



2024

PREPARATION MEETING HANDBOOK

for Mosaic Delegates



MOSAIC



Mosaic Conference

OUR VISION AND MISSION

Mosaic Mennonite Conference is a community celebrating and extending God's grace, justice, and peace. We desire to assume the mind of Christ: shaped by love, humility, and a concern for the well-being of others ([Philippians 2:1-5](#)). As people following in the way of Jesus, we have committed together to embody the reconciling love of Jesus in our broken and beautiful world.

To embody this reconciling love in a world shattered by division, hatred, and violence, we commit to cultivating a community that prioritizes relationship, in which authentic conversation leads to understanding and we are all changed as we recognize the [Image of God](#) in one another.

Just as a tile mosaic is comprised of many pieces that are different shapes, colors, and textures, so Mosaic Conference includes people from a variety of races, cultures, identities, language-groups, educational and economic backgrounds, geographies, political perspectives, and life experiences. We acknowledge the presence of these differences and the discomfort we often feel when we look around us and see unfamiliar faces, perceptions, and experiences looking back at us.

The very nature of a mosaic, however, lies in the way that the artist shapes the pieces into a new picture, something each piece cannot form on its own. To do this, each piece must fully bring its uniqueness while also allowing itself to be reshaped to contribute to the whole. In the same way, our Mosaic Conference needs the unique gifts of each member, congregation, and partner ministry while we also expect to be changed as we live in community with one another. We believe that each person and community has been brought to us by God's Spirit for God's purpose. We accept this reality with grace and humility, knowing that each of our communities is needed for us to see the full picture of who God is and what God is doing in the world.

In recent years, we have seen God's Spirit leading us into new relationships and ministries that have surprised us. We desire to join God in what God is doing: experimenting and exploring across human-made divisions of nationality, language, and race to foster meaningful connections that are fruitful and generative.

As Mosaic Conference, we desire to be a community that practices [silaturahmi](#) (pronounced: sill-ah-tour-ah-mee), an Indonesian way of gathering that promotes friendship, respect, and a common purpose. We believe that, by allowing our differences to equip us for mission instead of tearing us apart, we strengthen our witness as we participate in God's healing work in our broken and beautiful world.

To live into this vision for our life together, in 2023 the conference Board formed the Pathway Steering Team, which worked with Grovider, a knowledge management consulting firm, to design a pathway forward. The PST launched a listening tour, reflected on the feedback, aligned it with our existing priorities and mission, and began developing a three-year strategic plan. The Pathway Steering Team has recommended we focus our work together on five areas: clarifying our identity, promoting communication, developing leaders, building relationships, and pursuing reconciliation.

[Read the full report here.](#)

CLARITY AND IDENTITY



“We are a mosaic formed by many different members and united in our commitment to following Jesus together, listening to the Holy Spirit, and building on our Anabaptist heritage as radical reformers. We seek to live out our missional, formation, and intercultural priorities.”

ACTIVITIES TO CLARIFY IDENTITY

We seek to see and hear God’s Spirit in one another, with postures of listening, learning, and loving. Over the next three years, Mosaic will focus on creating and establishing strategies to enhance members' and CRM teams' understanding and embodiment of Mosaic's core values, mission, and identity. We will develop a curriculum to teach congregations about the Mosaic story and the meaning of our priorities. Additionally, the conference will launch the Vibrant Mosaic Program, which will help congregations integrate our priorities into everyday life, emphasizing learning communities for lay leaders.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING



“We prioritize equitable distribution of power, voice, and resources as we build authentic relationships through gracious and transformational dialogue, storytelling, service, celebration, and prayer. Even in matters of variance, we notice and marvel at how the Holy Spirit is working and leading in our ever-growing community.”

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

We are committed to being transformed as we watch for the image of God in one another. Over the next three years, we will provide relational opportunities that align with Mosaic’s priorities, such as Pentecost exchanges, storytelling gatherings, intercultural potlucks, Faith and Life gatherings, and Peace Circles. The Vibrant Mosaic program will offer opportunities for congregations to partner in learning experiences and missional experiments. We desire to join God in what God is doing: experimenting and exploring across human-made divisions to foster meaningful connections that are fruitful and generative.



WHAT IS THE VIBRANT MOSAIC PROGRAM?

In June 2024, Mosaic Conference was granted \$1.25 million by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., to create a new program called “Vibrant Mosaic.” This program will provide opportunities for congregations and their leaders to increase congregational health, build common mission, and foster community by integrating our conference priorities into church life.

The program includes three major components: 1) learning communities made up of congregational leaders who will travel and study together; 2) coaching and microgrants for each participating congregation to plan missional experiments or learning experiences to integrate what its leaders have studied; and 3) additional supports for leaders of color in our conference, including regular retreats, a revision of our core curriculum to expand its cultural and linguistic diversity, and antiracism and intercultural training for conference staff and board members.

The Vibrant Mosaic program is integrated into all pillars of the strategic plan: classes and learning experiences will foster our sense of identity and values, learning communities will develop leaders and build relationships across differences, and participation in classes, retreats, and joint learning experiences will provide congregations opportunities to actively practice peacemaking and open communication.

The Vibrant Mosaic program will be co-directed by Emily Ralph Servant (Leadership Minister for Strategic Priorities) and Danilo Sanchez (Leadership Minister for Intercultural Transformation) and include support from Jaye Lindo (Hospitality Coordinator), Rose Bender Cook (Leadership Minister for Formation and Director of the Mosaic Institute) and Noel Santiago (Leadership Minister for Missional Transformation) as well as other administrative staff and Mosaic Institute instructors.

The first cohort of five congregations will start in February 2025; we hope that, eventually, every congregation and partner ministry in Mosaic Conference will participate. If your congregation would like to be included in one of our pilot cohorts, please talk with your leadership minister.

[To read the whole proposal, click here.](#)





LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



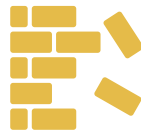
“We cultivate and equip lay, clergy, and organizational leaders to shape and steward God’s call in our communities, congregations, and conference-related ministries as we live out our formational, intercultural, and missional priorities together.”

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP LEADERS

We believe that each person and community has been brought to our conference by God’s Spirit for God’s purpose and we are committed to exploring each one’s giftedness together. Over the next three years, we will launch our Vibrant Mosaic program, which will provide congregational leaders will opportunities to travel and learn together. Participants will be coached (both by trained facilitators and by their peers) as they share in and lead learning experiences, intercultural projects, and missional experiments in diverse cohorts from throughout the conference. We will increase our supports for leaders of color, introducing new Nations & Generations retreats and revising Mosaic Institute curriculum to include a broader diversity of context and culture.



RECONCILIATION



“We tear down dividing walls, repair what has been broken, and honor differences with curiosity and humility as we transform into the full breadth of the mosaic that God has called us to be.”

ACTIVITIES TO PURSUE RECONCILIATION

Through the power and inspiration of the Spirit, we expect our community to participate in the healing of our world. Over the next three years, we will create and implement Peace Circles to teach conflict resolution to pastors, congregational leaders, and CRM leaders. Our Vibrant Mosaic program will offer training on how to lead difficult conversations across cultural differences and we will create an open system for people who have been marginalized to share their hopes and concerns with conference staff and Board. We will continue to pursue and prioritize diversity on all boards, committees, and staff. Additionally, we will create a Conflict Resolution Council that addresses root causes of inner-conference conflict and helps facilitate reconciliation. We believe that, by allowing our differences to equip us for mission instead of tearing us apart, we strengthen our witness.



COMMUNICATION



“Conference Board and Staff consistently use two-way communication modes that cultivate love, trust, accountability, and belonging within and outside of Mosaic.”

ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION

We commit to fostering a community of hospitality where conference members feel valued, heard, and “in the loop.” Over the next three years, Mosaic Conference will focus on establishing transparent, two-way communication platforms that facilitate open dialogue and keep members informed about key issues, like conflicts or church departures. Conference Board and committees will share summaries of their meetings in Mosaic News and Mosaic News will also share stories about what has been happening in congregations and partner ministries. Leadership Ministers will be trained and held accountable in promoting two-way communication between and among congregations/partner ministries and conference staff and board. From time to time, Conference staff may perform “pulse checks” to invite open feedback from conference members.





A PROPOSAL FOR AFFILIATION



Mosaic Mennonite Conference is a community celebrating and extending God's grace, justice, and peace. We have agreed together that our mission is to embody the reconciling love of Jesus in our broken and beautiful world.

Mosaic Conference is committed to cultivating a community in which relationships are prioritized, authentic conversation leads to understanding, and we are all changed as we recognize the Image of God in one another. Over the last decade, as our conference has grown across geographies, ethnicities, languages, and life experiences, we have found that we need to be nimble and responsive to the contextual needs of congregations and their leaders. We continue to see God's Spirit leading us into uncharted waters, in which we are invited to explore and innovate, often with very little notice or precedence.

As Mosaic increasingly grows into a global community of local congregations and ministries, we find that we need freedom to respond to these highly diverse contexts relationally and effectively. The natural path of relationships does not always follow the boundaries of traditional church structures. We seek to create systems to hold brave, transformational, flexible space.

At the same time, we are aware of the history of schism and division within Anabaptism. As a conference committed to prioritizing relationships and working toward reconciliation, we do not believe that leaving a relationship over disagreement and difference is the best expression of loving-kindness (*chesed*) and faithful truth (*emet*).*

As Mosaic's board and Pathway Steering Team have wrestled with questions around affiliation over the last two years, it has become apparent that our needs, as a conference whole, are different from many other conferences in the denomination. We have begun to wonder if we might be better able to live out our commitments to mutual transformation as a partner of MC USA rather than as a member of the denomination. At the same time, we acknowledge that some of our congregations value their status as "members" of MC USA and commit to exploring avenues that will make congregational relationships possible.

By shifting to a partnership model, Mosaic will develop our own identity documents, policies, and confessions that are contextual and relational. As partners, Mosaic will interact with denominational leadership as colleagues, building relationships that include the sharing of resources, accountability, and mutuality. As a conference that values and prioritizes relationships, a partnership model will allow us to maintain connections with the broader church without getting mired down in disagreements over policy or procedure.

* [Psalms 116 and 117](#). *Chesed* was theme for the [2022 Conference Assembly](#) and *Emet* for the [2023 Conference Assembly](#).

Mosaic already maintains partnerships with several other entities, including the Anabaptist Mennonite Network in England, the Conferencia de Iglesias Evangélicas Anabautistas Menonitas de México (CIEAMM), and is building relationships with LMC and several conferences in Mennonite Church Canada. As part of these relationships, Mosaic staff and board members share resources, arrange visits, and meet with leadership to explore ways we can support and encourage one another. A partnership with MC USA would include these elements, as well as giving and receiving counsel and possible partnering with Mennonite agencies.

As we consider an ongoing partnership with MC USA in the future, we recognize our need for a community beyond our conference. Mosaic has witnessed significant demographic growth and the movement of God's Spirit in the last few years. We respect that God is also moving in other communities and that good things are happening beyond our conference. We commit to approaching the MC USA staff, board, agencies, and those within the sibling conferences with a loving-kindness (*chesed*) that is passionately concerned about the well-being of others and a faithful truth (*emet*) that seeks to honor and protect others, even those with whom we disagree. We acknowledge our need for humility* and commit to walking alongside MC USA with a posture of learning, listening, and loving.

HOW COULD THIS WORK?

- **Credentialing:** The credentialing and pastoral search process would change very little. According to Mosaic's current bylaws, the lead pastors of Mosaic congregations are credentialed through Mosaic Conference. Mosaic already has its own credentialing process, including a more nuanced background check procedure than required in much of the denomination. For pastoral searches, congregations who are a part of MC USA would still have access to the MLI listing. Mosaic credentials could be transferred to and from MC USA congregations like credentials are transferred to and from other denominations. Mosaic and MC USA would share information related to investigations over accusations of abuse.
- **Convention & Assembly:** Congregations who choose a relationship with MC USA may be able to continue to send delegates to MC USA conventions. Mosaic would send non-voting representatives to conventions to support denominational staff and facilitate relationship-building. MC USA would be invited to send representatives to Mosaic assemblies as listeners, to give counsel, and to build relationships. Any individual or family in Mosaic Conference could attend MC USA conventions as a guest, regardless of their congregation's membership status.
- **Resources:** MC USA and Mosaic would exchange resources, and partner as needed to develop resources, around church safety, mission, intercultural and justice work, and other shared values. There are areas where MC USA has strengths and can offer resources to Mosaic, and areas of strength where Mosaic can offer resources to the denomination. Instead of duplicating effort, we would offer support, ideas, and funding/staffing to each other to facilitate the creation of resources.

* [Micah 6:8](#). The theme for the [2024 Conference Assembly](#) will be Walk Humbly with God.

- **Agencies:** Mosaic would continue to develop relationships with several MC USA agencies. Everence has indicated that Mosaic congregations could continue to participate in their services, regardless of affiliation. We have initiated similar conversations with Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Men, and Mennonite Education Agency. Mennonite schools and colleges are independent of MC USA agencies. School-based scholarships will continue to be available to Mosaic students. Mosaic would no longer provide MC USA representatives for agency boards.
- **Mennonite World Conference (MWC):** The Conference Board and the Pathways Steering Team heard a strong desire within our conference to stay connected to the global Anabaptist family and the accountability that comes from mutual relationships with global siblings. Our current affiliation with MC USA provides us with membership in Mennonite World Conference. If we were to become partners of MC USA instead of members, we would need to seek direct membership in MWC; we would seek the blessing of MC USA to do so (the process of joining MWC usually takes between 2-7 years). In the future, Mosaic may affirm their Core Convictions.
- **Finances:** Mosaic does not currently send financial support to MC USA, although individual congregations within the conference do so. If Mosaic were to join Mennonite World Conference, MWC's membership fees amount to \$5 per Mosaic member annually. Additionally, some of Mosaic's Spanish-speaking members receive scholarships for the *IBA & SEBAH* pastoral studies programs that will no longer be available to them; there are also several grants provided to congregations from Mennonite Men that we may need to repay. Other incidental costs could include maintaining our own database of credentialed leaders.

NEXT STEPS

We recommend the following steps to reshape our affiliation with Mennonite Church USA:

1. At the November 2024 Mosaic Assembly, delegates may be given the opportunity to affirm the board-approved Pathway recommendation. This recommendation could include empowering the board to change the Mosaic bylaws as necessary to implement this affiliation plan. MC USA has indicated that Mosaic Conference's membership in the denomination will end as soon as an affirmative vote has passed.
2. After Conference Assembly, any Mosaic congregation who wishes to become a member of MC USA should alert their leadership minister and will also need to contact MC USA staff (MichaelD@MennoniteUSA.org or RachelRM@MennoniteUSA.org). Any congregation who indicates that they are pursuing options for MC USA membership will maintain their membership status until their process is completed.
3. Over the next months, Mosaic's staff will continue conversations with MC USA staff and MC USA agencies to explore possibilities for partnership and/or establish direct relationships for resourcing and collaboration.
4. In conversation with MC USA staff, Mosaic's staff and board will explore becoming a Mennonite World Conference member.