



*March 4 - Kern Road
(South Bend, IN)
or
March 18 - Online*

- ❖ **March 4, 2022 – In-Person Delegate Meeting at Kern Road Mennonite Church (South Bend, IN)**
- ❖ **March 18, 2022 – Virtual Delegate Meeting (Zoom)**

March 4

Agenda

March 18

9:30 am	Welcome & Worship	9:00 am
10:45 am	Spending Plan	9:45 am
11:15 am	Intercultural Working Group	10:15 am
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Table Discussion	11:00 am
2:30 pm	Dismissal	12:30 pm

Nominate someone for an IMMC leadership team:

Gifts Development Team would greatly appreciate your suggestions of people you think could serve on one of the teams. For more information and to fill out the form, use the QR Code to the right or visit <https://im.mennonite.net/gifts>

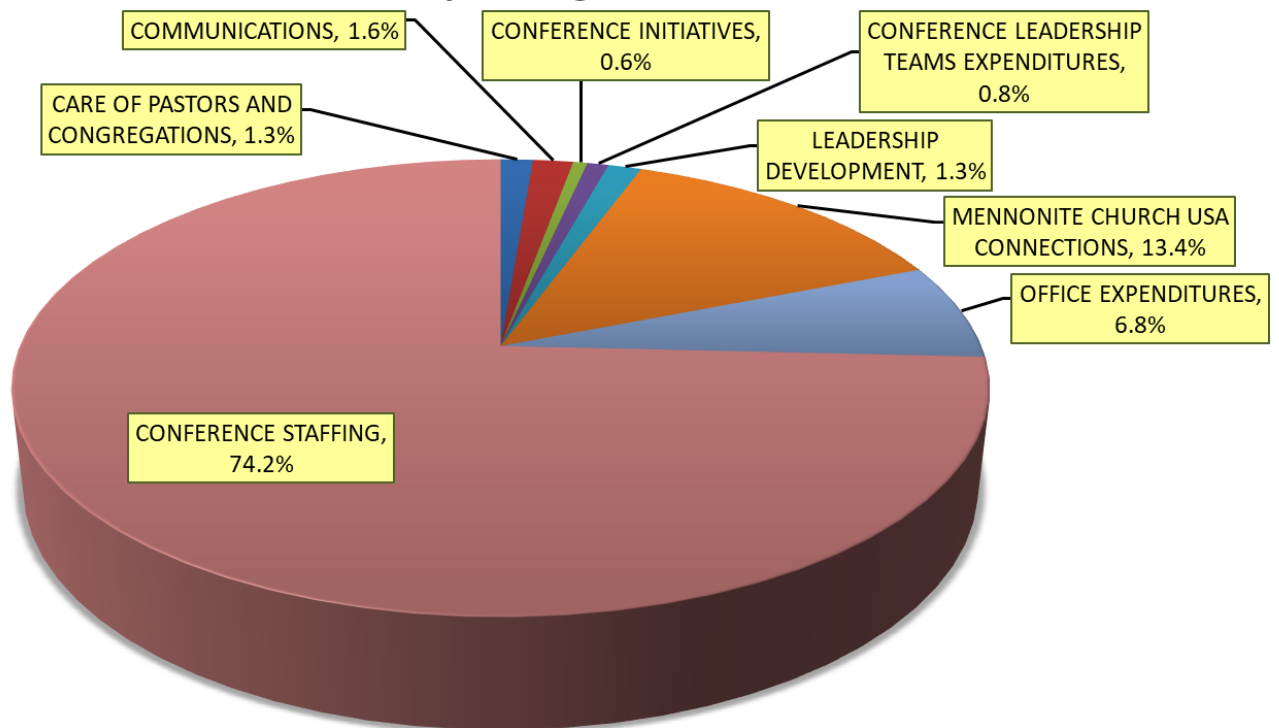


Proposed 2022-2023 Spending Plan
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference is a community of congregations centered on Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. Acting through grace, love and peace we are engaging the world God loves.

	22-23 Spending Plan	Actual through 12/31/22	Proposed 23-24 Spending Plan	\$ Change from 22-23	% Change from 22-23
INCOME					
CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CONFERENCE	\$210,000	\$91,100	\$215,000	\$5,000	2.4%
INDIVIDUAL GIFTS AND OTHER EXPECTED INCOME	\$54,644	\$19,363	\$54,495	\$(149)	-0.3%
TOTAL EXPECTED INCOME	\$264,644	\$110,463	\$269,495	\$4,851	1.8%
EXPENSE					
CARE OF PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS	\$3,900	\$1,138	\$3,400	\$(500)	-12.8%
COMMUNICATIONS	\$3,950	\$2,474	\$4,250	\$300	7.6%
CONFERENCE INITIATIVES	\$2,500	\$84	\$1,500	\$(1,000)	-40.0%
CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAMS EXPENDITURES	\$4,000	\$541	\$2,250	\$(1,750)	-43.8%
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	\$4,000	\$1,050	\$3,500	\$(500)	-12.5%
MENNONITE CHURCH USA CONNECTIONS	\$34,075	\$14,152	\$35,925	\$1,850	5.4%
OFFICE EXPENDITURES	\$21,725	\$7,814	\$18,150	\$(3,575)	-16.5%
CONFERENCE STAFFING	\$190,186	\$88,366	\$198,695	\$8,509	4.5%
TOTAL EXPECTED EXPENSE	\$264,336	\$115,618	\$267,670	\$3,334	1.3%
BALANCE	\$308	\$(5,154)	\$1,825		

2023-2024 Spending Plan Allocations



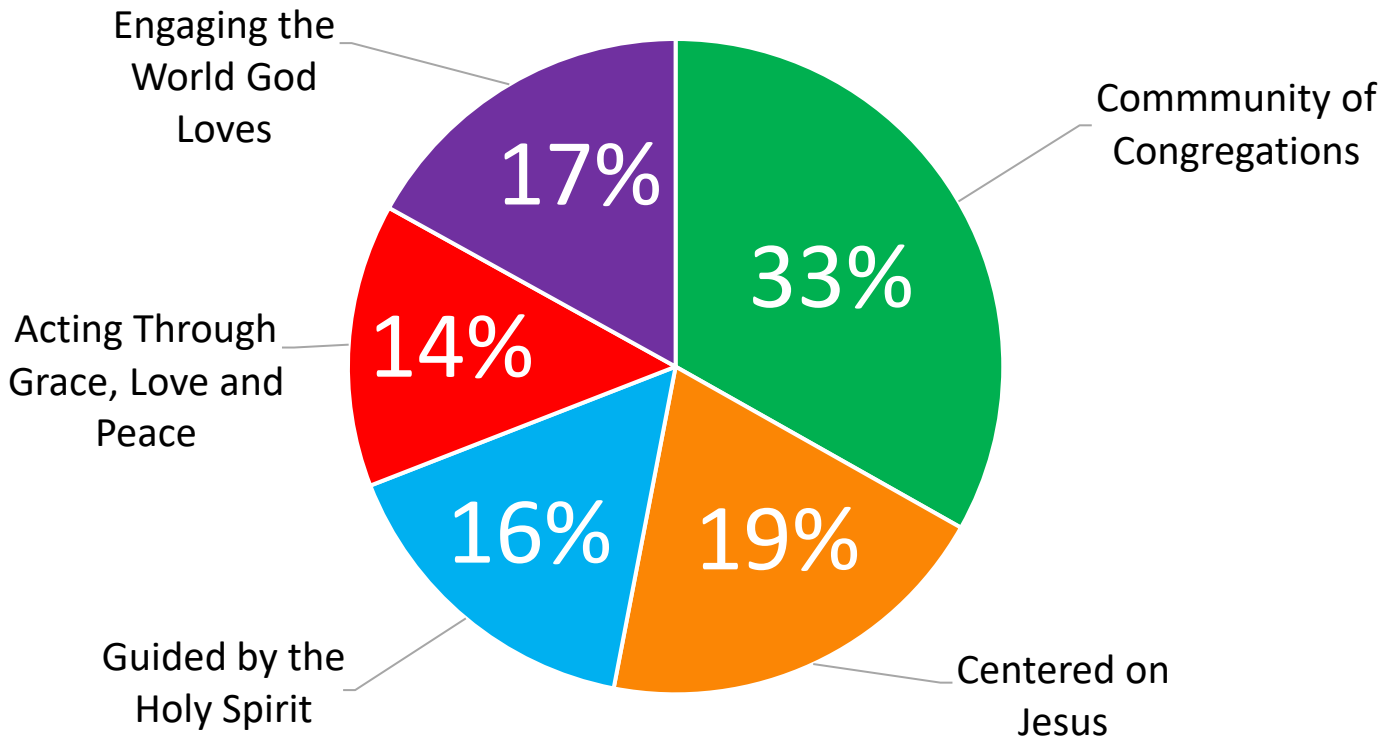


Narrative Spending Plan

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference developed a mission statement (to the right) to describe our calling and identity in the world. In this statement we desire to express both who we are and who we want to become. One of the ways we embody this mission is through the financial commitments we make. Below is a way of making an explicit connection between our mission and our spending plan in a narrative form.

**We are a community of congregations
Centered on Jesus
Guided by the Holy Spirit
Acting through Grace, Love and Peace
Engaging the world God loves.**

How to read this document: the pie chart below represents a visual story of how finances are used to contribute to and support each part of our mission. On the reverse, you will find this story told using familiar line-item titles (highlighted in bold) along with additional insights and anecdotes highlighting how we see God working in each corresponding area of our mission. We believe that this way of telling our financial story encourages us to not only consider *what* we are spending but *why* we are stewarding our finances.



Category from Vision Statement	Dollars	Percentage
Community of Congregations	\$87,444.50	33%
Centered on Jesus	\$51,926.80	19%
Guided by the Holy Spirit	\$43,632.90	16%
Acting through grace, love and peace	\$37,908.35	14%
Engaging the world God loves	\$46,757.45	17%

Note: all percentages are approximated based on IMMC conference staff estimates on time and energy spent in each area.

Community of Congregations

A significant portion of the work of the **Conference Staff** is focused here, equipping and supporting the community of congregations. The work of the **Leadership Enhancement Team** and the **Ministry Credentialing Team** provides support to pastors and congregational leaders so they can lead effectively within their congregations and connect with other leaders in the conference. Additionally, the conference makes **leadership training** opportunities and the **care of pastors & congregations** priorities as part of our community of congregations.

The **Missional Leadership Team** is committed to ensuring that the institutional elements of our conference are serving the needs of our entire community as well as individual congregations. Our connection to **Mennonite Church USA** is a mutually beneficial relationship in which we can learn from each other.

We use the **Gospel Evangel** and our **website** as means of telling our stories and communicating to and within the community. Our **archive storage** allows us move forward as we can remember how we got here.

Other support for our community comes through **Congregational Coaches**.

Centered on Jesus

A fair amount of the **Conference Staff's** work is dedicated to making space to putting Jesus at the center of our faith and practices. This comes in the form of personal connections and discernment with congregations and in making space for spiritual retreats. The **Leadership Enhancement Team** and **Ministry Credentialing Team** contribute to the above as well as providing insight and opportunity for pastors to reflect on past experience and future goals. The **leadership training** that is provided by IMMC strives to put Jesus as a model for the practicing of our faith.

The **Missional Leadership Team** helps us to envision ways we can remain faithful to Jesus' call in an ever-changing world. Our relationship with **Mennonite Church USA** also provides us with a broader perspective on how we might follow Jesus in our own contexts and provides us with resources for engaging in Jesus-centered living.

Guided by the Holy Spirit

The **Conference Ministers** help congregations and individuals to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives, especially during seasons of leadership transition. Likewise, the **Missional Leadership Team** plays an important role in discernment within the conference. **Gifts Development Team** is guided by the Spirit as new persons are called to join conference leadership teams. **Stewardship Team** aids in the discernment of how resources are used to meet our conference mission. The conference also gives and receives council along with **Mennonite Church USA**.

The Holy Spirit continues to challenge and equip us to engage in the important work of **intercultural transformation**. We have sensed the need to identify and address our own part in the injustices of the world and are following the leading of the Holy Spirit in this work. **Special Projects Fund** allows for Spirit-driven initiatives to receive our support.

Acting Through Grace, Love and Peace

So much of what has already been mentioned requires us to act through grace, love, and peace. This is especially true as we attend to the **care of pastors and congregations** and as we seek **intercultural transformation**. The **Conference Staff** and the **Missional Leadership Team** help to facilitate this posture of grace, love, and peace as they discern ways to make our services and resources available to an increasingly diversifying conference.

Mennonite Church USA continues to invest in ways to “Be Transformed” in our respective contexts, calling us to live in community, love, and peace through Jesus.

Engaging the World God Loves

As we continue to work on “Growing our Intercultural Witness,” conference resources are being used to further the work of **intercultural transformation**. **Conference staff** and the **Missional Leadership Team** are working to evaluate their own need for growth in intercultural competency as well as equipping and calling others to do this work. This includes anti-racism training, the formation of an Intercultural Work Group, and utilization of the Intercultural Development Inventory. **Mennonite Church USA** helps us to broaden our perspectives and connects us with opportunities to work and serve outside of IMMC.

Our work in engaging the world also includes the ways we support those near and far through **Mutual Aid**, and resources provided through our **website**.

Delegate Table Conversation Information

Background documents:

- Renewing a Vision, full version (pages 6-9)
- Report to IMMC Delegates on the Kansas City Special Delegate Session Resolutions (page 10)
- Summary of Credentialing Criteria (pages 11-12)

At Annual Sessions 2017 the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) delegates approved the attached document *Renewing a Vision* (see pages 6-9). It includes three compromise agreements about questions of LGBTQ+ inclusion and credentialing. The first two agreements give IMMC congregations freedom to decide either yes or no about accepting LGBTQ+ people into membership or affirming their pastor in officiating same-sex marriage ceremonies. The third agreement says: *IMMC will not credential or hold credentials of a person in a same-sex relationship unless Mennonite Church USA changes its polity and IMMC Conference delegates affirm the change.*

At the 2022 Kansas City Special Delegate Session of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) the delegates passed a resolution rescinding the 2001 Membership Guidelines and emphasizing that conferences rather than the denomination would be responsible for making decisions about credentialing and holding credentialed leaders accountable (see page 10). **This “polity change” is the reason that IMMC delegates are now being called on to help discern a way forward in regards to our 2017 agreement.**

The Missional Leadership Team (MLT) plans to bring a proposal for a vote at the 2023 Annual Sessions. We would like your thoughts and counsel on two possible directions listed below. Please be prepared to speak for yourself as a delegate and also about the response(s) you would expect from your congregation.

- 1) Affirm that the MC USA interview and assessment guide (summary attached) is adequate for credentialing accountability. (This would make the third agreement parallel to the first two: IMMC could choose to credential someone in a same-sex marriage who meets other criteria, and a congregation would be free to call or not call such a person to minister in their congregation)
- 2) Add a restriction to the interview and assessment guide* saying that a person in a same-sex marriage will not be considered for an IMMC credential.

*Because at Annual Sessions 2021 IMMC delegates voted to remove the *Covenant* section of the *Renewing a Vision* document, and because the *Process for discernment* section has never been implemented, the *Renewing a Vision* document currently available on the IMMC website is a summary version that includes only the *Mission and vision statements*, *Centering Conference life around Jesus*, and *Shared Spiritual Practices*. From here forward the MLT expects to make the summary version our official vision document, so agreements about specific issues will be lodged elsewhere.

Renewing A Vision

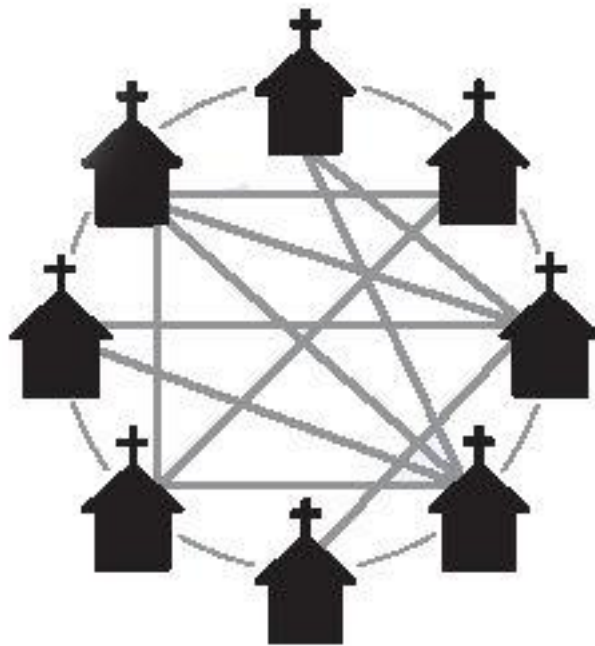
Full Version

Introduction

For 100 years, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) has sought to be faithful in following Jesus as a community of congregations. Our story involves congregations retaining, as well as adopting, the richness of Anabaptist history and theology. Our story is also one of innovation in mission and seeking to live out the gospel in new and ever-changing times.

As we reflect on the current state of our conference and the Church, we feel called to articulate for this present time how we sense God calling us to be together as a conference, and to act as brothers and sisters, and disciples in the world. This involves retaining much of what we value from our past and present, as well as making some changes in the way we conceptualize 'conference.' The diagram below depicts our relating to one another as "a community of congregations."

The vision puts emphasis on the centrality of Jesus in our life (at individual, congregational, and corporate levels); places a high value on our relationships with one another; and expresses a commitment to respond to God's love for us by sharing God's love in the world.



Mission statement

We are a community of congregations
Centered on Jesus
Guided by the Holy Spirit
Acting through Grace, Love and Peace
Engaging the world God loves.

As IMMC congregations live into this vision, we hope for and anticipate the following:

- Congregations will strengthen their relationships with each other to foster greater affection, understanding, and mutual sharing.
- Conference activities will equip congregations to be spiritually and biblically grounded, led by Spirit-filled leaders, and telling stories and celebrating God-with-us.
- Each congregation and its members will grow in capacity for God-centered worship, Christ-like love, and reaching out to their neighbors in Spirit-led witness and service.

Centering conference life around Jesus

Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. This simple confession unites the church across cultural, national, racial, denominational and every other human-made boundary that separates people from each other. As one, the church proclaims faith in Jesus for salvation from sin and service to God.

Jesus is a person, the fullest expression we have of our Creator and the original intent for the salvation of the world. We follow this Jesus whom God sent into the world (Colossians 2:6). Jesus is not a theology or belief construct. While Jesus is not bound by Anabaptist traditions, we believe the Anabaptist stream of faith contributes to a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Jesus here and now.

Shared spiritual practices

We are shaped over time by what we pay attention to and the habits we form. Thus we want to pay attention to and enact several spiritual practices that will continually bend us toward Christ, and form us over time as Christ followers. These practices help us stay centered on Jesus even in the midst of differences.

This vision proposes we agree to be accountable to one another for implementing the following set of common spiritual practices. These practices are currently embedded within our Confession of Faith (related COF article numbers listed after each).

- We will worship God as the central act of our common life whenever gathered (COF 1, 9).
- We will practice prayer, fasting and generous giving (COF 18, 21).
- We will prayerfully study the Bible together whenever we gather to increase our competence in reading, interpreting, and applying the scriptures in an Anabaptist perspective to our everyday lives and to issues we face in the world (COF 3, 4, 15, 17, 18).
- We will accept and offer hospitality, believing it creates the context for God's kingdom to appear in our midst (COF 10, 18).
- We will study the Bible with neighbors and strangers, inviting them to become disciples of Jesus (COF 10, 8).
- We will practice peacemaking by extending loving-kindness and forgiveness (COF 17, 22).
- We believe that by committing ourselves, together, to work at these spiritual practices, God will bring transformation toward Christ-likeness and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Process of discernment

Communal biblical discernment is another spiritual practice; it is a discipline for us to listen to the Spirit, scripture and one another, to exercise patience, and to come to common understandings.

Missional Leadership Team desires to create space for discernment at the congregational level, while offering the following discernment process for ways to confer together.

In brief, when a congregation is considering beliefs or practices that differ from the beliefs and practices outlined in IMMC and MC USA documents* the congregation will engage in a process of discernment that includes guided conversation and study with another congregation.

After fully participating in the process, the congregation may come to embrace the belief or practice as articulated by the conference. Alternately, if the congregation still believes it must differ, it will either be freed to pursue their course, or the congregation and conference can evaluate the continuation of the relationship.

The discernment process is not intended specifically or solely as a disciplinary process; rather it is hoped it will build understanding, and reinforce our sense of being a “community of congregations” who belong to and are responsible to and for one another.

* Conference by-laws, *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective (1995)*, *Mennonite World Conference: Shared Convictions of Global Anabaptists*, *Missio Dei: What is an Anabaptist Christian?*, *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*, or *A Shared Understanding of Church Leadership* (the MC USA polity manual)

Breadth of variance—in general and specifically

As we consider many issues that continue to challenge us (such as women in leadership, our practice of peacemaking, racism) we have congregations who address these very differently. Yet we value our relationships with one another and our common faith understanding centered on Jesus.

Regarding questions about how congregations relate to LGBT persons, some congregations have already given significant time and study. There are significant questions about whether congregations are willing to invest time in a discernment process generally, and regarding this question in particular. Because we have been unable, as a conference or as a denomination, to decide on a stable and consistent understanding of LGBT inclusion, we hope that more stable and consistent understandings can occur within individual congregations as we strengthen our relationships with our God, one another, and our communities.

The following statements reflect the discernment of the Missional Leadership Team in light of the Unity Variance Task Group process, its recommendations, and the 2015–2016 delegate and Annual Sessions meetings.

- *Individual congregations may, without fear of censure, receive or not receive single LGBT people or LGBT people in covenant relationship as members and non-credentialed leaders in their congregations.*
- *Pastors, with the affirmation of their congregations, may, without fear of censure, officiate or refuse to officiate same-sex covenanted unions.*
- *IMMC will not credential or hold credentials of a person in a same-sex relationship unless Mennonite Church USA changes its polity and IMMC Conference delegates affirm the change.*

Covenant for congregations and credentialed leaders

Congregations and credentialed leaders who want to be part of this conference will be asked to sign a covenant every three years. In brief, the covenant asks us to commit to: engaging the shared spiritual practices, to participate in conference affairs (via volunteers, delegates, finances, prayers, and communications), to use the communal discernment process as needed, and to foster inter-congregational relationships.

A congregational representative will sign the covenant on the church's behalf. Pastors and others who desire their credentials to be held by IMMC will also sign the covenant.

This covenant will help us to maintain accountability and create an environment of trust as we, the community of congregations, commit and periodically recommit to the relationship. Does it take some effort? Yes, but we believe there is benefit to intentionality as it helps us be mindful of our voluntary commitment to the people, congregations, values and spiritual practices of IMMC.

When we commit to and connect with those who know and care whether we succeed, we are better able to effectively serve our communities and the world, to the glory of God.

Conclusion

Jesus sent his disciples out in his name and they returned to report all they had done. Our hope is that when we gather as a community of congregations it will be a time to share all that we have done in Jesus' name, and a time to support and equip one another in how the Spirit is leading.

As a conference, we want to live in such a way that when we stand before our Lord and humbly ask, "When did we see you hungry and thirsty?" that we will hear the words, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Report to IMMC Delegates on the 2022 Kansas City Special Delegate Session Resolutions

This is Moderator Brenda Meyer's report on what happened at the Mennonite Church USA special delegate assembly in Kansas City over Memorial Day weekend. We want all Indiana-Michigan Conference delegates have the same information. She gave this report to the IMMC delegates at the Annual Sessions, but it was not discussed or processed by the delegates.

All 500+ delegates unanimously passed a resolution committing us as MCUSA to work together to remove barriers in architecture, communications and attitudes that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in church life. The resolution includes things congregations can do, and resources available through the Anabaptist Disability Network. Please note that our conference has a capital grant fund that's available to your congregation for improvements to your building – up to \$50,000 as long as it's not more than half the project. In addition Conference Co-Minister Joanne Gallardo is currently working with Anabaptist Disability Network on an accessibility curriculum for congregations. So this is a great time to make this a focus in your congregation.

We did not vote on, but commended for study in our congregations over the next two years, a resolution named For Justice in the US Criminal Legal system. You can find it on the MCUSA website.

Over 80% of the delegates voted in favor of the Executive Board's resolution to retire the Membership Guidelines which had been put in place when we formed MCUSA over 20 years ago. What the Executive Board resolution points out is that the way MCUSA is organized it's always been the conferences that make decisions about credentialing and sanctioning pastors, not the denomination. Asking the denomination to do it with these guidelines was confusing and not working well. Retiring these guidelines takes us back to what has always been true: congregations decide who their members are and who they call as pastor, and conferences decide the criteria for who can be credentialed. Rescinding the guidelines does not mean that any congregation needs to make changes in their belief or practice. It does mean that we as a conference need to keep tending to our own guidelines for credentialing. The Missional Leadership Team will continue to lead that process and bring any proposed changes to the delegates.

The Kansas City delegates voted by over 70% to discuss and vote on a Repentance and Transformation resolution brought by the Inclusive Pastors of MCUSA. It calls for repentance for the harms caused to the LGBTQ+ members of MCUSA by the Membership Guidelines, and a commitment to bringing all voices to the table for ongoing decisions. In the end, the delegates passed this resolution by 55%. This resolution commits the denomination to give room for pastors and congregations who choose to invite LGBTQ+ people to full participation, including serving as pastors and being married. It does not ask any congregation to change their position or practice.

Summary of Credentialing Criteria

Original Document: The Interview Guide: Goals, Assessment Questions, Interview Questions
Mennonite Church USA/Mennonite Church Canada, April 2018 (IMMC additions to assess intercultural competency December 2021)

This summary version includes all six goals and all *assessment questions*, omits interview questions.

Interview Goal No. 1: PERSONAL FAITH

To discern whether the candidate's relationship with God is appropriate to the ministerial calling.

Does the candidate have a living and growing relationship with God?

Can they talk about that relationship in a way that is helpful to others?

Is the candidate able to hear and accept others' faith experiences?

Does the candidate know and accept God's grace for themselves? For others?

Does the candidate have an adequate sense of call to ministry?

Interview Goal No. 2: THEOLOGY

To discern whether the candidate has and can express an adequate understanding of Christian doctrine that is compatible with the understandings of the Mennonite Church.

- *What evidence is there that the candidate holds both universal Christian and unique Mennonite theological convictions?*
- *Does the candidate understand A Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and can they endorse it with integrity even if not agreeing with every line and word?*
- *Can they talk about theology intelligently and coherently enough to express it to both believers and unbelievers?*
- *Is there evidence that this person's theological understandings and convictions, while orthodox, at the same time are alive, active, and creative?*
- *Is there enough "give" in the candidate's theology to be able to minister to and with others who hold different views?*

Interview Goal No 3: PASTORAL FUNCTION AND TASKS

To discern how well the candidate understands and is able to perform the complex set of tasks and functions expected of a pastoral minister.

- *Does the candidate demonstrate a lively interest in the range of activities of the ministry to which they are being called?*
- *Are particular areas of responsibility being rejected?*
- *Does the candidate demonstrate an ability to function in the key areas of administration, public ministry and pastoral care?*
- *Is the candidate aware of their functional strengths and weaknesses in ministry? Are they taking appropriate steps to develop or compensate for inadequacies and also to develop areas of strength and nurture special gifts?*
- *Can this person maintain an appropriate balance between self-care, family commitment and the work of ministry?*
- *Does the candidate have a commitment to and a plan for continuing education?*

Interview Goal No 4: CHARACTER

To discern whether the candidate's character of person is suitable for pastoral ministry.

- *Is the candidate appropriately self-aware and growing in this awareness?*
- *Do they express a sense of authenticity and genuineness about themselves?*
- *Is there adequate evidence of ethical standards befitting a Mennonite Christian leader?*
- *Does the candidate have a healthy awareness of how others perceive and experience them?*
- *Does and will the candidate maintain appropriate boundaries and self-differentiation in personal relationships?*

Interview Goal No. 5: COMPATIBILITY

To discern whether the candidate is sufficiently compatible with the ethos of the Mennonite Church and the calling congregation to gain acceptability as a legitimate minister.

- *Is the candidate familiar with and sympathetic to the Mennonite ethos (values, style, history, and culture) as it is experienced and expressed in this particular community?*
- *Does the candidate understand and respect "how we do things" in this regional church/area conference and the denomination?*
- *Does the candidate have an underlying love and respect for the church in its local embodiment?*
- *Has the candidate entered (or are they able to enter) into the life and work of the community and its people?*

Interview Goal No. 6: OFFICE OF MINISTRY

To discern whether the candidate has a sufficient understanding of and claim of the church's office of ministry to be able to "carry the mantle" of ordination.

- *Does the candidate have an adequate but not undue respect for the office of ministry?*
- *Is there adequate recognition of the potential for abusing the power and authority that comes with the office of ministry?*
- *Does the candidate recognize that the ministerial office is both given and earned by one's attitude and actions?*
- *What level of reflection has occurred about the meaning of ordination and its relationship to the role of a representative leader in the church?*
- *Does the candidate understand authority both as one having authority and as one under authority?*