

1 **MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA**

2 **JOINT COUNCIL MEETING**

3 **December 5, 2020**

4 **ZOOM**

5 **Session 1 (11:00 AM – 12:40 Noon CST)**

6 **Session 2 (1:05 pm – 3:00 PM CST)**

7 **Meeting Minutes**

8
9 **Joint Council Present:** Calvin Quan (Moderator), Geraldine Balzer (Assistant Moderator), Allan Hiebert
10 (Secretary/Treasurer), Terry Stefaniuk (Moderator MCSK), Gerald Gerbrandt (Moderator MCM), Andrea
11 De Avila (MCM), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Moderator MCA), Margaret Kruger Harder (MCA), Gerry Grunau
12 (Moderator MCBC), Betty Loewen (MCBC), Arli Klassen (Moderator, MCEC), Ly Vang (MCEC) Henry Funk
13 (MCSK)

14 **Staff Present:** Tim Wiebe Neufeld (MCA), Rick Neufeld (MCM), Leah Reesor-Keller (MCEC), Garry Janzen
15 (MCBC), Ryan Siemens (MCSK), Doug Klassen (Executive Minister); Kathy Fast (Exec. Assistant)

16
17 **Session 1**

- 18 1) **Welcome:** Calvin called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM (CST) and outlined ZOOM protocols, also
19 noting a late document that was sent out regarding the role of Joint Council Additional Regional
20 Church Representative.
21
22 2) **Opening:** Ly Vang spoke on Ecc 3:1-12 – the changing season of our unchanging God. Covid-19 is a
23 season that's frightening, and changing us, but God wants us to rejoice always, and is a part of every
24 season of our lives. She offered a prayer for healing and restoration.
25
26 3) **MC Canada Covenant Litany:** The MC Canada Covenant Litany was read with all Joint Council and
27 ESG members present participating.
28
29 4) **Agenda and Minutes**
30 a) **Agenda Review** – Agenda was accepted as presented, though item 7c (changes to Benefit plans)
31 will be deferred to January meeting.
32
33 b) **Joint Council minutes, October 31, 2020.** (pp 6-11 of the docket) The draft minutes of the
34 previous Joint Council meeting were reviewed. A few grammatical changes were noted.
35

36 **CONSENSUS: The minutes of the October 31, 2020 Joint Council meeting were approved as circulated**
37 **with the corrected grammatical changes.**

38
39 **5) Regional Church moderator reports**

40 **a) MCBC – Gerry Grunau**

- 41 i) With the expansion of COVID-19, there are more restrictions for church services. We are
42 trying to support congregations and working with those who have not been following
43 protocols.
44 ii) Currently considering how congregations can support lonely people over Christmas
45 iii) AGM was held virtually
46 iv) MCBC is finding general financial support is in line with budget.

47
48 **b) MCA – Brenda Tiessen-Wiens**

- 49 i) Check-in session (via Zoom) held with congregations on November 7 went well.
50 ii) Chin congregation has purchased a building, and now has additional pressure to shift to the
51 new location earlier than anticipated. Renovations to the building are required. Other
52 congregations have pledged financial assistance.
53 iii) The E3 reference group put together an on-line advent calendar See: www.mcab.ca
54 iv) The Alberta Government provided \$40,000 to offset financial losses with Camp Valaqua.

55

56 **c) MCSK – Terry Stefaniuk**

- 57 i) Had a visioning meeting last weekend with Betty Pries – start of new process.
58 ii) Annual Delegate Session will be on ZOOM in March.
59 iii) Finances are tracking as normal.
60 iv) Worship is still taking place, but staying within limitations set by Saskatchewan Government
61 (30 or less in-person)
62 v) Youth Farm Bible Camp has built a snow Maze

63

64 **d) MCM – Gerald Gerbrandt**

- 65 i) No in-person worship services allowed across Manitoba
66 ii) A recent fund-raising banquet for camping ministry went well
67 iii) The Mission board met with Jeanette regarding relational funding, and with Dorothy
68 Fontaine re: local programming.
69 iv) Have 5 congregations with pastor resignations, only some having interim pastors in place
70 v) Riverton congregation is closing. Building was given over to local community

71

72 **e) MCEC – Arli Klassen**

- 73 i) Finances – income is lower, but so are expenses. Bottom line looks good – wondering about
74 how many congregations will come through - long term forecast is disconcerting
75 ii) Last exec. Council meeting held discussions on long-term planning, determined to work on
76 missions/values/priorities. Strong affirmation for current vision statement
77 iii) Misconduct cases continue to require energy and attention. Working at crisis management
78 with these congregations.
79 iv) Commissioning service for Leah took place a few weeks ago. Arli found it energy giving.

80

81 **6) Executive Minister's Report**

82 **a)** Office is operating with a limited number of staff in office due to current COVID-19 restrictions.
83 Staff are missing the daily interactions.

84 **b)** Doug has been in virtual meetings with our affiliation with EFC, CCC & CCAL

85 **i)** CCAL (Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders): discussions on indigenous relations, Steve
86 involved in writing up actions. Other group discussions include developing Culture of Call

87 **ii)** CCC (Canadian Council of Churches - includes various faith groups) is dynamic, seen as
88 working alongside the government. Doug, ESG and Executive participated in a ZOOM on
89 Thursday, with Prime Minister on what faith communities are doing to support people and
90 caring for society during the COVID-19 crisis. One challenge came from Muslim group for the
91 Government to see churches as providing essential services, such as soup kitchens and other
92 community services.

93 **c)** Bill C-15 (regarding the implementation of UNDRIP) was introduced to parliament, with mention
94 of Steve Heinrichs for his work in promoting this.

95 **d)** For a misconduct case from MCEC, Doug will stand in for Marilyn.

- e) **MOU between CommonWord and MennoMedia.** Doug had a good conversation with MC Canada’s board representatives regarding issues between CommonWord and MennoMedia, and discussed some possible resolutions. A recent cost comparison for publishing has been eye-opening, as MC Canada found it cheaper to self publish, rather than using Herald Press.
- f) Diversity Adversity Steering Committee is waiting for one more appointment and will begin meeting mid December. Ly Vang will co-chair with Doug.
- g) Doug is missing the face-to-face JC & ESG meetings where we can sit down for longer periods.

7) **Finance**

- a) **Financial Reports** as of October 31, 2020 were reviewed (pp. 12-18 of docket).
- b) **Shared Revenue Agreement / Fundraising.** (pp. 19-22 of docket)
 - i) There was a discussion of moving to a percentage based shared revenue of undesignated giving from churches and individuals. Sean has prepared charts indicating what the costs to the Regional Churches would be with the new model.
 - ii) Benefits include having a simple model to explain to members, and joint fund-raising efforts with no ‘competition for funds’. It is hoped that the new model would create more of a sense of risk-sharing, and being in it together.
 - iii) **Discussion:**
 - (1) Questions about individual giving either to the Regional Church or directly to MC Canada. Is this “designated” giving? All were in general agreed on sharing undesignated congregational giving. However, the trend seems to be that of congregational giving going down and individual giving is on the rise, as well as more donations being designated giving. This creates the challenge of donors then attempting to drive agenda and how this takes away from the goal of working together and creating one-ness. More clarity was requested on the individual giving and approach to designated giving, along with options and a rationale on the percentages used.

ACTION: Doug to lead development of a document, and update JC by email. (due to timing of budget development and year end dates looming)

- c) **Fundraising:** A nationwide strategy was being created. The docket included the current draft of the themes and a ‘line-up’ of church programs to be highlighted. The work is being done between communicators, together determining what will be communicated across the regions. The challenge of how each region profiles work happening within other regions is being discussed. Fall and Spring donation appeals are being suggested.
 - i) **Discussion:** Encourage that the appeal letters go out with regional input. When sharing Witness stories, and considering the desire to grow the networks, suggest relating a story from a network, local congregations who are participating in a program. Appeal letters from region should include nation-wide programs that we are all in together, and projects from both region and nationwide.

Session 2:

8) **Facilities - update**

- 140 a) **Lease Agreement** (pp 23-25 of docket): An update on the lease agreement between MCM and
141 MC Canada was presented in the docket. Doug reviewed the proposed terms of the agreement,
142 with breakdown of areas and that are covered, including basic rent, capital improvement,
143 common area maintenance, and utilities allotment.
144 b) **Roof/HVAC Repairs.** This should be completed within the next few days.
145 c) **Other issues:** Mold was discovered within ceiling of 2nd floor in areas where the recording studio
146 was created. Currently waiting for an estimate for professional cleanup.
147

148 9) **Witness**

- 149 a) **Ministry Initiative Development Guidelines** (pp 26-29 of docket):
150 i) Delighted with how the witness support networks are building up, thanks to Jeanette's hard
151 work. Current policy on workers raising 50% of their funding is a real challenge for workers
152 and applicants where English is not their first language.
153 ii) A proposal is being developed for a stream lined system for new witness project, including
154 financial support.
155 iii) Changes proposed to the Mennonite Church Canada Ministry Initiative Development Guide
156 were reviewed.
157 iv) **Discussion:**
158 (1) Responses to some wording were raised, eg: "Planting", "on mission" and desire to keep
159 the word Mennonite alongside Anabaptist.
160 (2) A desire for additional information on relationship between ESG/JC in section #11;
161 insertion of Purpose Statement in #8; stating listening to partners in # 3; and a note that
162 reference(s) documents that are connected/linked.
163 (3) Importance to ensure we also use language we hear from partners.
164

165 **ACTION: Review in January with further revisions.**
166

167 10) **Delegate Gathering, Joint Council Roles (pp 30 of docket and subsequent e-mail).**

- 168 a) **Joint Council roles:** A 2018 document on the roles of the Additional Regional Church
169 Representatives to Joint Council was reviewed, along with a companion document prepared by
170 Betty Loewen (JC Exec member).
171 b) **Discussion:**
172 i) Preference to not use "2nd Representative". Suggestion to call the position "Regional
173 Church Representative" was discussed. Wording consistent with bylaws would be
174 "Additional Regional Church Representative".
175 ii) Additional Regional Church Representatives being invited to forward agenda items to Joint
176 Council is appreciated.
177 iii) Further discussion on how one can link to churches within region and desire to see more
178 practical details on how to share with the constituency, along with expectations of
179 participation in regional meetings and interaction with regional staff.
180

181 **ACTION: Merge the two documents discussed, with ESG to assist in the wording, and the inclusion of a**
182 **statement of responsibilities.**
183

- 184 **c) 2022 Delegate Gathering: July 28 – Aug 1, 2022**
185 i) As we need to secure a venue, MCA wanted to confirm that the dates, discussed at the last
186 JC meeting, had been agreed to by the Regional Churches.
187 ii) The communicators should be getting these dates out to the congregations.
188 iii) Note that because of the date for filing the CRA Charity Return, the AGM may need to be
189 held earlier to formalize acceptance of the financial statements and budget. Elections still
190 happening at Delegate gathering.
191 iv) There was a question on whether the Additional Regional Church Representative had any
192 responsibilities when Delegate Gatherings are in their region.
193

194 **ACTION: Brenda/Tim/Doug will provide a fairly clear layout of 2022 Delegate gathering at January**
195 **meeting.**
196

197 **11) Upcoming Agenda for Joint Council.**

- 198 a) Members was asked to list topics for Joint Council:
199 i) Witness in Canada – in new structure
200 ii) need for coordinating roles: in communication; fund-raising together; nationwide effort for
201 witness in Canada
202 iii) how we should use the missional initiative reserves
203 iv) intercultural church
204 v) overarching plan for church renewal or establishing new faith communities
205 vi) cultivating a culture of call in our congregations (more pastoral vacancies than people to fill)
206

207 **12) Next meetings: Jan 30th – ZOOM; March 27th - ZOOM (to be confirmed)**
208

209 **13) Closing led** by Henry Funk. Advent season: Having spent a short term in Nazareth as a tour guide,
210 Henry reflected on an experience at Bethlehem Bible College where several hundred leaders
211 struggled about how to bring justice and peace. Meanwhile a street fight broke out nearby, and
212 later, when walking to accommodations Henry picked up a spent rubber bullet. He also noted that
213 some entrepreneurs took sinister instruments of violence (spent tear gas canisters) and turned them
214 into beauty by creating Christmas tree decorations. Our challenge is to bring peace and justice to a
215 hungry and broken world.
216

217 **14) In-camera session**
218

219 **15) Adjournment at 3:25 pm Central.**