

Minutes of the 55th Annual Conference Assembly
Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA/Ohio Mennonite Conference
Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio
March 1-2, 2024

10 a.m.-11:15 a.m. — Worshipful Work Session #1

A1. **Opening Song** — Marilyn Rossiter led delegates in an opening song, “Come, Come Ye Saints.”

A2. **Welcome** — Moderator Ken Sims welcomed delegates to the 55th Annual Conference Assembly and gave delegates a few housekeeping instructions.

A3. **Opening Prayer** — Paula Snyder Belousek, assistant moderator, led delegates in an opening prayer.

A4. **Introductions** — Ken Sims introduced the Ohio Conference staff and Leadership Team.

A5. **Blessing of New Pastors** — Regional Pastor Tony Doehrmann and Interim Regional Pastor Larry Rohrer introduced new pastors Valentine Iroha of Good Shepherd Mennonite Church in Archbold, John David Thacker of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, and Rosalind Young of First Mennonite Church in Canton. They also noted that two pastors have new assignments in Ohio Conference congregations. Gary Stuckey is serving as associate pastor at Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker, and Walter Campbell is serving as interim pastor at Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City. In addition, Tony Doehrmann noted that David Tijerina has retired from Good Shepherd Mennonite Church. The regional pastors led delegates in a time of prayer and blessing for these pastors.

A6. **Congregational Transitions** — Interim Conference Minister Dan Miller introduced representatives from two congregations that have chosen to leave the Ohio Conference and affiliate with other groups. Lee Waidelich of West Clinton Mennonite Church and Matthew Peterson, pastor of Midway Mennonite Church in Columbiana, gave parting remarks. Matthew Peterson noted that the Midway congregation holds no ill will toward the Ohio Conference leadership. The congregation is feeling out of sync with the priorities of Mennonite Church USA, and they are affiliating with LMC. He expressed appreciation for the support he has received from his regional pastors.

Delegates stood as a sign that they agreed to release the two congregations from membership in the Ohio Conference.

Dan Miller led the delegates in a litany of lament and blessing for the departing congregations.

A7. **Table Group Introductions** — Delegates spent a few minutes introducing themselves to the others in their table groups.

A8. **Introduction of Resolutions Committee and Parliamentarian** — Paula Snyder Belousek introduced the Resolutions Committee for this ACA: Jeff Hochstetler, Lucas Johnson, and Rebecca Kauffman. She also introduced Bill Seymour, who agreed to serve as parliamentarian for this gathering. Bill explained the business meeting process, noting that for this ACA, all resolutions need approval from at least two thirds of delegates to be adopted.

A9. **Minutes of 2023 ACA** — Ken Sims invited delegates to approve the minutes of the 2023 ACA. **Cheryl Vanatsky made a motion to approve the minutes, and LaVerne Yousey seconded. Delegates voted by a show of hands. M/S/C**

A10. **Explanation of Delegate Actions** — Paula Snyder Belousek reviewed the major resolutions planned for these delegate sessions: the name change for the Conference, the Gifts Discernment Slate, the strategic plan, the 2024-25 budget proposal, and the update to the Ohio Conference Constitution.

A11. **Name Change Recommendation** — Ken Sims reviewed the process that led to the proposal to change the Conference's official name from Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA to Ohio Mennonite Conference. The Leadership Team received feedback from delegates at cluster meetings. He noted that the name change to Ohio Mennonite Conference acknowledges that not all congregations in the Conference are members of Mennonite Church USA. The name change also helps to differentiate Ohio Mennonite Conference from the Ohio Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists. The short name for the Conference is Ohio Conference.

A12. **Table Discussion** — Delegates discussed the proposal to change the Conference's name to Ohio Mennonite Conference.

A13. **Open Mic** — Delegates were invited to speak during an open mic period, but no delegates chose to speak.

A14. **Call for the Vote** — **Resolved, that the name of the corporation is changed from Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA to "Ohio Mennonite Conference."** — Motion brought by the Leadership Team, seconded by Vickie Yoder. Delegates voted by paper ballot.

A15. **Missional Story** — Steve Nafziger of Central Mennonite Church shared Bill Holdsworth's account of the work of the Resettlement Support Team in northwest Ohio. Individuals from Central Mennonite Church and Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold formed the team in mid-2022. They reached out to resettlement organizations for advice. Initially they had concerns about their rural location, but they were encouraged to proceed by Charity Stowell, the newcomer coordinator at Mennonite Central Committee. The team has been able to help two families from Ukraine to settle in Fulton County.

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. — Worshipful Work Session #2

A16. **Song** — Marilyn Rossiter led delegates in singing "In the Morning When I Rise."

A17. **Name Change Vote Results** — Ken Sims announced results of the vote regarding the proposed name change for the Conference. **There were 107 yes votes and two no votes, resulting in 98.2 % approval. — Motion carried**

A18. **Strategic Plan Introduction** — Paula Snyder Belousek reminded delegates of the two-year process the Conference went through in developing the strategic plan. We trust that God has led this process of discernment. The strategic plan is for 2024-2027, and includes three areas of focus: support for congregations, support for pastors, and support for congregations' action witness in their communities. The plan notes that staffing levels are being adjusted to reflect the current level of giving. Congregations need to make this plan happen. In addition, the plan outlines a streamlining of the Conference structure.

A19. **Table Discussion** — Paula invited table groups to spend time in discussion about the strategic plan. She suggested a question for discussion: What has been the most important factor in determining how you will vote?

A20. **Open Mic** —

Alvis Pettker (Table 10) — He expressed concern that we won't find people to volunteer. Is there a mechanism for amending the strategic plan if we find that it isn't working?

Paula Snyder Belousek — Yes, there can be adjustments if needed.

Vickie Yoder (Table 6) — There is some concern that it will be difficult to find volunteers. With the Lord's help, we will be able to accomplish it. She expressed appreciation for the work of the Leadership Team in developing this plan. How much are we willing to work at it to see it succeed?

Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi — She noted that as far as results go, the plan sets specific targets, and reporting notes the reality of whether the targets are met or not.

Carole Schumacher (Table 8) — Is this strategic plan something that we would be able to change with a two-thirds affirmative vote, or a straight majority?

Paula Snyder Belousek — We are not certain at this point.

A21. Strategic Plan Vote — Resolved, that the Conference adopt the Ohio Mennonite Conference Strategic Plan for 2024-27. The motion was brought by the Leadership Team and seconded by Alex Dye. Delegates voted by paper ballot.

A22. Journey Graduation — Dan Miller affirmed Journey, a leadership development program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). He introduced Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, dean of lifelong learning at AMBS, who presented a certificate of completion of the Journey program to Ohio Conference Coordinator of Volunteers Alysa Short. Jewel said that Sue Short, collaborative minister at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, has served as Alysa's mentor.

Jewel noted that AMBS partners with Ohio Mennonite Conference, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and Central District Conference in this program. Journey is a three-year program. Ohio Conference joined as a sponsoring conference in 2019. As a sponsoring conference, Ohio Conference gives input to the program through the participation of Interim Conference Minister Dan Miller and Doug King, chair of the Credentialing Ministry.

Alysa began with Journey in the fall of 2021, and she will be graduating in the summer of 2024. She shared about her experience in Journey, saying that the program has been extremely formative, with study of scripture and Anabaptist history and theology. She has been challenged to put what she has been learning into practice, and the experience has been an affirmation of her gifts and calling. She said that the best part of the program is having a mentor, and she gave thanks to her mentor, Sue Short.

Alysa was presented gifts to honor her completion of the program: an oil lamp, a *Vision* journal subscription, and a certificate to attend AMBS' Pastor and Leaders Gathering in 2025.

Jewel also thanked Sue Short, and presented her with a *Vision* journal subscription, and a certificate to attend AMBS' Pastor and Leaders Gathering in 2025.

A23. Conference Minister Report — Interim Conference Minister Dan Miller noted that he has been working with Ohio Conference for three months. In this role he has attended pastor-peer group meetings, as well as meeting with the Credentialing Ministry, Leadership Team, Ministry Development Team and the regional pastors.

Dan acknowledged the foresight of former Conference Minister Dick Barrett in calling for work on a strategic plan for the Conference, and he reminded delegates that they were integral in the development of the strategic plan. The plan has grown out of the work that the delegates have done.

Dan challenged delegates to think about the spiritual life of Ohio Conference. What does it mean for Ohio Conference to trust God in this time? What is God stirring in our congregations? Who is God calling the congregations of Ohio Mennonite Conference to be? He emphasized that changing structures is **not** the goal of our planning and reminded delegates of the Conference mission statement.

He also posed a question: In three years will you be able to identify the changes? The point is to respond as faithfully as we know how in the present moment.

Staffing changes are happening much more quickly than had been planned. Is this a hint about larger changes? The Leadership Team wants to lean into the future, and has begun looking into job descriptions for staff. The regional pastor role will phase out during this year. He also reminded delegates that they had worked on identifying important competencies for the next conference minister, and he referred them to the document in their delegate packets for details.

Dan noted that the experiences the Conference is going through are providing opportunities to exercise our trust “muscles.” He mentioned the focus on trust found in Psalm 23, and invited delegates to say the psalm together.

A24. Spending Plan Proposal — Andrew Blount, chair of the Stewardship Ministry, introduced the proposed spending plan for 2024-25. In developing the proposed plan, the Stewardship Ministry looked at the emerging strategic plan and noted that receipts were in decline. He noted that the Conference staff has been responsible in the expense side of things. The Conference needs contributions to continue and even increase. He noted that the Conference has been using reserve funds over the past few years, and said that staff transitions will happen throughout the year.

A25. Table Discussion — Delegates spent time in their table groups discussing the proposed spending plan for 2024-25.

A26. Open Mic —

Keith Lyndaker Schlabach (Table 4) — What is the actual level of our reserve funds?

Andrew Blount — The Reserve Fund stands at about \$75,000.

Keith Lyndaker Schlabach — Is the transfer in line 50 included in line 49?

Andrew Blount — The last line is how much of our reserve fund we would need to use. Staff is very responsible in spending, and we rarely use the total amount of funds that are budgeted.

Keith Lyndaker Schlabach — Why is the support level for Brazo en Brazo being cut?

Andrew Blount — There are fewer supporting congregations from Ohio Conference than there were in the past.

Joel Shenk (Table 12) — He said that he can’t argue with any of the line items. The Conference is facing the reality of its financial situation. We as a Conference need to reboot and build.

Hank Unruh — What was the result of the strategic plan vote?

A27. **Strategic Plan Vote Results** — Ken Sims announced results of the vote on the strategic plan. Results were as follows: yes — 105, no — 2, for a 98.1 % approval. **The strategic plan was adopted.**

A28. **Spending Plan Vote** — Delegates voted on the spending plan via paper ballot.

A29. **Introduction of Visitors** — Paula Snyder Belousek introduced visitors with displays from a variety of organizations.

A30. **Words of Thanks** — Carole Schumacher, who shared a presentation about the Arsenic Mitigation Project in Bangladesh at the 2023 Annual Conference Assembly, thanked churches for their support of this project. She noted that enough funds have been raised to make possible the first expansion of the project.

A31. **Announcements/Instructions** — Paula Snyder Belousek gave delegates instructions for lunch.

12:30-1:45 p.m. — Lunch

1:45-3:15 p.m. — Plenary Session with Meghan Larissa Good

3:15-3:45 p.m. — Break/Displays/Snacks

3:45-5:15 p.m. — Plenary Session with Meghan Larissa Good

5:30-7 p.m. — Dinner/Pastor Appreciation Dinner

7:15- 8:15 p.m. — Worship

8:15 p.m. — Celebration of Departing Staff

Saturday, March 2

8-8:15 a.m. — Prayer Time

8:15-9:30 a.m. — Plenary Session with Meghan Larissa Good

9:30-10 a.m. — Break/Displays/Snacks/Meghan Larissa Good Book Signing

10:15-11:15 a.m. — Worship

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. — Lunch

12:30 p.m.-2 p.m. — Worshipful Work Session #3

A32. **Opening Songs** — Marilyn Rossiter led delegates in singing “Happy Birthday” to Alan Kauffman, and then led delegates in singing “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.”

A33. **Questions about the Spending Plan** — Andrew Blount, chair of the Stewardship Ministry, answered some delegate questions he had received after his presentation about the spending plan. He had been asked about the changes in amounts budgeted for the two types of congregations, Mennonite Church USA-affiliated and those congregations not affiliated with the denomination. He noted that some congregations have changed categories in the past year, resulting in their giving moving to the other category.

Regarding reserve funds, he noted that his previous comments regarding reserve funds did not include the endowment, which has about \$350,000 and the capital funds account, which has about \$200,000.

A34. Missional Story — David Hargrave, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster, shared the story of Salem Mennonite's experience as a multicultural congregation. Currently the congregation is about 60 percent Hispanic, and the congregation's bilingual worship services are conducted in both English and Spanish. God has done incredible things at Salem. He arrived at Salem in 2017.

He talked about the influence of Raul Tadeo, who has a love of soccer. Through Raul's influence, Salem Mennonite has had a soccer team which plays in a league on Sunday evenings at Wayne College. At one point, a fight at one of the games ended with one person being beaten so badly that he had to be treated at the hospital. Raul served as translator for the medical staff, since those involved were not English speakers.

David mentioned that a while ago a story in the local newspaper discussed the league, noting that fights no longer break out during matches. A former police chief for the area and the mayor have commented that it is good that Salem is involved in the league. He challenged the delegates to seek out more community engagement for their congregations.

A35. Gifts Discernment Slate — Matt Weaver, chair of the Gifts Discernment Ministry, presented the Gifts Discernment slate. He encouraged delegates to consider volunteering for one of the positions that are still vacant. He would like to fill these vacancies before the end of his term with Gifts Discernment Ministry at the end of the month.

A motion was made to approve the Gifts Discernment slate as presented by the Gifts Discernment Ministry. Motion – Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler, second – Ken Sims

Delegates voted by paper ballot. There were 114 yes votes and 0 no votes, resulting in 100 % affirmation.

A36. Mennonite Church USA Update — Ken Sims introduced Rachel Ringenberg Miller of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) and Eric Frey Martin of Mennonite Mission Network.

Rachel Ringenberg Miller, denominational minister for Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA, thanked delegates for their generosity in contributions to the denomination. She said that the denomination received about \$40,000 in 2023, both directly from the Conference and from individual congregations in the Conference.

She discussed several resources available through MC USA, including the Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) form, which candidates for pastoral positions are asked to complete. Recently Interim Conference Minister Dan Miller talked with her about the possibility of having the MLI available in French, and that conversation spurred changes in the denomination's MLI system. The MLI is now available in French, and MC USA is now looking for a new platform for the MLI system. This example is a reminder of how one conversation can impact the rest of the conferences.

Also mentioned was *Leader* magazine and its worship resources. Rachel is in charge of finding people to create worship resources for Advent and Lent for *Leader*, and she works to use the gifts of individuals in the various conferences. The next turn for Ohio Mennonite Conference to participate in developing these resources is in 2026.

She also highlighted the need to support pastors and commended the Women in Leadership Retreat that the Conference held recently, noting that we continue to have work to do in recognizing the ministry gifts of women.

Another planned resource is a new podcast, “The Competent Pastor.” This podcast, which will begin in April, will be hosted by Rachel and Michael Danner, associate executive director for Church Vitality in MC USA. The podcast will be for and by MC USA pastors, and episodes will be released monthly.

Finally, she highlighted several other MC USA resources, including Safe Church, the Corinthian Plan, Mennonite Education Agency, MennoMedia, and Mennonite Mission Network.

A37. Mennonite Mission Network Update — Eric Frey Martin, Interim Director of Constituent Engagement for Mennonite Mission Network (MMN), shared greetings from the MMN staff. MMN appreciates the support it receives from Ohio Conference. MMN hopes to be a place where we can gather around Jesus as the center, joining in what God is doing. Several individuals from Ohio Conference are participants in MMN service programs.

Eric also highlighted some MMN resources, including Just Peace Pilgrimages. MMN leads Civil Rights Tours and Borderlands Tours. Some other MMN resources are Immigration Aid and Resourcing, Family and Housing Assistance, Restorative Justice, and Creation Care and Sustainability. He asked delegates to consider this question: How can your congregation join in this mission of God?

A38. Constitution Introduction — Ken Sims highlighted some changes that are planned in the proposed update of the Ohio Conference Constitution. (See attached document at the end of these minutes for details.)

A39. Table Group Discussion — Delegates discussed the proposed changes to the Ohio Conference Constitution in their table groups.

The motion to approve the amended version of the Constitution was made by the Leadership Team and seconded by Alan Kauffman.

A40. Open Mic —

Jim Hartman (Table 14) — He referred to point number 11 in the document describing the proposed changes to the Constitution, which says, “The words ‘worship, faith, and witness’ would be replaced by wording from the current mission statement ‘gather, equip, send’ or refer to the ‘current focus.’” Which wording is actually going to be in this version of the Constitution?

Ken Sims — Currently we are planning on using the wording “gather, equip and send.” In the future, other delegates might decide to make wording changes to fit the focus of that time period.

Alex Dye (Table 3) — He is unsure why we are changing the age range for Young Adult delegates to only up to age 21. He said that for many congregations no one that age is available to participate in ACA in March while high schools and colleges are in session. What are we hoping to achieve with very young ages? What are we providing to make this a less intimidating space for youth?

Becca Hager — She mentioned that in talking with some other delegates, she learned that the idea for changing the age range from 16-30 to 16-21 was a desire to engage more youth in ACA. However, she feels that we don’t have space for youth in our current ACA structure. If we do want to attract that age

group, it would be great to have a time for them to meet together and then interact with the other delegates, presenting their ideas. **She made a formal amendment to the proposed changes for the Constitution: That the age range for Young Adult Delegates should be changed to 16-25. This motion was seconded by Chip Welch.**

Galen Nofziger — Why are we proposing to change the age range anyway? He participated as a young adult delegate and found it to be a valuable experience.

Ken Sims — The Leadership Team’s rationale for making the change was that they felt 30 was moving toward older rather than being a young adult. They wanted to make room for younger people.

Paula Snyder Belousek — Part of the thinking of the Leadership Team is that there’s nothing stopping congregations from appointing people in their mid-20s as regular delegates. This change would be a way of encouraging people in that age category to see themselves as adults participating in the church, instead of seeing themselves as belonging to special category.

Jeff Hochstetler (Table 10) — When he was family life pastor at Berlin Mennonite Church, the congregation brought high school and college students as young adult delegates, but not many other congregations did. He felt that there weren’t peers for his congregation’s young adults to relate to. He would encourage more conversation about how we can be intentional about engaging young adults.

A41. Vote on Amendment – Delegates voted to approve the amendment by a show of hands.

A42. Vote on Constitutional Changes — Delegates voted on the following resolution: **Resolved, to approve all amendments to the Constitution contained in the document distributed to delegates, *Constitution of the Ohio Mennonite Conference for ACA 2024* with one change: The age range for Young Adult Delegates will be 16-25 years old.**

Delegates voted on the constitutional change resolution by paper ballot.

A43. Grace & Groundings Update — Doug Zehr, a member of Grace & Groundings, Ohio Conference’s racial reconciliation resource team, reported about the team’s work. Grace & Groundings has the motto “Learn, Act, Reflect.” Reflecting on what he has learned as a part of this team, he said that there is a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in most of our congregations. He noted that 90 percent of the population in Wayne County, where he lives, is white. It is easy to turn a blind eye when we think issues of race and ethnicity don’t affect us. It’s easy to stereotype the issues when we are removed from them.

Grace & Groundings has been sharing a column in *Ohio Mennonite Evangel*. The team also has compiled a set of resources which are available on the Conference website, including resources for observing Social Justice Sunday. Grace & Groundings is working on a series of podcasts focusing on social justice and shalom which are available through the Ohio Conference Cast podcast.

Doug shared an invitation to delegates from the Grace & Groundings team. They would like to talk with delegates and work together in community. Other team members include Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells, Kevin Himes, Greg Battle, Greg Bowman and Coordinator of Volunteers Alysa Short.

A44. Announcement of Constitution Vote — Paula Snyder Belousek announced the results of the vote to adopt the updated version of the Ohio Conference Constitution. **There were 110 yes votes, and 1 no vote, resulting in an affirmation of 99.2 %.**

A45. **Delegate Incentive Drawings** — There were several drawings for gift baskets. One drawing was for everyone who had completed reading Meghan Larissa Good's book, *Divine Gravity*. Maynard Hershberger was the winner of this drawing.

There also was a drawing for gift baskets for delegates who turned in their delegate checklists. Darrin Snyder Belousek, Miriam Zehr, Paula Snyder Belousek and Laura Hoag won the gift baskets.

A46. **Upcoming Events** — Alys Short, coordinator of volunteers, told delegates about several upcoming events. June 23 will be Social Justice Sunday, and worship resources for this day will be available in mid-April. Other upcoming events are a Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat, a Pastors' Wives Retreat, and a pastors' meeting focusing on studying the Bible through an Anabaptist lens. In addition, Berlin Mennonite Church will host the 2025 Annual Conference Assembly on March 7-8.

A47. **Blessing for Departing Staff Members** — Paula Snyder Belousek gave a prayer of blessing for departing staff.

A48. **Resolution of Appreciation** — Rebecca Kauffman, a member of the Resolutions Committee, presented a resolution of thanks submitted by the Leadership Team:

Presented for delegate action by the Leadership Team

Resolved, that the delegates of Ohio Mennonite Conference, while meeting in Plain City, Ohio, on March 1-2, 2024, do hereby thank Ken Sims for his service to Ohio Mennonite Conference as moderator the past two years, expressing appreciation for:

- **the warmth and welcome he brought to every setting, connecting with a broad range of individuals about a broad range of interests.**
- **the deep Christian faith with which Ken has led through some challenging circumstances.**
- **his integrity and thoroughness; when Ken says he will do something, you can trust it will get done.**
- **being a servant leader among us who is committed to the vitality of Conference.**

Steve Kopec seconded the resolution, and delegates showed their affirmation by standing and applauding. **The resolution was adopted.**

A49. **Announcement** — Ken Sims shared the announcement that all delegates except table group leaders should move to a different table for the Engagement and Action session after the break.

2-2:15 p.m. — Break

2:15-3:45 — Engagement and Action

A50. **Discussion for Engagement and Action** — Consultant Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, led delegates in a time of discussion. She reminded delegates that God is with us, Jesus Christ lives in us, and the Spirit keeps our lives.

She asked delegates to individually think of the word or phrase which has become a guiding focus for them during this ACA. Delegates then shared their answers in their table groups.

She reviewed the strategic planning process that the Conference has completed, noting that the process of meeting together and working together is as important as the end product.

She invited delegates to reflect on one main takeaway from the strategic planning process and to choose a metaphor to describe the Ohio Conference. Delegates shared their answers in table groups, and the

answers were written down. Group leaders shared with the entire gathering, and the written answers were collected for use in an article in *Ohio Mennonite Evangel*. She ended the session with prayer.

3:45-4:15 p.m. — Communion

A51. **Words of Thanks** — Ken Sims expressed thanks to Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi for her work in the strategic planning process.

A52. **Announcements** — Ken Sims shared several announcements.

A53. **Communion** — Delegates shared in a time of communion led by Dan Miller, Meghan Larissa Good, and Ohio Conference staff and Leadership Team members.

Proposed Changes to the Ohio Mennonite Conference Constitution

Strategic Planning Team

January 2024

- 1. Conference name.** (Article I) The “Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA” would officially change its name to “Ohio Mennonite Conference” to reflect the fact that not all congregations claim derived membership in Mennonite Church USA and to differentiate it from the Ohio Conference of the Adventist Church. The short name for Ohio Mennonite Conference is Ohio Conference.
- 2. Conference Assembly.** (Article V) would include only the governance requirement that the delegates meet annually to conduct the business of the Conference. Details about the timing, fellowship, Biblical teaching, worship, and celebration objectives for Conference events would be included in the Strategic Plan rather than in the Constitution.
- 3. Youth Delegate** (Article VI) would change to age 16-21 rather than age 16-30.
- 4. Leadership Council.** (Article VII) The new Leadership Council model would reduce the number of meetings required for volunteer leaders and avoid the duplication of responsibilities that exist between Leadership Team and Ministry Development Team. The Leadership Council would provide spiritual leadership and would replace the Leadership Team and the Ministry Development Team. The Leadership Council would be made up of Conference staff (see below) and five Conference leaders (Moderator, Moderator Elect, and representatives from the Credentialing, Stewardship, and Gifts Discernment Committees). It would supervise the Conference Minister, set the agenda for the Conference Assembly and oversee the work of committees. Between Conference Assembly times, the Leadership Council would work on behalf of the Conference for operational and program decisions.
- 5. Moderator Elect.** Ohio Mennonite Conference would have a Moderator Elect instead of an Assistant Moderator. After a two-year term, the Moderator Elect would move into the Moderator role when the Moderator completes their two-year term. There would be no term extensions for these roles.
- 6. Committees.** Conference Committees would be streamlined to four: Program, Credentialing, Stewardship, and Gifts Discernment. Each committee would be represented on the Leadership Council. Specific tasks currently assigned to Resource Teams and the Capacity Building Team would be given to ad hoc committees with time-bound and short-term commitments. Work on salaries and benefits would be assigned to the Stewardship Committee.

- 7. Program Committee:** The newly designated Program Committee would carry the responsibility for creating, implementing, and evaluating vibrant Conference programs for the support of congregations, pastors, and congregation's outreach in their communities. The Program Committee would be anchored by the Conference staff position who represents the Program Committee on the Leadership Council. The Program Committee would include five additional members from OMC congregations. The Program Committee would assume the programming role formerly assigned to the Ministry Development Team and/or Resource Teams.
- 8. Stewardship Committee.** In the amended constitution, a single Stewardship Committee would address all finance, property, and benefits/compensation questions for the Conference rather than having multiple finance-related committees with overlapping responsibilities.
- 9. Ad Hoc Committees:** The Leadership Council would have the option of appointing additional ad hoc committees to delegate time-bound specific tasks such as planning a program initiative or event or to advise the Conference in a particular area.
- 10. Titles:** Specific staff titles and roles would be removed from the Constitution because they are operational staffing decisions and not constitution-level decisions.
- 11. References to past mission statement:** The words "worship, faith, and witness" would be replaced by wording from the current mission statement "gather, equip, send" or refer to the "current focus" so that the focus can be regularly updated in a Strategic Plan without a constitutional change.