

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.
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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.

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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.

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ARTICLE VII

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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

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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.

Allegheny Mennonite Conference Organization

Introduction

Allegheny Mennonite Conference, hereafter called Conference, has had a good structure that has served its purposes well, but with changes across the conference, it has seemed good to explore a different model in order to better join in God's work. On March 5, 2011, delegates decided to try on a new model which incorporates these changes. Following the acceptance of revised bylaws, we will implement this model for two years beginning August 7, 2011. This trial period will be followed by a year of evaluation, before deciding whether or not this new model is what best helps us to join in God's work at this stage in our lives together. We will be assisted in our evaluation by the work of an ad hoc committee, whose goal will be to monitor and evaluate. Members of the ad hoc committee will be named by the Leadership Council.

Let us joyfully follow Christ into the world, allowing him to breathe fresh life into Conference members, churches, and the world around us.

SECTION I. Conference Meetings and Delegates

- A.** Conference is an association of congregations whose purpose is to serve its members, assist its congregations to notice and join in with God's work in the world, and to serve as a connector between the local congregation and the broader church entity named Mennonite Church USA. Congregations act officially in Conference through delegates.
- B.** The final authority of Conference shall be vested in the Conference delegate body. Conference shall establish at least two annual meetings, set by the Leadership Council. The Moderator shall lead the Delegate sessions of the Conference delegate body. The fiscal year begins on July 1, and all elected positions commence immediately after the annual summer delegate session.
- C.** The Conference delegate body reserves for itself the right of final responsibility in all matters of policy, appointments, finances, or other matters relating to the function and conduct of Conference, except as delegated between assemblies to its Leadership Council. Additional responsibilities of delegates include:
 - 1.** Represent and report the views of the congregations.
 - 2.** Keep informed of congregational and Conference matters.
 - 3.** Assist in defining the Conference goals and objectives.
 - 4.** Relate to matters in their respective interest areas.
 - 5.** Attend Conference-wide delegate sessions and regional meetings.
- D.** The annual meetings shall be:
 - 1.** Faith and Life Gathering
Foundational to our polity of relational accountability, member congregations of Conference shall participate in regular meetings to discern what God is doing and how we can participate in God's work. The purpose of this one-day gathering is to make decisions necessary to the work of Conference, such as budgetary and electoral decisions, and to discern matters important to our faith and life in our home communities, regions, and throughout the world. Normally, this gathering will take place the first Saturday in March.
 - 2.** Celebration of Congregations and Conference
Because relationships are important to us, we will set aside a weekend each year to gather together for the purpose of worship and fellowship, to hear one another's stories and to

43 strengthen our ties to one another. While decisions that cannot wait until the next Faith and
44 Life Gathering may be made here, the main focus will not be decision-making, but will be
45 relationship-building. Normally, this celebration will take place the first full weekend in
46 August.

47 **3. Other meetings**

48 Normally, a third meeting will take place the first Saturday of November. This meeting can be
49 scheduled, as needed, by the Leadership Council. Other meetings can be called as deemed
50 necessary by the Leadership Council by notifying the delegates no less than thirty days in
51 advance.

52 **4. Notifications will be given to delegates in writing. All information for delegates will be posted**
53 **on the Conference web site.**

54 **E. Composition and Voting Privileges**

55 Delegates to annual Conference meetings will be appointed as follows:

56 **1. Each member congregation shall appoint up to six (6) delegates. Delegates must be a member**
57 **of the congregation. In addition, and not included in the count of six:**

58 **a. All actively credentialed persons shall be delegates, representing the congregation where**
59 **they hold membership.**

60 **b. Any person serving Conference through an elected position shall be a delegate.**

61 **c. The Youth Cabinet representative serving on Leadership Council shall be a delegate.**

62 **2. Non-delegates and guests are welcome and encouraged to attend and may participate in**
63 **discussions, but will not have voting privileges.**

64 **F. Quorum**

65 A quorum shall consist of those delegates present for any duly called meeting. A majority vote is
66 needed to approve any action unless a different vote is specified.

67 **SECTION II. Leadership Council**

68 **A. Purpose**

69 Between annual meetings, the Leadership Council shall function on behalf of the member
70 congregations and their delegates in matters of establishing policy, legal decisions, Conference
71 Minister oversight, and all other matters necessary and convenient to conference affairs, within
72 the parameters established by the Conference bylaws and organization documents and except as
73 exclusively reserved to the delegates. (For legal purposes Leadership Council shall serve as
74 Board of Directors of the corporation.)

75 **B. Composition**

76 **1. Moderator**

77 **2. Moderator-elect**

78 **3. Treasurer**

79 **4. Regional Representatives**

80 **5. Constituency Leadership Council Representative**

81 **6. Youth Cabinet Representative**

82 **7. Conference Staff**

83 **C. Function, Frequency of Meetings, Responsibilities**

84 **1. The Leadership Council shall:**

85 **a.** Be accountable to the conference delegate body for its actions.

86 **b.** Insure that the decisions of the delegates are carried out between conference sessions.

87 **c.** In conversation with the member congregations, articulate and promote a relevant vision for
88 the conference.

89 **d.** Approve the agenda for conference delegate meetings.

90 **2.** The Leadership Council shall physically meet in a common location no less than once per year
91 and ordinarily no more than four times per year. The Council may also conduct meetings by
92 teleconference and take actions using electronic media without a meeting, by written consent,
93 as permitted by law.

94 **3.** The Leadership Council shall have the power to appoint persons or committees to serve across
95 the conference as needs and visions arise (e.g., News editor; Archivist; Parliamentarian; etc.).

96 **4.** The Leadership Council shall appoint persons to complete unexpired terms. Persons filling
97 unexpired terms may be re-appointed by the designated body for that appointment.

98 **5.** Conference staff shall be non-voting members of the Leadership Council.

99 **6.** The Leadership Council shall appoint a person to serve as Secretary to maintain required
100 minutes and records of the Leadership Council and Conference Meetings.

101 **7.** When Conference Representation on the Board of another organization, or some other formal
102 representation, is invited by that organization and desired by Conference, the Leadership
103 Council will make the appropriate appointments and facilitate necessary reporting. i.e., MCC
104 East Coast Representative, Conference Resource Advocate, college representatives, etc.

105 **8.** Allegheny Mennonite Conference shall send Conference delegates to the Mennonite Church
106 USA Delegate Assembly according to the by-laws of the Mennonite Church USA.

107 **a.**Conference representatives serving on the Constituency Leaders Council shall be delegates
108 by virtue of their office. The following shall serve on the Constituency Leaders Council:

109 **(1.)**The Conference Minister,

110 **(2.)**The Moderator, and

111 **(3.)**The elected Constituency Leaders Council Representative

112 **b.**The Moderator Elect shall serve as a delegate (assuming membership in Allegheny
113 Mennonite Conference is high enough, otherwise they will serve as an alternate delegate). If
114 additional delegates or alternate delegates are needed they shall be elected from a slate of
115 candidates drawn up by the Nominating Committee and will serve for two years (they may
116 serve two consecutive terms).

117 **9.** Quorum: A majority of current Council members shall constitute a quorum.

118 **D. Leadership Council Chair**

119 **1.** The Moderator shall serve as Leadership Council Chair and shall lead the Delegate Meetings
120 of the Conference Delegates. (For legal purposes the Moderator shall serve as president of the
121 corporation.)

122 **2.** If the Moderator is not present, the Moderator-Elect shall lead the Delegate Meetings of the
123 Conference Delegates or Leadership Council meetings.

- 124 **3.** The Moderator-Elect shall succeed the Moderator. (For legal purposes the Moderator-Elect
125 shall serve as secretary of the corporation.)

126 **E.** Treasurer

- 127 **1.** The Treasurer shall be accountable to the Leadership Council. (For legal purposes the
128 Treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.)

129 **F.** Executive Committee

- 130 **1.** Comprised of Moderator, Moderator-elect, and Treasurer to deal with personnel matters and to
131 advise the Treasurer.

132 **SECTION III. Nominating Committee**

133 **A.** Membership

134 The Nominating Committee shall consist of one person from each region elected by the
135 delegates at the Spring delegate meeting, from a list of nominees submitted by the Leadership
136 Council.

137 Each region will be on a rotational basis so that one or two shall be elected each year for
138 three-year terms and may not be re-elected for two years. The Leadership Council will
139 appoint the chairperson from among the elected members.

140 The Nominating Committee shall be responsible to the Leadership Council and shall
141 submit its slate of nominees to them for review prior to elections.

142 **B.** Functions

- 143 **1.** Search out persons exercising the gifts needed for the Conference responsibilities.
144 **2.** Give careful consideration to questions of Conference representation and balance of gifts,
145 offering to the delegates a multiple-candidate slate, or when deemed appropriate a single-
146 candidate slate, for delegate election.
147 **3.** Prepare a candidate slate for all elected offices and for delegate positions to the Mennonite
148 Church USA Delegate Assembly.

149 **C.** Guidelines for Election

- 150 **1.** The Regional Representatives and the Treasurer shall have terms of three years each which
151 shall be spaced so that one or more is elected each year and may not serve more than two
152 successive terms.
153 **2.** The Moderator-Elect shall be elected every two years. This person will serve an additional two
154 years subsequently as Moderator.
155 **3.** The Constituency Leaders Council Representative shall be elected every two years on
156 alternating years from the Moderator-Elect and may not serve more than two successive terms.
157 **4.** Any qualified member of any congregation within Conference is eligible for any position
158 unless otherwise specified.
159 **5.** Persons may serve in only one elected office at a time.
160 **6.** Elections shall take place at the Spring delegate meeting.
161 **7.** Persons having served the full tenure of their office as outlined in points 1.-5. above are not
162 eligible for any elected office within Conference for two years. This two year ineligibility shall
163 not apply:
164 **a.** to candidates for Moderator-Elect,
165 **b.** to members who were appointed for the purpose of filling out an unexpired term.
166

167 **SECTION IV. Conference Staff**

168 A Conference staff team may be employed upon recommendation of the Leadership Council and
169 confirmed by the delegates. Accountability, specific terms, and job descriptions shall be developed by the
170 Executive Committee/Leadership Council and are available on request. An employment review shall be
171 held mid-term for all staff persons. Conference staff may include the following: Conference Minister;
172 Minister of Children and Youth; Missional Leader; Conference Administrator

173 **A. Oversight of staff**

- 174 **1.** Both the Conference Minister and the Minister of Children and Youth shall be affirmed by the
175 delegate body of Allegheny Mennonite Conference upon recommendation by the Leadership
176 Council. A 2/3 majority will be required.
- 177 **2.** Staff shall be accountable to the Leadership Council through Executive Committee.
- 178 **3.** The Leadership Council shall establish and maintain a relevant job description for the Staff
179 that reflects the vision and values of the conference while maintaining a reasonable workload.
- 180 **4.** The Leadership Council shall develop a Covenant of Understanding that outlines such matters
181 as (but not be limited to): periodic reviews, basis for remuneration including benefits,
182 sabbatical policy, and a termination policy.
- 183 **5.** The Treasurer will annually update the salary and benefits based on the salary guidelines from
184 Mennonite Church USA for the succeeding year, subject to final approval by the Leadership
185 Council.

186 **SECTION V. Regional Organization**

187 **A.** All member congregations of Allegheny Mennonite Conference are strongly encouraged to
188 relate to their specified regions. Congregations are assigned to regions in Appendix I. Leadership
189 Council shall be responsible to update this document as needed. Each region will:

- 190 **1.** Have Pastor Peer meetings organized by the Conference Minister for all credentialed persons
191 within the region.
- 192 **2.** Each region will be represented on Youth Cabinet by at least one youth from the region. The
193 Minister of Children and Youth will determine the criteria for serving on the Youth Cabinet.
194 The Youth Cabinet shall choose among themselves one person to serve annually on the
195 Conference Leadership Council.

196 **B. Regional Ministries**

197 Ministries or activities may emerge from the individual passion and initiative of persons,
198 congregations, or region. (i.e. nurture, education, mission, peace and justice) Regions are
199 encouraged to organize themselves in ways that allow such regional ministries to flourish and
200 grow. The Conference Minister may know of other regions developing similar ministries and
201 can encourage collaboration between regions where appropriate.

202 **SECTION VI. Amendments**

203 This Allegheny Mennonite Conference Organization may be amended or altered by a simple majority of
204 all votes cast by the delegates of Conference, providing a notice of the proposed change is given at least
205 thirty (30) days in advance of the vote, or without notice, providing two-thirds majority of all delegates
206 present vote in favor at any regularly called meeting.

Appendix I

Regions for Allegheny Mennonite Conference

Johnstown Region

Churches

Blough Mennonite Church
Carpenter Park Mennonite Church
Crossroads Community Church
First Mennonite Church
Kaufman Mennonite Church
New Life Mennonite Church
Stahl Mennonite Church
Thomas Mennonite Church

Western Region

Churches

Asian Indian Christian Church of Pittsburgh
Masontown Mennonite Church
Morgantown Church of the Brethren
Philippi Mennonite Church
Pittsburgh Mennonite Church
Scottdale Mennonite Church

Eastern Region

Churches

Barrville Mennonite Church
Canan Station Mennonite Church
Cornerstone Fellowship of Mill Run
Grace Fellowship
Maple Grove Mennonite Church
Martinsburg Mennonite Church
Tressler Mennonite Church
University Mennonite Church

Casselman Valley Region

Churches

Glade Mennonite Church
Gortner Union
Hyattsville Mennonite Church
Meadow Mountain Mennonite Church
Oak Grove Mennonite Church
Pinto Mennonite Church
Red Run Mennonite Church
Springs Mennonite Church