

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

Report Book for Annual Sessions 2023



Amigo Centre

26455 Banker St, Sturgis, MI 49091

June 9-10, 2023

Table of Contents

Schedule for 2023 Annual Sessions	3
Map of Venue	4
Seminar Descriptions.....	5
Procedural Rules for Delegates	6
Chapter 1: Conference Program.....	8
Conference Personnel — 2022-2023	8
Geographic Locations of Congregations.....	10
Missional Seeds Giving Club Members	11
Chapter 2 Items for Discussion and/or Action.....	12
Annual Sessions 2022 Minutes and Proceedings.....	12
For Appointment by the Missional Leadership Team	15
For Affirmation by the IMMC Delegates	15
2023-2024 Narrative Spending Plan	17
2023-2024 Spending Plan	19
Proposals for Consideration by the Delegates	20
Chapter 3 Reports to Delegates	21
Missional Leadership Team Report 2022-2023	21
Conference Minister & Staff Report 2022-2023	21
Gifts Development Team Report 2022-2023	22
Leadership Enhancement Team Report 2022-2023	22
Ministry Credentialing Team Report 2022-2023.....	23
Stewardship Team Report 2022-2023.....	23
Leadership Report of Credentialed Persons.....	24
Deceased Pastors 2022-2023	25
Church Closures & Withdrawals.....	26
Chapter 4 Annual Reports from Ministry Partners	30
Chapter 5 Announcements	31
Annual Sessions 2023 Evaluation	31
Conference Sunday Materials	31
Annuals Sessions 2024.....	31

Schedule for 2023 Annual Sessions

Unity in Love

June 9-10, 2023

Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI

FRIDAY, June 9

- 4:30-5:30 Registration (Retreat Center)
- 5:30-6:15 Dinner (Dining Hall)
- 6:30-7:15 Delegate Orientation (DH Lower Level)
- 7:15-8:45 Worship (DH Lower Level)
- 9:00-10:00 Social Hour (RC Lower Level)

SATURDAY, June 10

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast (Dining Hall)
- 8:30-9:00 Registration (DH Lower Level)
- 9:00-10:00 Worship (DH Lower Level)
- 10:15-12:15 Discerning in Community (Gym)
- 12:30-1:15 Lunch (Dining Hall) & Free Time
- 2:00-3:15 Seminars Options (See page 5 in Report Book)
- 3:30-4:30 Discerning in Community (Gym)
- 4:45-6:00 Worship (DH Lower Level)

Color code:

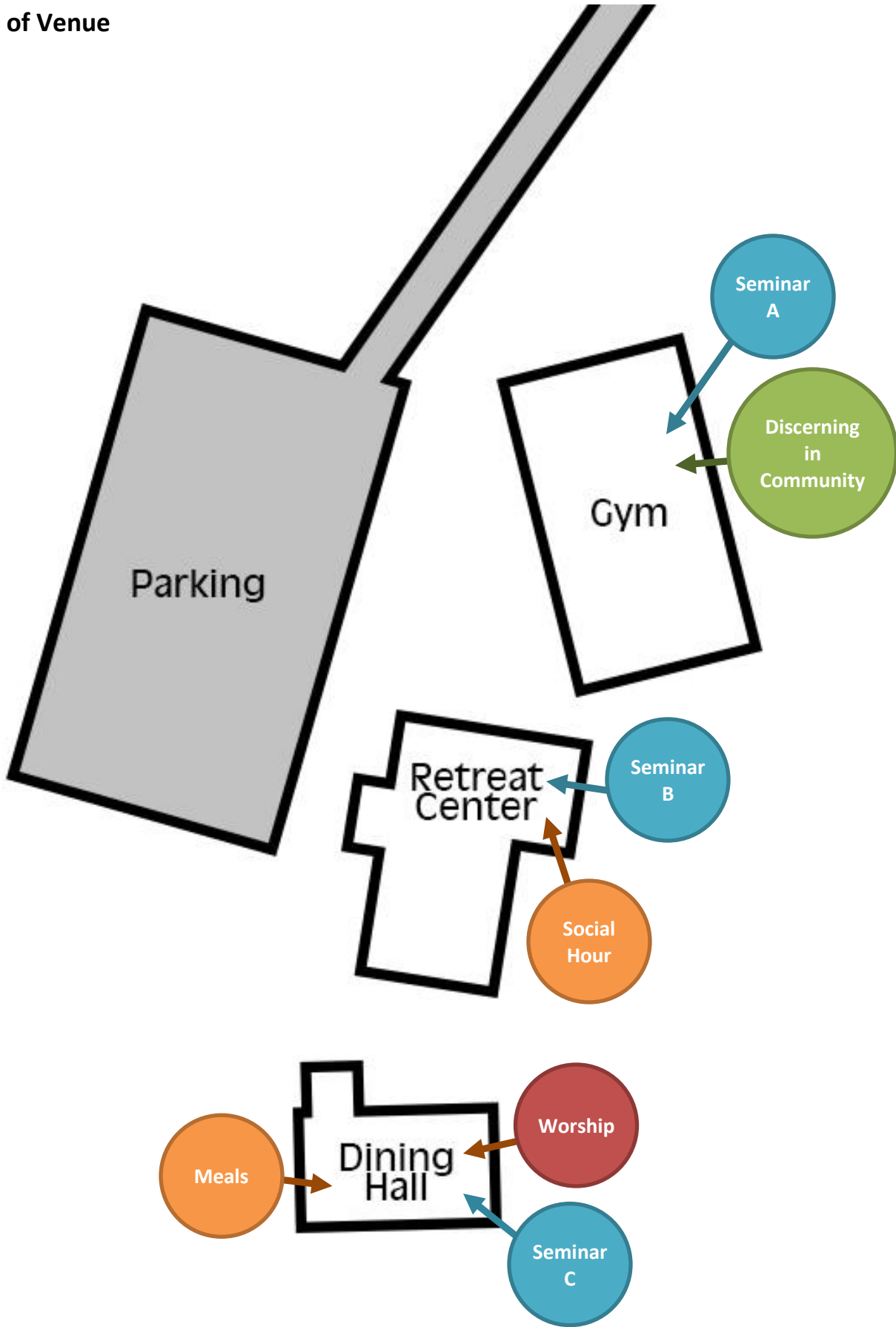
Worship services are in red

Meals are in orange

Seminars are in blue

Discerning in Community Sessions are in green

Map of Venue



Seminar Descriptions

“Calling All Church Treasurers!” – Marlene Kroeker and Kent Miller

We are grateful for the time and attention church treasurers give to their ministry with numbers. We realize that not everyone has a degree in church finance. At this session, an Everence representative as well as an accountant with a gift for working with church finances will be available to answer any questions you have about finances in the church. We invite you to: bring yourselves, bring your questions and bring a desire to learn something new.

Location: Retreat Center Lower Level (Seminar A on map)

“Sabbath Gardening” – Andrew Hudson

Andrew Hudson will be presenting about 'Sabbath Gardening', a way to use gardening and biblical ideas to be more in touch with a church's place. In Sabbath Gardening, a garden is divided into seven parts. Six of the seven parts are for regenerative gardening. The seventh is to rest. This simple seven-part structure helps with both gardening planning and making space for biblical engagement in the space. In garden planning, Andrew draws on his years of experience in organic agriculture to encourage planning with sensitivity to the local ecology. On the spiritual side, the church year from Epiphany to Sukkot is used as a structure for gathering, dreaming, and celebrating. For a three-minute introduction feel free to visit <https://youtu.be/uRRqACgZm9M>

Location: Retreat Center Lower Level (Seminar B on map)

“Voices Together: Singing Beyond Our Boundaries” – Adam Tice

Singing shapes our theology and our identity. How and what do we sing to truly reflect a church that extends beyond the bounds of race, language, culture, and geography? This seminar will explore how Voices Together can allow congregations to sing beyond the familiar. Come learn how the committee engaged concerns of cultural appropriation and sought to justly include songs from many languages and places. Be ready to sing!

Location: Dining Hall Lower Level (Seminar C on map)

Procedural Rules for Delegates

Adapted from the special rules approved at the beginning of the 2007 Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly held in San José, California.

Indiana-Michigan constitutional provisions for decision making at Annual Sessions:

- The conference shall seek consensus or broad affirmation in all decisions. Where available time does not allow for consensus or where circumstances are not deemed to require broad affirmation, the conference may proceed by majority vote.
- A majority of votes cast shall determine any matter, except when the delegates agree otherwise or when otherwise provided in the constitution or bylaws.
- A quorum shall consist of all properly recognized delegates present at a duly called assembly meeting.

Delegates representing INDIANA-MICHIGAN Conference congregations need to attend to the church's business in a timely manner that allows for due consideration. Balancing these goals is typically difficult, especially in decision-making bodies as large as ours.

Parliamentary procedure is used to help groups, especially large ones, balance the goals of timely action and due consideration. It does so by standardizing procedures through a system of rules that establish who may speak, about what, when, and for how long. Most people are not familiar with these rules and as a result tend to experience parliamentary procedures as cumbersome. So far no one has developed a less cumbersome and yet fair way to balance these competing goals. This document is adapted from the Procedural Rules for Delegates successfully followed at Mennonite Church USA Charlotte 2005 Delegate Assembly, and is an effort to make parliamentary procedure feel a bit more user friendly.

Basic rules

In an effort to allow as many persons as possible to be heard, please follow these basic rules:

- Only delegates may make motions or vote on them.
- Do not address the assembly more than twice in a day on any one topic.
- Before you speak a second time on one topic, make sure that no one else who has not yet spoken on that topic wishes to do so.
- When you go to the microphone to address the assembly, wait to be recognized by the moderator. Once recognized, state your name and (if appropriate) the group you represent before making your remarks.
- Only speak on behalf of a group if you have been specifically commissioned to do so.
- In order to keep the discussion from becoming personal, always address the moderator rather than a previous speaker or someone else in the meeting.
- Always speak respectfully. If you disagree with another person who has spoken, please describe that point of view with respect.
- So that the group can put your remarks in context, always indicate whether you are speaking in favor of or against the proposal that is being discussed.

Parliamentary procedures commonly used

During the delegate session, if you want to introduce a motion, raise a question, or extend discussion, please follow these procedures:

- If you want to amend a main motion, limit or extend debate on a motion, or lay a motion on the table, you need to make a motion to that effect while the main motion is still under consideration. To do so, seek recognition from the moderator and then make the motion.
(Simply say, "I wish to amend the motion," and then, when recognized, say, "I move that the motion be amended to say . . .")
- To object to the consideration of a motion, call for a more precise vote, ask a question about parliamentary procedure or offer information on a question, first seek recognition of the moderator and then state your

business. (You might say, "Point of information." Then, if recognized, you might say, "In relation to the current motion, delegates may find it helpful to know that...")

- To call for a recess, adjournment, or a question of privilege (to rectify some problem that is distracting the assembly, for instance), seek the recognition of the moderator and after recognition make the motion. (You might say, "I rise to a question of privilege." The moderator will ask you what the question of privilege is.)
- Many motions require a second. This guarantees that at least one other person is interested in the proposal. (To second a motion, rise and say "I second that motion.")
- Any motion that comes from a committee does not need a second since the support of a committee already indicates that the body is interested in the motion.
- Finally, if you think that it is time to end discussion you can "call for the question." However, if there is any objection to ending discussion, then the delegate body will need to take a vote on your proposal to end discussion.

New motions and/or amendments to motions that are on the agenda

We will conduct our business according to the following rules which are commonly used in large assemblies that must get their work done in a relatively short period of time.

- Any motion that brings substantive business to the body must be taken to the moderator or moderator-elect before it can be brought to the floor. The purpose of this is to make sure that the assembly only takes time to consider clear and appropriate motions.
- Likewise, amendments to resolutions that appear on the agenda must be presented to the moderator or moderator-elect before they can be brought to the floor for discussion. The purpose for this rule is the same as above.

For more specific information on the kinds of motions you can make and the rules that apply to them, see *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th edition)*. If you have questions about parliamentary procedure during the delegate sessions, we invite you to ask the designated parliamentarian about appropriate procedures during a break.

We hope that the procedures described above will enable Annual Sessions to be times of discernment together. Come prepared to hear God's voice as we worshipfully work together.

Chapter 1: Conference Program

Conference Personnel — 2022-2023

Missional Leadership Team

Brenda Meyer, moderator, Benton (19/2019-23 affm)
Steve Slagel, moderator-elect Maple River (20/2020-23 affm)
Duane Yoder, treasurer, Fairhaven (19/2019-22 affm)
Naomi Yoder, secretary, East Goshen (19/2019-22 affm)
Shawn Lange, New Foundation United in Christ (21/2021-2024 affm)
Rolando Sosa Granados, Piedra Viva (21/2021-2024 affm)

Conference Staff

Joanne Gallardo, conference co-minister, Kern Road (2021-Present)
Sharon Yoder, conference co-minister, Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship (2019-Present)
Clayton Gladish, administrative coordinator (2021-Present)
Michelle Cabanaw, bookkeeper and administrative assistant (2022-Present)

Gifts Development Team

Addie Leaman, chair, College (17/2020-23 affm)
Ruby Eh, Mara (22/2022-25 affm)
Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, Kern Road (21/2021-24 affm)
Rod Maust, Shalom (22/2022-25, affm)
Grant Miller, Kalamazoo (22/2022-25 affm)
Janice Wagner, Wildwood (17/2020-23 affm)

Leadership Enhancement Team (LET)

Ben Bouwman, chair, Walnut Hill (17/2020-23 appt)
Andrea Grotenhuis (20/2020-23 appt)
Kent Miller, College (16/2022-25 affm)
Craig Oury, Shalom (23/2023-2026, appt)
Dave Sutter, Kern Road (18/2021-24 affm)

Ministry Credentialing Team (MCT)

Suella Gerber, chair, Fellowship of Hope (19/2022-25 affm)
Kelly Carson, Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington (22/2022-2025 appt)
Ruben Chupp, Sunnyside (16/2022-25 affm)
Angy Moore, Kern Road (13/2021-24 affm)
Phil Waite, College, (19/2021-24 affm)

Personnel Committee

Ray Hunsberger, chair, Belmont (20/2020-23 appt)
Kathy Nofziger Yeaky, North Goshen (21-2021-24 appt)

Stewardship Team

James Gerber, Holdeman (20/2020-23, appt)
Patty Graber, First Mennonite (20/2021-23 affm)
Ron Ringenberg, Prairie Street (20/2020-23 appt)
Angela Swartzendruber, North Goshen (20/2020-23 affm)
Duane Yoder, Fairhaven (19/2022-2025 affm)

Intercultural Working Group

Jes Stoltzfus Buller, chair, Walnut Hill

Zenebe Abebe, Shalom

Carol Bixler, Shalom

Bonita Childs, Peace Community

Marissa Smucker, Belmont

Congregational Coaches

Brian Bither serves Emmanuel Living Christian Church & Mara Christian Church of America, Indiana; pastors Shalom.

Ben Bouwman serves Benton; pastors Walnut Hill.

Ruben Chupp serves Hudson Lake; attends Sunnyside.

Ron Guengerich serves College; attends Eighth Street.

Russel Jensen serves Parkview; pastors Maplewood.

Lois Kaufmann serves Fellowship of Hope; attends Assembly.

Keith Kinglsey serves New Foundation United in Christ; attends Fellowship of Hope.

Marty Lehman serves Waterford and East Goshen; attends College.

John Powell serves Ninth Street; attends Shalom Community, MI.

Bob Schloneger serves First Mennonite (Indianapolis); attends Berkey Avenue.

David Sutter serves Hopewell; pastors Kern Road.

Janice Yordy Sutter serves Walnut Hill; pastors Kern Road.

Phil Waite serves Kern Road; pastors College.

Mary Lehman Yoder serves Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship; attends Assembly.

Search Guides

*denotes activity during 2022-2023

* Ruben Chupp serving and Hudson Lake, attends Sunnyside.

* Suella Gerber pastored at Fellowship of Hope.

Becky Horst attends College.

* Frank Kandel serving Fairhaven; attends Shalom.

* Richard Kauffman serving Sunnyside; attends College.

John Kaufman attends Waterford.

* Bob Schloneger serving First, attends North Goshen.

MCC Great Lakes Rep

George Thompson, Waterford (19/2022-25 appt)

Geographic Locations of Congregations

Northern (11 congregations)

Upper Peninsula

Grand Marais
Wildwood

Northern MI

Maple River
Grace Chapel
New Hope Community Church of Midland
Ninth Street

Southern MI

Ann Arbor
Community Christian
Good News
Kalamazoo
Peace Community

Michiana (18 congregations)

Swanee Lake (Plus)

Hopewell
Hudson Lake
Kern Road

Goshen

Benton
Berkey Avenue
College
East Goshen
North Goshen
Walnut Hill
Waterford

Elkhart

Belmont
Belmont Neighborhood
Church Without Walls
Fellowship of Hope
New Foundation United in Christ Fellowship
Piedra Viva
Prairie Street
Sunnyside

Southern (8 congregations)

Camfell

Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington
Emmanuel Living Christian
Fairhaven
First, Indianapolis
Mara Christian Church
Morning Star
Parkview
Shalom

Missional Seeds Giving Club Members

The Missional Seeds Club is an opportunity for individuals to share in cultivating leadership growth and connections between congregations that inspire discovering and joining in God's surprises. Proceeds will be used directly in the overall ministry of the conference.

The following are the Missional Seeds Giving Club Members, as of May, 2023:

Patricia Brubacher
Phil & Carolyn Bontrager
Kelly Carson
Karl Cender
Sherrill Glick
Alvin & Dolores Graber
Virgil Hershberger
Frank & Linda Kandel
Paula Killough
Eleanor Kreider
Dean & Bek Linsenmeyer
Rod & Martha Yoder Maust
D Richard Miller
Kent Miller
Laverne Nafziger
Esther Shaum
Juanita Shenk
Jacob Snider
Cindy & Daniel Steiner
Vic & Marie Stoltzfus
David & Janice Sutter
Johanna Sutter
George & Karen Thompson
Roberta Yoder
Sharon & Kevin Yoder

Chapter 2 Items for Discussion and/or Action

Annual Sessions 2022 Minutes and Proceedings

Friday, June 17, 2022, 5:30pm to 9:00pm

Gathering Meal, 5:30pm

1. Beverly Lapp provided a welcome on behalf of AMBS and gave an opening prayer for the meal.

Delegate Orientation, 6:30pm

2. Ben Bouwman (LET Chair) led the New Pastor introduction and recognition. Each received a stone with the word "Joy" and the book *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, by Ruth Haley Barton. Ben offered a word and prayer of blessing for the new pastors. The new pastors included:
 - Craig Oury, Shalom Mennonite (Indianapolis, IN), July 19, 2021
 - Deron Bergstresser, Waterford Mennonite (Goshen, IN), August 30, 2021
 - Monica Miller, First Mennonite Church (Indianapolis, IN), November 1, 2021
 - Michelle Merchant, Maple River Mennonite Church (Conway, MI), May 15, 2022
3. Brenda Meyer (Conference Moderator) shared a report summarizing the resolutions from the Special Delegate Session in Kansas City (May 2022) on behalf of the Missional Leadership Team (MLT).
 - a. The report was given but the resolutions were not formally discussed. An invitation was given to bring feedback to the MLT.
 - b. The Accessibility Resolution was passed unanimously. It was also noted that the IMMC Capital Grant is available for efforts to make church building more accessible, granting 50% of the cost up to \$50,000.
 - c. There was 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.
 - d. Over 80% of the delegates voted in favor of the resolution brought by the Executive Board of MC USA to retire the Membership Guidelines.
 - e. 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.

4. Clayton Gladish, Administrative Coordinator for IMMC, reviewed the Annual Sessions Report Book and the agenda for the rest of Annual Sessions 2022.

Worship Service 1, 7:30pm

5. Quinn Brenneke (Co-Pastor at Prairie Street) serves as worship leader for this worship service, welcoming and opening in prayer. He also taught the congregation to say, "Dios es amore" (God is love).
6. A band from Piedra Viva Mennonite Church led singing in Spanish: Espiritu de Dios, llena mi vida, Amarte solo a ti, señor.
7. Testimonies of Love were shared by persons from Elkhart Churches. Sharon Heatwole (Belmont Mennonite Church) shared about their partnership with neighborhood school, Mary Beck Elementary School, and Ray Hunsberger (Belmont Mennonite Church) shared about their partnership with La Casa in providing housing to those in need in the neighborhood. Kevin Yoder (Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship) spoke of the different ways people in their congregation show love to one another and in their community.
8. Joanne Gallardo, conference co-minister, led the congregation in singing Come Let Us All Unite to Sing (Voices Together #7).
9. Sylvie Gudin did a reading of the theme verses, 1 John 4:4-21.
10. Joanne Gallardo (IMMC Conference Co-minister) preached on the vastness of God's love, challenging the congregation to realize that God's love is not scarce but abundant.
11. The band from Piedra Viva led in a closing song, Grano de Mostaza.

12. Quinn closed with a final blessing and invited everyone to the courtyard for the ice cream social.

Saturday, June 18, 2022, 9:00am to 6:00pm

Worship Service 2, 9:00am

13. Terri Geiser (a pastor from Sunnyside) serves as worship leader for this worship service, welcoming and opening in prayer.
14. The band from Piedra Viva Mennonite Church led singing in Spanish: Espiritu de Dios, llena mi vida, Amarte solo a ti, señor.
15. Testimonies of Love were shared by persons from Elkhart Churches. Naun Cerrato (Piedra Viva Mennonite Church) shared about La Posada, an immigrant aid organization that was started in Sunnyside Mennonite Church to serve those who need support with the immigration process. Pastor Shawn Lange (New Foundation United in Christ) spoke of the history of the church in the community and the ways they have shown love in their community for decades.
16. Joanne Gallardo, conference co-minister, led the congregation in singing The Love of God (Voices Together #162).
17. Sylvie Gudin did a reading of the theme verses, 1 John 4:4-21.
18. Melody Pannell (Director, Diversity & Community Engagement, UVA Health, Harrisonburg, VA) shared a word of empowerment and encouragement toward enfleshing freedom: radical love as a practice of radical liberation.
19. The band from Piedra Viva led in a closing song, Grano de Mostaza.
20. Terri closed with a blessing.

Discerning in Community, 10:30am

21. Brenda Meyer (Conference Moderator) offers a welcome and prayer. Brenda also reiterated the announcement made concerning the Special Delegate Sessions in Kansas City.
22. Brenda Meyer (Conference Moderator) called for a motion to affirm the minutes from Annual Sessions 2021 in the Report Book as written. The motion was made by Lee Leatherman, Holdeman, and seconded by Carston Hess, Waterford. The vote was called with the green-yellow-red cards; it was unanimously green.
23. Joanne Gallardo and Sharon Yoder (IMMC Conference Co-Ministers) introduced themselves and welcomed the delegates to the Discernment in Community, formerly Worshipful Work.

24. Delegates were invited to view the Roll Call PowerPoint, which showed images from each of the IMMC Congregations.
25. Sharon Yoder (Conference Co-Minister), on behalf of MCT, introduced Simon and Lucy Muange and they were invited to share about their vision for planting a church in Detroit primarily for Congolese persons. Simon spoke in French and Lucy interpreted into English.
26. Sharon Yoder (Conference Co-Minister) shared the names of the former pastors in IMMC who have died in the last year:
 - a. Harold L. Mast, died July 6, 2021.
 - b. Wilbert R. Shenk, died July 13, 2021.
 - c. Dagne Assefa, died September 9, 2021.
 - d. Homer E. Yutzy, died December 12, 2021.
 - e. William A. Wickey, died March 6, 2022.
 - f. John Driver, died on March 17, 2022.
 - g. Robert Lee Shreiner, died April 1, 2022.
27. Sharon Yoder also gave an update about congregations that have closed or have left the conference. Bethel Mennonite Church (Ashley, MI), closed Sunday, April 17, 2022. Mission 72, formerly New Worship Center at the Lighthouse, expressed their desire to end their association with IMMC via email, but it was too late to include this in the report book.
28. Addie Lehman (GDT Chair) addressed the delegates and asked them to fill out their affirmation ballot for the leadership team members that were being affirmed for another term (see page 19 in Report Book).
29. Patty Graber (Stewardship Team Member) presented the spending plan as found in the Report Book, see pages 20-23). When asked if there were any questions, there were none.
30. Brenda Meyer (Conference Moderator) made a motion to approve the spending plan using the green-yellow-red cards, which was seconded by Tim Lichti, College. The vote was unanimously green.
31. Joanne Gallardo presented on the progress being made in connection with *Growing Our Intercultural Witness*. This included an update on her status as a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and the process of rolling this out to the MLT and Staff in 2021/22, and then to other leaders in the following years. She also introduced the new Intercultural Working Group:
 - a. Jes Stoltzfus Buller, chair, Walnut Hill
 - b. Zenebe Abebe, Shalom
 - c. Carol Bixler, Shalom

- d. Bonita Childs, Peace Community
 - e. Marissa Smucker, Belmont
32. Brenda Meyer brought the meeting to a close with a prayer, adjourning at 11:52.

Seminars, 1:30pm & 3:00pm

33. Seminar Offerings:

- a. "Cultivating a Radical Love through Prophetic Imagination, Truth -Telling and Restorative Justice"—Melody Pannell. Participants will explore stories, concepts and pathways to transforming communities and cultivating a culture of radical love that encourages restorative healing and positive human flourishing. Participants will be empowered to engage in a prophetic imagination that envisions inclusive communities within the church.
- b. "Holding Stories of Sexualized Violence: Scripture's and Our Congregations"—Susanna Larry. This presentation will introduce social scientific and biblical models for understanding sexualized violence, survey some examples of its appearance in the Bible, and explain how biblical texts frequently subvert our stereotypes about "victims." If time allows, I will offer a model for encountering traumatic texts in Scripture.
- c. "Presentation on Been in the Struggle"—Regina Shands Stoltzfus. From the publisher: Been in the Struggle nurtures, challenges, and fosters the work and witness of dismantling racism for the long haul. Filled with wisdom and insight from nearly three decades of partnering across racial lines in this work, authors Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer offer a powerful mix of practical direction and poignant reflection to empower and sustain those working to dismantle racism, regardless of their stage on the journey.

Worship Service 3, 4:30pm

- 35. Shawn Lange (a pastor from New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship) serves as worship leader for this worship service, welcoming and opening in prayer.
- 36. The band from Piedra Viva Mennonite Church led singing in Spanish: Caminamos en la luz de Dios and Cristo te necesita para amar.
- 37. Testimonies of Love were shared by persons from Elkhart Churches. Dave Janzen from Fellowship of Hope shared about their relationship with the

Gaza YMCA and people there. Patty Gorostieta from Prairie Street Mennonite Church shared about the ministries especially with Spanish-speaking individuals and those in need in their neighborhood.

- 38. Joanne Gallardo, conference co-minister, led the congregation in singing What Wondrous Love is This (Voices Together #564).
- 39. Sylvie Gudin did a reading of the theme verses, 1 John 4:4-21.
- 40. Phil Waite (a pastor from College Mennonite Church) preached on the theme of love casts out fear, encouraging us to embrace God's love and the love of one another in the midst of change to overcome the fear that comes with the unknown.
- 41. Conference Co-Ministers Joanne Gallardo and Sharon Yoder led a time of Communion for those gathered.
- 42. Pastor Shawn closed the worship service with a blessing.
- 43. Clayton Gladish and Joanne Gallardo closed the Annual Sessions gathering with thank yous.

The annual sessions adjourned at 5:52pm.

Minutes recorded by Clayton Gladish, Administrative Coordinator, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

For Appointment by the Missional Leadership Team

MINISTRY CREDENTIALING TEAM



Kelly Carson (22/2022-25)
Congregation: Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington
Occupation: Chaplain at Southern Care Hospice, Bloomington, IN

STEWARDSHIP TEAM



Jeff Miller (22/2022-2025)
Congregation: Waterford Mennonite Church
Occupation: Financial Analyst at Goshen Health

For Affirmation by the IMMC Delegates

MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



Becky Helmuth, Moderator-Elect (23/2023-2027)
Congregation: North Goshen
Occupation: Transitional Pastor at Hudson Lake and interim pastor at Sunnyside

LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT TEAM



Craig Oury (23/2023-2026)
Congregation: Shalom
Occupation: Pastor at Shalom; Interim Pastor at First, Indianapolis



Barbara Slagel (23/2023-2026)
Congregation: Maple River Mennonite Church
Occupation: Manager, Clinical Education at Munson Healthcare



Shin Yee Tan (23/2023-2026)
Congregation: Walnut Hill Mennonite Church
Occupation: Therapist at Oaklawn Psychiatric Center

GIFTS DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Sharon Norton, Chair (23/2023-26)
Congregation: Walnut Hill Mennonite Church; Outdoor Sanctuary
Occupation: Transitional Pastor at Fellowship of Hope, Pastor of Outdoor Sanctuary



Leandrea Lange (23/2023-26)
Congregation: New Foundations United in Christ
Occupation: Medical Assistant at The South Bend Clinic, Pastor at New Foundations

STEWARSHIP TEAM



Jim Alvarez, Chair (23/2023-26)
Congregation: Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship
Occupation: Director of Finance – CFO at Maple City Health Center



Marlene Kroeker (23/2023-26)
Congregation: Belmont Mennonite Church
Occupation: Stewardship Consultant at Everence

Jim Gerber (20/2023-2026)*

Patty Graber, First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis (20/2023-2026) *

PERSONAL COMMITTEE



Sue Ramseyer (23/2023-2026)
Congregation: Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington
Current Occupation: Software Engineer at Indiana University

Ray Hunsberger, Chair, Belmont (20/2023-26) *

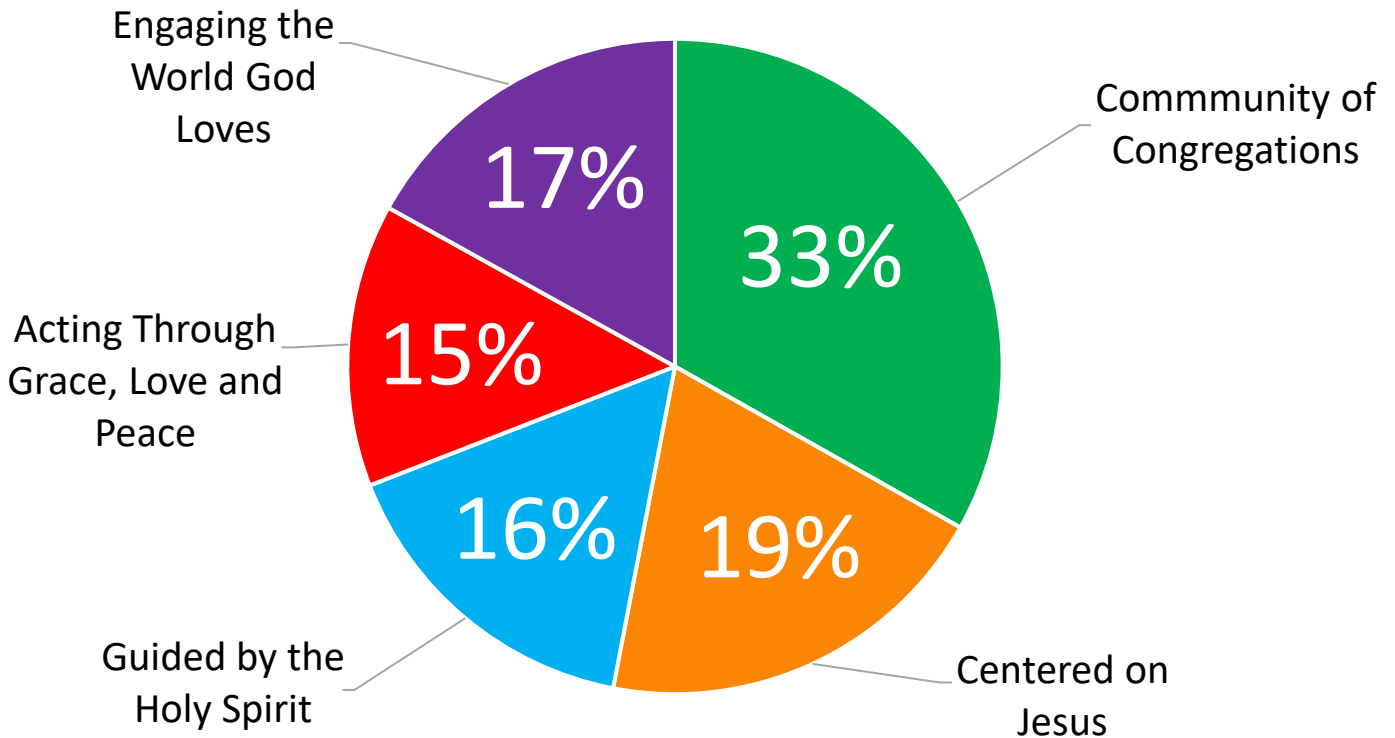
* Indicates affirmation of an additional term.

2023-2024 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	\$90,669.15	33%
Centered on Jesus	\$52,203.45	19%
Guided by the Holy Spirit	\$43,960.80	16%
Acting through grace, love and peace	\$41,213.25	15%
Engaging the world God loves	\$46,708.35	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.

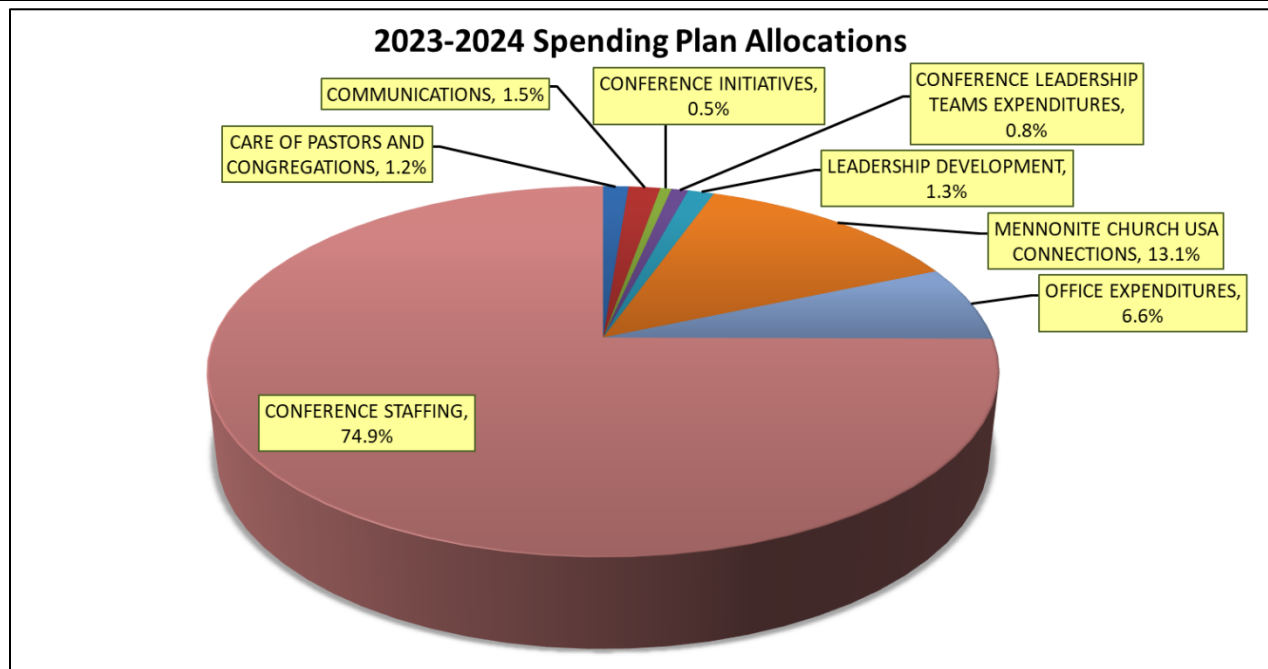
Our work in engaging the world also includes the ways we support those near and far through **Mutual Aid**, and resources provided through our **website**.

2023-2024 Spending Plan

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	\$205,780	\$15,594	8.2%
TOTAL EXPECTED EXPENSE	\$264,336	\$115,618	\$274,755	\$3,334	3.9%
BALANCE	\$308	\$(5,154)	\$(5,260)		



Prepared for 2023 March delegate meetings (Spring Summits)
Spending plan draft approved by Stewardship Team 1/18/23
Approved to delegates by Missional Leadership Team 2/4/23 (amended 5/20/23)

Proposals for Consideration by the Delegates

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) is discerning how we will relate together as a community of congregations in light of varying congregational policies concerning the involvement of LGBTQIA+ persons. The current policy at the conference level, as listed in the Renewing a Vision document (2017), is that congregations have the autonomy to choose for themselves as to whether they will allow LGBTQIA+ persons to be members and whether their pastors may officiate same-sex covenant services. Additionally, according to current policy, the conference will not hold credentials for individuals in a same-sex relationship.

We extend our thanks to the delegates who participated in the conversations at the March delegate meetings (Spring Summits). The proposals that we will consider at Annual Sessions 2023 grow out of what was submitted by groups and individuals in Spring Summit meetings. The proposals seek to change our policy to state that IMMC will credential pastors based on established credentialing criteria without the consideration of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. This extends the autonomy of congregations to choose the pastor(s) that they can call. Congregations will not be asked to change their own policies; but will instead be freed to choose for themselves based on their own discernment, all while remaining in relationship with IMMC. The proposals also seek to hold the agreements we have made about membership, marriage, and credentialing of LGBTQIA+ persons as part of a relevant document rather than as part of the Renewing a Vision document.

Please read these proposals carefully and discern with your congregation how you would like to vote in June.

Proposal 1: Credentialing

To edit the third breadth of variance statement from Renewing a Vision to read:

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) will not deny credentials to someone called to ministry in IMMC because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Congregations continue to be the deciding bodies about their pastoral leadership and thus can, without fear of interference, choose to call or not call as a pastor any person equipped for pastoral leadership as determined by the Credentialing Guidelines and the Ministry Credentialing Team.

Proposal 2: Renewing a Vision

To make the summary version of the Renewing a Vision document the official vision and mission statement for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, with the following understandings:

- 1) that the MLT will continue to look for ways to support the spiritual practice of the process of discernment within and among IMMC congregations
- 2) that the three breadth of variance statements* will continue as active statements of our operating policy and will be listed on the website as well as in the appropriate sections of MLT and MCT policy handbooks.
- 3) that the covenant section was previously removed by a delegate vote at Annual Sessions 2019.

* The wording of the third statement will depend on the outcome of the vote on the Credentialing proposal below.

Chapter 3 Reports to Delegates

Missional Leadership Team Report 2022-2023

By Brenda Hostetler Meyer, moderator

This year the MLT:

- Worked on *Growing our Intercultural Witness* by:
 - looking at the group results of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) that we had each taken, and reflecting on what that means for MLT and conference.
 - spending time in conversation around the questions from Mosaic Conference that delegates engaged at the Spring Summit meetings.
- Worked at strengthening a Gifts Development Team in transition by:
 - finding new GDT members from diverse congregations.
 - finding a chair to take the work forward into the coming year.
- Strengthened relationships within the MLT by:
 - taking an entire meeting with an outside facilitator and no staff present to share our personal journeys with and responses to the Kansas City delegate decisions of May, 2022.
 - meeting for a February retreat at Amigo Centre, with an evening spent sharing personal testimonies of God's transformation.
- Worked toward updating our IMMC *Renewing a Vision* (RaV) document by:
 - reviewing a time-line of events and decisions that contributed to the "breadth of variance" agreements included in RaV.
 - reviewing our conference credentialing practices
 - bringing questions about credentialing and vision to the Spring Summit meetings and formulating two proposals for the 2023 Annual Sessions based on that feedback. These proposals would:
 - remove the barrier to credentialing LGBTQIA candidates that meet other credentialing criteria, giving congregations more say in who they may call as a pastor make the summary version of the RaV the official vision document of IMMC, lodging the "breadth of variance" agreements on the website and in other relevant conference documents

Conference Minister & Staff Report 2022-2023

By Sharon Yoder and Joanne Gallardo, conference co-ministers

Conference Staff: After a year with transition for every one of the conference staff positions, staff members are settling into ongoing routines. We are deeply grateful for meaningful office relationships as we implement the vision and mission of IN-MI Mennonite Conference.

- Michelle Cabanaw serves as bookkeeper and administrative assistant, processing accounts payable and receivable, managing staff payroll, and creating and reviewing financial reports.
- Clayton Gladish serves as administrative coordinator, supporting the work of other staff, managing conference communication, and coordinating and hosting conference events.
- Joanne Gallardo coordinates the work of the Intercultural Working Group and supports pastors and congregational leaders in ongoing congregational life. She also collaborates with the Leadership Enhancement Team, Gifts Development Team, and Missional Leadership Team.
- Sharon Yoder focuses on office and financial oversight and assists with congregational leadership transitions, pastoral searches, and credentialing. She also collaborates with Ministry Credentialing Team, Stewardship Team, and Missional Leadership Team.

Conference events coordinated by IMMC staff with Clayton's leadership in the past year include:

- Annual Sessions 2022, with a theme of *Let Us Love*, was held at AMBS June 17-18, 2022.
- Conference Sunday 2022 resources for worship on June 19, 2022, using the Annual Sessions theme, were provided by conference staff. This included worship materials, music suggestions, children's worship outline, and a pre-recorded sermon.

- All Teams retreat, held at College Mennonite Church September 16-17 for persons serving on Missional Leadership Team, Gifts Development Team, Leadership Enhancement Team, Ministry Credentialing Team, Stewardship Team, and Personnel Committee.
- Diversity Isn't Enough, an interactive webinar with Ben Tapper, on October 8. The webinar, a follow-up to Ben's Spring Summit 2022 presentation, highlighted the reality that diversity does not automatically create intercultural competence and decenter whiteness in our institutions.
- Healthy Boundaries 101, a virtual training led by Nancy Kauffmann and Michael Danner on November 7. Boundaries training is required for credentialed leaders every three years.
- Pastors Gathering, at Amigo Center November 7-9. Along with space for rest and fellowship, Clayton Gladish provided interactive input on Adaptive and Anabaptist Leadership.
- Pastoral Financial Wellness Seminar, jointly sponsored by Everence and held January 18 at Belmont Mennonite Church, this event included information on clergy taxes, money management, and debt relief.
- Spring Summits 2023 (formerly Regional Meetings) were held in person at Kern Road Mennonite Church on March 4 and via zoom on March 18. Our gathering included worship centered on our 2023 theme, *Unity in Love* and several opportunities for table conversations.

Communication from our office strives to connect our community of congregations through monthly emails: *weLink* newsletter; *weNote* announcements; *wePray* memo; and letters to pastors from Joanne or Sharon. We connect further through our quarterly *Gospel Evangel* publication and quarterly letters to *Missional Seeds* donors. Clayton also keeps our website current and shares news and updates via Facebook.

Office space for conference staff is provided in a space-sharing arrangement at East Goshen Mennonite Church. Staff from conference and East Goshen continue to enjoy weekly coffee connections.

As conference staff, we wish to be *centered on Jesus* and *guided by the Holy Spirit, acting through Grace, Love, and Peace* as we relate with one another and as we support pastors and leaders in our community of congregations. May it be so.

Gifts Development Team Report 2022-2023

By Addie Leaman, Chair

The Gifts Development Team (GDT) finds new members for the various Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) Leadership Team positions. We help fill vacancies on these teams as they arise.

We ended the 21-22 year with six open positions. Throughout the year, due to terms ending and resignations, we found ourselves with seven additional open positions. We invited 23 individuals to fill a position in the Conference during the 2022-2023 year, or to begin a term in 2023-2024 year. Seven were male, 16 were female, seven represent members of the BIPOC population. We have been able to fill all except two open positions.

Thanks to the hard work of Gifts Development Team members, and the willingness of those who have agreed to step into a leadership role, we feel confident in the work these teams will do in the years ahead.

Leadership Enhancement Team Report 2022-2023

By Ben Bouwman, Chair

Growth and Wellness Form – This year LET rolled out a new form for credentialed leaders, replacing the Framework for Pastoral Growth. This new form allows pastors and other credentialed leaders to consider ministerial goals they have as well as consider ways to increase their overall wellness. Wellness is understood holistically, including 8 different areas. For those enrolled in the Corinthian Plan, submitting this form can also count towards one of their Wellness Incentives.

Congregational Coaches – Upon request, we continue to match congregations with coaches. We also provided 2 virtual training opportunities for congregational coaches. In the fall, Conference Pastor Sharon Yoder shared about the work of

Search Guides and how that relates to the work of Coaches. In the Spring, Coaches learned about the new Growth and Wellness form as well as a new AMBS program (to begin fall 2023) on practical leadership for pastors and lay leaders.

Pastor Gathering Retreat – This annual retreat was held at Amigo Centre in late fall. Pastor Clayton Gladdish talked about Adaptive Leadership and provided many opportunities for pastors to connect their learnings with their congregational context.

Annual Sessions - LET enjoys providing a space for new credentialed leaders to be introduced and welcomed to the conference.

Joint meeting with the Ministry Credentialing Team – The two teams met in winter to discuss areas where our work intersects and/or comes alongside each other.

Ministry Credentialing Team Report 2022-2023

By Suella Gerber, chair

The Ministry Credentialing Team continues to center and work at a culture that encourages our credentialed leaders to grow and thrive in their ministries. To that end, we have been:

1. Supporting credentialed persons by
 - a. Placing newly credentialed persons into peer-mentor relationship;
 - b. So that credentialed persons are well-supported in their growth and development, especially in working with our shadows and growing edges, we continue to encourage all credentialed leaders to place themselves in a relationship where they are being cared for emotionally, spiritually, psychologically, etc.;
 - c. Making sure there are Healthy Boundaries trainings available for everyone to be able to participate every three years. We are in the process of making a HB training available for Spanish speakers;
 - d. Carrying conversations with leaders in difficult placements;
 - e. Growing awareness of how our credentialing processes and requirements preference certain persons and/or disadvantage persons. And making changes accordingly.
2. Credentialing. We have the honor and holy opportunity to interview candidates for licensing and ordination.
 - a. We have recognized that MCT has sometimes acted with a certain suspicion, that those seeking credentials need to be tested to see if they're worthy of our approval. We know that this causes harm, significant harm, to persons. We are sorry.
 - b. We are making ourselves available to hear stories of harm and, where possible, will seek ways to work at reparation and reconciliation.
 - c. As we engage in conversations with those seeking credentials, we want to work collaboratively with the congregations that have called their leaders, trusting and building on their work, as we work through the credentialing process.

Stewardship Team Report 2022-2023

By the Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team (ST) has been meeting monthly via zoom over the past year. Team members for the year were James Gerber, Holdeman; Patty Graber, First Mennonite; Angela Swartzendruber, North Goshen; and Duane Yoder (treasurer), Fairhaven. Jeff Miller, Waterford, joined mid-year and Ron Ringenberg, from Prairie Street, ended his tenure with the team a couple of months ago; Sharon Yoder, Conference Minister, and Michelle Cabanaw, bookkeeper also joined the meetings.

We continued our work for a second year without a regular chairperson, with chair tasks delegated to different persons on ST. Patty Graber served as liaison to the conference office and chaired ST meetings; Angela Swartzendruber served as

minute taker and monitored monthly financial reports; Ron Ringenberg and Duane Yoder monitored congregational giving and its impact on the spending plan; and Jim Gerber and Duane monitored investments and equity funds.

In addition to routine financial agenda in the past year, ST also developed a plan that was affirmed by Missional Leadership Team to offer a leadership grant for credentialed leaders in our conference who enroll in the new Doctor of Ministry program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. We also approved capital grant proposals from Prairie Street, Hudson Lake, New Foundation United in Christ and Waterford Mennonite congregations.

Congregational and personal giving followed projections for the first 6 months of this fiscal year. However, we've noted a decline in the past 4 months. As of April 30, gifts are \$50,000 lower than at the same time last year. We hope for increased giving in the last two months of the fiscal year to help close the gap.

We are deeply grateful for generous financial support that makes it possible for our staff to continue equipping and supporting our community of congregations as they engage the world God loves.

Leadership Report of Credentialed Persons

June 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023

Ordained

Oct	02	'22	Sharon Brugger Norton, Outdoor Sanctuary, Walnut Hill Mennonite Church
Feb	19	'23	Leandrea Lange, New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship

License Toward Ordination

Nov	23	'21	Lee Pfahler, Waterford Mennonite for chaplain ministry
May	24	'22	Becky Helmuth, North Goshen Mennonite for transitional ministry
Jul	26	'22	Stephanie Wieand, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship
Aug	30	'22	William Funk, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship

License Extension

Jun	14	'22	Naun Cerrato, Piedra Viva Mennonite Church (until Jun 14, 2024)
Aug	23	'22	Sharon Brugger Norton, Outdoor Sanctuary, Walnut Hill Mennonite Church (until Aug 23, 2024)
Sept	13	'22	Carmen Horst, Walnut Hill Mennonite Church (until Sept 13, 2024)
Sept	20	'22	Nathan Graber-McCrae, North Goshen Mennonite Church (until Sept 20, 2024)

New Pastoral Appointments

<u>Beginning Date</u>			<u>Installation Date</u>
Jun	01	'22	Craig Oury (interim pastoral team member), at First Mennonite, Indianapolis, IN
Jun	27	'22	Rebecca Helmuth (transitional pastor), Hudson Lake Mennonite July 24, 2022
Aug	02	'22	Stephanie Wieand, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship Aug 7, 2022
Sept	06	'22	William Funk, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship Sept 11, 2022
Jan	01	'23	Rachel Hartzler (interim co-pastor), Sunnyside Mennonite
Jan	01	'23	Rebecca Helmuth (interim co-pastor), Sunnyside Mennonite
Feb	01	'23	Sharon Norton (transitional pastor), Fellowship of Hope Feb 12, 2023
Mar	12	'23	Keith Harris, New Hope Community Church of Midland, Midland, MI

Credential Transfer

Oct	31	'22	Enid Schloneger <i>from</i> Ohio Mennonite Conference
Oct	31	'22	Robert Schloneger <i>from</i> Ohio Mennonite Conference
Mar	06	'23	Derrick Ramer <i>from</i> Western District Conference
Apr	03	'23	Mariah Martin <i>to</i> Central District Conference

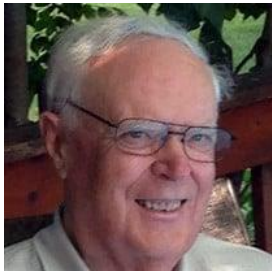
Completion of Ministerial Assignment

July	31	'22	Richard Kauffman (interim pastoral team member), Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, IN
Aug	30	'22	Frances Ringenberg (interim pastoral team member), Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN
Oct	01	'22	Denny Heath, New Hope Community Church of Midland, Midland, MI
Dec	18	'22	Suella Gerber, Fellowship of Hope Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN
Dec	31	'22	Charles Geiser, Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN
Dec	31	'22	Teresa Geiser, Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN
Feb	28	'23	Cyneatha Millsaps, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN
Mar	26	'23	Mariah Martin, Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, IN
Apr	30	'23	Steve Slagel, Holdeman Mennonite Church (transitional pastor), Wakarusa, IN

Credential Withdrawn Due to Congregation Leaving

Dec	31	'23	Danny Jones, Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, IN
-----	----	-----	--

Deceased Pastors 2022-2023



LeRoy Bechler, 97, died April 1, 2023, in Goshen, IN. He is survived by his children Kathleen (Michael) Lechlitner, Kent (Karen) Bechler, and Curt (Shari) Bechler; 6 grandchildren; and 7 great-grandchildren. His wife, Irene preceded him in death; they were married 71 years. LeRoy's love for God and deep commitment to follow Jesus led him to serve as a pastor and church planter in the African-American community in Saginaw, MI and in Los Angeles and Inglewood, CA. He founded Ninth Street Mennonite Church in Saginaw, the first IN-MI Mennonite Conference congregation of color. He pastored there for 11 years, until 1960. LeRoy also served in an executive leadership position, responsible for Home Missions and church growth in the Southeast Mennonite Conference. After returning to Goshen, he served as a congregational coach for IN-MI conference, from 2002-2005. He authored two books: "The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986" and "Answering the Call: Telling the Story."



Mary Elizabeth Herr, 94, passed away on April 19, 2023 in Hesston, Kansas. She is survived by her children: Phillip (Magda) Herr, Karl (Mary Lynne) Herr, and Ellen Awe (Darryl), 6 granddaughters, and 5 great-grandsons. She was preceded in death by her husband H. Eugene "Gene." Mary had a wonderfully diverse life and career that touched many people. She was a school teacher, served in Mennonite Voluntary Service, and served with Mennonite Board of Missions (now Mennonite Mission Network) as co-founder and co-director of the Phoenix Discipleship and Service program and as Director of Service Ministries. In 1989, she was ordained for spiritual retreat ministry by the IN-MI Mennonite Conference. From 1985 through 2001, Mary and Gene established The Hermitage Retreat Center in Three Rivers, Michigan, a place where their vision and dreams came together. Across many different roles and settings, Mary served and mentored others. She was a gracious hostess and opened her home to countless visitors.



Phil Mininger, 72, of Paoli, IN, passed away on April 26, 2023, after a long, painful battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Mary Kauffman Mininger and children, Marijohn (Dave) Mininger Mosemann, Annie Mininger, and Carolyn Mininger; and two grandsons. Phil and Mary served with Mennonite Board of Missions in Macon, Mississippi for 10 years. Phil also served as Associate Pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church for 10 years and as co-pastor with Mary at Paoli Mennonite Fellowship for 13 years, ending in 2011. Phil also served as President for Orange County Habitat for Humanity, was awarded the Orange County Philanthropist of the Year in 2008 and named Grand Marshal of the Paoli Fall Festival parade in 2022. Phil was a calming presence as well as a powerful force; he was a peacemaker with a revolutionary edge. He made people feel like they mattered; he made love tangible by creating beauty with his hands and being truly present with people.



John L. Troyer, 84, died November 25, 2022, in Michigan. He is survived by his wife Maxine and children, Lowell (Cheryl) Troyer, Ronda (Bill) Eickholt, Johnny (Susie) Troyer, Joan (Steve) Wagner, Lori Troyer, Roberta (Greg) Moore, Patti Troyer, and Steven Troyer; 16 grandchildren; and 19 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by siblings Esther Shaum, Janice (Bill) Wagner, Ken Troyer, and Stan (Marilyn) Troyer. John taught school at Engadine and Germfask for 12 years and left teaching in 1975 to be a pastor. John’s 30 years in ministry include pastoring at the Wildwood Mennonite Church and the Curtis Community Church. He was also involved with leading summer Bible School for many years. During his ministry, he also operated a farm for many years and was a deliveryman for the Soo Evening News and Marquette Mining Journal for 10 years. He was active in church and community, serving on many boards and committees throughout his life. He loved and cared for people, welcoming them into his home, always helpful and generous.



Aden J. Yoder, 97, passed away on April 4 in Goshen, IN. He is survived by his wife Helen and children, Cheryl (Art) Neuenschwander, Steve (Randa Moyers Hendricks) Yoder, Twila (Dean) Eshleman, and Tim (Jane Grove) Yoder; 11 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. Aden pastored churches in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois for 35 years; Yellow Creek Mennonite and Shore Mennonite were among the churches he served in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Aden also served as secretary of the Ohio Mennonite Conference for several years and on the Goshen College Board of Overseers for ten years. After his retirement, he worked in College Relations for Goshen College. Aden had three years of college before marriage and always said he would graduate before he turned 50. He resumed college at age 49 and received his degree one day before his 50th birthday. Aden could fix or build just about anything. His wit, charm, patience, kindness, foresight, and humility truly defined him as the person he was.

Church Closures & Withdrawals

Bonneyville Mennonite Church (Bristol, IN)

Closed

March 26, 2023

On August 28, 2022 Bonneyville Mennonite Church met for our annual congregational meeting. During that meeting we acknowledged that we had hit certain, pre-determined parameters involving membership numbers and budget. Hitting those marks indicated it was time for our church family to make some hard decisions. If we were to continue as a congregation, some major changes needed to take place—our current set-up was only sustainable for one or two more years. We agreed to reach out to Indiana Michigan conference to ask for guidance in this decision.

Sharon and Joanne helped connect us with Randy Miller who has previous experience working with congregations discerning church vitality and closing. We first met with Randy as a leadership team and then he led our congregation in a series of meetings that slowly walked us through a discernment process. He reminded us that everything alive goes through a life cycle, and as Christians we can have faith in re-birth/resurrection/new life (however we are not always in control of what that new life looks like). Everyone had ample opportunity, encouragement, and space to share their thoughts/feelings/opinions on the matter. After voting on whether or not to vote (so typically Mennonite—albeit ultimately helpful) we delayed the vote a month. Then on January 15, 2023 we voted and passed the recommendation from the leadership team to dissolve Bonneyville Mennonite. We set a date for a Bonneyville Homecoming Service as well as a final farewell service. The Bonneyville Homecoming Service took place on March 12 and our final service was on March 26, 2023. The Homecoming Service was a vibrant, emotional time of sharing stories and breaking bread together. Our final service was intimate and symbolic, ending with a final oil anointing of the building.

As far as the building and church assets, we split the remaining funds and donated them to a handful of organizations that Bonneyville has given to throughout its history. We “sold” the building to Everence Financial through a “donor advised fund”—which was the first of its kind (Everence had never done a DAF with a church building before). This

meant that Everence was now in charge of putting the building and property on the market and selling it. Once sold, the proceeds will go to the organizations previously mentioned.

We had a final few days of cleaning out the building and sorting through all the lovely items that accumulate in a church over time. Each former member is now in the process of visiting other churches, taking a break from church, or settling into a new congregation. Bonneyville leaves a legacy of selling pies and ham and bean soup at Bonneyville Days, hosting a pre-school, supporting the Bristol food pantry, running a bus ministry, participating in Stephen Ministry, mission trips, retreats, acapella hymn singing, and so much more. Mostly, we pray that Bonneyville will be remembered as a congregation that loved one another fiercely, even until our very last day. Reflecting on our ending process, a member of the congregation remarked, "We truly did end well as a congregation." And as the pastor that served as "hospice worker" through this process of ending and dying well, I couldn't be more grateful for how we ended.

Mariah Martin, pastor at Bonneyville Mennonite Church from November 4, 2018--March 26, 2023

Cedar Grove (Manistique, MI)

Withdrawal from IN-MI Mennonite Conference

August 24, 2022

Cedar Grove began meeting as a congregation in Manistique, Michigan in 1951. In a letter to IN-MI Mennonite Conference, dated August 24, 2022, Cedar Grove leadership named concern about resolutions passed by MC-USA regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion. The letter indicated their wish to withdraw from IN-MI Mennonite Conference (IMMC) and Mennonite Church USA.

The letter noted the significant support Cedar Grove has felt from IMMC and the support they have shared with our conference over the past 72 years. They recognize how this mutuality in support has significantly shaped them as a congregation. On behalf of the leadership team, Douglas Troyer notes: "Our affiliation (with IN-MI Mennonite Conference) has been an invaluable part of our history and mission and we're grateful we've had the opportunity to both give and receive. Our church building would not have been built without the assistance of IMMC and, in earlier years, my father, Rev. James Troyer, was financially fostered in his ministry before becoming self-supporting in the mid 1970's. In short, we are acutely aware of how this relationship has shaped our church. Our separation from IMMC is not without heartache or sadness."

Holdeman Mennonite Church (Wakarusa, IN)

Withdrawal from IN-MI Mennonite Conference

December 31, 2022

What became known as the Holdeman Mennonite Church as a separate entity from Yellow Creek Mennonite Church began in 1851 when a plot of land was purchased across the road from the present meeting house. A log cabin was then built on the plot. Prior to the log cabin, meetings were held in various homes, quite often in the George Holdeman home. Fourteen of the sixteen charter members had the last name Holdeman by birth or marriage. In 1875 a frame meeting house was built across the road from the log cabin. Over the years it was enlarged, modified, updated. In 1974 a new brick building was dedicated, and the frame building was given to the Old Order Mennonites who used the lumber to build their Clearland meetinghouse and horse sheds. They also bought the benches and pews from the frame building. In 2006 a two-story addition to the brick building consisting of classrooms, kitchen, multipurpose room, restrooms, and elevator was dedicated.

- 1864 joined IN Mennonite Conference transferring in from Ohio Conference.
- 1895 began using Herald Press SS quarterlies and still used by some classes today.
- 1897 began SS year around.
- 1898 hosted the 1st sessions of the Mennonite General Conference, one of the MCUSA predecessors.
- 1901 hosted 1st sessions of IN Mennonite Conference IN-MI MC predecessor.

- 1922 held VBS possibly the 1st among Mennonite churches.
- 1934, 1979 hosted sessions of IN-MI Mennonite Conference.
- 1950 first time the lot not used to choose a Minister & some financial support given him. First person from Holdeman went into VS. Many have gone since then.
- 1954-1984 gave program & provided meal monthly at Hope Rescue Mission in South Bend.
- 1966 began participating in the Bible Memory program and continue to take part.
- 1968-2010 went to World Missionary Press in New Paris on a regular basis.
- 1980 sponsored a Laotian refugee family that initially lived in the parsonage.
- 1988 first woman Elder; since then only 1 year with no women on the 3 or 4 person Elder team.
- 2004 first woman Pastor serving ½ time with full-time male lead Pastor.

Holdeman has hosted at least 3 MIP participants and at least 1 Explore! participant. We have gone on service trips to Kentucky, Atlanta, San Antonio, Mississippi x 2, LaJunta, CO, Fort Wayne, and Evansville, IN. Helped locally at FCDC in Nappanee, CCS in Elkhart, LaCasa Help-a-House in Goshen, Habitat for Humanity in several places, jail ministry at the Elkhart County Jail, The Depot, MCC meat canner, etc.

Holdeman has always met our share of the IN-MI budget & members have served on various IN-MI commissions/committees.

Vernard Guengerich, member of Holdeman Mennonite Church

An excerpt from the letter of withdrawal: "... through a difficult discernment process, our congregation has determined that we need to withdraw our membership from Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference, and Mennonite Church USA effective December 31, 2022. The reason for our decision revolves mainly around recent decisions from the Denomination and conference that do not seem to align with many of our member's biblical understanding and leading of the Holy Spirit. We have chosen as a congregation to affiliate with the Evana Network of Churches as we move forward in our Service to God in our community."

Lee Leatherman, Moderator, and James Gerber, Lead Elder, of Holdeman Mennonite Church

Liberty Christian Fellowship (Jackson, MI)

Withdrawal from IN-MI Mennonite Conference

April 30, 2023

Liberty Christian Fellowship began meeting as a congregation in 1946, known first as Liberty Mennonite Church. With sadness, we observed minimal contact between the conference and Liberty Christian Fellowship for some years.

In March 2023, on behalf of Missional Leadership Team (MLT), Moderator Brenda Hostetler Meyer sent a letter to the congregation. The letter noted that in November 2021, Liberty Christian Fellowship had asked to stop receiving regular communication materials from our conference. It also named the ambiguity that results with no formal withdrawal from the conference even though communication had ceased. The letter from MLT further named our hope for congregations to connect with one another for support and accountability and the fact that we've been missing the participation of their congregation in our community of congregations.

Given no response from Liberty Christian Fellowship by the identified date of April 30, 2023, conference staff followed up with a letter in May to recognize the official withdrawal of this congregation from IN-MI Mennonite Conference.

Mission 72, formerly Family Worship Center at the Lighthouse (Goshen, IN)

Withdrawal from IN-MI Mennonite Conference

July 26, 2022

Family Worship Center (FWC) has its roots with Foundation Ministries, a Charismatic Anabaptist family of churches. In the autumn of 2002, FWC merged with the Gospel Lighthouse (GL) after a ten-month journey of seeking God and gradually walking together and became Family Worship Center at the Lighthouse. The Gospel Lighthouse was an aging Mennonite congregation, pastored by Eli Schmucker.

In the merging of congregations, we felt we should include both church affiliations as well. We wanted to honor the spiritual heritage of GL and affiliation, and continue to walk actively with my spiritual mentors and oversight. I've appreciated the relational aspects with both. The last time Dan Miller and I talked, the issue of FWC's continued affiliation with IMMC was briefly discussed. Because of my bi-vocational work, I'd been unable to participate in the monthly pastor gatherings for years.

Six years ago, FWC invited a new church plant to use our facility for their services. The Movement was affiliated with Patria Ministries and had a Brethren background. Through the years we held some services together, and occasionally dialogued about the possibility of merging together. A few years ago we began praying more seriously into this possibility, and it seemed the wisdom of God to pursue joining the congregations.

In May of 2021 we merged into one congregation, Mission 72. Our name originated from Luke 10 and the sending out of the 72 others. We see God's heart for all to live missionally with our families, neighborhoods, and spheres, and carry a strong desire for each person to be a disciple of Jesus who also makes disciples.

Pastor Kyle and I both remain bi-vocational, and he functions as lead pastor of Mission 72. Our church backgrounds and affiliations were both similar, yet different. With the merger we felt the need to reassess our oversight, and have felt God's direction in remaining with Patria Ministries. Therefore, we have formally requested a withdrawing of our membership with IMMC.

James Hochstetler, Pastor of Mission 72.

Chapter 4 Annual Reports from Ministry Partners

These reports can be found on our website by using the links below (digital version) or by visiting <https://www.im.mennonite.net/events/annualsessions/>.

English

[Anabaptist Disabilities Network](#)

[Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary](#)

[Bethel College](#)

[Bluffton University](#)

[Eastern Mennonite Seminary](#)

[Eastern Mennonite University](#)

[Everence](#)

[Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program](#)

[Mennonite Central Committee](#)

[Mennonite Church USA](#)

[Mennonite Economic Development Associates](#)

[Mennonite Education Agency](#)

[Mennonite Health Services](#)

[Mennonite Mission Network](#)

Español

[Anabaptist Disabilities Network](#)

[Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary](#)

[Bethel College](#)

[Bluffton University](#)

[Everence](#)

[Mennonite Central Committee](#)

[Mennonite Church USA](#)

[Mennonite Economic Development Associates](#)

[Mennonite Mission Network](#)

Chapter 5 Announcements

Annual Sessions 2023 Evaluation

Please take a moment to reflect and give feedback on Annual Sessions 2023 using this Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/tWD1KLderyox3f97>

Thank you!

Conference Sunday Materials

We have provided materials for congregations to engage in a Conference Sunday that connects with our Annual Sessions. To view or download these materials, visit the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference website or with this link: <https://www.im.mennonite.net/events/annualsessions/#conference-sunday>.

Annuals Sessions 2024

**SAVE THE DATE for Annual Sessions 2024:
June 7-8 in Indianapolis.**