

# Memo

**June/July 2008**

**A Word from Dorothy  
Thin Places**

I was reminded of Marcus Borg's book, EXPERIENCING THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY, by Janet Kaufman, chair of the WDC Leadership Commission, as she led us in profound devotions at our last meeting. In it, Borg reflects on Thomas Merton (20th century Trappist monk) who said this: "Life is this simple. We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent and God is shining through it all the time...It becomes very obvious that God is everywhere and in everything and we cannot be with God. It's impossible. The only thing is that we don't see it." As Borg asserts, occasionally we do "see it," do experience God shining through everything. "Thin places" are places where the veil lifts between the visible world of our ordinary experience, and God, the sacred, Spirit.

I reflect on a couple of "thin places" just this last week. 1) At the WDC Executive Board, Dianna Schunn (Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater) reported that her congregation picked up the centerpiece flames with two names of congregations written on them at last year's summer conference in Tulsa. Every subsequent administrative council meeting since they have been praying for those two congregations. This spring they sent a plant to the two congregations telling them, "We're praying for you." One congregation is a WDC church plant and is desiring a sister/partner congregation and now Grace Hill is considering this prayer partner church as their new connection. This is a "thin place."

2) I met with Marlene Bogard for our monthly supervision session and determined that we could use a college student for the summer to assist in the Resource Library. We have the funds from Vision 2012. Who could answer that call? Just after our conversation, a young woman from the neighborhood came in to inquire about a summer youth event. There she stood! A graduating high school senior awaiting a service assignment and "in between things." This is a "thin place."

In the midst of all that is happening locally and globally, we tend to focus on the dramatic, the large, the evil, the violence, and forget the many acts of kindness,

gestures of compassion, and everyday workings of the Spirit in our lives and in our congregations. I needed the reminder of the "thin places" because the Holy Spirit is working--alive among us all of the time. Can you give a testimony of God's presence--now that you look back? Name those "thin places" in your life and in the life of your congregation.

*--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.**

**Prayer article**

*"Listen now to my prayer and to the prayers of all your other servants who want to honor you. Give me success today." Neh. 1:11.*

As Nehemiah saw the need, he prayed and waited for the right moment to ask Pharaoh for permission and the tools to reconstruct the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

We need to have a vision, goal, and a plan for action when you pray, as Nehemiah did. God will guide us and put it together; modifying it in his perfect will. He only expects from us the prayers of vision to fit the purpose of helping others, spreading the good news and glorifying his name.

This is a good time for you to review your prayers, what are you asking for? Does it fit what God requests from us? Are your prayers fulfilling the purpose of God?

Listen now to my prayer and to the prayers of all your other servants who want to honor you.

Give me success today....

*--Sandra Montes-Martinez, 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 1** - Pray for Pastor Joanna Harader as she is ordained today at Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, KS.

**June 8** - Give thanks for the ministry of Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS as it celebrates its 125th anniversary today.

**June 15** - Pray for the "church fathers" among us--those men who give leadership, counsel, time, and finances to sustain local congregation and WDC ministries. Pray for Jay Goering, WDC moderator, as he prepares to lead our annual conference sessions June 27-28.

**June 22** - Pray for WDC as it gathers on June 27-28 on the Hesston College campus for its annual conference session. May we be a "Bold Witness" of our faith (Acts 4:31-35).

**June 29** - Pray for Eric Buller as he concludes his pastorate at First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS today and prepares for his pastorate at Inman (KS) Mennonite Church.

**July 6** - Pray for conference and congregational leaders who vacation this summer--for safety, refreshment, renewal, rest, and laughter!

**July 13** - Give thanks for the ministry of Pastor Dewayn (and Marilyn) Isaac on their farewell today at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK. They will retire and plan to move to Ontario.

**July 20** - Pray for the newly affirmed WDC Executive Committee: Moderator Brenda Glanzer Lilliston (Hope/Wichita, KS); Moderator-elect Doug Penner (Southern Hills/Topeka, KS) and Secretary Berni Kaufman (Eden/Moundridge, KS). Conference Minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen meets with them regularly.

**July 27** - Give thanks for the youth and sponsors of WDC who spent time in June in Clinton, OK with the "Walk a mile" event, learning about the Cheyenne / Mennonite experience and faith. Pray for Nita Wilson, Dallas, who will serve as WDC Interim Conference Youth Minister.

### Pastoral openings

*(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):*

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

**Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK** - pastor (in process)

**First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS** - pastor (in process)

**Houston (TX) Mennonite Church** - pastor

**Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX** - pastor

### Transitions

**Jaime Cazares** will be the church planter at Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, a new church plant in Newton, KS. His responsibilities start on June 15.

**Joanna Harader** graduated from Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Shawnee, KS with an MDiv on May 17. She will be ordained at 4:00 p.m. on June 1 by WDC and continue as the pastor of Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, KS.

**Justin Hiebert**, interim youth pastor at Trinity and First Mennonite churches in Hillsboro, KS, will conclude his service there on June 30. He will enter seminary in the fall.

A farewell service will be held on July 13 for **Dewayn Isaac**, pastor at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK, where he has ministered since 1995.

**Susan Jantzen** graduated with an MA in Biblical Studies from St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO, on May 16. She is the interim pastor at Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church.

**Renee Kanagy** graduated from AMBS, Elkhart, IN with an MDiv on May 24 and will become the pastor (3/4 time) of New Creation Fellowship Church, Newton, KS on September 1.

**Lee Lever**, WDC Associate Conference Minister, graduated from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL on May 16 with a Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Development. His thesis title is "Where is the Missional Church?" a study of church planting and missional agenda in WDC. A copy is in the WDC Resource Library. He will end his work at WDC on June 30, and will work with the Mennonite Church USA Denominational Ministry office.

**Hugo Saucedo** has resigned as Conference Youth Minister (Texas) effective July 31. He has been named the Director of Mennonite Voluntary Service for Mennonite Mission Network of Mennonite Church USA. Hugo served in youth ministry in a one-half time position since September, 2004 and created a network of youth, youth leaders, and congregations who are developing a vision for Mennonite leadership.

**Nita Wilson**, now of Dallas and serving as a church planter intern with Marco Güete, has been named the Interim Conference Youth Minister on a 1/2 time basis, beginning July 15, until a permanent conference youth minister is named.

**Jeff Wintermote**, currently pastor at Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church, will become pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS on September 1.

### Check It Out

**Excellent Resources on Caregiving.** What exactly are "good" bedside manners? How can we care for ourselves while caring for our elders? How do we offer comfort to those who are dying and those who care for them? View the recent edition of Check It Out at [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org). These resources could be utilized by deacons, elders, pastors, caregivers or small groups. As always, to check availability or to reserve a resource, email: [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org) or call 316-283-6300.

### Walk a Mile

“Walk a Mile”, a youth service and learning event, is coming to Clinton, OK **June 14-17!**

This three-day immersion in Southern Cheyenne Christian culture will include touring the Trail of Tears with Mennonite pastor and Cheyenne Peace Chief, Lawrence Hart, working with the Return to the Earth project (return of Native remains for proper burial), experiencing the Cheyenne Cultural Center as well as recreating, interacting and having fun! This event is open to 25 high school youth (approximately nine youth from Kansas & Nebraska, eight from Oklahoma, and eight from Texas.) We are hoping to get youth from many different churches across the conference.

**Registration deadline is June 3.** Fee: ONLY \$25 (does not include travel). To register, contact Nancy Funk at WDC offices: [wdc@mennowdc.org](mailto:wdc@mennowdc.org), 316-283-6300. More details will be sent to you after you register.

Need more info? Contact: Doug Krehbiel, [dougk@mennowdc.org](mailto:dougk@mennowdc.org) or Hugo Saucedo [hugo.saucedo@gmail.com](mailto:hugo.saucedo@gmail.com). This is a Western District/South Central Conference Youth Ministry event.

### Reference Council

WDC Reference Council will meet on **June 27, 1:30-4:00 p.m.** at Hesston (KS) Mennonite Church, just prior to the opening session of annual conference. All members of WDC Executive Board, commissions, task forces, pastors, and WDC persons serving on MC USA committees, boards and agencies are invited. The agenda includes input by Dorothy Nickel Friesen and Phil Bergey about post-Vision 2012 assessment and dreaming. What have we learned about WDC (mission, vision, values, unity, diversity, new/emerging structure, connection and role with MC USA)? What does WDC want and need to do and be in the next five years and what implications does this have for MC USA and this region (Resource Center and staff, Missional equipping of/with leaders and congregations, youth and young adult ministry resourcing)?

### Annual Conference

Plan to attend the WDC annual conference **June 27-28** at Hesston (KS) Mennonite Church/Hesston College.

The opening session on Friday evening begins at 7 p.m. and will feature singing, preaching and prayer. Come prepared for a joyful time of reunion and of establishing new relationships.

On Saturday morning, delegate session agenda includes - what happened in 2007; election of new leaders; state of conference address; celebration of Vision 2012 reaching \$1 million; updates on new churches and partnerships, Camp Mennoscah, Resource Library, youth ministry; budget and Vision 2012

campaign. On Saturday afternoon, a variety of workshops will be offered - there will be something to appeal to every interest! The conference will end on Saturday evening with a worship service, including communion.

**Please register by June 13.** Brochures with registration forms are available in your churches, or at: <http://www.mennowdc.org/2008annualconferencebrochure.pdf>  
*See you at annual conference!*

### Peace Resources available as companions to summer Gather 'Round curriculum

If your church uses the Gather 'Round Curriculum, you will note that the summer quarter focuses on "The Things That Make for Peace." Remember that your Conference Resource Library has dozens of picture books that focus on many aspects of peacemaking. These will be placed in a special section in the library for summer use. Teachers - come and see! (Pastors, if you are reading this, pass this info on to your Sunday School teachers!) To check availability of a particular book by author or title, go to: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org) and click on Webrary.

### Camp Mennoscah update

Camp Mennoscah is really cookin' now! **Thanks** to all our wonderful and talented volunteers, work on the new director's residence at Camp Mennoscah is progressing quickly. The exterior of the residence has been painted and the deck is nearly finished. Inside, trim has been installed, the cabinets are nearly completed, and the floor coverings will be installed soon—hooray for all these blessings! An open house and dedication is planned for later this summer. On top of exciting house developments, our summer camps also started on June 1, and we're having a great time learning about God and experiencing God's creation at Camp Mennoscah. (Don't you wish you were here? Join our summer volunteers and see what Camp Mennoscah is about.) [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org)

### Ignite!

Attn: youth pastors, workers and sponsors - put **August 24** on your calendars for **Ignite!** - a youth ministry resource event that will put a fire in your youth ministries. (This replaces the youth pastor/sponsor banquet which has been held in previous years.) Resourcing, fellowship, fun, workshops, seminars, banquet... More details to come.

### The Parish Paper

Visit [www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html) to view the June issue of **The Parish Paper**. Its topic is: "Teaching Moments" Strengthen Governing Board Meetings!

### Women's and Girl's Retreat

All South Central Conference and Western District Conference women and girls are invited to come together for the annual Women's and Girl's Retreat, scheduled for **September 5-7** at Camp Mennoscah. The theme for the weekend is "*The Woven Threads of Sisterhood*". Debbie Schmidt, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS, and Raylene Hinz-Penner, professor of English at Washburn University, who together have shared a four-decade-long friendship and spiritual journey - will be the principle speakers. Through their special sessions, Saturday afternoon seminars, free time, music, and mealtimes, the weekend will focus on the special connections girls and women develop through shared life experiences. Programming is planned for girls in grades 3-12.

Registration information will be sent to churches in July and sign-up is due by August 18. For further information, contact Eileen Stucky, retreat chairperson, 620-543-2756 or [swp@buhlerks.net](mailto:swp@buhlerks.net).

### Jumpstart is Coming!

Save the date: Saturday, **September 13** at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, KS. Jumpstart will provide a variety of interactive workshops relating to Christian education and faith nurture in the congregation. Topics will include Reclaiming Bible Literacy; Teaching Bible 101 to Adults, and much more. Registration materials will be ready in July. Plan now to send many of your teachers to this affordable and enriching day.

### Proclamation by Design:

#### Worship and the Visual Arts Resourcing Day

Worship planners, pastors, artists and anyone with an interest in the visual arts are invited - mark your calendars for **October 11** from 8:30 - 3:30. A full day of presentations and workshops will be provided for you at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, KS. Presenters will include Marlene Kropf, MC USA Denominational Minister of Worship and Leslie James, co-author of the newly released book, *Proclamation by Design* by Faith and Life Resources. Workshops will include Banner Basics, Collaborative Art for Worship, Cohesive Worship Planning and Advent Idea Starter. This event is sponsored by the Resource Commission of the WDC and the Faith and Life Bookstore of Newton, KS.

Registration materials will be available in July. Contact Marlene Bogard, 316-283-6300; [mbogard@mennowdc.org](mailto:mbogard@mennowdc.org).



### Western District Conference coming events

June 14-17 - Walk a Mile youth service learning event, Corn, OK  
June 27 (1:30-4:00) - Reference Council, Hesston Mennonite Church, KS  
June 27-28 - WDC/SCC Annual Conference, Hesston College, Hesston, KS  
Aug. 24 - Ignite!  
Sept. 6-7 - Women's and Girl's Retreat, Camp Mennoscah  
Sept. 13 - Jumpstart, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS  
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, Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS  
October 25 - Reference Council, First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS

### Conference Ministers' schedules

June 1 - Ordination of Joanna Harader, Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence KS (DNF); Mt. Zion Mennonite Church, Hallsville, MO (LL); Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS (MB)  
June 2 - Healthcare focus, Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF); Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, KS (LL)  
June 3 - Healthcare focus, West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (DNF); Faith Journey presentation, MC USA chapel (LL)  
June 5 - Retired Pastors' Luncheon, Bethel College Mantz Library (DNF, LL)  
June 8 - Zion Mennonite Church 125<sup>th</sup> celebration, Elbing, KS (DNF); Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS (MB)  
June 9-13 - Concordia University, NE (MB)  
June 11 - WDC/SCC Program Committee, Hesston College; WDC Exec Committee (DNF)  
June 15 - Houston Mennonite Church, TX (LL)  
June 17 - Great Plains Seminary Board (DNF)  
June 18 - Texas WDC staff meeting, Dallas, TX (MG)  
June 19-21 - Central Plains Conference, Lincoln, NE (MB)  
June 19-23 - Vacation (MG)  
June 20 - Women Pastors' Lunch - Lorraine Ave. Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF)  
June 22 - First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS (DNF)  
June 27-28 - Reference Council; WDC/SCC annual assembly, Hesston College (all)  
June 30 - July 7 - Vacation (DNF)  
July 11-27 - Study Leave (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:*

*Dorothy Nickel Friesen, [dorothyntf@mennowdc.org](mailto:dorothyntf@mennowdc.org).*

**Western District Conference MEMO**

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