

## Statement of Faith and Practical Applications for Disciples of Christ Mennonite Church

1. We believe there is but one God eternal, infinite, perfect, and unchangeable; Who exists and reveals Himself in three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (*Ps. 9:2; Isaiah 57:15; Romans 8:9; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 13:8*)
2. We believe in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, born of a virgin; that He is the perfect Lamb of God, Who died and shed His blood to make atonement for our sins, and arose for our justification; that through repentance and faith we might be saved. (*Matt. 28:1-6; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; Acts 20:20-21; Rom. 5:1; Heb. 9:12-14; 1 John 1:8-10*)
3. We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, that He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment; that He indwells and comforts the believers, guides us into all truth, empowers us for service, and enables us to live a life of righteousness. (*John 16:7-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:9; Titus 2:11-15*)
4. We believe in the verbal inspiration and the absolute authority of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God in the original manuscripts and that it is the only infallible rule for faith and practice. (*2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 119:89; Ps. 138:2; John 12:48; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21*)
5. We believe in God as Creator and Sustainer of all things. We accept the Genesis account of creation as a historical fact and literally true. We believe in the sacredness of human life, which begins at conception, and is terminated by God's sovereignty. (*Gen. 1:1; Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5; Matt. 10:29; John 1:3; Col. 1:16*)
6. We believe that man was created in the likeness and image of God and by disobedience brought depravity and death upon humanity; thus all inherit a sinful nature and need to be redeemed. (*Gen. 1:27; 3:1-19; Rom. 3:10, 23; 5:12-21; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3-6*)
7. We believe spiritual gifts are given by God, and are intended for the edification of the Body of believers, (and should not be used for personal glorification). (*Rom. 12:6-15; 1 Cor. 12-14, [highlighting 12:7, 25; 14:1-5, 12]; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10*)
8. We believe it is the privilege of all believers to know they have passed from death unto life; that God is able to keep them from falling, but that the obedience of faith is essential to the maintenance of one's salvation and growth in grace. (*John 8:31; Rom. 5:16; 10:8-11, 16; 2 Tim. 1:12; James 2:14-26; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 John 3:14; 5:11-13; Jude 24-25*)

9. We believe the Church is the Body of Christ, composed of those who through repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again and were baptized by one Spirit into one body, and that it is her divinely appointed mission to preach the Gospel to all mankind, teaching obedience to all His commandments. (*Matt. 16:16-18, 28; Mark 16:15; Luke 21:37-38; Acts 1:8, 20-23; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:18*)
10. We believe those who repent and believe should be baptized with water in obedience to the scriptures and as a symbol of baptism with the Spirit, cleansing of sin, and commitment to Christ. (*Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:16-21; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21*)
- A. One way our commitment to Christ is expressed, is by being submitted and committed to a local church in membership. Membership happens at the time of baptism or upon approval of a membership transfer. It is within the local church where we can practically obey and live out the teachings of Jesus Christ. We believe all Christians need to be submitted somewhere, and the practice of not being submitted and accountable to a local church is not in keeping with New Testament teachings.
- B. All new applicants for membership by either baptism or transfer may be subject to a proving time before being accepted into the congregation. The length of the proving time would be decided on a case-by-case basis. Mentoring would be made available for new believers and would be under the authority of church leadership. Those who are of younger age would be required to attend instruction class before baptism would take place.
- C. All members must be at least 18 years of age before they would be eligible to vote in church related matters.
11. We believe those of like precious faith who have peace with God, the Church, and their fellow man may observe the Communion of the Lord's Supper as a symbol- in remembrance of his broken body and shed blood, and of the fellowship of his Church until His return. (*Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-29*)

We believe in the practice of close Communion, and it would normally be partaken at each one's local church. Visitors of like precious faith may be admitted on a case-by-case basis under the direction of church leadership. Communion is a time of intimacy and deep fellowship and should be attended by all members.

If an individual misses Communion without having a legitimate reason, the following will occur:

1<sup>st</sup> intentionally missed Communion: individual may continue to hold office and vote if they continue to attend church. Those no longer attending church will be contacted by the ministry and action taken as deemed appropriate by the local ministry.

2<sup>nd</sup> intentionally missed Communion because of disagreement with church or brethren: forfeiture of office and voting privileges.

3<sup>rd</sup> intentionally missed communion because of disagreement with church or brethren: terminate membership.

Through all of the above steps, the ministry would be working towards restoration and reconciliation.

12. We believe in the washing of the saints' feet as a symbol of brotherhood, cleansing and service, and that it should be literally and appropriately observed. (*John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5:10*)

13. We believe the Lord has vested the Church with authority in accordance with Scriptural teachings; (1) to choose leaders; (2) to regulate the observance of ordinances under the supervision of the local church leadership; (3) to exercise wholesome discipline; and (4) to organize and conduct her work in a manner consistent with her high calling and essential to her highest efficiency. We recognize the plural ministry to be a strength to the congregation. In keeping with Scriptural qualifications of the ordained, we believe only men should be ordained to church leadership. (*Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-18; 28:19-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 14:21-23; 1 Cor. 5; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:10-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4*)

#### A. Choosing Spiritual Leaders

Spiritual leadership is essential for the life and growth of the church. Leadership shall be chosen by prayer and fasting. Earnest leading of the Holy Spirit shall be sought. Leaders must be men of the Word and conviction. The candidates shall give evidence of Scriptural qualifications. The voice of the congregation shall be respected as received and led by those in responsible leadership. (*1 Tim. 3; 2 Tim.1; Titus 1*)

#### Ordinations

(1) Ministers and deacons shall be chosen by vote of the congregation, ordained by bishops. When one is to be ordained and two or more brethren having scriptural qualifications are chosen, the lot shall be used to decide between them.

(*Acts 1:15, 23-36; 6:1-6*)

(2) Bishops shall be chosen in a similar way from among the ministry, including the deacons. (*Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9*)

\*No one lacking the Scriptural qualifications of Acts 6:3, 1 Tim 3:1-13, 2 Tim 2:2, Titus 1:5-9 or those who cannot work in harmony with the leadership team at the time of ordination shall be taken into the lot or otherwise ordained.

## B. Duties Within the Church

- (1) Bishops: It is the duty of the bishop, besides the ordinary work of the ministry, to instruct, baptize, and receive into the Church penitent believers, to hold communion and feet washing, to solemnize marriage, to excommunicate with counsel of the congregation those who are guilty of flagrant sins, and to have general oversight of the congregations under his charge. (*Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 2:1-8; 1 Peter 5:1-3*)
  - (2) Ministers: It is the duty of the minister to preach the Word at home or in other places as needs may require, to do pastoral work and under the direction and oversight of the bishop, to perform duties that are normally the responsibility of the bishop. (*2 Tim. 4:1, Titus 2:1*)
  - (3) Deacons: It is the duty of the deacons to see after the material needs of the needy ones in his congregation, to serve as helper to the bishop and ministers in their duties, taking charge at public services in the absence of the ministers-in short to labor in accordance with the Gospel and the direction of the congregation. Deacons would also normally be in charge of church finances. (*Acts 6:1-4; 1 Tim. 5:8-13*)
  - (4) Members: It is the duty of all members to heartily support the work of the Gospel and the health and witness of the Church by doing the following:
    - (a) exercising a life of prayer (*1 Tim. 2:8*)
    - (b) sharing with physical or financial resources. (*2 Cor. 8:1, 7*)
    - (c) being in loyal submission to its teachings and under those in authority (*Matt. 7:21-27; Heb. 13:7*)
    - (d) recognizing that it is our privilege and duty to render faithful Christian service and love to all men (*Matt. 25:34-36; 1 Cor. 15:58*)
    - (e) seeking to promote love and good will among the brotherhood and acknowledging that sowing discord among the brethren is of the Evil One. (*Prov. 6:19; Eph. 4:1-6, 31, 32; Rev. 3:10*)
    - (f) living a life of accountability to each member, giving and receiving counsel.
    - (g) participating in the great work of furthering Christ's kingdom upon the earth.
14. We believe the first day of the week to be the Lord's Day. We observe the Lord's Day as a day of rest and worship with reverence, doing Christian service and faithfully attending all services; thus maintaining fellowship with the saints. Let us refrain from buying, selling and working except in an emergency. (*Gen. 2:1-3; Isaiah 58:13-14; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25*)

15. We are to worship God in spirit and in truth; avoiding all vain display and showmanship, emphasizing modesty and Christian stewardship. We emphasize acapella congregational singing. Our wedding and funeral worship experiences shall be in keeping with congregational standards. (*Ps. 95:6; 96:9, 100; John 4:24; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:22-25*)
16. We believe the salutation of the holy kiss should be observed and practiced by members, brethren among brethren and sisters among sisters, as an expression of fervent love. (*Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14*)
17. We believe in the anointing of the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, accompanied by the prayer of faith for healing. Members shall call for the elders to administer this ordinance. (*James 5:10-18*)
18. We believe there are two opposing kingdoms to which men give their allegiance; that of Christ and that of Satan. Those who belong to Satan's Kingdom live for sin and self, and refuse the obedience of faith. The Kingdom of Christ is composed of those who have been born again and by faith have entered into a union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and who evidence the fruit of the Spirit. They recognize the Lordship of Christ, and perform all manner of good works. (*Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 9:23-26; John 3:3-21; 18:36; Rom. 6:11-18; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 4:1-32; Col. 1:12-13; Titus 2:11-14; James 3:13-17; 1 Pet. 2:9-12*)
19. We believe we are called with a holy calling to a life of separation from the world, and unto God, in which we regard our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore:
- A. We will give careful consideration to our diet, exercise and rest.
  - B. We will also avoid the production, distribution and use of harmful drugs, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages.
  - C. Our adornment will be the beauty of spirit expressed in attire that is modest, economical, simple, and avoids the world's fashions including make-up, jewelry and the wedding ring. Our goal is to have a unified testimony of nonconformity exemplified by modesty, simplicity and uniformity. Modesty and simplicity include orderliness, consistency, cleanliness, and economy. Uniformity in Christian attire aids in unifying the church and strengthening the church's witness in the world.
- In applying the above principles, we encourage our brethren to wear plain and simple attire without ties, and to have their hair cut above ears and collars. To avoid improper exposure, brethren shall wear shirts and long trousers.
- For the sake of purity, sisters shall be attired modestly and simply with dress hem lines below the knee, abstaining from sleeveless, sheer material or form-fitting clothing. We

shall avoid following the fads and fashions of our day. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. The hair is to be worn up in a fitting style, under a covering of sufficient size. The covering shall be non-ornamental, abstaining from, but not limited to, lace, beads, decorative barrettes or pins. It shall be patterned after the traditional European or the black/white hanging veil. The doily is not acceptable. We believe the Christian woman's relationship is symbolized by her uncut hair and veiled head. Understanding that there are occasional medical exceptions, minimal trimming may be allowed on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with leadership counsel. The consistent wearing of the veiling gives testimony to the Christian woman's privilege to pray, prophesy and experience divine protection. (*Num. 15:37-41; Isaiah 3:16-26; Rom.12:1-2; 1 Cor. 11:1-16; 1 Tim. 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6*)

D. We believe the stewardship of money, possessions and time should be consistent with the Christian walk. Our goal is for each member to cheerfully give their tithes and offerings as the Lord prospers them. Our first responsibility shall be to the offering schedule of the local congregation. Our giving shall be a weekly reminder of the Lord's provision. May stewardship be exercised in reference to our finances in investments and indebtedness. (*Deut. 16:17; Ps. 24:1; Prov. 22:7; Mal. 3:8-10; Luke 6:38; 12:16-21; 16:1-25; Rom. 13:8; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6,7; Heb. 13:16*)

E. Through the Spirit we will put off the old man and put on the new, seeking for holiness of life, in thought, speech, and conduct; refusing to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (*Rom. 6:11-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:20-24; Phil. 1:27; Heb. 12:14*)

F. Our goal is for each member to abstain from worldly amusements, entertainment establishments, league and professional sports events. Involvement in the occult, the New Age Movement, theaters, dance halls, game rooms, gambling (including the lottery and raffles) are forbidden. Because of the evil influences in promoting disrespect for human life, sanctity of marriage, Christian morality and the principles of non-resistance and non-conformity, let us be free from television and use extreme caution with videos, using them only for home and family pictures and educational purposes that do not conflict with Christian values. The popular practice of watching entertainment videos shall be prohibited. (*Job. 31:1; Ps. 1:1-2, 101:3; Prov. 23:19-35; John 17:14-18; Rom. 1:18-32, 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:9-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 2:8-10; 4:22-24; 5:1-12; Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 3:1-10; 1 Tim. 6:6-14; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Pet. 1:13-17; 2:9-12; 10-14; 1 John 2:15-17; 3:1-3*)

G. We recognize the internet as a powerful tool. It can be used very effectively in helping us to fulfill our work and communicate in ways our world has never seen before. But it's ability to corrupt the soul through immoral and ungodly content, as well as wasting the precious gift of time that God has given us, is also clearly evident. In order to use this tool in as safe and honorable way possible, and to remain open and pure to those around us, we have these guidelines:

- Any computer that children use with internet access should be kept in an open public place, and we strongly recommend having a reputable filtering program installed.

- In order to guard against the devil gaining a foothold of a secret part of our lives, we require our members to be accountable to another member from our body. (brother to brother, sister to sister) This can be done either through accountability software, or through structured times of sharing and accountability. (*John 3:19-21*)

20. We believe marriage is intended by God to be the union of one man and one woman for life, dissolved only by death, and that Christians shall marry only other like-minded believers. (*Gen. 1:27-28; Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10*)

We believe all homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender activity or any sexual activity outside of a God ordained marriage to be unscriptural and will not be accepted among our members. (*Lev. 18:23; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10*)

21. We believe the family was designed by God for the purpose of fostering unity, promoting purity, training and raising godly children, and being an example in the community of Christ's relationship to His Church; that the men be leaders in the home and in the church. Leaders, without wrath and doubting, men must sacrificially love and honor women as joint heirs with them in Christ. In God's design, women are to be subject to the authority of man. As a help-meet to man, women have the liberty to minister in the home and in the church, except where prohibited by the Scriptures. (*Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:8-12; 5:14*)

The home was the first institution for man. The husband/wife relationship shall parallel Christ-church relationship as given in Eph. 5:22-33. Parents are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord which includes family worship led by the father. Parents shall lead and teach their children to be in subjection and respectful toward those in authority (God, government, church, parents) and to be law-abiding citizens in relation to the state. (*Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:22-6:4*)

22. We believe it is the will of God for Christians not to resist him who is evil, but rather to show love to all. The example and teaching of non-resistance by our Lord Jesus Christ applies to every area of life; personal injustice, litigation, industrial strife, and military involvement. (*Matt. 5:38-48; John 13:34-35; 18:36; Rom. 12:18-21; 1 Cor. 6:1-11; 1 Pet. 2:18-25*)

23. We believe the State is ordained of God to maintain law and order in society. The Church should also witness to the authorities of God's redeeming love in Christ, and to His sovereignty over all men. In law enforcement, the State does not and cannot operate on the nonresistant principles of Christ's Kingdom. Therefore, nonresistant Christians cannot undertake any service in the state or in society which would violate the principles of love and holiness as taught by Christ and the inspired Word. (*Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17*)

Our goal is to witness in word and deed to all men, including government leaders, concerning principles of righteousness and justice. We seek to obey the New Testament

commands to render honor to the authorities, to pay our taxes, to obey all laws which do not conflict with the higher law of God, and to pray for our rulers. Since the government's methods of maintaining order in society differ from Scriptural teachings for the Christian, the principle of separation of church and state must be maintained. It is inconsistent for Christians to become involved in political offices, voting, military service, jury duty and law suits. In legal matters, a simple affirmation is to be used. Union membership, public protests and racial discrimination are not in keeping with the New Testament covenant.

*(Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:14-21; 13:1-7; 1 Cor. 6:1-8)*

24. We believe it is our Christian obligation to be strictly truthful and transparent in life and doctrine, with no secrecy or hypocrisy. Therefore, we will not be members of secret societies, or lodges, nor use the swearing of oaths. *(Matt. 5:33-37; 23:16-22; John 18:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 5:11-12; James 5:12)*
25. We believe the latter days will be characterized by general lawlessness and departure from the faith; that on the part of the world "iniquity shall abound" and "evil men shall wax worse and worse"; that on the part of the Church there will be a falling away and "the love of many shall wax cold"; that false teachers shall abound, both deceiving and being deceived; and further, that present conditions indicate we are now living in these perilous times. *(Matt. 24:9-14; 1 Thess.5:1-11; 2 Thess.2:3-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-9, 13; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 3:3-7)*
26. We believe Satan, the great archenemy and adversary of human souls, is the slanderer and accuser of God and man. He is a real being with a distinct personality, and his goals are to tempt and deceive mankind, and thwart the plan of God. When possible, he takes full control of those who can be swayed to his advantage and at his will. While he has absolute sway, so far as his dominion extends, there are limits beyond which he is not permitted to go. Finally, at the close of time, God will cast Satan and all his hosts from His presence into the lake of fire for their eternal punishment. *(Isaiah 14:12-15; Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 13:16; 22:3; Acts 8:1; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:13-14; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 John 3:8-10; 4:4 Rev. 2:10; 12:9; 20:2, 10)*
27. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the bodily resurrection of all men, both of the just and of the unjust-of the just to the resurrection of life, and of the unjust to the resurrection of condemnation. *(Luke 24:30-31; John 5:28-29; 20:20, 26-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:20-23, 42-44; Rev. 20:13)*
28. We believe in the personal, imminent coming of our Lord, and look forward to this blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. This hope bids us to comfort sorrowing saints and live a life of watchfulness, fidelity, wisdom, activity, simplicity, self-restraint, prayer and abiding in Christ. *(Matt. 25; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18;*



*Titus 2:11-13; Heb. 10:37; 2 Pet. 3:11-14)*

29. We believe all humans will have a conscious existence after death. In the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss and comfort, but the wicked will be in a place of torment, in a state of conscious suffering and despair. (*Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; 1 Thess. 5:10; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 21:8*)
30. We believe Heaven is the final home of the righteous, where we will dwell in our glorified bodies with God and his angels, in fullness of joy forever and ever, and that: hell is the place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels, where with them the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever and ever. (*Ps. 9:17; Matt. 13:36-50; Matt. 25:31-46; John 14:1-7; 1 Thess.4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Heb. 10:26-31; Jude 6, 23; Rev. 7:9-17; 20:10-15*)