

Conference Minister's Report
2017 CDC Annual Meeting, Bluffton, OH



“Find the joy.”

A number of wise folks blessed me with these words as I began serving as your Conference Minister on August 15, 2016. One of these individuals was Lois John Kaufmann whom I followed in my role. I am grateful for her wise leadership, the orientation she provided and the continued prayers she offers for this ministry. I have truly found much joy...and other fruits of the Spirit...in this ministry. Specifically, some of the areas of joy include:

- ❖ **Meeting monthly with five area pastor-peer groups.** I give thanks for the faithfulness, creativity, wisdom and generosity of our more than 50 pastors serving CDC congregations.
- ❖ **Worshipping in 15 CDC congregations** and observing common themes in worship, teaching and preaching as well as variations on these themes.
- ❖ **Building relationships throughout MC USA** through attending two Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meetings, a Conference Ministers gathering, and informal networking. At the October 2016 CLC meeting, a Peer Review Team and CDC leadership each provided reports regarding the Peer Review process. While this wasn't easy counsel to give or receive, there was a spirit of openness and greater understanding that emerged. One person commented to me, “While I don't agree with your decision, I understand much better the intentional process and discernment you used.” (See Ministerial Committee report for additional comments.)
- ❖ **Participating in three Regional Gatherings** attended by nearly 100 people in total. These were meaningful times of worship, fellowship, encouragement and reporting. Plan to participate in a Regional Gathering in 2018!
- ❖ **Engaging with congregations discerning conference affiliation.** This remains a season of discernment and realignment among congregations and conferences throughout MC USA. I find joy in learning to know pastors and congregations beyond CDC. These conversations also bring heartache at the thought of lost relationships. Arman Habegger and I had the privilege of visiting Berea Mennonite Church, Raleigh Mennonite Church and Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship in early April as part of their conference discernment process. At our Regional Gathering in Wadsworth, OH, we had guests from Allegheny Mennonite Conference, which is discerning their future.
- ❖ **Resourcing search committees and congregational leaders.** I have been in contact with 12 congregations over the past year that are in some stage of a pastoral search process. These transitions reflect the normal ebb and flow of pastoral leadership within congregations. The joy is found in learning to know congregational leaders and new pastoral candidates.
- ❖ **Partnering with conference leadership.** I am grateful for the wise and committed leaders who serve with me in ministry. The prayers and discernment of conference staff, board and committee members and many others provide a community of support that is simply remarkable. Together, we are striving to follow the leading of God's Spirit as we *Abound in Love and Abide in Grace*.

I give thanks for the resources that are shared in abundance to carry out the ministries God has called us to in the Central District Conference. May the Spirit of Christ abide with us all.

Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister