

VISION STATEMENT PROCESS & PROPOSAL

General Conference 2022 will mark the end of the third year that we have been working together as a denomination, led by the Executive Director and Executive Board of The Brethren Church, to write a new vision statement for our denomination. This has been good work, and we are so grateful to everyone who has participated in conversation and prayerfully supported this endeavor.

In 2019, the work began of listening to our people and discerning where the Lord was leading us. We started by having a number of listening sessions at conference, conversations with the national staff, as well as virtual town hall meetings with elders of our largest churches, women of The Brethren Church, people of color of The Brethren Church, and all of our regions. During these meetings, the heart of our people was heard: a desire for growth, a desire to be a people connected by Word and Spirit, seeking to love those around us in new ways that share the gospel far and wide.

After these initial listening sessions, the Executive Board, following the leadership of the Executive Director, crafted a first draft of a vision statement. This draft was then shared with the same groups that had been a part of the initial conversations, and a second round of virtual town hall meetings were held. These conversations were not easy, but they were good and fruitful. Differing opinions and beliefs were heard, contradicted, and still valued despite contradiction.

After these discussions, the Executive Board has again revised the initial draft, attempting to capture the things they heard were missing, and holding the tension of differing opinions in order to draft what we heard from the Holy Spirit. As a result, a second draft of the vision statement has been written to be presented to the conference for further discussion and a vote of affirmation.

This entire process has been uniquely Brethren. Nothing in our polity says we had to go through this time consuming and sometimes difficult process. But our Brethren identity, which values the Holy Spirit working in each of us, and the communal interpretation of the Word the Lord has given us, demands that we do the hard work of listening to each other and doing this together. As Brethren who historically find ourselves in the middle of two poles of our culture, it is not surprising that we must hold

the tension of our own people as well. Our hope and prayer is that we can take the steps we are called to take to be closer to the Kingdom of God, as a diverse family of churches, led by the Word and the Spirit. When all is said and done, we trust that the Spirit will lead us exactly where we need to go.

Here is the most recent draft of the vision statement of The Brethren Church, to be voted on by the General Conference:

“Our vision is to be a diverse family of Brethren churches, led by the Word and Spirit, innovating together to create spaces for every tribe, language, race, and nation to encounter God’s redemptive Kingdom.”