

DRAFT Vision and Mission Statement



Identity

Mennonite Church Manitoba is an Anabaptist-Mennonite community of congregations covenanted together for meaningful fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry. We are a regional church of Mennonite Church Canada, which is a member of Mennonite World Conference.

Vision

Mennonite Church Manitoba seeks to be a flourishing community of worshiping, learning, and serving congregations where people can find belonging in the Spirit and follow the Way of Jesus together, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.

A church to belong,
embraced in the Spirit.

A church to meet Jesus,
following his Way.

A church to do justice, love mercy,
and walk humbly with God.

Missional Priorities

Preserve and cultivate a shared **Anabaptist-Mennonite identity** among our congregations, grounded in the historic Mennonite church and open to new expressions of Mennonite faith and practice.

Grow and nurture **healthy congregations** centered on Jesus in which diverse people can belong and be loved.

Call and develop **capable leaders**, both clergy and lay, who can guide the growth and nurturing of our congregations.

Invite and equip our congregations and leaders to bear **witness to Jesus** by sharing Jesus' story, living lives of spiritual vitality and compassionate love, and pursuing justice, hospitality, and peace among us and beyond us.

Presented by the MCM Board for conversation and discernment, Fall 2025. See below for commentary.

Commentary on the DRAFT Vision and Mission Statement

Commentary is presented in italics.

Identity

Mennonite Church Manitoba is an Anabaptist-Mennonite community of congregations covenanted together for common identity, meaningful fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry. We are a regional church of Mennonite Church Canada, which is a member of Mennonite World Conference.

A statement of identity is a statement of who we are. This forms the stable groundwork for any statement of vision and mission.

“Mennonite Church Manitoba”: This is our name since 2001; more formally, “Mennonite Church Manitoba, Inc.” Our congregations are situated in or near the province of Manitoba.

“Anabaptist-Mennonite”: This is the stream of Christianity in which we swim. “Anabaptist” is added to “Mennonite” to clarify that we are not merely a Mennonite church by ethnicity or culture, but we are distinctively Anabaptist in our theology and practice. What we mean by “Anabaptist” can be helpfully summarized using Palmer Becker’s threefold description in his book, Anabaptist Essentials (2017): 1) Jesus is the centre of our faith; 2) Community is the centre of our lives; 3) Reconciliation is the centre of our work. See also Stuart Murray’s book, The New Anabaptists (2024), for a helpful description of common Anabaptist practices.

“Community of congregations”: This language reflects our Confession of Faith (Article 9). The congregations of MCM are a “community,” a group which holds in common certain history, values, beliefs, and practices—a shared life.

“Covenanted together”: Just as individual believers covenant together to be a local congregation, local congregations covenant together to be a regional church. This covenant is formalized in MCM’s Constitution and General Operating Bylaw.

“Meaningful fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry”: These are the core aspects of our shared life as a regional church, representing aspects of our community life which do not change with changing vision statements.

“Regional church of Mennonite Church Canada”: MCM covenants together with MC British Columbia, MC Alberta, MC Saskatchewan, and MC Eastern Canada to be Mennonite Church Canada together. This covenant is formalized in the Mennonite Church Canada Covenant and other foundational documents.

“A member of Mennonite World Conference”: MWC is our worldwide community of faith, representing Anabaptist churches from around the world. MCM shares in the community life of MWC through MC Canada.

Vision

Mennonite Church Manitoba seeks to be a flourishing community of worshiping, learning, and serving congregations where people can find belonging in the Spirit and follow the Way of Jesus together, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.

A church to belong,
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A statement of vision is a statement of who we want to become. It is aspirational, even as we hope it reflects to some degree who we already are.

“A flourishing community”: See note on “community of congregations” above. “Flourishing” here draws on ideas of “abundant life” in Christ (John 10:10): we strive to be healthy, vibrant, and growing as a community of congregations, drawing our life from Jesus Christ.

“Worshiping, learning, and serving congregations”: These are not the only marks of a faithful, flourishing congregation, though they are three fundamental ones. We strive to nurture congregations characterized by vibrant, meaningful worship, active, faith-forming learning, and dynamic, self-giving service.

“Find belonging in the Spirit”: “Belonging” is a strongly felt need in our culture of isolation and division; belonging to a community of faith can even precede believing personally in Christ for many people. The Spirit draws us together and unites us together in Christ. Note that this statement is intentionally Trinitarian; see below.

“Follow the Way of Jesus together”: This is a core aspect of our Anabaptist identity: centering our faith and life on Jesus, and in particular “following Jesus” in his way of life and love. “Way” is capitalized as a nod to the early church, which preferred to refer to itself as “the Way” (e.g. Acts 9:2; 24:14).

“Doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God”: This is the Prophet Micah’s summary description of what God’s people are called to do (Micah 6:8). It parallels Jesus’ Greatest Commandment: that we are to love God with all we are, primarily, but not exclusively, by loving our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:34-40). We work alongside and learn from others who likewise seek to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

“A church to belong / embraced in the Spirit...”: This is a tripartite summary of the vision statement, highlighting its Trinitarian nature while centering on Jesus: specifically the importance of having a personal encounter with Jesus (“meet Jesus”) and following him in discipleship (“following his Way”).

Missional Priorities

Mission, or missional priorities, grow out of identity and vision. Like the identity and vision, these missional priorities should be evident throughout MCM's structure, planning, and work.

Preserve and cultivate a shared **Anabaptist-Mennonite identity** among our congregations, grounded in the historic Mennonite church and open to new expressions of Mennonite faith and practice.

“Preserve and cultivate”: This shared identity is both preserved—sustained, kept intact—and cultivated—nurtured, something that grows among us.

“Anabaptist-Mennonite identity”: See comments on “Anabaptist-Mennonite” under Identity above.

“Grounded in the historic Mennonite church”: We acknowledge with tremendous gratitude the heritage we have through our Mennonite forebears. This heritage of faith and life lays the groundwork for our current identity, vision, and missional priorities.

“And open to new expressions of Mennonite faith and practice”: Mennonite faith and life is not static; it is constantly changing. We recognize that the vast majority of Mennonites globally are non-European in background and orientation, and that Mennonites are diverse in many other ways. We strive to be open to new understandings of what Mennonite faith and practice could look like for us.

Grow and nurture **healthy congregations** centered on Jesus in which diverse people can belong and be loved.

“Grow and nurture”: Healthy congregations need to be both grown—built up, including potentially new congregations—and nurtured—sustained in our common identity, meaningful fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry.

“Healthy congregations”: Healthy congregations are characterized by three dimensions: 1) an internal dimension (e.g. worship, fellowship, mutual care, faith formation, diversity); 2) an outward dimension (e.g. witness to Jesus, partnerships, neighbourhood engagement); and 3) an organizational dimension (e.g. strong self-identity, vision, leadership, structure and process). See the work of the Flourishing Congregations Institute (www.flourishingcongregations.org).

“Centered on Jesus”: We strive for a centered-set understanding of faith and church life, focused on the person and work of Jesus primarily as presented to us in the Gospels. This centered-set approach draws on the work of missionary anthropologist Paul Hiebert.

“Diverse people”: A centered-set orientation allows for diversity—theological, cultural, and more—around the core focus, both within local congregations and as a regional church.

“Can belong and be loved.” See “Find belonging in the Spirit” under Vision above. Belonging, being loved, loving others—these are fundamental to both our faith and our humanity.

Call and develop **capable leaders**, both clergy and lay, who can guide the growth and nurturing of our congregations.

“Call and develop”: Capable leaders need to be both called—their gifts recognized and named in our churches—and developed—trained and nurtured to use their gifts effectively in serving the church.

“Capable leaders”: We strive to call and develop leaders who are characterized by particular character qualities and competencies, so as to be effective in serving the church.

“Both clergy and lay”: While MCM necessarily focuses on credentialed leaders (since MCM gives and holds ministry credentials), we also strive to support the calling and development of non-credentialed leaders within our congregations.

“Who can guide the building and nurturing of our congregations”: Leadership in the church involves both oversight and active participation. This is summarized using the word “guide.”

Invite and equip our congregations and leaders to bear **witness to Jesus** by sharing Jesus’ story, living lives of spiritual vitality and compassionate love, and pursuing justice, hospitality, and peace among us and beyond us.

“Invite and equip”: Congregations and leaders need to be both invited—following the invitation of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20)—and equipped—given resources—for bearing witness to Jesus.

“Congregations and leaders”: This is a calling not only of leaders, but also congregations; this is a calling not only of congregations, but also of leaders.

“To bear witness to Jesus”: This was the fundamental outward calling of the early church (e.g. Acts 1:8, 21-22). This witness is manifold, as the following clauses demonstrate.

“By sharing Jesus’ story”: One essential aspect of bearing witness to Jesus is sharing the story of Jesus, which the New Testament calls the gospel, the word of Christ, the word of truth.

“Living lives of spiritual vitality and compassionate love”: Our way of faith and life is a second essential aspect of bearing witness to Jesus, as it shows the work of Jesus in our lives by the Spirit. Love in the way of Jesus is the preeminent virtue which marks this spiritual vitality.

“Pursuing justice, hospitality, and peace among us and beyond us”: Our call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, to love God by loving our neighbour as ourselves (see under Vision above), is a third essential aspect of bearing witness to Jesus, participating in God’s transformative power at work in the world through Jesus by the Spirit.