

Conference Minister's Report  
2018 CDC Annual Meeting, Goshen, IN

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians he says, "Every time we think of you, we thank God for you. Day and night you're in our prayers as we call to mind your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope in following our Master, Jesus Christ." (I Thess. 1:2-3; The Message)

When I began as Conference Minister nearly two years ago I began reading through the Epistles, finding much wisdom and guidance for this ministry. The words of blessing, disagreements in the church and the ongoing discernment regarding God's leading are very contemporary. I discovered the unique ministries and ways of being church that each congregation practices. I discovered similar frustrations and challenges as well as joys and celebrations. I even discovered that the distance from Thessalonica to Jerusalem is about the same distance as St. Paul, MN to Sarasota, FL; the two most distant CDC churches!

As I reflect on the past year, here are some themes or observations that I share.

- ❖ Every CDC congregation that I have visited plus the six that are seeking to join CDC (I've visited 37 out of 47 congregations in two years) use at least one of our three hymnbooks. Common music and words for worship provide an expression of our shared faith. I look forward to the work of the Mennonite Worship and Song committee as they prepare a new selection of resources for our common use.
- ❖ Congregations in pastoral transition are reviewing and discerning the role of pastor. Our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, our desire to not lodge too much authority in one or two people, exhausted lay leaders, and a shift toward leadership as equipping and empowering others have invited good and challenging conversation. How is God shaping ministerial leadership for the future?
- ❖ Two Regional Gatherings were well attended and provided a rich opportunity to fellowship, sing, study scripture, and pray together in addition to learning about what's new across the conference and denomination.
- ❖ Christ's ministry of reconciliation and justice-making is alive and well throughout CDC. I've witnessed this through those providing sanctuary for undocumented persons, joining together to protest the construction of an ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) facility, ministering to prisoners, better understanding the seeds of racism, learning about the Doctrine of Discovery, supporting the work of Mennonite Central Committee, building relationships with other faith communities, fully welcoming those who identify as LGBTQ, providing safe spaces for child care, campers and Bible school, and so much more.
- ❖ Transition and change throughout the denomination continues. Significant leadership transitions have taken place in the denomination and at our universities. The Journey Forward process invites renewed vision and engagement with our core Anabaptist values. Changes in conference and denominational affiliation continue. Clarity has been given to the authority of executive board and executive leadership around credentialing questions and appointments to boards and committees with more authority residing at the conference level.
- ❖ I value the shared leadership of our CDC staff, Board of Directors, committees, and task forces as we navigate together the many changes, transitions, and ministry opportunities.



Doug Luginbill, CDC Conference Minister