

Notice of Proposed Amendments to ACC Bylaws

In accordance with the bylaws, notice is hereby given that the following bylaw amendments will be considered at the Fall Delegate Assembly on October 23, 2021.

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws:

Amendment 1: Article I.3 | Incorporation

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>On November 4, 1978, the Atlantic Coast Conference of the Mennonite Church became the successor to the Missions Committee of the Conestoga-Maple Grove District, which was incorporated May 15, 1957, and the Atlantic States District, both of which were members of the Ohio and Eastern Conference of the Mennonite Church. The Atlantic Coast Conference was chartered as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on January 24, 1979.</p>	<p>On November 4, 1978, the ACC became the successor to the Missions Committee of the Conestoga-Maple Grove District, which was incorporated May 15, 1957, and the Atlantic States District, both of which were members of the Ohio and Eastern Conference of the Mennonite Church. ACC was chartered as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on January 24, 1979.</p>	<p>Section 2 indicates that “Atlantic Coast Conference” will hereafter be shortened to “ACC”. This was not followed through and the full text appears in several places. All mentions of “Atlantic Coast Conference” after section 2 will be shortened to “ACC”.</p>

Amendment 2: Article I.4 | Denominational Affiliation

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>The Atlantic Coast Conference is a voluntary participating conference in the Mennonite Church USA. The Conference subscribes to the current Confession of Faith of Mennonite Church USA and seeks to fulfill the responsibilities of this affiliation. It encourages member congregations to participate in the meetings, programs and services of the denomination.</p>	<p>ACC is a voluntary participating member conference of the Mennonite Church USA and seeks to fulfill the duties and share the vision thereof. The Conference subscribes to the current Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and seeks to fulfill the responsibilities of this statement.</p>	<p>Language was updated. The third sentence was moved to Section 5.A. which addresses congregations.</p>

Amendment 3: Article I.5.A. | Congregations

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue. Words removed are in red.	Rationale
<p>1. The congregation is the basic unit of the Atlantic Coast Conference organization. The congregation is central in the life and witness of the church and finds broader meaning as it becomes a part of the larger church.</p>	<p>1. The congregation is the basic unit of the ACC organization. The congregation is central in the life and witness of the church and finds broader meaning as it becomes a part of the larger church. 2. Member congregations of ACC are encouraged to fully participate in the life of ACC and endorse the vision and priorities of Mennonite Church USA.</p>	<p>5.A.2. was moved from Section 4.</p>

Amendment 4: Article I.5.B. Eligibility for Conference Membership

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>1. Congregations shall be eligible to apply for and continue membership in the Atlantic Coast Conference when they demonstrate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The existence of a recognized body of members. b. An adequate leadership structure that supports the operations of a viable congregation. c. A willingness to embrace the current Confession of Faith of Mennonite Church USA as a guiding framework for ministry and relationship. d. A commitment to giving and receiving counsel from the conference and/or its constituent congregations. e. A readiness to share responsibly in the program of the Conference with interest, prayers, personnel and funds. 	<p>1. Congregations shall be eligible to apply for and continue membership in ACC when they demonstrate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The existence of a recognized body of believers. b. A leadership body that supports the life and mission of a congregation. c. A willingness to embrace the current Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective as a guiding framework for ministry and relationship. d. A readiness to share responsibly in the program of the Conference with interest, prayers, personnel and financial generosity. <p>2. Congregations commit to giving and receiving council from each other and from conference leadership to ensure ongoing alignment with the above criteria.</p>	<p>Language was updated. New Section 5.B.2. defines what topics congregations commit to give and receive counsel.</p>

Amendment 5: Article I.5.C. | Eligibility for Associate Conference Membership

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>1. Congregations or groups of congregations will be eligible to apply for and continue associate membership in the Atlantic Coast Conference when they demonstrate the same characteristics as Members, found in Section 5.B.1.a-e. 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. Associate membership may be a step toward membership in the Conference.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Associate membership will have the following characteristics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Non-voting members of Delegate Council. 2) Staff and Pastors do not hold credentials with the Conference, unless otherwise agreed with the Conference. 3) Will receive administrative services based on agreement with the conference. 		<p>This proposal removes the provision for associate conference membership. This status and practice has not served ACC well in the past.</p>

Amendment 6: Article II | Function

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>The Atlantic Coast Conference will, from time to time, establish the Conference's vision, purpose and values and maintain or create structures and processes to, together, achieve it vision and purposes. The Conference will do this through the structures of its Delegate Council, Executive Committee, its various subcommittees, and Conference staff.</p>	<p>ACC fully endorses the vision and priorities of Mennonite Church USA and provides the service of leadership and Christian community to participating congregations and Conference Related Ministries. ACC will utilize the structures of its Delegate Council, Executive Committee, various standing committees, and Conference staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Call all congregations to obedience to God, the centrality of Jesus Christ, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of the Scripture. B. Help congregations to identify their needs and find support services that may help congregations accomplish their mission. C. Welcome diversity among the congregations within the parameters established by the current Mennonite Confession of Faith. D. Encourage a social conscience by expressing Christian concerns and convictions on ethical issues. E. Provide oversight for each congregation and encourage and disciple congregations toward greater faithfulness to Christ and Scripture. F. Help congregations call dedicated and gifted pastors, examine and credential these leaders, and support their continuing growth and education. G. Be a forum for discerning the will of God through the counsel of the members and for addressing issues of concern to congregations. 	<p>ACC's polity and practice has been to endorse and live out the vision, purpose, and values of Mennonite Church USA rather than initiating its own. Points A-G were reintroduced from the 2003 version of ACC's Bylaws.</p>

Amendment 7: Article III.1 | Delegate Council Function

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>The Delegate Council will serve as a forum for representatives of associated congregations to address policies and programs that achieve the purpose of Conference. The final responsibility and authority of the Conference rests with the Delegate Council. The Delegates are the representatives of the member congregations of this corporation.</p>	<p>The Delegate Council will serve as a forum for representatives of member congregations and Conference Related Ministries to address policies and programs that achieve the purpose of Conference. The final responsibility and authority of the Conference rests with the Delegate Council. The Delegates are the representatives of the member congregations of this corporation.</p>	<p>Updated language.</p>

Amendment 8: Article III.3 | Delegate Council Duties

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>B. Participate in meetings, fellowship, discussion, and ACC vision development stewarding the vision through Conference delegate sessions.</p> <p>C. Elect Executive Committee members and other identified leadership needed for the Conference.</p> <p>E. Receive and terminate member and associate member congregations.</p>	<p>B. Participate in meetings, fellowship, discussion, and Mennonite Church USA vision processes.</p> <p>C. Elect Executive Committee members and chairpersons of standing committees.</p> <p>E. Receive and release member congregations in accordance with conference policy.</p>	<p>Updated language. Clarified what has been the delegate body's practice of voting on Executive Committee members and committee chairpersons.</p>

Amendment 9: Article III.4 | Meetings

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>A. The Delegate Council, conference congregations and interested individuals will meet at least annually for worship, fellowship and conducting the official business of the Conference, at a time and place fixed by the Executive Committee. The fall assembly is regarded as the annual conference assembly. Additional meetings of the Delegate Council can be called by Executive Committee or at the written request of a majority of the Conference Delegates</p> <p>B. Notice of all meetings will be communicated to associated member congregations no less than thirty days prior to the date of meeting.</p> <p>F. The Delegate Council, Executive Committee and any subcommittees may act by electronic (including telephonic) means, by following policies developed, approved and agreed on by the Executive Committee. A decision by electronic means will be properly documented in writing after its action and will be binding as any other action taken in an in-person meeting. While face-to-face meeting will be the preferred style of meeting, the Conference recognizes that its objectives may be best met by meeting by electronic means.</p>	<p>A. The Delegate Council, conference congregations and interested individuals will meet at least annually at the invitation of Executive Committee for worship, fellowship and conducting the official business of the Conference, at a time and place fixed by the Executive Committee. Additional meetings of the Delegate Council can be called by Executive Committee or the written request of delegates from any four ACC member congregations in consultation with Executive Committee.</p> <p>B. Notice of all meetings will be communicated to member congregations no less than thirty days prior to the date of meeting.</p>	<p>The Fall Assembly gathering is often referred to as the Annual Assembly, but both annual gatherings hold equal weight in regard to conference business and life. Clarification is added to assign primary oversight of delegate gatherings. Additional means of calling delegate gatherings were amended to make it easier for delegates to call meetings.</p> <p>Section F, which allowed for meetings of the delegate body to be convened electronically, was removed. We are aware of no possible situation that would require such a meeting and prefer in-person gathering and voting.</p>

Amendment 10: Article IV.1. | Executive Committee Functions

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>B. Function for the Conference between Delegate Council sessions, within parameters established by the Delegate Council</p> <p>C. Acts on membership as described in Article I, Section 5.</p> <p>F. Supervise the work of Conference staff persons, through the Executive Conference Minister and via personnel policies, including annual review of assignments, salaries and allowances.</p>	<p>B. Function on behalf of the Conference between Delegate Council sessions, within parameters established by the Delegate Council</p> <p>C. Recommends Delegate Council action on conference membership as described in Article I, Section 5.</p> <p>F. Supervise the work of Conference staff persons, through the Executive Conference Minister.</p> <p>J. May act by electronic means, which will be properly documented in writing after its action and will be binding as any other action taken in an in-person meeting. While face-to-face meeting will be the preferred style of meeting, the Conference recognizes that its objectives may be met by meeting by electronic means.</p>	<p>Language was updated. The Executive Conference Minister, as staff team leader, is entrusted with enforcing personnel policies and reviewing staff performance as necessary.</p> <p>Unlike the work of the delegate body, sometimes electronic communication and decision-making best meets conference objectives. Item J. makes allowance for this form of business.</p>

Amendment 11: Article IV.2. | Executive Committee Composition and Officers

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>A. Composition: The Executive Committee consists of six (6) or more individuals selected by the Delegate Council at its Annual Assembly or other appropriately convened meeting and a representative of the Cluster Conveners.</p> <p>B. Servant Leaders: The Delegate Council will appoint individual members of Executive Committee to serve as Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer, Secretary, (the officers of the Conference) and two or more additional members. Members of the Executive Committee serve as volunteers, receiving no compensation from the Conference.</p> <p>C. Description of Servant Leader Roles</p> <p>1. Moderator</p> <p>a. Presides over meetings of the Delegate Council and Executive Committee.</p> <p>b. Has the responsibility of a chairperson, under the Nonprofit Corporation Law of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>c. Serves a two-year term; may be appointed for up to two additional two-year terms.</p> <p>d. Performs all other duties pertaining to the office of Moderator.</p>	<p>A. Composition: The Executive Committee consists of six (6) or more individuals selected by the Delegate Council at its Annual Assembly or other appropriately convened meeting.</p> <p>B. Servant Leaders: The Delegate Council will appoint individual members of Executive Committee to serve as Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Treasurer, Secretary, (the officers of the Conference) and two or more additional members. Members of the Executive Committee serve as volunteers, receiving no compensation from the Conference.</p> <p>C. Description of Servant Leader Roles</p> <p>1. Moderator</p> <p>a. Facilitates meetings of the Delegate Council and Executive Committee.</p> <p>b. Has the responsibility of a chairperson, under the Nonprofit Corporation Law of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>c. May serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.</p> <p>d. Assumes the office beginning July 1 for a two-year term following election by the Delegate Council.</p> <p>2. Treasurer</p> <p>e. Serves as chairperson of the Finance & Stewardship Committee.</p>	<p>Cluster conveners have not been a part of Executive Committee for some time. The Moderator-elect is now in practice called the Assistant Moderator. New items c. and d. are the new standard terminology for all appointed Executive Committee members and Committee Chairpersons.</p> <p>Also of note is the change to the number of consecutive terms allowed. Formerly the above mentioned officers could serve three consecutive terms. We suggest allowing only two consecutive terms to allow for a more frequent rotation of leaders.</p> <p>Executive Committee recommends that the Treasurer and Finance Committee chairperson roles be combined to eliminate any duplication of responsibilities. An assistant Finance & Stewardship Committee chairperson will be designated from within the committee.</p>

Amendment 12: Article V | Conference Office

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
<p>Executive Committee proposes to the Delegate Council a budget and recommends the chief administrator (Executive Conference Minister). The Executive Conference Minister may employ/discontinue the employment of additional staff upon authorization of the Executive Committee and consistent with the Conference budget.</p>	<p>Executive Committee proposes to the Delegate Council a budget and recommends the Executive Conference Minister recommends the Executive Conference Minister to the Delegate Assembly for affirmation. The Executive Conference Minister may employ/discontinue the employment of additional staff in consultation with Executive Committee.</p>	<p>Updated language.</p>

Amendment 13: Article V | Committees

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
D. The Executive Committee will have authority to create temporary staff positions as deemed necessary to support the establishment and function of a committee.	D. Committee chairpersons will be approved by delegate council for a two-year term and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.	Removed is the provision for Executive Committee to create temporary staff positions. A bylaw is not required if this type of role is ever needed. The new bylaw clarifies that committee chairpersons will be elected by the delegate body, and reduces the term limit from three to two. These are two unrelated changes.

Amendment 14: Article VII | Conference Year

Current Bylaw Words removed are in red.	Bylaw with Amendments Words inserted or added are in blue.	Rationale
A. The Conference year will begin with the close of the annual Assembly of Delegates and extend through the annual meeting the following year. All elected positions will be governed by the Conference year.	A. The Conference year will begin on July 1 and extend through June 30. All elected positions will begin on July 1.	We favor starting elected terms at least a month after election at the Spring Assembly to allow sufficient time for orientation and transfer of responsibilities. The Conference year will now be aligned with the fiscal year.

Committee membership plan through the proposed transition

1. Currently seated members are grandfathered into three-term committee membership eligibility.
2. We will continue with the plan proposed in 2019 to discontinue the Fall Assembly following the Fall 2021 meeting (no bylaw change needed). We intend to continue planning engaging and community-building events each fall without centering them around delegate business.
3. Newly-elected members in the Fall of 2021, along with all existing committee members renewing terms, would serve a two year term, beginning immediately and running through June 30, 2023 (rather than October 2023).
4. Committee members with terms expiring in October 2022 would be asked to extend their term through June 30, 2023.
5. In the Spring of 2022, committee members will be elected to begin terms on July 1 with the new conference year.