



Ontario
Conference of Mennonite
Brethren Churches

ASSOCIATE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP POLICY

(May 2019)

1 PARTICIPANTS

Churches may apply to the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (ONMB) to become members within this Conference of Churches. Associate Church Membership is an agreed upon status and process where both parties can get to know each other and determine if there is a healthy fit.

Church Plants Church plants will typically engage with the Faith and Life Team (FLT). Upon having met the criteria for membership (as set out in the General Operating By-laws-GOB) the FLT will recommend to the Board of Directors their full membership for ratification at the next ONMB Annual General Meeting (AGM). In certain situations, church plants may be directed into the Associate Church Membership process before becoming full member churches.

Church Adoptions Churches from other denominations or independent ministries may request membership within the ONMB. They will be asked to begin the process by becoming Associate Church Members.

Churches birthed out of a church crisis may request membership within the ONMB but are required to become Associate Church Members of the ONMB before becoming full members.

2 TIME FRAME

Associate Church Membership will usually take between 12-18 months. The transition to full membership is undertaken cooperatively between the applicant church and the FLT. If, after 18 months no formal decision has been reached, the applicant church will be withdrawn from its Associate Church Membership status.

3 JURISDICTIONS

Associate Church Membership of ONMB falls under the jurisdiction of the FLT and the Executive Director who are accountable to the Board of Directors. Any actions relative to granting or removing Associate Church Membership will be undertaken at the FLT's discretion. Associate Church Membership does not require ONMB membership ratification, and thus may be initiated or dissolved at any time.

Final decision for full membership into the ONMB will be made by the Board of Directors at the request of the Executive Director and FLT. At the next available AGM this new member church will be introduced to the Convention for formal ratification. (see Article 6.2 & 17, GOB)

4 PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

Churches who become Associate Church Members are invited to attend and participate in all ONMB events and activities. Full access to seminars, workshops, network activities, pastoral retreats, camping programs and other activities are available to them. It is encouraged that during this stage leaders of these churches begin the credentialing process including the Pastor Credentialing Orientation.

Associate Church Members will be able to send observers to all AGM's and other official meetings of the Conference but are granted official voting status only after the church has attained full ONMB Membership.

5 EXPECTATIONS

Associate Church Members are requested to:

- uphold the spirit of the MB Confession of Faith
- submit to the governance of the Conference which is led by the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and the Faith and Life Team.
- attend and participate in key Conference events, including the AGM and pastoral retreats

Prior to Full Membership it will be expected that:

- There has been a careful review of the MB Confession of Faith and that the leaders agree to support and teach its theological convictions
- Pastoral staff (half time or greater) be credentialed and attend a Pastors Credentialing Orientation
- There is a willingness to abide by the General Operating By-laws of the ONMB and its Board of Directors

- Establish and begin a financial commitment to support and partner in the work and mission of the ONMB (currently recommending 5% of a church budget to support ONMB and CCMBC)
- The financials of the church have been reviewed and they are in good standing with the federal government and registered charities commission
- The church has liability insurance in place

6 BENEFITS

Paid pastoral staff may access the benefit program of CCMBC, including medical, dental, Life Insurance, LTD and Pension. The church may also access the payroll services of CCMBC for paid pastoral staff.

7 CONTRACTS

An Associate Church Members may choose to develop a ministry agreement or contract for purposes of adjusting, or adding distinctive elements to, this standard agreement. In such cases, the ministry agreement or contract needs to be approved by the Faith and Life Team.

If the Associate Church Member receives financial support from ONMB, a contract is required to clearly outline the expectations terms and conditions of such funding.

8 ASSOCIATE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DISSOLUTION

During the term of the Associate Church Membership a church may withdraw as long as they do not violate any contractual agreements.

The Faith and Life Team, acting on behalf of the Board of Directors, may choose to dissolve a church's Associate Church Membership as long as in doing so ONMB does not violate any contractual agreements.

If Associate Church Membership is dissolved while in good standing, the credentials of the pastoral staff may be maintained until they are transitioned to another credentialing body, for a period of six months to one year.

If the church is not in good standing at the time of Associate Church Membership dissolution (eg. through pastoral moral failure, theological insubordination or financial insubordination) the pastoral credentials will be removed immediately by the FLT.