

Agenda item for WDC Delegate Assembly – July 31, 2021

Release of Goessel Mennonite Church from Western District Conference

Background: On June 1, 2021, Western District Conference (WDC) received a letter from the Executive Board of Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church stating that on May 16 the congregation voted to approve the motion *"that the Goessel Mennonite Church withdraw from WDC and MCUSA and the word 'Mennonite' be dropped {or removed} from the church name."*

The letter from Goessel Mennonite Church noted a decline in their relationship with WDC over the last 15 years. It stated that their membership with WDC and Mennonite Church USA "created a barrier" in fulfilling their "desire to thrive as a mission church in Goessel," and cited issues related to interpretation of scripture, response to persons in the LGBTQ+ community, and Anabaptist views of sin, salvation and faith.

At its meeting on June 3 the WDC Executive Board received the letter from Goessel Mennonite Church, and reviewed the WDC constitution statement regarding withdrawal of congregations from WDC: *"The process of a congregation requesting withdrawal from the Western District Conference should be in the spirit of Christian love and, if possible, with efforts of restoration and reconciliation guided by the Western District Conference Executive Board in dialogue with the particular congregation. A congregation is released from Western District Conference when a two-thirds majority of all delegates vote favoring such action after a written notice of the proposed action has been printed in official conference publications and/or mailed to all member congregations not less than sixty days prior to voting sessions. Upon leaving WDC, a congregation forfeits all claims to WDC property and privileges."*

An e-mail was sent to WDC congregations on June 4, informing them of Goessel Mennonite Church's decision, with the notice that the WDC Executive Board would place the proposed action to release Goessel Mennonite Church from WDC on the agenda for a vote by WDC delegates at the annual WDC delegate business meeting on July 31, 2021.

Proposed Action: To release Goessel Mennonite Church from WDC.