

# 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

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

**3. Other meetings**

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

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

**E. Composition and Voting Privileges**

Delegates to annual Conference meetings will be appointed as follows:

- 1.** Each member congregation shall appoint up to six (6) delegates. Delegates must be a member of the congregation. In addition, and not included in the count of six:
  - a.** All actively credentialed persons shall be delegates, representing the congregation where they hold membership.
  - b.** Any person serving Conference through an elected position shall be a delegate.
  - c.** The Youth Cabinet representative serving on Leadership Council shall be a delegate.
- 2.** Non-delegates and guests are welcome and encouraged to attend and may participate in discussions, but will not have voting privileges.

**F. Quorum**

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

**SECTION II. Leadership Council**

**A. Purpose**

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

**B. Composition**

- 1.** Moderator
- 2.** Moderator-elect
- 3.** Treasurer
- 4.** ~~Regional Two (or three?)~~ Four at-large Representatives
- 5.** Constituency Leadership Council Representative
- 6.** Youth Cabinet Representative
- 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~~ **four people**  
135           elected by the delegates at the Spring delegate meeting, from a list of nominees submitted by  
136           the Leadership Council.

137           ~~Each region will be on~~ **On** a rotational basis ~~so that~~ one or two members shall be elected  
138           each year for three-year terms and may not be re-elected for two years. The Leadership  
139           Council will 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~~ **at-large** Representatives and the Treasurer shall have terms of three years each  
151           which shall be spaced so that one or more is elected each year and may not serve more than  
152           two 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. SECTION V. 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.