



Ministerial Committee

Members: Brian Bolton (Shalom, Harrisonburg), Kevin Chupp (Mennonite Church of Normal), Michael Crosby (First, Champaign-Urbana), Gayle Gerber Koontz (chair; Assembly, Goshen), Ruth Guengerich (Eighth Street, Goshen), Robin Walton (Columbus), Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister (ex officio).

The major ongoing work of this committee, a rewarding task that absorbs a majority of our time, is **interviewing candidates for pastoral licensing and ordination**. The development of Zoom resources during the pandemic has made it possible for us to spend time with CDC pastoral candidates from as far away as Atlanta and to join from our own locations in Illinois, Virginia, Ohio and Indiana. Interviews include conversation and external recommendations regarding theological, spiritual, personal and leadership commitments and competencies. Since the end of April 2023 we completed 11 interviews and were pleased by the quality and enthusiasm of new and developing pastoral leaders serving our conference.

One of the questions this process raised was **whether or not theological education was a prerequisite for credentialing in all cases**. We determined that, given our commitments to spirit-led leadership, such education would not be a prerequisite if there were a clear and supported call to ministry and adequate informal leadership education and experience. In such cases we also strongly recommend the furthering of education utilizing such resources as the Journey program, online theological education and CDC scholarship support.

Since the beginning of the **Seminary Scholarship Grant program we initiated last year** we have awarded three scholarships, up to \$2500 each.

In relation to our commitment to implement the **Resolution for Repentance and Transformation** passed by MC USA in 2022, Doug Luginbill wrote to five CDC pastors who had been investigated in the past for performing same sex weddings, recognizing the changes that have developed in MC USA since these actions and affirming the study, prayer, reflection and courage they had exhibited “in providing a new spirit of welcome and hospitality to our queer siblings in faith.”

We continued to provide regular **counsel and support for the substantial work of our conference minister** in developing and sustaining congregational leadership. Of special concern this year were a number of congregations dealing with conflict. The additional collegial staff support of Sarah Werner and Matt Pritchard helped release Doug for ministry to and with these congregations.

As part of our role in **providing resources to pastors and other church leaders**, we agreed to sponsor a training for the “Our Whole Lives” human sexuality curriculum, scheduled for November 2024 at Camp Friedenswald. In addition, Doug developed a letter outlining CDC resources for pastors and church leaders. This overview contains digital links to further information and documents to make finding such materials easier.

Submitted by Gayle Gerber Koontz