

Glen Guyton first person of color to be Mennonite Church USA's top executive

**He was an air force captain who became a conscientious objector. Now he'll lead a historic peace church.**

by [Celeste Kennel-Shank](#) in the [April 11, 2018](#) issue



Glen Guyton. Photo courtesy of Glen Guyton.

Glen Guyton will be the next executive director of Mennonite Church USA, the largest U.S. Mennonite denomination. He is the first person of color to be the church's top executive.

"We want to be relevant as Anabaptists in the 21st century," he said. "There are other partnering churches adopting the peace philosophy. We're going to be looking

for opportunities to work with people especially in local contexts, whoever those partners may be.”

Guyton joined the historic peace church in 1993 while a captain in the air force, becoming a member of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Virginia. Mennonite and Quaker leaders and military counseling ministries helped him attain a conscientious objector discharge. He was later a youth pastor at Calvary before becoming the denomination’s director of intercultural relations. He has also held financial management roles and is currently chief operating officer.

“More and more denominations are realizing that we need to empower people to utilize their gifts,” he said. “Denominations should be there to facilitate and help people network. We definitely don’t want to be a barrier to people living out their faith.”

Guyton also anticipates ecumenical involvement.

“We welcome the opportunity to partner with the broader faith community to make a difference in this world,” he said. “We want to make sure that we demonstrate through our interaction with each other the love of Christ.”

He begins a three-year term on May 1, following the retirement of Ervin Stutzman, who has been executive director for eight years.

Joy Sutter, chair of the search committee, cited Guyton’s “commitment to antiracism, his excellent skills in communication, [and] his business acumen,” among other gifts that made him the best candidate. —*Christian Century*

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