

April 1, 2020



Dear Mennonite Church Alberta,

During this time of uncertainty, the faith we share in Jesus Christ is more important than ever. Today we are writing to invite you as the individuals and congregations that make up MCA into the next phase in our spiritual journey together. Our 3-year action plan is called,

Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ...in Life, in Community, in the World.

This theme developed through the prayerful discernment of our Vision 20/20 process. Through surveys, gatherings, and reflection together, we as MCA affirmed the following:

- We are excited about being the church together but uncertain about the future.
- Renewal is part of a natural spiritual cycle. Just as God worked through times in the “wilderness,” God can and will work through times of uncertainty in our lives today.
- As individuals, as congregations, and as the broader church community, we are called to surrender in trust to God. Through opening ourselves to the leading of God’s spirit we will grow every more fully into being the body of Christ together.

For the next 3 years we invite you as individuals and congregations to join in our “E3” action plan. The first year will focus on **Encountering, Embracing, and Embodying Christ in life**, where we will be examining our personal experiences and openness to God. In year two we will focus on **community**, and year three our focus will turn to all the **world**.

As we move into Year 1 we will be asking:

- How do we nurture our relationship with God?
- How do we reclaim prayer & spiritual disciplines?
- How do we remember that we are deeply beloved?
- How are we spiritually formed so we are able to give ourselves in the world?

Throughout 2020 watch for resources and suggestions for how to become involved. The following steps will help us live into our action plan together:

1. Look through the take-home plan for congregations that accompanies this letter.
2. Watch the MCA website and Communiqué for resources and ideas.
3. Incorporate the themes of E3 into your worship, Sunday School, and ministry plans.
4. Encourage engagement and commitment from church members and your congregation.
5. Provide opportunities for people to share their experiences. MCA is developing a webpage forum where people can post their reflections.

Paul writes, “For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” (Eph. 2:10) We hope you will join us as together we live into a renewed calling to be what God has created us to be!

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, On behalf of the E3 Reference Group
Debbie Baergen, Werner DeJong, Laura Wiebe, and June Miller

Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ...In Life

Year 1 Action Plan for Congregation

An Invitation to Become Involved



As we live into this theme as individuals, congregations, and all of MCA, we are invited to consider how to join in this journey. Here are some suggested steps:

1. Connect as MCA Delegates, Pastors, and Congregational Leaders to develop a plan for your congregation. Consider how your congregation might incorporate these themes in to your worship, Sunday School, and ministry plans. Note: Some congregations may already have begun thinking about these questions and planning next steps.
2. Review the resources MCA has put together online [here](#). These include:
 - a. Where do we go from here? --a brochure summarizing Vision 2020 and the background that led to the Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ theme.
 - b. Bucket-List - a list of action items designed for individuals, congregations, committees, and MCA for living into Year 1 of E3.
 - c. A bulletin insert that can be used to promote E3 in your congregation.***
 - d. Links to an online forum for sharing ideas, reflections, and experiences.
 - e. Resources, video clips, and other materials as they become available.
3. Invite everyone in your congregation to become involved. Some ideas include:
 - a. Give each congregation member a copy of the invitation letter or read it on Sunday morning.
 - b. Announce and distribute background and promotional materials.
 - c. Announce and distribute the lists of personal action items.
 - d. Devote space on bulletin boards to feature E3 materials and action ideas.
4. Consider ways to encourage commitment. How might people express a commitment to one or more of the suggested action items, or other personal ways to live into Year 1?
 - a. Set aside one Sunday worship for a sermon or personal sharing about how the "Bucket List" ideas have deepened faith.
 - b. Include an act of committal. Invite individuals indicating their commitment to an action item by writing it down and putting it into an offering plate, or picking up a visual reminder (eg. a card, fridge magnet, or bookmark). Perhaps people could sign up on a bulletin board display.
 - c. Connect people together to share their experiences, struggles and successes. This could be done in pairs, small groups, Sunday School time, or during worship.
5. Share your congregation's experiences with other churches in our conference. We will look for opportunities to connect congregations together, share stories through the MCA Communique, among the Pastors Council, and at our annual gatherings.
6. Watch for new ideas and updates from MCA as we walk through this spiritual journey together!