



will encourage the Church to:

- **Claim our biblical and theological foundation regarding the care of God's Creation.**

Mennonites have a rich, yet often untapped heritage regarding the created world and our relationship to it. Our tradition teaches us that God made all things, and that as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to be caretakers of land, air, water and all species. Because of Christ's power to transform relationships and break down walls of hostility, we are called as reconcilers to work together to protect and heal creation.

We claim the resources present in the Bible, within the Christian tradition as a whole, and within the history of our own denomination. We envision a Church that is grounded theologically, biblically and ethically regarding its relationship with God's creation and that expresses this respect for the created world in its worship.

We are also open to learning from science and other worldviews. Using Christian teaching as our foundation, we will seek contemporary insights that can inform our lives and actions in light of the current ecological crisis. This will require dialogue and creative engagement.

- **Discover the ties that link all created beings to each other and to God.**

We believe that experiencing creation in some way is vital for a rich and full life: as a farmer, growing food in ways that honor biological systems; or as a child, tenderly caring for a tomato plant on an urban balcony; or as a Ph.D. student of ecology, grappling with predator-prey relationships in a national park. Interacting with nature has an important place in the life of the Church because it inspires awe and guides our response to our fellow creatures. The church's role includes providing opportunities to explore and study the natural world.

Interacting with nature has an important place in the life of the Church because it inspires awe and draws us to worship the Creator. When we see the beauty

and diversity of the created world, we witness the glory of God. We also begin to understand our place within it. We are a part of, not separate from creation. There is a great interconnectedness—kinship—between all parts of creation, under-girded by our relationship with God. Learning to understand this kinship within the context of our faith enriches our relationship with the Creator and our responsibilities as disciples.

Furthermore, what we learn in nature help us see how our actions affect the wellbeing of natural systems and of other people. Humans are dependent on natural systems; on air, soil, water, and biodiversity. Engaging people in hands-on learning in nature—as well as the built environment—can help us to choose healthy responses that sustain Creation instead of making devastating errors. Exploring ecological systems also provides a model for human interactions including economic, social, and political systems in the global context.

• **Confess the harm we have caused the natural world and our neighbors.**

Daunting environmental issues frame our current reality. Knowingly and unknowingly, through personal and corporate failures, human beings have injured the world God loves. We have degraded the earth's systems, harmed other species and caused the poorest and most vulnerable human beings to suffer the greatest environmental consequences.

Recognizing how we have contributed to this brokenness is a critical first step. As we become aware of how the natural world works, we are called to acknowledge our sins and repent. Confession of the environmental problems we have caused is a natural part of both corporate worship services and personal spirituality. Naming our wrongs, confessing them and accepting forgiveness contributes to spiritual wholeness. We are freed to pursue regenerative acts that lead to redemption and environmental justice.

• **Act faithfully to restore the earth.**

We envision a Church that embraces stewardship of God's good earth and joins the Creator in the work of sustaining creation. We recognize our need for God's holy, healing Spirit as we confront environmental challenges.

We will strive to live in ways that are healing, reconciling and restorative. This includes seeking fulfillment through relationships rather than material things, limiting our impact on creation and developing good habits. We will engage in restorative activities that bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it.

We will call people to take creative action in homes, congregations, schools, workplaces, and church agencies. Our role includes encouraging innovations

and modeling new ways of living that can build strong communities.

We will work toward peace and justice through moving toward a more equitable distribution of earth's resources, by promoting fair-trade economics and by protecting land. As we model new priorities for creation care in our lives and communities, we will witness to the powers on the transforming role of Jesus Christ. Joy, humility, and Sabbath rest will shape our approach.