

# Information for Delegates 2019

## MennoCon19 in Kansas City, Missouri

Every two years, at the Mennonite Church USA Convention, the Delegate Assembly convenes to tend to the business of Mennonite Church USA. But what exactly does being a delegate entail? How do you become one? Below you'll find answers to frequently asked questions about who can be a delegate, how they are chosen and the work that they do. Leading up to the convention, we will continue to add updated information to the [Delegate Assembly website \(mennoniteusa.org/resource/delegate-resources\)](http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/delegate-resources).

### **Who can be a delegate?**

In order to be eligible to send a delegate, a congregation must be part of one of Mennonite Church USA's area conferences. Each congregation can choose who they wish to send to convention as their delegate representative. The only requirement is that the delegate be a member of a Mennonite Church USA congregation.

### **How many delegates does each congregation send?**

Every Mennonite Church USA congregation is invited to appoint one delegate for each 100 congregational members (or fraction thereof). For example, a congregation of 1–100 members can send one delegate; 101–200 can send two delegates; 201–300 can send three delegates, etc. The Mennonite Church USA [online directory](#) is the official source for congregational size and guides the number of delegates who can be sent. As part of the [Step Up program](#), congregations may send an additional youth representative, aged 16-21.

### **When should congregations appoint delegates?**

In preparation for the Delegate Assembly, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board plans to be in regular communication with delegates, beginning in early 2019. Therefore, it will be important for congregations to begin appointing their delegates as soon as possible and for delegates to register for convention as soon as registration opens on February 6, 2019. Early registration ends on March 20.

### **How are area conference delegates appointed?**

Each area conference is eligible to send one delegate for each 1,000 area conference members, or fraction thereof. As part of the Step Up program, conferences may send two additional youth representatives, aged 16-21.

### **How are delegates from Racial/Ethnic groups appointed?**

The following Racial/Ethnic groups have been officially recognized by the Executive Board and may send three delegates, plus one delegate for each 1,000 members of the group: African American Mennonite Association, Iglesia Menonita Hispana, Native Mennonite Ministries, and the network of Asian Mennonite Church USA congregations. As part of the Step Up program, Racial/Ethnic groups may send two additional youth representatives, aged 16-21.

## How do I register to be a delegate?

If you have been invited to serve as a delegate, check the appropriate box on your convention registration form to indicate whether you are representing a congregation, area conference or Racial/Ethnic group. Step Up program participants or their sponsors can indicate their involvement as a Step Up participant during registration or by emailing sarahc@mennoniteusa.org.

This will ensure that you are assigned to a table group for conversation with other delegates. You will also be asked to provide an e-mail address to receive updates and background information in preparation for the Delegate Assembly meetings at MennoCon19.

[Go to the convention website to register online, beginning February 6, 2019.](#)

## How should I prepare for my role as a delegate?

- **Pray.** Begin praying now — individually and with your congregation — for the work that God wants to do among us at MennoCon19.
- **Read.** Over the course of the six months prior to convention, you'll receive background information about the work of the Delegate Assembly. Be sure to read all of the materials that are sent and come to convention ready to engage the topics at hand. Also, visit the convention website (<http://convention.mennoniteusa.org>) to learn about our time together at MennoCon19.
- **Listen.** Talk to members of your congregation about the work that the Delegate Assembly will be doing. Ask for their opinions and thoughts, and listen carefully. You will be representing them at the Delegate Assembly. Encourage other members of your congregation to consider coming to MennoCon19 to take part in worship and fellowship with other Mennonites from around the country.

## What do delegates do?

The Delegate Assembly is the representative body of the denomination. According to the [Mennonite Church USA bylaws](#) and the [Delegate Job Description](#), a delegate's purpose is to:

- Discuss, discern and decide on major issues of policy for the denomination.
- Speak to other delegates, as well as Mennonite Church USA leaders, in order to give guidance to the establishment of general policies and the programs that are designed to carry out those policies.
- Receive reports from the Executive Board and churchwide agencies regarding the work that they are undertaking on behalf of the delegates and denomination.
- Review current programs and act on priorities as presented by the Executive Board.
- Worship, fellowship with one another, and find ways to deepen relationships and shared Christian commitment across the church

## How does the Delegate Assembly make decisions?

The Delegate Assembly needs to attend to the church's business in a timely manner and with attentiveness to process. Balancing these goals can be difficult, especially for a large decision-making body. Much of the work of this assembly will be done in table groups in a process of biblical/communal discernment. The content of these discussions will be shared both through written feedback and verbal reporting to the assembly by table group representatives.

On several items, however, individual delegates will be called on to vote. During those sessions, we will follow the rules laid out in the [Bylaws for Mennonite Church USA](#). Article V, Section 5 sets forth the following directions for the conduct of meetings of the Delegate Assembly.

*Bylaw provisions for decision making by the Delegate Assembly:*

- Normally floor privileges are granted first to all delegates, Delegate Assembly committee members, and members of the program boards and committees. Floor privileges will be extended to others during a discussion at the moderator's discretion.
- Each assembly delegate shall be eligible to cast one vote. There is no proxy voting.
- A majority of votes cast shall determine any matter, except when the assembly agrees otherwise or when otherwise provided in the bylaws.
- A quorum for conducting official business of the assembly shall be those delegates to the assembly who appear for any duly-called meeting.

### **Are pastors automatically delegates?**

No. Pastors only serve as delegates if they are appointed by their congregations. Some congregations always choose to send pastors as delegates, while others prefer to rotate the role among members.

### **Is there a minimum age for delegates?**

No. If there are young adults who are active participants in the life of your church, you are encouraged to consider sending them as delegates.

### **Alternate delegates.**

Each appointing body may appoint one (1) alternate delegate for each five (5) delegates, or fraction thereof. Alternates shall be recognized by the Delegate Assembly in the place of official delegates unable to attend. Alternates shall receive the same mailings and materials as official delegates.

### **Is there a way to cast an absentee vote?**

No. A delegate must be physically present at the Delegate Assembly at MennoCon19 to cast a vote.

### **More questions?**

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board staff members are here to help you prepare for your role as a delegate. If you have questions about what it means to be a delegate, contact Shelley Buller:

[ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org](mailto:ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org) (316) 281-4257