



Associate Conference Minister's Report 2025

Central District Conference is experiencing a vibrant season marked by the flourishing of both established congregations and dynamic new faith communities dedicated to peace, justice, and inclusion. I am proud of our work with emerging communities and am excited as we continue to resource their work. Since the last meeting, I have moved to Winnipeg to begin the

MDiv program at Canadian Mennonite University, while continuing to serve in this role.

Empowering a Network of Thriving Emerging Communities of Peace

As Associate Conference Minister (working $\frac{1}{3}$ time or about 15 hours a week), I support emerging faith communities and aid established congregations in their renewal efforts. Over the past year, a significant focus has been on developing institutional processes and supports to best incubate emerging communities of faith aligned with CDC's vision "to answer God's persistent call to share that love with one another and the world." This work has included:

- **Growing the Network:** Cultivating relationships and resourcing several emerging communities, including:
 - Moveable Feast (Chicago, IL) moveablefeastcommunity.org
 - Olentangy Wild Church (Columbus, OH)
 - The Intention Church (Online) theintentionchurch.com
 - Imagine Cincinnati (OH) imaginecincinnati.org
 - Grand Rapids Mennonite Fellowship (MI) grandrapidsmennonite.org
 - PEACE Mennonite Fellowship (Archbold, OH) peacemennonitefellowship.com
- **Ongoing Connections and Resourcing:** In addition to one-on-one coaching, CDC continues to offer a monthly pastor peer gathering to foster collaboration and connection among leaders (and potential leaders) of emerging communities. We also develop resources as needs arise.
- **Financial Assistance:** Missional Church Committee awarded \$32,000 in grants to emerging communities, enabling them to strengthen and expand their presence and mission. These funds were matched with \$18,000 from the emerging communities.
- **Standardized Practices:** We have developed processes and structures to fiscally sponsor emerging communities. This enables them to focus on the relationships and work to enable thriving peace-church communities while building the supporting infrastructure over a longer timeframe.
- **Collaboration:** We are working with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Mission Network as we seek to systematically strengthen and align our denominational support for church planting.
- **Established Community Renewal:** As we continue to support established congregations seeking opportunities and resources for renewal, we've been talking with partners throughout MC USA to develop ways to better equip pastors and leaders as they help their churches thrive in our changing world.

Central District Conference is making significant progress in its mission to cultivate a vibrant network of emerging "communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world!"