

To: Ohio Conference credentialed ministers, delegates, and congregations
From: Ohio Conference Leadership Team
Subject: What's Next after ACA 2023?
Date: March 9, 2023

The Leadership Team of Ohio Conference would once again like to take the opportunity to thank all of our credentialed ministers, delegates and congregations for your active participation in the first year of our two-year review process being facilitated by our consultant Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi from Design Group International. While the discernment at our winter delegate meetings and our Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) focused on future affiliation, as we begin year two we would like to shift our focus to work at aligning our vision and structure with our new mission statement – *The Mission of Ohio Conference is to Gather, Equip and Send our Congregations by the power of the Holy Spirit to live out God's Greatest Commandments and Jesus' Great Commission.*

Based on the discernment that took place at the Winter Cluster Meetings and at the Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) on March 3 – 4, 2023, the Leadership Team of Ohio Conference acknowledges that as a conference we are divided on wanting to remain affiliated with Mennonite Church USA (MC USA). We were committed going into ACA that a vote of less than a 2/3 majority by our delegates on either of the scenarios presented would not give us a clear mandate of God's will for us regarding future affiliation.

We also acknowledge that the discernment regarding affiliation has been draining for many and has taken time away from our primary mission of living out God's Greatest Commandments and Jesus' Great Commission.

In light of this we are committed to moving forward together, allowing space for those congregations that want to stay actively involved with MC USA to do so. We will continue our dialogue with MC USA leadership regarding the specifics of what it means for congregations to opt out of direct membership with MC USA, and we will continue to explore new opportunities of networking or affiliation options with other Anabaptist/Mennonite groups of similar beliefs that those congregations might like to relate to.

One of the highlights of the weekend ACA was the appreciation and respect shown for one another and importance of relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ. There was also a lot of optimism and hope expressed for Ohio Conference as we move forward together. Attached are two documents: 1. A compilation of responses from our delegates taken at the end of ACA titled "What's Next?" and 2. Ohio Conference's Identity as of March 2023.

In the upcoming weeks our pastoral staff, Dick Barrett and Tony Doehrmann, will be contacting each of our congregational pastors to check in regarding their own and their congregation's thoughts and feelings after the Annual Conference Assembly.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact anyone from the Leadership Team: Ken Sims (Moderator), Paula Snyder Belousek (Assistant Moderator), Dick Barrett (Conference Minister), Jared Chase (Gifts Discernment Chair), Andrew Blount (Stewardship Ministry Chair), Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach (Credentialing Ministry Representative), Alysa Short (Coordinator of Volunteers) or Judy King (Administrative Assistant).