

MBCM Assembly of Congregations 2023

Summary

Find all 2023 reports and partner updates here: <https://mbcm.ca/assembly2023>

Following each Assembly, MBCM distributes a summary of the event to MBCM churches.

More than 325 delegates and guests attended Assembly 2023 at Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church(WMBC), March 3-4, 2023.

The event kicked off on Friday afternoon as church leaders participated in 3 workshops.

1. **Our MB Theological DNA and the Gospel** National Faith & Life Director Ken Esau explored what different church families have highlighted in their definition of the gospel—and provided a rationale for which one is most faithful to our MB theological DNA.
2. **Navigating Post-Pandemic Sociological Impacts on Youth** Kara Friesen led a panel that explored how the pandemic has affected youth, impacted engagement and relationships and is changing the landscape of discipleship.
3. **Discipleship Challenges and Opportunities – Shepherding the flock toward multiplication and cross-cultural connections** Multiply General Director Bruce Enns & Multiply Regional Mobilizer in Central Canada Lloyd Letkeman explored the challenges and opportunities experienced by local pastors in light of the fast-growing rate of new churches and disciples in other parts of the world.

In a first for the MBCM Assembly, attendees were treated to a rousing routine by local stand-up comedian Matt Falk. Matt expertly navigated the complexities of the setting, spreading much-needed laughter with his unique Mennonite-centric material.

Friday concluded with a full-group discussion, "Church and Conference, What's the Difference?" hosted by Director of Ministries Jason Dyck. Jason prompted participants to consider the institutional relationships that MBCM churches share with Conference, each other, and in ministry within their local church. The conversation was divided into two parts: How do we understand the relationship that churches have with each other? And secondly, how are our churches equipped and prepared to negotiate their own contexts?

Saturday started with worship and communion led by WMBC lead pastor Terry Dueck. The morning also included an audio presentation ([linked here](#)) produced and hosted by David Balzer. David spoke to MB church members from the furthest corners and centre of the province. Each life story is unique yet threaded together by the work of the Holy Spirit and a desire to know and serve Jesus.

There was much discussion and decision-making on the agenda, but one motion, in particular, was foremost on most attendees' hearts and minds. Delegates entered into significant discussions around the special resolution. A motion to delay a vote on the special resolution failed to pass. After considerable interaction, where many voices and opinions were expressed and heard, delegates voted to affirm the special resolution regarding Jubilee Mennonite Church¹. Delegates were later emailed a form inviting them to share thoughts that will be summarized and shared with MBCM pastors, as the leaders best positioned to care for MBCM members.

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<https://mbcm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Delegate-Letter-JMC-Resolution-Timeline-Assembly-2023.pdf>

Understandably it was hard to return to business following such emotional deliberation. Still, participants reconvened after lunch to hear partner reports and approve standard motions such as the 2022 financial statement, the 2023 budget and board nominees.

MBCM is grateful to all who attended and participated in Assembly 2023. We appreciate WMBC for hosting us with a gracious and welcoming spirit. Thank you, Westside Community Church (Morden, Man.), for preparing a delicious lunch, and thanks to all who volunteered in other ways to make an event of this size run smoothly and efficiently.

This summary is not able to capture the entirety of experience and detail from Assembly 2023.

To our MB churches, may God grant us wisdom and courage to move forward with continued faith and grace to follow Jesus faithfully.