

January 15, 2009

Mennonite Church USA congregations

Greetings in the name of Jesus,

We look forward to Mennonite Church USA congregations gathering together for the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009 in Columbus, Ohio, June 30-July 5, 2009. Please mark your calendar now and encourage your members to attend. Convention 2009 includes the Delegate Assembly and specific programs planned for children, junior highers, youth, young adults and adults. All are invited!

This letter will assist you in appointing your congregational delegates to the Delegate Assembly. The convention begins with opening worship on Tuesday evening at 6:45 p.m. The first delegate session begins on Wednesday morning, July 1, at 8 a.m., and the last delegate session ends on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. The convention closes with worship on Sunday morning, July 5. There are a multitude of activities throughout the week including daily worship, Bible studies, drama, seminars, music and more.

Pastors are invited for a full-day learning experience from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, 2009. The topic will be Pastoral Leadership from a Missional Perspective. Jim Schrag, Lois Barrett and Gilberto Flores will be the resourcing team. To optimize the learning process, everything will be organized in an atmosphere of participation, dialogue and fellowship. This will be a refreshing and life-giving experience that stimulates a desire to grow professionally. This event will begin and end with worship and I encourage you to attend.

**Here are 10 guidelines for selecting delegates from your congregation –**

1. **Each congregation should appoint one delegate for each 100 of your congregational members (or fraction thereof).** Congregations must belong to one of the 21 area conferences of Mennonite Church USA. The “fraction thereof” part simply means that a congregation with 201 members, for example, should appoint three delegates.
2. **Each congregation may choose to appoint one additional alternate delegate for every five delegates (or portion thereof).** Alternate delegates will not be able to vote but will be able to participate in all other aspects of the delegate process. The “portion thereof” part means that every congregation with up to five delegates can appoint an alternate as well. If you have more than five delegates (and up to ten), you can appoint two alternate delegates. Alternate delegates should receive all of the same advance information and preparation as regular delegates, but they should be identified separately.
3. **Congregational membership will be based on the membership figures supplied for the *Mennonite Church USA 2009 Directory*.**

4. **Pastors are not automatically delegates** but may serve as delegates at the discretion of their congregations.
5. **Consider appointing a young adult (age 18-30) as a delegate** if your congregation has more than one delegate. A mentoring system will be in place to help young adults fully participate in the delegate process.
6. **There will be no proxy or absentee voting.** The primary goal for the Delegate Assembly is for members of congregations to talk to each other. When votes are needed, each delegate is entitled to cast only one vote.
7. **Each congregation may decide how it will appoint its own delegates.** The only requirement is that delegates must be members of your congregation. Please consider appointing delegates for a four-year term (two Assemblies) so that some of your delegates have some experience in participating in the Delegate Assembly and in reporting back to your congregation.
8. **As soon as you are able – and no later than April 1, 2009 – enter your delegates on the Mennonite Directory Congregational Update Web page.** This is the same process you used for updating your congregational information for the *2009 Directory*. Go to:

[www.mennodata.org/mennonitedirectory/login.asp](http://www.mennodata.org/mennonitedirectory/login.asp)

See item #20 on your congregational profile. Enter the email and mailing addresses as well as the names of your delegates. If you need assistance with your congregational number or password, contact your area conference office. **Please enter this data by April 1 and submit updates until June 15.** If you do not have Web access, simply send the information to Shelley Buller, PO Box 347, Newton KS 67114; email: [ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org](mailto:ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org) or ask your area conference office to enter the information for you.

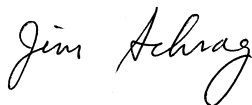
9. **Dual conference congregations only appoint one set of delegates.**
10. **Begin to pray now for Convention 2009.** Pray, individually and corporately, for the work God wants to do among us as we gather in Columbus next summer.

In addition to your delegates, please encourage other members of your congregation – young and old – to attend Convention 2009. Consider including funds in your budget to assist those who want to attend with their travel expenses. Remember that Mennonite Church USA conventions are one of the few ways most of your members can experience the church beyond your area conference.

Registration for the convention is available online at [www.MennoniteUSA.org/convention](http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/convention). This letter and other delegate session materials are also available at this Web site in the “Delegates” section.

I pray that God will bring blessing to and through our Delegate Assembly in Columbus. I’ll look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,



Jim Schrag  
Executive Director  
Mennonite Church USA