

May 2007

## **A Word from Dorothy Dual-affiliation update**

As many of you are aware, there is a nearly forty-year history of having dual-affiliated congregations. The former General Conference and Mennonite Church denominations began the path to integration with Columbus, Ohio and the Kansas City leading the way by forming "dual-affiliated congregations in the very late '60's. This "missional" objective was a symbol of the unity we preached--why confuse new believers with "two" Mennonite churches? And why not seek "cradle" Mennonites, particularly in urban settings, to join together instead of planting competing churches? And it worked! In WDC, most of the urban churches of the '70's were all dual-affiliated: Mennonite Church of the Servant/Wichita, Lawrence (now named Peace Mennonite), Inter-Mennonite/Hesston (no longer part of WDC or SCC), Manhattan (affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren as well as WDC and SCC) are examples.

This impulse has fueled work in Texas as well. The Mid-Texas Convention includes the first WDC congregation (Houston-1967) and today includes 15 congregations--some are church plants and receive subsidy from WDC. All of them are dual-affiliated (WDC and SCC).

Against the backdrop of the formation of Mennonite Church USA, there were decade-long discussions with sister conferences (South Central Conference and Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference) about a new, regional conference encompassing all three into one. The dual-affiliated congregations patiently waited for a new, unified body to emerge. However, differences in polity emerged when South Central Conference removed a congregation (Rainbow) from its membership. Finally, in November, 2002, it was decided by all three bodies that formal integration at the regional level was not meant to be at the present time. The decision was marked with commitments and statements that collaboration, partnership, and cooperation should be practiced wherever possible.

Starting with 2003, finances continued to be a strain for both conferences. Positions were cut (youth ministry) or eliminated (front desk coverage). By the fall of 2006, WDC eliminated the conference administrator position altogether, restored the youth ministry position thanks to generous grants from Schowalter Foundation, and began a fund drive (Vision 2012) to fund programs thus reducing the reliance on shrinking offering plate monies. In the same period, SCC gradually reduced their staff by eliminating all paid support staff and finally cutting their conference minister staff to one-half time. Shared staff included Marco Guete in Texas (3/4 WDC, 1/4 SCC), and the Youth ministry position (3/4 WDC, 1/4 SCC).

In this same time, a new area Mennonite conference, Mountain States Mennonite Conference, was born and the six WDC Colorado congregations became full members of that new conference and ceased WDC membership. That left SCC and WDC with a variety of dual congregations--five in KS and about 15 in mid-Texas.

In April 2007, the Mid-Texas Convention recommended to its member congregations that dual-affiliation no longer be continued. Each congregation has until the end of May to declare its conference affiliation. In Kansas, Peace Mennonite/Lawrence and Mennonite Church of the Servant/Wichita, have decided to be affiliated with WDC only. (Shalom/Newton, Manhattan, and Faith/Gospel in Montezuma remain dual-affiliated.)

WDC has maintained its commitment that affiliation is a congregational decision. It has also pledged its efforts at unity and cooperation wherever possible. However, it appears we are entering a new stage of conference relationships as the trend toward and need for dual-affiliation are dying. This also follows the Mennonite Church USA membership guidelines which discouraged future dual-affiliation.

The WDC Executive Board has on every agenda our relationships with South Central Conference seeking ways to minister together.

--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.**

**Vision 2012 and Children**

WDC, through Vision 2012, has created a "Children's Activity Book," ready for delivery to your church in May. This 16-page book—chock full of mazes, word finds, puzzles, coloring pages, dot to dots, and more—helps children catch a vision for WDC. It will be fun. They will learn more WDC. And it invites prayer, service, and contributions to WDC and God's work.

Every day, in many places, and through rich and powerful ways, children are nurtured to a growing faith in Jesus Christ: in families, at church, at Camp Mennoscah each summer, and at the Resource Library. Pray that Vision 2012's new "Children's Activity Book" will also connect the children to God and WDC.

---Rosella Wiens Regier, prayer partner for Vision 2012

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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**

**May 6** - Pray for the WDC Stewardship Commission as it prepares the spending plan for 2008 to present to delegates at Tulsa this summer--that all the resources might be wisely shared.

**May 13** - Pray for the meeting of the joint meeting of the WDC Executive and South Central Conference Administrative Committees this week--that planning for our summer conference and future staffing will be productive.

**May 20** - Pray for Marco Guete, associate conference minister for Texas, who is on a six-week leave as part of his sabbatical. He is attending a learning tour on "Hispanic literature, art and spirituality" in Spain and then will present a paper on "Hispanic theology" at a consultation in late May at AMBS.

**May 27** - Give thanks for the ministry of Tim Kliewer, pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS who retires today after nearly 35 years of pastoral ministry.

**Pastoral openings**

*(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):*

**Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS** - associate pastor for youth pastor (half-time); associate

pastor for Christian formation (half-time); associate pastor for pastoral care (half-time). Positions may be combined.

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

**Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS** - associate pastor (full-time) beginning August 15

**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

**Kingman Mennonite Church, KS** - youth pastor (half-time)

**Transitions**

**Marshall Anderson**, associate pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS, will graduate from the Hesston College Pastoral Ministries Program (KS) on May 6.

**Karen Andres**, associate pastor at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, will be on sabbatical in June and July.

Correction: **Eric Buller**, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS, took one week of continuing education in January and will take a one month sabbatical in May.

**Gail Graber** was installed as associate pastor for visitation at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS on April 1.

We express our sympathy to **Joanna Harader**, pastor of Peace Mennonite Lawrence, KS, on the unexpected death of her father-in-law, Dennis Ellett, in South Dakota on April 28.

**Justin Hiebert** has been called as the interim youth pastor for First and Trinity Mennonite Churches in Hillsboro, KS, beginning July 1.

**Orlan Koehn** will begin July 15 as interim pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS. He is completing another interim pastoral assignment at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, NE. Welcome to WDC!

**Nathan Koontz** has been called as the full-time Associate Pastor for Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS beginning August 15. He will complete a half-time interim youth pastor position at Faith this summer.

**Western District & South Central Conference  
Joint Annual Conference - July 27-29 - Tulsa, OK**

**Schedule**

Friday, July 27

- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Reference Council
- 4:00 - 7:00 - Registration (no supper served)
- 7:00 - 9:00 - Opening worship
- 9:00 - Ice cream social

Saturday, July 28

- 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Delegate session
- 1:30 - 3:45 - Workshops
- 4:00 - 5:00 - Joint session
- 7:00 - 9:00 - Musical
- 9:00 - Alumni gatherings

Sunday, July 29

- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. - Worship, communion,

**Cost:** \$125 per adult for food, registration, snacks, materials. (1/2 price for children and youth)

**Lodging:** Doubletree Hotel at Warren Place, Tulsa, OK 918-495-1000 - Make own lodging arrangements.

**Children/Youth Program:** Childcare for 0-5 year olds; children's programming planned by WDC Resource Commission for K-5<sup>th</sup> grade; junior high (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) planned by Sara Dick (youth pastor from Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS). No special high school program due to San Jose - encourage youth/young adults to be delegates.

**Publicity:** Posters will be sent to each congregation. Watch for weekly bulletin announcements. Brochures available later in May. Watch website for information: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)

**Financial year starts slowly**

For two months ending March 31, 2007: total income \$61,239; total expenses \$97,821. There are 34 congregations (out of 65) in WDC with no contributions - yet our staff gets paid, Camp Mennoscah operates, church plant subsidies are sent, and ministers are credentialed each month! Vision 2012 now has over \$633,000 committed and we encourage this above-budget effort in your congregation.

**Donate via the Web to WDC**

Using your credit or debit card, you can now donate to either the Western District general budget or the Vision 2012 capital campaign or to any other MC USA organization through the following website: <http://giving.mennoniteusa.org> (follow the links: Organizations/Area Conferences/Page 3 for WDC). Links to the donation site can also be found on the Home page or the Vision 2012 page of the WDC website: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org).

**Check It Out**

This month in the **Check It Out** newsletter from the Conference Resource Library...find new resources on "Living in this Beautiful Mess: Books on Today's Kingdom of God here on Earth". Included are titles such as: *They Like Jesus but not the Church* by Dan Kimball, *Grace (Eventually): thoughts on faith* by Anne Lamott; and *The Dirty Little Secret: uncovering the truth about Porn* by Craig Gross. All these may be reserved by contacting the Library or by visiting our website: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org).

*-Marlene Bogard, Minister of Christian Nurture and Resource Library Director*

**50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS celebrates its future and recognizes God's many blessings for 50 years of church community on **June 2-3**. There will be a program and reception on Saturday evening at 7 p.m. The events continue on Sunday morning with remembrances and music, special speakers at 9 a.m. and celebration worship at 10:30 a.m. A catered meal (requires advance registration) will be served at 12:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend and/or send written special memories. For more information: [www.southernhills.ks.us.mennonite.net](http://www.southernhills.ks.us.mennonite.net).

**Church news!**

**Peace Mennonite Church**, Lawrence, KS decided to purchase a building and acreage in north Lawrence as their worship center. Congratulations!

**Traveling Peace Trunk available!**

Imagine a trunk-load of peace and justice related resources delivered right to your church! The Traveling Peace Trunk from the Western District Resource Library is packed full of ideas for all ages - small groups, family nights, weekend retreats and includes books, CD's, posters, curriculum, binders of ideas. Call now to schedule for the summer or fall for a 2 month loan to your congregation - 316-283-6300.

**Spiritual Guidance Seminar**

Western District Conference, South Central Conference, and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Great Plains Extension are co-hosting a Spiritual Guidance Seminar this next year. The dates are August 13-15, October 12-13, December 14, February 29-March 1, 2008, and June 6-7, 2008. The art of spiritual guidance will be learned both through theoretical study and developing practical ministry skills. **Eight** participants will be accepted. Cost will be \$970 (including course pack). Register at WDC by June 1 with \$500 payment; remainder \$470 due August 1.

### **Bethel College alumni activity**

The Bethel College Alumni Association invites alumni and friends to its annual banquet, 6 p.m. Saturday, **May 19** in Memorial Hall. Program includes award presentations and music by Open Road. Cost \$16 per person. Contact the Bookstore in Schultz Student Center on campus, 316-284-5205. Reservation deadline - May 9.

### **deo\* invitation**

All are invited to the commissioning service for Phase 3 of the 2007-08 deo year on **May 20**, 1:00 p.m. at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS. Come hear the deo participants share about what they have learned and experienced through Phase 2 and what they anticipate in Phase 3. They will be commissioned for serving in their home congregations during June and July. The member of the team from Western District is Mary Goering from First, Newton. (\*discipleship, encounter, outreach)

### **Attn: Deacons**

**A Deacon Ministry Training Event** sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) and **open to Mennonites** will be held at The Cedars, McPherson, Kansas, on **June 9**, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The theme "Anoint Us, Lord" will be led by Wallace Landes, pastor of the Palmyra (PA) Church of the Brethren and chair of the ABC Board. He is an adjunct member of the Religious Studies faculty at Elizabethtown (PA) College. The event will include Bible study, keynote presentations, multiple workshops and worship. (Mennonite and Church of the Brethren have close ties as historic peace churches. Brethren and Mennonites have collaborated on a training manual for deacons, Hymnal: A Worship Book and other projects.)

Cost is \$15 per person, which includes lunch for those who register before the registration deadlines. More info and registration at <http://www.brethren.org/abc/>

### **VBS Troupe to visit WDC churches**

A Traveling Troupe will help bring God's good news during Vacation Bible School to five locations across the WDC: Hillsboro, KS: First Mennonite and Trinity Mennonite; Turpin, OK: Turpin Mennonite and Calvary Mennonite, Liberal, KS; Clinton, OK: Koinonia Mennonite Church; Hydro, OK: Junior Camp; and Dallas, TX: Iglesia Mennonita Comunidad de Esperanza and Mennonite Church House of Healing. These small rural or urban churches were selected because of their expressed desire for additional leadership to run a Vacation Bible School, their plan to reach out into their communities and to cooperate with other churches in their geographic area. Norma Johnson is coordinating the Troupe, made up of four young

women from Mennonite colleges and universities. They are: Rebecca Claassen, (Bethel College); Teresa Hershberger (Bluffton University) Megan Klaassen (Bethel College) and Regina Weaver (Hesston College). This Troupe will help local congregations by providing leadership in music, worship, drama and other activities. They will use the Faith and Life Resources Curriculum: ***Be Bold, God is With You***. The Troupe is possible because of a generous grant from the Schowalter Foundation.

### **Mission and Congregational Life**

How does congregational life impact the mission of the congregation in the world? What makes congregational life a "sign of the kingdom of God"? How does a congregation as a contrast community engage communities beyond itself? Engage these issues as a seminary student for credit or audit in the course "Mission and Congregational Life." **Pastors** may also register for a **one-day workshop** on the same topic, **Friday, June 15, 8:30-11:30 a.m., 12:30-3:30 p.m.** The course, taught by Keith Harder, D.Min., is sponsored by the Great Plains Extension of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The class will meet **8:30-11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, June 11-22, except June 15, when it will also meet in the afternoon.** Tuition for two credit hours is \$740; audit, \$130; audit for AMBS graduates, \$80; one-day workshop only, \$35. All sessions are at Shalom Mennonite Church, 800 E. First St., Newton, Kansas. Register by **May 17** at <http://www.ambs.edu/applying-to-ambs/application-process/register-online>. Or contact the AMBS-Great Plains office: [lbarrett@ambs.edu](mailto:lbarrett@ambs.edu) or 316-283-7098.

### **Anabaptist Disabilities Network**

ADNet is a non-profit membership organization seeking to serve the church, particularly the larger Anabaptist family. The mission of ADNet is to provide encouragement and resources to congregations, families, and persons with disabilities as they identify and embrace their God-given gifts and abilities in ministry to each other and to the larger church. Resources include: printed and audiovisual materials, website, Congregational Accessibility Network, people connections, workshops, seminars. Please visit us on the web: [www.adnetonline.org](http://www.adnetonline.org).

### **Travel opportunity**

Driver(s) needed to return rental car to Newton, KS after San Jose Mennonite Church Assembly. Must be 25 years or older. Car available July 2-6. Return date and terms negotiable. Contact Don and Loretta Sharp at 717-560-6352, 717-330-6929 or [dlsharp102@yahoo.com](mailto:dlsharp102@yahoo.com)

### **Sister congregation partnership**

**Southern Hills Mennonite Church**, Topeka, KS and **House of Healing Mennonite Church**, Dallas, TX have established a sister-to-sister partnership. This means that the established congregation and the church plant are involved in a relationship of learning to know each other, of sharing what Christian faith in a Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective means to each other, and supporting one another in the kingdom work.

### **Tournament results**

The WDC Tournament was held at the end of March at Bethel College, North Newton, KS and Hesston College, KS. South Central Conference churches were also invited to participate. Seventeen basketball teams and nine volleyball teams were entered.

#### **Congratulations** to the winning teams:

Basketball Division I - Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS/Beatrice Mennonite, NE (joint team). Division II - Whitestone, Hesston, KS. Volleyball - Divisions I and II - Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS. Many people said they enjoyed the tournament and that it should be continued.

**Thanks** to the Tournament Task Force for organizing this event: Melisa Cooper, Neal Denno, Shirley Dietzel, Pat Flaming, Lisa Hochstetler, Alan Koller.

### **Pastors Marriage Enrichment Weekend**

Pastors, take some time for you and your spouse to relax, communicate and spend time enriching your marriage on **September 28 (7 p.m.) - 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 per church to pay for pulpit supply. A modest registration fee for the week will be charged. Reservations are being accepted now by contacting Nancy Funk at 316-283-6300.

### **Keyboard needed for Resource Library**

The Resource Library is looking for a portable piano keyboard (can be used in good condition). This comes in mighty handy when musicians want to play a tune when making selections from our extensive Music Lending Library or for those who want to use it for worship planning. Contact Marlene Bogard if you have one you would like to donate: 316-283-6300.

### **MCC openings**

Mennonite Central Committee invites qualified candidates interested in the position of **Executive Director** to submit a letter of intent and resume. This position is the chief executive officer and provides overall leadership for the relief, development and peace agency. The anticipated start date is January 1, 2008. For job description and information, contact Lowell Detweiler: [lcd@mcc.org](mailto:lcd@mcc.org) or send a letter of inquiry to PO Box 500, Akron PA 17501, or call 717-859-2806.

MCC also has an immediate opening for an experienced **Director of Peace & Justice** in the national office. This person will collaborate with regional staff to co-create peace, justice and service programs. Complete job description available upon request. Send resume, cover letter and salary requirements to: Human Resources-MCC, 21 S 12<sup>th</sup> St, Akron PA 17501 or email: [krj@mcc.org](mailto:krj@mcc.org).

### **Retreat to the Minnesota wilderness**

Arthur Paul Boers, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at AMBS will be the resource person for a 5 day canoe trip in the MN Boundary Waters **July 22-27**. Come experience the call of the loon, time for reflection and retreat, and the camaraderie of fellow sojourners. For more information call 218-365-5873 or visit [www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org).

### **Network of Biblical Storytellers**

The Network of Biblical Storytellers (NOBS) 20<sup>th</sup> annual festival gathering will be **August 1-4**, in Atlanta, GA. "Welcome Back - Stories to Celebrate Homecoming". [www.nobs.org](http://www.nobs.org)

### **Western District Conference coming events**

May 3 - Retired pastors' lunch, Bethel College, North Newton, KS  
May 27-28 - Just fOr You (JOY) Disabilities Retreat, Camp Mennoscah  
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. 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 Mennofolk 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**

May 1 - WDC staff meeting

May 3 - Retired Pastors' Luncheon (DNF, LL)

May 4-6 - to Bluffton--vacation (DNF)

May 7 - Kansas Ecumenical Ministries; Staff Relations  
and Stewardship Commission (DNF)

May 8 - Tulsa Program Committee; DEO board meeting  
(DNF)

May 11 - Prairie View Board retreat - Wichita (DNF)

May 16 - Kansas Christian Leaders Forum, WDC  
conference room (DNF)

May 17 - Low German task force (DNF)

May 18 - Women pastors' breakfast; Joint WDC/SCC  
Exec/Ad committees (DNF)

May 27 - Trinity Mennonite/Hillsboro; Tim Kliewer  
farewell (DNF)

*(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](mailto:dorothyf@mennowdc.org).*

**Western District Conference MEMO**  
**PO Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117**  
**316-283-6300, FAX 316-283-0620**  
**E-mail: [wdc@mennowdc.org](mailto:wdc@mennowdc.org); Website:**  
**[www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)**