Welcome to the Twin Cities!

Minneapolis and St. Paul combine to form the beloved Twin Cities with a population of over 3.5 million. We boast one of the most culturally diverse metro areas in the US. In recent decades the Twin Cities has been central to refugees from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. St. Paul has the largest urban Hmong population in the world and Minneapolis is home to the largest community of Somali people in the US.

An illustration of our broad diversity is the annual Festival of Nations celebration in St. Paul where over 80 different ethnic groups are represented. On the other side of the river, Minneapolis's Phillips neighborhood is the single most diverse neighborhood in the country with residents speaking nearly 100 different languages. We see this as an opportunity to touch the world with God's grace.

People from so many different backgrounds living in such close proximity has yielded a beautiful richness in Twin Cities' culture. We have an array of award-winning restaurants, neighborhood cafes, microbrews, and ice cream shops. Our art scene boasts world-renowned theatres, music, dance, fine art, literature, modern art museums, media arts and more. Our extensive and well-maintained park and trail systems are vital in keeping our citizens active and engaged with nature. Minneapolis was one of the first urban areas to launch a bike share program with a current fleet of over 1,500 bicycles for citywide use.

The Twin Cities is also a very spiritually diverse area. Christianity remains the largest spiritual demographic, but there are also sizeable pockets of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Wiccans, and Sikhs.

Our local Mennonite churches hosting this year’s meeting include Faith Mennonite, Emmanuel Mennonite, Hmong Mennonite, Rochester Mennonite, Shalom Mennonite, Mennonite Worker, and Third Way. We are deeply grateful to Woodland Hills Church for hosting our meeting, and lending their support. Greg Boyd, senior pastor of Woodland Hills, is this year’s speaker. Greg is a well-known author and common presence at Anabaptist gatherings. He began with Woodland Hills when it started as a Baptist General Conference church plant in the suburb of Woodbury, in 1992. The church relocated to their current building in 2001, which used to be a KMart. The building now houses a variety of ministries, including Hmong Mennonite Church that meets there Sunday afternoons.

For this year’s meeting, we hope to bring a taste of the Twin Cities diversity to all participants. Catered meals will offer something out of the ordinary, though we also plan to treat you to a local dessert popular with all cultures. Here are some of the highlights planned:

Thursday: Sessions begin with a meal from Hmong Mennonite Church (donation-based).

Friday: Interaction with local ministries followed by a meal at a local ethnic restaurant.

Saturday: Workshops followed by Izzy’s ice cream, a talent show, and mission moments.

Sunday: Worship and communion at Woodland Hills at their 9:30am service.

We look forward to hosting you in the Twin Cities!