



Mennonite Church USA Accessibility Resolution

Introduction:

The purpose of this resolution is to help all members of MCUSA (including congregations, district conferences, and church agencies) 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.

“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful.” 1 Corinthians 12:7, *The Message*.

Resolution:

As members of Mennonite Church USA, we commit to growing as communities of grace, joy and peace without barriers so that God’s healing and hope flows through all of us to the world regardless of ability.

This resolution affirms that people with disabilities are included within priorities expressed in MCUSA Journey Forward:

- Experience and bear witness to the belovedness of all creation acknowledging that all people are made in the image of God and are children of God.
- Follow Jesus: In his life and teaching, Jesus emphasized that God’s reign includes all people, especially those who have been marginalized or excluded. As an Anabaptist community of the living word, we will listen carefully to the voices of people with disabilities, to better understand the fullness of God’s love for us and the vision of God’s reign through Jesus Christ.
- Witness to God’s Peace: We are called to extend God’s holistic peace to all. We bear witness to Christ’s gift of peace to the world by rejecting violence and resisting injustice in all its forms and in all places.
- Experience transformation: The Holy Spirit dwells in and among all of us, transforming us to reflect God’s love in unique ways. When our worship includes all people, the Spirit gathers the whole body of Christ, where our diversity reveals God’s beauty and enables us to more fully embody the grace, joy and peace of the gospel.

We, the members, congregations, and organizations of MCUSA, resolve to deepen our understanding of barriers for people with disabilities, to take action to make our community life and facilities accessible and welcoming to all, and to discern and affirm the gifts of each person for our common good.

Anabaptist Disabilities Network will support MCUSA agencies, districts, and congregations to remove barriers to belonging for people with disabilities by:

- Providing assessment tools, such as the accessibility surveys offered by Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN). (Appendix 2)
- Offering events and resources for all ages to raise awareness and change attitudes about disability.
- Sharing and developing resources, including curriculum, for people with disabilities.
- Providing resources to congregations through congregational disability advocates.
- Consulting with congregations about addressing specific barriers.

Congregations will work to become more accessible to people with disabilities by:

- Assessing their own accessibility through an audit or inventory, and by periodically surveying their congregants to learn of any barriers to full community participation.
- Developing a plan to increase accessibility in some way(s). For example: motorized door openers or wheelchair ramps, assisted listening devices or hearing loops, large print worship materials, Sunday school classes that raise awareness and understanding.
- Calling a disability advocate or advocacy team charged with helping to assess accessibility, identify and remove barriers, share resources on disability, and call forth the gifts of people with disabilities in the congregation.

At all levels of the church, we commit to calling out and employing the leadership gifts of people with disabilities.

Witness approved by consensus at the _____