

## Welcome to the Delegates from the CDC Board President



Welcome to the beautiful campus of Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio. It is a pleasure to hold our 61<sup>st</sup> Central District Conference Annual Meeting here. Thank you to First Mennonite Church (Bluffton, Ohio), Grace Mennonite Church (Pandora, Ohio), Lima Mennonite Church (Lima, Ohio), Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship (Cincinnati, Ohio), Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship (Berne, Indiana) and Shalom Community Church (Ann Arbor, Michigan) for sharing the responsibilities of hosting this gathering. We are blessed each year by the gifts and vision of the local congregations.

This year we want to extend a particular welcome to members of RAWtools, an organization founded by Mike Martin, a member of Mountain States Mennonite Conference. RAWtools will give shape to our Thursday evening worship service. We will be led in singing, prayer and storytelling, while simultaneously witnessing a firearm being forged into a hand tool. The scriptural inspiration for RAWtools is from Isaiah 2: *"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."* Please see their website ([rawtools.org](http://rawtools.org)) for additional information. Our local coordinator for this program is Wendy Chappell-Dick.

We also warmly welcome Dr. Drew Hart, who will be leading our Friday afternoon plenary session, as well as a follow-up workshop. Dr. Hart is Assistant Professor of Theology at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, and the author of *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*. You are invited to visit the resource table (coordinated by Lois Kaufmann-Hunsberger) to purchase your own copy of this book.

And finally, we are blessed to have our Conference Minister, Doug Luginbill, bring us the message at our Friday evening worship service. Doug has provided excellent leadership for Central District since stepping into this position in August 2016. The Board wants to express deep appreciation to Doug for his pastoral presence and administrative gifts. Please introduce yourself to Doug this weekend if you have not yet had an opportunity to make his acquaintance.

It has been an honor to serve on the Central District Conference Board these past four years. I now "pass the gavel" to Arman Habegger, who will pick up Board President responsibilities at the conclusion of this gathering.

In peace and fellowship,  
Lisa Weaver