



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**What changes are happening in Mennonite Church USA as a result of the resolutions passed at the special delegate assembly in Kansas City (May 2022)? Would anything change within Mosaic Conference if we remain a part of Mennonite Church USA?**

Mennonite Church USA continues to use the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective as its primary theological document. There is no plan to change the Confession. The Resolution for Repentance and Transformation does, however, open the possibility for further discernment nationally and locally both on the involvement of LGBTQ persons in church life and on officiating same-sex marriages. A new constituency group has been named specifically for LGBTQ persons within the denomination.

On the denominational level, the Repentance and Transformation Resolution does indicate that the official position of MC USA is now open to same-sex relationships, which does include openly LGBTQ persons serving in denominational leadership.

Resolutions like the Resolution for Repentance and Transformation that are nonbinding are applied at local discretion. No changes are required for congregations or conferences on their teaching position or in their processes for naming pastors as a result of this resolution. The change in membership guidelines that was also passed at Kansas City shifts decisions around allowing credentialed leaders to officiate same-sex marriages squarely to Conference-level discernment. Additionally, decisions around the credentialing of individuals in same-sex relationships will continue to be decided at the conference level based on our ongoing policies, as outlined in Conference bylaws and formation documents. Any changes in Mosaic practice, direction, or vision would be discerned by our Board and its committees and approved by delegates.



**What would change if Mosaic Conference left Mennonite Church USA?**

Mosaic Conference doesn't contribute directly to MC USA—financial contributions are given by congregations. Mosaic does, however, rely on MC USA structures and staff for resources, including a database of credentialed leaders and congregations, some equipping events, and for giving and receiving counsel at the Conference level. Our expenses in the area of affiliation are primarily in travel costs and investment of staff time. We do pay MC USA an annual fee for database maintenance. We also work with other MC USA conferences in an experimental program to provide better access to mental wellness resources for our Conference staff and urban pastors in Philadelphia and Allentown.

If Mosaic Conference were to choose to leave MC USA, we may become a standalone community working collaboratively with other Anabaptist groups. We would likely seek membership in Mennonite World Conference, which costs about \$5 per member per year (a \$40,000 budget item at our current size).

Several grants given by MC USA have provided support to some of our congregations, particularly in urban settings. We would need to seek new sources of funding in these areas, which include justice grants and grants for new congregations.

We have been in conversation with several other conferences on their future directions. We would continue to cultivate relationships with other Anabaptist groups and to seek to maintain healthy relationships with Mennonite Church USA communities as well.



**If a congregation suspends membership with MC USA, will that congregation still be able to use resources from Menno Media, Everence, Mennonite Education Agency (including the IBA and SeBAH programs) and Mennonite Mission Network, participate in The Corinthian Plan, or receive denominational grants?**

Even if they suspended membership in MC USA, individual Mosaic congregations would still have access to all resources available to our conference through MC USA. We would, however, ask that congregations recognize their differentiated status and therefore not request resources specifically available only to MC USA congregations. Most agency resources would still be provided, regardless of membership in MC USA. Although the bylaw change would be permanent in Mosaic, a congregation that chooses to suspend its membership in MC USA at this time could reverse that decision in the future. The option to suspend membership in MC USA while remaining part of a conference has been a long-term policy in other MC USA conferences, including Ohio and South Central, for years.



**If Mosaic does eventually leave MC USA, will congregations still be able to use resources from Menno Media, Everence, Mennonite Education Agency (including the IBA and SeBAH programs) and Mennonite Mission Network, or participate in The Corinthian Plan?**

If Mosaic leaves MC USA, relationships with most MC USA agencies would remain, although they may be altered. The Corinthian Plan, which provides healthcare coverage for some of our pastors, is an MC USA program that may need to be renegotiated. We are currently in conversation with another mutual aid plan provided by Everence for long-term mission workers that could replace The Corinthian Plan, if needed, for future health care coverage.

A key area to be reconsidered in regard to agencies will be board-level representation. Currently board members from Mosaic congregations serve on Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency, and several subsidiary Everence boards. In situations where these positions are appointed by MC USA, those positions will have to be reconsidered by each organization. Mosaic would not be guaranteed representation. Mosaic already has Conference representatives on the board of Mennonite Central Committee on both coasts, and that would not change.

Mosaic leaders are key in a number of constituency groups in MC USA, including Iglesia Menonita Hispana, Indonesian Mennonite Association, and African Belizean Caribbean Mennonite Mission Association. Since these are constituency groups within MC USA, these roles likely could not continue if Mosaic departs from MC USA.



**Why do we need to wait two years to decide whether or not Mosaic remains a part of MC USA?**

Leaving Mennonite Church USA is no small decision. The reconciliation process between Eastern District and Franconia Conference that created Mosaic took almost a decade of conversation. Two years gives us time to ask good questions, to seek good counsel, and to work on our relationships within Mosaic and with MC USA. We need time in order to make an informed decision on our future that includes all of us.

A one-year process would mean that we'd be voting quickly, with decisions needing to be made by summer 2023. An 18-month process would mean a special spring assembly. We believe that by giving the process up to two years, clarity can emerge. We trust this will be a time of seeking the Spirit together and living into our Mosaic vision and mission. Are there new ways we can relate to MC USA or other Anabaptist groups? How can we strengthen our emerging global and local Mosaic identities?

The change to our bylaws proposed in the Pathways document allows for congregations to suspend their membership within MC USA while also remaining part of Mosaic Conference. This change in status gives congregations whose conscience no longer allows them to associate with the broader denomination a way to remain in the process with Conference communities as we discern together.



## As we enter this two-year period of discernment, what will change and what will stay the same?

In this two-year period, all Mosaic formation documents including bylaws, the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the Grace and Truth and Going to the Margins statements will remain in effect. Our vision and mission statements, along with our commitment to the Anabaptist essentials of Jesus as the center of our faith, community as the center of our lives, and reconciliation as the center of our work, remain. Whether or not we are a part of MC USA, we will continue our 300-year Anabaptist legacy in extending the way of Christ's peace. Our Mennonite identity doesn't change.

In the meantime, pastors may not officiate same-sex marriages. We will continue to clarify our position on supporting women in pastoral leadership. Our ministerial processes for leadership will remain rooted in all current conference documents.



## Who will lead the two-year strategic planning process? What will the process look like?

The strategic planning process will lean into what we have learned from our listening task force: How do we continue to move toward what unites us around our missional, formational, and intercultural priorities in ways that extend the love of Jesus in our broken and beautiful world? While the strategic planning doesn't seek to solve our theological differences, the conversations can model for us what it means to hold dynamic tensions as we seek to live faithfully.

We anticipate engaging a consulting group and steering team to direct this process across our Conference. The process would likely involve a combination of congregational commitments, study, and conversation, and cross-conference initiatives including Bible studies, prayer gatherings, and multi-congregation dialogue. Conference staff will provide resources and opportunities for corporate prayer and discernment. Individual communities will need to make their own commitments to the process and to one another as we listen to God and trust the Spirit's movement for our shared future.