

Central District Conference

Conference Minister Review for Doug Luginbill (2022)

The Review Team: James Rissler (CDC President), Karla Minter (Missional Church Committee), Ray Person (Ministerial Committee), Phil Martens (CDC Board)

We have been privileged to see the overwhelmingly positive, appreciative, and affirming tone of the responses to Doug's tenure as Conference Minister. Suggestions for improvement were uniformly aspirational, often with comments about how helpful an Associate Conference Minister will be. We want to note that Doug's self-evaluation (including strengths and areas for growth) and the results of the survey overlap significantly. The value, respect, and love for Doug evinced in the survey and Doug's honest self-evaluation gives us confidence that Doug is the right person for this role, and that he has the flexibility, grace, and maturity to carry this good work forward into the future.

We wish to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the survey with such genuine, heart-felt and helpful comments.

The Survey Process

The CDC Board of Directors invited credentialed ministers within CDC, members of CDC's Leadership Council, congregational lay leaders with whom Doug has worked (especially on search committees), and peer conference ministers to respond to questions regarding Doug's tenure. Respondents were asked to reflect on Doug's gifts as well as any areas of growth. An additional question asked respondents to identify challenges and opportunities for CDC. The CDC weekly announcements also extended an invitation for feedback from anyone who would like to share that had not been directly invited to do so by the board. Sixty-six responses were received, with good representation from all of these groups.

Affirmation of Doug's Gifts and Ministry

"Every interaction I have had with Doug has left me grateful for his ministry."

This observation by one respondent provided an excellent summary of the tone and quality expressed nearly universally throughout the responses. A significant majority of folks mentioned Doug as a skilled listener, calm and calming presence, and thoughtful counselor whose wisdom has been appreciated in multiple instances of congregational conflict and tension. Doug's ability to listen attentively and respond in a Christ-like way was highlighted by many. As one pastor commented, *"Doug provided welcome experience and a larger perspective as we grappled with what could have become sticky interpersonal grievances."* His

skill at rethinking and reframing a contentious issue into a “win-win” scenario was also repeatedly mentioned in these responses.

Many survey participants mentioned their appreciation for Doug's ability to achieve a high level of availability despite the demands of frequent long-distance travel, nearly constant Zoom meetings and challenging logistics. Phrases like *“cares deeply about the church,”* *“wonderfully supported by Doug,”* and *“warm and consistent support”* sum up his ability to provide a pastoral presence to his constituents. This attentive stance is accentuated by his administrative competence, timely communication, and willingness to be highly available to the pastors, pastoral candidates, search committees, and other congregational leaders.

Another recurring theme in the survey was Doug’s transparency and personal faithfulness. *“Doug is the real deal”* was one typical response. Another person wrote, *“He practices what he preaches.”* The responses make clear that Doug is someone that CDC constituents respect and trust.

Opportunities for Continued Growth and Development

Survey responders had few suggestions for ways in which Doug might continue to develop. Numerous examples of statements like *“Doug is already functioning at a high level”* and *“Doug seems to have a healthy level of self-awareness, so I trust him to follow the Spirit as she so moves”* lead us to understand that Doug is already challenging himself to continuous improvement. A search committee member noted, *“I can't honestly identify any particular area where growth is needed on his part.”*

Doug acknowledged in his self-review that he has less experience with emerging communities of faith and does not have sufficient time to tend them well, but that this will be addressed with the addition of the Associate Conference Minister. Several commenters suggested that Doug is well prepared to mentor the new Associate Conference Minister in ways that they believe will benefit Doug, the new associate, and CDC.

One comment from a peer conference minister stands out to our review committee. He stated that *“Doug has gifts that can someday serve the denomination at even higher levels. I would encourage honing those leadership gifts/skills with CEO level development, which will serve CDC well (as well as other endeavors Doug might engage in the future).”*

Challenges/Opportunities for the Conference

Survey participants were also asked about their thoughts on challenges and opportunities for CDC. The gist of these responses can be summarized in a handful of broad themes. First,

respondents overwhelmingly stated that staying connected after COVID, especially with our recent geographical growth, is a challenge. A pastoral search committee member commented, *“(we) need to stay connected as we continue to spread out regionally. How do we ensure that those of us who are far flung feel connected?”* Secondly, a strong need for attention to new communities of faith came out of the responses. One pastor wrote, *“New emerging congregations are exciting and help to stir excitement of newness even in older congregations.”* Desires for increasing diversity, promoting anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and bringing young people into church leadership also figured prominently in survey statements as opportunities for growth within CDC.

We are grateful for Doug’s many gifts, his self-awareness, and his openness to where God’s Spirit might be leading us. Thank you, Doug, for your leadership and service as our Conference Minister.