

## A Community Called to Build:

### Renewing Our Shared Vision

- Anthony G. Siegrist



The story of how the tabernacle is built is a fascinating part of the Torah (Exodus 25 – 40).

The details about the design of the space and the various dimensions for the furniture can be a bit overwhelming. The big story, though, is profound. A group of migrants build a mobile worship space in the wilderness. Why? How?

When I speak with churches about leadership, I often reference Exodus 31, where we read about two people named Oholiab and Bezalel. These two play a crucial role in Israel's worship life, but they are not priests, judges, or prophets. They are builders or artisans. They are "filled with the Spirit of God" to craft a space of worship and divine presence. An obvious lesson for church leaders who are not priests or pastors is that your ministry matters and God's Spirit can be with you.

A few chapters earlier in Exodus (chapter 25) we learn that the tabernacle was built with material contributed by the entire community. God said, "Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering; from all whose hearts prompt them to give . . . ." The tabernacle, a space of worship and divine presence among the

people, was built with generosity. My hunch is that the experience of your congregation reflects that original heartfelt worship offering. Congregational ministry and our shared MCEC ministry depend on this ancient form of worship. Yes, the worship life of a community involves music, preaching and ritual—but it also involves the work of artists and technicians and it depends on the abiding generosity of the entire community.

This document contains examples of our shared ministry. I hope that you notice the theme of collaboration. Like the building of the tabernacle, through generosity and the presence of God's Spirit, we can do things together that couldn't happen otherwise.

In this same spirit I want to let you know that in the months to come MCEC will be continuing the work of discernment begun at our annual gathering. At this stage our goal is to listen to congregations. What should we be doing together? Within the next couple of months your congregation will be receiving a letter asking not only for continued financial support, but also for prayerful consideration of what our shared

*The worship life of a community involves music, preaching and ritual—but it also involves the work of artists and technicians and it depends on the abiding generosity of the entire community.*

priorities should be for the next several years. Our intent is to sharpen and renew MCEC's vision and priorities, and that can only happen as we work together and listen to God's Spirit.

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# 2026-27 Approved Spending Plan Summary

Before we provide a closer look at the April 30, 2026 financial results, the 2026-27 Approved Spending Plan is shown here.

This plan follows on the organizational restructuring that was operationalized in the 2025-26 fiscal year. It includes significantly reduced occupancy expenses following a 57% reduction in the office footprint last November, continued partnership support and ongoing support for provisional congregations.

On the revenue side we have planned for a loss of interest income pertaining to the MCCO loan repayment and relative stability from other sources. Church Giving continues to be our most significant source of financial support, and we were so pleased to report a year-over-year increase in this area last year.

The projected deficit in this year's spending plan is relatively small. In fact, it is 83% lower than the deficit of two years ago. We are focused on getting MCEC to a balanced spending plan with no deficit. We gratefully welcome your participation in our shared ministry!

2026-27 APPROVED SPENDING PLAN	
<b>REVENUE</b>	
<i>Individual and Estate Donations MCEC</i>	\$140,000
<i>Individual Donations (MC Canada)</i>	\$25,000
<i>Church Giving</i>	\$1,400,000
<i>Relational Witness Giving</i>	\$200,000
<i>MC Canada Relational Witness - Designated</i>	(\$200,000)
<i>Interest</i>	\$6,000
<b>Core Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,571,000</b>
<i>other income</i>	\$109,980
<i>fund transfers</i>	\$327,921
<b>Additional Revenue</b>	<b>437,901</b>
<b>Total Operating Fund Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,008,901</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>	
<i>includes program, partner and salary expense</i>	
<b>Total Operating Fund Expense</b>	<b>\$2,058,429</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(49,528)</b>
<i>Transfers from Faithful Legacy Fund</i>	\$49,528
<b>Net Operating Deficit</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## Your Support Makes A Difference

We give thanks to God for the generosity already shown across our community—and we warmly invite every MCEC congregation to take part in this shared calling.

Your financial support plays a vital role in sustaining, strengthening and growing ministry.

We invite your church to prayerfully consider how you might give generously in the year ahead.

This is an opportunity to invest in what God is doing among us—as we move forward together in faith, purpose and generosity.

Donate  
[mcec.ca/giving](https://mcec.ca/giving)



# April 30, 2026 Financial Results

The April 30, 2026 financial results (actuals) are shown in comparison with what was expected (budgeted). Revenues came in a little lower than expected, but expenses were lower than budgeted. Together this provided better than anticipated overall results which puts us on a good path.

The recent Annual Church Gathering brought encouraging news. Along with introducing a new format that included equipping workshops, MCEC intentionally focused on reducing costs through careful planning. As a result, expenses dropped significantly—from nearly \$60,000 in 2024 to under \$20,000 in 2026—coming in well below the Spending Plan. A good news story!

We express our sincere gratitude to all congregations for their gifts during this first quarter. Thank you for walking with us as together we energize congregations, encourage leaders and embody God’s reconciliation.

April 30, 2026 FINANCIAL RESULTS		
	FYE27 YTD ACTUALS	FYE27 YTD BUDGET
<b>REVENUE</b>		
<i>Individual and Estate Donations MCEC</i>	\$24,988	\$20,400
<i>Individual Donations (MC Canada)</i>	\$505	\$6,250
<i>Church Giving</i>	\$287,057	\$311,531
<i>Relational Witness Giving</i>	\$34,058	\$50,000
	(\$34,058)	(\$50,000)
<i>Interest</i>	\$2,693	\$1,500
<b>Core Revenue</b>	<b>\$315,242</b>	<b>\$339,681</b>
<i>other income</i>	\$55,706	\$46,409
<i>fund transfers</i>	\$82,605	\$84,605
<b>Additional Revenue</b>	<b>\$138,311</b>	<b>\$131,041</b>
<b>Total Revenues into Operating Fund</b>	<b>\$453,553</b>	<b>\$470,695</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>		
<i>includes program, partner and salary expense</i>		
<b>Total Operating Fund Expense</b>	<b>\$525,611</b>	<b>\$562,095</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(72,058)</b>	<b>(\$91,400)</b>
<i>Transfers from Faithful Legacy Fund</i>	\$12,382	\$12,382
<b>Net Operating Deficit to date</b>	<b>(\$59,676)</b>	<b>(\$79,018)</b>

## Celebrating Steinmann Mennonite Church Generous Hosts of Our Annual Church Gathering

We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Steinmann Mennonite Church for providing such a beautiful space and for their gracious, supportive assistance as we prepared for and hosted the 2026 Annual Church Gathering. Their care and hospitality helped create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for everyone who attended.

We are thankful as well for the opportunity to build on the efficiencies we discovered this year and anticipate carrying these forward into future Annual Church Gatherings. It is our hope that these improvements will also enable us to offer increased support in the years ahead, including subsidies for those traveling from a distance.



Steinmann Mennonite Church Hospitality Team - Your care and kindness made all the difference. Thank You!

# MCEC Annual Church Gathering



*Left:* Anthony Siegrist, MCEC Executive Minister, reminds us that we are built together into a dwelling place for God.



*Right:* Jean-Claude Nkundwa, Regional Minister, leads a safe church workshop.



*Left:* MCEC Congregational Ministries Team close our day in worship.



*Right:* An energizing day of connections, learning and thoughtful discernment among new and familiar friends.

## MCEC Welcomes Two New Staff

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) is pleased to welcome Christina Cox as Communications Assistant and Jean Claude Nkundwa as Regional Minister for Ottawa and Quebec.

Jean Claude Nkundwa brings more than fifteen years of experience in peace-building, ministry, and cross-cultural engagement to his new role as Regional Minister. "I believe God has called me to build bridges and foster reconciliation," he shares. Jean Claude has served with organizations including Mennonite Central Committee, Tearfund UK, and the Burundi National Council of Churches, supporting church leaders in diverse contexts.

"Jean Claude's leadership in peace-building and his heart for intercultural ministry will strengthen our congregations," says Executive



*Jean Claude Nkundwa and Christina Cox join the MCEC team.*

Minister Anthony Siegrist. Fluent in four languages and deeply grounded in theology and conflict transformation, he will support pastors and congregations through encouragement, resourcing, and relationship-building.

Christina Cox joins MCEC with a passion for storytelling and a deep appreciation for the church's shared life. "I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to join MCEC in this role," she says. "MCEC has been an important part of my faith journey,

and I'm excited to help share the stories of our congregations and leaders." In her role, Christina will craft engaging content, guide social media presence, and help communicate MCEC's mission in authentic and meaningful ways.

"Her creative eye and thoughtful approach to communications will enrich how we share our story," says Lisa Williams, Communications Director. Christina brings experience from the private sector in communications and administration within complex environments, along with strong organizational and relational skills.

Together, Christina and Jean Claude bring gifts that will help MCEC continue to energize congregations, encourage leaders, and embody God's reconciling work across our region.



## MCEC and TiW Awarded Grant to Strengthen Worship Resourcing for Diaspora Congregations

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) and Together in Worship (TiW) have been awarded a \$25,000 USD Vital Worship Grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. This significant investment will support new initiatives to better resource Anabaptist congregations, especially those who worship in languages other than English, ensuring that Anabaptist worship materials reflect the growing cultural diversity within our church body.

“As diaspora congregations learn about Anabaptist faith, I hope these resources will be a bridge—showing that even when worship styles or approaches differ, they can still find meaningful connection here,” says Yoel Masyawong, MCEC Regional Minister and representative on this project. “My hope is that these resources will be adapted and integrated in ways that support their unique needs.”

Launched in 2020, Together in Worship (TiW) is an online collection of free Anabaptist worship resources. It is a growing library of songs, prayers, litanies and teaching tools

shaped by the gifts and voices of many people from across our Mennonite tradition. TiW exists to support congregations in planning and leading worship that is grounded, creative and rooted in a global Anabaptist story.

Through this partnership, MCEC and TiW aim to:

- Identify, curate and make available resources that affirm a greater diversity of worship expressions within MCEC
- Collaborate directly with diaspora worship leaders and pastors
- Strengthen intercultural understandings within the wider MCEC community
- Highlight the diverse expressions of worship within our Mennonite tradition
- Contribute to a priority identified by our nationwide church, MC Canada.

*“As diaspora congregations learn about Anabaptist faith, I hope these resources will be a bridge.”*

*- Yoel Masyawong*

“We are excited to partner with Together in Worship in ways that bring fresh energy to congregational worship,” says Anthony Siegrist, MCEC Executive Minister. “These resources have the potential to strengthen and inspire our communities across many cultures and languages, and we look forward to seeing that impact unfold.”

This project is made possible through a Vital Worship Grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, Michigan, with funds provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. With this support, MCEC continues its commitment to strengthening worship in all congregations across our diverse community.

# Building Belonging Together: A Conversation with Pablo Kim

Over forty pastors and leaders from across MCEC gathered at 50 Kent on April 24, 2026 for a rich conversation with Pablo Kim, reflecting together on Building Mennonite Belonging: Toward an Intercultural Church—also the title of Pablo’s book.

Pablo, an ordained MCEC pastor, reminded us that the Spirit’s own signature is on the biblical vision of interculturality. He noted that this vision also rises from the “ferment of Mennonite principles and best practices.” Breaking bread and baptism, radical hospitality and the shared discernment in community have long shaped us as Anabaptists.

Belonging and becoming, he said, are key to nurturing an intercultural church. “We need both – and they are not the same.” Belonging means making room so people are welcomed not as guests but as family. Becoming is the intentional work of a community shaping and reshaping itself through shared commitment and relationship. “Belonging without becoming is inclusion without transformation, and becoming without belonging is change without relational depth.” He reminded us that the church is called to love across our deepest differences.

A time of questions and conversations followed. Some were eager to move deeper toward practical ways of living out these truths. “What are some guiding questions to help



*Pablo Kim facilitates a conversation on Building Mennonite Belonging*

*“Belonging without becoming is inclusion without transformation, and becoming without belonging is change without relational depth.”*

our congregations move in this direction?” one pastor asked.

“Ah!” Pablo replied with a smile. “That’s my third book coming out in November!” He emphasized that each context is different and to always ask “Why?” and “Are we ready to move forward?”

As the conversation wrapped up, there was a shared sense of energy in the room. Pastors expressed gratitude for both the challenge and encouragement, trusting that the Spirit continues to lead us toward a church where every person can truly belong and become.



## At A Glance

*Anthony's Ordination*

### Celebrating Anthony Siegrist's Ordination

Anthony Siegrist, MCEC Executive Minister, was ordained on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at the MCEC Intercultural Worship Gathering.

Anthony reflected, “Experience in ministry, conversations with church leaders, prayer, study, the example of others and the gentle persistence of God’s Spirit all brought me here.”

### MCEC Small Church Theology Workshop



Most Canadian churches are small. MCEC held an online workshop with Mykayla Turner, where participants gathered to explore from

an Anabaptist perspective how small churches are a gift to the wider Church.

### Caring for the Creation: What's the Church to Do?

MCEC and A Rocha held an inspiring and informative ecumenical idea exchange to explore how Christian communities and their leaders can be involved with creation care as way of serving God and their neighbour.

*Churches Caring for Creation Panel*



# From Classroom to Congregation: AMBS Journey Program Strengthens Ministry in MCEC

For Maciel Arias Hernandez, the Journey Program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary began as an invitation—an invitation to listen for God’s calling, deepen her theological understanding and grow in her capacity to serve her congregation, Toronto Mennonite New Life Church.

“I love education,” Maciel says simply. “When you learn something meaningful, you want to share it with the people you love.”

Maciel entered the program in 2022. At the time, her church was navigating life without a paid pastor, relying instead on shared leadership, and, as Maciel puts it, “God’s grace.” She was balancing significant responsibilities: working as a nurse, caring for her family, and living through the ongoing disruptions of a pandemic. She also experienced profound personal loss.

She reflects, “I don’t know how I did it, but God is great and gave me strength.”

Rather than adding pressure, the Journey Program met Maciel in the midst of real life. She found that what she learned in the classroom resonated with what was happening in the world and her own experience.

The impact of her studies quickly extended into congregational life. Courses in biblical interpretation equipped her to read Scripture more carefully and contextually—asking what a passage meant in its original setting and how to faithfully “cross the bridge” into today’s world. Now, she is preparing to lead a Bible study in her congregation, where anticipation is already growing. “It’s amazing how people respond,” she says. “They’re so excited to start.”

The program has also strengthened her confidence. Grounded in Anabaptist theology, history and practice, Maciel feels better equipped to welcome others and nurture faith across generations. Children and youth are joining Bible studies alongside adults, bringing curiosity, energy and a shared desire to follow Jesus in

*“When you learn something meaningful, you want to share it with the people you love.”*



*Maciel Arias Hernandez*

community. “They are eager to learn about everything I’ve learned,” she reflects.

Since graduating, Maciel has continued to share what she has learned within her congregation. She actively encourages others to consider the Journey Program, confident in its ability to offer both depth and accessibility.

Her story is one example of how partnerships between MCEC and institutions like AMBS strengthen the church. When leaders are equipped in context, while remaining rooted in their communities, the whole body is built up—for ministry, for witness, and for the work God continues to do among us.

*AMBS Journey participants, mentors, instructors, program leaders and sponsoring conference leaders at a Weekend Learning Event at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Michigan, in September 2024.*



# We're Here for You: The MCEC Team

As a regional church, we come together to energize congregations in worship, discipleship and mission; encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation and embody God's reconciling ministry for all creation. We are here to walk alongside and support you in ministry.

## Congregational Ministries Team



*Marilyn Rudy-Froese, Leadership Minister*, leads the Congregational Ministries Team. She nurtures leaders and pastors, walking alongside congregations through seasons of growth, transition and renewal.



*Fanosie Legesse, Intercultural Minister*, leads the Congregational Ministries Team. He invites us to grow in knowing and understanding each other's cultures as we grow into an intercultural church.



*Yoel Masyawong - Regional Minister (Ontario East)* – Yoel supports pastors & congregational leaders in church leadership, resourcing, intercultural competency & church planting.



*Jean Claude Nkundwa, Pasteur régional (Ottawa & Quebec)* – Michel supports pastors and leaders in church leadership, resourcing, intercultural competency and church planting.



*Cathrin van Sintern-Dick, Regional Minister (Ontario West)* – Cathrin supports pastors and congregational leaders in church leadership, resourcing, intercultural competency and church planting.

## Operations Team



*Laurie Castello, Operations and Finance Director* – Laurie gives financial oversight, managing budgeting and operational efficiency to ensure compliance, making the most of every resource.



*Lisa Williams, Communications Director* – Lisa manages communications, crafting engaging content for diverse audiences. She advances a sense of community and shared purpose.



*Ellen Kim, Office Administrator* – Ellen keeps the office running seamlessly, providing support to the team so MCEC operates efficiently, with a welcoming touch that fosters collaboration.



*Sharon Schwartztruber, Accountant* – Sharon manages financial records, ensures compliance with regulations and assists in financial reporting with precision and care.



*Christina Cox, Communications Assistant* – Christina brings to life compelling stories and digital content, leads MCEC's social media and cultivates meaningful connections across MCEC.

## CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES & OPERATIONS



*Anthony Siegrist, Executive Minister* – Anthony provides thoughtful leadership and in MCEC. He nurtures our vision and values, fostering growth and strengthening the impact of our shared ministry.



*Micah Peters Unrau, Church Engagement Associate* – Micah connects congregations, speaks in churches and nurtures vibrant expressions of Christian community and shared ministry.



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