

Memo

November 2007

A Word from Dorothy

50 + 100 + 20 + 75 + 3= Priceless!

During this year, WDC has enjoyed celebrating congregational anniversaries. I attended the Southern Hills Mennonite Church's 50th in Topeka; I traveled to Turpin, OK for their 100th; here in Newton, Shalom Mennonite marked 20 years and just this month Lorraine Avenue in Wichita celebrated their 75th anniversary. Each one was marked with special music, banners, good food, and ceremonies that inspired and encouraged all who were present.

However, last Saturday (October 20), I was in Dallas and helped to celebrate more milestones. The Leadership Commission interviewed eight (yes, eight!) candidates for credentialing. Four women and four men tramped into the Monte Horeb building in the Oak Cliff community and gave their glowing testimonies of God's call on their lives--some from childhood where a mother (who, at 83, accompanied her daughter to the interview!) imparted a love of God and the Bible to her family--to a psychologist trained to listen to people but now is feeling the call of God to lead people to faith! We ended most interviews in tears as we prayed for them and experienced their gratefulness for the affirmation of the church for their ministries.

Yet, the priceless celebration was yet to come. I was not prepared for the celebration of the third anniversary of the Iglesia Menonita Mi Redentor in Dallas, a church plant led by pastor Jorge Quintanilla, originally from Nicaragua. Our car was met in the parking lot by all the congregation--all in formal "Sunday" clothes including fancy dresses for the little girls and a striking white suit on the pastor. We were escorted to a rented building which I knew was to be their church home--but I thought was not yet remodeled. Unknown to all of us, the congregation had received its final occupancy permit that week after hours and hours of painting, installing a new floor, lights, etc. I was led to the door and invited to open the door. I opened the door while the little children circled me, all giggling and smiling. There, to my surprise, was a giant ribbon across the threshold. I was given a scissors and cut the ribbon to great applause, cheering, screaming, laughing

and hugging. Joy was uncontrollable! "Lead us into our church!" was the command. And so I did--with flashbulbs popping and more clapping and cheering. "We are in our church. Gracias Señor!"

The worship was spirited and heartfelt. The youth, the children, the adults all celebrated with their whole beings and I was their guest. It was positively incredible. The Holy Spirit had guided Western District Conference to plant this church and provide nurture to its pastor and leaders. Come to think of it--we were all there! This is the church alive. Gracias Señor!

---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.***

Celebrate!

We celebrate Camp Mennoscah

... cabin ants, prayer times, and river play
... great food, new friends, and peace on the prairie
... a new director's house with willing workers and growing funds.

We celebrate WDC congregations and pastors

... commitments, growth, and service
... dedicated pastors, serious study, and growing faith
... energized members who care deeply, pray daily, and give generously.

We celebrate the WDC Resource Library

... new lights, new shelves, and carpeting
... quiet spaces to read and study, talk and pray
... a vision captured, embraced, and now in use.

We celebrate Vision 2012

... prayer partners, the steering committee, and the executive committee
... Dorothy and WDC staff with innovative ideas and meaningful work
... God's people—all of us—with profound commitments to pray and give and serve.

Thanks be to God!

---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

Nov. 4 - Pray for the new church plant, Comunidad de Fe, Grand Prairie, TX, and church planters Natan and Rosalba Navarrete, that the Holy Spirit will give guidance, strength and encouragement in this ministry of planting a church. Also pray for Jerry Kaiser as he completes 18 years as pastor of Inman (KS) Mennonite Church this Sunday and moves to Aberdeen, ID to pastor First Mennonite Church. Pray for Harold D. Thieszen as he becomes the interim pastor of the Inman congregation.

Nov. 11- Pray for LeNora Duerksen as she is installed at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS as Coordinator of Senior Ministries (1/2 time); and for Matt Simon as he is installed for joint ministry with Buhler (KS) and Hoffnungsau (Inman, KS) Mennonite Churches, as Associate/Youth Pastor.

Nov. 18 - Pray for Houston (TX) Mennonite Church and Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX as they search for new pastoral leadership.

Nov. 25 - Pray for the Mi Redentor congregation, Dallas, TX, as it celebrates its third anniversary as a church plant with pastor, Jorge Quintanilla--now credentialed (licensed) by Western District Conference for two years towards ordination.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

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

Houston (TX) Mennonite Church - pastor (full-time)

Inman (KS) Mennonite Church - pastor (pending CIF)

Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX - pastor (pending CIF)

Transitions

Michelle Armster, a member of Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX, was licensed toward ordination on October 21, but will continue to live and serve with Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, PA, as Director of Mennonite Conciliation Services and also co-pastor part-time at St. Andrews United Church of Christ congregation in Lancaster, PA.

Susan Jantzen has been called to serve as a part-time Interim Pastor for Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church beginning November 11. She continues her seminary studies at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO, commuting both to Deer Creek and St. Paul

from her home in Newton, KS.

Joyce Pankratz, has resigned as Director of Camp Mennoscah effective January 31, 2008. A search process is being formed.

Todd Schlosser, former co-pastor at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, KS, began as Campus Pastor at the Mennonite Manor retirement community in South Hutchinson, KS on October 15.

Matt Simon is the new Associate Pastor for Buhler (KS) and Hoffnungsau (Inman, KS) Mennonite churches. Also congratulations to Matt on his marriage on October 13 to Jami Reeves.

Harold D. Thieszen becomes the interim pastor (3/4/ time) at Inman (KS) Mennonite Church on November 5.

Financial update

As of October 15, WDC has received \$216,384 (45%) towards its 2007 annual budget of \$472,300.

The **Vision 2012** capital campaign's total is \$717,946 (3-year goal of \$1,500,000).

Check It Out

Jim and Casper go to Church. Amish Grace. 10 Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military. Asphalt Jesus. How do these titles grab you? These are just a few of the recent resources added to the Conference Resource Library that connects **real life to real faith.** Check out the most recent listing of new additions by going to [www.mennowdc.org / Library.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Library.html). Call or email to reserve your top choice! 316-283-6300 / crlib@mennowdc.org

--Marlene Bogard, Resource Library Director

The Leadership Commission breaks a record!

In a marathon period of 24 hours, the WDC Leadership Commission interviewed eight individuals in Texas for credentials. The following individuals were all affirmed for leadership: Michelle Armster, member of Peace, Dallas, but now working for MCC in Akron and pastoring part-time for a United Church of Christ congregation, licensed toward ordination; Blanca Vargas, pastor/church planter of Comunidad di Vida, San Antonio, for ordination; Oneida Duenas, commissioned for specialized ministry as a teacher/tutor for the Anabaptist Bible Institute in Dallas; Juan Limones, pastor of Luz del Evangelio, Dallas for ordination; Natan Navarrete, commissioned for church planting in Grand Prairie; Antonio Caceros, pastor of Monte Horeb, Dallas for ordination; Esther Vazquez, pastor/church planter of House of Healing, Dallas, for ordination; Jose Vazquez, co-church planter with Esther, transfer of ordination from Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Also, upon the recommendation of Marco Guete, associate conference minister for Texas, the following five church planters' credentials were moved from "commissioning for specialized ministry as church planter" to "licensed toward ordination"--a two-year period of testing and further education before ordination. Those people were: Jorge Quintanilla, Mi Redentor, Dallas; Natavidad Hernandez, Casa de Dios, Dallas; Alberto Parchmont, Casa del Alfarero, Houston; Aurora Parchmont, Neuva Jerusalem, Houston; Feliz Marquez, Rey de Gloria, Dallas.

Give thanks to God for this tremendous outpouring of leadership and new church development!

Visioning grants

Vision 2012 offers vision grants (up to \$5,000) to current Western District Conference congregations for strategic planning, visioning and redevelopment planning. Area conference staff and others will provide consultation, resources and training. For application form, go to: www.mennowdc.org, click on Grants.

Camp Mennoscah

Camp Mennoscah and WDC invites you to the **groundbreaking ceremony** for the new Director's House on Sunday, **November 4** at 4:00 p.m. on the campgrounds. Come see Vision 2012 funds at work, tour the new maintenance apartment, and enjoy fellowship--and some refreshments. (In case of rain, event will be held in the Dining Hall.)

Interim pastors

Persons currently involved with or interested in the possibility of interim pastor ministry with Western District Conference are invited to a November 15 gathering from 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the WDC office for a time of getting acquainted, sharing and resourcing about interim ministry. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Nancy Funk at the conference office (316-283-6300; wdc@mennowdc.org) by Nov 12.

Discipleship Now

Discipleship Now, being held **Nov. 16-18**, in Newton and Wichita, KS, is an intense experience-based retreat where youth will be led to encounter God through dynamic individual and group prayer practices, worship, and reflection. The retreat also encompasses in-depth teaching on discipleship and a specially designed outreach experience to apply and reflect on what it means to call oneself Christian. This event is for sophomore through senior high youth, who are referred by leadership in their local congregation as someone growing in their relationship with Christ and open to exploring their gifts in leadership. For information, contact Doug Krehbiel, Conference Youth Minister,

316-283-6300; dougk@mennowdc.org. Register by Nov. 8.

Resource Library open house

Sunday, December 2, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Come, celebrate and explore the newly remodeled and expanded Western District Conference Resource Library. A brief program at 4:00 p.m. will be followed by refreshments and story telling, including a reprise of the now famous...Possum Come A Knockin'!

Upside Down King musical

Coming in **January 2008!** The "Upside Down King" - an upbeat, fun, and powerful re-telling of the life and ministry of Jesus. This original musical, with script by Carol Duerksen and music by Doug & Jude Krehbiel (Road Less Travelled), features a five-member young adult cast, and a live classic rock and roots band. Six presentations will be done throughout Western District Conference in January. Offerings will be taken for WDC youth ministry.

Receive the benefits - before time runs out

If you are 70½ or older, you can make outright gifts to qualified charities like the Western District Conference with a direct transfer from your individual retirement account (IRA) – and pay no income tax on the amount distributed!

A year ago, congress passed the Pension Protection Act of 2006 effective for taxable years 2006 and 2007. Your gift can only come from an IRA. The Rollover you transfer directly to a charity, such as the Western District Conference, helps you meet the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA. You may transfer any amounts up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA. You have until December 31, 2007, to make an outright gift from your IRA directly to a qualified charity, without paying any income tax on the withdrawal.

You can make the gift by contacting the company that holds your IRA and request a charitable distribution to the Western District Conference. Ask that the check be mailed to Western District Conference, P. O. Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117. Then contact the Western District Conference Office (316) 283-6300 to let us know to expect your gift, where you would like the gift directed, such as Vision 2012. It is important to let us know, since some IRA companies do not identify the donor on the check.

Your gift is an investment in the Western District Conference. It is an investment in ministry through ministerial services, camping ministries, church planting, and congregational resourcing. Please consult with your financial planner or tax accountant or contact Harold D. Thieszen 316-283-8623.

AMBS-Great Plains

Study the Minor Prophets with Dr. Patricia Shelly in North Newton, **January 2008**. This AMBS-Great Plains class will meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings, January 8-24 and Saturdays, Jan. 12 and 19. Details available at 316-283-7098 or ibarrett@ambs.edu.

WDC Ski Retreat

February 1-5, 2008 - Cooper Mountain Ski Resort in Colorado. For information, contact Ken Regier, 316-283-5155, ext. 275.

National sermon contest

FaithTrust Institute is sponsoring a **sermon contest**. Through this contest, they intend to encourage and support preaching that addresses sexual and domestic violence. Sermon topic - Addressing Sexual and Domestic Violence in a Religious Context. Deadline: November 30. For information: www.faithtrustinstitute.org.

Christmas gift idea

New CD available from Mennonite Media, **“Abide With Me.”** All a cappella music from the former Mennonite Hour radio program, the CD features “comforting” music. \$12.95 CD only. Call 800-999-3534 or visit www.store.mennomedia.org.

Churches Supporting Church

Churches Supporting Churches is a program encouraged by Mennonite Central Committee where struggling New Orleans churches are connected with other supporting churches for the purpose of being centers for revitalization for New Orleans. More info at www.cscneworleans.org.

Office closed

The WDC office and Conference Resource Library will be closed **November 21, 22, 23** for Thanksgiving holiday break.

Western District Conference Coming Events

Nov. 3 - Reference Council, First Mennonite Church, Halstead, KS
Nov. 4, 4:00 p.m. - Groundbreaking ceremony for new director's house, Camp Mennoscah
Nov. 15 - Interim pastors luncheon, WDC office
Nov. 16-18 - Discipleship Now, Newton & Wichita, KS
Dec. 2, 4:00-6:00 p.m. - Open House, WDC Conference Resource Library
Dec. 24, 2007-Jan. 1, 2008 - WDC office closed
Feb. 1-5, 2008 - WDC Ski Retreat, Copper Mountain Resort, CO
Feb. 8-10, 2008 - Junior High Snow Camp, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, CO

Feb. 15-17, 2008 - Senior High Snow Camp, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, CO
March 9, 2008 - Children's Choir Festival, Bethel College Memorial Hall, North Newton, KS
March 14-16, 2008 - Senior High Snow Camp, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, CO
May 1, 2008 - Pastors' Day Apart
June 27-28, 2008 - WDC/SCC Annual Conference, Hesston College, Hesston, KS

Conference Ministers' schedules

Nov. 1 - I-70 Pastors, Manhattan, KS (LL)
Nov. 2 - Executive Committee and Board (DNF)
Nov. 3 - Reference Council, First Mennonite Church, Halstead, KS
Nov. 4 - Inman (KS) Mennonite Church, Camp Mennoscah (DNF)
Nov. 7 - Kansas health ecumenical meeting, Wichita, KS (DNF)
Nov. 8 - Low German task force (DNF)
Nov. 9-12 - South Texas (MG)
Nov. 11 - Installation of LeNora Duerksen - Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS (DNF); Joint installation service for Matt Simon - Buhler (KS) & Hoffnungsau Inman, KS Mennonite churches, (LL)
Nov. 12 - Staff Relations Committee, Stewardship Commission (DNF)
Nov. 13 - Vision 2012 Steering Committee, WDC Staff meeting, Vocations Banquet (DNF)
Nov. 14 - Wichita pastors meeting (LL); Bethel College class presentation/career fair (DNF)
Nov. 15 - Interim Pastors meeting, WDC office (DNF, LL)
Nov. 16 - Women pastors' breakfast (DNF)
Nov. 16-18 - Houston (TX) Mennonite Church (LL)
Nov. 17-24 - Thanksgiving break/vacation
Nov. 18 - Jorge Quintanilla licensing, Iglesia Menonita Mi Redentor, Richardson, TX (MG)
Nov. 27-Dec 1 - Conference Ministers meeting, Portland, OR (DNF, LL, MG)
(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:

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Western District Conference MEMO

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