

## **Ohio Conference Identity**

### **March 2023**

#### Ohio Conference Mission

We are committed to living into our new mission statement of *Gathering, Equipping and Sending our congregations by the power of the Holy Spirit to live out God's Greatest Commandments* (loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving others as ourselves) *and Jesus' Great Commission* (going out and making disciples of Jesus Christ).

We are committed to doing life together as sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ for the glory and honor of his name.

We fully support the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Ohio Conference Constitution & 2015 Resolution).

We are committed to continuing our current initiatives of anti-racism training and intercultural development, immigration, empowering women in leadership, and educating and equipping our pastors and congregational leaders in missional theology and action.

We are committed to continuing our two-year process of discerning God's will for us as a Conference which includes affiliation, as well as vision and structural change reflective of our new mission statement.

#### Affiliation and Autonomy:

Ohio Conference determines its own policies, credentialing guidelines, budget, structure, staff, and congregational membership. Ohio Conference is a member conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Ohio Conference exercises its authority and autonomy within MC USA according to the [MC USA Bylaws:](#)

- “*Each area conference shall establish provisions and procedures for the credentialing of ministers.*” Ohio Conference uses Ohio Conference credentialing guidelines.
- “*Each congregation shall, insofar as it is possible, call ministers that are certified or registered by a member area conference of MC USA under the provisions and procedures defined by its own area conference as a credentialing body of MC USA.*” Ohio Conference holds the credentials for all ministers in Ohio Conference.
- While we recognize that Ohio Conference’s credentialed ministers, delegates, and congregational members are in different places on the interpretation of Scripture regarding sexual ethics and how much to include LGBTQIA+ persons in the life of their congregations, we continue to hold our credentialed ministers accountable to the resolution passed by our delegate body in 2015 that our credentialed ministers will not perform a same-gender ceremony/marriage or be in a same-sex relationship themselves.

Ohio Conference continues to follow its 2017 Constitution revision allowing individual congregations to opt out of MC USA membership. Ohio Conference congregations that opt out of MC USA do not participate in MC USA decision-making or include individuals who represent MC USA on boards. Ohio Conference does not report non-MC USA congregations as part of the MC USA census of congregations. Congregations that opt out of MC USA continue to have access to the Corinthian Plan health insurance through Everence.

Ohio Conference and its congregations are members of Mennonite World Conference through MC USA.