

Ministerial Leadership Commission Annual Report (covering June 1, 2022-June 14, 2023)

Submitted by Cynthia Neufeld Smith, chair of MLC

MLC Members: Cynthia Neufeld Smith (chair), Elizabeth Melendez (resigned 10/1/22), Gail Graber (began 3/8/23), Micah Hurst, Rachel Epp Miller, Todd Schlosser, Samuel Voth Schrag

Staff liaison: Heidi Regier Kreider, conference minister

The Ministerial Leadership Commission has fulfilled its constitutional duties in the past year in the following ways:

Monitoring changes in ministers' credential status:

New Credentials (Licensing Toward Ordination or License for Specific Ministry)

- 9/1/22 - Josh Janzen, License towards Ordination granted, First MC, Beatrice, NE
- 10/12/22 - LaTayna Purnell, License for Specific Ministry granted, Houston MC, Houston, TX
- 3/6/23 - Michael Unruh, License towards Ordination granted; Bethel College Campus Pastor, North Newton, KS

Credential changes (Transfers, Active to Active without charge, Active without charge to Active, Reactivation of Inactive Ordination credential, Active to Retired, Expired, Change in assignment, Withdrawn, etc.)

- 6/13/22 - Susan Jantzen began as Sabbatical Coverage Pastor, Hope MC, Wichita, KS; ended 9/18/22
- 6/19/22 - Derrick Ramer ended as Pastor at New Creation Fellowship, Newton, KS; Credential transferred to IN/MI Mennonite Conference 3/6/23
- 6/30/22 - Scott Litwiller ended as Co-pastor at Lorraine Ave, Wichita, KS
- 6/30/22 - Renee Reimer ended as Associate Pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS
- 7/1/22 - Luann Yutzy began as Interim Pastor at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, VA; ended 9/30/22; began 10/6/22 as Interim Pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, ended 6/10/23
- 7/30/22 - Gilberto Flores began as Pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz, Guatemala City, Guatemala
- 8/1/22 - Randy Smith began as Interim Pastor at First MC, McPherson, KS; ended 4/30/23
- 8/1/22- Dawn Yoder Harms began as Interim Pastor at Lorraine Avenue MC, Wichita, KS

- 8/21/22 - Roger Neufeld Smith ended as Interim Pastor at First MC, Beatrice, NE; began 1/1/23 as Interim Pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS
- 9/1/22 - Linda Lewis, License Towards Ordination withdrawn, Hospice Chaplain; 1/1/23 ended as Chaplain at Phoenix Hospice, Wichita, KS
- 9/2/22 - Karen Mascho ended as Chaplain at Cross Timbers Senior Mental Health (continues as Spiritual Director at Kairos Outside Ministry)
- 9/23/22 - Stephen Conrad ended as Chaplain at Valley Hope, Moundridge, KS; Licensed for Specific Ministry expired
- 10/1/22 - Randy Quinn (credentialed retired United Methodist pastor) began as Interim Pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS
- 10/3/22 - Eric Massanari ended as Chaplain at Kidron Bethel Village, North Newton, KS; began 11/1/22 as Conference Minister for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. Credential Transferred 1/31/23 to PNMC.
- 10/31/22 - Peter Emery ended as Interim Pastor at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, KS; began 11/1/22 as Pastor at First Mennonite Church of Christian
- 11/13/22 - Dianne Garcia ended as Pastor of Family at San Antonio Mennonite Church, San Antonio, TX
- 11/19/22 - LaTayna Purnell ended as Associate Pastor at Houston Mennonite Church, Houston, TX
- 11/26/22 - Todd Schlosser ended as Interim Pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS; began 11/27/22 as Pastor at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS
- 11/30/22 - Graciela Tijerina ended as Pastor at Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS
- 12/4/22 - Brad Roth ended as Pastor at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS; Credential Transferred 1/31/23 to South Central Mennonite Conference; began 2/1/23 as Pastor at Whitestone MC (SCMC), Hesston, KS
- 1/22/23 - Fernando Pérez Ventura and Rebeca González Torres were installed as Transitional Pastors at Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS. They are members of the Conferencia de Iglesia Evangelicas Anabautistas Menonitas de Mexico and are credentialed in Mountain States Mennonite Conference.
- 1/27/23 - Amy Claassen - Credential Transferred from SCMC to WDC, continues as Chaplain at Wesley Medical Center, Wichita, KS
- 3/22/23 - Rachel Ringenberg Miller credential transferred to Central District Conference
- 4/9/23 - Norma Duerksen ended as Pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro KS
- 4/16/23 - Tom Harder ended as Pastor at First MC, Hillsboro, KS
- 4/30/23 - Dianne Schmidt ended as Associate Pastor at Eden MC, Moundridge, KS
- 5/17/23 - Micah Hurst ended as Campus Pastor at Hesston College, Hesston, KS
- 5/28/23 - Tim Amor ended as Pastor at Summit Street Church, Beatrice, NE
- 5/31/23 - Marty Troyer, credential transferred to Central District Conference
- 6/4/23 - Rachel Epp Miller ended as Interim Pastor at Austin Mennonite Church, Austin, TX
- 6/14/23 - Beverly Baumgartner, Ordination Reactivation granted, began as Interim Associate Pastor at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS

Deceased

- 1/18/22 - Willis Hallman, retired minister (was omitted from 2022 report)
- 9/4/22 - Dave Stevens, Pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS
- 1/7/23 - James Schrag, retired minister
- 2/19/23 - Blanca Vargas, Pastor at Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida in San Antonio, TX

Supporting personal and spiritual growth for pastoral leadership through counsel, personal evaluation, continuing education and professional assistance.

- Approved 32 continuing education grants for credentialed ministers, totaling \$4230
- Approved 4 sabbatical grants, totaling \$1678.46
- Approved 3 Seminary Scholarships, totaling \$1309.75
- Provided mentors for new ministers
- MLC supported congregations and pastors navigating conflict and change, and pastoral review, accountability and discernment processes, using our Congregational Development Fund. Efforts are needed to replenish this vital fund.

Supporting a code of ministerial ethics in keeping with Mennonite Church USA documents.

- Carried out policy requiring all ministers to take Healthy Boundaries training.
- New members to MLC completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

Resourcing ministry teams that include pastors and deacons through workshops, retreats, and other appropriate events.

- MLC co-sponsored a Pastors' Day Apart in February with Prairie View Mental Health on the theme of Mental Health First Aid training.
- Two females have been appointed to an Abuse Prevention and Response Resource Team that can be available to congregations and to the MLC. An additional male is being sought.
- MLC is planning a ministers' appreciation gathering at the Annual Assembly of WDC.
- MLC is working to develop a series of resourcing topics to be offered for pastors and congregational leaders.
- MLC meets monthly to tend to the larger picture of ministerial leadership in WDC and support the conference ministers in their work.

The MLC began discussion about what it means to engage in Repentance and Transformation as called for by the 2022 MCUSA resolutions in Kansas City. We acknowledge that the MLC played a role in excluding LGBTQ person from ministry in the past. We met with a group of Hispanic pastors to listen to their opposition to MLC's decision to extend credentialing to all persons regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. We are trying to find our way to authentic repentance and transformation, while honoring the various views on this subject among our constituents.