



Report to Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

*"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." —Hebrews 10:24-25
Through its ministries, Mennonite Church USA seeks to show the love of God to one another and the world.
Here are some ways we have worked together as the church in 2017.*



The MC USA biennial convention was held July 4-8 in Orlando, Florida with the theme "Love is a Verb." Over 3,200 people attended.

The MC USA Delegate Assembly in Orlando passed a resolution on **"Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine."** The resolution

encourages support for Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers. It also laments Mennonite historical complicity with anti-Semitism and calls for further learning.



A significant part of last year's convention was the **Future Church Summit**, the first step in a churchwide discernment process inviting delegates and key stakeholders to envision an Anabaptist future for MC USA. Delegates voted to affirm the outcomes of the summit as "a guide for living into God's calling for our church."



Growing out of the priorities from the Future Church Summit, MC USA continues discernment through **Journey Forward**, a churchwide process to develop an identity document centered around MC USA's shared beliefs and goals. The initial draft emphasizes three pillars of MC USA faith as being

"Grounded in the whole story of Jesus"; "Transformed by the Holy Spirit in community"; and "Empowered to join in God's reconciling work." In December 2017, a writing group began creating a study guide that seeks to engage congregations and gather feedback for updating the document in 2018.

The MC USA Archives moved from Goshen College to MC USA's Elkhart (Ind.) offices. Researchers can now access those materials in a more accessible and better preserved space. Bethel College continues to house the General Conference archives collection.

MC USA began offering **Healthy Boundary Trainings** and held a "Train the Trainer" event in March 2017 as a commitment to addressing sexual abuse in the church. It is the intent that every new MC USA pastor will receive this training and that all current pastors receive it in the next three years. The Leadership Development staff also updated **"Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures,"** MC USA's procedure for addressing ministerial sexual misconduct.



In December 2017, the **Panel on Sexual Abuse Prevention** completed its term, submitting a proposed policy outlining appropriate response when non-credentialed leaders are accused of sexual abuse.

Ervin Stutzman announced his plans to retire from executive director of MC USA in spring 2018. The search committee for his replacement gathered denomination-wide priorities for the position and revised the job description to emphasize goals of the Future Church Summit and Executive Board.

The final payment was made on the **Elkhart offices** that house MC USA and Mennonite agencies. The Constituency Leaders Council met to ceremonially burn the mortgage and celebrate in the space. Generous donors made it possible to pay off the mortgage years ahead of schedule.



In January 2018, the **Women in Leadership Project** released a second collection of essays based on presentations at the 2016 Women Doing Theology (WDT) conference, I've got the power! Naming and reclaiming power as a force for good. The next WDT conference is scheduled for Nov. 8-10, 2018.



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