

Ministerial Committee



Members: Brian Bolton (Shalom, Harrisonburg, PA), Kevin Chupp (Mennonite Church of Normal, IL), Gayle Gerber Koontz (chair; Assembly, Goshen, IN), Ruth Guengerich (Eighth Street, Goshen, IN), Robin Walton (Columbus Mennonite, OH), Matthew Yoder, (Grace, Pandora, OH), Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister (ex officio).

Implementation of revised MCUSA Safe Church Policy. Some of our work this year included reviewing the new procedures for reporting and investigating ethical and sexual abuses by church leaders in our district. We think the change that removes our conference minister from the awkward role of needing both to confront and support pastoral leaders in such situations is a significant improvement. We also welcomed Kristin Sanken as the new CDC Church Safety Coordinator. She met with our committee several times for relevant agenda items.

Credentialing of pastors and chaplains. This past year through March 2026 the Ministerial Committee completed seven interviews of candidates preparing for ordination and two interviews of candidates recommended for licensing toward ordination. Interviews typically take 90 minutes and provide an opportunity for Committee members to learn to know new CDC ministers and to encourage growth in their pastoral work.

Educational Debt and Clergy Development grants. This year we awarded the remaining \$32,000 in the Educational Debt Relief fund for pastors, the gift of two anonymous donors. Seven pastors expressed deep gratitude for this year's debt relief gifts. Twelve grants were given previously. In addition, we approved \$1200 in Clergy Development Grants. These grants supported such projects as personal spiritual retreats and an educational visit to a peace center.

Theological Education Graduates from CDC. We warmly congratulate 2025 Anabaptist Biblical Seminary graduate Melika Kauffman Hershberger (Mennonite Church of Normal, IL). Three additional graduates also attended CDC congregations while they were at seminary: Stephen Lowe (Assembly Mennonite), Daniel Nuerte (Hively Avenue) and Paul Banchasawan (Hively Avenue). Four CDC students are currently enrolled in the Journey program, but none are ready to graduate this year.

Doug Luginbill sabbatical. Since Doug is such an integral part of our committee, we put in place coverage for his Ministerial Committee work for the three months he was away, and we delayed as many credentialing interviews as we could during that time. Thanks to Matt Prichard, Emma Hartman, Kristin Sanken and Gayle Gerber Koontz for their extra assistance while Doug was away.

Submitted by Gayle Gerber Koontz, Committee Chair