

LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE

CREDENTIALING PROCEDURE

1. The bishop, district and congregation will determine the need for a leader to be credentialed by the conference. When a person has been named, the bishop should fill out and submit the CREDENTIALING ACTIVITIES FORM to the Conference Office and request an interview time. The candidate should submit the background check forms immediately.
2. The bishop will meet with the candidate to review all materials in the packet. The candidate should be given all the documents/books included in the packet that they do not already own.
3. The candidate fills out all forms in the credentialing packet including the:
 - a. Credentialing Leadership Information (CLI) form
 - b. Conference Theology Statement form
 - c. Spouse Information form
 - d. Covenant/Code of Sexual Ethics for Ministers
4. The candidate is required to submit copies of their Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse Clearance, from their state, and the FBI Criminal Background Check and training certificate to the LMC office in order to reserve an interview time with the Credentialing Commission.
5. The Credentialing Commission generally meets the second Wednesday of each month. All requests for interviews should be received at least two weeks prior to the meeting. All written information such as the credentialing and theological forms needs to be submitted to the Conference Office the same week as the request. When the CLI or (MLI) that is being presented to the Credentialing Commission is a previously reviewed form, then a two-page report is required. The two pages should be an update related to the learnings and experience of the person over the past two or more years in preparation for the new interview. The two-page update must be presented to the conference administrative assistant 8-10 days prior to the interview so the commission can receive the pages in preparation for the new interview. The interview is dependent on the updated report.
6. The presenting bishop will attend the interview. The candidate's spouse is also welcome to attend.
7. The presenting bishop reports the decision of the commission to the congregation. If the candidate is transferring from another conference, the transfer will be requested by the Conference Office following the interview.
8. The presenting bishop will inform the conference office as soon as a date has been set for the credentialing service. A certificate and ministry card will be given to the bishop to be presented as part of the credentialing service.

CREDENTIALING ACTIVITIES FORM

BISHOP _____

DISTRICT _____

Instructions:

1. Complete all information in box
2. Complete appropriate section below box
3. Return to Conference Office (*include Background Check Papers with requests*)

Congregation: _____ District (*if different from above*): _____

Name of Individual: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Name of Spouse: _____ Email Address: _____

REQUEST:

Date of Credentialing Service: _____

Credential desired:

- ☐ Ordination
☐ License toward ordination
☐ License for specific ministry

Role desired:

- ☐ Bishop
☐ Lead Pastor
☐ Associate Pastor
☐ Chaplain
☐ Deacon/Deaconess
☐ Specific Ministry of _____

If already ordained:

Name of conference currently holding credential: _____

Address: _____

CREDENTIAL CHANGE:

Date of Credentialing Service: _____

Current Credential:

- ☐ License toward ordination
☐ License for specific ministry

as _____

Credential desired:

- ☐ Ordination
☐ License toward ordination
☐ License for specific ministry

as _____

STATUS CHANGE: (*Status descriptions listed on back*)**Current Status:**

- ☐ Active
☐ Active without charge
☐ Inactive
☐ Retired
☐ Suspended

Change Status to:

- ☐ Active
☐ Active without charge
☐ Inactive
☐ Retired
☐ Withdrawn
☐ Suspended
☐ Terminated

Effective Date: _____

DEATH:

Date of Death: _____

Surviving Spouse? ☐ yes
☐ no**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**☐ Background ✓☐ Monthly Report☐ Certificate Issued☐ LMC Data☐ MC USA Data☐ MPH☐ Background ✓☐ Background ✓ ☐ Training

STATUS DESCRIPTIONS:

Active: Active involvement in a ministry assignment. Used with a license or ordination
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90, 128

Active without Charge: The status of an ordination credential between assignments. A credential can be in this category for up to three years between the ending of one assignment and the beginning of another.
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90, 128

Inactive: The status of an ordination credential for those who have been without a ministry assignment up to three years or who have left the denomination. After three years “active without charge,” status becomes “inactive.”
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90-91, 134

Retired: The status of an ordination credential held by those who have retired from active ministry. Also persons who have held a license for specific ministry for an extended period (normally ten years or longer) are eligible for retired status.
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 91, 138

Withdrawn (previously Terminated in the 1995 Polity): A license credential that has ended. Used when the assignment for a license for specific ministry was granted for ends; and when the two year (renewable once) license toward ordination expires and ordination has not occurred.
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90-91, 139

Suspended: The credential for ministry is laid aside for a specified period of time for disciplinary reasons. At the end of the suspension period, it is determined whether the credential becomes Active or Terminated.
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90-91, 139

Terminated (previously Withdrawn in the 1995 Polity): Used when disciplinary action is taken to remove the ministerial credential.
A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership—Pg. 90-91, 139

Less commonly used status terms are described in A Mennonite Polity, pgs 90-91

MEMO

Lancaster Mennonite
Conference

TO: **Bishop Candidate**
FROM: Dale Stoltzfus, *Conference Minister*
SUBJECT: **REQUESTED INFORMATION**

2160 Lincoln Highway East, # 5
Lancaster, PA 17602
(717) 293-5246
FAX: (717) 431-1987
information@lancasterconference.org

This Credentialing Information packet is given to all persons who will be processed by the congregation or district for leadership roles that require a credential. It is given to you for your awareness of the procedure used by the Lancaster Conference Credentialing Commission as well as provide you with the Credentialing Information Form (CLI).

The bishop search committee of a district may have given you a Ministerial Information Form to fill out.

Please fill out the forms in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference packet and respond to the areas that relate to a potential bishop assignment.

CREDENTIALING LEADERSHIP INFORMATION

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

CONTACT DATA

Name _____ Today's Date _____
(First, Middle, Last)

Present address _____

Home phone (_____) _____ Work phone (_____) _____ (please star preferred contact)

Alternate address _____

Email address where you may be contacted _____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS

1. Local church membership: Name of congregation _____
City _____ State _____
Name of congregation presently attending if different from above _____
City _____ State _____
2. Date of baptism _____ (approximate is fine)
3. Area Mennonite conference (or denomination) to which you are accountable for ministerial credentials presently, if you are presently credentialed _____
4. Credentialing status as a Mennonite minister: (complete all lines that are applicable)
Ordained _____
(congregation, area conference, date)
Licensed _____
(congregation, area conference, date)
Commissioned _____
(congregation, area conference, date)
Student in training for ministry, lay leader or lay minister _____

A. CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS (continued)

Ordained in another denomination _____ (*denomination name, date*)
(*please enclose photocopy of certificate*)

5. Positions/responsibilities (not employment) in area conferences, denominations, institutions, and ecumenical agencies and community. (*Give a representative sample.*)

Dates involved: _____

Dates involved: _____

Dates involved: _____

Dates involved: _____

B. TRANSITION

Comment on your history with ministry transitions. Describe the circumstances and reasons for the transition you are now considering. (*Ministry students and others without experience may omit.*)

C. EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Note: A resume may be submitted in lieu of Part C and D.

List in chronological order the schools attended or name other educational programs (i.e. IBA, PSDE)

Name of college, seminary, other. Include S/CPE	Location City, State	Date attended from - to	Degree, certificate or S/CPE units	Field of emphasis

☐ I have studied Anabaptist/Mennonite history and/or theology. If so, where: _____

☐ I am willing to take an Anabaptist/Mennonite studies course.

Give an example of recent training/continuing education experiences beneficial to your personal growth or ministry (*seminars, workshops, self-directed studies*)

D. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

List in reverse chronological order your most recent church employment experiences (including voluntary service), as well as other *primary* work experience.

Name of employer	City, State	Date: from - to	Position	Duties-skills

E. LANGUAGES (1 = proficient; 2 = able to use if necessary; 3 = limited use)

English _____ Spanish _____ French _____ German _____ Other(s) (specify) _____

REFERENCES AND LEGALITIES

Give name and address of four people (not relatives) who have been close to you in the last five years who can give an evaluation of your gifts and character. Suggestions: leaders of congregations where you have served as pastor, teacher, a pastoral or student colleague. Please consider how readily your references can be contacted. Your forms and reference work will be held at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Office.

Name	Relation-ship	Street	City	State	Postal Code	Email	Phone

Give name and address of conference minister, overseer, bishop. If a student, name of field education director or supervisor.

Name	Role/ Position	Street	City	State	Postal Code	Email	Phone

BACKGROUND CHECK QUESTIONS:

1. Have you been convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, describe the nature of the conviction on attached sheet.
2. Have you been reprimanded or disciplined in your church or conference for any form of ethical or sexual misconduct? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, comment on separate sheet.
3. Have you ever been denied employment for ethical reasons? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, comment on separate sheet.
4. Is there anything in your life, past or present, that if it came to light, would be detrimental to your ministry or inconsistent with the basic tenets of the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, comment on separate sheet.

PERSONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

(answer this section only if you are being considered for a congregation other than the one you currently attend)

1. For what type of congregation do you feel best suited relative to size, rural-suburban-urban setting, and worship style?
2. What is the position you prefer? (check as many as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> lead pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> minister of evangelism	<input type="checkbox"/> co-pastor
<input type="checkbox"/> associate pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> church planter	<input type="checkbox"/> intentional interim
<input type="checkbox"/> youth pastor	<input type="checkbox"/> chaplain	(<input type="checkbox"/> I have had intentional interim training)
<input type="checkbox"/> minister of music	<input type="checkbox"/> pastoral counselor	<input type="checkbox"/> interim: supply pastor
<input type="checkbox"/> minister of visitation	<input type="checkbox"/> bi-vocational	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
3. When would you be available for service? _____
4. Make a statement regarding housing needs and/or expectations: _____

5. Make a statement regarding financial needs and/or expectations: _____

6. Are you willing to consider bi-vocational ministry? _____ If so, in what type of work? _____
7. Indicate preference of geographical location, if any. _____
8. Any other personal comments important to your placement?

Six core competencies for pastoral ministry

We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Lancaster Mennonite Conference will . . .

1. **Be deeply and firmly grounded in the Bible and the story it tells.** This involves knowing the biblical story, being grounded in it and being continuously formed by it. It involves knowing the history of the biblical text and canon. It involves interpreting the Bible through the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christian ministers should also be able to help their congregations understand, interpret, and obey the scriptures. They are expected to guide the congregation in discerning the truth of the scriptures together and in living out their biblical witness as the body of Christ before a watching world.

2. **Understand and embody core Anabaptist values.** (1 Corinthians 3:11) This includes familiarity with the issues, values, and theological principles that have shaped Anabaptist-Mennonite history and witness. It includes a willingness to embrace the values, perspective, and spirit of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (or earlier confessions). This will involve a commitment to practice and teach Anabaptist-Mennonite values and to minister, witness and lead in a way that is consistent with these values.
3. Give evidence of a **personal journey of faith that is continually being shaped by the everlasting love of God, the saving life of Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.** Those in Christian ministry will be shaped by an awareness of God's presence and activity in their ministry setting, by an active relationship with the triune God of the Bible, by a commitment to follow Jesus and his way, and by an on-going openness to God's leading and to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Those who are ordained will have the capacity and willingness to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed (1 Peter 3) and to equip others to bear witness to Jesus and his way.
4. **Clearly understand their own strengths and weaknesses and be able to maintain healthy relationships with other people.** This involves a clear call to Christian ministry, an understanding of spiritual gifts, ministry capacities (e.g. Romans 12:3), ministry roles (e.g. Ephesians 4), appropriate boundaries in relationships, and the importance of spiritual disciplines that help maintain appropriate boundaries. This involves the ability to take clear stands, but also to disagree with others without ill will or spitefulness. It involves life-long learning, rooted in a healthy curiosity about life, self and others. Life-long learning also applies to deepening knowledge of the scriptures and a deepening relationship with, knowledge of, love for, and obedience to Jesus Christ.
5. **Recognize, interpret and creatively engage their ministry context, including both the cultural and spiritual aspects of the ministry setting.** It involves learning the language and the values of those to whom one is called to minister and developing inter-cultural communication and relationships in that setting.
6. **Be able to lead with clarity and resolve.** Anabaptist leaders are rooted and grounded in a relationship with Jesus and increase their effectiveness when they lead as Jesus led. They cultivate an environment of trust and confidence where the gifts and ministry capacities of others are drawn out and released, because they recognize that no one leader has all that is needed to lead the congregation well. They use their awareness of the relational dynamics that shape the life of the congregation to effectively lead the congregation to change in ways that help it to carry out its missional calling. Ordained leaders lead the public rituals of the church, including its relationships with other church bodies and organizations.

by Karl Landis, April 2010.

Candidate Self-Assessment of Gifting and Skills.

Indicate your choice by checking the box that closely fit your assessment of yourself in each category.

		AGREE			DISAGREE	
		(strongly)	(somewhat)		(somewhat)	(strongly)
1.	Has a theology that is informed and is Christ-centered					
2.	Models a welcoming appearance to outsiders for the congregation					
3.	Shows an ability to handle crises					
4.	Is an effective voice for the Church in a variety of settings					
5.	Comes to meetings well-prepared					
6.	Fosters the goals of others over his or her own					
7.	Prepares well for sermons and presentations					
8.	Is good at mentoring (encourages others)					
9.	Is well read					
10.	Is comfortable working with others					
11.	Handles conflict well					
12.	Helps to bring about change effectively					
13.	Has a good grasp of biblical texts					
14.	Teaches/preaches from an Anabaptist perspective					
15.	Takes appropriate risks					
16.	Is comfortable with diverse views					
17.	Interacts with all members of the surrounding community					
18.	Follows through on tasks					
19.	Shows an openness to the opinions of others					
20.	Seeks personal and professional development					
21.	Connects to members of the congregation without showing favoritism					
22.	Involves others in leadership					
23.	Welcomes counsel from those in oversight					
24.	Is sociable and friendly					
25.	Is skilled at chairing meetings					
26.	Helps develop a vision for the future					

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

PERSONAL STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND DOCTRINE

To be used by all candidates being considered for credentialing in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Your interest in the work of the Lord and the Church is appreciated. The following questions are for persons under consideration for credentialing with Lancaster Mennonite Conference. After you have read the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (or an older *Mennonite Confession of Faith* in use in your congregation), please prepare your answers on separate sheets (*typewritten if possible*). Suggested length is 3-6 pages.

A. Doctrine of God

1. Describe your understanding of God; personhood (*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*), moral attributes, relation to creation and to the world order.
2. Describe the nature of sin and what you believe about God's judgment.

B. Revelation

1. How is God revealed to people?
2. Present your views on the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Give some principles that need to be considered in the interpretations of Scriptures. (*Illustration: What is the relationship between the Old and New Testaments and the place of Jesus' teachings?*)

C. The Person of Christ

1. State what you believe about the person and work of Christ, particularly with reference to his atoning death, resurrection, and second coming.
2. How do you view the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation?
3. How do you view Jesus Christ in relation to other religions?

D. The Holy Spirit

1. State your understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit. Describe the work of the Spirit in the personal Christian experience, in the faith community, and in the non-believing community.

E. The Christian Life

1. How does a person become a Christian and receive assurance of salvation?
2. Describe your understanding of Christian discipleship, including stewardship of all life, interpersonal relationships, and spiritual disciplines (*i.e. prayer, Bible reading, worship, etc.*).
3. State your personal commitments on the following moral issues:
 - a. Marriage: a covenant of life-long marriage and ministry to persons who are divorced and/or remarried.
 - b. Sexuality: premarital, extramarital, and homosexual behavior. (*See "The Church and Homosexuality," Lancaster Conference, 9/19/97.*)
 - c. Social drinking, tobacco, addictions, compulsive behavior.
 - d. Finances: money, accumulations of possessions, and wealth.
 - e. Peace and justice: abortion, warfare, use of violence, capital punishments, sanctity of life.
 - f. Other:
4. What is the role of the individual believer in the fulfillment of the Great Commission? How has God used you?
5. How would you respond to someone who holds a different view of a theological issue that is of great importance to you? (*Examples: the baptism of the Holy Spirit and gifts, women in leadership, eternal security, etc.*)

F. The Church

1. What is the nature and mission of the church?
2. What is your understanding of Christ's call to evangelism, missions, and social concerns?
3. What is the role of the church in today's world, including the way of love and peace in human relationships, a witness to society, and relationship to government?
4. What are the responsibilities and privileges of membership in the body of Christ?
5. What is your understanding of baptism, communion, and foot washing?
6. What is the importance of accountability within the life of the Church? How should it take place?
7. What is your understanding of the roles of men and women in ministry?
8. What is your attitude toward inter-Mennonite and inter-denominational cooperation?
9. What is your vision for youth and young adult ministry in your context?
10. Comment on your understanding and vision for a missional emphasis in your context.

G. Personal Response and Commitment

1. Describe your personal call to ministry/missions.
2. Describe your perceived areas of strength and gifts you are willing to commit to Christian service.
3. Describe your perceived areas of weakness or desired areas of growth.
4. Give a brief response to the Lancaster Conference Constitution and Mission Statement.
5. Are you in harmony with the doctrines of the Bible as taught by the Mennonite Church?
_____ Explain areas of disagreement.

H. Experience/Expectations

1. Share your spiritual pilgrimage and state scriptural passages or beliefs that serve as a foundation for your faith and life. Who were persons that shaped your spiritual pilgrimage? What are the spiritual disciplines that are practical and guide your life?
2. Summarize your experience in church activities or assignments.
3. Write any statement that you wish to share on any responsibilities, problems, or other matters that should be considered at this time. Please comment on any pertinent information that could have a potential impact on your ministry and the congregation you intend to serve.
4. Comment on how you perceive the role of the office for which you are being considered, including time involvement, financial support, relationship to a ministerial team, and congregational responsibilities.
5. Describe how willing you are to sacrificially commit yourself to the task of ministry, to work with others in leadership, and to be sensitive to needs and concerns of the membership.
6. How do you know that you have the support of your spouse?

(Signature)

(Date)

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

FORM FOR SPOUSE

of Candidate for Credentials

Rev. 09/00

Your spouse is being considered for ordination/license. It is important that you share your perspective and indicate the level of involvement you intend to have in your spouse's ministry. Answer the following questions in the space provided. You may use an additional sheet if necessary.

1. Can you affirm your spouse's call by God to ministry? How do you see the call being confirmed in your spouse's life?
2. How may your spouse's call to ministry affect you and your children (*if any*)? What concerns do you have?
3. Describe how you experience your spouse's relationship to you and your children (*if any*).
4. How do you expect to support your spouse in ministry?
5. Describe your current level of church involvement.

If your spouse is being considered for a congregational leadership role, please answer the following:

6. Do you intend to: maintain, increase, or decrease your level of congregational involvement when your spouse is ordained/licensed?

After your have read the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective (or an older Mennonite Confession of Faith in use in your congregation), **please answer the following:**

7. Are you in harmony with the doctrines of the Bible as taught by the Mennonite Church? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Explain any areas of disagreement.

(Signature)

(Date)

Lancaster Mennonite Conference
Credentialing Commission

REFERENCE QUESTIONS

The Credentialing Commission of Lancaster Mennonite Conference suggests the following questions to the Search Committee when contacting references named by the candidate.

1. Describe the person (*outward behavior, personal characteristics, work habits, and emotional tendencies*) relative to the position the candidate is seeking. Give an example of how the candidate has been sensitive to the feelings, perspectives and needs of others consistent with the principles or basic tenets of the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith.
2. How do you perceive the candidate's spiritual and theological commitments for service in a Mennonite setting? What issues or beliefs will energize the candidate to assume a leadership role in ministry?
3. Can you recommend this candidate for the position s/he is seeking? Additional comments:.
4. Any additional comments.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DISCLOSURE

I understand that ministerial leaders must commit themselves to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. They are accountable to God, the church, and the credentialing body for the conduct of their lives and ministries. Candidates for ministry assignments must voluntarily disclose pertinent information that could affect their ministry or the congregations and institutions they serve. Therefore:

- I also authorize Lancaster Mennonite Conference to make inquiries regarding my background and character, and information I supplied.

- I authorize all persons, organizations, present and former employers, committees on ministry, courts, law enforcement authorities, public authorities and the agents of any of them to respond to inquiries concerning me and to verify information I provided. They may comment on and state opinion regarding my background and character. In consideration for my being considered as a potential candidate for ministerial leadership, and intending to be legally bound, I release all of them, as well as Lancaster Mennonite Conference and all who act on its behalf, from all liability, damages and causes of action arising from or relating to their responses made in good faith.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____

District: _____

Printed: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

For Office Use:

Credentialing\Authorization for Disclosure.wpd

Criminal Check sent:	Ch. Abuse Hist. sent:	Received Clearance Cert.:
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PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CERTIFICATION

Type or print clearly in ink. If obtaining this certification for non-volunteer purposes or if, as a volunteer having contact with children, you have obtained a certification free of charge within the previous 57 months, enclose an \$8.00 money order or check payable to the PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES or a payment authorization code provided by your organization. **DO NOT send cash.**

Certifications for the purpose of "volunteer having contact with children" may be obtained free of charge once every 57 months.

Send to CHILDLINE AND ABUSE REGISTRY, PA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, P.O. BOX 8170 HARRISBURG, PA 17105-8170.

APPLICATIONS THAT ARE INCOMPLETE, ILLEGIBLE OR RECEIVED WITHOUT THE CORRECT FEE WILL BE RETURNED UNPROCESSED. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CALL 717-783-6211, OR (TOLL FREE) 1-877-371-5422.

PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION (Check one box only)

<input type="checkbox"/> Foster parent <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective adoptive parent <input type="checkbox"/> Employee of child care services <input type="checkbox"/> School employee governed by the Public School Code <input type="checkbox"/> School employee not governed by the Public School Code <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed provider of child-care services in a family child-care home <input type="checkbox"/> An individual 14 years of age or older applying for or holding a paid position as an employee <input type="checkbox"/> An individual seeking to provide child-care services under contract with a child care facility or program <input type="checkbox"/> An individual 18 years or older who resides in the home of a foster parent, licensed child-care home, family living home, community home for individuals with an intellectual disability, or host home for children for at least 30 days in a calendar year <input type="checkbox"/> An individual 18 years or older who resides in the home of a prospective adoptive parent for at least 30 days in a calendar year	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer having contact with children If purpose is volunteer having contact with children, choose SUB PURPOSE: <input type="checkbox"/> Big Brother/Big Sister and/or affiliate <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence shelter and/or affiliate <input type="checkbox"/> Rape crisis center and/or affiliate <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> PA Department of Human Services Employment & Training Program participant (signature required below) <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> _____ SIGNATURE OF OIM/CAO REPRESENTATIVE </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;"> _____ OIM/CAO PHONE NUMBER </div>
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AGENCY/ORGANIZATION NAME:

PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION CODE, IF APPLICABLE:

☐ Consent/Release of Information Authorization form is attached. Applicant must fill in the "Other Address" sections. By completing the other address sections, you are agreeing that the organization will have access to the status and outcome of your certification application.

APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (DO NOT USE INITIALS)

FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	LAST NAME	SUFFIX
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ____	GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not reported	DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD/YYYY)	AGE

Disclosure of your Social Security number is voluntary. It is sought under 23 Pa.C.S. §§ 6336(a)(1) (relating to information in statewide database), 6344 (relating to employees having contact with children; adoptive and foster parents), 6344.1 (relating to information relating to certified or licensed child-care home residents), and 6344.2 (relating to volunteers having contact with children). The department will use your Social Security number to search the statewide database to determine whether you are listed as the perpetrator in an indicated or founded report of child abuse.

HOME ADDRESS	MAILING ADDRESS (if different from home address)	OTHER ADDRESS (if Consent/Release of Information Authorization form is attached)
ADDRESS LINE 1	ADDRESS LINE 1	ADDRESS LINE 1
ADDRESS LINE 2	ADDRESS LINE 2	ADDRESS LINE 2
CITY	CITY	CITY
COUNTY	COUNTY	COUNTY
STATE/REGION/PROVINCE	STATE/REGION/PROVINCE	STATE/REGION/PROVINCE
ZIP/POSTAL CODE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	ZIP/POSTAL CODE
COUNTRY	COUNTRY	COUNTRY
<input type="checkbox"/> Different mailing address	ATTENTION	ATTENTION

CONTACT INFORMATION

HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER	WORK TELEPHONE NUMBER	MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER
EMAIL (By submitting an email contact, you are agreeing to ChildLine contacting you at this address.)		

PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CERTIFICATION

PREVIOUS NAMES USED SINCE 1975 (Include maiden name, nickname and aliases.)			
First	Middle	Last	Suffix
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

PREVIOUS ADDRESSES SINCE 1975 (Please list all addresses since 1975, partial address acceptable; attach additional pages if necessary.)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (Please list everyone who lived with you at any time since 1975 to present. Please include parent, guardian or the person(s) who raised you; attach additional pages as necessary.)				
Name (First, Middle, Last)	Relationship	Present Age	Gender	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> person(s) who raised you			
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> person(s) who raised you			
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

I affirm that the above information is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and submitted as true and correct under penalty of law (Section 4904 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code). If I selected volunteer, I understand that I can only use the certificate for volunteer purposes.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

CHILDLINE USE ONLY		
DATE RECEIVED BY CHILDLINE	SUFFICIENT PAYMENT INFORMATION RECEIVED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> VALID PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION CODE <input type="checkbox"/> WAIVED (supervisor initials) _____	CERTIFICATION ID #

INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE THE PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CERTIFICATION APPLICATION:

General:

- Type or print clearly and neatly in ink only.
- If obtaining this certification for non-volunteer purposes or if, as a volunteer having contact with children, you have obtained a certification free of charge within the previous 57 months, enclose an \$8.00 money order or check for each application. No cash will be accepted. Personal, agency, or business checks are acceptable. Certifications for the purpose of "volunteer having contact with children" may be obtained free of charge once every 57 months. If no payment is enclosed for a non-volunteer purpose, you must provide a payment authorization code, otherwise your application will be rejected and returned to you.
- **DO NOT SEND POSTAGE PAID RETURN ENVELOPES** for us to return your results. Results are issued through an automated system generated mailing process.
- Certification results will be mailed to you within 14 days from the date the certification application is received at the ChildLine and Abuse Registry.
- Failure to comply with the instructions will cause considerable delay in processing the results of an applicant's child abuse history certification application.

Purpose of Certification - Do not check more than one box:

- Check the **foster parent** box if applying for purposes of providing foster care.
- Check the **prospective adoptive parent** box if applying for the purpose of adoption.
- Check the **employee of child care services** box if applying for the purpose of child care services in the following:
 - Child day care centers; group day care homes; family day care homes; boarding homes for children; juvenile detention center services or programs for delinquent or dependent children; mental health services for children; services for children with intellectual disabilities; early intervention services for children; drug and alcohol services for children; and day care services or other programs that are offered by a school.
- Check the **school employee governed by the Public School Code** box if you are a school employee who is required to obtain background checks pursuant to Section 111 of the Public School Code and will continue to be required to obtain background checks prior to employment in accordance with that section and on the periodic basis required by Act 153.
- Check the **school employee not governed by the Public School Code** box if you are a school employee not governed by Section 111 of the Public School Code, but covered by Act 153 (pertaining to school employees in institutions of higher education).

Definition of school employee: A school employee is defined as an individual who is employed by a school or who provides a program, activity or service sponsored by a school. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless they have direct contact with children.

Definition of school: A facility providing elementary, secondary or postsecondary educational services. The term includes the following:

- (1) Any school of a school district.
 - (2) An area vocational-technical school.
 - (3) A joint school.
 - (4) An intermediate unit.
 - (5) A charter school or regional charter school.
 - (6) A cyber charter school.
 - (7) A private school licensed under the act of January 28, 1988 (P.L.24, No. 11), known as the Private Academic Schools Act.
 - (8) A private school accredited by an accrediting association approved by the state Board of Education.
 - (9) A non-public school.
 - (10) An institution of higher education.
 - (11) A private school licensed under the act of December 15, 1986 (P.L. 1585, No. 174), known as the Private Licensed Schools Act.
 - (12) The Hiram G. Andrews Center.
 - (13) A private residential rehabilitative institution as defined in section 914.1-A(c) of the Public School Code of 1949.
- Check the **self-employed provider of child-care services in a family child-care home** if providing child care services in one's home (other than the child's own home) at any one time to four, five, or six children who are not relatives of the caregiver.
 - Check the **individual 14 years of age or older who is applying for or holding a paid position as an employee** box if the employment is with a program, activity, or service, as a person responsible for the child's welfare or having direct contact with children.
 - Check the **individual seeking to provide child care services under contract with a child care facility or program** box if you are providing child care services as part of a contract or grant funded program.
 - Check the box for **individual 18 years or older who resides in the home of a foster parent, licensed child-care home, family living home, community home for individuals with an intellectual disability or host home for children for at least 30 days in a calendar year** if you are an adult household member, excluding an individual with an intellectual disability or chronic psychiatric disability receiving services, in one of these types of settings and require certification.
 - Check the box for **individual 18 years or older who resides in the home of a prospective adoptive parent for at least 30 days in a calendar year** if you are an adult household member in this setting and require certification.
 - Check the **volunteer having contact with children** box if applying for the purpose of volunteering as an adult for an unpaid position as a volunteer with a child-care service, a school, or a program, activity or service as a person responsible for the child's welfare or having direct

volunteer contact with children. In addition, check the box of one of the organizations listed, i.e. Big Brother/Big Sister, domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center. If you are **NOT** applying for a volunteer in one of the organizations listed, please check the **other** box and write the name of the organization in the space provided.

- Check the **PA Department of Human Services employment & training program participant** box if you are applying for the purpose of participating in a PA Department of Human Services employment and training program through a county assistance office (CAO) or the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM). The signature **AND** phone number of the CAO or OIM representative is required. If there is no signature and no phone number, your application will be rejected and returned to you.
- If you were provided a **"PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION CODE"** by an organization, please provide the **agency/organization name** in the space provided and the **payment authorization code** in the space provided.
- Please check the **CONSENT/RELEASE OF INFORMATION** box if you included a payment code in the space above and attached the completed Consent/Release of Information Authorization form to your Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Certification application when you mail it to our office. The Consent/Release of Information Authorization form allows the department to send your results to a third party. If the Consent/Release of Information Authorization form is **NOT** attached to the certification application, the results **WILL** be mailed to the applicant's home address and not to the third party.

Applicant Demographic Information:

- Name - Include the applicant's full legal name. Initials are not acceptable for a first name. If your full legal name is an initial, please provide supporting documentation along with your certification application.
- Social Security number - Include the applicant's social security number. A social security number is voluntary; **HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS MAY TAKE LONGER TO BE PROCESSED.**
- Gender - Please check one box.
- Date of birth - Fill in the applicant's date of birth (Example: 01/22/1990).
- Age - Fill in the applicant's current age.

Address:

- The address listed must be the applicant's current home address. This is also where the results of the certification will be mailed, unless otherwise noted. If the **different mailing address** box is checked and a mailing address is provided in the "different" mailing address column, the results will be mailed to the "mailing" address and not the "home" address. **Note:** If the consent/release of information box is checked and an "other" address is provided, the results will be mailed to the "other" address.

Contact Information:

- Please provide your home, work or mobile telephone number. Fill in the number where the applicant can be reached in the event that there are questions about the information on the application.
- Please provide an email address. By providing an email address, you are consenting to ChildLine contacting you by email in the event that you cannot be reached by phone. **NO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION WILL EVER BE SHARED OR PROVIDED IN AN EMAIL FROM OUR OFFICE.**

Previous Names Used Since 1975:

- The applicant must list any and all full legal names that they have ever had since 1975. This includes maiden names, nicknames, aliases and also known as (aka) names.

Previous Addresses Since 1975:

- List all addresses where the applicant has resided since 1975. The applicant can attach an additional sheet of paper with all of the addresses listed if necessary. If the applicant cannot remember the exact mailing addresses since 1975, filling in as much information as possible about the location is acceptable.

Household Members:

- Include anyone that the applicant lived with since 1975 (parents, guardians, siblings, children, spouse (ex), paramour, friends, etc.). In addition, include the household member's relationship to the applicant, their age (to the best of your knowledge) and their gender. If the applicant was under the age of 18 in 1975, this section **MUST** include the applicant's PARENT(S) or GUARDIAN(S). If this section is left blank, the application will be rejected and returned to the applicant.

Signature:

- Applications **MUST** be signed and dated. Applications that are not signed and dated will be rejected and returned to the applicant.

CHILDLINE USE ONLY:

- Please DO NOT WRITE in this section. This is for CHILDLINE staff only.

Additional Information:

Applicants can visit <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS> for more information about submitting the child abuse certification online or to register for a business/organization account.

Child Protection Policy
LMC Credentialing Commission Guidelines
April 13, 2016

FOR PENNSYLVANIA CONGREGATIONS

As a result of the changes to the PA Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) in 2014, the following procedures will guide Credentialing Commission process for leaders with active assignments who serve congregations in Pennsylvania. Leaders who serve in other states need to meet applicable law in their state. No other state where LMC congregations are located currently has as comprehensive a law as the 2015 PA CPSL.

When a credentialed leader lives in a state other than PA but serves in a congregation in Pennsylvania, the leader needs to complete the Criminal Record Check and the Child Sexual Abuse clearance for the state of residence as well as the FBI Criminal Background Check. In addition the Credentialing Commission is requiring approved training. See the training section below.

1. Background Checks: PA 2014 CPSL requires employees who have direct contact with children and those who supervise people who have direct contact with children to secure three background checks: PA Criminal Background Check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI Criminal Background Check (requires fingerprinting). None of the three checks may be older than five years. Checks older than five years must be repeated. As a consequence,

a. **Bishops** . All current Bishops must secure these three checks and supply copies of the first set of checks before 12/31/15 and subsequent checks every five years to the LMC office. New Bishops will need new checks and supply copies to the LMC office before a Credentialing Commission interview date will be set. Bishops whose checks are more than five years old must repeat their checks and supply copies to the LMC office. The LMC office will provide reminder notices to Bishops when their checks near the five year expiration. The LMC office will maintain the records of all Bishop checks for 50 years.

b. **Other Credential Holders**. All current credentialed leaders with an active assignment in PA must obtain the two PA and the one national FBI check and supply copies of the checks to their congregation child protection team before 12/31/15. For the purposes of LMC leaders, "credentialed staff" is defined as holding a credential with Lancaster Conference, whether or not one is paid. Candidates for a new credential will need new checks and must supply copies to the LMC office before a CC interview date will be set. If credentialing follows the interview, then copies of the checks should then be provided to the congregation for their recordkeeping for 50 years. Congregations will maintain credentialed staff records, not the LMC office. The congregation will be responsible to make sure that credentialed staff update their checks every five years and maintain ongoing records. Credential holders who serve in a capacity outside of a congregation (e.g. a chaplain at a hospital) should also provide copies of all checks for filing by the Child Protection Team in the congregation where they are members.

c. The costs for these checks will be the responsibility of the credential candidate or credential holder. Congregations may choose to reimburse the candidate or leader. Checks obtained for another employment venue do not transfer for credentialed leaders. Checks may transfer for an internal promotion (e.g. an associate pastor moves to lead pastor in the same congregation). The child protection team, in the congregation, is responsible to provide reminder notices to credentialed staff when their checks near the five year expiration time. Congregations are required to maintain the records of all checks for 50 years.

d. Bishops are responsible to oversee candidates efforts to meet the background check requirements of the Credentialing Commission.

e. **PA CPSL Background Check Requirements**

1. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check: \$8.00 fee

on-line application at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

2. Child Abuse History Clearance: \$8.00 fee

online application <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

3. FBI Criminal Background Check: \$27.50 fee; fingerprints must be made at designated locations; start process at https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpwnNew.htm, click *Registration Procedures*

2. Training: The Credentialing Commission requires leaders who have direct contact with children and those who supervise those who have direct contact to complete three hours of state-approved child abuse training. Training must be refreshed with three hours of additional training every five years. As a consequence,

a. **Bishops** . All current Bishops must secure state-approved training and supply copies of the training certificate to the LMC office before 12/31/15. This training must be refreshed every five years. New Bishops will need to obtain training and supply copies of their training certificate to the LMC office before a Credentialing Commission interview date will be set. The LMC office will remind Bishops to refresh their training every five years and maintain these records for 50 years.

b. **Other Credential Holders.** All credentialed leaders with an active assignment in LMC must secure state-approved training and supply copies of the training certificate to the child protection team in the congregation before 12/31/15. Candidates for a new credential will need state-approved training and must supply a copy of the training certificate to the LMC office before a Credentialing Commission interview date will be set. The congregation or organization where the credentialed staff person serves is responsible to remind credential holders to refresh their training every five years and to file these records for 50 years.

c. Approved training can be obtained for *free* at the following website: Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, 717-795-9048, for Mandated and Permissive Reporters, 3hrs, Online training, **www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu**. This training requires 4-6 hours of time to complete. It need not be completed in a single session. Be sure to print a certificate when you complete the training. Training obtained for other employment may transfer.

d. Bishops are responsible to oversee the efforts of candidates for a credential in meeting the training requirements for the Credentialing Commission.

FOR CONGREGATIONS OUTSIDE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Congregations outside of Pennsylvania are required to complete the Criminal Record Check and the Child Sexual Abuse clearance for the state of residence as well as the FBI Criminal Background Check. The cost of these checks are the responsibility of the credential candidate or credential holder. Filing of documents should occur in the congregation in which they serve or attend. All checks must be renewed every 5 years. The training requirements detailed above are also required by the Credentialing Commission for pastors in states other than PA.

Table 1 on the next page provides some basic guidance on mandated reporters, reporting laws, and clergy privilege for states where LMC congregations are located. Note that not all states provide a clergy privilege for reporting child abuse. Also note that while PA does have a clergy privilege according to this chart, the actual privilege in the 2015 CPSL is very narrow related to child abuse. LMC staff suggest legal counsel be sought by any PA clergy before invoking clergy privilege related to child abuse.

FOR CREDENTIALLED LEADERS WHO SERVE INTERNATIONALLY

Leaders who hold an LMC credential and who serve in another country are required to meet any applicable laws or guidelines in the country in which they serve. In addition, the Criminal Record Check and the Child Sexual Abuse clearance for the state of residence as well as the FBI Criminal Background Check will be required. All checks must be renewed every 5 years. The training requirements detailed above are also required by the Credentialing Commission for pastors in states other than PA. The following chart provides some basic guidance for states where LMC congregations are located.

TABLE 1

Application of Child Abuse Reporting Laws to Ministers and Lay Church Workers—A Summary

Note: State laws are subject to change, and so this table should not be relied upon without the advice of an attorney familiar with local law

"clergy" are mandatory reporters except for information obtained from privileged communications	"clergy" are mandatory reporters, no exception for privileged communications	all persons are mandatory reporters, but clergy not required to disclose privileged communications	all persons are mandatory reporters, no exception for clergy-penitent privilege	"clergy" not mandatory reporters, but are if a teacher, counselor, school administrator, etc. (clergy privilege exception)	"clergy" not mandatory reporters, but are if a teacher, counselor, school administrator, etc. (no exception for clergy privilege)
Alabama Arizona Arkansas California Colorado Illinois Louisiana Maine Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri Montana Nevada New Mexico North Dakota Ohio* Oregon — Pennsylvania South Carolina Vermont Wisconsin	— Connecticut Mississippi New Hampshire West Virginia	— Delaware Florida Idaho Kentucky — Maryland Tennessee* Utah Wyoming	Indiana Nebraska — New Jersey North Carolina Oklahoma Rhode Island Texas	— Virginia Washington	Alaska D.C. Georgia — Hawaii Iowa Kansas — New York South Dakota

* Limited "clergy privilege" exception.

Lancaster Mennonite Conference
Credentialing Commission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Leadership Credentialing Commission may review some or all of the following areas during the interview session. The Credentialing Commission will spend some time reviewing ten and eleven. The Congregational Search Committee is accountable primarily to the congregation and district bishop. The Conference and Bishop Board are responsible for providing a credential.

1. Personal faith journey
2. How the spiritual disciplines are practiced. Use of a spiritual director or spiritual retreats.
3. How the person demonstrates the expected and desired competencies for ministry. Discussion on strengths as well as areas which may need to be strengthened.
4. Discuss financial issues such as personal spending plans, debts, and long term financial concerns.
5. Adaptability to a new cultural setting
6. Inquire if the candidate is a member of a secret society.
7. Personal integrity and lifestyle issues including pornography.
8. Personal ability to relate to others. Personality profile may be recommended.
9. Personal and community of faith's call to the ministry.
10. Theological areas, including a discussion of and support of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective or another Mennonite Confession of Faith.
11. Willingness to support Lancaster Conference.
12. Awareness of your local bishop district and your openness to be involved in district and conference activities.

ORIENTATION INFORMATION

Each newly credentialed person is required to attend an orientation.

The next orientation will be held at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Office on Wednesday,

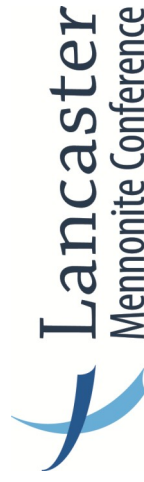
April 18, 2018
7:00-9:30 pm

Please register at least one week in advance so adequate materials can be prepared.

717-293-5246 ext. 100 or jsantiago@lancasterconference.org

COMMITMENT

Lancaster Mennonite Conference's Leadership Development Program is committed to growing leaders for healthy congregations. The Leadership Education Grant helps leaders who want to be life-long learners.



Leadership Development

2160 Lincoln Highway E. #5

Lancaster, PA 17602

717-293-5246 or 800-216-7249

www.lancasterconference.org

e-mail : jsantiago@lancasterconference.org



Lancaster Mennonite Conference

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION GRANT

*Growing leaders
for healthy
congregations*



LEADERSHIP EDUCATION GRANT

PURPOSE

To provide grant money to support credentialled and emerging leaders in the Conference with tuition costs and/or educational materials for leadership education and training. Courses of study may be:

- Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry (STEP)
- LMC programs and seminars
- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Seminary Programs
- Distance Learning
- Gateway Courses
- Other seminars/workshops for pastors or church leaders

GRANT CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a grant:

- Leader or emerging leader of a Lancaster Conference congregation
- Written recommendation from a pastor, bishop/ overseer, mentor, or other congregational leader including information about how your congregation will support you in this endeavor.

Preference will be given when reviewing applications for:

- Congregational commitment to support a part of the leader's educational cost
- Lancaster Conference or Mennonite Church USA connected educational resources

SELECTION PROCESS

- Obtain the Leadership Education Grant (LEG) application from the LMC Office or at www.lancasterconference.org/
- Complete all parts of the application, including the appropriate essay on the back of the application form.
- Submit applications to the Conference office by January 31 or July 31.
- Applications will be reviewed and grants awarded by the Leadership Education Grant Committee two times per year. Since there may be more requests for funds than are available for distribution, sincere effort will be made to be fair and impartial in awarding the grant. The Committee will look at:
 - available funds and number of applicants
 - congregational assistance
 - course supporting Anabaptist Theology
 - applicability to ministry in LMC
 - demonstrated need
 - references and recommendations

- Notification to the applicant will be given by email to advise of award or non-award of a grant.
- Grant money will be sent to the institution/agency/ conference office on behalf of the recipient prior to the start of a course or spring/fall semester by Lancaster Conference.
- Grant money may only be used for the purpose indicated in the application. If plans change after funds are distributed, the grant is to be returned to the Conference.

EXPECTATIONS OF RECIPIENTS

- Acknowledge LEG funding in the local congregation, verbally or in a bulletin announcement
- Report grade of previous class on next application

GIFTS TO THE FUND

Individuals or congregations may contribute directly to the Leadership Endowment Fund. Any direct gifts to the fund should be sent to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference office at the address below, or to Mennonite Foundation, P. O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527 and designated as "LMC-Pastoral Training Fund".

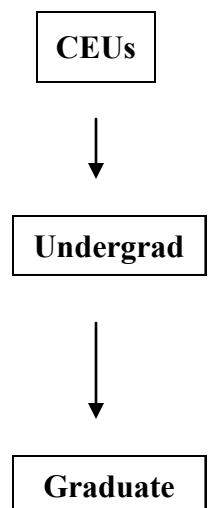
Overview of Lancaster Mennonite Conference's Leadership Development Programming

Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC)'s Leadership Development program equips pastors and congregational leaders by offering learning opportunities at different levels of rigor and engagement. The most appropriate level of study for each learner depends on experience, level of prior education, ministry setting, personal interests, time constraints and long-term goals.

- An evening [Orientation for Newly Credentialed Leaders](#) is held each spring at the Conference Office. Participants receive an overview of LMC's identity, vision, and mission and have a chance to meet Conference Office staff, bishops, and other leaders.
- The [Anabaptist Institute for Ministry Enrichment \(AIM\)](#) provides economical, practical courses for adult learners in Anabaptist-related congregations and agencies. Students earn non-credit, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by completing seminars in personal and spiritual formation, history and theology, Bible, ministry skill development, and mission and culture. Discovery is a continuing education seminar.
- [STEP \(Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry\)](#) is a part-time program designed for pastoral leaders or those exploring a call to pastoral ministry. Over three years, students earn 30 undergraduate credit hours from EMU. The curriculum integrates many topics, skills and personal growth elements. Students meet as a cohort for the entire program. Graduates receive a fully accredited undergraduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry, and may supplement their STEP credits to earn an Associates Degree in Pastoral Ministry.
- [Gateway Courses](#) are a series of four two-credit seminary courses – one per semester on a two-year cycle – that focus on Anabaptist identity formation. Pastors and congregational leaders who want to be better grounded in the Anabaptist perspective on the Christian faith are encouraged to enroll. Eastern Mennonite University offers the Gateway courses in collaboration with the Mennonite Conferences in southeastern Pennsylvania. Non-credit students may elect to receive AIM CEUs for their participation.

The four Gateway courses are: 1). Anabaptist History and Theology, 2). Anabaptist Hermeneutics and Bible Survey, 3). Missions and Peace, and 4). Anabaptist Polity and Leadership Effectiveness

- [Leadership Education Grants](#) provide support for anyone from LMC congregations who is pursuing further training in pastoral ministry or congregational leadership. Application deadlines are January 31 or July 31. LE grants
- [LMC's Director of Leadership Development](#) is also available to consult with any current or emerging leader regarding customized leadership training options that they would like to offer or receive. Our office also regularly circulates information through email and the LMC Resource Packet about Upcoming Events planned by other organizations.



The Place to Explore, Equip and Expand Horizons for Ministry

Eastern Mennonite Seminary has a strong record of preparing pastors, mission workers and leaders for the church of today and tomorrow. At its extension site in southeastern Pennsylvania, EMS offers a flexible array of non-traditional learning opportunities. These are designed so that students can choose what is right for them in pursuing God's call to ministry. One size does not fit all. Much depends on a variety of factors: ministry experience, level of education, ministry setting, personal interests, time constraints and long-term goals. Students can select what is right for them for their current ministry needs.

- Most courses are offered on a [Non-credit or Continuing Education](#) basis for persons who have an active interest in the topic or ministry skill but are not pursuing an academic goal. This option reduces cost and enlarges the pool of participants beyond pastors to others involved in congregational leadership and Christian ministry.
- The [STEP Program \(Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry\)](#) is a part-time, three-year training course of study designed for pastoral leaders – or those exploring a call – who don't have college or Bible school training. Over three years, students earn 30 college-level credit hours. The curriculum integrates many topics, skills and personal growth elements; students meet as a cohort for the entire program. Graduates receive a fully accredited undergraduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry; the credit can be applied toward an Associate Degree. STEP is not available for non-credit.
- [Gateway Courses](#) are a series of four courses – one per semester on a two-year cycle – that focus on Anabaptist identity formation. Pastors and congregational leaders who want to be better grounded in the Anabaptist perspective are encouraged to enroll. EMU offers the Gateway courses in collaboration with the Mennonite Conferences in southeastern Pennsylvania. Courses can be taken for college credit or for non-credit.
- The [Preaching Institute](#) is an in-service training program for men and women who want to improve their preaching. It is a preaching course that travels and has been offered in Florida, Kansas, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio. Preaching Institute works with groups of 6-12 pastors in a given region over a nine-month period. Students can take the Institute for non-credit or for three credit hours at the graduate seminary level.
- [Master of Divinity Degree & Graduate Certificates](#). Several courses are offered each semester by qualified instructors. Most of these courses meet the Master of Divinity core curriculum requirements of EMS. Students can earn credit toward a Certificate in Ministry or a Certificate in Theological Studies which can be applied toward a graduate-level degree. In most courses students earn three credit hours; many of these courses are also available for non-credit students.

Basic

Advanced

Child Protective Services Law Reporting of Child Abuse

Why do congregations need a child abuse risk management program?

Unfortunately, the problem is real. An increasing number of churches are facing lawsuits and tragedies surrounding children being molested or abused. A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church. In many ways the church needs to be on guard more than anywhere else:

- **People assume they know everyone in the church well, and therefore it is a safe place.** Many people naively think that a situation of abuse “would never happen in our church.” This is unwise and untrue.
- **We need workers.** The church is constantly in search of people who will volunteer to serve different needs in the church. This puts many churches in a vulnerable situation. The standards for child and youth workers must be set and held high.
- **Churches might actually be a perfect place for sexual predators to dwell.** This applies to known sexual predators and unsuspected abusers. Where else can you find so many children and such a trusting environment? Kids trust church. Moms and Dads trust church. Unfortunately, in churches it is more common to ignore a sense that a person may be a risk than to question their character or motives.
- **The impact is huge.** Even one incident of child molestation can divide or devastate a congregation. Parents and members are forced to ask questions they never wanted to ask. Leaders face tremendous blame. Children and youth feel victimized and negative news coverage intrudes. Add to all this the severe emotional trauma to the victim and the victim’s family and the future of effective ministry can be completely undermined.

Adapted from Capital Christian Fellowship, A Risk Management Plan for Capital Christian Fellowship to protect against Child Sexual Abuse, August 2007.

Are you a mandated reporter in the state of Pennsylvania?

If you are an adult (18+) who routinely interacts or has direct contact with children (under 18) in the course of your paid or unpaid role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service or who supervises those who do have direct contact, then you are a mandated reporter.

When does a mandated reporter file a report?

1. When you have “reasonable cause” to suspect a child has been abused. “Reasonable cause” is defined as a situation in which any other “reasonable” person would have made the report.
2. When a child discloses to you, or you learn from a third party, that an identifiable child has been abused by anyone, anywhere.
3. When a person 14 or older makes a disclosure to you that he or she has abused a child.

As a mandated reporter, **you are not to investigate** to be certain abuse has occurred. As a mandated reporter, your legal obligation is only to report.

How do I make a report?

1. **Report Out:** Immediately file a report at www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home the PA Department of Human Services Child Welfare Portal **OR** call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.
2. **Report Up:** Inform the person your Child Protection Policy identifies that you have made a report.
3. If you chose to call ChildLine rather than to file a report electronically, then ask the person to whom you made the report if you should also file the paper form CY-47 with your local Child Protective Services agency within 48 hours.

What if I am not a mandated reporter but am aware of an abuse situation? Anyone can file a report of child abuse. Mandated reporters are just legally required to do so. If you are not a mandated reporter, you are not required to file any paperwork or to inform anyone that you filed a child-abuse report.

Special Note to Credentialed Leaders Regarding Privileged Confidential Communications: In situations involving child abuse, there is no general rule in Pennsylvania that communications between a mandated reporter and a patient or client of that mandated reporter are privileged. The Child Protective Services Law does preserve a very narrow existing privilege relating to clergy “*who while in the course of his [or her] duties has acquired information from any person secretly and in confidence.*” Pennsylvania courts have interpreted the clergy-communicant privilege to apply only to confidential communications between a communicant and a member of the clergy in his or her role as confessor or spiritual counselor. Lancaster Conference advises pastors to state clearly that they intend to report situations of child abuse learned about in any setting, including pastoral counseling settings, so as to dismantle any expectation of confidentiality about abuse. Lancaster Conference also strongly advises any pastor who learns of child abuse in his or her role as confessor or spiritual counselor and who considers invoking the privilege on the part of the communicant to immediately consult legal counsel.

This information is not legal advice, and should not be treated as such. If you have questions about any legal matter, you should consult your attorney or other legal professional.

Resources suggested by the authors

- Department of Public Welfare, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *The child protective services law: Title 23 Pa. C.S. A. Chapter 63*, Harrisburg, PA, 2014.
- Hammar, Richard R., *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*, Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993.
- Klipowicz, Steven W., *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse training manual*, Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993.
- Parker, Mary, ed., *Safe Place: Guidelines for Creating an Abuse-Free Environment*, Christian Publications, Inc., 2009.
- Zarra, Ernest J., *It Should Never Happen Here: A Guide for Minimizing the Risk of Child Abuse in Ministry*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.
- SafeChurch, *Movement Building to End Child Sexual Abuse: Featuring Allies from Faith Communities Speaking Out to Protect Children*, DVD media, Samaritan Counseling Center, Lancaster, PA, 2015.

Adapted from Growing Leaders, November 2007, page 3.

**PLEASE READ
AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH
THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:**

- Lancaster Mennonite Conference Code of Ethics for Credentialed Persons
- Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective
- A Polity of Ministerial Leadership in the Mennonite Church
(especially Sections III and V)

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

CONGREGATION/CONFERENCE COVENANT

While we recognize that the local congregation is the primary Christian community and basic unit of church life, the congregations of Lancaster Mennonite Conference do not stand alone. We are a fellowship of churches, agencies and fraternal organizations, and relate to each other through our district and conference structures. We also seek to relate in responsible ways to the Mennonite Church. Involvement in the Conference broadens the opportunity for congregations to work together and to undertake together what none can do alone.

As evidence of mutuality, Lancaster Conference Center provides the following benefits to its congregations:

- Settings for fellowship, mutual accountability, conferring and discernment.
- Continuity with the Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective and witness.
- A connection to the wider Mennonite Church.
- Credentialing of leaders.
- An ethical standard of accountability for leaders.
- Resourcing for congregational life (CRC).
- Resourcing for leadership development.
- Resourcing for involvement in global missions (EMM).
- Resourcing through conference agencies and fraternal organizations that provide a variety of services.
- Resourcing for congregational vision, church development, pastoral transitions and conflict resolution (Bishop Board, Conference Minister).

As an expression of our interdependence, congregations affiliated with the Lancaster Mennonite Conference covenant together:

1. To accept the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995) (or the 1963 Mennonite *Confession of Faith*).
2. To accept the Constitution of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.
3. To actively participate in our respective districts and accept counsel and help from district bishop/overseer.
4. To participate in our conferring together by sending delegates to the **CELEBRATION OF CHURCH LIFE**, praying for one another, and sharing times of crisis and celebration.
5. To encourage and assist our credentialed leaders to participate in district and conference discussions, decisions, educational opportunities and other relevant activities.
6. To contribute to the financial support of Lancaster Conference ministries and its mission agency (*Eastern Mennonite Missions*), and other conference agencies.
7. To work within Lancaster Conference guidelines for credentialing ordained and licensed leaders.
8. To receive Lancaster Conference statements as guidance on pertinent issues.
9. To “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Approved by Bishop Board: 12/14/98

MISSION STATEMENT

LANCASTER CONFERENCE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

*Lancaster Mennonite Conference
is committed to the continuing
work of Jesus Christ.*

*We gather in congregations
to worship in Christ's name,
to minister the grace
of our Lord Jesus Christ
to one another, and
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
to go forth as workers
in God's kingdom.*

*We partner with a
network of organizations
to equip people for ministry,
to exercise mutual care,
and to extend God's salvation,
healing and hope to the world.*

The CHURCH and HOMOSEXUALITY

LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE

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Lancaster Conference
of the Mennonite Church
Adopted by Conference Leadership Assembly
September 19, 1997

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

See the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Resource Toolkit, “Healthy Sexuality Resources,” 2014.

THE CHURCH AND HOMOSEXUALITY SUMMARY

WE BELIEVE that sexuality is a good gift from God. Sexuality (*sexual desire and awareness*) has biological, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions.

WE BELIEVE that regardless of origins of sexual desire, we have choices to make in how we will manage or express that sexual desire. Unlike the animal world, we need not be controlled by our biology; we have the capacity and responsibility to choose our responses to our impulses.

WE BELIEVE that the Bible teaches that either celibacy or a lifelong marriage between one man and one woman is God’s design for humanity. The Bible is clear that nurturing the lust for or participating in homosexual, premarital, or extramarital sexual behavior is sin.

WE BELIEVE that Christ offers cleansing from sin and a relationship with Himself to anyone who cries out to Him for mercy. When first turning to Christ, the penitent one may be unaware of the full nature of her/his unrighteousness. As that person trusts Christ and His Word and is open to the teaching of the Christian community and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the person will grow in Christ-likeness and holiness of life. According to I Corinthians 6:9-11, those who were adulterers and homosexual offenders are among those, “*washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*”

WE BELIEVE that the Christian community is called to be a place of refuge, a safe place, where the sinner finds healing relationships of love while learning the ways of God. As a safe place, the church’s stance is that we all stand in need of forgiveness and cleansing, that there is not hierarchy of sins and that we all need the prayers and caring support of one another. Further, to create a safe place, the church must clearly state the Word and will of God and offer support and pastoral guidance in bringing all aspects of life, including our sexuality, into conformity to the will of God.

THE CHURCH AND HOMOSEXUALITY

❧ OVERVIEW

The faithful Christian church, based upon the teachings of the Scriptures, has consistently defined homosexual behavior as sin and has called people away from it.

By way of contrast, many outside the church who advocate for gay and lesbian causes as well as heterosexual freedom indicate that sexual desire is a need that must be acted upon if one is to be emotionally healthy. They seek to be liberated from any cultural or religious constraint which hinders the expression of desire. Those who advocate this position challenge elements central to Christian faith: the nature of humankind, the nature of sin, the extent and purpose of salvation, the interpretation of Scripture and the nature of the church.

In this current climate we believe that the faithful Christian church is called by God to assert its Biblical position that sexuality is God's good gift, that sexually chaste relationships are both possible and desirable, and that sexual passion is designed to be expressed only between a man and a woman in the context of a life-time marriage. The church must also reach out in love and compassion with a message of forgiveness and enabling grace to those who sin sexually, be it in premarital, extramarital or homosexual activity or the lust for such activity. Those involved in sexual sin may be our brothers and sisters, our sons and our daughters. They need the church's help to know and follow God's plan for bringing their sexuality under the Lordship of Christ. The church must also be clear in its teaching that God is calling us to repent and turn away not only from sexual sin, but from all unrighteousness including gossip, greed and a judgmental spirit.

In the case of marriage, Christ calls the church to assert that a lifelong union between one man and one woman is God's plan. Even when humans fail to live up to this Scriptural ideal for marriage, God calls the church to promote that ideal while at the same time relating redemptively to those who fail. In a similar way, the faithful church, while relating compassionately to all those who experience homosexual lust and behavior, must continue to make clear God's call to sexual purity.

***Moberly, Elizabeth R.** *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic.* James Clarke, Cambridge, England, 1983. Available in USA from Regeneration Books, telephone: 410-661-0284. Presents a helpful view that "the homosexual condition involves legitimate developmental needs, the fulfillment of which has been blocked by an underlying ambivalence to members of the same sex."

***Payne, Leanne.** *The Broken Image: Restoring Personal Wholeness Through Healing Prayer.* Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1981. Refutes the myth "once a homosexual, always a homosexual." Shows how the healing power of Jesus Christ brings true sexual freedom."

***Payne, Leanne.** *The Healing of the Homosexual.* Westchester, Ill. Crossway Books, 1984. Explains how the "healing of memories and listening prayer make it possible to obtain Christ's forgiveness and to be released once and for all from the bondage of homosexuality." An important book.

***Schmidt, Thomas E.** *Straight and Narrow?* Downers Grove, Ill. InterVarsity Press, 1995. An excellent book about compassion and clarity in the continuing homosexuality debate. Written with both an evangelical Christian perspective and with profound empathy. Well written, persuasive and readable.

Socarides, Charles W. *Beyond Sexual Freedom.* New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1975. A detailed study and critique of current sexual practices by a secular psychoanalyst who is a leader in the scientific study of homosexuality. Socarides has been harshly resisted by gay activists. An important book for those desiring a non-Christian critique of the gay movement.

Socarides, Charles W. "The Erosion of Heterosexuality." *Good News*. September/October 1994, 19-21. A recent article critiquing the gay movement. Socarides states, "Homosexuality cannot create a society or keep one going for very long."

***Soards, Marion L.** *Scripture and Homosexuality.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. A brief, well-written book which "advocates a heightened sense of both biblical authority and Christian compassion. An excellent discussion of how the church should respond to and deal with issues of homosexuality."

"Summary Statements by General Board on Homosexuality" is a list of statements adopted by the Mennonite Church General Board July 29, 1991.

***Whitehead, Brian.** *Craving for Love.* Tunbridge Wells, England: Monarch, 1993. An outstanding study of relationship addiction, homosexuality, and the God who heals.

***Consiglio, William.** *Homosexual No More.* Wheaton, Illinois: SP Publications, 1991. Dr. Consiglio draws on his counseling experience to provide practical strategies for Christians desiring to overcome their homosexuality. An excellent resource for those desiring help and those desiring to help them.

***Davies, Bob, and Lori Rentzel.** *Coming Out of Sexuality: New Freedom for Men and Women.* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993. A comprehensive book dealing from a Christian perspective with the full range of issues associated with homosexuality: origins, theology, paths to wholeness, answers to common pro-gay arguments, etc. Essential reading.

***First Things.** "The Homosexual Movement. A response by the Ramsey Colloquium." 1994: 41 (March), 15-20. A "must read."

***Frangipane, Francis.** *The Three Battlegrounds.* Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Advancing Church Publications, 1989. Not about homosexuality. This book is for all Christians. It explores the three arenas of spiritual warfare which the maturing Christian will face: the mind, the church, and the heavenly places. It provides a foundation of insight, wisdom and discernment on the nature of the battle and the keys to victory. A quotation from the book: "Victory begins with the name of Jesus on our lips. It is consummated by the nature of Jesus in our hearts."

***Guntheil, Thomas G., and Glen Gabbard.** "The Concept of Boundaries in Clinical Practice: Theoretical and Risk Management Dimensions." *American Journal of Psychiatry.* 1933; 150: 188-196. This article heightens the counselor's awareness of issues to consider in avoiding sexual misconduct. These areas include role, time, place and space, money, gifts, services and related matters, and physical contact. A helpful discussion of the issues.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament.* San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996. This writer provides a helpful balance of grace and truth in his discussion of homosexuality. His discussion of Romans 1 is particularly insightful.

***Joyner, Rick.** *There Were Two Trees in the Garden.* Charlotte, N.C.: Morning Star Publications, 1986. A "must-read" for all Christians struggling to understand the difference between flesh and spirit and committed to overcoming sin and glorifying the Lord with their lives. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life represent the fundamental conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God.

Martin, Enos, and Ruth Martin. "Developmental and Ethical Issues in Homosexuality." *Journal of Psychology and Theology.* Spring, 1981; 9 (1) 58-68. An early review article on the issues from a Christian perspective.

In light of the overview, the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church teaches the following:

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Scriptures teach that sexuality is a good gift from God. Within Christian marriage, sexual union is a celebration of the marriage covenant and participation in the creativity of God. When our human sexuality is used this way in Christian marriage, it expresses God's will (*Mark 10:3-9*). Sexual activities outside of the marriage union of one man and one woman are condemned in Scripture whether they are premarital, extramarital, or homosexual (*Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:22; 20:10-16; Rom. 1:18-32; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:16-21; Col. 3:5, 6; I Tim. 1:9-10; Rev. 21:8*).

Romans 1:18-32 identifies several sins, including a clear statement that homosexual behavior is sin (*vs. 26-27*). This sin, like others in the passage, is an expression of rejecting God as creator and is evidence one is outside the righteousness of God. The answer to this sin, as well as others, is found in God's great work of redemption in Christ.

Now, although we have the joy of the Holy Spirit and the transforming grace of God, we must continue to struggle to live faithfully. The redemption of our bodies from this struggle remains a future hope (*Romans 8:18-24*). Therefore, just as heterosexuals who are single can now live a life of holiness in celibacy (even though they experience heterosexual desire), so also persons with homosexual desire can live a life of holiness in celibacy.

No one is given the freedom to practice sexual sin whether that sin be heterosexual or homosexual. All members of the Christian community are one body in Christ. It is important for the Christian community to provide encouragement, support, and counsel to all of its members to live out their human sexuality in the holiness and righteousness of God.

2. Those who attempt to support homosexual practice from the Bible use approaches to the Bible that do not support the understandings historically held by the Christian church. Many theologians who support homosexual practice reinterpret the Scripture in a variety of ways. For example:

- a. They reinterpret Romans 1 as only condemning homosexual practice in the context of idol worship. They miss the obvious fact that Paul is condemning, among other things, the idolizing of sex itself.
- b. They emphasize that Jesus did not speak against homosexuality. But neither did He speak against rape or child molestation. Yet Christians believe these practices go against Biblical principles.
- c. They teach that homosexual genital behavior may now be understood as a good gift. In so doing they agree with Satan's suggestion in the Garden of Eden that God has in fact held back some good gifts from humankind.

☞ HOMOSEXUAL DESIRE AND MORALITY

1. The causes of homosexuality are multiple. Contributing factors may include conscious choice, unconscious motivation, psychological trauma in childhood, biological factors and spiritual factors. Whatever the predispositions or desires one has, God calls us to manage them to His glory. Where a person has difficulty doing this, the church should provide additional pastoral and community resources to help the person toward wholeness and holiness.
2. Homosexual attraction, referred to as homosexual orientation, is often experienced as an inherent part of one's earliest sexual awareness. Same-sex attraction or orientation is a kind of brokenness which affects persons through no necessary fault of their own. However, the experience of one's sexual attraction as inherent or as a given does not rule out ethical and moral responsibility for management of the attraction. Although homosexual attraction or orientation is not a sin in itself, all persons are called to moral responsibility in the way in which they manage their sexual desire. They are called to avoid and renounce the use of pornography and all other nurturing of lustful fantasies, thoughts and behaviors which predispose to premarital, extramarital or homosexual genital activity.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

With this statement we present an annotated bibliography of books and articles which you may find useful in your further study of homosexuality. We have placed an asterisk beside those listings which would be of general interest and appropriate for a church library. All of the listings so marked support a position consistent with Biblical teaching that homosexual genital behavior is sin. The other listings vary in viewpoint; some are secular but make helpful points in the dialogue regarding homosexuality.

A Call to Affirmation, Confession, and Covenant Regarding Human Sexuality is a statement which was adopted by the Mennonite Church General Assembly July 8, 1987.

Browning, Don. "Rethinking Homosexuality." Book review of Greenberg's *The Construction of Homosexuality*. The Christian Century. 1989; Oct. 11, 911-916. An excellent review of David Greenberg's book *The Construction of Homosexuality*. Articulates the philosophical significance of this book and highlights the importance of social labeling in the development of the concept of sexual identity.

Carnes, Patrick. *Don't Call It Love*. New York: Bantam, 1991. Carnes gives helpful insights from a secular perspective about the nature of sexual addiction and the approach to overcoming sexual addiction.

Carnes, Patrick, guest editor. *American Journal of Preventive Psychiatry and Neurology*. Issue on Medical Aspects of Sexual Addiction/ Compulsivity. 1990; 2 (3). A helpful discussion of the psychiatric issues in the discussion on sexual addictions.

***Comiskey, Andrew J.** *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness: How Jesus Heals the Homosexual*. Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 1989. As a leader in the Christian ex-gay movement, Comiskey presents an excellent discussion of the homosexual issue and how to equip people to minister to people dealing with homosexuality and with brokenness in general. Good for the church library.

***Comiskey, Andrew J.** *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness, Guide for Group or Individual Use*. Santa Monica, California: Desert Stream Ministries, 1988. A companion guidebook to the text cited above. Comiskey states that sixty-five per cent or more of those who complete the course based on this guidebook find freedom from homosexuality, and most find greater power to deal with their disordered desires.

3. Homosexual behavior and lust are primarily moral problems. Persons dealing with same-sex attraction may or may not experience difficulty in being able to “love and work” (a definition of emotional health). The church teaches against homosexual behavior so as to be faithful to God and not because the church sees homosexuality as a psychiatric illness.

☞ GOD’S CALL TO THE PERSON WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

Although God’s dealings differ from person to person, God calls His children to righteous behavior. Persons with homosexual desires are called by God to the following:

1. To grow into the likeness of Christ through spiritual disciplines, the development of loving relationships with brothers and sisters in the church, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 2. To acknowledge that although sexuality is a gift from God, homosexual or heterosexual temptation is not a gift from God, for “God cannot be tempted by evil” (James 1:13). However, no sin need separate a person from God’s grace.
 3. To seek deliverance from sexual preoccupation. Upon accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord, a person with same-sex attraction does not usually experience immediate deliverance from homosexual temptation. As the person submits to the lordship of Christ, however, the temptations will lose their control over his or her life.
- Some experience their continued homosexual desire as a “thorn in the flesh.” They discover that as they turn to Christ they find grace and experience personal and spiritual growth through their struggle to manage their sexual desire in a God-honoring way.
4. To be open to the possibility of developing heterosexual interest through Christian caring, therapy, and/or self-help groups. This transformation may or may not occur. If the change does not occur, it does not place the person in a spiritually inferior position.

☞ Encourage and focus on covenantal intimacy with Jesus Christ. God is calling us all into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We covenant to love and follow Him wherever He leads. We do not know where this faith journey will lead. But as He builds His righteousness in us, we begin to see where we next need to repent and be changed into His likeness. We learn that to grow up in Christ, we must respect the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the discerning Christian community of brothers and sisters.

☞ Encourage openness and walking in the light with hopes and fears and failures. This openness should not be with explicit details of a sexual encounter, but in candor about the nature of the struggle. Knowing that others know all about me, including my sexual sins, and yet love and accept me is a healing reality. Deal directly with such issues as resentment and bitterness which hinder relationships in the body of Christ.

☞ Recognize that the person dealing with any sexual sin may benefit from assistance in various areas including: help to forgive a parent or family member who has mistreated or abused them, deliverance from Satanic oppression or bondage, or healing of memories. Some may benefit from individual psychotherapy to deal in a focused way with emotional and spiritual issues. For other persons, medications may prove helpful in dealing with depression and other mood instabilities. Some need help to identify patterns of behavior and thinking which predisposed them to sexual sin. Many need help to devise practical ways for “fleeing temptation.”

☞ Know that some dealing with homosexuality will become free of persistent homosexual desire. Others will continue with this particular temptation to sin but will learn to rely on Christ’s enabling grace and the support of the Christian community to remain free of sexual sin. Be encouraged that Christ is building His church, and He is doing it out of people including those who were sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers but who now have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Christ. (*See I Cor. 6:9-11*)

☞ THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PERSON WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTIONS

God is the architect and builder of our righteousness (*Hebrews 11:10*). He gives us His plan for living as well as the ability to carry it out.

Following are principles to guide the church in cooperating with God in building His righteousness into our lives.

☞ Pray for the humility to recognize that there is no hierarchy of persons in the kingdom, some inherently more righteous or unrighteous because of the nature of their sins. If we take satisfaction that we are free of homosexual sin, and are therefore spiritually superior to a brother or sister dealing with homosexual sin, we have exhibited spiritual pride. If we take satisfaction that we are more loving in our responses to homosexuals than other “judgmental persons,” we have exhibited spiritual pride. Thus we have all come under the condemnation of God (*Romans 2:1*). We are all unrighteous and need a Savior to cleanse us and to lead us into His right way of living and being.

☞ Make the church a safe place, a city of refuge. Lay down the unrighteous weapons of gossip, criticism and even analysis. Extend Christ's love to the person. Address their sin at the Spirit-directed time. Do not focus only on their sin; focus on Christ. Trust the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Know that the Spirit will show you when to speak a word of direction or clarification to the person. Remember, it is God's kindness that leads us to repentance (*Romans 2:4*).

The church is called to love persons even when their behavior has been sinful and has contributed to their difficulties in life. Therefore, for example, the church is called to teach and demonstrate love for the AIDS sufferer. Efforts to deny basic civil rights to homosexuals are contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

☞ Do not apologize for moral and ethical guideposts. The church should clearly teach that Christians are called to a life of obedience to God's will, and not to a life controlled by fleshly inclinations.

Homosexual partnerships are not the moral equivalent of a heterosexual marriage. Christians should therefore flee homosexual behavior both with anonymous partners and with “covenantal” partners. The church should not encourage or support same-sex covenantal partnerships. Because the Bible is authoritative in the life of the Christian community and clearly condemns homosexual activity, the church is precluded from giving explicit or implicit approval to homosexual practices by offering church membership to those who persist in justifying their homosexual behavior. It, likewise, precludes ordaining or assigning a leadership position to those who engage in and/or justify homosexual acts. Congregations who justify homosexual acts preclude themselves from continued fellowship with other congregations in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

☞ Do not fear persons dealing with homosexuality. Rather, include these persons among your circle of friends. Seek to give and receive from persons dealing with homosexuality as real people.

☞ Help the person dealing with homosexuality understand that his or her identity is in being a child of God, not in being gay or lesbian. The concept of sexual identity is a social invention of the last 100 years. Giving someone the label “homosexual” helps create the reality of homosexuality. Those who are uncertain about their sexual leanings now conclude they are homosexual. They then begin to interpret all their experiences through that grid of understanding. This leads to the false conclusion that the most defining aspect of life is sexual orientation. By contrast, those who take their identity as children of God assess their sexual feelings and experiences as a reality to be dealt with, but not as a defining reality that even God cannot change.

☞ Teach children from the beginning that their identity is in Christ, not in their behaviors, either good or bad. Make a safe place for children to talk to their elders regarding their concerns and questions about their developing sexuality. Protect children from those who would urge them toward homosexual practice.

LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE
COVENANT/CODE OF SEXUAL ETHICS FOR MINISTERS

1. Ministers are representatives of God and the church and as such are to be agents of healing and redemption. They are aware that a minister's sexual exploitation or abuse is an abuse of trust, and abuse of power and an abuse of the authority of a pastoral position. They accept their responsibility to define and maintain appropriate boundaries within their ministerial relationships.
2. Ministers are aware that their personal relationships and lives must also reflect healthy morals and sexuality. Spouse or child abuse, use of pornography, or other forms of immorality may also lead to discipline.
3. Ministers are aware that discipline for sexual misconduct and immorality involves both their ministerial credentials and their vocational status.
4. Ministers are aware of and willing to abide by church policies and disciplinary procedures to address sexual misconduct.
5. Ministers accept responsibility to call each other to account and to exercise biblical responsibility to confront colleagues concerning perceptions of inappropriate sexual relationships.
6. Ministers are aware of their calling as servants of God under the lordship of Jesus Christ, and from that they accept their responsibility for and accountability to people entrusted to their care.
7. Ministers accept the obligation to disclose information regarding previous sexual misconduct for which they have been called to account prior to formal candidacy for a new ministry position.
8. Ministers are aware that there are denominational and conference policies and procedures for cases of sexual misconduct and unethical behavior.
9. Ministers accept the responsibility to be "mandated reporters" of any suspected child abuse as prescribed by Pennsylvania law.

As a minister of Jesus Christ and as a representative of the church within its office of ministry, I accept and subscribe to these affirmations.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____

Witness: _____

For a broader treatment of Ethics in Ministry, refer to:

- *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*, Section V, page 106-127.
- *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure*, Mennonite Church USA and Lancaster Mennonite Conference, 2000



LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE

**CODE
of
MINISTERIAL
ETHICS
for
CREDENTIALLED PERSONS**

January 2000

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

CODE OF MINISTERIAL ETHICS

for Credentialed Persons

“We believe that ministry continues the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and offices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith as they serve the church.” (Article 15, *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, 1995.)

The call to ministry is respected and taken seriously by the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. While the priesthood of all believers, is affirmed, it is also recognized that God gifts and chooses certain persons to serve, in the church, as ministerial leaders. The Conference believes that God’s call to ministry presupposes that:

- * Christ gives gifts to His church to continue His ministry -- among these gifts are persons or leaders (*Ephesians 4:7-13*).
- * God calls leaders to equip His people for ministry and service (*Ephesians 4:11-13*).
- * God calls to the ministry with both an inner and outer call (*Acts 13:1-4*).
- * Leaders are to have a servant attitude (*Matthew 20:25-28*).
- * The church sets some of their leaders apart through ordination (*1 Timothy 4:14*).

The New Testament identifies qualifications which ministers should possess (*1 Timothy 3:1-13*, *Titus 1:6-9*). They include: personal spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and the ability to relate in a healthy way to other people. Following the example of Christ, ministers are to be servants of all. Biblical qualifications for leaders focus upon character and personality factors which affect the person’s ability to get along with people. This ethics statement is an attempt to address this concern. Ethical standards are guidelines or principles for conduct necessary to maintain helpful, responsible relationships within the church. The spiritual health and welfare of the church are primary concerns.

This code of ethics is applicable to all ministers in Lancaster Mennonite Conference, whether ordained or licensed.

MINISTERS AND THEIR CONDUCT

Integrity. Ministers are committed to integrity of character. This implies honesty in the presentation of one's self, abilities, accomplishments, views, faith and discipleship. Integrity springs from submission to God's discipline, providential care, and reliance on His enabling grace.

Disclosure. Persons seeking ministerial assignments or credentialing will give honest, and full disclosure of all pertinent information that could impact upon their ministry and the congregation/institution they intend to serve.

Discipleship. A commitment to following Christ daily and totally in life is God's will for all Christians. The minister's life will give evidence of conformity to Christ and separation from evil.

Spiritual Disciplines. The regular practice of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, study of scripture, reflection on God, corporate worship, witness, and service open us to a growing relationship with God and teach us to trust Him with our lives.

Family Relationships. Ministers, whether single or married will have a strong commitment to marital fidelity and sexual purity. Those married are to model healthy husband and wife relationships, and demonstrate their faith in relationships with spouse and children. Family responsibilities have precedence over ministerial responsibilities and other demands.

Social Relationships. Ministers understand that loving and open relationships are foundational to effective ministry. Ministers seek to build healthy relationships with the congregation as a body. They also seek to build healthy person-to-person relationships within the congregation. Awareness and observance of boundaries in the area of sexual morality are imperative. Any sexual exploitation of a congregational member, counselee, or a co-worker is a betrayal of faith, of trust and an abuse of power, and is subject to discipline. *(For further help in this area refer to the current edition of "Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials." Appendix A.)*

Ministers represent their congregations in the community, all activities will be in harmony with the testimony and theology of the church. Serving non-members will be considered community service, and will be guided by personal and congregational priorities and time constraints.

MINISTERS AND THEIR CONGREGATIONS

Commitments. Ministers must be committed to biblical truth as understood in the Anabaptist theological stream. They affirm the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (or the older *Mennonite Confession of Faith* used in their congregation).

Contractual Agreements. Ministers treat contractual agreements with care and will work earnestly to fulfill agreed upon expectations. Expectations and job descriptions are mutually agreed upon by the minister and the congregation or agency at the beginning of ministry.

Professionalism.

- a. **Credentials:** Ordination and licensing are sacred trusts. One's call to ministry is considered a stewardship to the Lord.
- b. **Leadership:** Ministerial leadership is expressed in the care for individual members and for the members altogether as the body of Christ. A servant leadership style facilitates and gives direction. A definite agenda for the mission of the congregation along with leadership skills are necessary to lead the congregation in achieving its goals. Ministers, as they lead, seek to be an example in speech, in behavior, in love, in faith and in sincerity. At home and in personal appearance the minister is neat and clean, careful not to offend the expectations of the congregation.
- c. **Confidentiality:** Ministers will guard all confidential and official information, will avoid taking sides in conflicts between individuals or factions, and will avoid becoming unduly involved in counseling situations.
- d. **Accountability:** Ministers are accountable to both the congregation and the conference for the manner in which ministry is performed and for their Christian faith and life. They respect and cooperate with the designated leadership group/structure within the congregation. There is honest and open dialogue between congregational leaders and the ministers to sustain and improve a proper relationship.

MINISTERS AND THEIR CONFERENCE

Faith and Order. Ministers will have respect for the faith and order of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference and its historic witness. This implies a willingness to work with Conference positions; support for Conference programs; attendance at Conference leadership assembly (for those within reasonable driving distance); recognition of the relationship of the congregation to both the Lancaster Mennonite Conference and the broader Mennonite Church.

Disagreements. Leaders who have reservations about affiliation with the Conference will resolve such issues before assuming a ministry assignment. If ministers find themselves in disagreement with the Conference, they will express that disagreement in an appropriate manner (truthfully, respectfully) and through the appropriate channels (bishop, conference minister, moderator). An arbitrary effort to lead a congregation to withdraw from Conference is a breach of trust and is unethical.

Accountability. Credentials for ministry (ordination, licensing) come from the Conference. The Conference also provides resourcing and training for leaders. Credentialed leaders will work in full cooperation with their district bishop/overseer. Ministers will relate not only to their bishop/overseer, but also to the ministers in their respective bishop district. Ministers serve as peers and colleagues to one another. Participation in district meetings and activities is expected.

In the event of a major breach of ethics (moral failure or neglect of duties) the district bishop and Conference minister shall become involved. They may request the assistance of other persons depending on the nature of the situation. Matthew 18 serves as a foundational text for guidance. In addition, the steps and procedures as outlined in the current edition of “Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials” will be followed. Note the section in this document which specifies complaints which warrant disciplinary action.

Lancaster Mennonite Conference

SABBATICALS FOR PASTORS

This document summarizes Lancaster Conference's guidelines and recommendations on sabbaticals for pastors. It is written as a series of responses to Frequently Asked Questions and adapted from Lancaster Conference's *Sabbaticals for Bishops* guidelines as well as the pastoral sabbatical guidelines of Mennonite Church USA.

What is a sabbatical?

In the Old Testament, God instructed the Israelites to give the land a sabbatical (a rest) every seven years, by which he meant that they should allow the land to remain fallow for one year (Lev. 25). In the academic world, faculty are often eligible for a sabbatical year after being awarded tenure and after fulfilling their regular responsibilities for at least seven years. The college or university usually provides full salary and benefits during a half year (or half pay for a full year) of release from teaching duties. In order to be awarded a sabbatical year, the faculty member must propose a study, research, or writing project that will enhance their understanding and skills in their area of expertise.

In the last several decades, pastors and church leaders have begun to realize that the unique emotional, psychological, and spiritual demands and burdens of church ministry leave pastors and overseers particularly susceptible to 'burnout.' Many pastors and overseers who leave Christian ministry do so in response to the weight and relentlessness of the demands placed on them or in response to an experience of feeling 'burned out.' Also, many pastors and overseers benefit from the opportunity for an extended break from their regular ministry responsibilities in order to learn new skills or to engage in deeper learning experiences.

For pastors, a "sabbatical" is an extended period of time during which they are released from their regular oversight duties and responsibilities, while being fully supported by their usual salary and benefits package. The expectation of this document is that all pastors—part-time and full-time as well as compensated and uncompensated—should receive a sabbatical.

Why should a pastor take a sabbatical?

Sabbaticals for pastors are good for the pastor and his/her family and good for the congregation. Pastors are more likely to serve longer and to serve with greater enthusiasm if they have regular opportunities for study, service, or renewal leaves. Sabbaticals provide spiritual refreshment, new vision, strengthened skills, and wider perspectives on Christian ministry. Congregations benefit from the renewed vision, new skills, and wider perspectives that pastors gain from a time away from active ministry. Pastor sabbaticals should be seen by the congregation as an investment in future ministry rather than as an entitlement. The pastor's sabbatical is also an opportunity for the congregation to be self-reflective and to assess its ongoing journey as a people of God.

What results might a sabbatical produce?

One important result of a sabbatical may be the renewal and restoration of pastors whose emotional wells have been drained over years of ongoing ministry.

Another result might be further equipping for ministry through a study leave that combines rest from oversight duties with structured study. For some pastors, a study leave provides an opportunity to complete a seminary degree or to pursue post-seminary studies. For others, specialized studies can develop skills in particular areas of ministry – areas in which the pastor has need or interest in developing new skills. Pastors can improve their effectiveness in ministry through additional training in oversight skills and in pastoral skills (e.g., organizational leadership, conflict mediation, theological reflection, family systems theory, spiritual formation, preaching). Many pastors would also benefit from studies that are not directly related to Christian ministry, but which provide a better rounded understanding of the world outside the church. Of course, pastors should be receiving ongoing continuing education through short-term seminars and workshops, but longer blocks of study time are also important for cultivating deeper learning.

A third result, usually from a service or exchange leave, may be the chance to learn and grow through serving in a different setting for several months. Many Christian leaders have gifts and interests that are not fully exercised in

any one ministry assignment. Sometimes a pastor's family can resent the amount of time and energy invested in pastoral work. One alternative to this type of situation is a short-term leave or exchange that reinvigorates the pastor and that opens new possibilities for the pastor's family.

It is clear from stories of LMC pastors, sabbaticals often fulfill multiple goals, and that it can be wise to package an number of different objectives together such as study, service and rest.

What kinds of sabbaticals exist?

A. Study Leave

A study leave is not a vacation. It is undertaken to work on a particular learning goal. Usually it involves completion of a defined academic course or program, seminar or study tour. Occasionally a self-directed program of reading and study is appropriate, but the purpose should be clearly defined in advance and some form of reporting (e.g., publication of a document or presentation of a seminar) should be the result. The length of the leave could range from a few weeks to several months or a full year. Some study leaves take the form of a reduced work load while continuing in ministry, but the preferred model is a complete suspension of oversight duties during the leave.

Among pastors in Lancaster Conference who have taken a sabbatical, Dwight Groff, pastor of Kinzer Mennonite Church, took a sabbatical that included (along with a service component and visiting a friend) one month of study at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. While there, he studied I and II Corinthians and was surprised by the accompanying sense of retreat that he experienced. He strongly encourages congregations to make sabbaticals available to their pastor(s), noting that "elements of strength, renewal, and encouragement from my sabbatical continue to shape my ministry."¹

Bishop Sam Thomas took a sabbatical that combined travel, visiting friends and family, fishing and reading with a project in which he committed to being part of a team working at implementing missional communities as a new expression of church. As part of this commitment he helped to plan and host, along with other leaders, a "Taster Event" for folks interested in and experimenting with missional church approaches. As part of this he also traveled to Ohio Synergy Edge for a related three day event in Ohio. He found this engagement with missional church and those involved significant and inspiring, and perhaps a tipping point for new initiatives in LMC and beyond. Bishop Thomas reflected that: "I discovered in the midst of my time away that I was in need of a sabbatical even more than I was aware. It was a new and refreshing experience to feel fully rested and not have significant engagements in front of me. It reminded me of the importance of being more diligent about taking time for renewal and refreshment...to work from rest rather than just rest from work."

B. Rest and Spiritual Renewal Leave

Spiritual renewal and rest should be planned as part of every leave, but sometimes a leave should be taken for this purpose alone. After an extended or particularly intense time of pouring themselves out for the church, pastors often need time (several weeks or more) to replenish their spiritual resources through prayer and reflection. Even Jesus needed to do this from time to time (see Luke 5:15-16). Such a leave will often include time spent at a retreat center and involve some combination of reading, rest, physical exercise, spiritual disciplines, journaling, spiritual direction, and worship. The pastor should articulate clear goals for such a leave and provide a concluding written report upon return.

Ron and Judy Zook, former pastors of New Holland Mennonite Church, took a sabbatical in which they traveled to Europe and with a Palestine-Israel MCC Learning Tour. Upon return they noted: "In Assisi, we learned from St. Clare to 'Gaze upon, consider, contemplate, and then imitate Christ.' This shaped our sabbatical and continues to shape us. We return with a new appreciation for the power of art and liturgy to help us gaze and contemplate Christ. We find ourselves seeking new ways to use art and liturgy in worship. The Daily Office has become a new part of a daily rhythm that nurtures and restores our souls as pastors. Our sabbatical experience has given us new lens to see the world and our own local community and church."²

¹ *Shalom News*, August-September, 2012: 12-13.

² *Shalom News*, August-September, 2012: 13.

Joe Miller, pastor of Mellinger Mennonite Church also took a three month sabbatical that included multiple experiences--a 40-mile pilgrimage hiking the Jesus Trail in Israel as well as a month-long continuing education program at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, engaging in biblical studies lectures in the morning and day trips to historical sites in the afternoon.

After nine years of ministry, Lynn Parks of Oxford Mennonite Church took a sabbatical for renewal. Her sabbatical gave time to be with family, to rest without worrying about other responsibilities, and a break from the mental and emotional weight of ministry. The sabbatical enabled Lynn to step back and gain mental and spiritual energy that is drained by the constant demands that come with ministry. During Lynn's sabbatical she visited congregations of other denominations, read and reflected, and focused on her own spiritual needs rather than those of others. She found this time so refreshing that it felt difficult to think about coming back into ministry again.

Stan and Kathy Shantz, pastors at James Street Mennonite Church, took a sabbatical that like a number of other pastors, integrated renewal, rest, and play with training and retooling. That sabbatical was made possible by a Clergy Renewal Grant from the Lilly Foundation that allowed the Shantz family to visit South Korea (the birthplace of their daughters) and for Stan and Kathy to visit the faith communities of Iona in Scotland and Taizé in France.³

Michael Zimmerman, pastor of Meadville Mennonite Church, took a study/rest and renewal sabbatical. As a bi-vocational pastor he has little time to study or research apart from sermon preparation. The sabbatical gave him space away from meetings and constant pressure, specifically space "in which I was no problem solving in my head all the time." During his sabbatical he visited a variety of churches in the local area in order to experience the expression of worship, theological ideas, practices, etc. of congregations around his own. His visits to other churches helped him to see the family aspect of the congregation and the fact that one is not expected to offer all services and programs as a congregation, but to worship and obey God and love each other.

C. Service Leave

A pastor and another congregation or the broader church may benefit from a service leave when a pastor has particular expertise or experience that is needed for a time by another part of the church. Examples include overseas service or short-term service in another church agency or institution, such as interim teaching or administrative assignments, return trips to other countries previously served, or helping to start a new ministry. The form and length of such leaves varies greatly depending on the nature of the assignment.

D. Special Assignment Leave

Pastors may be released by their congregations for short periods (usually not more than one month) to work on a special assignment. Examples include writing Sunday school curriculum or other teaching materials, visiting other churches and ministries, or assisting in the development of a local service ministry. A special assignment leave may be somewhat similar to a service leave, but it is usually shorter than a service leave.

E. Short term or Interim Pastor Leave

Some pastors may welcome the opportunity to fill a pastoral role in a short-term assignment (often two to six months) to a congregation in another district, another conference, or another country. This sort of leave allows the pastor's family to experience another part of the church more fully since they are engaged in the life of a specific congregation.

How long are sabbaticals?

Sabbaticals generally vary from one to four months. The length varies depending on the purpose of the leave, family circumstances, and financial considerations. The primary consideration is that the leave be long enough to achieve its goal. The most typical duration is three or four months.

³ See additional rich testimonies from pastors and bishops about their sabbatical experiences at the end of this document.

Based on experience with pastoral sabbaticals, it seems that longer leaves (e.g., six to twelve month leaves) are likely to lead to too much disengagement for both the pastor and the congregation and to consideration of making a permanent change.

How often would a pastor be “on sabbatical?”

Congregations should expect sabbaticals to happen on a regular basis. Some congregations may plan for a leave (lasting two to four months) at the beginning of each new term of service (assuming terms of service are usually three to five years). In other cases, a longer leave (four to six months) may follow 7 or 10 years of ministry. Another approach would be to offer one month or one-half month of sabbatical leave for every year of service up to a maximum of four or five months, and to allow the pastor to schedule the sabbatical at their convenience. The Mennonite Church USA guidelines encourage 1 month of sabbatical for each full-time year of ministry. The expectation of Lancaster Mennonite Conference is that all pastors—bivocational, part-time, full-time, salaried, volunteer—will be eligible for regular sabbaticals.

For those pastors who are less than full-time, the congregation may want to pro-rate the amount of sabbatical time “earned” or “awarded” based on the FTE of the pastor’s appointment. Bi-vocational pastors may actually be in greater need of sabbatical time given the complexity of juggling multiple work commitments. In fact, congregations with bi-vocational pastors may want to consider providing additional compensation to allow the pastor to take a break from his/her other form of employment. A sabbatical from the congregation without a sabbatical from other employment is likely to leave the pastor feeling less renewed and more restrained in the opportunities that he/she may engage in during the sabbatical.

How much will a sabbatical cost, and who will pay?

Some leaves are self-supporting. A short term or interim pastoral leave, for example, would include salary, travel, and benefit coverage for the pastor and family by the receiving congregation. The costs of a service leave or special assignment leave may be covered by the receiving agency or institution, or the pastor’s salary and other expenses could be paid by the congregation as a way of sharing in the larger mission of the church. Another possibility would be to negotiate a cost-sharing arrangement between the congregation and the receiving agency or institution.

A study leave or a leave for rest and spiritual renewal is not as likely to be funded by another organization. Typically, for a leave of one to four months, the congregation would continue to pay the full salary and the pastor would apply continuing education allowance to any tuition costs. For a longer leave, congregations may prefer to pay 66% or 75% of the pastor’s salary and 100% of benefits for months five and six. Many congregations, schools, and other institutions follow this practice with longer leaves.

Additional financial support for pastor sabbaticals may be available through Lancaster Conference’s Leadership Education Grants (for tuition costs), the Lilly Foundation’s Clergy Renewal Grants (for ministers with an M.Div. degree), or the Louisville Institute’s Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders.

Who will be our pastor during the sabbatical?

Congregations may arrange for another pastor to cover pastoral responsibilities—perhaps another pastor from within the congregation or someone who comes in on an interim basis. The district Bishop will assist the congregation on coverage for the pastor’s responsibilities while the pastor is on sabbatical. Or, a congregation may cover pastoral responsibilities by calling on the gifts of others in the congregation—deacons, elders, Board members, former pastors, and others who might be able to share in preaching, pastoral care, administration and oversight, etc. Doing so has the potential to develop new leaders from within the congregation and to give others a new perspective of the opportunities and challenges that their pastor faces on an everyday basis.

Will our pastor come back afterward?

A pastor usually returns from a sabbatical refreshed and eager to reengage in ministry and usually returns with renewed passion and enhanced skills, which contributes to longevity in the role. But congregations may want to include a statement in the sabbatical agreement that spells out an expectation that the pastor who takes a sabbatical will complete the contract term after the leave or will serve at least one year after returning.

On the other hand, sometimes a pastor (or a congregation) will realize during the pastor’s sabbatical that it is time for a permanent change. In these cases, there is little to be gained by insisting on the fulfillment of the contract

term when there is no enthusiasm for it. This is one reason to consider scheduling sabbaticals at the end rather than at the beginning of a contract term.

Congregations that see their ministry as part of the larger work of the church sometimes provide financial support for a pastor to take a shorter (two to three months) study or spiritual renewal leave at the end of a term of service to that congregation, especially if the ministry has been more than 10 years long. This enables the pastor to make a better transition to the next assignment and may be less disruptive for the congregation than expecting the pastor to return briefly after a sabbatical before moving on to a different ministry assignment.

What happens to the pastor's family?

Family considerations are very important in deciding the timing, length, location and focus of the leave. A well-planned leave that involves the pastor's family in the planning will renew family life and encourage the pastor's spouse and children to support a return to ministry with enthusiasm. Congregations should help pastors ensure that a sabbatical does not place excessive financial or other burdens on the family.

What should the congregational leaders do?

- Consider the benefits your congregation will enjoy as a result of a well-planned leave for your pastor.
- Talk about your approach to pastor sabbaticals before your pastor asks for one.
- Develop a sabbatical policy that specifies frequency, length, expectations, options, and coverage of costs to guide your discussion of specific proposals. Include enough flexibility to respond to the particular needs and circumstances of your pastor.
- Be open to adjustments to the policy if circumstances warrant—e.g., if an opportunity or invitation for a service leave or exchange arises, or it becomes evident that the pastor needs a spiritual renewal leave before the policy calls for one.
- When you renew your pastor's contract or call a new pastor, add a paragraph to the covenant of understanding that spells an approach to sabbaticals.
- Consider including some set aside money in each year's support budget for your pastor, so there will be a fund available after six or seven years to cover the costs of a leave.
- When you receive a proposal for a leave from your pastor, negotiate details that benefit everyone concerned. Then write up an agreement that specifies the type of sabbatical to be taken, its duration, a budget, coverage of the pastoral needs of the congregation while the pastor is on sabbatical, and accountability for the pastor during the sabbatical period.

What should the pastor do?

- If you are considering a call to a new oversight assignment or renewing a contract, negotiate a policy (or at least a commitment to work at a policy) to be included in your memorandum of understanding.
- Talk with your congregational leaders about formulating a policy on leaves. If there is no such policy, begin working on one within the usual decision-making structures of your congregation.
- Once a policy is in place, consider when you might benefit most from a leave. It is best to plan a year in advance—longer if it is your congregation's first experience with pastor sabbaticals.
- Talk with your spouse and children, if appropriate, and pray about the opportunities for you and the congregation. Get counsel from colleagues, your Bishop, and others who have experienced a sabbatical regarding the best way for you to use sabbatical time.
- Develop a specific proposal to present to congregational leaders. Define what kind of leave you want, what you and the congregation stand to gain from it, how you will be accountable for the results, when and where it might happen, and so on according to your congregation's policy requirements.
- After your sabbatical, report to your congregation about how the experience has impacted you and your continuing ministry.
- After a longer leave, expect some awkwardness around returning to your congregation. Prepare yourself and your family for this. Consider what kind of celebration or reacquainting time might be appropriate for you and your congregational leaders as you begin working together more closely again.

Where can we get more information on planning a leave for our pastor?

Contact Lancaster Conference's moderator or district Bishop.

For reflections on the value of sabbaticals, see:

- February 2, 1998 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, the February 1997 issue of *Clergy Journal*
- Chapter “Desert and Harvest: A Sabbatical Story” in Eugene Petersen’s *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Word, 1989)
- <http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/clergysabbaticals.aspx>

This statement is adapted by permission from “SABBATICAL, STUDY AND SERVICE LEAVES FOR PASTORS,” Second edition © 2005 Ministerial Leadership Office of Mennonite Church Canada and Congregational and Ministerial Leadership of Mennonite Church USA and from the “Lancaster Mennonite Conference Sabbaticals for Bishops” document approved September 10, 2010.

Sabbatical reflections from LMC leaders

I have been blessed to have had several sabbaticals. In one case our family spent a month of my three-month respite in Immokalee Florida. We worked with Habitat for Humanity, me in construction and my wife Mary Lou in the office. During a second sabbatical years, later our congregation enabled us to travel to Peru for one month of my three-month sabbatical. There we assisted EMM missionaries with a medical clinic and other teaching/preaching assignments. In both cases our children were greatly impacted in positive ways by those trips. And in both cases I spent the remainder of my time resting, reading, and doing other things. While some enjoy academic sabbaticals, what I needed were those varied breaks, doing things far from my normal routine, and spending lots of time with my family.

Were my sabbaticals worth what they cost the congregation? What I know is that at 56 years of age, having served in pastoral ministry for more than 34 years, I love pastoring now as much as ever. Instead of feeling like I’m trying to hang until I can retire, I’m excited about the future and believe I have more to offer now than ever. Certainly not the only reason but one of the reasons why I have not been a pastoral “casualty” is that the congregation was willing to care for me by periodically giving me a sabbaticals. It has helped me to stay energized.

Joe Sherer
Willow Street Mennonite Church

I took a sabbatical in the summer of 2000 for thirteen weeks. I brought the idea to the leadership of the church five years before it happened and they opened up a fund putting a set amount (\$36) in each month to prepare to pay speakers for each week. We are a small body of believers and the amount did not stress our budget in any way. When the time came we had the money available. The goal was to have this happen every seven years, and continue to put in the set amount. During the sabbatical my family and I visited thirteen different churches from thirteen different denominations and vastly different expressions of faith. The idea was to get a pulse on what the Spirit of the Lord was doing in the body of Christ. It was a very rewarding experience for me, and great family time as some of these included visiting churches up to two hours away on a Sunday morning trip, i.e. The Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York City. In addition to learning what the Spirit of God was up to, I was incredibly blessed with messages that spoke directly to where I was at in a great time of need in my ministry. Only God could have orchestrated this blessing. I would highly advise all pastors to set up a similar situation for yourself. It is not very costly, and it is highly rewarding.

David Pegarella
Nanticoke Christian Fellowship

I was given a three month sabbatical the summer of 2012 after having been serving as pastor at Pilgrims Mennonite Church for twelve years. This was the first time Pilgrims has offered a sabbatical.

I pieced together a variety of things for these three months—

- I began and ended my sabbatical with a week "silent retreat" alone on the Appalachian Trail
- one week service project with each of my two daughters at a place of their choosing
- one week away with my wife
- three "clergy care" sessions with a therapist
- joined extended family for a week at a cabin
- visited a different church each Sunday, especially seeking out church plants and emergent-type churches
- worked on a few home projects including compiling documents from our six years in Germany with EMM

Most meaningful for me were the service weeks with my daughters and my time alone on the Appalachian Trail. It was helpful to step back from my responsibilities as pastor and take a new look at the big picture. I was acutely aware that I missed my primary community. It was encouraging to visit other congregations. I became more aware of the deeper things to which I am attracted and the passions that drive me. I believe it is helpful for pastors to step out of their regular routine for a time in order to reflect and be renewed for continued service.

Barry Kreider
Pilgrims Mennonite

Robert and I were given a two month sabbatical in our ninth year of ministry. We had several purposes for our sabbatical. Rest: mental and physical. Read/Study: Robert had a reading list focused on Missional communities and I studied through EMS. Travel: the first two weeks of our sabbatical was spent in Israel with a Tourmagination group led by Nelson Kraybill and hosted by Keith and Brenda Blank. Connecting: we made it a goal to visit the churches of our parents and siblings.

Our tour of Israel was the highlight of our Sabbatical and continues to give back to us in many ways. We continue to use the pictures taken there in sermons and Sunday School made more meaningful by the personal connections to those places. The tour opened the sensory aspects of the biblical text enriching our own spirituality as well as teaching. Because the trip was at the beginning of our sabbatical, we had plenty of time to rest and reflect before re-entering ministry.

Ministry requires engagement on many levels; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. While regular times of rest and healthy boundaries are essential to an ongoing pastoral presence, an extended time of rest and reflection is also beneficial. Sabbaticals allow pastors to unhook long enough reassess life from one's spiritual vitality to ministry longevity. Time and space for deep reflection give vital perspective to pastoral ministry.

Audrey Kanagy
Living Light Mennonite Church

Our sabbatical began with two weeks of Don recuperating from surgery. In late February of 2011, we traveled to Hesston, Kansas, for the remainder of our three months. On the way to and from Lancaster, we had the opportunity to renew relationships with friends in Goshen, Indiana, and then West Liberty, Ohio. After settling into our rental house, we began volunteering with Hesston College. Loretta averaged 15-20 hours per week in the Development Department and Food Services, while Don averaged 40-50 hours per week with the Dyck Arboretum and Hesston College Women's Softball Team. Our sabbatical was one of volunteering, rest and renewal, and reflection, giving us a much needed change of pace.

While we attended worship services in 7-8 different congregations, while we had some opportunity for local travel, a large sense of renewal and joy came from sharing time with our son, Andrew, and his family. Our daughter-in-law, Amy, gave birth to Lucy, on April 1, joining older brother, Jack. Don served as assistant Softball Coach to Andrew, Women's Softball Coach. Don's time with the Arboretum gave him vigorous physical labor and time to reflect on the act of tearing out old vegetation to make room for new spring growth. Loretta shared many precious "grandma" hours with Jack and Lucy.

During our time away, we choose Luke 15:11-32 as our sabbatical text, helping us to reflect on leaving and returning from the perspective of the father, and younger and older son. A book by Henri Nouwen, on this text, wove the Luke 15 account with the personal life experiences of Nouwen and the 16th century artist, Rembrandt.

For us, renewal and rest came through the gift of sabbatical. It involved friends, old and new, family, spiritual reflection, and physical labor. We remain grateful for this experience and encourage congregations to invest in the ongoing health and vitality of their pastors.

Don Sharp
Rossmere Mennonite Church

I wonder if shorter sabbaticals (1-2 months) that occur more frequently (every 3-4 years?) This might not be 'enough' to focus on a significant project, but it may provide ongoing opportunities for focused renewal and smaller projects without the significant effort smaller congregations need to marshal to support a longer sabbatical.

In a previous pastorate, I took a 1-month sabbatical. I divided that time to tend to some advanced graduate work as well as research that led to a proposal for the congregation. True, my time was divided, but at the same time, I was able to focus energy to see the congregation and its context in ways that the ongoing, weekly pastoral work does not permit.

It is challenging for a pastor who carries a (part-time compensated) portfolio to take a sabbatical. (I also keep a small therapy caseload and do some adjunct teaching). Though it would be greatly beneficial to have several weeks of Sabbath rest and sabbatical, my other jobs do not make that possible. However, I can certainly see the benefit of the space and silence that could bring.

Pastoring involves a range of skills and tasks that few other callings involve: oversight of an organization and spiritual oversight of a community; awareness of and capacity to engage with biblical and theological scholarship and the existential engagement with scripture and how it can speak into life in the Spirit; ongoing preparation of sermons, meetings, talking with people and tending to one's own participation in the Spirit's life; attending to others calling, nurturing and inviting involvement in designing gathered worship, in instigating and catalyzing mission and ministry among the gathered, building the building to support community life while at the same time, reaching out beyond its boundaries. It's a full plate. Individuals and the Church have invested significantly in the formation of people who are called as pastors; many gifted pastors walk out of this calling. Sabbaticals may be one means to honor and recognize how ongoing focus, training, attention and silence can deepen those called to this ministry.

Tom Leard Longenecker
New Hope Community Church

A three month sabbatical policy developed by the congregation had three specific requests which I needed to make plans to fulfill.

1. Serve in a context of ministry different from my own:

I spent 10 days in Philadelphia PA serving with the staff of Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association. They offer adult education and childhood development ministry to their community. This experience had me serving in a ministry context that was completely different from my own.

2. An element of intentional pastoral study: I spent most of the month of January at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. An interterm study on I and II Corinthians fulfilled the continuing education element of the sabbatical policy.

3. Some R & R: The final month of the sabbatical was an opportunity to, "just relax."

I was most impacted by time I spent alone. I found myself spending a great amount of time praying and reading scripture; pursuing more deeply some of the spiritual disciplines I had implemented a few years ago as a result of pastoral studies. I was not tired or lackluster in pastoral ministry when I began sabbatical. Careful plans were made so that my absence would not cause undo stress in congregational life. I encourage pastors to take a sabbatical. I encourage congregations to take action to make sabbatical available to their pastor(s.) The rewards are numerous for the pastor and the congregation. I was refreshed.

Dwight Groff
Kinzer Mennonite Church

I was blessed with a six month sabbatical from April 1 to September 30, 2013. I had served bivocationally for 18 years. The sabbatical was designed as a complete break. I did not receive any e-mails, updates or attend any meetings, other than what the average member would do. The purpose of my sabbatical was for me to have a respite, a break from the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional weight of shepherding our congregation. I wanted to be restored in heart and body, and to come back with a new focus for ministry. I also wanted to use the time to work through some substantial transitions that were taking place in my business. During my sabbatical, I continued to worship at Weaverland most of the time, but I had freedom to go wherever I wanted. This in and of itself was huge. I set a goal of losing 20 pounds during my sabbatical, which I was able to reach. I spent more time with my wife and family, enjoying more time to read. My experience was very positive. I felt energized, refreshed and excited to get back to ministry upon completion of my sabbatical. People commented that I was a different person when I returned. I felt spiritually refreshed. I feel like I gained a better perspective on life and what is most important. I hope to carry this with me to my retirement from ministry and beyond. On the first Sunday back, I had a recommitment to my vows as a pastor and to the congregation that I serve. This was a powerful part of my transition back.

Don R. Weaver
Weaverland Mennonite Church

In the year 2012 I experienced my second sabbatical in 17 years of ministry as bishop. Within my heart was the hope for these three months to be a time of developing understanding of preparation for fulfilling my calling in ministry for the next decade which would take me to the age of 65. My goals were to explore cutting edge ministries that are postured for ministry for the next ten years, to prepare myself for relevant and effective ministry, and to experience the rest and renewal needed to be able to lead with grace and joy.

Exploration of Effective Ministries--My strategic focus became three settings in Europe where the church is rebounding and the Spirit of God is moving. What I saw in these 3 churches in Switzerland and France were intentionality about ministry to the 35 and younger generation, seriousness about intimate worship, and passionate about making disciples whom assertively use their gifts for the kingdom.

Experience of Rest and Renewal--My ability to find rest took longer than expected, however, it went deep quickly as we arrived at a spiritual retreat center in Switzerland 30 days into the sabbatical. We dropped all other plans and stayed at the retreat center until we felt properly detached from the "race of life." The greatest renewal came through time with God, my wife, family, friends, reading, kayaking, and biking.

Conclusion--This was an awesome time releasing Elaine and I both to dream again and approach the future with excitement and anticipation.

Lloyd Hoover
Groffdale District bishop

In 2012 I took a three-month sabbatical after serving as the lead pastor for six years. It was a tremendous time of refreshment and retooling. One of the keys to a good sabbatical for me was to do a careful job of planning well in advance of the sabbatical. I used Keith Yoder's e-book *Navigating Your Sabbatical* to prepare for this time. I focused the sabbatical on three areas.

1. Rest & Recreation – I made a commitment to take a complete break from all ministry and attendance at MMC as a way of resting my body, soul, spirit from these engagements. I worked at developing some hobbies and also took more time just to rest and “be” on my sabbatical.

2. Reflection & Renewal – I took a week of retreat away from my home to pause and reflect. I spent time with spiritual friends/mentors who helped me to focus on my personal development and growth and not on church-related things. I read on personal renewal and spiritual growth.

3. Retooling & Resourcing – I took a number of trips to places where God was doing something new or of interest to me that helped to resource and retool me for my work at MMC.

I ended my sabbatical by helping to lead a tour to Israel/Palestine with Nelson Kraybill. This was very inspirational and a great way to end my sabbatical. My wife, Brenda, was able to join me for this part of my sabbatical.

Keith Blank
Mountville Mennonite Church

I am grateful to Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) for implementing a bishop sabbatical policy and encouraging sabbaticals. And I am so grateful to the Bishop Support Committee and pastors of Landisville and Manor districts who not only made the sabbatical possible, but helped to maintain boundaries that assured a true break from oversight responsibilities. Thank you...Thank you!!!

Travel:

- My wife and I attended MC USA Convention in Phoenix, AZ. I served as a delegate for LMC.
- We spent nearly a week in Winnipeg, Manitoba with good friends who had been members at Landisville Mennonite Church when I was pastor. One of the highlights of this visit was spending the best part of a day in a Hutterite community.
- We spent several days in OH visiting our son-in-law's parents.
- We enjoyed a long weekend in NYC with two other couples

Refreshment/Renewal:

- I love fishing. Sabbatical time provided numerous opportunities. I chartered a flathead cat fishing trip on the Susquehanna with my son-in-law and had my boat on the river seven or so times for pleasure and fishing.
- I did more biking than I usually am able to do. There were so many days of wonderful weather!
- There are always work projects here on the farm. When I am busy, they sometimes feel like work, but during sabbatical time I found most of them to be life-giving.

Reading:

- I've not read a good novel for a long time and so I got into two...*Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver and *Fate is the Hunter (a pilot's memoir)* by Ernest K. Gann.
- Also read:
 - o *Discerning God's Will Together* by Ervin Stutzman
 - o *Leading Missional Communities* by Mike Breen and the 3DB team

Sabbatical “project”:

For the past three years I've been involved with the Lancaster Learning Community (LLC), a group of 15 or so leaders who have been meeting together to explore and work toward implementing Missional Communities

(MC's) as a new expression of church. As I was preparing for a sabbatical, a small planning team began dreaming about planning a "Taster Event" in the Lancaster area for persons interested in and experimenting with the MC approach to discipleship and forming disciples. As part of my sabbatical proposal I committed to being part of that dream.

After some thinking together, we decided to host a Taster event for September 11-12 with resource persons Alex Absalom and Jason Lantz from OH. More than 150 persons registered for this event at Mount Joy Mennonite. This became a significant involvement for me during my sabbatical both in terms of time and what it meant to me as a person and in my role a bishop. We had approximately five planning meetings and several debriefing sessions along with a meeting to begin projecting next steps. I also went with a team of three persons from LMC to Synergy Edge in OH for a three day workshop in September.

Involvement in this MC effort stands out, not as the most fun part of my sabbatical, but certainly as the most significant. The strength of interest in the Taster event from such a rich variety of persons was inspiring. And I sense that the Taster event may well become a tipping point for new initiatives in LMC and beyond. It seems that God has been stirring this movement for several years and that it is at the point of bearing much good fruit, strengthening our resolve to form disciples of Jesus who in turn form disciples of Jesus.

Reflections:

- I became aware that a bishop role makes it difficult to create a clean break from responsibilities. While pastors, for whom I provide oversight, helped to maintained good boundaries, most persons outside of that realm had no idea I was on sabbatical and so phone calls and emails and requests continued. I found it easier to deal with these as they came my way rather than hold them until I returned.
- I discovered in the midst of my time away that I was in need of a sabbatical even more than I was aware. It was a new and refreshing experience to feel fully rested and not have significant engagements in front of me. It reminded me of the importance of being more diligent about taking time for renewal and refreshment...to work from rest rather than just rest from work. It renewed and strengthened my resolve to be an advocate for pastors to be granted sabbatical time.
- At age 63, it provided space for me to experience something of what retirement might feel like and to discern when that best happens. That discernment continues.

Sam Thomas, Bishop
