



## NEWS RELEASE

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### MC USA launches “Learn, Pray, Join: Welcoming EveryBODY” initiative

ELKHART, Indiana (Mennonite Church USA) — Mennonite Church USA (MC USA), in partnership with [Anabaptist Disabilities Network](#) (ADN), has launched [“Learn, Pray, Join: Welcoming EveryBODY.”](#) an initiative that celebrates the many gifts that people with disabilities bring to our church communities. During May and June, MC USA will seek to engage people in this initiative by offering resources, prayers and ways to care for one another and to address issues of accessibility in the church.

“We want to encourage our churches to commit to removing barriers to belonging and move towards creating spaces where God’s healing and hope can flow through people of all abilities,” said Sue Park-Hur, MC USA director of racial/ethnic engagement.

According to [The Century Foundation](#), “Sixty-one million, or one in four U.S. adults, live with disabilities — numbers that are rapidly rising due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a mass disabling event.” The Century Foundation also states that “Disabled people of color in the United States face even greater economic disparities and rates of poverty and hardship, due to a combination of structural as well as cultural ableism and racism.” The organization suggests that many of the barriers that those with disabilities are facing are caused by policy failures.

Welcoming EveryBODY highlights the proposed [Accessibility Resolution](#), which will be voted on during MC USA’s Special Session of the Delegate Assembly, May 27-30. This resolution states “We, the members, congregations and organizations of MC USA, 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.”

The Accessibility Resolution affirms that people with disabilities are included within the priorities expressed in [MC USA’s Vision: Healing and Hope](#). Clare Krabill, director of Mennonite Health Services and Jeanne Davies, executive director of ADN discuss the resolution in MC USA’s recorded webinar, [“Highlight: Accessibility Resolution.”](#)



Through “Learn, Pray, Join: Welcoming EveryBODY,” MC USA seeks to equip conferences, congregations and constituents with:

- Opportunities to **learn** about how to welcome people of all abilities, through auditing tools, books, webinars, podcasts, online presentations and other resources. In addition, leaders from MC USA agencies, congregations, affiliated colleges and ministry partners will contribute [blogs](#) over the next several weeks, which will explore what is helpful and not helpful to a person with disabilities and how we can create welcoming spaces for people with disabilities that help us all live into our faith as Anabaptist Christians.
- An invitation to **pray** for forgiveness for those times when we have not fully seen or welcomed those experiencing disability and for the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to work within us to help us see God in each other.
- A call to **join** in God’s work in the world by tearing down barriers and creating more disability-inclusive spaces and by advocating for more just policies and practices for people with disabilities.

“Disability inclusion is central to the vitality of the church,” said Jeanne Davies, executive director of ADN. “When all people with their various needs and gifts are fully included in the life of the church, the Body of Christ becomes whole,” she added. ADN offers a wide variety of resources for families and congregations seeking to include persons with disabilities in their lives and ministries, including consultations, online resources and speakers/trainers.

MC USA’s “[Learn, Pray, Join](#)” initiatives seek to create opportunities across the church to deepen understanding around a common topic and to come together in prayer and support. “Learn, Pray, Join: Welcoming EveryBODY” reflects the denomination’s #BeTransformed theme. #BeTransformed is Mennonite Church USA’s call for individuals and congregations to fully live into our Renewed Commitments to follow Jesus, witness to God’s peace and experience transformation. Learn more at <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/betransformed/>.

MC USA is the largest Mennonite denomination in the United States with 16 conferences, approximately 530 congregations and 62,000 members. An Anabaptist Christian denomination, MC USA is part of Mennonite World Conference, a global faith family that includes churches in 58 countries. It has offices in Elkhart, Indiana and Newton, Kansas. [mennoniteUSA.org](http://mennoniteUSA.org)

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