



Mennonite Church USA is made up of more than 100,000 members in about 900 congregations, 21 area conferences, various constituent groups and churchwide agencies.

Together, we are inspired by **Vision: Healing and Hope:** *God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.*

To carry out this vision, we pursue the following purpose: *Joining in God's activity in the world, we develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures.* We believe that congregations are the primary expression of God's work in the world. Together with area conferences and churchwide agencies, the national conference nurtures the life and ministry of congregations by providing:

- a place of **identity and belonging** in interdependence with other congregations.
- **education, resources and encouragement** for pastors and congregational leaders.
- means for calling, training and sustaining **leaders**.
- avenues for **mutual discernment and witness** beyond ourselves.

As part of the Anabaptist world, Mennonite Church USA enjoys unprecedented favor in the eyes of our world community. Many other Christians are looking to us for examples of ways to live in a post-Christendom society. Our emphasis on discipleship and Spirit-led Christian living helps people envision the practical implications of the gospel. Our commitment to relief and development attracts many people outside our church to support our missional causes. And our focus on peace and justice attracts many to consider peaceful alternatives to violence.

Over the past few years, Mennonite Church USA leaders have been cultivating a forward-looking, missional approach to church life. We have developed a missional vision and purposeful plan to draw all parts of the church to work toward common goals. You can find the statement online at [www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org).

Mennonite Church USA has adopted seven priorities to guide our ministry across all parts of the church. The first three priorities express the core of congregational life from an Anabaptist perspective. The other four priorities identify areas for particular emphasis over the next 10 years, particularly through area conferences, churchwide agencies and the national conference.

1. **Christian formation.** This priority reflects the centrality of Jesus Christ in the church. Missional Mennonite congregations call people to Christian commitment, disciple them in the way of Christ, teach them to embrace the scriptures, help them develop Christian identity from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective, and cultivate their vocational calling.
2. **Christian community.** This priority reflects the communal, organic nature of the body of Christ. Missional congregations worship together, extend hospitality, practice scriptural discernment, cultivate Christ-centered unity, and learn to agree and disagree in love.
3. **Holistic Christian witness.** This priority reflects the winsome nature of the church's witness. Missional churches share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, birthing new communities of faith. They reflect God's coming reign by striving for peace and justice.
4. **Stewardship.** This priority reflects our commitment to surrender all that we have for the sake of God's reign. Missional churches cultivate whole-life stewardship, care for creation, and practice mutual aid.
5. **Leadership development.** This priority reflects our commitment to develop leaders at all levels of the church. Missional churches help all of their members reach their potential as they follow God's call.
6. **Undoing racism and advancing intercultural transformation.** This priority reflects our intent to dismantle individual and systemic racism in our church, develop intercultural competence, heal racial divisions, and value all the gifts of God's diverse people.
7. **Church-to-church relationships.** This priority reflects our desire to give and receive gifts in the broader body of Christ, working toward Christian unity as a witness to the world. We cultivate a particularly close relationship with Mennonite Church Canada since we share a common history, confession of faith, and ministerial polity, and many joint ministry ventures.

We encourage every area conference to think of ways to advance at least several of these priorities over the next few years. As you move that direction, we will find ways to share your insights and experience with the rest of the church. In this way, we can grow together in God's call.

Ervin R. Stutzman, executive director, Mennonite Church USA