

**Post-Vote Hopes
Responses from Delegates
Ohio Conference Annual Conference Assembly
March 4, 2023**

After the delegates voted on the resolution, but before the results were made available, the delegates were asked, *“Assume the vote went opposite of the way you wanted. What is your hope for Ohio Conference?”*

The responses of the delegates provide guidance for designing the next steps of the strategic planning process (Blue Hat) and exhortations for hoped-for process behaviors across the Conference. The responses have been loosely sorted into categories.

Among Conference delegates/ congregations

- Civility, love, focus on Faith, scripture, and perseverance and patience as we focus and discern on what is next
- Civility, dignity, and respect
- Those who stay, and those who leave, bless each other
- Peaceful and hopeful discussions within congregations going forward
- Stay unified regardless of the outcome
- In spite of differences, that we will be able to love each other and do life together
- Learn from each other
- Meet the challenge of other issues
- Ohio Conference attempts to promote unity
- Deep plea for all churches to be in prayer for one another and encourage one another and visit one another
- That congregations will be able to have open honest conversation about what the decision means for their congregation
- That the conference and its congregations will continue to mature in their openness to all peoples
- That the conference and congregations can respond to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ
- Unity by maintaining churches and memberships within churches with acceptance love and moving forward together
- Continue to be steady and stable; even if some leave due to God's call on their particular church
- Deeper commitment to using scripture well
- Keep the same spirit of unity that has been shown in the last 5 years
- Continue to discern how Jesus would respond to the people in our communities, churches, and families
- That Ohio Conference will remain United and open to God's leading and welcoming to all
- We can unite just be together
- Be proactive in discussing and understanding biblical interpretation of sexuality and find ways to be more welcoming
- Working to keep Ohio Conference churches together: move forward in a positive way: challenging, learning, working on mission together
- That Ohio Conference can remain viable
- That Ohio Conference can thrive, flourish and prosper
- That we can work together and have a positive spirit
- That we can be unified in love and care for each other
- To continue to serve our God in unity

- That Ohio Conference can survive
- If or when churches leave, that we can bless each other and be gracious
- Hope individuals can reach out to outsiders
- Grace, respect, and unity
- Continue as brothers and sisters in Christ as we pursue our mission
- Ohio Conference can continue God's mission in our world
- Remain in relationship and not personalize hurt
- Little or no animosity, agree to disagree
- Continue to find ways to accept people who don't look or act like them
- We remain united, connected, conversational, and missional
- Peace and clarity of direction
- The effects on Ohio Conference would eventually bend in the direction of my choice
- I would at least be mature enough to receive the decision
- Focus on how Ohio Conference can be united, not uniform
- Hope Ohio Conference will still continue to grapple with what is the true measure of God's love
- We will be indifferent to anything but the will of God
- That Ohio Mennonite Conference and congregations will stay together in unity
- Maintain unity in Ohio Conference and congregations
- Ohio Mennonite Conference finds a place of rest and relaxation
- Unity and shared energy around chosen path
- Healing. Work together after no winners or losers. Reconciliation
- Unity. Keep together
- Find its way in time of uncertainty
- That the salvation message is preached from every pulpit. Faithful to the gospel. Jesus saves
- That dialogue would still be welcome that we can discuss disagreements and that as a group we reflect God's love for all
- That future groups of delegates would be able to meet in good fellowship and love for Jesus and the church
- Be faithful to Jesus and to scripture
- I don't know
- Accept the decision; it is God's kingdom not ours
- Accept the decision and work together into the future
- Whatever the outcome, pull together and continue the work of the church
- Stay together, continue to dialog
- Still move forward as a unified group in mutual respect and love
- Healthy separation
- As many of the people in the room will be here next year continuing together
- With the church with the churches that remain will stay united
- That the Mennonite Church will learn to love everyone without labels
- Peace and unity, not uniformity
- If it doesn't go our way, it does not mean we'll lose everything. As long as the core aspects of Christianity happen
- There will still be a sense of unity, partnership, peace and flourishing with Ohio conference
- Remain peaceful as individuals and congregations
- Relationships can be maintained and growth can still happen
- Continue to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit and no losses of churches
- Prayer and grace, unity, no broken relationships
- Stay. Do the work together

- Unity without uniformity
- Embrace the way of peace
- Unity and no major splits
- Conference to stay together and process scripture together

For Leadership

- For the leadership patience, transparency, bring in the congregations, and guiding enthusiasm
- Representation from MC USA leadership for participation
- Special blessing on conference leadership
- Leadership of Ohio Conference can find rest and renewal to lead after this
- Clarity, God's wisdom, biblical wisdom, and a peaceful wrestling with what is next.
- Reevaluation of what conference leadership believes in
- Patience for Ohio Conference and patience for congregational members with their own congregational leaders
- Provide clarity for leadership
- Strong leadership continues
- Increased funding for staff and increased energy for staff

Process

- Ohio Conference has the integrity and strength to continue and work through the next steps
- Phyllis Tickle - great emergence split every 500 years but both groups flourish
- That Ohio Conference will learn the importance of being proactive
- Options
- That conference and churches will make more space for mission
- A sense of moving forward together around shared commitments: conference to experience renewed energy as experiencing life together
- That we can dig deeper and find a creative way forward
- Energy and clarity going forward
- Discuss and resolve our tensions
- Find a way to work on the issues from within
- Accept to the result and move forward knowing we have done good work
- Focus on the mission of Ohio Conference
- Focus on the work of the church
- Get on with the work of the church
- Focus on the work of Christ, including welcoming all
- Mutual love and respect the ability to move on to Kingdom work
- Be able to look at other issues
- That we would not get mired internally that we can live out our mission
- Hope that Ohio Conference has energy for the next step
- That Ohio conference would be empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Hope that the damage is limited
- Hope that we would move forward with Jesus
- Ohio Mennonite Conference will be better able to live out our mission
- Ready to move on
- Not be consumed by the next steps of the process but stand together in our discerning
- Remember to do mission, gathered and sent
- Have enough energy and resources to survive and create something new

- Ohio Conference provides resources to congregations in making decisions for what is next

Identity

- That Ohio Conference can find a relationship that they can lean into
- We hold true to the confession of faith
- That Ohio Conference holds true to scripture and the confession of faith
- Get back to being the hands and feet of Jesus
- Cement our foundation in scripture
- God's blessing for new life and renewed sense of purpose and vision
- Focus on our core beliefs and doing God's work
- Identity. Who we are with this topic not being the focus
- That Ohio Conference figures out what they are for. Justice?
- That Ohio Conference would live into its vision statement
- Don't lose sight of the mission statement
- Faithful future for the conference faithful to God
- Focus on Ohio Mennonite Conference mission
- Move past issue and be about the kingdom of God. Continue being church together
- Feeling still evolving; still follow the example of Jesus
- Stay faithful to scripture and the gospel; Don't get political
- Renewed vision
- Faithfulness

Continued Support

- Conference continues to provide resources and leadership to congregations
- That the conference can continue to serve together as a unified body of Christ
- Continue telling the good news that Jesus died to save us
- Remain rooted in Christ and pour our energy into more productive ministries. Get back to what Ohio Conference does best!
- Continue dedication to witnessing about Jesus and God's kingdom in our world
- Continue existing under current guidelines
- That Ohio Conference will continue to support congregations and pastors in mission emphasis, effects, and work towards faithfulness
- Pastor peer relationships continue

Specific to the Vote

- Swift affiliation with another group
- Stay with MC USA. Work things out
- Not led astray without a denomination