

Ministerial Committee Report



Members: Michael Crosby (First Mennonite, Champaign-Urbana) Kay Bontrager-Singer (Faith, Goshen), Ardean Friesen (Silverwood, Goshen), Robin Walton (Columbus), Ray Person (First Mennonite, Bluffton), Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau (Eighth Street, Goshen), Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister (ex officio).

During the past year the Ministerial Committee has paid attention to a number of policies and procedures. First, we continued work on a new **Roles and Responsibilities** document that can be used for our conference minister. Currently no such documentation exists so it was decided to complete this process. This will aid in succession or if someone is needed to fill in on short notice or during sabbatical.

As leadership within congregations change many utilize **Transitional Ministers**. Doug along with the committee want to ensure that adequate qualified transitional ministers are available to fill these needs. We are working on ways to identify qualified candidates and providing educational/training resources as needed.

This was the second year of the **annual clergy report form**. There was over 90% of clergy who replied with the initial request. We appreciate the attention that all have given to this and hope this will encourage and strengthen relationship with the Conference.

The Ministerial Committee meets in person twice a year at Camp Friedenswald once in the Spring and then in the Fall. We also meet monthly online via Zoom. Two topics have received considerable attention over the past year. Much attention has been given to training about healthy boundaries for pastors and creating clear processes for investigations of pastors accused of misconduct. However, we recognize the need for greater training and awareness of how to respond when abuse or misconduct is committed by non-credentialed members of congregations. A second area of attention is recognizing how patriarchy and unhealthy power and authority structures within congregations can create pain and trauma that diminishes the ministries that pastors and congregations are committed to fulfilling. These are complex issues and we seek ways of addressing them which are helpful and hopeful for both pastors and congregations.

Credentialing for ministry is a significant part of our work as a committee. We work with the Conference Minister in credentialing interviews, for both licensing and ordination. It is a joy to interact with so many gifted and well-qualified candidates for ministry. Our conference is truly blessed.

Most of our work is directed by Doug and we very much appreciate the attention he pays to many details. Without reservation our most important responsibility is to provide support and facilitate the work of our conference minister. We seek to be **a supportive resource for Doug**, helping in his work as possible and paying attention to his well-being, monitoring the workload and travel since we are increasingly spread around the country.

This year we also have helped plan his well-deserved sabbatical which is scheduled for November 1, 2020-January 31, 2021. We feel it is a privilege to accompany Doug in his work on behalf of the conference.

—Submitted by Ardean Friesen