

# DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2022



## STAFF SUMMARY AND IMPACT STATEMENT

*This summary is the opinion of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board staff about the impact of the proposed resolution if passed by the delegate board. This summary does not necessarily reflect the views of resolution writers or the Executive Board. Delegates are encouraged to consult other resources, engage the writers of the resolution and discern within their context. This summary is based on the staff's understanding of the current bylaws and policies of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA).*

## TITLE: MENNONITE CHURCH USA ACCESSIBILITY RESOLUTION

[Link to the resolution.](#)

## TYPE OF RESOLUTION: CHURCH STATEMENT

### WHAT IS A CHURCH STATEMENT RESOLUTION?

A church statement gives direction to the church on matters of Christian faithfulness, often concerning current issues or issues where current church documents or previous statements fail to adequately address current questions/challenges. Church statements are approved by the delegate body and are implemented by the national body, area conferences, local congregations and individual followers of Jesus, according to the rights and responsibilities provided to each body. ***Church statements should be developed to further God's mission, as defined by our statement of vision and purpose, as well as our Renewed Commitments.***

Please read: [Developing Resolutions for Mennonite Church USA](#) for a more detailed overview of resolutions in MC USA.

### WHAT DOES THE RESOLUTION ADDRESS IN MC USA?

#### FROM THE WRITERS

“The purpose of this resolution is to help all members of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA), including congregations, area conferences, agencies and constituency groups, recognize and seek to remove the barriers to belonging in architecture, communications and attitudes that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in church life, and to bring wholeness to the body of Christ, as those barriers are removed and all people are fully integrated into the community of faith.”

#### STAFF SYNOPSIS

This resolution affirms the need to care for and integrate people with disabilities in the life and work of MC USA. As the church works at being an inclusive body, we must ensure that we eliminate barriers that prevent people from fully engaging in the mission of MC USA.

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## CURRENT POLICIES OR PROGRAMS RELATED TO THIS CHURCH STATEMENT RESOLUTION

1. This resolution aligns with the intent of **Renewed Commitments for MC USA**: “God invites us to experience and bear witness to the belovedness of all creation. We yearn to know and share in the mystery of God’s unending love. We confess that sin fragments our wholeness and strains our relationships with God, each other and the world. Confronted with the misuses of power in our lives, communities and institutions, we seek to tell the truth and repent. The Holy Spirit beckons us toward the restoration of all things in Christ. God continually calls us beloved.”
2. Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, **Article 6. Creation and Calling of Human Beings**: “We believe that human beings were created good, in the image of God. As creatures according to the divine likeness, we have been made stewards to subdue and to care for creation out of reverence and honor for the Creator. As creatures made in the divine image, we have been blessed with the abilities to respond faithfully to God, to live in harmony with other human beings, and to engage in meaningful work and rest.”
3. Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, **Article 17. Discipleship and The Christian Life**: “In all areas of life, we are called to be Jesus’ disciples.”
4. **Bylaws of Mennonite Church USA, Article II.1.a-g**:
  - a. “Share the good news of Jesus Christ through word and deed, calling people to salvation in Christ, and to form Christian communities of love and service to others.
  - b. “Establish, teach and promote the core values and beliefs of the church based on scripture as expressed in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, as updated from time to time.
  - c. “Tell the story of God’s faithfulness in our journey as an Anabaptist people.
  - d. “Encourage and enable congregations to actively engage in God’s mission in the world.
  - e. “Confront forces of the world which work against God’s intent for all creation.
  - f. “Be a channel for dialogue and witness to other church bodies and to governing authorities.
  - g. Provide a sense of larger community, creating a common identity for ourselves and recognized by those with whom we come in contact.”

## ACTIONS PROPOSED IN THE RESOLUTION

Summary of Actions	Division of MC USA Responsible	Financial Impact
Affirm people with disabilities as part of the work of MC USA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All members of Mennonite Church USA.</li> </ul>	This action is aspirational and restates the current values of MC USA. There are no additional costs.
Remove barriers to belonging for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board staff.</li> <li>• Program agencies.</li> <li>• Area conference.</li> <li>• Congregations.</li> </ul>	This action will require investment in tools and educational materials. Consultations will add additional cost. Most initiatives like this can be accomplished for less than \$5,000.

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Congregational planning for accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congregations.</li></ul>	The need for this action will vary by congregation. Everence has church loans available that may help congregations with actions they want to take in conjunction with this resolution. <u>Fund your vision.</u>
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## ADDITIONAL NOTES CONCERNING IMPACT

### MC USA EXECUTIVE BOARD STAFF

The Executive Board will need to provide information about available programs and resources that are available to help conferences and congregations live into the actions outlined in the church statement. MC USA does attempt to eliminate barriers and make accommodations for people with disabilities at gatherings it sponsors. The staff would conduct and publish an audit to show how well it complies with the actions outlined in the church statement.

### MC USA PROGRAM AGENCIES

Anabaptist Disabilities Network, with the support of our program agency, Mennonite Health Services (MHS), will provide counsel and resources for MC USA congregations, conferences and organizations to remove barriers to belonging for people with disabilities, as outlined in the church statement.

### MC USA AREA CONFERENCES

The church statement focuses mainly on congregations. Conference leaders would need to determine how to best partner with their members in this effort.

### MC USA CONGREGATIONS

The resolution lists several options for congregations. Anabaptist Disabilities Network also offers support for congregations.