

## **Proposed action to release West Zion Mennonite Church from membership in Western District Conference**

The following letter was sent to WDC congregations on May 24, 2024, describing the proposed action that will be on the 2024 WDC delegate assembly agenda, in response to West Zion Mennonite Church's decision to withdraw from membership in WDC:

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This is a formal notice that a proposed action will be brought to delegates at the Western District Conference Annual Delegate Assembly on August 3, 2024, to release West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS, from membership in Western District Conference (WDC). A paper copy of this notice will also be mailed to your congregation.

This is in accordance with the WDC Constitution, which states that *"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."*

The proposed action follows a process that took place over the past year: In May 2023 the WDC Moderator, Conference Minister and Associate Conference Minister liaison for West Zion Mennonite Church met with the Deacons at West Zion for conversation about their concerns regarding conference affiliation. Following further congregational discernment, West Zion Mennonite Church voted on January 21, 2024, to withdraw from membership in WDC and Mennonite Church USA. On February 28 the Church Council of West Zion Mennonite Church communicated this decision in a letter to the WDC Executive Board, stating *"We feel that Western District Conference has chosen to move away from the values that have set us apart as followers of Christ. We appreciate the many years that we shared together and will miss the relationships that have been formed."*

The letter was shared with the WDC Executive Board at its meeting on March 14, and on March 18 a letter of response on behalf of the WDC Executive Board was sent to the Church Council at West Zion Mennonite Church. The letter acknowledged that the congregation's decision had been discerned prayerfully and deliberately, lamented the ending of the long relationship between West Zion Mennonite Church and WDC, and offered gratitude for the congregation's many years of witness and mission as part of WDC, noting that we will miss West Zion Mennonite Church's participation in the conference.

West Zion Mennonite Church plans to join the Evana Network. May God bless and guide the congregation and the new relationships that will nurture it in the future.