



*“Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places — firm muscles, strong bones. You’ll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You’ll use the old rubble of past lives to build a new, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You’ll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.”* Isaiah 58:10-12 (The Message)

The last two years have been church-changing times! Our theme for this biennium has been “Be Transformed,” and we are being transformed. COVID-19 has changed society, the world and even how we do church. Demographics and church attendance have shifted. Some folks who were regular attenders prior to the pandemic have not returned. Even a few constituents are questioning whether they have a place at the table in this changing denomination (yes, they do!). But we have also been bathed in the sunlight of Jesus. We have experienced times of deep listening, caring amid pain, and restoration. Here is glimpse of the work of MC USA’s Executive Board (EB) during the past two years.

### Governance

The EB prepared for and led the 2021 Special Session of the Delegate Assembly, while doing board development and examining our bylaws and structures. Delegates approved an EB organizational [resolution](#) to rescind the Membership Guidelines. Delegates passed two other resolutions from the MC USA constituency addressing accessibility and LGBTQ inclusion. The EB also encouraged congregations to engage with a study resolution highlighting the injustices in our criminal legal system.

In response to “A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation,” the EB began the process to create a new constituency group, the [Queer Constituency Council](#).

The Resolutions Committee [responded to 2021 delegate feedback](#) and drafted new guidelines for developing resolutions and church statements. These put less emphasis on outcomes and more emphasis on how we live out our values together.

This spring, in response to shifting demographics and paradigms in the denomination, the EB [voted to forward](#) three proposed organizational resolutions to the 2023 Delegate Assembly. The proposed resolutions will allow the EB to operate more efficiently and effectively by streamlining and clarifying MC USA’s governance structure.

The EB supported the work of the Church Vitality staff on the [Prevention and Accountability Project](#), a comprehensive misconduct guidebook being developed in partnership with Mennonite Church Canada.

### Transformation

The EB sponsored a [denominational survey](#), which revealed that members want denominational leaders to focus on ministries that center Jesus, embrace diversity, and emphasize peacemaking and outreach.

In January 2023, the EB affirmed its relationship with [Christian Churches Together](#), an ecumenical fellowship of U.S. churches. We also mourned the passing of MC USA’s first executive director, [James Schrag](#).

The EB and Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference signed an [amicus brief](#) in March 2023, advocating for the protection of Oak Flat, a sacred Indigenous site in Arizona.

### In other business

The EB created two new staff positions to better serve the denomination: [director of racial/ethnic engagement](#) (Sue Park-Hur) and [director of constituent engagement](#) (Warren Yoder).

[Marty Lehman](#), former MC USA association executive director for Church Operations, was nominated to serve as moderator-elect beginning in July 2023.

*Submitted by Linda Dibble, MC USA moderator,  
May 1, 2023.*