



Mennonite Church USA **Written Communication Standards**

The Mennonite Church USA Written Communication Standards were created to provide a comprehensive reference for terms related to Mennonite Church USA and church language. This abbreviated guide addresses the most common questions about style that relate specifically to Mennonite Church USA. Additional questions not covered in this piece may be resolved by consulting *The Associated Press Stylebook* or a dictionary.

Preferred church and denominational terms

Anabaptist. Used to refer to someone who believes an adult confession of faith is required for baptism.

area conference. Use area conference, not conference. See complete list of Mennonite Church USA's area conferences at the end of this document.

believers baptism, believers church. No apostrophe needed.

Bible, biblical. Bible is capitalized; biblical is not.

biennial, biannual. When possible use "every two years" for biennial and "twice a year" for biannual to avoid confusion between these similar words.

Church, the. Use when referring to the broad Christian church. When referring to Mennonite Church USA, use "the denomination" rather than "the church."

churchwide. Not church-wide. Refers to a program or ministry of Mennonite Church USA that serves all parts of the denomination, as in "the churchwide agencies of Mennonite Church USA."

churchwide agency. Refers to each of the four program units of Mennonite Church USA – Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency, MennoMedia and Everence. When listing Executive Board as well as the churchwide agencies, use churchwide ministries.

communion, Communion. Capitalize when referring to a Communion service. Avoid using this term to refer to Mennonite Church USA. Instead, use "denomination."

Delegate Assembly. The governing body that meets every other year to conduct the business of Mennonite Church USA.

denomination. A generic term that, when applied to Mennonite Church USA, includes members, congregations, area conferences, Executive Board and churchwide agencies.

developing world or developing nations. The economically developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Also referred to as “Global South.” Avoid using “Third World.”

executive director. Job title for the staff leader of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and many of its churchwide agencies. No capitals.

Executive Board. The group of services and ministries that relate directly to the executive director of Mennonite Church USA. Includes the Executive Director’s office, Finance, Communications, Convention Planning, Leadership Development, Transformative Peacemaking, Holistic Witness and Interchurch Relations. Avoid listing Executive Board as an agency or churchwide agency.

firstfruits, firstfruits giving. The biblical principle of giving one’s first and best to God. Use “firstfruits” (one word; no space; no capital).

God. Capitalize all names and metaphoric references: *God the Father, Holy Ghost, Creator*. However, use lowercase personal pronouns and adjectives: *he, thou, the almighty God, the eternal Word*.

Gospel(s), gospel. Capitalize when referring to the first four books of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. Otherwise, lowercase.

holistic. Not wholistic.

international references. Organizations with non-English names should be referred to in the original language and followed up by the English translation in parentheses. An acronym would be based upon the title in the original language, not English.

Jesus. May be called Jesus Christ or Christ. Personal pronouns referring to Jesus are lowercase. *Jesus’* is the possessive form.

Mennonite Church Canada. Use *Mennonite Church Canada* on first reference. Second reference should be *MC Canada*. Do not use MCC to refer to Mennonite Church Canada.

Mennonite Church USA vision statement. Also referred to as *Vision: Healing & Hope*. The statement is: *God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.*

missional church. Becoming a missional church is the primary aspiration of Mennonite Church USA. To be missional is to pursue Christ’s purpose in the world. Missional does not refer exclusively to the mission field or mission work, but to all parts of church life and ministry.

partnership. Use to describe the relationship and cooperative programs between Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Avoid “binational.”

Racial/Ethnic. Use as a general reference term such as “Racial/Ethnic groups.” Do not use this term to describe people who have been underrepresented or excluded because of race or ethnicity. Instead for individual people use the appropriate specific term such as African-American, Asian, Hispanic or Native American. The term Racial/Ethnic was agreed upon by various Racial/Ethnic leaders in Mennonite Church USA to replace the term “People of color” because of the negative connotations it has for some Racial/Ethnic people. Do not use “People of color” or “minority.” Always capitalize and use forward slash (Racial/Ethnic).

transformation. Refers to the creation of Mennonite Church USA. Avoid merger or integration.

Mennonite Church USA organizations and programs

Archives of Mennonite Church USA. Historical manuscripts, photos, tapes, and records of Mennonite Church USA, located on the campuses of Goshen College and Bethel College. Archives are part of the Historical Committee’s work.

African-American Mennonite Association. (second reference: *AAMA*) The recognized constituency group for African-American congregations in Mennonite Church USA. Serves as a voice of advocacy and works to equip and link African-American as well as African-American integrated congregations within Mennonite Church USA. AAMA also holds an assembly every two years.

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. (second reference: *AMBS*) The seminary of Mennonite Church USA located in Elkhart, Ind. In 2012, the name was changed to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, replacing Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Bethel College. Four-year Mennonite Church USA college located in North Newton, Kan.

Bluffton University. Four-year Mennonite Church USA university located in Bluffton, Ohio.

Eastern Mennonite Missions. (second reference: *EMM*) The mission agency of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Eastern Mennonite University. (second reference: *EMU*) A union of the former Eastern Mennonite College and Eastern Mennonite Seminary. In listings of Mennonite Church USA institutions of higher education, the two current names should both be used: *Eastern Mennonite University* and *Eastern Mennonite Seminary*.

Everence. A churchwide agency of Mennonite Church USA based in Goshen, Ind. The agency’s mission is to lead Anabaptists toward greater practice of biblical principles of holistic stewardship. In 2010 the name Everence replaced MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid). One of the four churchwide agencies.

Executive Board. See Mennonite Church USA Executive Board

Faith & Life Resources. (obsolete) A former division of Mennonite Publishing.

Goshen College. Four-year Mennonite Church USA college located in Goshen, Ind.

Herald Press. A division of MennoMedia for trade book publication.

Hesston College. Two-year Mennonite Church USA college located in Hesston, Kan.

Historical Committee. Part of the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA that includes the Archives of Mennonite Church USA on the campuses of Bethel College and Goshen College.

Iglesia Menonita Hispana. The recognized constituency group for Hispanic congregations of Mennonite Church USA.

MennoMedia. Do not abbreviate. A churchwide agency of Mennonite Church USA that engages and shapes church and society with resources for living the faith from an Anabaptist perspective. Includes electronic media, public media and print media. One of the four churchwide agencies.

Mennonite, The. Official periodical of Mennonite Church USA. Always use italics.

Mennonite Church. Used only in historical references since this entity no longer exists. Use *Mennonite churches* for more than one Mennonite congregation.

Mennonite Church USA. The official name of the denomination resulting from the transformation of the former Mennonite Church and the former General Conference Mennonite Church. Avoid *MC USA* or *MCUSA*.

Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly. (second reference: *Assembly*, not *General Assembly* or *Convention*) The governing body that meets every other year to conduct the business of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. (second reference: *Executive Board*). The chief governing body of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Education Agency. (preferred second reference: *MEA*. An acceptable second/subsequent reference is *the Education Agency*.) A churchwide agency of Mennonite Church USA. Strengthens the life, witness, and identity of Mennonite Church USA through school-based education. One of the four churchwide agencies.

Mennonite Foundation. (second reference: *MF* or *the foundation*) An organization of Everence that provides planned charitable giving for individuals and planned giving and investment advisory services for institutions.

Mennonite Health Services Alliance. (second reference: *MHS Alliance*) Health and human service ministries of Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Brethren U.S. and Brethren in Christ.

Mennonite Men. A jointly owned partnership of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The organization aims to provide an Anabaptist perspective on manhood and develop resources for men's groups on specific issues.

Mennonite Mission Network. (second reference: *Mission Network* or *the Mission Network*) (Avoid *MMN* or *the Network*) The mission and service agency of Mennonite Church USA. One of the four churchwide agencies.

Mennonite Schools Council. (second reference: *MSC*) A Mennonite Education Agency organization of Mennonite schools serving students in pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Mennonite Women USA. Ministers to the women of Mennonite Church USA by resourcing women's groups and individual women by nurturing lives in Christ, studying the Bible, utilizing gifts, hearing each other, and engaging in mission and service. The group's magazine is called *timbrel* (no capital; always italicized).

Native Mennonite Ministries. (second reference: *NMM*) The recognized constituency group for Native American congregations of Mennonite Church USA. Sponsors an intertribal assembly every two years.

Third Way Media. (obsolete) A former division of Mennonite Mission Network for electronic media.

Virginia Mennonite Missions. The mission agency of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Other Mennonite organizations

Mennonite Central Committee. (second reference: *MCC*) A relief, service and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.

Mennonite Disaster Service. (second reference: *MDS*) Group that helps in emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and fires.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates. (second reference: *MEDA*) An association of people committed to nurturing and expressing their Christian faith in business or work settings.

Mennonite World Conference. (Avoid *MWC*) Worldwide organization of 100 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ national churches from 57 countries on six continents with offices in Bogotá, Colombia; Kenshasa, D.R. Congo and Kitchener, ON, Canada. Holds a global conference approximately every six years.

Area Conferences of Mennonite Church USA (21)

Allegheny Mennonite Conference
Atlantic Coast Conference
Central District Conference
Central Plains Mennonite Conference
Eastern District Conference
Franconia Mennonite Conference
Franklin Mennonite Conference
Gulf States Mennonite Conference
Illinois Mennonite Conference
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference
Lancaster Mennonite Conference
Mountain States Mennonite Conference
New York Mennonite Conference
North Central Conference of the Mennonite Church
Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA
Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference
South Central Mennonite Conference
Southeast Mennonite Conference
Virginia Mennonite Conference
Western District Conference

Mennonite Church USA Directory

The Mennonite Church USA Directory is available online at www.MennoniteUSA.org. It includes the following information.

- Churchwide calendar of events for Executive Board, churchwide agencies and area conferences
- Addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail information for:
 - Executive Board
 - churchwide agencies
 - area conferences
 - pastors
 - healthcare organizations
 - schools
 - camps
 - historical societies
 - other Mennonite organizations

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