

1 **BYLAWS OF THE**
2 **ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE**

3 **Adopted August 7, 1982**

4 **Revised March 7, 1987; March 6, 1993; March 7, 1998; November 7, 1998;**
5 **November 2, 2002; July 18, 2003; July 16, 2004; August 4, 2007; August 6, 2011**

6 **ARTICLE I**

7 **Name**

8 This organization, known as the ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE,
9 hereafter called Conference, is an association of congregations in Pennsylvania,
10 Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia, and is duly incorporated under the laws of the
11 state of Pennsylvania.

12 **ARTICLE II**

13 **Membership**

- 14 A. Congregations who maintain qualifications of Article VI are members of Conference.
15 B. Congregations' membership in Conference is exercised through delegates appointed
16 by members of congregations.
17 C. The Conference is an organization within the Mennonite Church USA and accepts
18 biblical faith as expressed in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* of
19 the Mennonite Church.

20 **ARTICLE III**

21 **Objectives**

- 22 A. Encourage and assist its members in being the people of God.
23 B. Provide a forum for consultation and sharing.
24 C. Provide perspective and counsel for congregational life.
25 D. Facilitate and promote common objectives of its member congregations in
26 cooperative efforts within the Conference and the denomination, and with other
27 groups.
28

29 **ARTICLE IV**

30 **Organization**

31 The Conference shall establish an "Allegheny Mennonite Conference Organization" document
32 which shall specify the various functions and duties to be carried out for and by the Conference.

33 **ARTICLE V**

34 **Related Organizations**

35 Conference recognizes various auxiliary organizations having their own constitutions
36 or bylaws, whose memberships consist of Conference congregational members and which
37 function within the framework of this Conference's policies and programs.

38 **ARTICLE VI**

39 **Congregations**

40 **Section A. Congregational Leadership**

- 41 1. Congregations are encouraged to form leadership teams to give oversight to the
42 congregation according to guidelines furnished by the Leadership Council.
- 43 2. Congregational leadership teams are encouraged to participate with other
44 Conference congregations in their region for mutual programming, counsel, and
45 fellowship.
- 46 3. The Conference Minister shall establish regular meetings with pastors by region. In
47 the absence of a pastor, a congregation should designate a representative to attend
48 these meetings.
- 49 4. Procedures for ordination, licensing, or ministerial changes shall be conducted in
50 cooperation with the Conference Minister and other persons as designated by the
51 Leadership Council.
- 52 5. Removal from Service
53 When a minister is unsound in theology, or morally disqualified, it becomes the
54 duty of the congregation, in cooperation with the Conference Minister, to deal with
55 the matter. If they need further assistance, they request it from the Leadership
56 Council.
- 57 6. Culture of Call
58 Congregations are responsible to call forth new pastoral leaders to allow for
59 timely transitions and retirement for those presently serving.

60
61

62 **Section B. Qualification for Member Congregations**

63 A worshipping group may make application to become a congregation in Conference
64 through the Leadership Council. Guidelines for congregational membership are as
65 follows:

- 66 1. Members have covenanted together in a common life of obedience to Jesus Christ.
- 67 2. The congregation confesses a faith common with the *Confession of Faith in a*
68 *Mennonite Perspective* and accepts the bylaws of the Allegheny Mennonite
69 Conference.
- 70 3. There is adequate provision for leadership and a willingness to give and receive
71 counsel from member congregations through Conference delegates.
- 72 4. Congregations are expected to conduct periodic congregational/pastoral evaluations.
73 These should be done in consultation with the Conference Minister.
- 74 5. There is a willingness to support Conference decisions.
- 75 6. New groups from existing congregations may apply to the Leadership Council for
76 congregational membership. There will be a waiting period of one year before full
77 membership is granted.

78 **Section C. Resolving Congregational Difficulty**

- 79 1. Congregations, in cooperation with the Conference Minister, are encouraged to
80 settle their own difficulties. If necessary the congregational leadership group or any
81 five lay persons may call the Leadership Council to assist.
- 82 2. If the congregation fails to resolve or deal with the difficulty, the Leadership
83 Council may form an ad hoc committee to make an investigation and report to the
84 congregation. If the congregation refuses to act on the finding, the findings shall be
85 reported to the delegates.
- 86 3. The Leadership Council and Conference Minister are available to give counsel to
87 those desiring help or advice.

88 **Section D. Dissolution of a Congregation**

- 89 1. It is expected that events leading toward the dissolution of a congregation will be a
90 matter of discernment between the congregation, the Conference Minister, and
91 Leadership Council. Disposal of assets and care for paid staff persons should be
92 discussed and resolved with Conference oversight.
- 93 2. Upon request, letters of transfer will be issued by the Conference Minister for a
94 period of up to two years following dissolution. Upon dissolution of a congregation
95 the final membership list will be held by Leadership Council for two years.

96 **Section E. Withdrawal of a Congregation**

- 97 1. When a congregation's continuing membership in the Conference is in question, the
98 resources of the Conference Minister, Leadership Council, and/or mediation
99 services shall be enlisted toward resolution of the conflict. Upon recommendation
100 by Leadership Council, action may be needed by the delegate body.

- 101 2. A congregation considering termination of its membership in the Conference shall
102 engage in discussion with Leadership Council before taking any congregational
103 action. A two thirds majority vote of the congregation will be required for
104 termination of Conference membership.
- 105 3. Disposal of assets and care for paid staff persons should be resolved satisfactorily
106 with Conference oversight.
- 107 4. The Conference Minister, upon withdrawal of a congregation from Conference, is
108 authorized, upon a member's request, to issue a certificate of membership for
109 transfer for a period of up to two years from the date of withdrawal.

110

ARTICLE VII

111

Dissolution Provisions

112 If for any reason the Allegheny Mennonite Conference is dissolved, any remaining
113 funds after all bills are paid shall be turned over to its successor or to any tax exempt
114 organization(s) within the church with similar ideals and purposes. Such dissolution shall
115 be completed under the laws for corporations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

116

ARTICLE VIII

117

Amendments

118 These bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast by
119 the delegates of Conference, providing a notice of the proposed change is given at least
120 thirty (30) days in advance of the vote, or without notice, providing 90 percent of
121 delegates present vote in favor at any regularly called meeting.