



VIBRANT MOSAIC



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
A THRIVING CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE

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PURPOSE & RATIONALE

Introduction

Vibrant, thriving Mosaic congregations are missional, intercultural, and formational, embodying the reconciling love of Jesus in our broken and beautiful world. The Vibrant Mosaic Program will provide congregations and congregational leaders with opportunities to strengthen their rootedness in our tradition while also increasing their missional, intercultural, and formational capacity through education, communal experiences, spiritual practices, and relationship-building.

The program includes three components:

- Learning communities of congregational pastors and lay leaders who participate in up to two years of classes and travel, with targeted coaching as they implement what they've learned on a congregational level.
- Congregational experiments and learning experiences funded by microgrants and focused on each congregation's growth edge.
- Specialized support and gatherings for leaders of color to learn, build relationships, and cast vision.

Changing Context of Congregational Life and Ministry

Mosaic Mennonite Conference is a community of congregations and non-profit organizations that stretches from Vermont to Florida and from New Jersey to California, with global connections in Mexico, Colombia, India, and England. The conference was birthed in the early 18th century in southeastern Pennsylvania, split in the mid-19th century into Franconia and Eastern District Conferences, and experienced a reconciliation and merger in 2019 that blossomed into Mosaic Conference the following year. Around the same time, the conference integrated several networks of congregations in Florida and California and has since experienced a wave of church planting alongside new congregations joining the conference from around the country.

All of these changes have led to growing shifts of demographics within the congregations of our conference. Nearly half of our congregations are majority People of Color (POC), especially first- and second-generation immigrants (mostly from various Latin American countries and Indonesia, although we have multiple congregations from southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and western Africa). We also have a rising number of congregations in urban centers or areas of the country that are experiencing a surge in immigrant populations. Additionally, many of our congregations are experiencing an increase in the number of attendees who didn't grow up in the Mennonite tradition. Our congregations are facing questions of identity, purpose, and community.



Even as our conference has expanded across geographies, the coronavirus pandemic has led to changes in how relationships are built and maintained. Changes in the ways we use technology have fostered new opportunities for developing significant relationships across long distances. Some congregations continue to meet in hybrid formats, joined by members who live hundreds of miles away. Others are struggling to reconnect after years of only seeing one another as faces on the screen or worshipping at home while watching a prerecorded or broadcasted service.

The pandemic also isolated members of our congregations at a time when difference has increasingly caused division across the U.S. American landscape. Physical separation has nurtured distrust even as philosophical or theological distinctions have grown more extreme. Some congregations have experienced shifts as members leave or join because of their convictions. Some congregations have engaged in processes to decide whether or not to leave the conference or the denomination over differences in theology and practice.

Our congregations are encountering shifting racial demographics, an influx of new members who do not share a common history, as well as a simultaneous geographic expansion of community and philosophical contraction of belonging. As a result, our congregations are faced with a crisis of identity, the threat of isolation, and a growing inability to love one another across difference.

In the midst of these challenges, Mosaic Conference has been exploring how to ground congregations in our rich theological and communal tradition while also remaining open to a redefined identity in response to the new brothers and sisters among us. Although it is easy and normal to fear change, how can we build resilience among our congregations through spiritual practices, deepening relationships, common mission, and a sense of belonging? Most importantly, how do we cultivate communities that recognize God in the changes and respond with courage and creativity?

Characteristics of Thriving Congregations

For over a decade, our conference has successfully been working at transformation around our three priorities: to be a people who are formed into the image of Jesus (formational priority), transformed by relationships with others (intercultural priority), and participants in the healing of our communities (missional priority). We have found that these priorities cannot easily be separated; they are essential to who we are designed to be as people made in the image of God.¹

Mennonite feminist theologian Lydia Neufeld Harder has described how common it is for people to get caught in what she calls “hermeneutical circles” in which our interpretation of Scripture justifies congregational practice, which in turn justifies our interpretation of Scripture. In order to remain relevant and respond to our current context, the circle must be interrupted by an outside force, in dialogue with both our tradition and the hope for transformation that comes through conversation with people outside of and on the margins of our circle.²

Acquiring new information is not sufficient in itself, however. To flourish as thriving congregations, we need to step out of what is familiar, enter into others’ space, and experiment with new and different ways of engaging the world. Missional pioneers Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost describe this experience as “communitas”: the bonding that happens when individuals work together for some higher goal. They suggest that getting out of one’s comfort zone in the company of friends is transformative.³

As we build mutual relationships of love and respect, we are changed—formed more clearly into the image of God, which includes a desire to participate in God’s work of restoration and reconciliation in the world. Asian feminist theologian Grace Ji-Sun Kim argues that safe, diverse communities create a “third space” where new, creative ideas can emerge.⁴ Social researcher Vlad Glaveanu further suggests that creativity in community is an important avenue for social change.⁵

¹ See Emily Ralph Servant, “Icons of God in the World: Formation as Mission” in *Anabaptist Witness*, Vol 9, Issue 1 (April 2022). Accessed at https://www.anabaptistwitness.org/journal_entry/icons-of-god-in-the-world/ (February 2, 2024).

² Lydia Neufeld Harder, *Obedience, Suspicion and the Gospel of Mark: A Mennonite-Feminist Exploration of Biblical Authority* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier, 1998), pp. 53–56.

³ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Faith of Leap: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure & Courage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), p. 54.

⁴ Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The Holy Spirit, Chi, and the Other: A Model of Global and Intercultural Pneumatology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 99.

⁵ Vlad P. Glaveanu, “Developing Society: Reflections on the Notion of Societal Creativity” in *Creativity, Culture, and Development*, edited by Ai-Girl Tan and Christoph Perleth (New York: Springer Science + Business, 2015), p. 192.

In Mosaic Conference, the Anabaptist value of community is essential to who we are and what we do together.⁶ Mosaic leadership and delegates have discerned that we are called to be shaped into the image of Jesus (our formational priority), transformed by relationships with others (our intercultural priority), and engaged in the healing of our world (our missional priority). In order to help newly credentialed pastors and emerging leaders learn about these priorities while also being steeped in the resources of our Anabaptist tradition, for the last four years, we have offered a series of classes designed around these themes. These classes not only teach new information but cultivate missional practices like noticing God’s presence in our neighborhoods, formational practices like reading and interpreting Scripture in community, and intercultural practices like sharing our personal and corporate (hi)stories. In these intentional learning communities, pastors have thrived as they encountered God in new ways and developed a deep love for one another, spending time together having fun as well as “doing the work.”

We have found that leaders who have been equipped through these classes and with these priorities have led their congregations into deeper spiritual and relational health, fostered new understandings of their congregations’ identities and purpose, explored new ways of engaging with their neighborhoods, and/or felt a deeper sense of connection and belonging within our network of churches (see attached letters of support). Our hope for the Vibrant Mosaic Program is to use our current offerings as a pilot program, which we can revise and expand for the broader church community.

Program Design and Activities

The Vibrant Mosaic Program will consist of three integrated parts: learning communities, congregational projects, and targeted supports for leaders of color.

Learning Communities

Over the course of the five-year grant period, we will form four cohorts of congregational leaders. These cohorts will enroll in a one-year formation process, with the option to re-enroll for a second year to complete the program. Each year, the congregational leaders will participate in two intensive classes, while journeying alongside other congregations in learning communities. These learning communities will be led by our Learning Community Coaches, who will help the leaders to integrate their training and experiences into the life and ministry of their congregations. Each of the courses will include an intensive weekend in-person in one of the conference hubs (Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Vermont) followed by synchronous online classes. These courses will be redesigned to integrate additional intercultural techniques and content (see below under “Supports for Leaders of Color”).



The four classes we will offer are:

- 1. Introduction to Mosaic Conference [story/identity course]:** This course provides opportunities for each participant to explore their own pathway to Anabaptism in conversation with communal stories from the tradition and conference history. Students visit churches and historical sites in southeastern Pennsylvania (where Mennonites first arrived in the US and the conference was first formed) and learn about the spiritual discipline of rest and sabbath. They also learn about church polity and how the church has traditionally made decisions about theology and practice.

⁶ Palmer Becker’s simple phrase has become a classic: “Jesus is the center of our faith. Community is the center of our life. Reconciliation is the center of our work.” *Anabaptist Essentials: Ten Signs of a Unique Christian Faith* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press; 2017).

- 2. Building Mosaic Relationships [intercultural course]:** This course introduces participants to the ways that cultures shape how we see and behave in the world. Students learn about elements of culture while also cultivating intercultural relationships among Mosaic's California congregations, a microcosm of America's diversity. Students explore the discipline of spiritual friendships and practice intercultural techniques with one another as they learn to listen and respond to the needs of others.
- 3. A Community in Mission [missional course]:** This course fosters an awareness of God's presence in the world as participants explore how the gospel is Good News for their specific context. The class begins with an intensive experience in Florida, where Mosaic is experiencing an explosion of church planting. Students practice the spiritual disciplines of observation and giving witness to where they see God's presence in their neighborhoods as they seek to cultivate a vision for God's work of restoration and reconciliation.
- 4. Formed by Scripture [formational course]:** This course offers participants the opportunity to dig into the story of the Bible and to practice reading it both devotionally and for spiritual growth. Students experience the spiritual discipline of reading the Bible in community as part of a weekend retreat in post-Christendom Vermont, while exploring the multiplicity of ways that Anabaptists have and do interpret Scripture, with Jesus at the center.

During each year, cohorts will also periodically meet in smaller learning communities as they explore how to integrate their learnings and experiences into their congregational life. In the second half of each year, participants will focus their energy on leading their congregation in a process of naming an area of growth and, in conversation with their coach, learning community, and assigned conference staff person (called a Leadership Minister), develop a learning plan for the congregation.

Congregational Projects

The second half of each year in a learning community will provide congregational leaders the opportunity to focus on how to implement change within their congregation. By this point, they will have been equipped with tools and techniques, but also have experienced transformation through relationships, travel, and engaging in spiritual disciplines. Our hope is that congregational leaders will not wait until their classes are over to begin integrating their learnings into congregational life; the second half of each year, however, will require less of an external time commitment and allow intentional work toward change.

As part of their integration work, participants will have the opportunity for their congregational leadership and/or congregations to meet with their Leadership Minister and coach to identify an area in which the congregation would like to foster growth, in response to the classes in which they participated (story/identity, intercultural capacity, mission, or formation). Together, with insight from others in their learning community, the participants will develop a plan for congregational growth.

The congregational project may include external resourcing, programming, or events that can be underwritten by a grant from the Vibrant Mosaic budget, which will be partially funded by a contribution from the conference's Missional Operational Grant fund (up to a total of \$5,000 per congregation). If a congregation wishes to, they may reserve their first-year's grant for their second year in the program and request a combined grant of up to \$10,000 for a larger-scale experiment.

Throughout the year, the learning community will engage in an action-reflection process, utilizing Kolb's Experiential Learning Model⁷, adapted as needed for the learning plan. Near the end of the year, the learning community, coach, and Leadership Minister will help participants to evaluate the fruit of the year's

⁷ "What is Experiential Learning?" Institute for Experiential Learning. Accessed at <https://experientiallearninginstitute.org/resources/what-is-experiential-learning/> (June 8, 2023).

experiences by sharing stories in response to one or more of the questions below, as appropriate to their growth edge. Stories are a primary way that people make sense of our experiences in the world⁸ and help to shift us away from opinion to reflection on congregational practice.

1. How has the congregation grown in its sense of mission and identity? [story & identity]

Markers: The congregation tells their corporate story and describes how they came to be and who they are. The congregation shares their personal stories with one another and are aware of why their particular combination of people are gathered in community for such a time as this.

2. How has the congregation grown in its connection with one another and/or the broader conference this year? How has the congregation experienced reconciliation or belonging? [intercultural]

Markers: The congregation describes ways they have contributed to the flourishing of others. The congregation names skills they have learned and implemented to relate to one another across difference. The congregation tells stories of ways they have changed in response to others.

3. How has the congregation contributed to the flourishing of its community this year? [mission]

Markers: The congregation tells stories of where they have seen God's presence and how they responded to what they saw. The congregation names specific people they have interacted with and/or befriended in their neighborhood over the last year. The congregation articulates what the Good News is for people in their community.

4. How has the congregation grown in its connection with God this year? [formation]

Markers: The congregation names signs of peace and flourishing in their spiritual walks. The congregation points to specific spiritual practices they have individually and communally engaged with this year. The congregation tells stories of ways they have seen God's presence in their lives, as individuals, families, and a church.

Supports for Leaders of Color

Historically, our conference of congregations has not been organized in a way that led to the thriving of People of Color (POC) in our midst. Conference structures, events, and ways of relating often reflect the dominant culture's way of being and behaving. Part of our intercultural commitment to living God's mission in the world is to change in response to the real needs and desires of our congregations and leaders of color.



Because of this commitment, the Vibrant Mosaic Program will include specialized resourcing for our congregations and leaders of color; this resourcing will be integrated into all elements of the program but also include additional resources directed toward cultivating unmediated space for POC in our conference to build relationships, receive resourcing (and resource one another), and cast vision for their congregations.

Integrated supports:

- In consultation with Eric Law of the Kaleidoscope Institute, we will intentionally redesign the curriculum of our four learning community classes to include intercultural content, teaching techniques, and the contextualization of learnings. We will

⁸ See Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990).

integrate primary language learning in our courses whenever possible, including books written in languages other than English, contextualized instruction videos, bilingual instructors, interpretation, and alternate tour guides. We will regularly review and revise our curriculum to make our courses and program more accessible and relevant across cultures.

- Although our class cohorts will intentionally include a diverse combination of leaders, the smaller learning communities may include some specifically shaped around culture and language, as needed.
- Our learning community coaches will include leaders of color who are bilingual. All learning community coaches will meet periodically throughout the grant period with their own coach to build their intercultural capacity as they work across the diversity of our conference.
- We will provide intercultural and/or anti-oppression training for conference staff and board members as they support the Vibrant Mosaic Program.

Additional supports:

- We will organize Renewing Nations & Generations retreats in 2025, 2027, and 2029 for leaders of color to gather, foster relationships across cultures and language, and share resources specific to their needs and contexts. These gatherings will be planned and implemented by leaders of color so that their time together is unmediated by white staff.
- We will provide scholarships for leaders of color and women on the Vibrant Mosaic Program staff to continue in their theological education. These scholarships will help bridge disparities in access to higher education and promote sustainability of our programming into the future.



SELECTION PROCESS

The Vibrant Mosaic Program is designed to include four leaders each from up to 20 congregations over four cohorts. We expect that some congregations will not be able or willing to participate at this time; we anticipate that others will eagerly request to be included. We also know that a number of congregations include people from cultures that will only participate if invited. Therefore, Vibrant Mosaic staff will select participants through a combination of relational shoulder-tapping (with recommendations from the Leadership Ministers who work with the congregations) and open application for congregations who indicate interest. Individual participants from each congregation will be selected in conversations between the congregation's leadership and their Leadership Minister; criteria will include their ability to stick with and complete the program, leadership position or relational ability to encourage change, spiritual maturity, ability and willingness to collaborate, and an awareness of the balance of gender, age, theological perspectives, and racial demographics in each cohort.

As of 2024, Mosaic Conference has more than 40 pastors or credentialed leaders who are People of Color. Not every leader will be able to attend every Renewing Nations & Generations gathering, so participants will be allowed to self-select, with priority given to a balance of geography, ethnicity, and gender. Priority will also be given to younger leaders or women exploring ministry or discerning call.

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS



MOSAIC INSTITUTE is the formation arm of Mosaic Conference, with its own advisory team and director. Mosaic Institute was launched in 2021 and developed and implemented the core courses described above, as well as a variety of other classes designed to equip pastors and lay leaders in the work of the church. Mosaic Institute will provide the core courses and participate in the revision and development of the curriculum, in partnership with the Institute director. (mosaicmennonites.org/institute)



ROOTS OF JUSTICE helps churches and nonprofits identify and change systems of oppression within their organizations. They provide workshops, analysis training, and coaching for anti-oppression and justice work. Mosaic Conference and its predecessors have partnered with Roots of Justice since its inception more than 25 years ago. Roots of Justice will provide anti-oppression training for conference staff and board. (rootsofjusticetraining.org)



THE KALEIDOSCOPE INSTITUTE helps churches and church-related institutions to grow in their intercultural practices and provides tools for healthy dialogue across differences. Mosaic began working with the concepts and books of Kaleidoscope's founder Eric Law over a decade ago and began consulting directly with him in 2022. Kaleidoscope will work with Vibrant Mosaic staff to revise and further develop the course curriculum with an intercultural posture and techniques and to provide regular reviews over the first three years of the program. They will also provide intercultural trainings to instructors and facilitators. (kscopeinstitute.org)



THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTER is a Conference Related Ministry of Mosaic Conference, part of the network of organizations that partner with Mosaic in sharing God's healing and hope in local communities through nurture, witness, care, and discipling. Located in Harleysville, PA, the Heritage Center will provide access for program participants to resources on Mennonite and Mosaic history and a library of historical documents. As part of their oral history project, they will also provide guidance and workshops for congregations who identify connecting with their communal story as part of their growth edge. (mhcp.org)



EVERENCE is the stewardship agency of the Mennonite Church USA, with long-standing ties to other denominations with historic Anabaptist roots. They offer financial services, including banking, investments, retirement & insurance. Everence provides education and resourcing for congregations and church leadership and will partner with the Vibrant Mosaic Program to equip BIPOC leaders through our Nations & Generations gatherings and/or scholarship funds. (everence.com)

EVALUATION

Outcomes

Mosaic Conference has designed the Vibrant Mosaic Program to achieve four outcomes: for the leaders who participate, for the congregations who participate, for the conference as a whole, and for the wider church.



- **Leaders:** The Vibrant Mosaic Program provides a space for congregational leaders to grow in their relationships with God and with one another. We expect that these classes, learning communities, and Renewing Nations & Generations retreats will challenge and encourage conference leaders as well as provide support and practical tools to lead their congregations in change.
- **Congregations:** By equipping leaders and accompanying congregations through a period of reflection, action, and more reflection, the Vibrant Mosaic Program will contribute to a growing health in conference congregations. We expect to see congregations who are able to name their growth edge, design a process to facilitate change, and articulate ways that they have experienced transformation.
- **Conference:** As congregations who participate in the Vibrant Mosaic Program complete the program and participate in up to two years of learning and experimentation, our conference's current trajectory of cultural change will be accelerated. We believe that growing health in even a portion of our conference system will increase health across the conference as a whole and that the skills and techniques that we learn through this process will overflow into other areas of conference life.
- **Wider Church:** With its built-in process of review and revision, the Vibrant Mosaic Program will be a laboratory to develop intercultural techniques and postures for other institutions within our networks, including seminaries, other conferences, and our denomination. Our observations of and reflections on the experiments we engage will provide valuable information to others as they look toward the future of providing education and resourcing in an increasingly multicultural reality.

Performance Indicators

Quantitative

- Learning Communities
 - » Our goal is for 20 Mosaic congregations to participate in the initial four cohorts of this program, so that each cohort includes four representatives from each of five congregations, for a total of 20 participants per cohort.
 - » Our goal is that at least half of the congregations in each cohort complete the program, including participation in a second year of classes and learning experiments. This equals a total of three congregations per cohort, for a total of 12 congregations.

- Congregational Projects
 - » Our goal is for participating congregations to identify a growth edge and to develop a plan to foster health and thriving in that area. This goal will be measured by changes in congregational structure or programming in response to these learning communities, including the implementation of a learning experience or missional experiment in each year of their learning community.
- Support for Leaders of Color
 - » Our goal is to have 30 leaders attend each Renewing Nations & Generations gathering, with half of attendees from geographic regions outside of the one where each gathering is held.
 - » Our goal is for at least 3 Vibrant Mosaic staff to complete further theological training to equip them for sustaining the Vibrant Mosaic program into the future.
 - » Our goal is to have at least half of our staff and board complete anti-oppression and/or intercultural training and 40 members of the broader conference community complete intercultural facilitator training to create a resource bank for future Vibrant Mosaic programming as well as to contribute to the health of conference and congregational life.

Qualitative

- Program-wide indicators
 - » Conference staff will experience an increase in job satisfaction as they work across cultures and as they cultivate a deeper understanding of these cultures, as expressed through their conversations and engagements in these contexts.
 - » Our team of instructors will develop an effective curriculum for forming leaders and congregations in our priority areas of story, formation, mission, and interculturalism.
 - » Our leaders of color will foster community through more prolonged time together at the biennial retreats. Evidence of community would include a sense of belonging among the leaders, inter-congregation partnerships among the leaders, and an increase in participation in other conference events, committees, and resourcing.
- Congregation-specific indicators
 - » Congregational leaders who complete the program will be able to articulate the importance of our priorities in the life of their congregations and name a growth edge for their congregations. They will experience an increased passion for congregational life and mission. They will develop relationships with leaders from other congregations and contexts.
 - » Congregations will express one or more of the following: 1) an increased sense of belonging and identity in our broader conference, which includes partnerships between congregations for purposes of mission, spiritual growth, and fellowship; 2) a common mission or communal spiritual practices that are bringing life to their church; or 3) an increased satisfaction in the future and direction of their church and expanding commitment to participation.

Evaluation Plan

Our conference operates as a very relational system. Additionally, many of the cultures within our conference respond more fully and frequently to relationships than surveys. In response to these context-specific needs, although our evaluation plan will include some traditional forms of information gathering (like course evaluations), much of our evaluation plan will revolve around “informal” conversations shaped by common questions and learning outcomes.

In the autumns of 2025 and 2026, course instructors and the program director will meet with a representative from Kaleidoscope to evaluate and revise the curriculum based on feedback from students (course evaluations distributed, collected, and compiled), direct conversations, and using Kolb’s Experiential Learning model to process the instructors’ own experiences. In 2027 and future years, the instructors and program director will continue this process using skills learned from consulting with Kaleidoscope.

Additionally, course assignments will ask questions related to the participants’ ability to integrate learnings into congregational life. These responses will be brought into conversation with Learning Community Coaches to evaluate the ways that participants are thriving both in the program and in their congregational contexts. More direct conversations can be initiated by the Learning Community Coaches as additional information is needed. The program director will meet with the coaches quarterly.

After completion of each year of the cohort, congregational leaders will reflect with their Leadership Minister and Learning Community Coach (see questions and markers in congregational project section). The program director will initiate and collect reports on these evaluations and will identify themes and areas of growth or changes to the program that may be needed in response. Congregations who are willing will be encouraged to write an article or make a video sharing their experience with the broader conference (which is also a part of the communication plan).

Since many of the leaders of color in our conference do not respond well to surveys or other modes of written data collection, feedback from our Renewing Nations & Generations gathering will be collected relationally, through conversations among participants, between participants and conference staff, and among conference staff, participants, and Vibrant Mosaic staff. This feedback will be integrated into future events.

COMMUNICATION

Communication support will be provided by the conference’s communication staff, which is a multilingual team with skills in digital communication, audio and video production, written communication, and translation. The program director will collaborate with the communication director to provide regular updates on the program and storytelling from the program through social media and the conference’s weekly email newsletter; this will be done multilingually and in a variety of media, as fits the context (video, blogs, photos, graphics). The conference gathers every November for a delegate assembly, which will include storytelling from congregations who are participating in the program. This will foster excitement in the wider conference community about the program as well as provide avenues for fundraising and recruitment for future cohorts (contributing to the program’s sustainability).

There will be regular communication with members of cohorts through direct email, WhatsApp, and relational connections, such as conversations with Leadership Ministers and coaches. Members of program staff will make visits to congregational meetings and programming. Annual communication will be provided about changes to the program in response to feedback and experiential learning.

Communication staff will be prioritized in the anti-oppression training offered to staff and board at the beginning of the program as well as the intercultural capacity training offered to the wider community. This will equip them to shape a Vibrant Mosaic communication plan that is culturally sensitive and just.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Vibrant Mosaic Program is the culmination of many years of dreaming, experimenting, and discerning what new, groundbreaking paths God is leading us down. We sense God's Spirit is doing a new thing among us and we are choosing to stop and recalibrate our lives together in response to God's presence and activity in our community.

We believe that the process, experience, and formation that comes with the Vibrant Mosaic Program will reshape our conference structures and relationships moving into the future. Therefore, we are designing this program to transition over the course of the five-year grant-period into an integrated part of our conference operations, which will include the establishment of new funding sources as well as phasing in line-items in our conference operating budget.

The grant-funded years of the Vibrant Mosaic Program will only provide opportunities for about a third of our congregations to participate in these transformational experiences. We will need to continue the program for another ten years to reach 100% participation, and an unknown number of years beyond that if our conference continues to grow at its current rate. Although we know that the program could change shape and structure in response to what we learn over the course of the next five years, we are in this for the long haul and are committed to developing a sustainability model that will allow us to continue a version of this program into the future.

Some parts of the grant program will provide lasting benefits without needing new investment: the structures will be established, curriculum will be developed, equipment will be purchased, and staff will not only be trained but will also be equipped to provide training to new staff. Other elements of the program will require ongoing investment and funding: course instructors and Learning Community Coaches will continue to accompany congregational leaders, students will continue to incur travel expenses, and congregational experiments will continue to require microgrants.

To support these elements of the program, we have developed a three-pronged sustainability plan: 1) to terrace contributions to the program from the conference operating budget, beginning in 2025, increasing the contribution by \$20,000 a year until reaching a sustainability level of \$180,000 annually in 2033; 2) to use the terraced contributions from the grant period and additional gifts (totaling at least \$330,000) from congregational and Conference-Related Ministry donations saved during the grant period to partially fund the program during the transition period; and 3) to cultivate estate gifts in order to establish two additional endowed funds, shaped around conference priorities. These endowed funds will begin supporting the Vibrant Mosaic program in 2030 with a \$20,000 contribution and increase each year to reach \$80,000 in contributions annually by 2033. During this time, the contribution of Missional Operational Grants already begun during the grant period will increase to match each endowed fund so that it also contributes \$40,000 annually in 2033 and moving forward.

This sustainability plan is designed with the goal of having the Vibrant Mosaic Program completely integrated into our operating budget and fully funded by 2033.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Mosaic Mennonite Conference is a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose vision is to “embody the reconciling love of Jesus in our broken and beautiful world.” Mosaic is a conference of Mennonite Church USA. Our board supervises the business of the conference, including conference committees, and does strategic planning to ensure that the conference is maintaining alignment with its vision and following the lead of the Spirit into areas of growth and change. Board members are recruited through a nomination process, supervised by a nomination committee that seeks to recommend nominees who represent the diversity of our conference (geography, theology, gender, race, etc.). Board members are delegate-approved. Our annual operating budget is over a million dollars and is funded by donations from individuals, congregations, and Conference-Related Ministries as well as annual contributions from conference-owned properties and investments.

Mosaic Conference has a gifted multilingual and multicultural staff that teams well and connects with the diversity of our conference. Our staff has a long history of providing faithful and creative accompaniment to conference leaders and congregations. The conference will allocate time from existing staff to provide program staffing during the grant period.

PROGRAM STAFFING

Program Co-Directors



Rev. Dr. Emily Ralph Servant (PhD in missional Anabaptist theology, MA in intercultural transformation) is a church planter, dean of the Mosaic Institute, and professor of culture, mission, and biblical interpretation. Dr. Servant has served as a pastor and theologian and has been in executive leadership for over a decade. She is deeply involved in renewal and community-building ministries in her Baltimore neighborhood and is author of *Experiments in Love: an Anabaptist Theology of Risk-Taking in Mission*.



Rev. Danilo Sanchez (intercultural coach) is Mosaic’s Leadership Minister for Intercultural Transformation and part of the pastoral team of an urban, multiethnic neighborhood church that primarily serves those on the margins of their city. Rev. Sanchez grew up in Mosaic Conference in a bilingual household and has served with Mennonite Central Committee in coordinating programs for young leadership development, especially among BIPOC leaders. With a BA in youth ministry and theology from Eastern University and an MDiv from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, he teaches courses on interculturalism and coaches pastors in ways to increase their intercultural capacity.

Learning Community Coaches



Rev. Rose Bender Cook (formational coach) is the Director of Mosaic Institute, Mosaic’s Leadership Minister for Formation, and pastor of a multilingual and multicultural congregation, which is exploring ways to adapt the culture and practice of a traditional Mennonite church to minister among and alongside refugees. With a BA in behavioral science with a social studies certificate from Messiah College and an MDiv from Bethel Seminary, Rev. Bender Cook has taught history in both rural and urban Christian schools, worked at curriculum development for Eastern Mennonite University’s leadership program, and taught seminary courses in history and formation. She is currently a DMin candidate at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, IN).



Rev. Noel Santiago (missional coach) is Mosaic's Leadership Minister for Missional Transformation. Rev. Santiago has spent decades supporting missional experiments and church plants during his 27 years on Mosaic's staff and, previously, in his role with Mennonite Mission Network. As a Puerto Rican man who grew up surrounded by the Pennsylvania Dutch community of Lancaster County, PA, Rev. Santiago has spent his whole ministry bridging cultures and encouraging intercultural transformation. With a degree in Hispanic ministries from Goshen College (IN), he has taught and ministered internationally and is a certified coach with Forge America, a community of practitioners-cultivating-practitioners who join in the everyday mission of God.