

April 2008

A Word from Dorothy About health

Mention the word “healthcare” and you are bound to get a story—quickly. The last month has been full of such incidents for me.

☞The new WDC Health and Wellness Task Force was born out of a congregation’s (Hoffnungsaus, Inman, KS) determination that people of faith must address healthcare access issues. That led to a “Healthcare Summit” last September where over 100 people were energized to speak out about healthcare policy as well as to care for their bodies as a temple of the Holy Spirit. WDC joined with other denominations to advocate for Kansas healthcare policies which affect the rich and poor, urban and rural, healthy and unhealthy, children and adults. On March 12, 23 Mennonites traveled to Topeka and learned about the legislative process and then shared our faith-based concerns with our respective legislators. We spoke truth to power.

☞I have been in conversation with pastors and congregational leaders about how Mennonites should care for the “benefit” of health insurance as part of the pastoral compensation package. We vary in our opinions from seeking the best policy for the cheapest price to a Mennonite program that provides both good policy plus mutual aid. Stay tuned.

☞I lost a mother-in-law (age 99 in California) to death and learned of a cancer diagnosis of my father (age 86 in Minnesota) all on Good Friday. Health concerns multiplied by the minute. While we celebrate life lived well and long, we also were faced with decisions about level of care, reasonable measures of treatment and the role of family in providing care and support. How do other people cope who have no one who cares, no church family who rallies, and no community of faith to sustain them?

Re-read Amos 5:24: Let justice roll down...”, Matthew 25:40: “...just as you did it to one of the least...”; I Corinthians 6:19-20: “...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...”

--Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister

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.*

Jesus prays for us

In John 17:20-26 Jesus prays for all believers. It is always encouraging to know that Jesus is praying for me. He prays that just like Jesus and the Father are in relationship with each other, he wants us also to be in relationship to them. The second thing Jesus prays for us is that we may be brought to complete unity.

It is challenging to see why he prays these two things. First, Jesus prays so that the “world may believe that you have sent me,” and second, is to let the world know that the Father sent Jesus and that He loves us even as the Father loved Jesus.

What kind of message does our church send to the world? Is our love for each other attractive to the world? Pray that our love for each other will grow in our churches.

---Verlin Koehn, Vision 2012 prayer partner, Enid, OK

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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

April 6 - Pray for all WDC pastors (and their families) that they might find joy, fulfillment, challenge, and spiritual growth in their ministries.

April 13 - Pray for Bill Dellinger as he is credentialed today as pastor of Mt. Zion Mennonite Church, near Columbia, MO, a new church plant in Hallsville. Also pray that the Holy Spirit gives guidance to two English-speaking church plant possibilities in Denton (Anglo-White) and Grand Prairie (African-American), Texas.

April 20 - Pray for the WDC Stewardship Commission as it discerns a 2009 spending plan for delegate discernment this summer.

April 27 - Pray for Susan Jantzen, interim pastor at Deer Creek Mennonite Church (OK), as she is credentialed this morning. Pray for Linda Ewert, associate pastor of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS as she is ordained today at 4:00.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

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

Houston (TX) Mennonite Church - pastor

Inman (KS) Mennonite Church - pastor

New Creation Fellowship, Newton, KS - pastor (3/4 time)

Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX - pastor

Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS - pastor

Transitions

Dorothy (and Richard) **Nickel Friesen**, WDC Conference Minister, grieve the loss of Richard's mother, who died at age 99 on March 21 in Reedley, CA. A memorial service will be held in California on April 19. Also, Dorothy's father in Mt. Lake, MN was diagnosed with bladder cancer on March 21, and will have surgery.

Rod Franz, WDC Stewardship Commission member, from Manhattan Mennonite Church, was named as MMA Advocate of the Year for the central and eastern Kansas area. Congratulations!

Marco Guete, WDC Associate Conference Minister, has moved his office to a new location called "Centro Menno", 427 N Marlborough, P.O. Box 4446, Dallas, TX 75208. New phone and email: 214-946-3858, marcog@mennowdc.org.

Tom and Lois Harder, co-pastors at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS, have accepted another five-year term.

Orlan Koehn's (intentional interim pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS) mother died in Montezuma, KS on March 13.

Newton Hispanic church plant

The Newton (KS) Hispanic Mennonite Church began Sunday services (11 a.m. worship) on March 30 and will have Bible study and prayer on Thursday evenings (7 p.m.). They meet at 510 SE 2nd in a house owned by First Mennonite Church. A search continues for a church planter while local individuals will give leadership.

A special "inauguration service" will be held on Sunday, **April 13** at 6 p.m. at Bethel College Mennonite Church to celebrate this new church. The public is invited.

Annual conference

The program planning committee for the WDC/SCC annual conference (**June 27-28**) has chosen Acts 4:31-35 as its text and the theme, "Bold Witness: Pray with Courage, Share as One". In the powerful passage of the beginning of the Christian church, we have the narrative that combines prayer, speech, and action--and "there were no needy persons among them" (v. 34a). Speakers, musicians and workshop leaders are being arranged.

The schedule for Friday, **June 27** includes the WDC Reference Council from 1:30-4 p.m.; registration from 4-7 p.m. and opening worship at 7 p.m. at the Hesston Mennonite Church (KS) on the Hesston College campus. Saturday, **June 28**, includes morning WDC delegate sessions, noon meal, and afternoon workshops with a supper and closing worship at 7:00 p.m. A registration fee of \$50 plus meals (half for children) per person will include all materials, workshops, and programming. Junior High events are being planned by Doug Krehbiel and Hugo Saucedo. Pre-school and toddler care will be available; children from K-5th grade will have their own program.

Haven't been to an annual conference recently? This is your chance! Congregations should begin appointing delegates (1 per every 30 members or fraction thereof; at least one youth/young adult) and sending their leaders to this annual gathering. There will be great music, good fellowship, and powerful prayer!

Camp Mennoscah

Have you been to Camp Mennoscah lately? We've been busy. The new director's residence is progressing like wildfire, and we've burned some of the fields. And, sadly, some of our trees were sacrificed in the name of electrical security—you've never seen a Camp Mennoscah like this! Come out for one of our retreats in April.

Retirees' Relaxation Retreat: April 14-16, will have presentations on birding, recycling, star gazing; as well as times for visiting, hiking, and sharing. Bring your instruments, games, pictures and stories! Register by April 9.

Men & Boys Retreat: April 25-27, relax by the campfire, fish, canoe, fly kites, star gaze, eat, play ball, visit with old friends and make new ones. A great opportunity for outreach - invite others!

We'd love to see you at Camp Mennoscah for either (or both) of these retreats or volunteer your help as we prepare for our summer camps. See website for more information on these events and more:

www.mennowdc.org or call Camp at 620-297-3290.

Interim pastors' lunch

An Interim Pastors' lunch meeting is scheduled for **April 17**, 11-1:30 p.m. at the WDC office. We will be discussing basic issues of interim ministry – models or images of the interim pastor, memo of understanding, resources, etc. If you are currently an interim pastor or interested in the possibility of interim ministry, you are invited to this meeting. Lunch will be provided. RSVP to wdc@mennowdc.org by April 15.

Stewardship workshop

Stewardship theologian, author, and speaker Lynn Miller will lead a workshop at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS on **April 26** from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on **"The Power of Enough"**. It's designed for anyone interested in learning how to find real contentment by discovering what "enough" means in your life. It will include practical help and useful exercises you can apply to your own situation. There is no charge, but an offering will be taken. Childcare is available. RSVP to Shalom, 316-283-7395, office@shalomnewton.org.

Resource!

Tabor College School of Adult and Graduate Studies Christian Ministries Program is hosting a low-cost training event on Saturday, **April 26** in Wichita called Resource! There are seven seminars offered between 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. for \$15. WDC members are welcome to attend. Call 316-729-6333 for information/registration or go to www.Tabor.edu, click on Resource! on home page.

Next "Pastors' Day Apart" is May 1 --and not just for pastors!

"Vision and Strategic Planning" is the theme for the next PDA on Thursday, **May 1** at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS. The schedule is planned in two parts: Pastors meet from 1:00 - 5:30 p.m. with resource leaders from WDC; light supper served; then the evening session from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. is designed for pastors to bring the "Vision team", or Council, or Future committee, or structure group, or whatever group is designated by the congregation to lead in planning. There will be three case studies of congregations who have completed or are in the process of visioning--plus a report on how Vision 2012 has aided in congregational planning.

Put the date on your calendar and invite your congregational "team" to attend this session. Registration fee per congregation is \$25; pastor's fee is \$25 (includes meal, materials). Brochure available soon.

Pastors' sabbatical program

Consider shoulder tapping pastors or conference ministers who would benefit from four to nine weeks at AMBS. AMBS is receiving applications for fully funded **Engaging Pastors' Sabbatical Program** for spring 2009 (funded by a Lilly Endowment Grant to AMBS). Program benefits include: free campus housing and weekly stipend. Apply by April 28. Go to: <http://ambs.edu/programs-institutes/clc/engaging-pastors/pastor-sabbatical>

Legislative advocacy day

Over 40 members of the Kansas Faith Alliance for Health Care Reform, including 23 Mennonites from 13 WDC churches, descended on Topeka to raise their voices for health care access and reform on March 12. We learned several things:

- 1) Many of us are woefully ignorant of the legislative process yet we realize that public policy affects every citizen.
- 2) Our legislators need to hear from their constituents--not just from paid lobbyists.
- 3) The voice of faith is an important one because it brings to bear a moral perspective and speaks for the voiceless--the poor, the children, the disabled, the mentally ill.
- 4) WDC has a Health and Wellness Task Force that is monitoring this year's legislative process in Kansas due to the possibility of changing health care policy for the state. It also will be providing resourcing and educating our congregations about wellness issues. If interested in the task force, contact Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, bgill@att.net.

2009 Mennonite Directory

All congregations, please update your church information for the 2009 edition of *Mennonite Directory* by **May 1**. Letters have been sent to churches about this process. Updates can be made on paper forms or online: www.mennodata.org/mennonitedirectory/login.asp. The 2009 directory will be released near the end of 2008. For more information, contact Deb Ratzlaff at 1-866-866-2872 or debr@mennoniteusa.org.

Radical Journey

Radical Journey is a new service opportunity in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network and various Mennonite area conferences and congregations. It is a yearlong service, cross-cultural learning, intentional faith formation and leadership development experience for young adults. Radical Journey is looking for congregations that are willing to call, send and support young adults in this life-changing experience.

Contact: Darrell Gascho, program director, or Kay Schroeder, partner relations at 1-866-866-2872, or see www.Service.MennoniteMission.net.

The Parish Paper

Western District Conference has subscribed to *The Parish Paper - Ideas and Insights for Active Congregations*. Our subscription gives us copyright permission to share issues with our clergy, staff, lay leadership and members - for local use - in any or all of the following ways: e-mail, U.S. mail, enclosing or reprinting in your newsletter, distribution at your meetings or training events, and posting on your website. If you mail photocopies with your newsletter or other mailings - using your U.S. Post Office Nonprofit Mailing Permit - most local post offices require that every item carry your organization's name and address. Above *The Parish Paper* masthead, type your congregation's name, address, and "Photocopied by Permission."

Look for *The Parish Paper* on the WDC website: www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html.

Habitat for Humanity seeks applicants

Harvey County (KS) Habitat for Humanity is accepting applications for qualifying partner families to purchase the three bedroom home about to be constructed in Newton. Selected partner families actually purchase the home from Habitat and must be able to afford a monthly house payment. Family selection is based upon level of need, income and ability to make regular payments and willingness to partner with Habitat. Selected partner families must complete the required number of sweat equity hours in the construction of a home or other volunteer tasks to support the work of Habitat. An advocate is assigned to each Habitat family to provide ongoing assistance in home ownership after moving into the house.

Interested persons may obtain more information or request an application by writing to PO Box 1015, Newton, KS; bruauct@cox.net; 316-283-1172 or 316-772-0907.

Looking for leaders

Service Adventure needs unit leaders in Johnstown, PA, Philippi, WV, and Raleigh, NC. Leaders should be at least 24 years old, and can either be single or a married couple. Here is an opportunity to minister with young adults (age 17-20) as you live in community and serve the local community and church. Room, board and insurance are just part of the benefits! Terms start in late July. For more information, visit our Web site at Service.MennoniteMission.net and follow the Service Adventure links, call toll-free: 1-866-866-2872, or email: Service@MennoniteMission.net.

Western District Conference coming events

April 1-5 - Basketball Tournament, Bethel College, North Newton, KS; Volleyball Tournament, Hesston (KS) College

April 4-6 - Pastor Spouse Retreat, Roman Nose Resort, Watonga, OK
April 14-16 - Retirees Relaxation Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
April 25-27 - Mennonite Men & Boys Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
April 17 - Interim Pastors' lunch, WDC office
May 1 - Pastors' Day Apart, Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS
June 27-28 - WDC/SCC Annual Conference, Hesston College, Hesston, KS
Sept. 6-7 - Mennonite Women Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 14-18 - Work & Play Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Oct. 10-12 - Mennofolk on the Prairie Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Oct. 11 - Visual Arts & Worship Resourcing Day, Location TBA

Conference Ministers' schedules

April 1 - Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX (MG)
April 1-2 - Constituency Leaders Council, Laurelville, PA (DNF)
April 2 - Texas based staff meeting, Dallas, TX (MG)
April 3 - WDC/SCC program committee; Gifts Discernment committee (DNF)
April 4-6 - Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Watonga, OK (LL, MB)
April 7-10 - First generation immigrants churches consultation, Los Angeles, CA (MG)
April 7-11 - Family leave (DNF)
April 12-14 - Hispanic church plant, Newton, KS (MG)
April 14 - Host Kansas Christian Leaders Forum (DNF)
April 16 - Summer education planning, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (MB)
April 17-20 - Family leave (DNF)
April 18-20 - Women in Conversation Retreat, Wichita, KS (MB)
April 19-20 - Mission Leader Network meeting, Chicago, IL (MG)
April 22 - WDC staff meeting; Stewardship Commission (DNF)
April 24 - Bethel College Mennonite Church librarians, North Newton, KS (MB)
April 25 - Prairie View Board Retreat (DNF)
April 25-27 - Texas churches family camp/meeting, San Antonio, TX (MG)
April 27 - Susan Jantzen credentialing at Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, in a.m.; Linda Ewert ordination at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS at 4:00 p.m. (DNF); Hospitality series at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS (MB)
(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, dorothyntf@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; Website: www.mennowdc.org