climate ambassadors at 10 Anabaptist-related universities and colleges, including Canadian Mennonite University and Conrad Grebel University College. In addition, 14 climate futures fellows and interns have engaged in advocacy and other creative projects.

The **church leadership program** provides training for pastors and other church leaders, offering 18 retreats across North America to about 575 leaders. A cohort partnership with MC Canada, Faithful Leadership in a Climate Crisis: Responding in Hope, concludes soon. A retreat was also held at Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON, in the fall of 2018.

**Amplifying diverse voices** gathers the stories of Anabaptists from across the globe. The original intent brought these stories to North American

audiences, with three Global Voices tours. MCC partners have spoken to over 2650 people at 65 events about how they are responding to climate change in Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Nepal and Cambodia. More recently ACC partnered with the Mennonite World Conference Creation Care Task Force to create Climate Pollinators, short stories of Anabaptists across the globe engaging in climate action.

**Building partnerships** brings together Mennonite agencies; we also partner with interdenominational agencies. Given the harmful rhetoric from US leadership, we are even more focused on building space for cross-border conversation among Mennonites. I visited Canadian Mennonite University this February and joined MCC Ontario and MC Canada to plan Climate Jazz: Anabaptist Improv & Collaboration in Kitchener, ON. Sandy Plett and I are pictured there at right as we joyfully lead this demanding work.



**Thank you for the vibrant partnership with MC Canada!** Last year Kenton Lobe at CMU became part of our board and we are seeking a way to offer a Canada Revenue Agency deduction. Learn more about us at [anabaptistclimate.org](http://anabaptistclimate.org).



**Rachelle Friesen**  
CPT Canada Coordinator



## Community Peacemaker Teams

At Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), we believe that true peace is built through relationships—by showing up, standing with, and walking alongside those who resist violence and oppression. Rooted in nonviolence and solidarity, our work stretches from Colombia to Iraqi Kurdistan, Palestine to Turtle Island and Greece. We accompany Indigenous land defenders, displaced communities, and those living under occupation and militarization, offering a presence that interrupts cycles of violence. Through Unarmed Civilian Accompaniment (UCA), we place trained peacemakers alongside those at risk, not to ‘save’ or ‘protect’ but to stand with those whose struggles are too often ignored by the global community, and to amplify their voices.

In Colombia, we walk alongside communities resisting land theft and paramilitary violence. In Iraqi Kurdistan, we support those displaced by war. On Turtle Island, we stand with Indigenous partners protecting their sacred lands. And in Palestine, we bear witness to an intensifying crisis. In 2024, violence in the West Bank surged, with attacks on Palestinian communities reaching unprecedented levels.

This work is not about neutrality; it is about presence. In a world where militarization is often framed as the only path to security, **we know that peace is not the absence of violence—it is the presence of justice.**

At CPT, our most valuable resource is our people. Our team members are the heart of this work—the ones who show up, stand in solidarity, and are on the ground with our partners. The majority of our funding goes directly toward ensuring that our peacemakers receive stipends that allow them to do this work full-time, remain in the

field, and respond when communities call for accompaniment.

### CPT SNAPSHOT: TURTLE ISLAND SOLIDARITY NETWORK

“From Turtle Island to Palestine - Occupation is a Crime!” This chant reverberates through Toronto’s streets on a weekly basis. Recognizing the similarities between settler colonialism in Canada and Israel, a significant amount of TISN work this year involved joining the movement to support the liberation of Palestine. Together with Wet’suwet’en water protectors and the people of Grassy Narrows we marched in the streets, knowing the pathways to liberation here and in Palestine are intertwined.

However, this work is not without risk or consequence. On September 30, 2024, the TISN Coordinator was arrested at the airport in Toronto for her alleged participation in nonviolent solidarity actions. The arrest of our TISN Coordinator came after months of her experiencing police harassment. CPT has been supporting and working in collaboration with the Toronto Legal Support Committee to support 111 individuals arrested for pro-Palestine solidarity actions.

The Turtle Island Solidarity Network also helped organize the River Run march for mercury justice for Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nations). Thousands of people gathered in Toronto (pictured) to call on the Ontario and Canadian governments to repair the atrocity of mercury poisoning by cleaning the English-Wabigoon River. We celebrate that the long-awaited mercury care home broke ground this winter.



## Mennonite-Anglican Dialogue Report

The Mennonite-Anglican Dialogue in Canada was created in 2017 under the sponsorship of Mennonite Church Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada with a mandate to build up understanding and to encourage greater partnership between these two distinct Christian communities. The first term of the dialogue was held between 2018 and 2022. In 2023, the sponsoring bodies agreed to a second phase of the dialogue to commence in 2024.

Building on the work of the first term, the dialogue group practices a methodology known as “receptive ecumenism.” In contrast to models of ecumenical engagement that emphasize the need for doctrinal consensus as the primary basis for Christian unity, receptive ecumenism operates under the premise that the unity to which followers of Jesus are called is not one that relies on complete uniformity in all matters of faith and order. Rather, churches are called to listen to the distinctives of other traditions as potential gifts and opportunities for enrichment. A receptive posture is much more inclined towards asking “What can I learn from you?” than “What do you need to learn from me?”

This second round of dialogue has been asked to focus on two main themes: 1) the work of the churches in Indigenous justice and decolonization, and 2) understandings and practices of ministry and ministerial leadership.

The first meeting of the second phase of dialogue was held from May 31 to June 2, 2024 in Treaty 1 Territory in the city of Winnipeg. The purpose of the first in-person meeting was to build relationships of trust within the dialogue group through practicing receptive ecumenism.

Since that time, the group has met six times online. These online meetings have moved between the two themes. Topics have included:

- 1) Reflecting together on formal statements made by the Anglican Church of Canada and

Mennonite Church Canada regarding truth, reconciliation, and Indigenous justice.

- 2) Learning from guests from Pinawa Christian Fellowship, an Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Manitoba that is recognized by the Anglican Church of Canada, Mennonite Church Manitoba, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the United Church of Canada, and that is currently served by a Mennonite pastor.
- 3) Learning from guests engaged in tangible efforts toward reparations including the Spiritual Covenant Working Group at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, the Pakitinasowin Initiative/Standing Stones Sacred Lodge in the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton, the Peardonville Property Transfer in Mennonite Church British Columbia, and the Tithe for Reconciliation in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.
- 4) Reflecting together on documents expressing the ecclesiology of the Anglican and Mennonite traditions.
- 5) Reflecting together on competencies for ministry identified by the Anglican Church of Canada and Mennonite Church Canada.
- 6) Reflecting together on how change happens in the Anglican and Mennonite church structures.

These discussions have been fruitful, and the dialogue members are beginning to move toward a second and final in-person meeting that will yield a summary report and potential recommendations to the nationwide church bodies.

In addition, in January 2025, the dialogue group released a statement regarding the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Anabaptist Reformation in Switzerland: “Anabaptism at 500: Looking Back to Look Forward – A Joint Message from Members of the Anglican-Mennonite Dialogue in Canada” (<https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/article/45184-anabaptism-at-500-looking-back-to-look-forward>).

Mennonite members of the dialogue are grateful for the opportunity to be in relationship with our wider church community, to learn from our Anglican siblings in Christ, and to continue to

### Mennonite-Anglican Dialogue Report | page 2/2

grow in unity into the future as followers of Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Members of the dialogue include:

Mennonite Church Canada  
Sarah Kathleen Johnson (Co-Chair)  
Doug Klassen (Denominational Staff Secretary)  
Michael Pahl  
Irma Fast Dueck  
Neill von Gunten  
Edith von Gunten  
Caleb Kowalko

Anglican Church of Canada  
Elin Goulden (Co-Chair)  
Scott Sharman (Denominational Staff Secretary)  
Vincent Solomon (Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples Representative)  
Ryan Turnbull  
Charlie Scromeda  
Bram Pearce

Chris Bishopp (Full Communion Observer,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada)



Left to right: Caleb Kowalko, Scott Sharman, Bram Pearce, Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Doug Klassen, Charlie Scromeda, Michael Pahl, Neil von Gunten, Edith von Gunten, Vincent Solomon, Elin Goulden, Irma Fast Dueck.  
Not Pictured: Ryan Turnbull, Chris Bishopp



# MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

## ANABAPTIST/MENNONITE CAMPS & RETREAT CENTRES OF CANADA & THE UNITED STATES

### ALBERTA

CAMP VALAQUA  
[www.campvalaqua.ca](http://www.campvalaqua.ca)

### BRITISH COLOMBIA

CAMP SQUEAH  
[www.squeah.com](http://www.squeah.com)

### MANITOBA

CAMPS WITH MEANING  
[www.campswithmeaning.org](http://www.campswithmeaning.org)

- Camp Assiniboia
- Camp Koinonia

### ONTARIO

HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP  
[www.hiddenacres.ca](http://www.hiddenacres.ca)

SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP  
[www.slmc.ca](http://www.slmc.ca)

### SASKATCHEWAN

SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE  
[www.shekinahretreatcentre.org](http://www.shekinahretreatcentre.org)

### MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

[www.mennonitecamping.org](http://www.mennonitecamping.org)

### SEEKING GOD'S FACE IN CREATION

In a world often detached from nature and from spiritual reality, our camping and retreat ministries offer a way to reconnect with the created order and invite us to experience God through:

- Prayer, solitude and worship
- Scripture study and reflection
- Outdoor discovery and play

### RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST

Our camping and retreat ministries offer well-rounded experiences of Christian community through:

- A loving circle of acceptance and healing that supports growth in faith
- A place where gospel is both heard and seen
- A sense of belonging that invites personal commitment to Jesus Christ and discipleship
- An opportunity to recognize and express gifts

### RADIATING GOD'S SPIRIT IN THE WORLD

As a place where the power of the Holy Spirit is seen and known, camps and retreat centres offer inspiration for faithful, creative ministry in God's world, enabling participants, staff and volunteers to:

- Be peacemakers, servants and witnesses of God's love
- Be caretakers of the earth, God's garden
- Be prophets who, from a creative distance, call the church to faithful living in a materialistic, violent world
- Live in harmony with God, nature, each other and the world beyond our camp or retreat centre

# MCC Report to Mennonite Church Canada 2025

Dear friends at MC Canada,

Thank you for supporting MCC’s ministry throughout the past year. **Our guiding Scripture verse for this year is from John 1:39: “Come, and you will see!”** Our prayer is that we would make space to focus more deeply on Jesus and recognize where he’s at work.

As the new MCC Canada executive director, I’m grateful to be on this journey of following Jesus with compassionate and generous people like you! Thank you. Together, may we continue to walk alongside our global neighbours, sharing Christ’s love with all.

### Relief

Your support has played a crucial role in MCC’s response to the crisis in Gaza. To date, MCC has allocated more than \$2.6 million USD to our response. MCC has been able to get several shipments of food and relief supplies into Gaza. This includes 4,000 food boxes, comforters and relief kits. But humanitarian access is constantly changing, and needs remain urgent. We continue to advocate for a permanent ceasefire, the protection of civilians and increased humanitarian access and aid into Gaza. Please join us in praying for a just and lasting peace in the region.

MCC is also responding to ongoing conflict and displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. MCC is collaborating with Anabaptist churches and organizations, including Mennonite Church Canada Witness, on a project in DR Congo’s eastern region to provide emergency supplies through local churches.

### Development

MCC continues to invest in education and learning, ensuring children receive the training they need for secure jobs and healthy futures. In Bolivia, MCC partners with the Bolivian Evangelical Mennonite Church to support Samuelito Daycare. The daycare provides nutrition and rich learning opportunities for the children. It also supports parents through home visits and workshops.

### Peace

For MCC, peace is more than a wish. It’s our work. Building bridges of peace can take many forms – from giving young people opportunities to serve cross-culturally, to teaching conflict resolution skills to creating space for dialogue. In Cambodia, it meant taking part in a tree-planting event that brought together more than 1,200 participants from various walks of life. Staff from MCC and partner Peace Bridges Organization helped plant more than 3,000 trees in one day.

Thank you for the ways you’ve helped encourage so many lives. In doing so, you have provided a tangible expression of God’s love and compassion. It is a privilege to do this work together, within the wider mission of the church.

Humbly under the Mercy,



**KEN H. KIM**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MCC CANADA**  
**KENKIM@MCCCANADA.CA**

*We invite you to learn more about how MCC is learning, changing and growing.*



**Al-Najd Developmental Forum staff distribute emergency supplies to families caught in conflict in Gaza.**

*Names withheld for security reasons. (Photo courtesy of Al-Najd Developmental Forum).*



**Students enjoy the day in the two-year-old classroom at Samuelito Daycare in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.**

*(MCC photo/Anna Yoder)*



**MCC staff accompanied partner Peace Bridges Organization (PBO) in a tree planting activity organized by local authorities and communities.** *(Photo courtesy of PBO)*





Women in Leadership



MC USA Executive Board



MC USA Staff

*As we reflect on 2024, we give thanks for God’s abundant blessings and the ways we, as MC USA, continue to live out our [Renewed Commitments](#) of following Jesus, witnessing to God’s peace and experiencing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Together, we live into our mission as a denomination that equips, empowers and inspires.*

### Church Vitality: Equipping healthy congregations

In 2024, MC USA’s Church Vitality team worked diligently to nurture thriving congregations and support pastors and leaders. From practical tools, such as [pastor salary guidelines](#) and [The Corinthian Plan](#) healthcare program, to initiatives such as our [Wellbeing in Ministry](#) resources, we continue to prioritize the health of our churches and the wellbeing of those who serve them.

Our [Safe Church Ministry](#) empowers faith communities to prioritize safety for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Engagement with our webinars and the updated Circle of Grace curriculum reached new heights, extending even beyond our denomination. Additionally, we introduced background checks for church employees and volunteers, demonstrating our commitment to safe spaces for worship and ministry.

Through our [Thrive church planting grants](#), we provided financial support to five new missional peace churches, breaking down barriers for church plants to proclaim the gospel and engage their communities.

We also launched two new podcasts: [“Lead/Follow”](#) with Executive Director Glen Guyton, in which leaders explore how to follow Jesus boldly, and [“The Competent Pastor,”](#) hosted by Church Vitality’s Michael Danner and Rachel Ringenberg Miller, which offers practical wisdom for pastors.

### Peace and Justice: Living into our Anabaptist faith values

As a historic peace church, MC USA continues to lead the way in nonviolence and justice. Through our 2024 [“Learn, Pray, Join” campaigns](#), we educated congregations on climate justice and conflict transformation, calling us to connect faith and action.

## Renewed Commitments

- Follow Jesus
- Witness to God’s peace
- Experience transformation

## Church Vitality

MC USA’s Church Vitality team empowers and equips the church every day through:

- Pastor salary guidelines
- Wellbeing in ministry resources
- The Corinthian Plan healthcare plan for church workers
- Ministerial Leadership Inquiry process

Learn more [here](#).



[Subscribe](#) to MC USA’s weekly email newsletter.





2024 Bring the Peace honorees



Glen Guyton's "Lead/Follow" podcast



2024 Hope for the Future attendees

This past year, the [Justice Fund](#) supported nine churches dismantling racism, addressing police brutality or combating poverty, while the [Bring the Peace](#) award recognized individuals who are bringing God's peace to their communities. The [Church Peace Tax Fund](#) rallied our collective voice against the destructive powers of militarism in our congregations by supporting education, grassroots activism and [Peaceful Options for Training and Careers](#).

Additionally, the [Pam De Young Net Zero Energy Fund](#) helped several congregations take bold steps toward renewable energy. Youth-led innovation shined through the [Gen Z Energy and Spirit Challenge](#), celebrating young leaders committed to climate justice.

Finally, [Women in Leadership](#) continued its work of dismantling patriarchal systems, laying the groundwork for the Women's Summit, "Beholding It Together," July 8, 2025, in Greensboro, North Carolina.

**Racial Ethnic Engagement: Fostering Solidarity and Transformation**

Our 11th [Hope for the Future](#) conference in Dallas, Texas, Feb. 9-11, 2024, brought together 70 Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders under the theme, "Breaking Chains, Mending Walls." This sacred space for dialogue and solidarity inspires hope for systemic transformation in our church and communities.

Additionally, MC USA, in partnership with the [Racial Ethnic Council](#) and the [Historical Archives](#), launched a groundbreaking initiative to preserve and amplify BIPOC stories within our denomination's history. This effort includes workshops, resource kits, and digitization projects, ensuring these voices are honored and heard for generations to come.

**Looking Ahead with Hope**

Together, we are building a church that embodies Jesus' radical love and justice. Thank you for your prayers, participation and support. We are stronger together, united by our call to follow Christ and transform the world.

**Our Mission**

To share with others the gift of God's love through our worship, witness and life together. We claim Jesus as the center of our faith, community as the center of our lives and reconciliation as the center of our work.

**Our Vision**

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Join us for [Follow Jesus '25](#)  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
July 8-12, 2025. Scan for info:



Mennonite Disaster Service Canada

# REPORT

## MDS Canada 2024: Restoring hope

“It is a tremendous thing to have this happen. To have a house built for you, it’s beyond words,” said Jade Shamen, one recipient of a volunteer-built home in North Shuswap, British Columbia.

Jade, his wife Isabelle and their four-year-old son Able were among hundreds of North Shuswap area residents affected by the Bush Creek East Wildfire in August 2023. The family was one of four households in the North Shuswap area to benefit from an MDS volunteer-built home this summer, while four more were helped with home repairs and renovations. Over a five-month period, 227 volunteers served in the North Shuswap.

Around the same time, a smaller national crew rebuilt a house in Lytton, British Columbia. Patsy Gessey and Owen Collings survived a wildfire in 2021. Due to several complicating factors — including toxic ash removal, loss of town records, archeological surveying requirements and updates to the local building code — rebuilding began more than two years after the fire flattened their village.

“I’m so grateful and thankful that I’m working with [MDS] because your organization shows hope... Some people have given up... but you’ve stuck with us,” shared Owen.

Units were also active across the country with house builds taking place in Carstairs, Alberta, and Truro, Nova Scotia. Home repair projects were undertaken in Manitoba.



Isabelle Labelle and Jade Shamen in Celista, B.C.

In Carstairs, more than 130 people volunteered to rebuild a house for Elisa Humphreys after she lost her home to a tornado last year. The house was built almost entirely by daily volunteers, 95 serving with MDS for the first time.

“God [directed] but people had to say yes. So, my heart was really warmed by how giving people were and what a great community we live in,” said Jessica Lawrence, volunteer coordinator for the response.

In July, the Ontario Unit hosted the MDS Canada Family Project at Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft, Ontario. Over four weeks, 48 people built three cabins and put the finishing touches on two more — to house camp volunteers and facilitate their program activities.

As I reflect on our work and relationships with disaster survivors and their communities in 2024, I am so grateful for the collective efforts of response coordinators, units, staff and the hundreds of daily, weekly and long-term volunteers who helped us achieve our mission to restore hope and homes. Thank you for your partnership in this work! I invite your continued prayers as we explore how to best serve our neighbours, across the country, in 2025.

—Ross Penner, Executive Director

### 2024 STATS

- 2 national responses
- 263 national response volunteers
- 4 unit responses
- 1 summer youth project
- 1 family project
- 8 service scholarships awarded
- 21 Spirit of MDS Fund grants totalling
- \$102,000 issued to churches and community orgs.



**Mennonite World Conference**  
A Community of Anabaptist related Churches

# Mennonite World Conference

Annual report: 2024

*Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

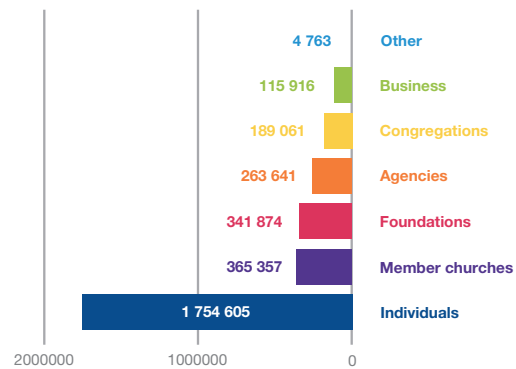
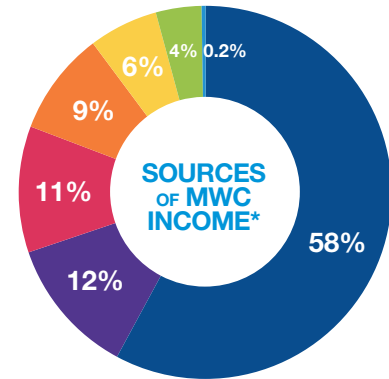
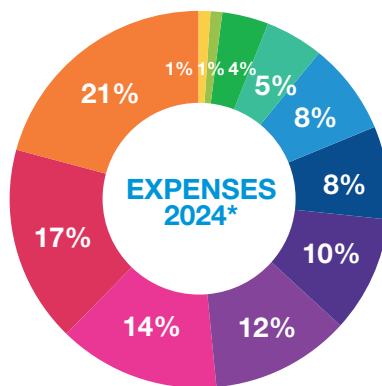
## Thank you! ¡Gracias! Merci !

Your involvement with MWC fuels the 500-year commemoration of the Anabaptist movement – a legacy of radical faith, unwavering peace and unstoppable unity. As a global family, we are each a piece of the same mosaic, reflecting the beauty of God’s design.

Through your generosity, brothers and sisters worldwide are following Jesus, living his call to unity and building peace in a fractured world. God’s Spirit is working through each of us to tear down barriers, ignite hope and embody justice and reconciliation.

Your partnership with MWC sparks a transformative movement that continues to change lives and empower future generations to share Christ’s message of peace, love and unity worldwide.

- Interchurch relations
- Global Anabaptist networks
- Commissions
- Governance
- Global gatherings
- Global Church Sharing Fund (GCSF)
- Regional representatives
- General secretariat
- Communications
- Development
- Administration & operations



TOTAL REVENUES **3 035 217**

\*All amounts in US\$

## Transformation

Valentina Kunze from Uruguay says one word comes to mind regarding her experience with MWC: transformation.

“Being part of this global community has broadened my perspective,” she says. “It’s a privilege to connect with something bigger than myself: bigger than my home, church or country.”

This experience deepened her faith, introducing her to believers worldwide who worship the same God in diverse ways. “I’ve met people with completely different lives, yet we believe in the same God. That’s powerful.”

Valentina now sees the church as a global body. She is passionate about helping others experience a broader, hope-filled view of following Jesus.

### Join us

Your gift can transform lives. Make an impact today! In a divided world, your support helps build a global church rooted in God’s peace and reconciliation.

### Invest in MWC’s mission:

- Empower leaders to grow and serve like Jesus.
- Strengthen congregations to live out unity.
- Foster global communion that builds peace across cultures.

Help lay the foundation for a future filled with love, unity and hope.

### Give - Serve - Walk Together Always.

Help the worldwide Anabaptist family thrive by making a gift to MWC today!

Scan the QR code, donate now at [mwc-cmm.org/donate](https://mwc-cmm.org/donate), or send your contribution to

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Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1  
CANADA

Mennonite World Conference  
P.O. Box 5364  
Lancaster, PA 17606-5364  
USA

Valentina Kunze, chair of the Young AnaBaptists (YABs) Committee.  
Photo: Preshit Rao





# Each Gift

1 PETER 4:10

SEE YOU AT THE GATHERING!

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