



## Welcome to the delegates from the CDC Board President

Here is something no Central District Conference Board President has ever said: Welcome to Harrisonburg, Virginia for our Annual Meeting. It's the 70<sup>th</sup> year delegates have gathered, our first time here. CDC is a growing conference, and sometimes that growth looks like visiting with each other in new locations.

I've always appreciated one of the main metaphors CDC uses for how we relate: A family of adult siblings. That works on the delegate level – we each have wisdom from the particularities of our own faith journeys to share. And it works on the congregational level – we each have our own places but have much to learn from one another in how we grow into a fuller manifestation of Christ among us. CDC is chosen family, and Annual Meeting is a reunion of sorts, even if you're a first timer discovering siblings you didn't know you had.

The board is tasked with managing the affairs and guiding the vision of the conference/family. In March we convened the midyear gathering over Zoom where we heard congregational stories and considered our relationships with our Confession of Faith's Article 19 which speaks to family, singleness, and sexuality. When the Board last met face to face, in April, we received a Power and Authority Training that challenged us in all areas of life to recognize power and use it in a way that empowers one another.

We have a gifted staff and it's been a significant year for these leaders. Doug Luginbill had a three-month Sabbatical over the winter and transitioned to 80% time. We gathered conference-wide feedback to mark Matt Pritchard's three years serving as Minister of Emergent Communities. Sarah Werner initiated lunch-and-learns which bring us together around a topic of interest concerning church life. We welcomed Kristin Sancken to strengthen our commitments to church safety. And Emma has administered us through another full year.

Back in August of last year the board, staff, and committee chairs had a retreat to discern the conference theme for the upcoming years. There was a shared sense of being in a time calling for bold faith and action. "Rise Up! Take Courage!" emerged as the guiding call, which we'll be hearing about over the course of this Annual Meeting.

We're glad you're here. We hope you make some new sibling connections and rekindle old ones. We hope you learn something you'll tell your congregation. We hope you feel emboldened by the Spirit of Christ who calls us to rise up and take courage.

Joel Miller