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Dear Central District Conference,

After three years of discernment with Virginia Mennonite Conference regarding the status of LGBTQ people in our congregation, we have decided to request to transfer our congregational membership from VMC to CDC.

When a small group from Raleigh Mennonite Church started our congregation in Chapel Hill in 2002, we sought affiliation with VMC because it was our regional conference and because RMC was already a member of VMC. Although our congregation is more willing than VMC to recognize LGBTQ people as fully part of our church, we had decided to remain part of our conference in a posture of forbearance. We began to reconsider our affiliation with VMC when our conference leaders suspended our pastor's ordination without review after he officiated the marriage of Kate Dembinski and Kathryn Flynn in May 2016. As of February 2017, conference leaders have not met with him as part of their review of his ministerial credentials.

Our Mennonite identity is essential to the life of our congregation. We belong as members of Mennonite Church USA. Therefore we have chosen to request to transfer our congregational membership to another conference instead of withdrawing from our denomination. As we considered various options for conference membership, we were impressed that the polity of CDC makes room for congregations to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, even when that Spirit leads us into a theological commitment regarding LGBTQ people that is at variance with our Mennonite Confession of Faith.

We know that there is still much for us to learn about CDC, and that there is much CDC might want to know about our congregation. We look forward to engaging in the process of joining you so that we together seek to live out the gospel, bearing witness to Christ's love for the world.

Best regards,

Rebecca Rich
Moderator, Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship