

Covenant of Understanding

Peace for the City and Central Plains Mennonite Conference

Peace For The City fosters a sincere desire to live out the radical Kingdom in our city by seeking peace and pursuing it (1 Peter 3:8, Jeremiah 29:7). Founder, Michael Lillie, has extensive experience in South Minneapolis working from a pastoral perspective with adults in substance abuse recovery, many of which have been incarcerated, have mental illness, and have been involved in gang activity. Peace For The City has built solid relationships with substance abuse centers and churches and is trusted to do ministry with a very fragile population.

Peace For The City desires to be aligned with a strong denomination that will embrace their vision, which is to break the cycle of violence in the city. Michael writes, “Our methods are rooted in a commitment to non-violence we find in traditional and contemporary Anabaptist practices. Although we are not a church, we recognize the body of Christ is manifested in many forms. To participate in the body of Christ requires accountability and oversight by a legitimate ecclesiastical body. Our desire is for each board member and volunteer to be in full accordance with the *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* (1995). Peace For The City hopes to build relationships with Mennonite churches in the Central Plains Mennonite Conference and beyond in an effort to further the call God has put on this ministry. Through this partnership we believe that we can learn from each other.”

Peace for the City is seeking a relationship with Central Plains Mennonite Conference because they are new to the Mennonite Church and do not have an extensive network for prayer, finances, accountability, oversight, and encouragement. Michael Lillie hopes that recognition by the Central Plains Conference will provide a platform to do ministry with like-minded people. This partnership will offer credibility with future donors and partners who may feel safer partnering with a non-profit governed by a reputable body.

Peace For The City Strengths and Gifts:

- A ministry that seeks to be more singularly focused in areas of greatest need.
- A ministry that has experience and has developed trust with emotionally fragile individuals and those on the margins who often suffer from oppression.
- A deep commitment to developing incarnational relationships that are holistic and authentic.
- A desire to see lives transformed by the Gospel.
- The ability to persevere.
- A desire to transform the culture of death into a culture of life.

Central Plains Mennonite Conference Strengths and Gifts:

- A desire to embrace what God is doing in our region.
- A strong spiritual heritage grounded in Scripture.
- Validation for Peace for the City as a legitimate and authorized ministry.
- Providing experienced counsel through governance oversight.
- The ability to be an outside source of encouragement and accountability.

Peace For The City Needs:

- Conference wide prayer support.
- Fellowship with Central Plains Mennonite congregations.

- Accountability and financial support.
- Volunteers for service projects or retreats.

Central Plains Mennonite Conference Needs:

- Trustworthy portals for ministry among the most fragile and marginal individuals in society.
- Experiences where we can bear witness to death being transformed to life.
- Opportunities to learn how to participate as mutual partners in mission.
- Increased confidence in and passion for the transforming work of the Gospel.

Partnership Commitments

Because we share in a common cause of reaching the world through holistic witness, Central Plains Mennonite Conference and Peace for the City seek a partnership committed to supporting and expanding the mission of each partner.

To do so, Central Plains Mennonite Conference agrees to the following commitments:

1. We will identify members of Central Plains Mennonite Conference to serve on the Peace for the City Board of Directors. One member will come from the conference ministry staff.
2. We will endorse and validate this ministry as a partner of our conference as Peace for the City develops its organization and secures adequate funding.
3. We will provide contact information that will help Peace for the City recruit service teams and other volunteers from congregations in our conference.
4. We will encourage prayer support for this ministry among our congregations.
5. We will seek to open channels for communication and awareness to all the parts of Mennonite Church USA.

Peace for the City agrees to the following commitments:

1. We will share prayer requests with the members of Central Plains Mennonite Conference
2. We will develop a board of directors with a majority of Central Plains Mennonite Conference and seek additional board members who are aligned with the *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* (1995).
3. We will develop service opportunities for volunteers that are aligned with Anabaptist theology and values.
4. We will develop opportunities that adequately attend to the safety and ethical concerns of both clients and volunteer.

Together we will seek regular opportunities for dialogue between Peace for the City and conference leaders to develop new levels of understanding about what it means to be the church in mission.

Michael Lillie, Peace for the City

Diane Zaerr Brenneman
Conference Moderator
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