

# 96th Annual Delegate Sessions



# ANNUAL REPORTS

Be strong and let your heart take courage.

Psalm 31:24b

A green silhouette of a world map is centered in the background. Overlaid on the map is the number "500" in a large, dark blue serif font.

# 500

## The Courage to Love

**Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary**  
**March 14-16, 2025**

## MENNONITE CHURCH ALBERTA STAFF

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld	<i>Executive Minister</i>
Ruth Bergen Braun	<i>Communications Coordinator</i>
Suzanne Gross	<i>Bridge Building Facilitator</i>
Derek & Darcie Janzen	<i>Managers, Camp Valaqua</i>
Jon Olfert	<i>Director, Camp Valaqua</i>
Wayne Janz/Austin Janz	<i>Contract Treasurers</i>

## MCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Keith Retzlaff	<i>Moderator</i>
Linden Willms	<i>Vice Moderator</i>
Rachel Siemens	<i>Finance Chair</i>
Coreen Froese	<i>Secretary</i>
Tim Wiebe-Neufeld	<i>Executive Minister</i>

## MCA GENERAL COUNCIL

Jan Wilhelm	<i>Nominating</i>
Doug Wiebe	<i>Personnel</i>
Darrel Heidebrecht	<i>Camp Valaqua</i>
Adela Wedler	<i>Community Building &amp; Program</i>
Marie Moyer	<i>Mission &amp; Service</i>
Timothy Burkholder	<i>Congregational Leadership</i>
Margaret Kruger-Harder	<i>Regional Church Rep to Joint Council</i>

## MC CANADA JOINT COUNCIL

Keith Retzlaff	<i>Moderator</i>
Margaret Kruger-Harder	<i>Regional Church Rep to Joint Council</i>

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# Robert's Rules of Order

Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA) follows Robert's Rules of Order to maintain courteous and orderly discussion and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.

1. All motions will be moved and seconded, followed by discussion.
2. The mover has the first privilege of speaking, followed by the seconder. It is preferable that those speaking in opposition to the motion will alternate with those speaking for the motion.
3. Each speaker to a motion will be limited to two (2) minutes. Speakers may speak a second time, but only after everyone has had an opportunity to speak once.
4. If no one wishes to speak against a motion, the Moderator will call for the vote.
5. Amendments require a mover and seconder. An amendment can be amended after it has been approved. Only one amendment or motion may be considered at a time.
6. The order of presentation of the resolutions will be decided by the MCA Executive.
7. Delegates may refer to the Moderator on points of privilege or information.
8. It is the privilege of any delegate to move the previous question if they consider that the discussion has been prolonged. However, a delegate will not be allowed to move the previous question while speaking to a motion, thus in effect ending the discussion.
9. Officials will be given time to make necessary explanations.
10. Guests have the privilege of the floor, but do not have voting privileges.
11. Ordinary resolutions require a 50% plus one of the majority of votes cast by eligible delegates. Special resolutions require 75% of those entitled to vote and present in person.

# Schedule

## Friday, March 14

- 1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Pastors Council
- 5:00 p.m. Supper for Pastors Council
- 7:30 p.m. Evening Worship
- ◇ Opening
  - ◇ Sharing from Host church – Foothills
  - ◇ Guest Speaker – Allan Rudy-Froese: Courage to Love...in the stories we tell
  - ◇ MCA Year in Review
  - ◇ Offering
  - ◇ MCA Milestones
  - ◇ Announcements
  - ◇ Closing

## Saturday, March 15

- 8:00 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Opening Worship: Courage to Love...in the ways we confess
- 9:45 a.m. General Session (to include the following)
- ◇ Introduction of Guests/Greetings
  - ◇ Sharing from MCA and MC Canada
  - ◇ Presentation of Nominees
  - ◇ Announcements
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 10:45 a.m. Breakout Sessions
1. Business for Delegates (to include the following)
    - a. Resolutions:
      - i. Minutes of 2024
      - ii. Financial Review of 2024
    - b. Presentation of 2025 Budget
  2. Bible Study
  3. TBA

11:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions

1. Camp Valaqua
2. Mennonite Church Canada
3. Global Youth Summit
4. Indigenous Relations

12:15 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. Breakout sessions

1. Camp Valaqua
2. Mennonite Church Canada
3. Global Youth Summit
4. Indigenous Relations

2:00 p.m. Afternoon Worship: Courage to Love...in the decision to reconcile

2:45 p.m. Coffee Break

3:00 p.m. Breakout sessions

1. Business for Delegates (to include the following)
  - a. Report Book Q & A
  - b. Round Table Discussions
  - c. Resolutions:
    - i. 2025 Budget
    - ii. Nominations
2. Bible Study
3. TBA

4:00 p.m. General Session (to include the following)

- ◇ Commissioning of Volunteers
- ◇ Singing
- ◇ Prayer

4:30 p.m. Visiting – get to know each other!

5:30 p.m. **Tastes and Talents of MCA**

- ◇ Food provided by churches across MCA
- ◇ An evening of various “entertainment” provided by MCA churches

## **Sunday, March 16**

10:30 a.m. Worship including Communion: Courage to Love...at the table. (in person and on-line)

Noon Lunch

- ◇ \$15.00. Please register for this if you are planning on staying.
- ◇ Farewell/Closing



**MCA Annual Delegate Sessions Mar. 15-16, 2024 Minutes**  
**Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton**

Forty-six delegates were in attendance.

**Friday, March 15**

7:30 – 9:00 Opening of Sessions & Welcome

Gathering Song

Call to worship & prayer

Praise songs & offering

Scripture reading: Ephesians 2:13-22

Guest Speaker: Joon Park

Embarking a new journey to become an intercultural church

Small group discussion, sharing & prayer

MCA Milestones - special note of Edmonton Christian Life Community Church closing

Presentation of Nominees - Jan Wilhelm, Joani Neufeldt

MCA positions are for 2 years, with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

Committees are as follows:

- those taking an additional term (blue)
- slate of new nominees (red)
- those in term (black)

**Executive Committee** (four positions plus Executive Minister: Tim Wiebe-Neufeldt)

Moderator	Keith Retzlaff (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Foothills	2026
Vice Moderator	Linden Willms (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Springridge	2025 (affirm Exec. appointment May 2023)
Secretary	Coreen Froese (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Bergthal	2026
Finance Chair	Rachel Siemens (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026

**Personnel** (one position)

Doug Wiebe (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2026
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**Finance Committee** (two positions)

Rachel Siemens (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
Karl Blank (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2025 (affirm Exec. appointment April 2023)

**Congregational Leadership Committee** (three positions plus Executive Minister)

Anna-Lisa Salo (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Bergthal	2025
Caleb Kowalko (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Calg.	2026
Tim Burkholder (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2025

**Community Building and Program Committee** (three positions)

Rachel Hunsberger (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Trinity	2026
Charlotte Wiens (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2026
Adela Wedler (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2025

**Missions & Service Committee** (four positions)

Mezgebu Tucho (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Bethel	2026
Joyce Baergen (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Holyrood	2026
Marie Moyer (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2025
Tracy Brown Ewert (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Bergthal	2025

**Camp Valaqua Committee** (five positions)

Kathryn Friesen (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
Christine Hansplant (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	First-Calg.	2025
Darrel Heidebrecht (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2025
Liam Kachkar (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2025
Noah Thiessen (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Foothills	2026

**Nominations Committee** (two positions)

Jan Wilhelm (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
Joani Neufeldt (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2025

**Canadian Mennonite Representative**

Art Koop (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Foothills/Edson	2026
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**Joint Council Representative**

Margaret Kruger- Harder (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Foothills	2025
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**Palestine Israel Network of Mennonite Church Canada (Rep.)**

Suzanne Gross (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm./Holyrood	2025
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**MC Canada Nominating Committee**

Joani Neufeldt (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2025
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**CMU Board: Prairie Regions Representative (3 year term)**

Reece Zablocki (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2027
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**RJC Board:**

Ashley Gusztak (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Foothills	2024 (Oct.)
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Thank you to **Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Elizabeth Wall, Karen Janz, Jake Froese, Riek Tut, Albert Goerzen, Peter Sang** who are finishing/stepping down. Your service to MCA is deeply appreciated.

Thank you to those who have agreed to accept a new nomination or continue to serve for another term.

Thank you to those who prayerfully considered accepting our request to let their name stand on a committee and could not do so at this time.

Youth Quiz

Announcements & Benediction

Hymn

## **Saturday, March 16**

9:00 – 9:55 Opening & Worship

Sharing & praying Foothills, Bethel

Scripture Reading: Galatians 2:11-14

Guest speaker & discussion: Joon Park

Embracing a disruptive journey

9:55 – 10:10 Break

10:10 – 11:15 Business Session 1

Parliamentarian: Bruce Baergen

Resolutions: Darrel Heidebrecht (Foothills), Coreen Froese (Bergthal)

Introduction of guests:

Mennonite Church Canada: Doug Klassen, Jeanette Hanson, Tany Warkentin.

CMU: Reynold Friesen.

MCBC: Shel Boese.

*Canadian Mennonite*: Tobi Tiessen

MCC Alberta: Jose Luis Moraga, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld.

RJC: Alex Tiessen.

CMU & RJC greetings

Year in Review

**Resolution #1 Be it resolved, that MCA approve the minutes from the March 17-18, 2023 Annual Delegate Sessions as presented in the Report Book.  
(Elizabeth Wall, EFMC/Karen Janz, CFMC) - carried.**

**Resolution #2 Be it resolved, that MCA adopt the 2023 financial statements as presented. (Karl Blank, Lethbridge/Linden Willms, Springridge) - carried.**

Presentation of 2024 Budget

Discussion: Q: Robert Proudfoot (EFMC): Camp Valaqua deficit is approx. \$96,000. Can that be reduced? A: This is reduced from previous years. Darrel Heidebrecht (Foothills): Rather than simply being a deficit, this is an investment in ministry. We work hard to be responsible with funds.

Mennonite Church Canada sharing - Doug Klassen

MCBC sharing - Shel Boese

11:15 – 12:00 Break-out Sessions

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 1:45 Break-out Sessions

1:45 – 2:25 Worship

Hymn

Scripture Reading. Rev 7:9-10

Guest Speaker and discussion: Joon Park

Envisioning a journey that is not finished yet

2:25 – 2:40 Break

2:40 – 4:00 Business Session 2

Prayer - Tim Wiebe-Neufeld

MCM AGM - Linden Willms

AMBS - Paul Bergen

Camp Valaqua - Liam Kachkar

Report Book Q&A time

Round Table Discussions

**Resolution #3 Be it resolved, that MCA adopt the 2024 budget as presented. (Karl Blank, Lethbridge/Doug Wiebe, Lethbridge) - carried.**

**Resolution #4 - Be it resolved, that MCA approve the Nominations as presented. (Jan Wilhelm, EFMC/Tim Burkholder, EFMC) - carried.**

Commissioning of Volunteers

Hymn & offering

Announcements

Prayer & closing



## **2025 MCA Resolutions**

1. Be it resolved, that MCA approve the minutes from the March 15-16, 2024 Annual Delegate Sessions as presented in the Report Book.
2. Be it resolved, that MCA adopt the 2024 financial review as presented.
3. Be it resolved, that MCA adopt the 2025 budget as presented.
4. Be it resolved, that MCA approve the Nominations as presented.



## Moderator's Report Keith Retzlaff



It is hard to believe that it has been almost a year since I took over the moderator role at the last ADS. Since then, I have been able to attend several events here in Alberta, MC Canada joint council meetings in Waterloo and Winnipeg and work with Tim and the executive. With each event I learned a little more about MCA, our congregations and myself.

One of my goals is to find ways to share the stories that I have the privilege of hearing when I get to attend events on behalf of MCA. Here are some of my highlights over the last year:

1. Meeting with Mezgebu from the Bethel church and hearing how our support has allowed him to minister to Bethel and his many Facebook followers.
2. Joining with Bergthal to celebrate the years of ministry of Anna-Lisa as she moved back to Ontario.
3. Coming Together at Edmonton First Mennonite and then again at the Chin church in Calgary. Both evenings were entertaining, celebrated the many ministries of MCA and provided time to meet with many MCA supporters.
4. The opportunity to participate in Trinity's installation service for Terry Fach.
5. Walking with Holyrood as they shifted from MCA support to supporting themselves.

Add in the Camp Work Day and Garden Party and it was a busy year. All these events show how God is working within our congregations and MCA to further the kingdom.

There were also plenty of meetings. Executive meetings, General Council meetings, All Committee meetings and MC Canada Joint Council meetings. Each of these touched on various parts of the MCA budget, vision and administration.

In fall, there was another transition as Jeff announced he was moving on from Camp. Together with the camp committee, we worked to celebrate Jeff's career and review the role for what camp needs in a manager. We welcome Derek and Darcie Janzen to join our camp family.

Late in 2024 we were informed that MCC would not be renewing their support for Bridge Building in 2025. This together with rising costs on everything has impacted our projected budget for this year. One result is that we will be transitioning Suzanne Gross to quarter time starting in July. The focus of Bridge Building was also reviewed to understand how MCA can benefit the most from the reduced time. In 2025, Suzanne will prioritize building relationships within MCA between the different cultures present in our congregations. She will also support where possible congregations with Indigenous Relations, Interfaith Relationships and Bridge Building. We must also recognize that this is only a part time role and be careful of Suzanne's time commitment.

As we join together to celebrate 500 years of Anabaptism, my thoughts turn to how that Radical Reformation applies to us today. Our theme *Courage to Love* stands in contrast to many things we see in the world right now. There is a lot of talk about peace and justice but it is mixed with talk about revenge. Through Christ we have a different message; peace and justice through love. Those same messages from early Anabaptism continue to be relevant today and just as important.

For 2025 I hope we can live into this vision by showing the courage to love to the world around us. I hope to be able to visit each of our congregations this year and add to the stories of God working in MCA. We will also be reviewing our policies from 2012 and working to finish an update that was started in 2021.

I am looking forward to joining you in worship, fellowship and discernment at Foothills, March 14 – 16.



## Executive Minister Report Tim Wiebe-Neufeld



MCA's vision is to be a community of Anabaptist-Mennonite congregations seeking to embody Jesus Christ in the world (<https://mcab.ca/about-us>). Through this vision MCA is part of an interconnected "ecosystem" that includes nationwide, regional, and congregational expressions of the church where people of faith seek to grow as followers of Jesus Christ. These interconnected aspects provide identity, supports and structures through which ministry may flourish as we seek to live into God's calling together. They also provide the forums through which we live into the Christ-centred faith perspective represented through the global Anabaptist community and reflected in the 500 years of Anabaptist history that we celebrate together with the Mennonite church around the world.

In my role as Executive Minister, I am tasked with assisting the MCA community as we live into our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ. Here are 3 areas of focus that shaped my activities this past year:

### 1. Provide direct support and guidance to MCA congregations.

- **Walking with Congregations.** In addition to visits to congregations to preach and connect, it has been a privilege to walk with several congregations through various challenges. These included:
- the Edmonton Christian Life Community Church, which decided to close this past April after several decades of Chinese-language ministry
  - Holyrood as it concluded its interim ministry period with Suzanne Gross and Joon Park and moved into ongoing ministry with Suzanne as ¼ time pastor. Further conversations about vision, direction, leadership, and stewardship were important places for my involvement.
  - The Edmonton South Sudanese Mennonite Church and Bethel Church in Edmonton, both of whom received financial support towards their rent and pastoral leadership respectively.
  - Trinity through Jerry Buhler's initial work as interim pastor, and the search for a longer-term interim which was filled by Terry Fach who was installed this past September.
  - Bergthal as Anna-Lisa Salo concluded her ministry and they began a pastoral search.

Openings for pastoral leadership are often accompanied by feelings of anxiety. Although there is much uncertainty during pastoral searches, it has been amazing to see how consistently God's spirit has called forward people with ministry gifts to provide leadership for the church.

► **Walking with pastors** both one on one and in group settings. When I connect with the pastors of MCA I find myself energized for the ministry we share. Credentialing of pastors is an important aspect of my role, a process through which a person's inner call to ministry is tested within a ministry setting and affirmed by the broader church community. This past year credentialing included the affirmation of Bill Christieson's Ordination from his previous denomination after a two-year period of discernment, and the Licensing Toward Ordination of Aiden Scherzinger, both from Foothills.

I am also part of two groups that provide important support for MCA ministry leaders: the **Congregational Leadership Committee** plans pastors retreats and Faith Studies events, takes part in the credentialing process of pastors, and provides an important place to process issues of significance regarding MCA congregations and pastoral leadership. The MCA **Pastors Council** brings together the pastors and credentialed leaders of MCA for discernment, spiritual enrichment, prayerful sharing, skill development, and engagement with ministry issues. As we move into 2025 both of these groups are reflecting on how to best support and grow together as leaders within the MCA faith community.

## **2. Lead activities and engagements associated with MC Canada's current or future restructuring initiatives and liaise and represent MCA as required.**

► **Represent MCA in two significant forums** for Nationwide engagement. The **Executive Ministers Group** brings together MC Canada and Regional Executive Ministers for monthly zoom meetings and periodically in person. These meetings focus on mutual support, learning from each other, supporting the health of our nationwide community of faith, and assisting in the development and coordination of ministry efforts. The EMG also participates in **MC Canada Joint Council** meetings. Major areas of work include developing a coordinated approach to resource development and shifting the governance model to include congregational representatives in nationwide Gatherings.

The **Church Leadership Ministers** also meet by zoom monthly and in person to collaborate on leadership programming and policies. Major work of the past year includes:

- Consultation for the **Guiding Ministerial Leadership in MC Canada** policy, which replaces previous ministerial misconduct policies. This includes developing the supports needed for the covenantal commitments outlined for pastors and the congregations in which they serve.
- Assisting in the development of a new **"Transition into Ministry"** program for new pastors
- Participating in conversations with the presidents of MC Canada's affiliated schools of higher education and on an advisory group for CMU's ReNew event as it resources pastors for ministry.

**3. Support MCA Executive and provide input and direction to the missional vision of MCA.** This aspect of my ministry work is hard to summarize as it takes me in many directions. It is part of helping provide the supportive "skeletal structure" from which ministry is fleshed out and comes to life. In addition to meetings of Executive, General Council, and occasionally MCA's various committees this includes:

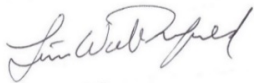
► **Planning, participating in, and supporting** ministries and special events. Every year I lead a session with the **Camp Valaqua** summer staff about the place of the camp ministry within the MCA community. In 2024 I also filled in for Executive on the Camp Committee and supported the camp in its visioning process; worked with **Missions and Service** as it worked out logistics for continued support of two South Sudanese students to receive pastoral training; and worked with **Community Building and Program** to plan the fall **"Come Together"** events of fun, fellowship, and fundraising in Edmonton and Calgary.

► **Providing administrative direction to MCA staff.** This includes monthly staff zoom meetings, direct supervision of Communication and Bridge Building, support for the staffing relationship with our bookkeeping providers, and connection and support for Camp Valaqua year-round staff.

In recent months the MCA General Council has highlighted 3 aspects of the vision we share:

- i. Shaping Identity as a Community of Anabaptist/Mennonite Congregations by nurturing relationships between congregations, embodying Healing and Hope in relationship, and embracing that we are loved by God and made whole in Christ.
- ii. Developing Leaders for ministries in congregations and in the broader church.
- iii. Telling of our experience of Jesus's presence in our lives and in our world.

As we seek be the church in today's world, I pray that all we do may grow out of our focus on Jesus, trusting that the presence of God's spirit will guide us as we witness to the peace and love of Christ!



*Tim Wiebe-Neufeld*, Executive Minister



## Communications Report Ruth Bergen Braun



As I began my report last year, an annual report often begins with what was done in the previous year and what there is to look forward to in the next.

Communications work involves a myriad of details from the creative and relational to the technical and 2024 was no different. *The Annual Delegate Sessions* last March, like this one, required the usual graphics, report book and online event creation, advertising, videos, power points, posters, an oral *Year in Review* plus managing the logistics of delegates, registrations, name tags.

Our *Come Together* events challenged me to think about what WAS cool when the original Beatles *Come Together* song was written and reflect that in our poster and graphics. (And my own outfit for those who were at the Calgary event.) We did, indeed, come together.

And then, the mail strike complicated our fall donor mailing. After putting together the donor letters and envelopes, Tim and I delivered some to church mailboxes, but most of those letters sat and waited to be mailed. The date of receipt was out of our control! We also sent a thank you to donors electronically just before Christmas.

A big piece of my work is gathering, and sometime creating, both text and photos from multiple sources – Menno Minute writers, Mennonite Church Canada, Witness Workers, our committees and staff. And then, sharing these with you using the weekly newsletter the MCA Communiqué, bulletin announcements, donor letters as well as our website and social media.

Most of you won't see the newsletters created by the communications staff in the other regions of MC Canada so you won't see how different they are from each other. Ours is much more colourful! This is because I see our *MCA Communiqué*, as not just a variation on announcements, but as a mini-magazine delivered to your inbox weekly. The Communiqué reflects who we are! I rarely get feedback on what I send your way but am always happy to receive it. Even if that feedback is "your font is too small."

Although the *Canadian Mennonite* is separate from MCA, CM is also communications and therefore maintaining a relationship with both Will Braun (editor) and Katie Doke Sawatsky (our prairie region correspondent) helps tell the MCA story. Each January I line up the writers for *From Our Leaders* as requested by Canadian Mennonite. With CM going to a monthly publication, we are represented less frequently.

All that said, Communications Coordinator continues to be a varied, creative, and fulfilling position within MCA. I am grateful for all those who help me tell our story. Thank you to the Menno Minute writers, to those who share prayers, to our pastors and administrators who keep in touch with me, and even thank you to those who find my errors – and remember to tell me.

It has been a privilege to do *all that* with and for you.

## **Bridge Building**

### **Suzanne Gross**



There are so many times in the past year where I felt the hope in Jesus at work in the relationships I was privileged to be part of – within our MCA community as well as with people of differing faiths and cultures. Through these relationships, those of you on this journey with us, either through participating in activities or through the Bridgebuilding Network, or simply by reading the reflections that have been shared through the Communique --- we furthered the objectives of this work. Each reflection below ends with the objective addressed, as laid out in our vision and mission for 2024.

I begin with gratitude for the representatives of seven of our 11 MCA churches participating in our Bridge Building Network. Representatives in 2024 include Beth Moyer from Lethbridge, LaVerna Elliot and Ruth Bergen Braun from Foothills, Linden Willms from Springridge, Susanne Feddema from First Mennonite Calgary, Jacob Froese from Trinity, John and Eleanore Woollard from First Mennonite Edmonton and Don Baergen from Holyrood Mennonite. Thank you for your participation and contributions to our provincial tapestry of diversity.

#### **Cross-province imagination for building good relations locally:**

- The Bridgebuilding Network met regularly to share stories and encourage each other in our local relationship building activities. As an activity focus, we chose to do a book study during the winter months using the book “The Four Vision Quests of Jesus” by Choctaw and Episcopalian Priest Steven Charleston. Through this book study, we explored new perspectives on familiar stories of Jesus: the temptations in the wilderness, the transfiguration, Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Crucifixion. The study opened our eyes to Indigenous histories that give new insight into these experiences of our Lord Jesus.

[Objective addressed: *Expand intercultural/interfaith understanding*]

#### **Building knowledge and experience with the Indigenous communities:**

- Ruth Bergen Braun and I teamed up to offer a virtual *Pow-wow 101* session to help prepare our Mennonite community to show up well at local pow-wows. We opened this up to communities across Canada to encourage our people to show up as allied guests in Indigenous spaces.
- I then organized visits to two pow-wows for Edmontonians. The first was an Inter-Mennonite experience at the Enoch Pow-wow. We all enjoyed meeting Indigenous neighbours who were on the Powwow circuit with their two daughters. We learned from them that dancing is mostly about contributing to community healing, even in the context of competitive dancing.
- The second pow-wow was inter-faith, bringing together members of the Al Rashid senior women’s group and other community members from Mennonite and Bahai backgrounds. This was an opportunity to build on the interfaith work done around Indigenous relations over the past two years. Many of the Al Rashid women had little understanding of history and cultural context of a powwow and were delighted to feel so included by the Indigenous hosts. This type of experience contributes to good relations.

[Objective addressed: *Explore existing intercultural/interfaith relationships and opportunities*]



**Building solidarity with the occupied and oppressed:**

- In February, we organized a local Inter-Mennonite singing vigil to remember the civilian carnage happening in Gaza and call for a ceasefire.
- I was part of organizing the 2024 World Refugee Day presence in Edmonton's City Hall, where we focused on the complicity of Canada in the violence in Palestine, Sudan, Congo.
- I spearheaded a four-part series of lament for the tragic anniversary of the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre and subsequent systematic killing and destruction waged against all civilians in Gaza.
- For Remembrance Day, Mennonites and Quakers organized a historic peace church presence in Churchill Square through a time of lament, reflecting on the verses of "If the War Goes On", # 66 in "Sing the Journey."

*[Objective addressed: Develop intercultural/interfaith intentionality in our worship, invitations, and activities]*

**Building connection with the Muslim community:**

- I supported the organizing of a mini-dialogue after the Muslim time of Ramadan, and the Christian time of Lent. We exchanged knowledge and experiences with fasting and praying during these important times for both traditions.
- I supported the organizing of the *Annual Interfaith Dialogue* on the story of Jonah/Younis. This story is beloved by both Muslim and Christian communities. As always happens, new relationships emerged and new possibilities for coming together in the spirit of hospitality and mutual witness to our faiths.

*[Objective addressed: Develop deeper intercultural/interfaith relationships]*

I continue to share reflections through blog posts on the Mennonite Church Alberta website. I have also contributed to the Canadian Mennonite and Anabaptist World on topics of Inter-culturalism and Interfaith work. I have supported Katie Doke Sawatzky in her coverage of stories from Alberta. Please visit this website for a deeper dive into all these experiences.

*[Objective addressed: Capture and share stories to inspire and explore with others.]*

And so, I believe we continue to have growing and learning to do. There is a constant dance between reflecting on our unique cultural and faith heritage, learning about the beauty and uniqueness of other cultural and faith heritages, and integrating that into our growth to better understand life together in solidarity for each other's good, as a human family.

The funding for this work has shifted. Funds we received from MCC Alberta for the past 13 years have been cut. This leaves us with fewer financial resources and has resulted in reducing the time spent on leadership for this work to 1/4 time. Although some attention will continue to be given to interfaith dialogue and Indigenous Relations, the area of focus MCA leadership has identified for us to work on together in the coming year is intercultural relationships right in our MCA family of congregations. Together with MCA leadership, we will be further developing imagination and capacity to shape what good intercultural church family relations look and feel like in our structures, and in our gatherings. Bridgebuilding offers us a constant learning curve to live into the vision Jesus had for us as a diverse human family. I look forward to learning together in the coming year.

## **MCA Financial Reports**

The MCA Finance Committee welcomed Rachel Siemens into the role of Finance Committee chair in March 2024. She joined Karl Blank and Wayne Janz on the committee, and the Treasurer role continues to be filled by Highside Solutions (Wayne and Austin Janz). We are thankful for Tim Wiebe-Neufeld's additional support and representation at MCA Executive and General Council meetings while Finance was without a chair.

### **2024 Financial Results**

The overall position of MCA finances in 2024 was again very positive: we have reached the year-end ahead of budget, and in fact, with a slight surplus! Thank you to all of our churches and donors for your support in 2024. We had been budgeting a deficit of \$14,500 and had realized a surplus of about \$3,700. This is, in large part, due to a significant reduction in Camp Valaqua expenses: we are grateful to the efforts of Jon, Jeff and the rest of the Camp staff for making this possible.

Here are some of the highlights of the year:

- Total operating income for MCA (including Camp and designated donations) was approximately \$855,000 and 97% of budget:
  - o Church contributions were slightly more than expected at about \$319,000, although it was anticipated that the amounts would be lower than received in 2023.
  - o General and designated donations from sources excluding Camp were about \$151,000 (87% of budget).
    - Included in this, the flow-through donations designated for Relational Witness experienced another decline: \$5,600 lower than 2023.
  - o Camp Valaqua income was about \$20,000 higher than 2023 at \$357,000 (96% of budget).
    - Donations to camp (including the fundraisers) were \$82,600 (26% below expectation).
    - Other Camp income sources offset declining donations, including rentals & school programs and government funding (\$19,000 and \$5,400 higher than anticipated, respectively).
- Total MCA operating expenses (including Camp) were about \$851,000 (95% of budget) and approximately \$87,200 less than 2023.
  - o Camp expense reductions accounted for being approximately \$20,500 under budget, with the greatest reduction coming in groceries, seasonal staffing and utilities costs.
- MCA continues to hold some of its reserve funds in GICs, although interest generated in the coming year will decrease due to lower interest rates.
- The loan balance to Holyrood Mennonite Church is currently approximately \$87,800 of the maximum \$90,000.
- The 3 designated funds are tracked outside of the normal operating budget and used as determined by the responsible committees. In 2024, the Camp Facility Improvement fund received \$1,200 in donations, while approximately \$13,200 was spent from each of the Camp Support fund and Camp Facility Improvement fund.

The following charts are a general representation of the 2024 MCA income sources, ministry expense categories and camping ministry (i.e. Camp Valaqua) funding sources.

Figure 1, 2024 MCA Income:

- 'Church contributions' include income from member churches that is not designated to specific programs like Camp or other ministries.
- 'Individual donations' include all donations to directed to MC Canada from Alberta, as well as all donations designated to specific projects, including MCA Bridge Building and MC Canada Relational Witness (excluding Camp).
- 'Designated Camp income' is all income attributed to Camp Valaqua, including designated donations, registration and rental income, merchandise sales and government funding. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of funding sources for Camp.
- 'Other income' includes interest income and registration fees from MCA events, like the delegate sessions and pastor's retreat.

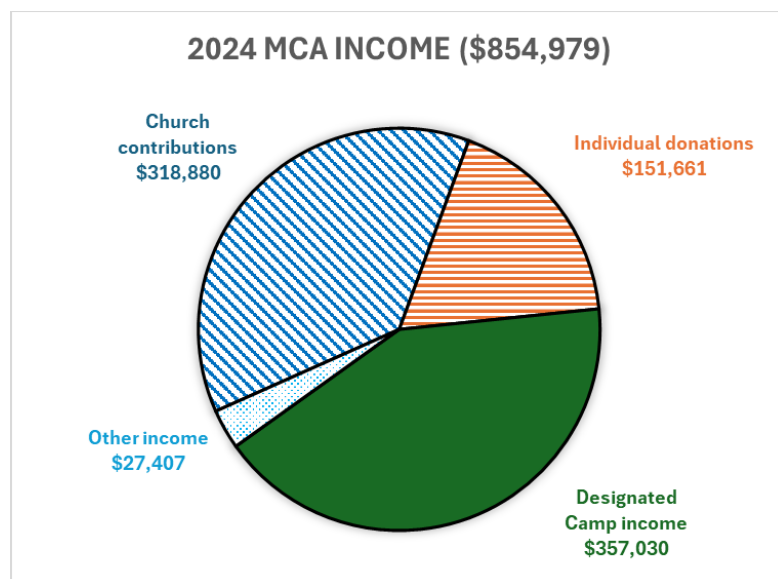


Figure 1

Figure 2, 2024 MCA Expenses:

- 'MC Alberta ministries' includes costs of supporting MC Alberta programs, including staff, expenses and ministry costs (excluding Camp Valaqua).
- 'MC Canada ministries' includes MCA contributions sent to MC Canada for their ongoing ministries and programs (based on a shared revenue model), as well as the donations designated for Relational Witness.
- 'MCA Camping ministry' includes all expenses directly related to Camp Valaqua.
- 'Other ministries' includes MCA contributions made to other ministry partners, like *Canadian Mennonite* magazine, Canadian Mennonite University, Rosthern Junior College, and the Mennonite Historical Society.

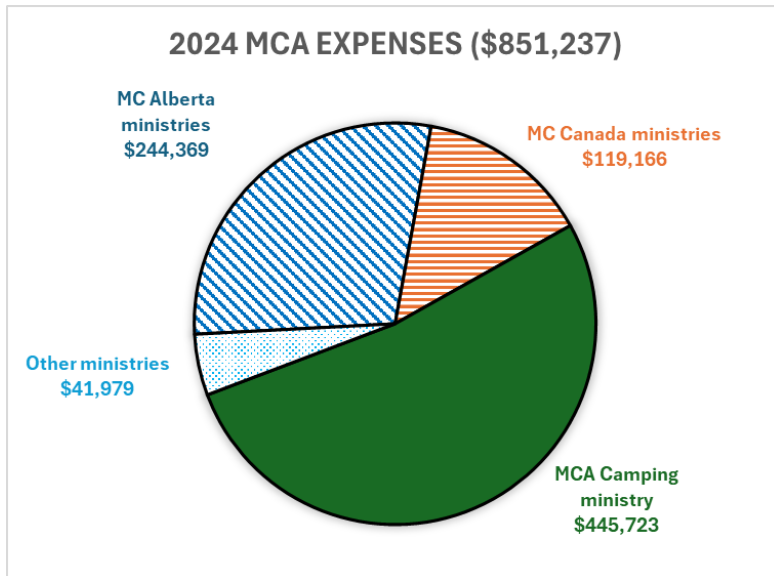


Figure 2

Figure 3, 2024 Camp Funding Sources:

- 'Designated donations and fundraisers' are all donations made by churches and individuals designating to Camp, as well as specific fundraisers like the Hike-a-thon and Family Feud.
- 'Registration' is income directly collected from campers for summer camp programs.
- 'Rental income' is income from users of Camp Valaqua other than summer camp programs.
- 'Government funding' includes participation in programs to offset youth employment costs, primarily for seasonal summer staff.
- 'MCA general budget' is the contribution of general MCA funds to support the full cost of the camping ministry.

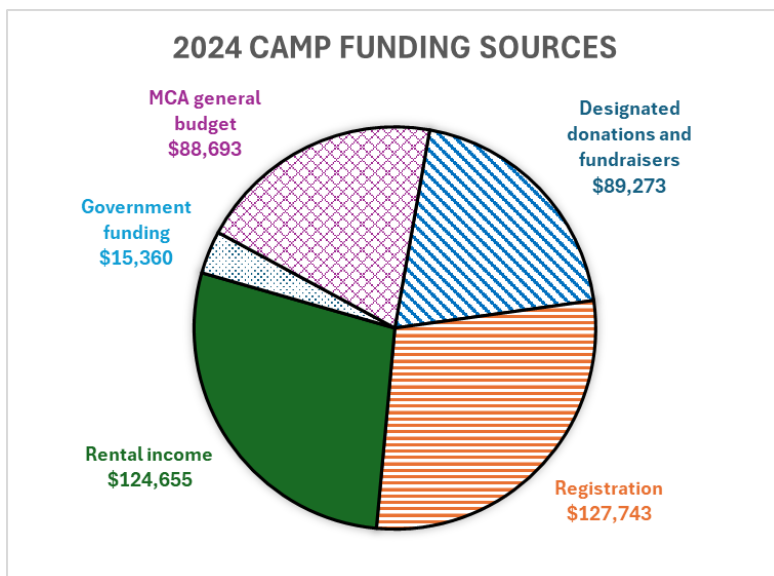


Figure 3

## 2025 Proposed Budget

For 2025, the MCA Executive Committee and General Council are proposing a balanced budget, with a slight surplus of \$1,200. This is, in part, a result of some of the member churches being able to increase their financial contributions for 2025. We especially rejoice in the Calgary Chin Church's increased giving, as they become more established and financially secure as a congregation.

The major changes and drivers of the 2025 budget are:

- Total MCA income (including Camp and designated donations) is budgeted for \$892,600 (an increase of 4.4% over 2024 actual):
  - o Church donation income budget increases 3.4% to \$329,600;
  - o Individual donations (excluding Camp) income budget is increased by 7.5%.
- Camp total income is anticipated to increase 7.9% over 2024 actual:
  - o Donations to Camp (including fundraisers) are budgeted to increase by 4.1%;
  - o Registration income is expected to increase by 8.2%.
- Camp expenses are budgeted to increase by 4.1% over last year's actual:
  - o Seasonal employee compensation is increased and includes provisions for Jon Olfert's Sabbatical coverage and additional staffing for rental management beginning in the fall;
  - o Permanent staff compensation decrease due to new hire of Camp manager, partially offset by a promotion of the Camp director.
- The MCA general fund contribution to Camp Valaqua is expected to be \$79,000 in 2025 (compared to approximately \$88,700 in 2024).
- Total MCA expenses (including Camp) are budgeted to increase 4.7% over 2024 actual expenses:
  - o Permanent staff compensation includes a 2.68% increase, per MC Canada salary guidelines, offset by reduction of Bridge Building Coordinator contract from 0.5 FTE to 0.25 FTE beginning in July;
  - o Additional costs incurred in 2025 include MC Canada assembly registration, support for sending a representative to the Global Youth Summit in Germany, and a formal, bi-annual accounting audit.

The Finance Committee thanks Lowell Thiessen for reviewing the financial statements this year. He affirmed the work we are doing and highlighted an opportunity for us to better communicate and demonstrate how designated donations are handled and tracked. We will incorporate these suggestions in the coming year.

MCA is very grateful for all of the financial contributions that churches and individuals can share with MCA. We ask for your continued prayers that your gifts to us are used wisely and effectively.

Submitted by *Karl Blank*, on behalf of MCA Finance Committee

<b>Mennonite Church Alberta</b>		
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
<b>December 2024</b>		
Unaudited		
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>Current as of</b>	<b>Previous Year as of</b>
	<b>2024-12-31</b>	<b>2023-12-31</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalent</b>		
01-1005 Cash-on-hand	45.00	0.00
01-1010 Royal Bank - Operating	222,663.82	91,124.69
01-1011 Royal Bank - Restricted Funds	1,439.29	13,453.54
<b>Total 01-1010 Royal Bank - Operating</b>	<b>\$ 224,103.11</b>	<b>\$ 104,578.23</b>
01-1020 Royal Bank - Camp Valaqua	-184.50	2,713.19
01-1030 Telpay Clearing	0.00	4,102.59
01-1040 Donated Expense Account	0.00	0.00
01-1050 Undeposited Funds	11,730.50	58,425.00
<b>Total Cash and Cash Equivalent</b>	<b>\$ 235,694.11</b>	<b>\$ 169,819.01</b>
<b>Accounts Receivable (A/R)</b>		
01-1100 Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Accounts Receivable (A/R)</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
01-1102 GST Rebate Receivable	2,078.24	3,255.51
01-1103 Interest Receivable	1,370.00	987.95
01-1105 Miscellaneous Accounts Receivable	0.00	486.88
01-1106 Loan to Holyrood (max \$90,000)	87,823.53	72,806.20
<b>01-1200 Investments</b>		
01-1205 RBC GIC 030	12,493.25	12,129.37
01-1206 RBC GIC 034	131,062.50	125,000.00
01-1207 RBC GIC 035	0.00	145,000.00
01-1208 AC Invest - General GIC #C0209	0.00	4,541.50
01-1209 RBC GIC 036	25,000.00	
<b>Total 01-1200 Investments</b>	<b>\$ 168,555.75</b>	<b>\$ 286,670.87</b>
01-1220 Interfund Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
01-1225 Prepaid Expenses	28,155.05	4,338.69
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>523,676.68</b>	<b>538,365.11</b>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
<b>Property, plant and equipment</b>		
<b>Total Property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>\$ 653,918.07</b>	<b>\$ 699,710.79</b>
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 653,918.07</b>	<b>\$ 699,710.79</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,177,594.75</b>	<b>\$ 1,238,075.90</b>

<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>Accounts Payable (A/P)</b>		
01-2000 *Accounts Payable	\$ 41,043.42	\$ 27,979.50
Total Accounts Payable (A/P)	41,043.42	27,979.50
Total Credit Card	3,464.48	3,019.22
01-2210 GST/HST Payable	0.00	-214.36
01-2221 MC Canada Payable	2,295.88	2,429.34
01-2223 WCB Payable	0.00	839.39
01-2510 Customs & Revenue Payable	5,292.88	5,956.95
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 52,096.66	\$ 40,010.04
Total Liabilities	52,096.66	40,010.04
<b>Equity</b>		
01-3010 Unrestricted Funds Equity	222,591.84	222,591.84
01-3020 Camp Operating Fund Equity	9,944.16	-2,070.09
01-3200 Externally Restricted Funds		
01-3212 Facility Upgrade Fund Equity	600.14	12,614.39
01-3213 Leadership Memorial Fund Equity	\$ 839.15	\$ 839.15
Total 01-3200 Externally Restricted Funds	1,439.29	13,453.54
01-3300 Other Restricted Funds Equity		
01-3310 Camp Capital Fund Equity	\$ 699,710.78	\$ 699,710.78
Total 01-3300 Other Restricted Funds Equity	699,710.78	699,710.78
Retained Earnings	264,379.79	97,550.51
Profit for the year	-\$ 72,567.77	\$ 166,829.28
Total Equity	\$ 1,125,498.09	\$ 1,198,065.86
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$ 1,177,594.75	\$ 1,238,075.90

Designated Funds	Starting Balance 2024-01-01	Closing Balance 2024-12-31
Leadership Memorial Fund	\$ 839.15	\$ 839.15
Camp Valaqua Support Fund	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 236,793.68
Camp Valaqua Facility Upgrade	\$ 12,614.39	\$ 600.14

<b>Mennonite Church Alberta</b>					
<b>Operating Profit Loss YTD Summary Statement</b>					
<b>2024 Year End Statement and 2025 Budget Request</b>					
No Amortization, Unaudited		<b>2024</b>		<b>2025</b>	
	<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>Annual</b>		<b>Proposed</b>	
	<b>2024-12-31</b>	<b>Budget</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>INCOME (Operating)</b>					
<b>01-4100 Church Donations Income</b>					
01-4102 Calgary Chin Christian Donation Inc	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00		\$ 15,000.00	329%
01-4104 Calgary First Donation Inc	25,000.00	25,000.00		26,000.00	4%
01-4106 Calgary Foothills Donation Inc	100,000.00	100,000.00		100,000.00	0%
01-4108 Calgary Trinity Donation Inc	10,000.00	10,000.00		10,000.00	0%
01-4110 Didsbury Bergthal Donation Inc	6,500.00	6,500.00		6,500.00	0%
01-4111 Edmonton Bethel Int'l Donation Inc	0.00			0.00	n/a
01-4114 Edmonton First Donation Inc	108,100.00	108,100.00		110,300.00	2%
01-4116 Edmonton Holyrood Donation Inc	5,475.00	5,500.00		5,500.00	0%
01-4118 Edmonton South Sudanese Donation Inc	0.00			0.00	n/a
01-4120 Lethbridge Donation Inc	42,000.00	42,000.00		43,300.00	3%
01-4122 Pincher Creek Springridge Donation Inc	18,305.00	17,000.00		13,000.00	-24%
01-4200 Individual Donations Income	100,035.58	112,000.00		107,500.00	-4%
01-4230 MC Canada Relational Witness Donation Inc	30,724.75	36,000.00		36,000.00	0%
<b>01-4270 Program Designated Inc</b>					
01-4271 YLT Snow Camp Registration Inc	3,605.00	2,000.00		2,000.00	0%
01-4272 YLT Event Registration Inc	1,505.00	0.00		1,000.00	n/a
01-4275 Bridge Building Ministry Donation Inc	17,275.73	20,000.00		10,000.00	-50%
<b>01-4300 Other Income</b>					
03-4000 Community Building Committee Inc	5,585.00	5,000.00		6,000.00	20%
05-4000 Congregational Leadership Committee Inc	2,845.00	3,000.00		3,000.00	0%
07-4000 Missions & Service Committee Income	3,500.00	5,000.00		5,000.00	0%
<b>11-4000 Camp Valaqua Income</b>					
11-4110 Camp General Donations Inc	60,631.64	86,500.00		63,000.00	-27%
11-4115 Camp Campership Donation Inc	2,463.65	3,100.00		2,500.00	-19%
11-4210 Camp Registration Inc	127,742.50	139,100.00		138,200.00	-1%
11-4212 Camp Facilities Rental Inc	99,769.00	90,000.00		104,500.00	16%
11-4214 Camp School Programs Inc	14,686.00	5,500.00		14,000.00	155%
11-4216 Camp Resident Rental Inc	10,200.00	6,600.00		20,400.00	209%
11-4218 Camp Apparel and Merch Sales Inc	6,648.83	7,000.00		7,000.00	0%
11-4310 Camp Hike-A-Thon Donation Inc	16,678.77	21,300.00		18,000.00	-15%
11-4312 Camp Other Fundraising Inc	2,849.75	1,000.00		2,500.00	150%
11-4410 Camp Fed Govt Funding Inc	15,360.00	10,000.00		15,000.00	50%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 854,978.59</b>	<b>\$ 879,700.00</b>		<b>\$ 892,600.00</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>11-4900 Camp Nonbudgeted Inc</b>					
11-4905 Camp Support Fund Inc	0.00				
11-4910 Facility Upgrade Fund Inc	1,200.00				



<b>EXPENSES (Operating)</b>					
<b>01-5100 MC Canada Exp</b>					
01-5105 MC Canada Assembly Registration Exp	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,500.00	n/a	
01-5110 MC Canada Operations Exp	88,440.93	88,400.00	87,800.00	-1%	
01-5115 MC Canada Relational Witness Exp	30,724.75	36,000.00	36,000.00	0%	
<b>01-5200 Partner Ministries Exp</b>					
01-5205 Canadian Mennonite Magazine Exp	8,979.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	0%	
01-5210 Canadian Mennonite University Exp	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	0%	
01-5215 Mennonite Historical Society Exp	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0%	
01-5225 Rosthern Junior College Exp	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	0%	
01-5270 Youth Leadership Team Exp	1,855.62	2,000.00	3,000.00	50%	
<b>01-5300 Exec Committee Exp</b>					
01-5305 Bethel Support Exp	6,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0%	
01-5306 Bridge Building Exp	66.32	1,000.00	500.00	-50%	
01-5315 Communications Expenses	1,060.81	1,500.00	2,000.00	33%	
01-5325 Executive Minister Exp	8,614.12	7,500.00	7,500.00	0%	
01-5330 Liability Insurance Exp	2,895.00	2,800.00	3,000.00	7%	
01-5335 MCA Fundraising Exp	350.15	1,500.00	1,000.00	-33%	
01-5350 Nuer Support Exp	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,400.00	0%	
01-5355 Office Rent Exp	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0%	
01-5360 Office Staff Prof Development Exp	2,091.83	3,000.00	3,000.00	0%	
01-5370 Office Staff Salaries and Benefits Exp	171,341.96	170,500.00	166,300.00	-2%	
01-5380 Office Supplies Exp	1,212.77	500.00	1,200.00	140%	
01-5390 Professional Services Exp	24,362.48	32,600.00	35,400.00	9%	
01-5397 Software Subscriptions Exp	1,183.50	3,000.00	1,700.00	-43%	
01-5399 Exec Committee Other Exp	250.00	800.00	2,000.00	150%	
<b>NEW ITEM Global Youth Summit Exp and Travel</b>			1,500.00	n/a	
01-5400 Finance Committee Exp	2,844.83	7,500.00	2,400.00	-68%	
01-5490 Nominating Committee Other Exp	197.58	200.00	100.00	-50%	
01-5495 Personnel Committee Other Exp	0.00	200.00	100.00	-50%	
01-5500 Miscellaneous Exp	3,787.66	0.00	1,000.00	n/a	
03-5000 Community Building Expense	5,417.16	8,400.00	9,800.00	17%	
05-5000 Congregational Leadership Exp	2,642.19	3,500.00	3,400.00	-3%	
07-5000 Missions & Service Committee Exp	4,594.42	7,500.00	7,500.00	0%	
11-5000 Camp Valaqua Operating Exp	445,723.25	466,200.00	464,100.00	0%	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 851,236.83</b>	<b>\$ 894,200.00</b>	<b>\$ 891,400.00</b>	<b>0%</b>	
<b>Operating Budget Surplus/Loss</b>	<b>\$ 3,741.76</b>	<b>\$ -14,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,200.00</b>		
<b>11-5500 Camp Nonbudgeted Exp</b>					
11-5505 Camp Support Fund Exp	13,206.32				
11-5510 Facility Upgrade Exp	13,214.25				

Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA)

Financial Review for 2024

February 15, 2024

### Reviewers Report

I have reviewed (not audited) the records used to create the financial reports for Mennonite Church Alberta for the period January 1 to December 31, 2024. Karl and Wayne provided ample evidence that they are operating with integrity and expertise. We had good dialogue which included documentation of ideas, suggestions, and actions.

I am of the opinion that the records are an accurate reflection of the transactions for the fiscal year 2024.

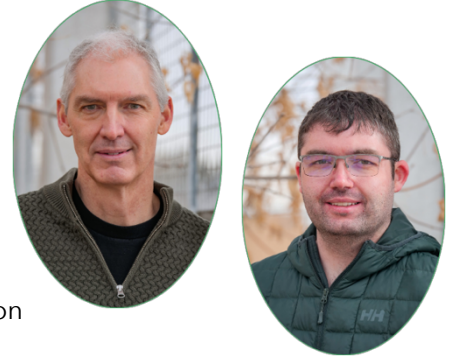
Food for thought for MCA: Designated donations are, and should remain, an infrequent donation option. That said, they are a reality that warrants some increased consideration. Finance has agreed to provide additional financial reporting on designated funds received including a yearly summary of money reserved for special purposes further to donation designations. It would likely also help reduce misunderstanding if committees communicate how donors who are considering designated donations can engage with them.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Thiessen', is written over a horizontal line.

Lowell Thiessen

**MCA Treasurer Report**  
**Wayne Janz**  
**Austin Janz**



After a year and a half as MCA's Treasurers, the role has become a comfortable fit for us in that we are past the steep part of the learning curve. The accounting system and financial records have been moved into the Cloud (no more boxes of paper to store!). Processes to support the digitization are in place and working well.

We had wanted to complete the integration of the CRM and accounting system before the end of the year, but it turned out to be a more time-consuming undertaking than expected. We have worked through the complexities of converting data from one system to another and completed the prerequisite data clean up. We hope to have the first data upload done in mid-February 2025. The delay may require that we implement an interim procedure for issuing 2024 donation receipts.

In the early part of 2025, we plan to tweak our financial management processes for Camp Valaqua. We made some changes last year as part of the digitization efforts. Now with Derek and Darcie taking over the Camp Manager role and their duties being a little different than Jeff's previously, we see an opportunity to make some streamlining adjustments. We will be working with Derek, Darcie, Jon, and the Finance Committee over the next few weeks to make some minor improvements to the financial procedures.

You might think the Treasurer role is routine, but there always seems to be something new and interesting going on!



## **Personnel Committee Report**

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to continue serving Mennonite Church Alberta on the Personnel Committee this past year. A strength of MCA is all the people who, in both paid and volunteer capacities, are committed to the health and growth of the body of Christ that is MCA.

Significant happenings with regard to personnel in the past 12 months include:

- When a new chair for the finance committee was confirmed, the chair of the Personnel Committee stepped down from their interim position on the MCA Executive
- Jeff Schellenberg resigned from his role of Camp Valaqua Manager. The Personnel Committee supported Jon Olfert, Camp Valaqua Board co-chairs, and the MCA Executive in their efforts to successfully recruit Derek and Darcie Janzen as the new Camp Valaqua Site Managers

Respectfully Submitted  
*Doug Wiebe*, Chair – MCA Personnel Committee

## Missions and Service Report

This year we welcomed two new committee members. The major focuses of our committee were 1) the reworking of the support structure for our student sponsorship project, and 2) continuing the visioning work started last year.

MCA currently sponsors the two South Sudanese students from refugee camps in the Gambela region of Ethiopia to attend Miserete Kristos Seminary, the seminary of the Ethiopian Mennonite churches. The purpose of this project is the development of church leaders for the growing Mennonite churches in Gambela and South Sudan. MCA's sponsorship, much of which comes from individual donors to this project, covers tuition, a tutor, room and board, travel between the seminary and Gambela, and a personal allowance. In total just \$5000 CAD covers all of this for two students for a whole year!

We are in the third year of this project. Up until November of 2024, Joanne DeJong has been a key partner on the ground in Ethiopia, mentoring the students, being the liaison between the students and our committee, and ensuring the smooth transfer of funds. With Joanne's and Werner's relocation to Nairobi, we have initiated a new structure with members of the Edmonton South Sudanese Mennonite Church taking on primary roles with respect to communication with the students and fund transfers, and members of the committee taking more hands-on roles in project oversight. The first fund transfers in January went smoothly and the students made it back to the seminary after their Christmas break - a three-day journey by bus. We hope this new structure will successfully shepherd these two students through to their anticipated graduations in the springs of 2026 and 2027.

Our visioning work has progressed more slowly. Given the schedules of our committee members, finding time to meet and delve deeply into this has been very challenging. Determining the best way in which this committee can serve the needs of MCA congregations and our conference will need to continue to be a priority going forward.

Respectfully submitted by *Marie Moyer*, Chair

On behalf of the Missions and Service Committee: *Tracy Brown Ewert* (Secretary), *Mezgebu Tucho*, and *Joyce Baergen*

## Congregational Leadership Committee Report

*Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who are working with you, leading you, and instructing you. Think of them highly with love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 CEB*

The Congregational Leadership committee (CLC) understands that the wellbeing of MCA resides in its people/congregations. To remain healthy requires good leadership of the people/congregations. It is CLC's responsibility to know the condition of MCA's people/congregations and to give special attention to those in their leadership.

The members of the CLC for 2024 consisted of Timothy Burkholder, Caleb Kowalko, Anna-Lisa Salo (through July), Tany Warkentin (completing Anna-Lisa's term) and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld. Caleb took on' the role of chair and Anna-Lisa served as secretary. Timothy agreed to be CLC's representative on the General Council and in the All-Committee meetings and took over as secretary when Anna-Lisa ended. CLC met a number of times throughout the year including an exit interview and several licensing/ordination interviews. All but two meetings were held via Zoom.

In its primary purpose of equipping congregational leaders for their task and working with and supporting the Executive Minister, the members of CLC were engaged in fulfilling the various duties associated with their role within MCA.

1. CLC assisted member congregations when plans or problems were considered beneficial to have MCA involvement. When walking alongside congregations facing difficult decisions or issues, CLC respects confidentiality. CLC processes all issues along with the Executive Minister as he connects with and supports the congregations. CLC is committed to responding prayerfully for wisdom and discernment in each case and to treat each situation with compassion and care.
  - CLC assisted Bergthal MC, Edmonton Christian Life Community Church, Holyrood MC, and Trinity MC in their respective ongoing processes of visioning and discernment.
2. CLC assisted congregations and pastors with the process of pastoral call, ordination, evaluation, transfer, termination, credentialing, and de-credentialing We are grateful for all who have responded to God's call to pastoral ministry and to serve with such dedication and passion.
  - Ken Tse retired April 2024 after many years of service with the Edmonton Christian Life Community Church.
  - Interviews with new pastors to Alberta involved one with Terry Fach (Trinity).
  - Exit interviews were conducted with Ken Tse (ECLCC) and Anna-Lisa Salo (Bergthal).
  - Credentialing for Tom and Christine Poovong (Witness workers with MC Canada) is pending.
3. CLC planned and promoted a number of events to support, train, and connect MCA pastors and congregational lay leaders.
  - The Pastors Council met 5 times in-person.
  - CLC promoted and offered financial support for pastors attending CMU's ReNew conference (January 30- 31).
  - CLC promoted Pastor's Week (February 13-16) at AMBS.
  - A Faith Studies event (May 5-7) held at Calgary First Mennonite Church, featuring Dr. Joanne Moyer, was planned and promoted by CLC.

- A pastor's retreat was held October 29-31 at Camp Valaqua. These retreats offer time for refreshment, reflection, and connection.
4. CLC reviews applications of congregations wishing to become MCA members or wishing to discontinue their membership in MCA.
    - CLC responded to the Calgary Chin Emmanuel Church following their expression of interest in joining MCA. These conversations concluded with a decision by the congregation to not pursue membership at this time.
  5. MCA pastors and MC Saskatchewan pastors participated in two joint boundary training sessions, a general expectation for licensed and ordained personnel.
  6. MC Canada has updated and expanded its policies related to pastoral misconduct. We are grateful that this update is happening as we seek to respond to these kinds of situations with integrity, wisdom, and compassion. These updated policies have been adopted as "Guiding Ministerial Leadership in the Church" and apply to all pastors and credentialed leaders within MCA and MC Canada.

As we reflected upon the past year, we noticed several things:

- The ways in which pastors emerge to give leadership to the church are changing. While in the past many young people would enter ministry as a career choice, today pastors come to ministry at a variety of ages and through various pathways. The pastor role is also evolving, with fewer full-time pastors, more bi-vocational pastors, and the emergence of pastoral leaders who provide leadership in worship and pastoral care in less traditional ways.
- Changing dynamics in congregations. Some of MCA's congregations are struggling with questions about their future in the face of declining numbers and ageing members. Some struggle with the need for leadership or developing common vision. Some have buildings they find difficult to maintain, or struggle with the administration needed to remain organised.
- The need to lean into our intercultural relationships. We have seen tremendous value in the contributions of groups like the Chin, South Sudanese, Oromo, and other African groups at Holyrood to our faith family.

Looking to the year ahead, CLC is working to more clearly organize the priorities of our committee including our role in support of the clergy, the congregations and the conference to whom we minister. This will help us prioritize the focus and activities of the various CLC events, to ensure balanced attention to those needs.

Submitted on behalf of CLC,  
*Timothy Burkholder*

## **Camp Valaqua Committee Report**

Camp Committee: Darrel Heidebrecht, Liam Kachkar, Kathryn Friesen, Noah Thiessen, Christine Hansplant, Rachel Siemens

2024 has been a year of transition, reflection and visioning for the Camp Committee. As highlighted in the Director's report, we ran our full summer camp programs and had active use of camp land and facilities throughout the year. Please refer to the Director's report for the details of our summer camp and rental programs.

A highlight of this year includes the camp committee and camp staff, in collaboration with MCA Executive, undertaking a visioning process for us to think through who is using the camp, how we use the land and facilities and how we envision the camp programs moving forward. This process included seeking input from diverse perspectives within the wider MCA community through surveys, focus groups and interviews. We will be presenting our "What We Heard Report" at the Annual Delegate Sessions in March. This report will provide the foundation for the strategic directions we take as a committee over the next few years.

In September of this year, Jeff Schellenberg, our Camp Manager for the past 28 years, informed us that he would be leaving his position as of December 31, 2024. Jeff has become a fixture at camp and he, together with his late wife Ingrid Janssen, have made a lasting impact from improving the facilities to creating a welcoming environment for all who access camp. Jeff has grown our rental programs to facilitate year-round use of the camp and this has created a reliable source of income that will ensure we are able to continue to run and grow our beloved programs. On December 7, 2024, we had a farewell celebration for Jeff and we were so happy to see wide representation from the MCA constituency. It was a beautiful send-off for Jeff.

Tasked with the job of replacing Jeff, the Camp Committee together with the Camp Director, Jon Olfert and the MCA Executive, established a hiring committee. We reviewed and revised the Manager job description with the understanding that it is impossible to expect a new staff person to immediately fulfill the job expectations in the same way as someone with 28 years' experience in the role. With this in mind, we have added supervisory responsibilities to Jon and have adjusted his title accordingly. He is now the Executive Director of Camp Valaqua. We managed to post the Site Manager position, conduct interviews and reference checks, and find a suitable candidate for the role. We only had a one-month gap in staffing and we are grateful to Jon Olfert and Ben Olfert Wiens who supported us during this month by hosting rental groups and providing snow removal. We are also grateful that Jeff has offered to provide some on-site training for the new staff in February. We are delighted that Derek and Darcie Janzen started in the role of Camp Site Manager as of February 1, 2025. When you have the opportunity, please take the time to welcome them into their new role.

Taking a step back and reflecting on the many ways camp is used and depended on invites us to realise how essential this place is and how much happens here that we often take for granted. For example, the rental groups accessing camp between September and June lead to an additional 2,000 people enjoying camp, two-thirds of whom have no affiliation with MCA. Camp is an important public facing institution of MCA.

In addition to the considerable financial donations Camp Valaqua has received this year, we also receive significant in-kind support throughout the year, particularly through the engagement of volunteers. A very low estimate of volunteer hours worked at camp would be 7,000 hours. This can be calculated in financial terms at



a value of at least \$105,000. This is an incredible contribution and includes volunteers from tweens to people in their 90s. We are so fortunate to have this incredible place where intergenerational engagement happens, leadership skills are developed and so many memories are made. We see the effects of this in our MCA churches and on the camp committee.

While we have experienced significant change over this past year, we are so grateful for the stabilizing presence of our Camp Executive Director, Jon Olfert, and we want to acknowledge how fortunate we are as a camp to have someone with Jon's skills and experience.

We continue to be grateful for the support we receive through the wider MCA community and look forward to an exciting year in 2025.

Submitted by *Kathryn Friesen*

## **Camp Director's Report**

### **Jon Olfert**

This year has been one of the first post-Covid summers where we really didn't think about Covid! We ran full camps full of happy kids, hosted scout groups, reunions, and churches, and provided field trips for school groups. We looked to the future with a visioning process. We said goodbye to a long-time staffer and welcomed new staff into our home. Valaqua looks as idyllic as always and the waft of evergreen will still hit your nose when you open the car door, but it feels like a time of transition. We are excited to explore what the future holds and your part in that journey!



### **Campers**

Our final number of campers for 2024 was 365, up 5% from 2023 and continuing our post-Covid growth. We are still shy of our pre-Covid camper numbers, but year-over-year growth is good.

We were so happy to help so many *Discover God in Creation* this summer. Our chaplains shared stories and lessons, our counsellor shared devotionals and wisdom, and we took every opportunity to worship together. We ran a second weekend of Family Camp in 2024 for the first time. Our Family Camp has been popular in recent years, and we wanted to expand the options for families that are interested in joining us for a weekend. We will run two Family Camps in 2025 as well and both weekends are already well subscribed.

We gave out over \$3,800 in campership aid to help 35 kids get to camp. We actually supported more campers in 2024 than in 2023, but to a smaller dollar amount per camper. We offer generous and low barrier support for families and we couldn't do it without your support. Thank you to all the amazing donors that helped to support this program. It makes a huge impact!

### **Out-trips**

All of our trips were fairly well subscribed and some had waiting lists. We ran two Canoe Camps, one Backpack Trip, and one Adventure Training Camp. The trips ran well and campers came back smiling! The Out-trip program continues to be a feeder for our CIT and staff program and an effective bridge between our teen camp and staff roles. The Out-trip program is also an 'alternative' contact to camp for kids who aren't as engaged in the classic sleepaway camp model.

### **Site Development**

Valaqua is looking forward to the future. We were grateful to have completed our *10 year Site Development Plan*. Now the exciting part of looking at what comes next!

The Camp Committee spent a good deal of 2024 working on discernment and visioning. We were grateful for the support of Christopher Cameron, who led us through a visioning process and helped to create a report identifying our strengths and challenges. We look to use this to help us create our next facility development plan.

## ***Big Transitions***

Our long time Camp Manager Jeff Schellenberg retired from his position at the end of 2024. Jeff was in the role for 28 years and he leaves a huge hole in our camp community. We were so happy to celebrate with him in December and while we will miss him deeply, we are excited to hear about his next adventures.

Derek and Darcie Janzen have begun to learn the role of Site Manager. It's a time of big transitions, and Valaqua has gone through some minor restructuring with our permanent staff, creating an Executive Director role for Jon Olfert, and a Site Manager role that is shared by Derek and Darcie. The Janzen family is onsite with their four kids and it is so exciting watching all of them explore and make Valaqua home.

Thank you to Ben OlfertWiens for helping to cover the gap. Ben hosted groups, hauled garbage, shoveled snow, and cleaned facilities. Thanks Ben!

## ***Valaqua the rest of the year***

Valaqua is well utilized the rest of the year, with only a few bookable weekends remaining in 2025. A stream of Scout Groups, Family Reunions, and Church Groups utilize the facility through the rest of the year! We are excited to welcome back many groups that have enjoyed the facilities for many years as well as a few that are coming for the first time.

## ***Staff***

Our summer staff continue to be our major strength at Valaqua. We are so fortunate to have this amazing group of young folks committed to this work. You will notice when you look at this list that we were acutely short on Male Counsellors. We found ways to cover cabins with Female counsellors and were blessed with a strong group of Male CITS to help cover the gap, but it took some creative staffing to make it all happen.

## ***Camp Valaqua staff 2024***

### **Leadership Support Staff**

<b>Program Director:</b>	Charlene Lauzier
<b>CIT Director:</b>	Delaney Janzen
<b>Office Manager:</b>	Lena Wiebe
<b>PIT Crew Boss/Camp Gardener:</b>	Liesel Retzlaff & Ainsley Dunn
<b>Out Trip Co-Directors:</b>	Devlin Patrick and Ben OlfertWiens
<b>Head Cook:</b>	Louisa Adria
<b>Assistant Cook:</b>	Isabella Morel

### **Male Counselors:**

Kyle Wiebe  
Jordan Wiens  
Micah Schellenberg

**Male CITs:**

Yohannes Abera  
Jonah OlfertWiens  
Samuel OfertWiens  
Ben Belletrutti  
Fin Lee-Epp  
Kenai Warkentin  
Senia  
Yaromir

**Female Counselors:**

Erynn Anderson  
Josephine Koop  
Margo Retzlaff  
Sarah Giesbrecht  
Kienna Krahm  
Donatella Filewych  
Jolene Bitter  
Claire Donais

**Female CITs:**

Ruby Loewen  
Rachel Giesbrecht  
Mikka Kostenecki  
Charlotte King  
Koharu Hogaboam

**Volunteers**

We had over 60 people who generously volunteered their time to help with our camp program this summer. Teen and adult volunteers served in the kitchen, helped out with maintenance, served as chaplains, and came out to help prepare the camp for the summer. Thank you for all of your help through the summer months, we could not do it without your support.

We owe a huge **thank you** to the chaplains who came and brought our chapels and campfires to life. Chaplains shared stories, led activities and games, challenged us, got us thinking and talking and helped us to learn how we can light up the world with our love and faith.

**Summer 2024 Chaplains:**

Family Camp I - **Cassidy Brown** - Bergthal Mennonite Church  
Breakaway - **Jenn Ratzlaff** - First Mennonite Church Calgary  
Explorer I - **Tany Warkentin** - Springridge Mennonite Church  
Adventurer I - **Reg Wiebe** - First Mennonite Church Edmonton  
Family Camp II - **Joani Neufeldt** - Lethbridge Mennonite Church  
Discovery - **Don Douglas** - First Mennonite Church Edmonton  
Explorer II - **Caleb Kowalko** - First Mennonite Church Calgary  
Adventurer II - **Aiden Scherzinger** - Foothills Mennonite Church

We continue to encourage our MCA churches to support your pastors, youth pastors, and other leaders in faith to come and serve with us here at Valaqua. It is a great opportunity to see the summer program in action, and it's fun too!

### **Youth Leadership Team**

Valaqua continues to be involved with mentoring the Youth Leadership Team. We will be hosting Snowcamp on February 21-23 and are very much looking forward to it! Look for announcements around a ski day in March as well!

### **Conclusion**

Valaqua is in a place that holds both consistency and potential. We are excited to welcome campers back to our programs in summer and so thankful for the amazing young folks who step up to lead and teach in our programs. It is exciting and energizing to look forward and plan for the future. Derek and Darcie have stepped into big shoes and have done so with grace and enthusiasm.

We are so thankful for all of the support you have shown our camp ministry. Valaqua could not operate without the incredible contributions of time, prayer, and resources that you all provide.



## Campership Aid

	2024	2023	2022	2021
<b># of Campers Served</b>	31	26	20	15
<b>Total Amount Distributed</b>	\$3,992.00	\$8,405.00	\$5,417.50	\$3,792.50
<b>Subsidy per camper</b>	<b>\$128.77</b>	<b>\$323.00</b>	<b>\$270.88</b>	<b>\$252.83</b>

## Camper Registration by Week

Camp	Campers	2024 Capacity	% Capacity	Campers	2023 Capacity	% Capacity	Campers	2022 Capacity	% Capacity
<b>Family Camp I</b>	44	44	100%	61	50	122%	41	50	82%
<b>Family Camp II</b>	29	40	72%						
<b>Breakaway</b>	45	48	93%	36	48	75%	44	32	138%
<b>Discovery</b>	15	48	32%	25	60	42%	24	28	86%
<b>Discovery Days</b>	6	10	60%	7	10	70%	10	10	100%
<b>Explorer I</b>	31	60	52%	45	60	75%	36	40	90%
<b>Explorer II</b>	29	60	48%	34	60	57%	40	40	100%
<b>Adventurer I</b>	49	60	82%	51	60	85%	40	40	100%
<b>Adventurer II</b>	50	60	83%	25	60	42%	44	40	110%
<b>PIT Crew I</b>	6	12	50%	12	12	100%	6	8	75%
<b>PIT Crew II</b>	15	12	125%	3	12	25%	10	8	125%
<b>PIT Lite I</b>	6	12	50%	8	12	67%	9	8	113%
<b>PIT Lite II</b>	13	12	108%	10	12	83%	4	8	50%
<b>TOTAL ON SITE</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>Jr Backpack</b>									
<b>Backpack</b>	6	8	75%	6	8	75%	4	8	50%
<b>Canoe Camp I</b>	3	10	30%	10	8	125%	8	8	100%
<b>Canoe Camp II</b>	10	10	100%	5	8	63%	4	8	50%
<b>Adventure Training Camp</b>	8	8	100%	10	8	125%	2	8	25%
<b>TOTAL OUTTRIP</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>TOTAL CAMPERS</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>95%</b>

## Community Building and Program Committee

*May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other,  
similar to Christ Jesus' attitude.*

*That way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice.*

*So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory.*

*Romans 15:5-7 (CEB)*

The purpose of the Community Building and Program Committee (CBP) is to plan events to build relationships among the churches of Mennonite Church Alberta and to plan the Annual Delegate Sessions (ADS).

In 2024 our committee planned three events:

- March 15-16, 2024, the **Annual Delegate Sessions** were held at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton. Approximately 80 people registered for the sessions. The speaker was Joon Park, who was then an interim minister at Holyrood. He challenged us all about working towards becoming an inter-cultural church. A highlight was the Saturday Musical event with choirs from many of the Edmonton churches. The energy of this evening was fantastic!!
- October 19 in Edmonton and November 2 in Calgary: **"Come Together!"**  
These events were planned as a fun time of getting to know each other and to provide some fundraising for MCA. The Edmonton event was hosted by First Mennonite Edmonton and the Calgary event by the Calgary Chin Church. Between the two events approximately 150 people attended. The theme was chosen based on the Beatles song of the same name. There was trivia and music from the 60s as well as some other fun entertainment provided by different churches from each area. Some people even came in costume! Tim Wiebe-Neufeld and Rob Peters created new words for the Beatles song reflecting MCA coming together. Fun was had by all!

Our committee also provides **bursaries** for Alberta Mennonite Youth/Young Adults attending Mennonite Universities and Colleges. This year the bursaries were awarded to three people. Although the bursaries are part of our budget, direct donations to the bursary fund are always welcome.

The next major event we are planning for March 14-16: "Courage to Love: an MCA weekend celebrating 500 years of Anabaptism," hosted by Foothills Mennonite Church. For this event we are trying something a little different, combining community building events, such as the "Tastes and Talents of MCA", workshops for non-delegates, and worshipping together across the province on Sunday morning. Our guest speaker is Allan Rudy-Froese, Associate Professor of Christian Proclamation, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), who will be challenging us as we look back and forward on this 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Anabaptism.

Ideas for Community Building events are always welcome.

*Adela Wedler, Chair*

## Nominations Report Jan Wilhelm

A Nominating Committee is given the task of gift discernment. We work throughout the year responding as vacancies remain or arise after the Annual Delegate Sessions.

MCA positions are for 2 years, with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

Committees are as follows:

- those taking an additional term (blue)
- slate of new nominees (red)
- those in term (black)

### **Executive Committee** (four positions plus Executive Minister: Tim Wiebe Neufeld)

Moderator	Keith Retzlaff (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Foothills	2026
Vice Moderator	Marguerite Jack	First-Calg	2027
Secretary	Coreen Froese (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Bergthal	2026
Finance Chair	Rachel Siemens (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026

### **Personnel** (one position)

Doug Wiebe (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2026
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### **Finance Committee** (two positions)

Rachel Siemens (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
Karl Blank (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2027

### **Congregational Leadership Committee** (three positions plus Executive Minister)

Tany Warkentin (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Springridge	2027
Caleb Kowalko (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Calg.	2026
Tim Burkholder (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2027

### **Community Building and Program Committee** (three positions)

Rachel Hunsberger (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Trinity	2026
Charlotte Wiens (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2026
Adela Wedler (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2027

### **Missions & Service Committee** (four positions)

Mezgebu Tucho (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Bethel Oromo	2026
Joyce Baergen (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Holyrood	2026
John Woollard (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2027
_____ (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	_____	2027

### **Camp Valaqua Committee** (five positions)

Kathryn Friesen (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
Jenn Ratzlaff (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Calg.	2027
Darrel Heidebrecht (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Foothills	2027



Liam Kachkar (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2027
Noah Thiessen (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm./Foothills	2026
<b>Nominations Committee (two positions)</b>		
Jan Wilhelm (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2026
_____ (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	_____	2027
<b>Canadian Mennonite Representative</b>		
Art Koop (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	Foothills	2026
<b>Joint Council Representative</b>		
Mathew Wiens (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	First-Edm.	2027
<b>Palestine Israel Network of Mennonite Church Canada (Rep.)</b>		
Suzanne Gross (3 <sup>rd</sup> term)	First-Edm./Holyrood	2027
<b>MC Canada Nominating Committee</b>		
Joani Neufeldt (1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Lethbridge	2025 term extended?
<b>CMU Board: Prairie Regions Representative (3 year term)</b>		
Reece Zablocki (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2027
<b>RJC Board:</b>		
Ashley Gusztak (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Foothills	2026? (Oct.)

There are still vacancies...

Thank you to Linden Willms, Anna Lisa Salo, Marie Moyer, Tracy Brown Ewert, Christine Hansplant, Joani Neufeldt, and Margaret Kruger-Harder, and Anna-Lisa Salo, who are finishing/stepping down. Your service to MCA is deeply appreciated.

Thank you to those who have agreed to accept a new nomination or continue to serve for another term.

Thank you to those who prayerfully considered accepting our request to let their name stand on a committee and could not do so at this time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jan Wilhelm and Joani Neufeldt

## **MCA Representative to Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council Report**

This March marks the end of my time as Mennonite Church Alberta's Representative on Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council. I have been in this position since March 2018. At that time, the implementation of MC Canada's restructuring had just begun. Part of the reason I accepted the position is because of the opportunity to be part of forming this new organizational structure, adjusting and refining it as we saw how it worked in practice.

Over the past 7 years, I have helped advocate for congregations and the importance of their involvement and voice. These connections come through the regional churches as representatives of congregations, yet it is vital for congregants to remain informed and consulted. A new opening for congregational involvement is being developed in our structure. Congregational Representatives will play an important role in setting direction for Mennonite Church Canada, beginning at the Mennonite Church Gathering in Kitchener this July.

Another important action of MC Canada over the past year (the year in this case is from March to March) is introducing a new clergy conduct policy. The Joint Council has been part of contributing guidance to this policy and gave final approval in October 2024. The policy, *Guiding Ministerial Leadership in Mennonite Church Canada* (GMLC), has been three years in the making. It replaces the *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure* (MSMPP) in place since 2016.

The GMLC policy continues to provide guidance for sexual abuse cases, and now also includes direction for conflict and other potential issues of a nonsexual nature. It addresses code of conduct and other ethical practices. Formerly, issues of these kinds had been dealt with in Shared Understanding of Church Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. The new conduct policy is comprehensive with enhanced sensitivity and clear timely steps for dealing with all forms of misconduct, including definitions of misconduct and how to report it. The policy has proven useful already. The GMLC can be found at <https://www.commonword.ca/go/gmlc>.

At the most recent JC meeting this past January, we discussed the role of the publisher, MennoMedia. As part of the conversation, I provided a presentation on Mennonite Education. Our Anabaptist curriculum is vital for many reasons, including the loving God image portrayed, the respectful view of human nature (human beings are created good: children are born innocent), the attention to being peacemakers, and the involvement of children in community building experiences.

MennoMedia is based in the States and partners with Common Word, a bookstore and resource center in Winnipeg. Most of the MennoMedia publications can be bought through Common Word. We continue to advocate for increased Canadian distribution.

It has been, at times, an intensive involvement, but throughout the past seven years, I have been happy to serve as MCA representative to the MC Canada Joint Council. Thank you, and blessings.

Minutes from Joint Council meetings are available on the CommonWord website: <https://www.commonword.ca/QuickSearch?search=joint+council+minutes&sort=relevance>

Submitted by Margaret Kruger-Harder

## **Alberta Palestine-Israel Network (PIN) Report**

January 2024 was the three-month point of the IDF assault on Gaza. As of this writing, a tenuous ceasefire is still in place after an unimaginable 15 months of daily destruction and carnage. The hostage exchange reminds us of the civilian suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians, recognizing however the glaring imbalance of power in the long-standing situation of oppression by one people over another.

Several of our Alberta PIN members committed to showing up regularly at the weekly Palestinian-led protests that happened in various venues in Edmonton. Beth Bezooyen, from First Mennonite Edmonton, was a regular marshal at these weekly events, keeping us safe as we walked through the streets reminding people of the ongoing struggle for justice. These protests continue.

Another activity Alberta PIN supported was the petition-writing efforts encouraged by PIN Canada to urge the Government of Canada to support a ceasefire and abide by International Law with respect to arms sales to countries in breach of International Law. Specifically, PIN Canada called on the government of Canada to stop building arms because of military contracts it has with the State of Israel.

In February 2024, PIN also organized a local Edmonton Inter-Mennonite singing vigil to remember the civilian carnage happening in Gaza and call for a ceasefire. This brought our local Mennonite churches and MCC Alberta together in song and prayer and short reflections, using the songs that had been shared publicly in the US Rotunda event organized by Mennonite Action.

Mennonite Churches in Alberta were also invited to use a four-part series of lament for the tragic 1<sup>st</sup> year anniversary of the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre and subsequent systematic killing and destruction waged against all civilians in Gaza. The series was designed for worship services – to help us shape a complete narrative so that a way forward with justice for all might prevail.

And, finally, PIN supported the organizing of an event for Remembrance Day, where Mennonites and Quakers, as two of the three historic peace churches, offered a simple ceremony in in Churchill Square through a time of lament and commitment to building a just world. We reflected on the verses of “If the War Goes On”, heard verses from the book of Lamentations, and considered queries composed by our Quaker friends followed by silent reflection. Over 60 Edmontonians from diverse backgrounds joined together for this Remembrance Day event.

Submitted by *Suzanne Gross*, Alberta PIN convenor

# 2024

The Year in Review



Every day, some aspect of Mennonite Church Canada inspires me!

One day it might be an email that I receive from one of our International Witness workers. Another day it is a discussion that we have in a staff meeting, or connecting with the Regional Church executive ministers.

An inspirational highlight I can count on is when I join one of our 203 congregations for worship. Whether I am in a congregation of 13 or 300, God is present and the Holy Spirit moves among us.

Annual visits to a dozen or so congregations and meeting Regional Church colleagues remind me of who MC Canada aims to serve. In the 2017 restructuring process, congregations were the centre of our attention, and leaders re-shaped our governance structures at the national and regional levels to support these local communities.

Since 2017, it has become clear that some early communal expectations of looking to congregations and regional churches for select expertise created unprecedented challenges. For example, it has been a struggle for congregations and regional churches to effectively speak into matters of nationwide programming and binational and global partnerships.

This past year the “Group of 5” – an ad hoc committee of the Joint Council – made recommendations to address our challenges. Here are a few of them:

- The Joint Council gave MC Canada staff more freedom to navigate national, binational, and global partnerships.
- Additionally, the Joint Council decided to reintroduce congregational representation at nationwide Gatherings (formerly Assemblies). This will take effect at Gathering 2025 in Kitchener (July 2-5).
- MC Canada will coordinate and lead revenue generation efforts to provide congregations, Regional Churches, and Nationwide Church with coordinated approaches to raising needed funds for ministry.

In making the above adjustments to our governance, we strive to strengthen the ministries we do together:

**CommonWord:** Your centre for congregational resources is celebrating 10 years of serving churches as your national bookstore and resource centre! Arlyn Friesen Epp also reports on special activities as Mennonites prepare to celebrate 500 years of Anabaptism in 2025.

**International Witness:** Whether at home or abroad, we strive to cultivate the gifts an intercultural church offers. Learn more about how that’s happening in Jeanette Hanson’s report.

**Indigenous Relations:** Reconciliation is a long word that describes a long journey. Jonathan Neufeld’s report brings us healing initiatives with intriguing names like the Secret Treaty, the Strawberry Communion, and more in his report.

**Climate Action:** Sandy Plett shares survey results that show congregations are deeply and biblically rooted in the ethics of social justice and stewarding our resources. However, we need to better understand how social justice and creation care connect with how we care for our neighbours.

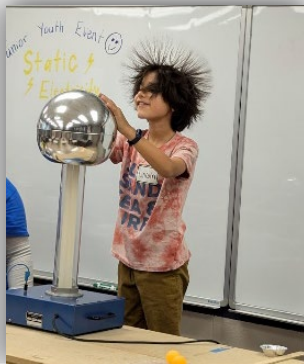
**Leadership Ministries:** Top of mind for Al Rempel is his work with Regional Churches to equip and grow those who are called to congregational ministry. In his report, learn about financial assistance to pastors and congregational leaders wishing to grow their skill set and a policy update that will interest all church leaders.

Please read the [ministryreportsummaries](https://commonword.ca/go/4185) <commonword.ca/go/4185>, and engage MC Canada staff with any questions you have.

Thank you for your companionship as together we seek to be People of God!

Doug Klassen  
Executive Minister  
[dklassen@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:dklassen@mennonitechurch.ca)





**Left:** Marilyn Rudy Froese, MCEC Church Leadership Minister, anoints Chinda Kommala during his ordination ceremony.

**Middle:** A shocking experience at a junior youth event in Leamington.

**Top:** Anthony Siegrist hired as Executive Minister.

## We celebrate congregations and pastors.

### 108 congregations

- Welcomed 5 congregations to provisional membership: FreeChurch Toronto; Mennonite Disciples Swahili Church (Ottawa-Gatineau); Rehoboth Inner Healing Church; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Guelph; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Windsor.
- Congregations Closed - Hawkesville Mennonite Church (June 2024); Agape Fellowship (July 2024). We appreciate the generosity of these congregations and their support of MCEC through their legacy gifts.

### 196 pastors serve as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other capacities

- 14 pastors installed in congregations
- 6 pastors licensed toward ordination
- 3 pastors ordained

## We are inspired by ministry throughout MCEC.

- At the Annual Church Gathering in Leamington, 236 delegates and congregational leaders were inspired by the hope we find in Jesus as we came together to worship and collaborate in community. We grow, learn and serve best in relationship with others, listening for God together.
- In the area of youth engagement, 150 voices contributed to a research project focused on ways to better engage youth in the church. Alongside our partners, junior youth gatherings in Kitchener and Leamington brought together 144 junior youth and their sponsors for meaningful connection and growth. This effort reflects our commitment to leadership development, intergenerational discipleship, collaborating with our partners to nurture both the current and future generations of the church.
- To encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation, 39 pastors attended renewing retreats, focused on the seasons of Lent and Advent. Additionally, 50 pastors participated in Healthy Boundary Workshops online, equipping them to maintain healthy boundaries while leading with integrity and care.
- The INNOVATE Ministry concluded after a decade of impactful service. Over the past 10 years, 48 MCEC congregations have participated in discipleship events and workshops, fostering growth and renewal. Additionally, the Transitioning in Ministry (TiM) Program saw the graduation of 5 pastors this year.
- We are privileged to journey alongside congregations during transformative moments, whether it's through pastoral searches, discernment processes, revitalizing mission, or reimagining facilities. A wonderful example of this is the shared co-ownership journey of Shalom Worship & Healing Centre and First Mennonite Church.
- We celebrate the hiring of Anthony Siegrist as Executive Minister, effective February 1, 2025.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of congregations, pastors and leaders through prayer, time and finances. We continue to grow into the future as a transformed, inspired and called people of God.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba Annual Report for 2024



Forty congregations have covenanted together to be Mennonite Church Manitoba, and we are grateful to God for these relationships of common identity, mutual support, and shared ministry. This includes one new congregation which joined MCM at our 2024 Gathering at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler, where delegates reflected together on what it would mean for us to be an intercultural church..

2024 saw the launch of two new initiatives among us. Hope and Courage is a two-year visioning process for MCM, prompting us as congregations and as a regional church to explore who God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to do at this time. This process includes focus groups, surveys of constituents, and our upcoming 2025 Gathering exploring one aspect of our core identity as Anabaptist Mennonites.

We also launched Light the Fire, a once-a-generation, multi-year, grassroots-based capital campaign to upgrade our facilities at Camps Assiniboia and Koinonia. In 2024 we celebrated 75 years of camping ministry with a wonderful weekend of singing, reflections, and activities; with Light the Fire we are looking to extend our camping and retreat ministries for another 75 years. Our summer camps this year saw 520 campers attend, including 178 adults with disabilities, led by 83 summer staff with 14 leadership staff. In 2024, Camps Assiniboia and Koinonia hosted over 180 guest groups representing nearly 8500 people.

Our Leadership Ministries Co-Directors, Jeff Friesen and Karen Schellenberg, supported our pastors through all the transitions of life and ministry during 2024. This year saw one pastor ordained, while four pastors received other forms of credentialing. Nine new pastors were installed in congregational ministry, while two retired from ministry. There were six pastors new to MCM in 2024.

Our shared Mission Ministries as a regional and nationwide church continued strong through this past year. International Witness currently works with partners in 16 countries around the world, and congregations across Canada share in this work through mission networks. Closer to home, Director of Mission Engagement Melanie Neufeld worked with elder David Scott of Swan Lake First Nation, along with members of our Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity, to tell David's story of a "Secret Treaty" between early Mennonite settlers and the Ojibwe people. Reception of this story has been overwhelmingly positive in encouraging reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours in Manitoba.

This past year saw the retirement of a much-loved staff member, Kathy Giesbrecht. She served for many years as Associate Director of Leadership Ministries, and for the past two years as Director of Congregational Ministries. We are grateful for her work in supporting our pastors and congregations over the years. Her work carries on in a scaled-back capacity, shared among other MCM staff.

We are looking forward to Gathering 2025, when we will come together for worship, information, and inspiration around the theme, "Looking to Jesus," based on Hebrews 12:1-2. Join us as we explore what it means for us to be Jesus-centered as congregations and as a regional church.

You can keep up with current MCM news by subscribing to our weekly MCM Update, which highlights prayer items and upcoming events, and our MCM Monthly, an online newsletter telling stories of our regional church. Sign up at [www.mennochurch.mb.ca/contact](http://www.mennochurch.mb.ca/contact) or by emailing our office.



## **Mennonite Church Saskatchewan 2024 Annual Report**

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is a family of 21 congregations, united in our commitment to being Christ-centered and sent into the world. Together, we prayerfully support one another, collaborating in ministry with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite World Conference, trusting that God's healing and hope flow through us to all the world.

***“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” – Romans 12:4-5***



These words from Romans guided us as we gathered for the Annual Delegate Session in Drake, hosted by North Star Mennonite with help from Pleasant Point and Grace Mennonite Churches. Under the theme **“Rekindling Relationships,”** and led by Doug Klassen, Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada, we experienced this spirit of renewal through worship, discussions, and fellowship.

**Youth:** Youth programming began with Kirsten Hamm-Epp completing the last few months of her time at MC Sask. Evan Bueckert has since taken on the Interim role and has been working at preparations for the coming Youth Gathering in Waterloo. The MC Sask youth events, or Mega Menno gatherings, have continued to engage youth with opportunities to learn, have fun, and explore their own relationship with God throughout this change in leadership.

**Church Engagement – Josh Wallace:** I've been privileged to serve MC Sask as Church Engagement Minister another year. The shape of this role continues to change as our congregations and our world continues to shift, both in joyful ways and in tragic ways.

This year my focus has gone primarily to

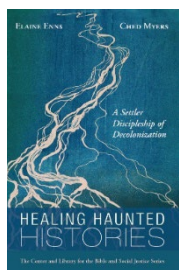
- Walking with congregations, pastors, and pastoral candidates in seasons of transition.
- Collaborating with the programs that report at Ministries. This year the crisis in Gaza has especially been front and center.
- Facilitating congregations in International Witness partnership and helping to organize visits from IW partners.
- Processing and shaping the new *Guiding Ministerial Leadership in our Churches* (GMLC) document with MC Canada's Congregational Leadership Ministers group.
- Continuing to support students as the Mennonite representative on the USask Faith Leaders Council.

**Transitions:** Looking back at 2024, we reflect on a busy and transitional year, shaped by challenges and opportunities. Leadership changes continued to define this season of growth, and we thank God for all who serve in so many ways with MC Sask, using their various gifts:

- In May, **Gary Peters** concluded his role as Interim Executive Minister, with **Len Rempel** stepping into the position in June.
- In August, **Kirsten Hamm-Epp** concluded her time as Youth Minister, with **Evan Bueckert** beginning as Interim Youth Minister in October.
- **Josh Wallace** completed his work as Congregational Engagement Minister on December 31, 2024.
- **Marianne Siemens** kept everything running smoothly as Office Administrator.

Transitions within our congregations also reflected God's ongoing work:

- Pastoral changes included departures, new beginnings, and retirements across several congregations. Highlights include:
  - **Emily Summach** transitioning from Langham Mennonite Fellowship to Mount Royal Mennonite
  - **Susanne Guenther-Loewen** ended her time at Nutana Park Mennonite.
  - **Don Froese** ended his time at Mount Royal Mennonite.
  - **Len Rempel** ended his time at Pleasant Point Mennonite and Warman Mennonite.
  - **Rodney Hennessey** ended his time at Grace Mennonite.
  - **Lois Siemens** retired from Bethany Manor
  - **Paul Matheson** retired from First Mennonite.
  - **Luke Bushman** was licensed toward ordination at Osler Mennonite in February.
  - **Garth and Claire Ewert Fisher** began as interim pastors at Rosthern Mennonite
  - **Lisi Schröttner** began at Wildwood Mennonite
  - **Andrea Enns-Gooding** began as Spiritual Care Coordinator at Bethany Manor



In November, we also explored the intersections of faith and history. Partnering with Canadian Mennonite University, we hosted the **Healing Haunted Histories** course with Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, fostering deep reflection on the ways our histories intersect with Indigenous stories.

Throughout the fall, the MC Sask Council led **Town Hall meetings** across the province to engage congregations in discussions on Youth Ministry, finances, volunteer positions, and connectedness; discussions that will continue with the final two meetings in Eyebrow and Swift Current in 2025.

The end of another year gives us the opportunity to look back on how God has led us as a church, through challenges and transitions. We are also invited to look forward, to be participants in this movement of God's spirit as we seek to live out our mission that God's healing and hope may flow through us to the world.

*Len Rempel, Evan Bueckert, and Marianne Siemens (MC Sask Staff)*





## GREETINGS TO OUR FAMILY ACROSS CANADA!

### MCBC in 2024:

- Started a new congregation in Kelowna, Valley Road Church
- 23 Churches plus 1 developing congregation
- Celebrated many baptisms in our churches in 2024
- Our average weekly main worship attendance: 61 in 2023 - 67 in 2024
- Kids, youth, and young adults are around 14% of our total engaged constituents
- The average total of people engaged is roughly 131 if spread evenly between churches
- Average membership 90

### Other items of note:

- We have partnered with a parachurch ministry for health assessments and revitalization work.
- Our forward-leaning simplification and prioritization of building a people continues.
- Our Executive Minister's primary areas of focusing more energy around are:
  - **New Congregations and Revitalization**
  - **Pastoral and Church Leadership Support, Training, Development**
  - **Funding Long-term Vision (get out of structural deficit mode)**
  - **Centre-Set Approach to Unity: Jesus.**
- The proposed New Congregational Categories bylaw will be before our Regional Church delegates at our AGM. We are wrestling with creating more of a network orientation and less denominational, given the post-denominational realities of thriving churches across North America. Currently, we have one category called "recognized congregation" and given our unique tensions and history, this has not served us well when engaging in church planting or established churches looking for a network home. So the proposal includes creating two categories of non-member congregations:
  - **Developing congregation.** Which would be for churches being "birthed" and in their initial years of life. And,
  - **Exploring congregation.** Which is for those established churches looking for a Jesus-centred Anabaptistish network. This would require assent to the Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions and then a mutually established process for discernment between that congregation and existing MCBC congregations over a period of up to 5 years.

### Our hope is that these open us more to the wider work of the Holy Spirit in new and other areas of the church.

- We continue to explore ways to encourage the calling and growth of pastors with our Columbia Bible College and other partnerships.
- Finally, our task groups around pressing local church social and spiritual issues are doing good work. Sign up for our regional newsletter at [mcbc.ca](http://mcbc.ca) for more details.



# CANADIAN MENNONITE

# 2024

The look and feel of *Canadian Mennonite* changed in 2024. Now monthly with longer feature sections, we offer **in-depth reporting on complex issues**. We continue to carry news from across the church, with regular articles from correspondents in B.C., the prairies and eastern Canada.

*The Secret Treaty*, our February feature, gave a unique new view on early Mennonite-Indigenous encounters. It has since been published as a book, with more than 1,000 copies sold, and was the basis for several events in Manitoba.

We launched several **new columns** in 2024, giving voice to a broad cross-section of the church. *Deeper Communion* is an ongoing conversation between four younger leaders in the church. *Life in the 80s* features some of our older members reflecting on lives of discipleship. *Faith Story* brings inspiration from one person's spiritual life.

We also launched **MennoCreative**, a residency program for creative communicators to tell the church story through new media and different channels. Three resi-

dents were hired. Watch for their work to appear in 2025 in a podcast, on our website and in the magazine.

Through all these voices, *Canadian Mennonite* seeks to strengthen the faith community. We want to represent the diverse church and encourage people to listen to one another, even on topics that could divide us. We do so in the spirit of Hebrews 10:24, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, to build up the Kingdom of God.

Through the Every Home Plan, people who attend a Mennonite Church Canada congregation subscribe at half the cost of a regular subscription. Fees are paid collectively. Talk to your church administrator for details.

Whether you read the magazine on paper or a mobile device; whether you visit our website or follow us on social media; whether you write letters, post comments, or discuss the articles at church; *Canadian Mennonite* is grateful that you connect with our national church family through the magazine.



✉ Have a story idea? Email Katie Doke Sawatzky at [prairies@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:prairies@canadianmennonite.org).

1-800-378-2524



[canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)



[canadian.mennonite](https://facebook.com/canadian.mennonite)



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[CanMenno](https://twitter.com/CanMenno)



# 2024/25 CMU Report to the Church

## Greetings to Mennonite Church Alberta

**Thank you** to our church community for your steadfast support of CMU and the ways you partner with us in nurturing lives of faith, learning, and service. Your commitment to Christian education helps inspire and equip students to make a meaningful difference in the world.



### Undergraduate Degrees

- » Bachelor of Arts
- » Bachelor of Business Administration
- » Bachelor of Music
- » Bachelor of Music Therapy
- » Bachelor of Science
- » **NEW!** Bachelor of Social Work

### Graduate Degrees

- » Master of Divinity
- » Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- » **NEW!** Master of Arts in Spiritual Care
- » Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- » Master of Business Administration



### Geographical Representation

- » 75% from Manitoba (13% First Nations, Inuit, or Métis)
- » 25% from other provinces and international (30 countries)

### Faith Representation

- » 70% from Christian traditions, including 30% from Mennonite/Anabaptist traditions
- » 27 MC Canada congregations
- » 15 MB congregations
- » 15 other Mennonite congregations and Hutterite communities



### 2024/25 Enrolment

- » 10% overall increase in students on main campus (40% increase in incoming students)
- » 694 students on main campus (630 full-time equivalent)
- » 125 full-time equivalent students at Menno Simons College (CMU courses in UW degree programs)

### Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

- » 100% of graduating students complete an experiential learning opportunity
- » 84 students completed their WIL placements in 2023/2024
- » Placements include: Assiniboine Park Zoo, Children's Hospital Research Institute, Legal Aid Manitoba, Sport Manitoba, Turning Leaf



# 25

### 25 Years of CMU

Join us in celebrating 25 years of CMU at Fall at CMU, September 19 and 20, 2025. Events include special celebratory program, Song Feast, alumni reunions, Farmers' and Makers' market and more. Learn more at [cmu.ca/fall](https://cmu.ca/fall).

### CMU Mission

Canadian Mennonite University is an innovative Christian university, rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition, moved, and transformed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through teaching, research, and service CMU inspires and equips for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.



## RJC BY THE NUMBERS:

(as of Feb. 1 2025)

<b>92</b> Total Students	<b>62</b> Day Students	<b>84</b> Saskatchewan Students	<b>Percentage of total students:</b>
21 Grade 10	7 Shuttle Students	2 Out-of-province	28% Students of Alumni
42 Grade 11	<b>30</b> Dormitory Students	<b>6</b> International	54% Indicated a church affiliation
29 Grade 12			26% MC Sask/MCA affiliation

**RJC High School seeks to nurture the development of each student's identity and potential in the preparation for a life of faith, service, and peacemaking. We do this in the following ways:**



### Chapels:

RJC students attend chapel four times a week. This year's chapel theme is 'Radical Love, Radical Lives'.

### Christian Ethics Classes:

RJC offers Christian Ethics courses including Bible Survey 10, Shalom 20, Anabaptist Studies 20, Social Ethics 30, Servant Leadership 30 and Worship Arts 30.

### Church Engagement:

RJC hosted a Pastors and Church Leaders Day this year on Sept. 26. RJC has students from many different faith and church backgrounds and we seek to work with local and community churches, along with MC Sask and MCA churches, to nurture the faith of all our students.

### Deeper Life Day (DLD):

Organized by the Faith and Life committee, DLD provides space for the RJC community to explore important ideas relevant to one's understanding of the world. Guests and speakers are invited to present on a variety of topics. This year's theme for DLD is 'Seeking God', and will held be on April 1.

### Alternative Learning & Service Opportunities (ALSO):

ALSO is a year long, cross-curricular program that culminates in a designated 'ALSO Week.' During this time, every student travels to an off-campus location to participate in alternative learning and service opportunities with the purpose of exploring and reflecting on issues of service, compassion, poverty and social justice.

### Retreats and Initiative Trips:

Each year our students attend class retreats at our camps. This year's retreats were held at Camp Quest, Shekinah Retreat Centre and Big River Bible Camp. We also engaged in grade-based trips to Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Living Waters Bible Camp.



### Community & Educational Partnerships:

RJC partners and engages and connects with many different community partners including MCC, PMP, MNH, MCC Clothes Basket, Good Neighbours Food Centre, The Town of Rosthern, The Rosthern Lions Club, YFBC, Shekinah, CMU and many more.

### Faith and Life Committee and Community Fundraiser:

The Faith & Life committee organized a Dine & Donate supper in support of Good Neighbours Food Centre in December 2024. The supper raised over \$5000 for GNFC.

### BELONG:

Through our dormitory and after school programming we invite all students to BELONG. This is done through youth events, trips, games and activities including our Sam and Sadie Hawkins events, guys' and girls' nights out, and our outdoor club. These invitational community events celebrate each person's gifts and importance in our community.



*Thank you for your prayerful support during the 2024/2025 school year!*



## Report to Mennonite Church Alberta

AMBS serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.

Our programs integrate academics, spiritual formation and practice. Join us — in person or at a distance, full time or part time — and deepen your understanding of Scripture, faith and Anabaptist theology!

### Degrees and programs (\* = distance-friendly program)

- Master of Divinity\*
- Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism\*
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership\*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction\*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies\* (choose your own courses)
- Mennonite Education Agency Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology\* (in Spanish)
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program\* (undergraduate-level certificate)

**[ambs.ca/degrees-and-programs](https://ambs.ca/degrees-and-programs)**

We offer generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and matching grants for both full- and part-time graduate students. See also benefits for Canadian students!

**[ambs.ca/canadian-students](https://ambs.ca/canadian-students)**

### Leadership and enrichment

Grow your ministry skills and gain Anabaptist approaches to today's leadership challenges through our nondegree offerings. (\* = distance-friendly program)

#### Short-term options

- Practical Leadership Training modules\*
- Online Short Courses\*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS\*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference\*: Feb. 23–26, 2026

#### Offerings of one to two years

- Transition to Leadership\*: program for new pastors
- Ministry Reflection Circles\*: reflect on current ministry challenges with the support of a group
- Spiritual Direction Seminars\*

**[ambs.ca/leadership-and-enrichment](https://ambs.ca/leadership-and-enrichment)**



### Regional church connections

- **Board members:** Paul Bergen and Rachel Siemens (First–Edmonton)

### AMBS statistics

- (above) In April 2024, 13 women and nine men from four countries — Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, U.S — graduated from AMBS. Sixteen completed part or all of their studies at a distance.
- In 2024–25, 149 graduate students are enrolled at AMBS: 82 from the U.S., four from Canada and 63 international students. Ten students are pursuing the Spanish-language Graduate Certificate in Theology.
- The undergraduate-level Journey program has 41 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, Uganda and the U.S.

### Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course:
  - Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible
  - Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology
  - Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture
  - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication
  - Challenging Christian Nationalism
  - Biblical Interpretation Across the Two Testaments

**[ambs.ca/online-short-courses](https://ambs.ca/online-short-courses)**

- Take a graduate-level course — online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first three credit hours! **[ambs.ca/upcoming-courses](https://ambs.ca/upcoming-courses)**
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn about what AMBS has to offer! **[ambs.ca/visit](https://ambs.ca/visit)**
- Stay connected: **[facebook.com/followAMBS](https://facebook.com/followAMBS)** • **[instagram.com/ambs\\_seminary](https://instagram.com/ambs_seminary)** • **[youtube.com/ambsedu](https://youtube.com/ambsedu)** • **[ambs.ca/subscribe](https://ambs.ca/subscribe)**

# REPORT

## MDS Canada 2024: Restoring hope

“It is a tremendous thing to have this happen. To have a house built for you, it’s beyond words,” said Jade Shamen, one recipient of a volunteer-built home in North Shuswap, British Columbia.

Jade, his wife Isabelle and their four-year-old son Able were among hundreds of North Shuswap area residents affected by the Bush Creek East Wildfire in August 2023. The family was one of four households in the North Shuswap area to benefit from an MDS volunteer-built home this summer, while four more were helped with home repairs and renovations. Over a five-month period, 227 volunteers served in the North Shuswap.

Around the same time, a smaller national crew rebuilt a house in Lytton, British Columbia. Patsy Gessey and Owen Collings survived a wildfire in 2021. Due to several complicating factors — including toxic ash removal, loss of town records, archeological surveying requirements and updates to the local building code — rebuilding began more than two years after the fire flattened their village.

“I’m so grateful and thankful that I’m working with [MDS] because your organization shows hope... Some people have given up... but you’ve stuck with us,” shared Owen.

Units were also active across the country with house builds taking place in Carstairs, Alberta, and Truro, Nova Scotia. Home repair projects were undertaken in Manitoba.



Isabelle Labelle and Jade Shamen in Celista, B.C.

In Carstairs, more than 130 people volunteered to rebuild a house for Elisa Humphreys after she lost her home to a tornado last year. The house was built almost entirely by daily volunteers, 95 serving with MDS for the first time.

“God [directed] but people had to say yes. So, my heart was really warmed by how giving people were and what a great community we live in,” said Jessica Lawrence, volunteer coordinator for the response.

In July, the Ontario Unit hosted the MDS Canada Family Project at Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft, Ontario. Over four weeks, 48 people built three cabins and put the finishing touches on two more — to house camp volunteers and facilitate their program activities.

As I reflect on our work and relationships with disaster survivors and their communities in 2024, I am so grateful for the collective efforts of response coordinators, units, staff and the hundreds of daily, weekly and long-term volunteers who helped us achieve our mission to restore hope and homes. Thank you for your partnership in this work! I invite your continued prayers as we explore how to best serve our neighbours, across the country, in 2025.

—Ross Penner, Executive Director

### 2024 STATS

**2** national responses

**263** national response volunteers

**4** unit responses

**1** summer youth project

**1** family project

**8** service scholarships awarded

**21** Spirit of MDS Fund grants totalling

**\$102,000** issued to churches and community orgs.

February 19, 2025

Report for MCA for 2024:

As of December 31, 2024, MMI has a total of 81 partnering churches.  
Of these 81 churches, 8 churches are connected to Mennonite Church Alberta.

Total policies held within these 8 partnering churches – 256 policies

MMI Insurance donated through requests from some of our partnering churches a total of \$53,740 to various financial needs of church congregates or requests for community connected needs.

MMI Insurance donated in 2024 a total of \$154,355 to our partnering churches, based on 1% of the premium from the policy holders associated with the partnering church.

MMI Insurance values our churches and the partnership we share with them. It is our hope that we can grow our church policy holders which in turn will allow us to contribute larger donation amounts to our churches.

Our goal is to continue to support and strengthen the partnering churches by giving through the Compassion Fund requests and donation money back to each church.

Bernice Siebert  
Constituency Relations  
1-866-222-6996 Ext 630



*Meeting Needs Together*

Thank you for being the church, the hands of Christ to minister to others at home and around the world.

Thank you for responding to crisis in the name of Christ all around the world! Your generosity, prayers, volunteer hours, hand-made comforters, and attention to needs even where the media doesn't go is inspiring. THANK YOU for partnering with MCC to be the hands and feet of Christ to bring hope where it is so very needed in 45 countries. At MCC, we thank God for our church partners at home and around the world.

Each week, MCC announcements and links to information and stories are sent to churches. Anyone can be on the list, contact us at 403-275-6935 or [office@mccab.ca](mailto:office@mccab.ca)

Call MCC for speakers, workshops on indigenous or refugee topics, or to plan a kit-packing event. We are happy to come to your youth, young adult, and adult gatherings!

Highlights that will be reported in next year's Annual Impact Report:

- our first SOLD-OUT Grow Hope Year with all 344 acres sponsored!
- 2024 Relief Sale at the Bergthal Retreat Centre
- Golf Tournament
- GO!100
- a Learning Tour to Colombia and so much more!

Mark your calendar for the Relief Sale on May 31, 2025 at Bergthal Retreat Centre!



**DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD**  
CHURCH ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR  
MCC ALBERTA




**RYAN SIEMENS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
MCC ALBERTA



## Program Highlights

*from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024*

### \$4,159,148

donated to MCC Alberta

### 7710

donations made in Alberta

Scan here to  
read Alberta's  
Annual Impact  
Report



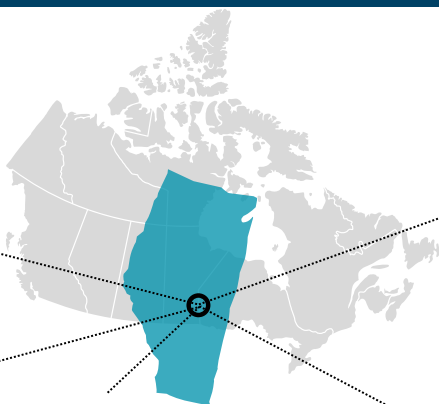
### 398

active MCC Thrift  
volunteers



### 1716

comforters shipped  
from Alberta



### 35

indigenous-led  
organizations engaged



### 45

speaking  
engagements in  
churches



### 52

refugees  
welcomed to  
Alberta