

Welcoming Statements from Congregations across Mennonite Church Canada

I found at least 13 welcoming statements from across MC Canada. These are only a few, some similar to ours and some very different. I find it very encouraging that there is at least one openly LGBTQ+ affirming congregation in every area church of MC Canada! - Susanne

Rockway Mennonite Church (Kitchener, Ontario)

Rockway Mennonite Church welcomes people of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages and abilities to full participation, inclusion and membership. Leadership, pastoral ministry positions, and every part of church life are open to all members. We support same sex marriage. Our vision is to be an open and welcoming faith community to all. We continue to grow and learn as we seek to live Christ's wisdom and peace in the world.

Windsor Mennonite (Ontario)

"Windsor Mennonite Fellowship is an intergenerational community of Christian believers rooted in the Anabaptist Peace Church tradition. We welcome everyone to full participation, inclusion and membership recognizing that everyone is created in the image of God, inclusive of cultural and ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, and other gifts which we share in community.

We confess that the Mennonite Church, including our congregation, has been part of the historic and ongoing exclusion and rejection of LGBTQIA+ persons, families, and communities. Churches have wielded theological rationale and social power in ways that cause suffering, division, and harm. All too often, they have failed to take a courageous stance to love, support, and embrace gender and sexual minorities. We confess this as a form of violence and neglect of our responsibilities as followers of Jesus. We strive to be a safe place for all and encourage all to engage in the ministries and practices of the congregation such as worship, baptism, membership, leadership, marriage, and service.

We are a community that values and respects the tapestry of perspectives and voices among us. We seek to be listeners and humble learners from one another, believing the Holy Spirit is present and at work in us all. Based on the study of Scripture and the teachings of Jesus, we are compelled by the love of God to give freedom and space for all people to fully share and participate in the life of our faith community."

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Position on Article 19:

"As written, Article 19 "Family, Singleness, and Marriage" of the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* does not reflect the theology and practices of our local church concerning the welcoming and inclusion of all persons. We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between two persons for life.

Windsor Mennonite Fellowship is a congregation of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, which is part of Mennonite Church Canada. Although our local fellowship is a part of the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition of Mennonite Church Canada, we also have areas of autonomy. We believe it is important to be open about our differences, and hold those differences in a spirit of unity, love, and respect. In particular, the community of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship has prayerfully discerned and chosen to

join other MC Canada congregations in amending Article 19 to better reflect our position of LGBTQIA+ inclusion. We are also committed to being an active part of the process of reconciliation and thus to actively push for the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* to be updated.”

Hope Mennonite (Winnipeg, MB)

The people of Hope Mennonite Church are diverse in how we identify our own sexual orientations, sexes, and gender identities. We desire to follow Jesus’ example of acting with love, compassion, justice, and equality, recognizing the intrinsic worth of every human being as part of creation. We continue on this welcoming journey, recognizing that we will always have something new to learn.

Langley Mennonite Fellowship (BC)

LMF is committed to live as a family, faithful to Christ’s teachings of love, acceptance, humility and hospitality. As children in God’s family, we are all wonderfully made and ought to be loved, affirmed and built up as the people we are, whatever our gender and sexual orientation.

As our family grows and becomes more and more diverse, and as we get to know one another, our relationships can be strained but ultimately affirmed. We are transformed by our genuine encounters with one another, particularly if we meet one another in the self-giving spirit of God’s unconditional love.

For other examples, see: Foothills Mennonite Church (Calgary AB); Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church (Kitchener, ON); Waterloo North Mennonite Church (Ontario); Toronto United Mennonite Church (Ontario); Hamilton Mennonite (Ontario); Charleswood Mennonite Church (Winnipeg MB); First Mennonite Church (Winnipeg MB); Jubilee Mennonite (Winnipeg MB); Wildwood Mennonite (Saskatoon); etc. MC USA congregations would also have examples of these!

MC Manitoba LGBTQ+ Guiding Statement

Mennonite Church Manitoba is a community of congregations covenanted together for fellowship, mutual support and shared ministry. We encourage congregations to discern the Spirit’s leading for themselves regarding their welcome and affirmation of LGBTQ+ people, and this has meant that our congregations are in different places theologically and practically regarding this. We continue “making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3), recognizing that our unity in Christ is not complete uniformity of belief and practice, and that diversity can be a beautiful, if sometimes surprising, gift from God.

In our shared spaces as Mennonite Church Manitoba, we strive to provide a welcoming and safe place for everyone. These shared spaces include our annual gatherings, our Mennonite Church Manitoba office, our Camps with Meaning camps and programs, our committees and working groups, and our resourcing workshops and events. To make these shared spaces safe for all, we will avoid disparaging remarks about one another’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and we will respect chosen names and pronouns. We will also avoid disparaging remarks about one another’s perspective on LGBTQ+ welcome or affirmation, and we will not promote our congregation’s position as normative for all congregations. mennochurch.mb.ca/creatingspace