

Welcome to the delegates from the CDC Board President



Welcome to Goshen for our 66th Annual Meeting. It is good to be back in person! As we discern how we will be church and conference together after covid, we are also leaning into being accessible for those who do not travel to Goshen. Most of our programming will be available live via zoom and recorded. Thank you to the local congregations who have helped to plan our worship, and to those helping with the technology that makes a hybrid Annual Meeting possible.

This is an exciting time in Central District Conference! Our two-year theme is “Tending Transformation,” and it has felt increasingly apt since we chose it last August. How is the Church being transformed as we emerge from the pandemic? How is the body of Christ different today than it was a generation ago? How is CDC being called to change as we know Christ’s love and answer God’s call? We want to pay attention to these questions and tend the transformations we see God’s Spirit leading.

CDC has changed over the past few years. We have grown, we are now 46 congregations in 11 states. Many of our congregations now offer hybrid services that can be joined remotely, and all of us have found new ways to connect with our congregants. We have learned to be conference together even when we don’t gather in the same physical space; we are likely to continue online mid-year gatherings into the future.

As we are changing, volunteers are visiting each of our congregations this year as part of an appreciative inquiry “Sacred Listening” process to hear the stories of how our congregations are faithfully sharing God’s love in our communities. Next year, we will wonder together about how the stories we share might inform the ways in which we are conference to one another.

Some of the most exciting transformations that we are tending are the emerging communities of faith that have interest in relating to us. A handful of small groups or individuals have expressed hopes for beginning communities of faith in areas from Syracuse, New York to Miami, Florida. We don’t know which of these seeds will grow, but we want to tend them well, and so are hiring a new Associate Conference Minister for Emerging Communities of Faith. This person may also tend some part of Doug’s current responsibilities, as we recognize that it is increasingly difficult for one Conference Minister to tend all our congregations.

In order to support this position, provide grants to emerging communities of faith, and fund new missional work and leadership development, we are launching a fundraising campaign to raise \$350,000 over three years. We’ll announce at this Annual Meeting how much of this amount has already been pledged by foundational donors, and hope that all of us will support these commitments as we’re able.

It is a joy to serve as your president along with so many gifted people faithfully committed to sharing God’s love in a changing world. Blessings for our time together this weekend, and for all the ways that we are Christ’s body in our local communities.

James Rissler