

Annual Report for the year 2023

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service 53rd Annual Meeting
Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m. EST by Zoom

1. Agenda for the 2023 Annual Meeting
2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting
3. Report from the Board Chair
4. Report from the Publisher
5. Board Member and Staff List
6. Auditor's Report
7. Audited Financial Statements

The 53rd Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 7:15 pm – 7:30 pm EST by Zoom

Agenda

1. List of members of the corporation
2. Items requiring action by CMPS members:
 - a) Approval of minutes from 2023 annual meeting
 - b) Acceptance of 2023 financial statements
 - c) Appointment of auditor for 2024
 - d) Elections of CMPS directors
3. Other business and discussion
4. Adjournment

The CMPS 2023 Annual Report contains board, editorial and circulation reports as well as audited financial statements for 2023.

**The 52nd Annual Meeting of
Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service**
Saturday, May 13, 2023, 4:00 pm – 4:15 pm PDT
by web conference

MINUTES

1. List of members of the corporation
 - a) Annika Krause, MC Canada
 - b) Karen Heese, MCEC
 - c) Art Koop, MC Alberta
 - d) Aaron Penner, MC Canada
 - e) Donna Schulz, MC Canada
 - f) Alex Tiessen, MC Saskatchewan

2. Items requiring action by CMPS members:
 - a) Approval of minutes from 2022 annual meeting
Alex Tiessen moved to accept, Donna Schulz seconded, approved unanimously.
 - b) Acceptance of 2022 financial statements
Aaron Penner moved to accept, Alex Tiessen seconded, approved unanimously.
 - c) Appointment of the auditor for 2023
Aaron Penner moved to continue with BDO as the auditor for 2023. Seconded by Donna Schulz. Accepted unanimously.
 - d) Elections of CMPS directors – none

3. Other business and discussion – none

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Annika Krause

Chairperson's Report

A year ago, this magazine was about to embark on several months of strategic revisioning. We had some basic ideas of what that might involve for *Canadian Mennonite* but were without a basic map of where we could go.

As a Strategic Working Group, several board, staff and denominational executive members reflected on *Canadian Mennonite's* past and then dreamed up a map for a more thriving publication.

We needed to chart a new course both because of the realities of magazine publishing in the 21st century, but also because the denomination and technology has changed substantially since the first issue of the *Mennonite Reporter* was mailed in 1971.

In examining our mission statement: "*To educate, inspire, inform and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective,*" the working group also wondered how the organization could live this better.

Surveys were drafted and redrafted, over 350 of you participated. Thank you for your valuable words and affirmations. It is always a pleasure to hear what is being done well and it is also a welcomed challenge to hear what can be done better.

At the same time, personal interviews were conducted with people we thought would have deep insights into the organization by virtue of their own experiences in business or the denomination. These "wise elders" shone a light on many aspects of the organization. We wrestled with our new knowledge.

The Strategic Working Group felt strongly about the need for a printed magazine to continue. In business terms, that is our core product. By switching to a monthly publication cycle, staff will be able to write more and better-quality content while also growing digital and new initiatives.

Today, for many in the Mennonite faith tradition, sewing quilts for relief organizations or baking Paska is not part of their culture. As a board we see *Canadian Mennonite* as the uniting voice for all whether it was your ancestors who arrived in this country by steamboat, or horseback, or *you* who have arrived recently by plane. A faith group has many intangibles and a physical magazine is one of the tangible ways a national church can remain connected. Each mailed copy a reminder that we are more than our different histories or current circumstances.

The pages of *Canadian Mennonite* also need to be a place where a plurality is represented. We envision an organization that nurtures new voices and talents within the Church and are looking forward to opportunities provided by the introduction of our Residency Program.

As an organization we are faithfully stepping into new waters and I must acknowledge the many hands who willingly respond with financial support when asked to do so. Your new and continued donations allow this organization's operations to remain financially positive. Thank you.

This past year CMPS renegotiated the Every Home Plan for three years with each regional conference that makes up MC Canada. The plan ensures anyone attending an MC Canada congregation will be connected to the broader church through their subscription. We thank the regional churches for their covenanted support and for sharing in the vision Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) has for its future.

The ongoing support of our many advertisers is similarly important. Our readers are united by values of peace, justice and mutuality, and companies who share these beliefs make their positions known through

their advertisements. Similarly, the ongoing support of the Canadian Periodical Fund ensures fiscal stability. We are thankful for the continued renewal of this grant.

As a board we are thankful for Tobi Thiessen, Publisher, whose steady hand on the tiller has guided CMPS through choppy waters even as we work to redraw the map she started with.

Will Braun, Editor, has taken on his role with great zeal. During Will's hiring process I asked one of his references what CM would look like a few years down the line with him in the Editor's position: "a renewed place of conversation." It's so good to see exactly that happening on and around our pages.

It takes the hard work of many talented people to put out a magazine. Tobi and Will work alongside a great staff of creatives. Without their effort and heart, *Canadian Mennonite* would not win the awards that it does and would not so ably serve its readers.

This is also an exciting era to be on the board, and I am thankful for the wise counsel of every member who sits on the board. The honest and respect filled conversations are plenty and we manage to sneak in a few laughs along the way. It is a joy to serve alongside you.

As an organization Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service sits at a crossroads but I am encouraged that we are currently in the best possible position to continue supporting the work of the Church and its various ministries. Onwards.

—*Kathryn Lymburner, Chairperson*
Stouffville, ON

Publisher's report

Canadian Mennonite (CM) tells the story of the church, in partnership with the Churches of Mennonite Church Canada.

In 2023, CMPS developed a three-year operational plan and renewed our publishing partner covenant with Mennonite Church Canada and the regional churches. The agreement includes continuing to produce a print magazine and launching new initiatives that will further engage Mennonites across Canada. We want to connect with, and give voice to, as broad a cross-section of the church as possible. Please see the Vision 2023 to 2026 document on the following page.

With your help, we are strengthening the faith community. We are making space for people with wide-ranging views to speak and to listen. We do so in the spirit of Hebrews 10:24, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, to build up the Kingdom of God. Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry to tell the church story.

Circulation and readership

In 2023, CM published 26 issues (22 print and 4 digital-only). Approximately 8,500 households subscribed to the magazine, which they received by mail or email. Online, approximately 16,000 people per month read articles on our website. We hosted three CM Events, online sessions where CM moderates a conversation between two or three panelists over a current issue. The most popular event of 2023 was about medical assistance in dying. Videos of past events are available on the website.

Finances

CM closed the year with a small surplus.

Fundraising in 2023 was successful, with \$182,000 in donations compared to \$173,000 the year prior. The average gift was \$123 but there were two large gifts: \$20,000 from a donor in January and \$17,000 from the First Mennonite Church Kelowna legacy fund in December. The Kelowna church sold their building and donated part of the proceeds to CM.

Despite strong fundraising results, total revenue was \$20,000 below budget. Advertising revenue fell to \$93,500 (\$11,000 below forecast) and, at year-end, CM had not received a decision on our application to the federal Canada Periodical Fund Business Innovation (CPF-BI) grant.

At the same time, expenses were below forecast for several reasons, the largest of which is that a planned website redevelopment project was moved to 2024.

In total, CM recorded revenue of \$756,700 against expenses of \$771,900, creating a deficit of \$15,200. Against that deficit, we add back the non-cash amortization expense, and bring in planned transfers from the Professional Development and Equipment Funds. In the end, CM recorded a surplus of \$8,100.

Facilities and equipment

CMPS owns a 1551 square foot unit at 490 Dutton Drive. Annual condominium fees cover snow removal and exterior maintenance. CMPS is responsible for interior maintenance, including heating, cooling and plumbing.

Most staff members work remotely from their homes across Canada. Part-time staff that live in the Waterloo area work from home or at the office, at their convenience.

—Tobi Thiessen, Publisher
Waterloo, ON

Vision 2023 to 2026

Using multiple media and an independent journalistic lens, *Canadian Mennonite* amplifies the stories of the church. With regular, direct access to 8,500 MC Canada households and others online, we seek to nurture a nationwide sense of shared belonging. Through stories, news and ideas, we want people to feel connected to the beautiful broader faith community.

We're eager to experiment and evolve while faithfully serving committed, long-time readers. We invite your continued support as we revamp the magazine and draw out the gifts of a new generation.

MennoCreative: empowering new voices

CM feels called to experiment with new ways to tell the church story. We want to engage new audiences and give voice to as broad a cross-section of the church as possible.

To achieve this, we are developing the MennoCreative initiative. We will offer creative next-generation church folk 6- to 18-month residencies to experiment with new media according to their own gifts and interests. They can tell Anabaptist stories and examine issues through investigative journalism, podcasting, photojournalism, documentary film, graphic design or some combination of these. Their work invigorate CM, broaden the way we communicate, and generate new ways to connect people and churches across the country. CM will begin accepting MennoCreative proposals by fall 2024, scaling up to support 2 to 3 projects per year by 2026.

CM will continue to hire student interns to encourage their skills in service of the church. Internships may focus on writing, design, social media, or other communications ventures. We will also build partnerships with other church organizations (for example, CMU and podcasting; Grebel and writers' residencies; MC Canada Company of 1000 reserve fund; other) to multiply the benefits of these efforts.

We will continue to host online CM Events, where we moderate a panel discussion on contentious issues connected to faith and discipleship.

Monthly magazine: retaining news focus, honouring existing readers

Starting in Spring 2024, *Canadian Mennonite* will be published 12 times per year under the Every Home Plan with the churches of MC Canada. This allows church attendees to receive the magazine at home if they desire and ensures no one is required to have internet service to stay informed and connected.

CM will redesign the magazine in early 2024, and the monthly magazine would include four special issues per year, with articles solicited around specific topics. The current mix of features, news articles, columns, letters and Milestones announcements would continue. New content would be integrated from MennoCreative projects.

Website: share our story with the world

With content generated by MennoCreative and the magazine, the CM website will be a digital hub for anyone searching for information about Mennonites in Canada. A free email sign-up from the website will let church insiders and interested outsiders stay informed and engaged in conversations about faith.

Mission

With the support of Mennonite Church Canada and the regional churches, our mission is to educate, inspire, inform and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. Together, we are building a sense of community and shared identity in our denomination. Through the internet, we are also presenting a strong witness to the world.

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service
Board of Directors as of Dec. 31, 2023**

Representing	Term
Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service	
Lois Epp, Calgary, AB	2021 – 2024, third term
Kathryn Lymburner, Stouffville, ON	2022 – 2025, second term
[vacant position]	
Mennonite Church Canada	
Annika Krause, Montreal, QC	2021– 2024, second term
Tim Miller Dyck, Baden, ON	2023 – 2026, first term
Aaron Penner, Winnipeg, MB	2022 – 2025, second term
Donna Schulz, Rosthern, SK	2023 – 2026, first term
Mennonite Church British Columbia	
Mary Barg, Chilliwack, BC	2023 – 2026, first term
Mennonite Church Alberta	
Arthur Koop, Edson, AB	2023 – 2026, third term
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan	
Alex Tiessen, Rosthern, SK	2022 – 2025, first term
Mennonite Church Manitoba	
Brenda Suderman, Winnipeg, MB	2023 – 2026, first term
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada	
Karen Heese, Markham, ON	2022 – 2025, first term

Staff as of Dec. 31, 2023

Head Office	Started	FTE
Graham Aberdein, Finance	2021	30%
Lorna Aberdein, Circulation/Donations/Office	2022	60%
Betty Avery, Graphic Designer (on mat. leave)	2017	20%
Anne Boese, Graphic Designer (contract)	2023	50%
Will Braun, Editor	2022	100%
Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant	2001	40%
Aaron Epp, Associate Editor	2019	100%
Ben Thiessen, Advertising representative	2022	20%
Tobi Thiessen, Publisher	2017	60%
Regional Correspondents		
Alberta and Saskatchewan: Emily Summach	2021	20%
British Columbia: Amy Rinner Waddell	2005	20%
Eastern Canada and social media: Madalene Arias	2024	60%

5.8 FTE