

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 **ARTICLE IV**

29 **Organization**

30 The Conference shall establish an "Allegheny Mennonite Conference Organization"
31 document which shall specify the various functions and duties to be carried out for and by the
32 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 **Section B. Qualification for Member Congregations**

- 62 1. Congregations that aspire to live in voluntary commitment to Jesus Christ from an
63 Anabaptist perspective, using the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as
64 a guiding document, qualify to be members of Conference. Through our covenants
65 with one another we endeavor to:
66 a. promote Jesus as the center of our faith, community as the center of our life, and
67 reconciliation as the center of our work;
68 b. give and receive resources for pastors and congregations in matters of faith and
69 life, including doing periodic congregational/pastoral evaluation in consultation
70 with the Conference Minister;
71 c. facilitate the reign of God by providing resources and channels through efforts
72 in mission, evangelism, church planting, Christian formation, nurture,
73 peacemaking and justice;
74 d. be supportive and respectful of the discernment processes used by Conference
75 and individual congregations in decision making and understand our diversity as
76 a way of sharpening one another (Proverbs 27:17) in extending the reign of God
77 in our communities.
78 2. An annual administrative fee is determined by the Leadership Council and is
79 payable within the first sixty days of the Conference fiscal year. All congregations
80 are expected to support conference budgets and financial commitments based on
81 decisions of the delegate body and the ability of each congregation, above and
82 beyond the administrative fee.
83 3. A worshipping group may make application to become a congregation in
84 Conference ~~through to the Conference Minister/the~~ Leadership Council. ~~Guidelines~~
85 for congregational membership are as follows:
86 a. The delegates will be notified of the congregation's membership request.
87 b. The Conference Minister will make an assessment and make a recommendation
88 to the Leadership Council. If the congregation is a member of another
89 Mennonite Church USA conference, guidelines provided by Mennonite Church
90 USA will be followed.
91 c. Leadership Council may recommend to delegates at a delegate session that the
92 congregation's request be affirmed.

- 93 ~~1. Members have covenanted together in a common life of obedience to Jesus Christ.~~
94 ~~2. The congregation confesses a faith common with the *Confession of Faith in a*
95 ~~*Mennonite Perspective* and accepts the bylaws of the Allegheny Mennonite~~
96 ~~Conference.~~
97 ~~3. There is adequate provision for leadership and a willingness to give and receive~~
98 ~~counsel from member congregations through Conference delegates.~~
99 ~~4. Congregations are expected to conduct periodic congregational/pastoral evaluations.~~
100 ~~These should be done in consultation with the Conference Minister.~~
101 ~~5. There is a willingness to support Conference decisions.~~
102 ~~6. New groups from existing congregations may apply to the Leadership Council for~~
103 ~~congregational membership. There will be a waiting period of one year before full~~
104 ~~membership is granted.~~~~

105 **Section C. Resolving Congregational Difficulty**

- 106 1. Congregations, in cooperation with the Conference Minister, are encouraged to
107 settle their own difficulties. If necessary the congregational leadership group or any
108 five lay persons may call the Leadership Council to assist.
109 2. If the congregation fails to resolve or deal with the difficulty, the Leadership
110 Council may form an ad hoc committee to make an investigation and report to the
111 congregation. If the congregation refuses to act on the finding, the findings shall be
112 reported to the delegates.
113 3. The Leadership Council and Conference Minister are available to give counsel to
114 those desiring help or advice.

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

- 116 1. It is expected that events leading toward the dissolution of a congregation will be a
117 matter of discernment between the congregation, the Conference Minister, and
118 Leadership Council. Disposal of assets and care for paid staff persons should be
119 discussed and resolved with Conference oversight.
120 2. Upon request, the final membership list may be held by Leadership Council and
121 letters of transfer will be issued by the Conference Minister for a period of up to two
122 years following dissolution. ~~Upon dissolution of a congregation the final~~
123 ~~membership list will be held by Leadership Council for two years. Requests for~~
124 ~~extensions will be reviewed by Leadership Council.~~

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

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

- 130 2. A congregation considering termination of its membership in the Conference shall
131 engage in discussion with Leadership Council before taking any congregational
132 action. A two thirds majority vote of the congregation will be required for
133 termination of Conference membership.
- 134 3. Disposal of assets and care for paid staff persons should be resolved satisfactorily
135 with Conference oversight.
- 136 4. The Conference Minister, upon withdrawal of a congregation from Conference, is
137 authorized, upon a member's request, to issue a certificate of membership for
138 transfer for a period of up to two years from the date of withdrawal. Requests for
139 extensions will be reviewed by Leadership Council.

140 **ARTICLE VII**

141 **Dissolution Provisions**

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

146 **ARTICLE VIII**

147 **Amendments**

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