

Listening, Living Together, & Loving One Another Even When We Disagree
a Workshop presented by the MCSask Listening & Discernment Committee

We hope to guide a discussion within a positive, welcoming space. This is a place for honesty and openness and for respect, a place where we can disagree and talk about our disagreements while still caring for one another.

It's up to the people here to help make this a positive conversation. So open your hearts to share your stories, as well as to care for and respect those sharing with you. Ask open-ended questions. Listen to understand what others share (without worrying about what you will say in response). Be grateful for others sharing their opinions, stories, and beliefs with you; these are gifts, whether you agree with them or not. Give people space to explain themselves without boxing them in with assumptions.

As we all commit to this kind of conversation, we become a community where God works.

Our first questions are about our family of churches, MC Sask and Mennonite Church Canada. In our conversation about same-gender marriage, this communion has been debated, threatened, even broken. So let's talk about our communion with one another.

- 1) What do you value about being connect to other congregations?
- 2) What do you see as threatening our communion of congregations?

Next we focus more clearly on same-gender marriage. There are lots of emotions, convictions, relationships, and dearly loved people involved when we talk about this topic. It's not uncommon for emotions and convictions to overflow: we let things get out of hand, say things we shouldn't, or pull back and shut down. This has made sustained conversation around this topic in our national church, area church, and local congregations difficult. Thinking specifically of same-gender marriage,

- 3) How do you perceive discernment has been handled?
- 4) Do you feel your voice has been heard? Why or why not?
- 5) How do you feel you have heard the voices of others?

The purpose of the L&D Committee is to help our congregations discern how to live together and love one another even when we disagree.

One barrier to this life together is that many of us do unloving things and many of us feel unloved. This reminds that we're not talking about abstract and ideas and policies, but about people—people with whom we may agree or not, people who are all part of our family in Christ.

- 6) What might cause someone to feel unloved in the church?
- 7) How would you respond to someone feeling unloved for some of these reasons?

Thank you!