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## **Executive Committee Summary of Request for Change in Membership Atlantic Coast Conference Maple Grove Mennonite Church**

**According to our bylaws, any request in change of membership must be done in writing to the delegates.**

Maple Grove Church has requested a change in membership from full conference membership to associate membership. This has been in response to associate membership granted to Frazer Mennonite Church Spring Assembly, 2013.

In order honor our relationship with Maple Grove and remain in the boundaries of our polity and bylaws we understand the following:

- Since Maple Grove has already established membership in ACC and is in good standing, all requirements of membership have been met.
- One such requirement is continued relationship through the conference minister office. The conference minister would expect continued cooperation and relationship with church leadership, including, but not limited to, dialog about membership.
- Associate membership of congregations is another means of relationship with the Conference in which the Associate Member Congregation desires to be aligned with and participate with the Conference for the benefit of both the congregation and the Conference

**According to the bylaws of ACC, the associate congregation will have the following characteristics:**

- Non-voting members of Delegate Council.
- Staff and Pastors do not hold credentials with the Conference, unless otherwise agreed with the Conference.
- Will receive administrative services based on agreement with the conference but at a lesser degree than full membership.
- Continued participation and fellowship within the conference
- Continued finance support of the conference

### **In summary:**

Maple Grove Mennonite Church, a full membership congregation, is seeking to be recognized as an associate congregation of Atlantic Coast Conference. This associate membership would allow Maple Grove to continue to participate in ACC delegate sessions, youth events, and MCUSA events. Guided by the present policy for delegate participation and voting privilege, ministers with credentials in the Maple Grove congregation would be full participants in ACC delegate sessions as long as their credentials are held by ACC. The congregation, however, would not have additional congregational lay delegates and any participants would be non-voting.

# MAPLE GROVE MENNONITE CHURCH

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Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Warren Tyson, ACC Executive Conference Minister  
Atlantic Coast Conference, MC USA  
2257 Old Philadelphia Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17602

RE: Maple Grove membership status change

Dear Warren,

This is to inform you that on Sunday, May 12, 2013 the Maple Grove Mennonite Church held an affirmation ballot on a proposal by our Leadership Team to change our status with the Atlantic Coast Conference from full member to associate member, effective immediately.

This decision was made after serious discernment and discussion over the past six months. It is a preliminary reaction to the Conference vote to invite Frazer Mennonite into membership. We have become discouraged with the policy of some ACC member churches that have an open acceptance of practicing homosexual individuals into active membership and participation in the church.

As charter members of the ACC we have found that this decision is both difficult and heartrending. However, we feel that under the present circumstances it is the best decision for our congregation.

Our desire is to remain as associate members of the ACC as we enter into a process of prayer and discernment on future conference affiliation options for Maple Grove.

Grace and Peace in Christ Jesus,

Stephen D. Crane, Pastor

CC: Merv Stoltzfus (Conference Minister), Harry Jarrett (Conference Moderator)

*"Showing God's Love To Others Through Jesus"*



**Executive Committee Summary of Request for Change in Membership**  
**Memo of understanding between Atlantic Coast Conference and Maple Grove Mennonite Church**  
**October 22, 2013**

Dear Stephen,

We recognize the request from Maple Grove to continue in relationship with Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) with a change in membership. We cherish the history of Maple Grove with ACC and seek the best for the congregation as well as the conference. In light of this request, we recognize the following. Please accept our apologies for the delay in our process. In light of your letter dated May 15, 2013 and the subsequent meetings and process already undertaken, the following is our understanding of your request and conference response.

Atlantic Coast Conference Minister, Merv Stoltzfus and Maple Grove Mennonite Church Pastor and Leadership team have been in dialog resulting from the congregation's desire to move from full membership to associate membership with ACC. This has been in response to associate membership granted to Frazer Mennonite Church by conference delegates during the Spring Assembly 2013 resulting in Maple Grove congregational meetings and a discernment process understanding about what it means to be a member of ACC. While this is not the first request for associate membership, this is the first request to move from full membership to associate membership and requires diligent process.

In our desire to honor the relationship with Maple Grove we understand that

- Maple Grove has already established membership in ACC and is in good standing, all requirements of membership have been met.
- One such requirement is continued relationship through the conference minister office. The conference minister would expect continued cooperation and relationship with church leadership, including, but not limited to, dialog about membership and leadership;
- Associate membership of congregations is another means of relationship with the Conference in which the Associate Member Congregation desires to be aligned with and participate with the Conference for the benefit of both the congregation and the Conference. ACC would encourage continued participation with youth events, assemblies, and other conference and denominational events.

**According to the bylaws of ACC, the associate membership would grant Maple Grove the following characteristics:**

- Non-voting members of Delegate Council, except any minister(s) already holding credentials in the conference and desiring the conference continue to retain the credentials
- Maple Grove pastors would not hold credentials with the Conference, unless otherwise agreed with the Conference. An exception may be any pastors or ministers currently holding credentials in ACC and desiring that ACC continue to hold the credential.
- Conference administrative services would continue but would be at a lesser degree than when Maple Grove held full membership.
- Maple Grove would continue to participate and fellowship within the conference.
- Maple Grove would continue to provide finance support of the conference.

It is our understanding that the change in membership would allow Maple Grove to continue to participate in conference life, sharing with other congregations in cluster, delegate sessions, youth events, MC USA events and conventions but as non-voting participants. Guided by the present policy for delegate participation and voting privilege, ministers in the Maple Grove congregation with ACC credentials would be full participants in ACC delegate sessions as long as their credentials are held by ACC; however, without any lay delegates.

We welcome the continued dialog as you process. We will recognize your request to read a letter to the delegate body and will move forward on your request.

ACC moderator: Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Maple Grove congregational chair: Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_