

Atlantic Northeast District Way Forward Commitment

*“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you
to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that
together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”*
~ Romans 15:5-7 NRSV

We of the Atlantic Northeast District are aware of the divisions in the Church of the Brethren, and we grieve that some are choosing to leave. For those of us who, at this time, are choosing to remain with the Church of the Brethren in the Atlantic Northeast District, we desire to share our witness to the world as a church that is known by embodying Christ’s love for each other, so we embrace this way forward together as a district.

As the Atlantic Northeast District Board, we commit to:

- Support all church members and all congregations who wish to continue to be Church of the Brethren, welcoming them into the fellowship and shared ministry of the district;
- Make available resources for congregations which helpfully interpret Brethren beliefs and practices, so that we might all learn more about Brethren teachings and traditions;
- Encourage the District Ministry Commission to uphold the importance of pastors embracing Brethren beliefs and teaching those beliefs to their congregations;
- Provide opportunities for congregations and their members to enter into dialogue with each other around issues of which we may not all be of one mind;
- Provide leadership when disagreements arise, and to respond according to the guidelines outlined in the 2004 Annual Conference Statement “Congregational Disagreement with Annual Conference Decisions.”

As individuals and congregations, we commit to:

- Remain in fellowship with each other and the Atlantic Northeast District, striving to support each other’s ministries as we all follow Jesus Christ;
- Extend respect to each other and strive to understand one another, refraining from disparaging each other while openly upholding others’ dignity, as we are called to seek the mind of Christ together and join in common ministry opportunities;
- Embrace a renewed emphasis on teaching our members about Brethren beliefs and practices, affirming Brethren identity, as we uphold the teachings in the New Testament as understood by the Church of the Brethren;
- Participate in respectful conversations within the district regarding controversial issues;
- Deal forthrightly with disagreements that may arise, honoring the call of the Spirit while striving to be faithful to the call of Scripture, as outlined in the 2004 Annual Conference Statement “Congregational Disagreement with Annual Conference Decisions.”

*“The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one,
I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know
that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*
~ John 17:22-23 NRSV