

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is a diverse community  
Transformed by the love of God  
Inspired by the hope we find in Jesus  
Called to action by the power of the Holy Spirit



The Learning Commons focuses on the MCEC priority of “Developing Leaders.”

## MCEC Learning Commons – 2022-23 Guide

***Theme: “Digging Deep – Being mindful of God who strengthens our Leadership for the shared journey ahead.”***

We’re so glad that you are joining us for this year’s learning journey! This is your Guide to some of the questions that will shape our learning together in the next year. At the heart of the [MCEC Learning Commons](#) and this Guide are beliefs that:

1. God is moving and at work in our world and church. God is restoring, reconciling and growing individuals and communities into the likeness of Christ.
2. We have a unique opportunity to be attentive and aligned with what God is doing within our life together and the world around us. The ability to align with God’s work is a reflection of our openness of mind, heart and will.

Early in the new year we put out a survey inviting feedback on the kinds of learning that feel important and timely as we look ahead to the next season. These results were reviewed further on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by a group of 12 people. A core value of the Learning Commons is collaboration with our community of learners. **Thank you!** Your input is particularly helpful in focusing and sharpening the guiding questions that will guide this year’s shared journey.

This feedback and discussion identified the core competency of **leadership** as a primary area of focus for the year ahead. We wonder what it will mean to lead as we emerge from the pandemic, growing in our understanding of new missional challenges and feeling the effects of isolation and fatigue. One of the respondents to the survey said, “We’ve come through an intensive 22 months of limitations. It has drained us...The good news is we can stop trying to make it by faking it. What a perfect time to talk about losing our lives in order to find them.” We agree! This is not a time for quick fixes, but a digging deep into spiritual disciplines and reflections for leadership. Let’s ask ourselves questions and provide avenues of exploration that help us find new and renewed understanding and experience of God’s presence, strength, hope, and healing.

### Guiding Questions for this year are:

1. Respondents to the survey indicated a deep sense of need in the area of self-awareness and emotional health over the past year. How do we care for ourselves and others at this time of tremendous change, exhaustion, frustration and uncertainty? What spiritual practices might sustain us? Is there a renewed invitation to mindfulness as we seek to centre ourselves in the presence of God?

2. One respondent noted that “building back as congregations and pastors after the pandemic” will begin simply by being together. How do we invest in each other and ourselves by fostering places of conversation, prayer, and encouragement? (How can you shape conversation in your MCEC cluster toward these ends?)
3. Much of leadership involves clarifying, articulating and lifting the core values and principles of those being led. The pandemic has stripped away the habits of faith and the traditions of attendance. What is at the core of “WHY” you and I gather for worship, for mission and for...? What are the faith practices, new and old, that can shape our leadership and our congregations and invite us to re-engage?
4. We have experienced the current political context of division and polarization in our families and congregations, as we navigate questions of COVID practices, mandates and restrictions. What are the leadership characteristics and skills that help us be the leaders needed in a time like this?
5. Electronic resources and challenges are likely to be not only the present but also the future of our ministry experiences. What skills and practices can we cultivate to make these mediums helpful and encouraging?

Event Planning is ongoing. There are a number of ministry partners that share their notices through the Learning Commons. It makes a rich and diverse space for connecting with opportunities to learn and grow. Some events that are being developed specifically by the Learning Commons with these questions in mind will be labeled “A Learning Commons focused Event.”