

## Welcome to the delegates from the CDC Board President



Welcome to our second virtual Central District Conference gathering and 65th annual meeting. It is a joy to gather with you.

This year we want to extend a particular welcome to Betty Pries from Credence & Co. It is a gift to be able to have her with us for worship this morning and for resourcing this afternoon around resilient and healthy congregations. We are grateful for her willingness to join us. We also have several great seminar opportunities.

CDC hosted two mid-year gatherings this year instead of regional gatherings, and they were a wonderful way to connect across the conference, to worship together and to share ideas and stories. Both of those gatherings included recordings of congregations singing from the new *Voices Together* hymnal. We will include more of those in our worship at this gathering. What a delight to be able to see and hear our congregations singing, even though we can't sing all together just yet.

Throughout this year we have continued to live into our commitments to keep taking the "next steps" to become more anti-racist. The Board worked through the WiderStand training, and the Leadership Council met with Darin Short who guided our discussion about the group results of the Intercultural Development Inventory that members took. I continue to be encouraged by the good and hard work that is happening in many of your congregations around reparations, truth telling, Doctrine of Discovery, police reform and more.

As a conference we continue to grow and welcome new folks. At this meeting we are delighted to introduce Keller Park Missionary Church, a close-knit, intergenerational church in a diverse neighborhood in South Bend, Indiana. We will hear more about them and their desire to join Central District Conference. We are also pleased to welcome Grand Rapids Mennonite Fellowship. They were introduced at last year's annual meeting and we will vote to receive them into membership this year.

It has been a joy to serve as president of the board for these two years. While I never got a chance to bang the gavel in person, I am hopeful that my successor James Rissler will have the opportunity to do so.

May you feel a sense of God's spirit moving us forward toward God's dreams for Central District Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

Blessings,  
Anna Yoder Schlabach