

Memo

June 2007

**A Word from Dorothy
Out of death comes life**

It was a sad day in WDC when Floyd Born died on May 12. Floyd had come to WDC in 1989 after serving as a pastor, missionary, and administrator with the Mennonite Brethren denomination for many years. He served as pastor at Peace Mennonite in Dallas and Zion Mennonite in Elbing before retiring on his 70th birthday--in 2003. He graciously offered his services as an interim pastor and served at Alexanderwohl/Goessel, Eden/Moundridge, and was in office as interim associate pastor for Bethel College Mennonite Church when his heart suddenly failed. Shocking.

Our pastors are symbols of life and often are the ones offering hope when others face death and loss. Our pastors are leaders who navigate public waters when communities grieve. Our pastors are the ones who offer hope when things seem hopeless. Our pastors offer words of strength when tornadoes tear down walls and destroy everything. So when a pastor dies, our system is stunned and we wonder, "Who will offer the words of hope?"

I learned that it is often other pastors who offer those words of comfort. I learned that families open up their homes, their memories, their observations and tell us that those who died were important, that they were human, that they were incredibly important to us. The family of Floyd Born gave us, the mourners, the gift of laughter amidst tears with wonderful stories of family life--which reminded us of our families, our relatives, our experiences, our travels by car, our childhood. We gained strength by singing the songs of faith. We gathered hope by shaking hands, hugging our friends, eating good food, praying together and reading scripture. We moved into our grief--acknowledging that loss is real, that it hurts, that it connects us to each other in ways we cannot verbalize. However, when the community of faith gathers, there is hope. Out of death comes new life, new hope, new possibilities, new strength, new connections.

Thanks be to God that the sting of death is accompanied by the healing power of hope.

--Dorothy Nickel Friesen

Western District Conference empowers its Anabaptist/Mennonite congregations to:

- *Witness and invite others to faith in Jesus Christ,*
- *Dwell in just and loving relationships,*
- *Connect to God's mission in the world.*

WDC blesses children!

Children in Western District Conference bless our lives immeasurably. And, as Christ did, WDC blesses them too!

1. Children grow up in loving homes and supportive congregations who are nurtured through WDC.
2. Some children get books and videos from the Resource Center—in person or through their church library.
3. Children will experience God at Camp Mennoscah this summer. In her first experience there last year, my granddaughter said, "The food was the best thing," and also, "I can't wait, 'cause next year I get to sleep in a cabin!"
4. This summer, children will receive a WDC "Children's Activity Book" with fun and meaningful activities that highlight Vision 2012 projects. Pray for WDC children, and make sure they receive these four WDC blessings.

---Rosella Wiens Regier, Vision 2012 prayer partner

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Please include announcements from this Memo in your bulletins and newsletters.

You are encouraged to copy and distribute the entire Memo in your churches.

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WDC prayer reminders

June 3 - Pray for the Traveling Vacation Bible School Troupe which begins five weeks of travel in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Pray that the Troupe will "Be Bold" in living and proclaiming their faith in Christ to the children that attend VBS and that they as leaders will have flexibility and strength for each week.

June 10 - Pray for the campers that will attend Camp Mennoscah this summer plus the counselors, staff, cooks, and all who contribute to this important place of faith formation and commitment to Jesus Christ

June 17 - Pray for Sarah Klaassen, seminary student, who is interning at WDC this summer and learning about regional conference ministry.

June 24 - Pray for all of the delegates, youth, and sponsors who will travel to San Jose this week to attend the Mennonite Church USA Convention that God's Spirit would inspire them all to "Live the Call".

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS -

associate pastor for youth pastor (half-time)

Beatrice Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE - pastor (full-time) beginning September

Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS - seniors' minister (half-time), open immediately

Buhler (KS) Mennonite Church and Hoffnungsau

Mennonite Church, Inman, KS - associate pastor (full-time)

Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS - associate pastor with youth emphasis (full-time), beginning summer

Fort Worth, TX - church planter (one-fourth time)

Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, KS - full-time Youth pastor, July 15

Transitions

Floyd Born, interim pastor for Bethel College Mennonite Church (BCMC), North Newton, KS, died on May 12. Memorial services were held at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, on May 16. Memorial gifts have been designated to MCC or to WDC for the Koontz Endowment Fund. BCMC staff changes in light of Floyd's death: Roger Juhnke, Youth Pastor, will be become full-time (instead of 60%) until August 31; John Esau, retired pastor, will be the on-call pastor when Heidi Regier Kreider and Roger are both out of town until August 31. **Ruth Harder**, Chicago, IL, has been called as the full-time Associate Pastor for BCMC, beginning September 1.

Joan Boyer has been called for another three-year term beginning October 1 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS.

Hallie Cable, Pretty Prairie, has been called to be youth pastor (1/2 time) at Kingman (KS) Mennonite Church beginning early June.

Jose Elizalde has resigned as pastor of Houston (TX) Mennonite Church as of June 30. He will become Associate Pastor at North Goshen (IN) Mennonite Church, and also begin a Doctor of Ministry degree at a Chicago-based seminary. We will miss Jose in WDC

and wish him all the best.

Linda Ewert has been called as the full-time Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Christian Formation at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS, as of July 1.

Kevin Goertzen, former pastor of Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church, has been named the Congregational Resource Coordinator for Mennonite Mission Network. He began full-time on May 29 and is based in Newton. Congratulations!

Lou Gomez has been called by Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS for a three-year term beginning June 1. He is half-time and commutes to Liberal on the weekends from his home in Newton, KS.

Sarah Klaassen, student at Vanderbilt Divinity School and member of Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, KS, will be a summer intern at the WDC office from June 15-August 15.

Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, KS, has purchased a building and will have their first worship service there on June 17. Congratulations!

Joel Schroeder has been called for another three-year term at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, beginning August 1.

Nita Wilson has resigned as Youth Pastor of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS as of August 31. Nita will then move to Dallas to become a church planter intern with Marco Güete beginning September 1. This position is partially funded by a WDC grant from the Schowalter Foundation.



Annual Conference - July 27-29 (WDC & SCC)

Brochures with information about the conference and registration form are now available in your churches, at the WDC office, and online: www.mennowdc.org, click on "Tulsa".

Register by July 13 to get the lowest rate. One fee (\$125/adults; \$62.50/K-8th grade; \$25/0-pre-K) covers everything (food, meeting rooms, materials).

Make your own lodging arrangements at the Doubletree Hotel at Warren Place, Tulsa, OK: 918-495-1000, identify yourself as a "Mennonite Conference" attendee to get the rate of \$69 per night plus taxes.

"Speak Lord! ¡Habla Señor!" is the theme, based on I Samuel 3. Speakers, music and drama will focus on hearing God's voice.

You can be a part of the conference - via video clips. How has God spoken to you? How is your congregation hearing God's voice and following it?

Send short clips of people (pastors, youth, young adults) who answer those questions in 3-minute (or so) interviews. Send your clips in any of these formats (DVD video, MiniDV tape, VCD-or as a datafile on a CD/DVD, MPEG2, MPEG4, Quicktime MOV, AVI (preferably not Divx/Xvid), WMV (least preferred), VHS, Hi8) to WDC, Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117 **by June 15!**

First quarter financial report (Feb. - April)

1. Note: 30 WDC (nearly half) congregations - zero contributions to WDC in 2007 (February - April).
2. Total income: \$99,790, Total expenses: \$149,645 Deficit to date: (\$49,855). Each gift is important.
3. Vision 2012 (above budget): Total intents: \$633,135.04. Thank you!

Conference ministers chosen for AMBS colloquy

Marco Guete, associate conference minister for Texas and Dorothy Nickel Friesen, WDC conference minister, have both been chosen to be part of the 2007-08 AMBS Engaging Pastors Colloquy--three gatherings of eight regional conference ministers with four AMBS faculty members plus denominational representatives and a facilitator to explore the shape and future of pastoral ministry.

Greensburg Mennonite Church

The Greensburg (KS) Mennonite Church building and parsonage were destroyed in a tornado that leveled 90% of the structures of Greensburg, a town of 1,500, on May 4. The congregation is a member of the Mennonite Church USA through its membership in South Central Conference. Pray for this congregation as they renew their congregational life and community ministry. MC USA Executive Leadership is collecting funds to assist the congregation in cooperation with the South Central Conference. You may send your contribution to MC USA, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, earmarked for Greensburg Mennonite Church. Or you can give by debit or credit card by going to www.MennoniteUSA.org and clicking on "Give". You'll find the Greensburg Mennonite Church listed as a special project.

San Jose 07 - Delegate healthcare resource

At the MC USA San Jose '07 assembly, delegates will be asked to make several key decisions concerning health care access. A major decision delegates will be asked to discuss and vote on is a new Healthcare Access for Church Workers program. You are invited to an evening with MC USA leader Keith Harder, a member of the Access for Church Workers Project Team. **June 6, 7:00 p.m. - Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS.** All interested people

- delegates, church leaders, lay people, pastors - are invited. For more information, call 620-585-6733. If possible, RSVP by phone or email (hmc@dtmspeed.net). The session is free of cost.

San Jose information meetings

In preparation for the MC USA assembly at San Jose this summer, delegates are invited to attend one of two (identical) informational meetings with Jim Schrag, executive director of MC USA: **June 3**, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Bethel College Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall, North Newton, KS or **June 10**, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, KS. Come to learn about the issues that will be presented at San Jose. (While MC USA delegates are especially encouraged to attend these informational sessions, everyone is welcomed to attend.)

Gather 'Round worship resources guide for summer 2007

If your congregation would like the worship and preaching to match the teaching this summer, try using the Gather 'Round texts as a focus for worship planning. There is a guide available at: www.faithandliferesources.org/gather_round/GRsummer2007.pdf

How to integrate summer worship with

Gather 'Round themes: Use this guide to integrate summer worship with Gather 'Round themes. If worship time precedes education, these resources will provide the worship element to the theme and the education hour will give more time for connecting and responding to the story. If you have Sunday school first, invite classes to participate in worship leading by preparing contemporary skits to go with the parables, prayers, litanies, and special music. If your church doesn't have summer Sunday school, use this guide to bring Gather 'Round themes to worship time.

"Parables packets" for families: Extend the learning and nurture faith in children and parents all summer, by giving each family a summer Talkabout (Parable cards), Connect (the Parent/Caregiver guide), Together (the Multiage student book), and My Bible Storybook (the Preschool student book). Attach a letter, encouraging them to enjoy learning together about the parables of Jesus at home or away. For more ideas on how the home and congregation can partner together to nurture Christian faith, contact Marlene Bogard, Minister of Christian Nurture.

Preaching the Parables: The parables of Jesus provide a wonderful theme for the summer months. In his introduction to the Summer 2007 sessions, Tom Yoder Neufeld writes, "Parables invite the hearer to make connections, to figure out the puzzle, to 'catch on.' Jesus was a master at telling stories with a twist and a

hidden meaning. But...a parable requires hearers who are ready to understand and live into a deeper meaning. They are ready not to laugh but to look for God in unlikely places, to orient their lives in light of God's kingdom, to follow Jesus."

Marriage Enrichment weekend for pastors/spouses

Pastors, take some time for you and your spouse to relax, communicate and spend time enriching your marriage on Friday, **September 28 (7 p.m.) through Sunday September 30 (1:p.m.)** at the Retreat Center at Camp Mennoscah. There is space for 18 pastoral couples who can commit to attending the entire weekend. Marlene Bogard, WDC Minister of Christian Nurture will be the facilitator / presenter for the weekend. She has received certification in Christian Prevention and Relationship Enhancement training, which focuses on maximizing the strengths of marriage, communication, and yes, fun! (Funds are available of \$100 stipend per church to pay for pulpit supply.) **A registration fee of \$100 per couple** includes 2 nights lodging, 5 meals and quality time with your honey in the cozy atmosphere of camp! Reservations are being accepted now by contacting Nancy Funk at 316-283-6300. (Schowalter Foundation is generously supporting this project.)

A Retreat for women

You are invited to ... and Inward Journey. Come join us for a day of reflection and rejuvenation at LaVerle Schrag's backyard in Hutchinson, KS. Your senses will be touched, allowing your spirit to be transformed. Your spirit will be nurtured through nature, music, silence, reflection, gentle movement, and sculpture and storytelling. The retreat begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. A light lunch is furnished at noon. Cost: \$20.00. Retreats are offered on: **June 23, August 11, September 21 and October 20**. Call at least one week prior to the day to reserve a spot: 620-663-4958 or email rschrag2@cox.net. (Presented by: Ann Dunn-musician, Virginia Rexroad-meditation, LaVerle Schrag-sculptor.)

Western District Conference coming events

June 3 - San Jose informational meeting with Jim Schrag, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS (identical to June 10 meeting)
June 6 - San Jose Healthcare Access information meeting with Keith Harder, Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS
June 10 - San Jose informational meeting, First Mennonite Church of Christian with Jim Schrag, Moundridge, KS (identical to June 3 meeting)
July 2-7 - Mennonite Church USA Convention, San Jose, CA
July 27 - (1-4 p.m.) - Reference Council, Tulsa, OK
July 27-29 - Western District Conf. & South Central Conf. joint annual conference, Tulsa, OK
Aug. 4-5 - Grand Camp, Camp Mennoscah

Aug. 18 - Day on the Farm, rural Hillsboro, KS
Sept. 8-9 - Women's Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 15 - Health Care Access conference, Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS
Sept. 17-21 - Work & Play Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 28-30 - Pastor's Marriage Enrichment weekend, Camp Mennoscah
Oct. 4 - Pastors' Day Apart: "Pastors and Money", Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS,
Oct. 12-14 Menfolk on the Prairie Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Oct. 19-21 - Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series, Hesston College, KS
Nov. 3 - Reference Council, First Mennonite Church, Halstead, KS

Conference Ministers' schedules

June 1 - Executive Committee and Board (DNF)
June 1-5 - Vacation (LL)
June 3 - Preach, Southern Hills Menn Church, Topeka; San Jose delegate meeting, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS (DNF)
June 3, 11, 17 - Adult SS, Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (MB)
June 4 - Meet with Oklahoma pastors, Enid, OK (MB)
June 5 - Summer staff orientation, Camp Mennoscah (MB)
June 6 - Health Care Access meeting, Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS (DNF, MB, LL)
June 8-9 - Leadership Commission (DNF, LL)
June 10 - Safe Sanctuaries presentation, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (MB); Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF); San Jose delegate meeting, Moundridge, KS (DNF)
June 11 - Staff Relations Committee (DNF)
June 12 - Vision 2012 steering committee; AMBS Great Plains Seminary Board (DNF)
June 13 - Staff meeting
June 14 - KEM Executive Committee (LL)
June 15 - Women pastors' breakfast; missional workshop at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF)
June 16 - Resource Commission (MB)
June 19 - Western Kansas Pastors, Dodge City, KS (LL)
June 22 - Prairie View Board of Directors meeting (DNF)
June 30-July 7 - San Jose Convention (DNF, LL, MG, MB, DK, HS, DG)
(Marlene Bogard-MB; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt--DG; Marco Güete-MG; Doug Krehbiel-DK; Lee Lever-LL; Hugo Saucedo-HS)

The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members. Submit articles and correspondence to: Dorothy Nickel Friesen, dorothyf@mennowdc.org.

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