

# Equipped by God

we Worship, we Empower, we Discern

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Virginia  
Mennonite  
Conference

A conference of  
Mennonite Church USA

**2024 Winter Delegate Assembly**  
Waynesboro Mennonite Church  
February 3, 2024



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# Agenda

2024 Winter Delegate Assembly  
Waynesboro Mennonite Church  
February 3, 2024

## Equipped by God - we Worship, we Empower, we Discern

### 9:00 Session I

Call to Order & Welcome  
Host Church Welcome  
Music & Worship  
Moderators Report

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### 10:15 Break

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### 10:30 Session II

Faith & Life Commission  
Racial Justice Task Force  
CC Self-Evaluation  
VMC in Prayer

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### 12:00 Lunch

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### 1:00 Session III

Denominational Affiliation Work Group

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### 2:30 Break

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### 2:45 Session IV

Review and Approval of Minutes	Action 1
Finance Report	
Gifts Discernment Ballot	Action 2 & 3
VMissions Status Change	Action 4
Congregation & Ministry Updates	
Music & Worship	

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### 4:30 Adjourn

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## **Actions & Acknowledgements**

2024 Winter Delegate Assembly  
Waynesboro Mennonite Church  
February 3, 2024

### **Action Items**

Action item 1-3 require a simply majority to pass. Action item 4 requires 75% approval for the constitutional change.

Action 1: After reviewing the minutes from the 2023 Summer Delegate Assembly, do you approve the minutes? Yes/No

Action 2: As recommended by Conference Council, do you approve nominee Mary Jo Veurink for the position of Secretary for 3-year term Sept 1, 2023 - Aug 31, 2026? Yes/No

Action 3: As recommended by Conference Council, do you approve nominee Veronica Sanchez for the position of FLC Member-at-large for 3-year term Sept 1, 2023 - Aug 31, 2026? Yes/No

Action 4: As recommended by Conference Council, do you approve the status change of VM Missions from a commission & conference ministry to a Conference Endorsed Ministry? And do you also approve the Constitutional changed Yes/No

### **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgement 1: We, the delegates of Virginia Mennonite Conference, acknowledge with regret the withdrawal of Knoxville Mennonite Church from formal membership in VMC. We are grateful for its ministry and pray that God bless and guide the congregation in its new affiliation.

Acknowledgement 2: We, the delegates of Virginia Mennonite Conference, acknowledge with regret that Roberta Webb Child Care Center, due to legal implications, has voluntarily not renewed their Covenant Agreement as a Conference Endorsed Ministry.

Summer 2023 Delegate Assembly Agenda and Minutes  
Park View Mennonite Church  
Friday & Saturday July 14, 15, 2023

8:30a Session I

Worship Seth Crissman led us in singing

Welcome/Opening: Sara Wenger Shenk welcomed the gathered group numbering 136 registered delegates in person and Zoom attendance and representing 40 of the 63 congregations of VMC. She noted that VMC was first organized in 1835, almost 190 years ago. She read our constitution's preamble and identity statements. She also noted the Strategic Plan including excerpts from the Vision and Values statements. She noted guests from sister churches in Trinidad/Tobago and Jamaica as well as from MC USA, MCC, Brethren and Mennonite Heritage Center, Everance and others.

Lead pastor Phil Kniss from Park View Mennonite Church welcomed the assembly with comments describing building amenities.

Maren Hange led us in a time of worship and prayer. She reviewed the context of conflict around the process of misconduct in VMC leadership the last several years as well as the tension from the adoption of the Repentance and Transformation by MC USA delegates in May, 2022. She reminded us that the Fruit of the Spirit, (Love, Joy, Peace...) also includes being able to face falsehoods in order to know the truth. Seth led us in more singing including *Holy Spirit Come with Power*.

Maren asked table groups to share what they have learned in the last months of the pain of persons in VMC, how we have experienced the presence of Jesus in the last months. Seth led us in *Move in our Midst, Spirit of God, Seeds*.

VMM Story: Aaron Kauffman shared a report noting staff changes. 65 workers serving 14 countries, half here in the US. He noted a 1.2 million grant from the Lilly Foundation to fund the Soil and Seed project. The plans are to use the \$ to fund more singer/songwriters/households who develop faith formation resources/concert series at Highland Retreat/Brethren Mennonite Heritage Center and other activities. He noted that 75 persons took the Perspectives course with several persons going on to The SLAQ program which involves faith formation among youth.

Story from Trinidad and Tobago: Ganesh Kalloo brought greetings and noted the role of Glendon Blosser and Ken Brunk in his conversion to following Jesus from his Hindu background. There are 3 congregations at the present. He shared there are about 100,000 Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad/Tobago. He shared several stories of refugees their churches are welcoming. They also engage in prison ministry. Jason Showalter led in prayer for Ganesh Kalloo, his family and the church in Trinidad/Tobago.

Denominational Minister Sharing: Rachel Ringenburg Miller, staff at MC USA brought greetings. She has served in pastoral leadership for 15 years and as conference minister and now as staff for MC USA. She relates to VMC and 7 others of the 16 conferences of MC USA. She noted resources MC USA offers such as publications of Menno Media, a new Children's Bible,

the Corinthian Plan, an insurance plan especially for pastors, the Ministerial Leadership Inventory, and changes to the pastor salary guidelines.

10:25 Break

10:45 Session I continued

Yvonne McDonald and Regina Taylor brought greetings from the Jamaican Mennonite Church (JMC). Regina is a member of the National Council and director of Education and Training for the JMC. Yvonne read a letter from the JMC leadership encouraging VMC to continue bringing God's healing and hope to the world and asks for prayers for JMC in being a church that helps others find Christ the Savior of the world. Gloria Lehman led in prayer for them and the church in JMC.

Moderator's Report: Sara reported on the past months and years noting that many serve on various conference commissions, committees, task forces, and groups which she named. These are all made up of volunteers who shoulder much work in the ministry of this affiliation of churches. CC has worked hard to be more transparent resulting in much more communication from CC to the churches and districts.

Approval of Winter Delegate Assembly Minutes: Jim Hershberger reviewed the main themes of the February winter delegate assembly. There were no corrections or questions so minutes are approved as presented.

Sara reviewed the process of CC recommending that all three resolutions have a threshold of passage of 75%.

**Action 1: We approve raising the threshold for passage of the resolutions to 75%.** There was a clarification that this action is for this assembly. The resolution passed by 72%.

Finance Report: Craig read a report from Leroy Kauffman noting that cash flow has a deficit of about \$31,000. Individual contributions are about \$11,000 behind and congregational giving about \$14,000 behind. Financial year ends August 31.

MC USA Delegates Report Back: Vivian Stephens Lyons described her surprise and gratitude for the many youth at the MC USA. She encouraged us in the words of Martin Luther King Jr, to "hew out of the hill of despair a mountain of hope."

Phil Kniss reported on the theme of "Being Transformed," growing diversity of the speakers, staff and members of the denomination.

Denominational Affinity Working Group: Craig Maven named the committee members as Beth Good, Vivian Stevens Lyon, Beryl Jantzi, Zak Dye, Carlos Malvaes, Pearl Hartman, Aaron Kauffman.

Youth Visioning: Mark Harmon from the Youth Visioning Council of the VMC. They are involving pastors and youth leaders in planning an Oct 14 youth worker meeting at HMC and

Zoom. Their desire is to build on youth's desire to be more engaged in the church. Their theme Matthew 26:28

Conference Council Self-Reflection: Sara introduced Cliff Brubaker as a member of the self-examination team. He has served as pastor and conference minister among some earlier roles and along with Duane Beck serves on this group. After the Gilliam report the Liaison Team recommended creating a process for a Conference Council self-examination.

Sara, Cliff and Andrew read through the Conference Council report on self-examination and clarified future steps that will go through the fall with a report before the end of 2023. Next steps will be determined before, or at least by, the February, 2024 delegate session.

iCLT Reflections on 1<sup>st</sup> year: The iCLT members each shared their learnings of the past year. Learnings they named about each other and VMC are: good working relationships, desire to create a Jesus centered vision for VMC, how easy it is to assume too much in communication, the giftedness of VMC, hearing the stories of pastors and laity of confusion and failures of the past years. Three themes of their discussions they named are: Why do we exist? What to do about the relationship with MC USA? What to do with the differences around human sexuality? VMC loves to process and sometimes makes processing the focus rather than results. Can we focus not on our pain but on our potential? This past year we were able to move into areas of responsibilities lacking in previous times.

Bishop Leslie Francisco led in a prayer. Marci Frederick led *Great is Thy Faithfulness*.

12:20pm Lunch

1:30 Session II

Dissolution of 2 congregations: New Song Anabaptist Fellowship (Harrisonburg, VA) and Fellowship of Christ (Rocky Mount, NC. C3 District, VMC). Aldine Musser, Northern District, VMC read a letter describing the history of New Song until the passing of Basil Marin in 2022. Bishop Leslie Francisco reviewed the changes in the leadership that resulted from the passing of Ronnie Pride.

VMM Story: This video is part of VMissions' "Business for Transformation," ministry. This video report focused on persons that live and work in central Asia. They are establishing businesses and other workplaces and creating jobs. This holistic ministry provides a livelihood and opportunities for Christian witness for those interested.

Presentation of Resolutions:

Year of Worship, Healing, Reflection and Renewal Resolution: Craig Maven reviewed the three aspects of the resolution they are bringing to the delegates. There was table discussion about this resolution. Some of the open mic comments: Questions: What about legal status of local congregations who leave MC USA? Answer: A congregation can apply for and gain their own legal status.

Question: Can the regional worship meetings be attended by all people, even those from Harrisonburg?

Answer: We would certainly encourage that.

3:15 Break

3:35 Session II continues

Community of Faith Resolution: Joe Friesen provided context for the resolution as a way of being together in community. The resolution encourages us to see we have much more in common than the things that divide us.

Open mic comments: The sentiment of a table was that this does not come naturally. We need to have intentionality about putting this into practice. If the conference does not put this into practice it forces local congregations to engage the issues. I need the COFMP in order to be able to talk with people about military membership. It gives me the truth to discuss military service with veterans who want to join our church. In the same way our COFMNP gives me the basis for discussing sexuality with people in my church.

Question: How do we put this into practice? No answer was given.

Question: Is this a call to forbear significant differences? Answer: Its an aspirational statement about how we should relate to others. Another answer is No, it is not a call for forbearance? It's simply a call for people in local churches to try to get along.

Question: If we are to be patient, what are we being patient for? Answer: Listen well as we speak.

Faith and Praxis Resolution: Matt Swartz provided an overview of the context of the resolution. He reviewed the process of seeing leaders in the church use their positions to try to make a change in policy around human sexuality. This led to distrust of leadership.

Open mic comments: The gifts discernment committee expressed concern about who serving on conference committee's would be impacted. People are overinterpreting the resolution. We travel together on the road of life but can travel better if we use the roadmap God has given us. After 41 years of pastoral ministry, I hope we can affirm the historic Biblical view of marriage. Jesus was clearer in the Sermon on the Mount on things like love of money and loving enemies than he was about sexuality. Healthy sexuality is more about loving people than drawing lines. This resolution will make it more difficult to find volunteers to serve in the church. This feels like a carrot and stick with not even a carrot. Perhaps we can find more volunteers if it was clear where we are going. Jesus was clearly a person who accepted what came to be the NT understanding of human sexuality. It's clear our differences extend far beyond sexuality into areas of how we interpret the Bible, who is Jesus and other questions of a deeper nature.

Closing Worship led by Phil Lehman, Maren Hange, Craig Maven.

Bonnie Stutzman was recognized for her flower and other arrangements in the meeting space.

5:00 Dismissal



Saturday, July 15, 2023

8:30a Session III

Worship: Maren led us in a meditation on Jesus feeding 5,000. This event teaches us that God uses the resources at hand but we need to reach out in faith. Mitchel Yoder led us in *Bread of Heaven, Cuan grande es Dios, (How Great is our God), Heart with loving heart united*. Maren led us in a Jesus, the Bread of Life reflection and litany, using John 6:26-35.

VMMissions Story: Hannah Shultz shared a story of how God sustains us with real Bread. She reflected on the music camp with youth from Spanish speaking churches. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of this camp. This includes people who speak Spanish, English and both languages. They were humbled by how God provided Bibles, music materials, and leaders for this event. They focused on how the OT tabernacle/temple provides analogies for the coming of Jesus the Bread of life and the True Vine. She reflected on Hebrews 12:1-2 and how God supplied instruments for the youth who are leading worship, healing for those who have illnesses, those who visit families with the truth Jesus.

Racial Justice Report: Andrew Buckwalter Fairfield distributed a paper by Elwood Yoder outlining a historical survey entitled *Race Relations in Virginia Mennonite Conference*. He and Tammy did a role play featuring a hypothetical conversation between 2 white people, one who denies there is racial injustice in our time, then shifted into a hypothetical conversation that explored redlining and other informal systems that closed the door to minorities accumulating generational wealth and covered over the many ways minority voices are crowded out.

Table conversations and plenary session feedback:  
When have you seen VMC work for racial justice? A couple illustrations from tables spoke to helping minority churches with getting buildings and working to stop police targeting immigrants who do not have all their immigrant documents.

When have you seen VMC fail to act for racial justice? Splitting Harrisonburg Mennonite Church into Broad Street MC and the modern HMC.

Gifts Discernment Nomination: Glen Kauffman chair of the Gifts Discernment committee, updated their searches for various roles and invited attendees to give nominations for these roles. He introduced Jim Hershberger for the role of Moderator Elect. Jim answered a variety of questions that delegates had submitted.

Delegates voted and submitted ballots for moderator elect.

Ballots for Resolutions and Nomination

Andrew shared a change in wording to the Faith and Praxis resolution, striking the words *including* and *other conference wide leadership bodies* from the wording.

Delegates voted and submitted ballots for the three resolutions.

10:30 Break

11:00 Session III continues

Ballot Result.

Glen Kauffman, chair of the gifts discernment committee reported the ballot results for Jim Hershberger to serve as moderator elect:

Moderator Elect total Yes 56%, Yes with reservations, 16%, No 29% approval.

Andrew Buckwalter-Fairfield, moderator elect, reported ballot results for the three resolutions:

Resolution 1 Year of worship, healing, reflection and renewal 91% approval

Resolution 2 Community of Faith 77% approval

Resolution 3 Faith and Praxis resolution. 50% non-approval

Sara commented that even though Resolution 3 did not pass the scale of support indicates VMC will continue the conversation

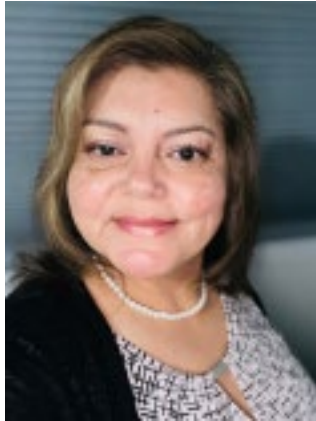
iCLT team reflections: We need honesty, hope, humility, peacemakers, and peacebuilders beyond not going to war, learning to listen to people, working for healing and hope as stated in the VMC mission statement several times.

Installation of new moderator: Andrew Fairfield as incoming moderator of the conference. Craig led in several installation questions for Andrew. Sara passed on to Andrew a goblet from Jerusalem. She led in a time of prayer for Andrew in this new responsibility. Andrew shared words of appreciation for the trust placed in him in this role. Craig expressed appreciation to Sara for her service to VMC as moderator in a time of great challenge and transition.

Worship and Lord's Supper: Maren led in a service of scripture reading and prayers and invited attendees to tables to share in the Lord's Supper.

12:30 pm Dismissal

## Gifts Discernment Biographies



### VERONICA SANCHEZ

Associate Pastor

#### ABOUT ME

I am a Latina mom of four children and I have been spending more than two decades helping moms, specially, single moms and their children with their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. During these years, I have volunteer my time in the community and the church supporting, guiding Latino families. Helping my community is one of the greatest and continuous my life.

accomplishments

of

my

life.

#### Associate Pastor

Support the Senior Pastor in the overall vision casting and leadership of the church's teaching. Work with the Senior Pastor to ensure weekend services are planned and executed. Able to recruit, teach, train, spiritually support and effectively supervise volunteers for adult small groups and adult ministries within the church. Serve as the primary contact for visitors. Visit members in the hospital, care facilities, and homes. Conduct funerals and weddings Provide pastoral care to children, youth, and families; provide confidential pastoral counseling in emergencies and short-term basis. Intentional about building relationships with congregation. Tends to the spiritual needs of the congregation as one who will give an account to God. Provide guidance and oversight for adult and small group teachers and leaders. Teach Small Group or Sunday School classes as needed. Provide staff oversight for the pastors/directors responsible for Children and Student Ministries. A spiritual leader to the staff that encourages, challenges and holds them accountable to their walk with God both at an individual and group level. Provides coaching, evaluation, mentoring, and bible teaching to the staff.



### Mary Jo Veurink

Mary Jo Veurink is originally from northeastern Pennsylvania where she lived at Spruce Lake Retreat and was a member of Spruce Lake Fellowship (Franconia Conference) with her family until the age of 22. After graduating from Eastern Mennonite College, she married Lynn Veurink and they lived in South Dakota for several years before moving to Hendersonville, NC, where they were members at Asheville Mennonite Church. They were very active there, including as Youth Leaders.

In 2007 they moved to the Valley where she started a freelance graphic design business, Bluewood Design, and also worked as Administrator at Grace Mennonite Fellowship, where they became members soon after moving to the area. She has been involved in many roles and committees at GMF, including Elder. She now works full time at Eastern Mennonite School as Counseling Office Manager.

She and Lynn have two daughters, Anna (20), who attends Virginia Commonwealth University, and Ruby (16), who attends Broadway High School.

## **Request to Update VM Missions' Status with VMC**

### **1. Background on the VMC/VM Missions Partnership**

- VM Missions was founded by VMC in 1919 to lead and coordinate VMC's mission efforts, initially in Virginia, West Virginia and neighboring states, and eventually abroad, especially in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean.
- VM Missions continues to help VMC churches engage in both short- and long-term mission endeavors domestically and internationally. Thirty-four of our current mission workers come from VMC churches. VM Missions also serves as a liaison between VMC churches and our historic international partners.
- VMC's Constitution and Bylaws currently categorize VM Missions as a Conference Commission. VM Missions is also considered a Conference Ministry. It is the only organization in these two categories. Other long-standing partners of VMC are considered Conference Endorsed Ministries.

### **2. Changes to the VM Missions Constituency**

- Historically, VMC and VM Missions had identical constituencies. Over the past decade, that has changed as congregations leaving VMC have continued to relate to VM Missions, and as partners beyond VMC have begun to participate in VM Missions' programs.
- Currently, the following percentages represent participation by constituents beyond VMC: 48% of workers, 31% of office staff, 31% of congregational giving.
- In light of these changes, the VM Missions Board desires to stay meaningfully connected to VMC while making room at the table for the diverse range of partners involved in our work. Becoming a Conference Endorsed Ministry (CEM) seems the best path forward.

### **3. Rationale for Updating VM Missions' Status with VMC to CEM**

- CEM status allows VM Missions to maintain a strong relationship with VMC while also including other partners more fully at the table (including as board members).
- CEM status more accurately describes how VM Missions and VMC currently relate.
- CEM status provides the opportunity for VM Missions and VMC to develop shared goals and expectations in a Covenant of Understanding.

### **4. Steps to Update VM Missions' Status with VMC**

#### VMC Restructuring for Mission Task Force (July 2019):

- The task force proposed that VM Missions would "no longer be a commission of VMC" but instead "a mutually agreed upon Memo of Understanding will outline a relationship that will serve to keep the two bodies cooperative and interdependent."

VMC-VM Missions Ad Hoc Restructuring Task Force Statement (November 2022):

- Joint statement: “We agree that the category of Conference Endorsed Ministry represents the best blend of autonomy and accountability for VM Missions' relationship with VMC.”
- However, in light of VMC leadership transitions and the Gilliam process, we agreed mutually to pause the process until after the 2023 VMC Summer Assembly.

Consensus of VM Missions Board (November 2023):

- The Board agreed to move ahead with the request for a change of status with VMC from Commission and Conference Ministry to Conference Endorsed Ministry. Paul Yoder and Aaron Kauffman presented that request to Conference Council on November 17, 2023.

Action Unanimously Approved by Conference Council (November 2023):

- “That we recommend, with Conference Council support, this change in status for VM Missions from Commission and Conference Ministry to Conference Endorsed Ministry at the Winter Conference Assembly.”

**Implications for Updating VM Missions’ Status with VMC**

	<b>Current Status</b>		<b>Proposed Status</b>
<b>VM Missions Bylaws (no change)</b>	<b>VMC Commission</b>	<b>VMC Conference Ministry</b>	<b>VMC Conference Endorsed Ministry</b>
Refer to VM Missions as “a mission agency of Virginia Mennonite Conference”	The President serves as a non-voting participant on Conference Council.	Submit changes to governing documents to Conference Council for “review and response” prior to enactment.	Relate to VMC in “a spirit of mutual counsel.”
Require one board member from each VMC district.	Two VM Missions board members can serve as voting members on Conference Council.	Provide an annual report to VMC delegates.	Develop a Covenant of Understanding to be reviewed every 3 years.
Allow up to eight members at large.	The Chair of the VMC Gifts Discernment Committee is invited to sit on the VM Missions Governance Committee.	Provide one staff or board member as a VMC delegate.	Provide an annual report to VMC delegates.
The board itself appoints all board members.	VMC delegates are invited to affirm at-large board appointments.	Ensure that at least 75% of VM Missions board members are members of VMC churches.	Provide one staff or board member as a VMC delegate
			Retain at least 60% Anabaptist representation on the VM Missions board.
			Make an annual contribution to VMC.

# CONSTITUTION

## VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

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### PREAMBLE

Christ Jesus has commissioned the community of faith to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all people, to nurture Christian believers and to show love to all persons. To fulfill this mandate in accordance with biblical principles, we set forth this constitution to describe the relationships and responsibilities which will guide us in our common task.

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church body is Virginia Mennonite Conference, hereinafter designated as Conference. The principal office is located at ~~901-601~~ Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

### ARTICLE II: IDENTITY

The Virginia Mennonite Conference was organized in 1835 by congregations of the Mennonite faith scattered throughout the Shenandoah Valley. These congregations desired a common organization and fellowship for promoting the work of the church from the perspective of the sixteenth century Anabaptists. Currently, it consists of congregations in Virginia and neighboring states who subscribe to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995) and make voluntary commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior a priority.

### ARTICLE III: RELATIONSHIPS

The conference is a charter member of Mennonite Church USA, effective February 1, 2002, sending delegates to the Delegate Assembly and the Constituency Leaders Council as governed by the bylaws of Mennonite Church USA and of Virginia Mennonite Conference. Congregations and individual members of the conference relate to other entities and agencies of Mennonite Church USA as provided in the bylaws of that body and through the extended ministries of the denomination.

### ARTICLE IV: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Conference shall be to:

1. Provide vision and leadership in the mission of the church by promoting and coordinating outreach ministries;
2. Bring persons into saving relationship with God by regeneration through the blood of Christ;
3. Foster a mature understanding of Christ-centered lifestyles;
4. Teach biblical doctrines faithfully;
5. Promote unity within the faith community;
6. Encourage fellowship among believers and congregations;
7. Develop guidelines which enable persons to live in community, promote peace and justice and practice stewardship of resources.

### ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

The Conference shall be composed of affiliated congregations who maintain relationship via mutual fellowship, counsel, and support as provided within the structures of Conference. Procedures for reception and termination of Conference affiliation are set forth in the bylaws of the Conference. Individuals are recognized as members of Conference by virtue of their membership in one of the affiliated congregations. Congregational members shall be baptized believers who have made a voluntary commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and who demonstrate their decision to walk in Christian discipleship within the fellowship of the Mennonite Church. Privileges and responsibilities of individual members shall be those accorded by their respective congregations.

### ARTICLE VI: DISTRICT COUNCILS

All member congregations shall participate in a district council which serves as a regional administrative unit of Conference. District councils shall include all ordained and licensed leaders exercising active assignments recognized by Conference, congregational delegates to Conference Assembly, and additional persons as

determined by each district council. Each district shall be represented on Conference Council by a member of the district council executive committee as determined by the respective district council.

#### **ARTICLE VII: CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY**

There shall be a Conference Assembly to serve as the governing body of Conference. It shall hold final powers of identification, organization and dissolution of Conference. Conference Assembly shall include those persons stated in the bylaws. The composition of Conference Assembly as outlined in Article III of the bylaws may be modified only by action of Conference Assembly.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: CONFERENCE COUNCIL**

There shall be a Conference Council to serve as the executive body of Conference, to coordinate the work of Conference commissions and committees, and to facilitate the activities of Conference between Assembly sessions. Conference Council shall include those persons stated in the bylaws. Staff are not eligible to serve on Conference Council.

#### **ARTICLE IX: CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS**

Conference ministries and activities shall be implemented through program commissions established by Conference Assembly, including the following:

- A. The Faith and Life Commission shall provide leadership for spiritual, doctrinal, and faith and life issues, and exercise oversight for ministerial leadership credentials.
- B. ~~Virginia Mennonite Missions shall lead in the development and administration of Conference programs of mission outreach, service, and church planting, both overseas and in the broader geographical area in which member congregations are located.~~
- C. The Congregational Life Commission shall be a resource to congregations in areas of Christian education, stewardship, peace and justice advocacy, and family concerns including special areas of ministry such as: older adults, men, women, persons with disabilities. It shall also serve as a liaison with church agencies and institutions.

#### **ARTICLE X: LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES**

Conference shall provide guidelines for congregational leadership, pastoral care and nurture of believers in affiliated congregations by recommending leadership patterns consistent with a biblical model. Conference may appoint persons for special ministries and Conference shall establish patterns of oversight for congregations through the Faith and Life Commission. These leaders shall be affirmed for their ministries by Conference Assembly.

#### **ARTICLE XI: CONFERENCE ORGANIZATIONS**

Conference shall authorize, as needed, additional entities within the Conference context. Such entities shall operate within the guidelines of their own constitutions and/or bylaws. Conference organizations shall specify in their constitutions, bylaws or operating manuals their methods of appointing their boards and officers along with the responsibilities of the same.

#### **ARTICLE XII: NONPROFIT TAX EXEMPT STATUS**

Virginia Mennonite Conference is organized, and shall be operated, exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, making distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law (the "Code").

The Conference shall have all of the general rights, privileges, and powers conferred upon corporations created by the Act (Title 13.1, Chapter 10 of the Virginia Code), but shall be limited to the exercise of only such powers as are in furtherance of the purposes expressly provided for in these articles and as are in furtherance of activities permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code.

No part of the net earnings of the Conference shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Conference shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof.

No substantial part of the activities of the Conference shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Conference shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the Conference shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Upon the dissolution of the Conference, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

### **ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS**

The Conference Assembly may adopt amendments to this constitution, upon recommendation by the Conference Council, by a 75% majority vote of the delegates present and voting at any duly called meeting of the Assembly, providing that delegates have received written notice of the substance of proposed changes at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting when the amendment is to be considered.

### **ARTICLE XIV: BYLAWS**

Bylaws will be hereinafter adopted. The conditions and regulations of Conference membership and function shall be determined by the bylaws. The bylaws may be amended in whole or in part, in the manner provided therein. The bylaws are to be deemed an integral part of this constitution.

Ratified by at least 75% of the delegates present this 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1994

As witnessed by:

Laban Peachey, Moderator  
David D. Yoder, General Secretary

Attested to by:

Wayne North, Conference Secretary

<i>Amended February 8, 1997,</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 97:02</i>
<i>Amended July 15, 1999,</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 99:05</i>
<i>Amended July 19, 2002,</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 02:14</i>
<i>Amended June 14, 2003,</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 03:10</i>
<i>Amended July 25, 2008</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 08:05</i>
<i>Amended February 5, 2011</i>	<i>ACTION VMC 11:03</i>
<i><u>Draft 12-19-2023 JM</u></i>	

~~Effective February 6, 2024~~ Draft 12-19-2023 JM

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DENOMINATION AFFILIATION WORK GROUP  
REPORT AND PROPOSALS  
for CONFERENCE COUNCIL  
November 17-18, 2023

**Prelude**

DAWG has been at work since its appointment by Conference Council. The members are Pearl Hartman, Vivian Stevens-Lyons, Zach Dey, Beryl Jantzi, Aaron Kauffman, and Craig Maven. Beth Good served on the work group through the first phase of our work. She served as co-chair with Craig Maven, and submitted her resignation in October due to a change in employment. Juan Carlos Malvaez has not been able to attend meetings beyond the initial one. His schedule with family and ministry requirements proved to be too much. He is still reading the reports and is serving as a consultant to help DAWG hear the perspectives and advice of our Hispanic churches. The first task we decided on was conversations with present and former MCUSA conference leaders who have, or are in the process of, discerning their relationship with MCUSA. These proved to be very fruitful conversations.

**November 7 Meeting**

On Tuesday, November 7, DAWG met in person for the first time. First Mennonite Richmond graciously opened their doors to us.

The first part of the business was to review the major learnings from our conversations with other conference leaders. Several themes emerged that helped focus our proposals for moving forward. These included: defining clearly who the conference is (identity) and its mission (purpose); pain was part of the process but the end is more often hopeful than not; face-to-face dialog and communication is important with everyone listening as well as speaking; respect and love for each is vital; being culturally sensitive to BIPOC congregations in discernment allows greater participation.

We then spent the rest of the morning brainstorming about possibilities. These we divided into possibilities of process or outcome. We created a long list of options.

Following lunch we honed in on what we think is the best way forward in our relationship with MCUSA and with each other. And what processes or actions would help us get there.

What emerged in our conversation was the sense that VMC needs to reimagine itself. VMC's struggles with the relationship with and participation in MCUSA is a reflection and outgrowth of our own internal struggles. While it might seem outside of DAWG's mandate to propose, but we are starting with the idea that VMC should recognize its center and build from there.

### **Proposals for Testing: Building From The Center**

1. Reaffirm our commitment to the Confession of Faith In A Mennonite Perspective as the teaching position of VMC. Affirm that in regards to same-gender marriage that the 2013 Statement of FLC will remain in place. And affirm VMC as a member conference of MCUSA. The provision for congregations to consider themselves not part of MCUSA will continue.
2. Suspend VMC's bylaws except for those that are necessary to pay bills and supervise staff for a two-year period. This creates the urgency to reimagine VMC. Who is God calling us to be (identity)? What is God calling us to do (purpose and mission)? This levels the playing field because the old power structures are immediately removed, allowing new voices to be heard. As we reimagine VMC we can redefine our relationship with MCUSA to fit who we are becoming.

The first proposal has three interdependent and indivisible facets rather than three separate actions. The second is the long-range process that the first enables. In that sense the two are linked and a whole.

We as DAWG recognize that these proposals will surprise many in VMC. We expect pushback. We view these proposals as a starting point, not the endpoint for discernment. Our hope is for significant participation from VMC member churches and leaders in shaping and refining what our delegate body takes up for decision.

TO: Virginia Mennonite Conference

Attn: Conference Council

FROM: TCK District

Chuck Hostetter, District Minister

Oct 31, 2023

Dear Conference Council,

On October 28, 2023 the TCK district, (meeting at Durham Mennonite Church), took action to receive Knoxville Mennonite Church's letter of withdrawal from Virginia Mennonite Conference. TCK's official action from the minutes is as follows,

**Chuck Hostetter read the letter from Knoxville Mennonite Church regarding their request to transfer their membership from Virginia Mennonite Conference to Central District Conference.**  
**\*Action – We received this letter with a sense of sadness and loss. We have valued the relationship we have had with them in the past. We wish them God's blessing as they go forward.**

It is my understanding that they are in conversation with Central District Conference for future realignment. I am unsure where they are in that process at this time.

Blessings,

Chuck Hostetter,

TCK District Minister

**Virginia Mennonite Conference**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of August 31, 2023**

	Aug 31, 23	Aug 31, 22
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Checking/Savings</b>		
1000 · Checking /PVFCU (Operations)	92,073.06	130,028.74
1030 · Savings Acct/SHARES/PVCU	41,261.21	41,230.36
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<b>133,334.27</b>	<b>171,259.10</b>
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>		
1110 · Accounts Receivable	710.16	710.16
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<b>710.16</b>	<b>710.16</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>		
1200 · Undeposited Funds	10,505.00	36,330.00
1800 · Due from VMC Operations Endowment	45,799.96	22,900.00
1802 · Due from MCUSA Endowment	17,599.92	8,799.96
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>73,904.88</b>	<b>68,029.96</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>207,949.31</b>	<b>239,999.22</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
1580 · Vehicle	16,734.28	16,734.28
1680 · A/D - Vehicle	(16,734.28)	(16,734.28)
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>		
<b>1220 · Trust Investments</b>		
1221 · Operating Reserves	36,846.29	35,126.19
1222 · Trust Funds	816,972.64	774,558.67
1223 · Quazi Endowments	877,020.66	863,953.11
<b>Total 1220 · Trust Investments</b>	<b>1,730,839.59</b>	<b>1,673,637.97</b>
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>1,730,839.59</b>	<b>1,673,637.97</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,938,788.90</b>	<b>1,913,637.19</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>2001 · CLEARING ACCTS-CUSTODIAL</b>		
<b>2014 · Conference Districts</b>		
2014-1 · Potomac District	-	3,798.00
2014-10 · Missions	400.00	-
2014-3 · Northern	100.00	-
<b>Total 2014 · Conference Districts</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>3,798.00</b>
2036 · Mennonite Women of Virginia	-	85.00
<b>Total 2001 · CLEARING ACCTS-CUSTODIAL</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>3,883.00</b>
<b>2150 · Clearing-PAYROLL</b>		
2523 · MRT Liability	1,015.59	817.70
2524 · 403(b)-Employee	428.65	298.07

These statements have not been subjected to an audit, review, or compilation engagement. No assurance is provided on them. Substantially all disclosures required by U.S. generally accepted accounting principles are omitted.

	Aug 31, 23	Aug 31, 22
2558 · HSA Liability	225.00	225.00
Total 2150 · Clearing-PAYROLL	1,669.24	1,340.77
2400 · Accrued Payroll Liabilities	1,394.51	823.85
Total Other Current Liabilities	3,563.75	6,047.62
Total Current Liabilities	3,563.75	6,047.62
Total Liabilities	3,563.75	6,047.62
Equity		
3100 · Perm. Restricted Net Assets		
3110 · Endowments	526,225.40	513,390.66
Total 3100 · Perm. Restricted Net Assets	526,225.40	513,390.66
3201 · Temp. Restricted		
3210 · Endowment earnings	274,295.79	429,048.22
3230 · Special Projects	118,965.55	39,338.54
Total 3201 · Temp. Restricted	393,261.34	468,386.76
3300 · Unrestricted Net Assets		
3310 · Bd designated quasi-endowment	833,590.13	1,030,387.81
3300 · Unrestricted Net Assets - Other	154,512.70	150,839.87
Total 3300 · Unrestricted Net Assets	988,102.83	1,181,227.68
Net Income	27,635.58	(255,415.53)
Total Equity	1,935,225.15	1,907,589.57
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>1,938,788.90</b>	<b>1,913,637.19</b>

These statements have not been subjected to an audit, review, or compilation engagement. No assurance is provided on them. Substantially all disclosures required by U.S. generally accepted accounting principles are omitted.



					<b>6108 · Archives</b>	7,000	7,000
					<b>6109 · Insurance</b>	2,250	2,250
					<b>6110 · Office Facilities</b>	16,440	15,744
					<b>6120 · Auto</b>		
					6120.1 · Repairs & Fuel	1,250	1,500
					6120.2 · Depreciation Expense	-	1,000
					6120.3 · Insurance	900	900
					6120 · Auto - Other	100	130
					<b>Total 6120 · Auto</b>	2,250	3,530
					<b>6122 · Small Equip Purchase</b>	300	500
					<b>6123 · Software Maintenance</b>	450	450
					<b>Total 6100 · General Administration</b>	32,590	34,224
					<b>6200 · Staff Directed Offices</b>		
					6202 · Travel/Consult	100	250
					6203 · Supplies & Expenses	2,000	3,000
					6204 · Phone/fax/web	700	250
					6205 · Postage	500	1,000
					6210 · Accounting fees	9,900	9,000
					<b>Total 6200 · Staff Directed Offices</b>	13,200	13,500
					<b>6300 · General Churchwide Expenses</b>		
					6301 · Delegate fees expenses	-	1,400
					6302 · Church-wide travel	1,400	1,400
					6303 · MC USA (MennoData)	1,000	1,000
					<b>Total 6300 · General Churchwide Expenses</b>	2,400	3,800
					<b>6400 · Conference Minister's Office</b>		
					6402 · Travel/Consult.Exp	3,000	3,500
					6403 · Supplies/Expenses	1,000	1,500
					6406 · Continuing Education	1,000	1,000
					6407 · VA Council of Churches	-	-
					<b>Total 6400 · Conference Minister's Office</b>	5,000	6,000
					<b>6500 · Racial Justice Staff</b>		
					6502 · Travel/Consulting Exp	750	1,000
					6503 · Supplies/Expenses	100	-
					6504 · Continuing Education	-	1,000
					<b>Total 6500 · Racial Justice Staff</b>	850	2,000
					<b>8002 · PayPal Fees Expense</b>	-	-
					<b>Total Expense</b>	220,460	212,008
					<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	15,940	5,000
					<b>Net Income</b>	<b>15,940</b>	<b>5,000</b>
					<b>Approved by Conference Council, 11/18/2023 (compensation updated per Council action)</b>		
					<b>Amended by Conference Council, 12/20/2023</b>		