



Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA

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We, the Ministry Credentialing Team (MCT) of IMMC, are writing to apologize to Karl Shelly and to the congregation where he serves, Assembly Mennonite Church (AMC) in Goshen, Indiana.

In the spring of 2014, Karl received a “statement of charge” from our conference, alerting him that his credential would be reviewed. The “charge” that initiated the review was officiating at a same-sex ceremony. Karl had acted on behalf of and with the support of his congregation, an act that he and AMC had considered with much care, following years of prayer, study, conversations, and waiting. They chose this action from a conviction and sense of call that God was asking them to include all persons, knowing this action was at variance with the conference and denomination.

During the next nine months, while we reviewed this matter, Karl’s credential review was regularly and publicly announced, in print and at gatherings. We did not ask Karl how he and AMC came to their sense of conviction and call. We talked about Karl rather than with Karl. The repeated accusation separated “us” (IMMC and MCT) from “them” (Karl and AMC).

We are sorry for the ways that we harmed Karl. Our actions worked to shame him and his congregation, causing and adding pain to Karl and to those in his congregation already hurting.

Yet, our harm did not thwart God’s Spirit! Karl continued to serve his congregation, listening for the Spirit and faithfully following. For that, we celebrate Karl! We hold deep respect and admiration for his persistent faith as he followed Jesus. We are humbled by the grace Karl and AMC extended to us even as we humiliated and shamed them.

We thank God for Karl. For his call to ministry, and for his faithful ministry in our community, conference, and denomination. May the Spirit of God continue to be Karl’s collaborator as he pastors God’s beloved, Assembly Mennonite Church.

Ministry Credentialing Team:

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