



# Provincial Director Report

Cam Priebe

## Welcome

Welcome to Assembly 2023. We no longer take the opportunity to gather together for granted, and this weekend is no exception. We expect God to be present with us and that the Holy Spirit provides for all our needs. As we have planned our gathering, one of our hopes is to share stories of God's presence and provision throughout the constituency. We are intentionally beginning our Saturday with worship, taking time in the morning to remind one another of the faithfulness of God, looking for stories of God at work from around our province, and reminding one another of our need and dependency on the grace of Christ. Throughout the day, during our times of focused worship, discernment and decision-making, and hearing reports from our partners, we desire to look for God at work in our midst.

I continue to be thankful for the support of prayers, finances, and involvement coming from our churches. I'm thankful for the generous commitment of our churches in 2022. Your financial support makes it possible for us to continue with conference activities and work of inspiring, equipping, and resourcing our churches. We strive to be responsible stewards with these funds as we work with our partner organization's, resource

churches through transition moments, support pastoral search teams, provide preaching, and participate in coaching through crisis management. Your support also helps us provide ways of connecting and strengthening our relationships together.

## Staff Update and Thanks

### *Jason – Church Ministries*

I am grateful to be able to work alongside Jason in his role as Director of Church Ministry. Jason cares deeply for our churches and leaders and seeks to respond well and walk alongside each person and situation with care and grace. I'm thankful for the consistency in which he seeks to serve. His role provides support in the pastoral search process, assisting with leadership direction and vision retreats, hosting pastoral huddles, and such important leadership for our Provincial Faith and Life Team.

### *Holly – Communications*

As Communications and Content Manager, Holly Hannigan joined our team just before last year's Assembly. She immediately went to work keeping our website up to date and working on our branding for communications. Holly is a gifted writer who spent significant time writing stories about our churches



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and preparing monthly e-news. On December 2nd, Holly and her husband Matt welcomed baby Callum James Hannigan, so she is currently on maternity leave. Baby Cal has experienced significant health struggles early on, and they would invite your prayers for him. Here is an update from Holly, "Callum was born without a swallow reflex and that has caused a number of medical issues including needing to be fed through an NG tube. He spent 7 weeks in the NICU and is now home being treated as an outpatient. We are praying for miraculous healing or a diagnosis that will help us to better care for Callum."

Check out some of the stories that Holly worked on this past year.

<https://mbcm.ca/connecting-in-the-mess/>  
<https://mbcm.ca/chopping-wood-with-purpose/>  
<https://mbcm.ca/open-hands-to-reconciliation/>

### *Amanda*

#### *Administration and communications*

During Holly's maternity leave, Amanda has increased her work days with her from 2 days a week to 4 days a week, and I'm incredibly grateful for her work and her contribution to our team in serving our churches.

Amanda has done a tremendous job at organizing and preparing for our Assembly. She also works to host our other annual events, such as the Council of Reps, the Pastor's Refresh retreat, and the upcoming National PCO just to name some of the event coordination. Amanda is a positive leader on our team and aspires to serve our churches and leaders in their roles. She assists in creating and providing appropriate

resources and responses to churches promptly and effectively. Amanda has also been providing our Safe Place Policy resources and supporting documents and resources and arranging for our group insurance.

### **MBCM Leadership Board Update and Thanks**

This year I've been incredibly grateful for the MBCM board. They have given extra time in meetings, discernment and attention to our shared MBCM relationships and they continue to do so with lots of grace and patience to walk out the processes well. We can be grateful that God has been at work amid the board's activities throughout the past year.

### **Refresh Pastors Retreat**

Last year, a motion from the floor of the Assembly saved the day and the 2022 Pastor's Refresh retreat was placed on the calendar. Over 50 people attended the event and enjoyed the opportunity to share life, eat great food, battle the white-water rapids (or slow-moving creek), and enjoy great coffee together. Times of praying with and for one another and hearing from some of our leaders made for a great time together. Churches, please encourage and make way for your pastors to attend Refresh 2023; we will once again return to Hecla Resort for this event. Registration details can be found at the following link, and we would love to see all our pastors there.



## Organizational Health

### *Elder/Board Connection*

Shortly after Jason and I began our roles with MBCM (a long, long time ago, approximately 3.5 years), the Ontario Conference shared a church covenant document that they had created with the National Ministry Team. This document essentially helped define the relationship of churches to the conference. They accomplished this by going through a process of meeting with each church to discuss defining the relationship between church and conference. The document itself was valuable, but of most significant value was the intentional conversations of leadership boards/elder teams and conference staff. From the Ontario leaders we heard that the meetings were the most valuable part of the exercise. A document like this can come with risk, and maybe, especially at this time, it could feel like a legalese binding contract. We have had a couple of initial meetings with leaders and the feedback we have heard is that it is a helpful tool. What is most helpful is it creates the reason to sit together, listen, share, and define our relationships. Over the next year, Jason and I are looking forward to expanding these meetings to include each church leadership team within the province and to continue building our relationships together.

### *MBCM Constitution*

A Constitution Review team, consisting of MBCM staff, board members and one church representative, has reviewed and revised our Constitution, which was approved at the 2022 Assembly. Further revisions are being made to continue

updating the Constitution, particularly regarding Articles 14-16. These articles define the relationship between Canadian Mennonite University, Family Life Network (now Square One Media) and MBCI.

### *Policy Updates*

A Safe Place Policy team consisting of MBCM staff and three church representatives reviewed and revised the Safe Place Policy. In 2022 the MBCM staff team also produced orientation videos for churches to use for training. The team and staff continue to update other Safe Place resources and host events for church leadership to gather and collaborate on policy implementation. An updated employment policy for MBCM churches is currently in legal review but will soon be ready for distribution. This policy is designed to support churches as they define and describe terms of employment, salaries, vacations, professional development, termination of employment, grievance, etc. Also, the Pastors and Staff Salary Grid is updated annually to reflect the current cost of living increases. We recognize that the current strain caused by inflation rates will impact the church and personal budgets. May God give us wisdom and resource to sustain us. We provide the salary grid as a guide to care well for our staff and pastors.

### *Leadership Development*

At our most recent Council of Representatives (a gathering of lead pastors and moderators from each church), we asked the following discussion questions:



- What is the current reality of leadership development?
- What might we be encouraged to do today?
- What might we be doing together?

The feedback identified that people seem more likely to sign up for projects than programs, that with changing congregations (people leaving new people arriving) the challenge is how to help orient new people to leadership roles, and people are sometimes reticent to step into the responsibility of leadership possibly especially given recent struggles.

There was encouragement for us to be working towards connecting around best practices from churches, church visits to learn from other churches and their leadership initiatives, networking on specific leadership needs, moderator and board training.

As conference staff, we desire to facilitate collaboration between churches and organizations. We are tracking toward the formation of our leadership development team. In the years ahead, this Leadership Development Team will succeed when leaders are discovered, equipped, and supported. We desire for theirs to be a posture of listening, and foster a learning environment. We anticipate this team will engage with local churches, listening to their needs and promote activities that support leadership development. Further, we are hopeful that collaboration between churches, provincial conferences, the national conference, and partner agencies will

gird this effort to develop leaders that exist in our churches.

We desire to continue building our awareness of our MB history and convictions, our understanding of the spiritual formation and Christian character, and our knowledge and skill for studying the Bible together.

The constitutional revision team has been working on the documents about CMU and MBCI to help define and clarify the relationships with these organizations. At time of reviewing these relationships, these educational institutions allow us to evaluate and re-calibrate how they can fit well with our leadership development vision.

## **Missions**

### *Simonhouse Bible Camp*

Simonhouse Bible Camp has struggled through the pandemic days, first with camps getting shut down, and then last year with camps having the opportunity to reopen, but there wasn't enough staff available to host campers. This camp is an essential ministry to our northern communities. Let me invite you as a church to commit to praying for the camp, pray that God would provide the staff and leadership needed to host camp this year, and as you pray, pay attention to the ways that God may be inviting your church to participate. Even as you read this, stop and pray! Camp is such a fantastic mission opportunity, allowing many young people to experience the love and grace of Jesus in such tangible ways.



### *Multiply*

We are so grateful for Lloyd and Carol and the whole Multiply team for their – ongoing work in our churches. SOAR is coming soon, so I encourage you as a church to consider how you, your youth group, small group or leadership team might participate. This is an opportunity to be immersed for a few days in missions orientation, missions activities, and team debriefing. These opportunities can encourage and train people for ongoing ministry in your local community. Talk to Matt Braun if you are interested in hearing more about this unique local short-term missions experience.

Multiply's Focus Internship is a 9-month program that teaches, trains, and equips eager Christians to walk in step with Jesus as they enter the mission field. The interns spend two months in Winnipeg preparing before they spend seven months in their given mission location. The program finishes with a two-week debrief and discern. This internship program is a great opportunity for MBCM churches to engage in leadership development, mission training, and discernment.

### **Spiritual Health & Theology**

The ongoing work of our Provincial Faith and Life Team in connection with our National Faith and Life team gives attention and resource to this area of the CUSP. My thanks to the members of the PFLT who have spent much prayer, energy, and discernment in this past year thinking and preparing for upcoming events such as the National

Pastors Credentialing Orientation, the recent creation of a Credentialing Policy, work as a team on Credentialing provincial leaders, resourcing and responding to spiritual health and theology needs in our midst.