



PO Box 301036
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Pastoral Leadership Team
December, 2023

Dear members of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference,

We write to you on behalf of PNMC's Pastoral Leadership Team. We are the body within our conference which confers and administers pastoral credentials on those seeking and holding license and ordination for ministry within our conference. We are a team that has been comprised at various times of pastors, chaplains and lay people from around our conference, elected by members at our annual meetings. Our Executive Conference Minister and Administrator join the team in a non-voting capacity.

In May of 2022 we members and delegates of PNMC and MCUSA affirmed "[A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation](#)," in which we "committed to truth-telling, repentance, and transformation in the Way of Jesus" with regard to the policies and actions of the church which have harmed LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones. Following that action, the PNMC Board rescinded the Ministerial Credential Review Process policy which mandated a credential review for pastors who have performed same-gender weddings, sharing that decision with PNMC members in the [February 6, 2023 E-Bulletin](#).

It is with the clarity of the MCUSA resolution and our conference board decision that the Pastoral Leadership Team confesses the harm of our own actions. In particular, we lament the way PLT has initiated or participated in disciplining and sanctioning pastors who have performed same-gender marriages and commitment ceremonies, and holding the credentials of those pastors "at variance." We lament the ways that we have been part of systems that reinforced exclusion and harm.

We acknowledge that these actions harmed pastors by questioning the calling that God placed upon them to minister to people of all sexual and gender identities. By expecting them to defend their actions, we took their time away from you, their congregations. We acknowledge that this harm extended beyond pastors to you, the members of their congregations, and especially LGBTQ+ members. By questioning and disciplining your pastors we were also calling your identities suspect and wrong.

We are sorry. We seek to follow a path of repentance and meaningful transformation as we move forward together.



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We have formally requested to MCUSA that indications of "variance" in pastors' records be removed and those credentials have been restored. We have invited pastors to share their experience with us if that will aid in healing and reconciliation. We are grateful for their faithful and prophetic witness to the way of Jesus in our midst for so many years.

Further, we commit to affirming and celebrating the faithful work of pastors who bless and call the LGBTQ+ members in their churches, and to blessing the ministries of LGBTQ+ pastors called to ministry in PNM. And we are committed to supporting all pastors and congregations in the way God is calling them.

Members, we understand that the ways that PLT has disciplined leaders or expected them to defend acts of faithful ministry for and with LGBTQ+ members has been harmful. If you would like an opportunity to tell that story or share your feedback with our team, we welcome it. You may contact either Amy or Eric, who will set up a time to meet with you and listen together with any other person or people you would like to have present. We will arrange for interpretation if necessary. We would like your stories and feedback to shape the ways that we continue our role in conferring and administering pastoral credentials. We look forward to rebuilding trust with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Humbly and Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Marie Epp".

Amy Marie Epp
Pastoral Leadership Team Chair
PastorAmyEvergreen@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Massanari".

Eric Massanari
Executive Conference Minister
Eric@pnmc.org

Pastoral Leadership Team Members:
Jennifer Gingerich, Rob Hanson, Sam Adams