

Memo

September 2008

A Word from Dorothy

BATH TOWELS AND MINISTRY

First a confession: I, like many of you, multi-task when I drive—always listening to NPR (or a CD of music), placing snacks and food in easy-to-grab positions, sipping water or strong coffee (depending on the time of day) and, I confess, sometimes jotting a word or phrase as I think of them on a strategically-placed yellow pad. Rarely, but sometimes I dig in my purse; sometimes I talk on my cell phone. I have the destination's directions in large black letters taped to the dashboard (so I don't have to read a map).

Second, an act of forgiveness. I always carry a bath towel over my lap. I love cruise control.

Over the years of going from here to there, from church to hospital, from home to denominational meeting, from office to conference setting, I have driven many miles. And I have spilled a lot of coffee. Once, on my way to an interview, I spilled coffee over white pants and after that, I never traveled without a bath towel spread from shoulder to knees, catching granola bar crumbs, sunflower seed shells, ketchup and the liquid spills and drips.

Ministry for me in the last 25+ years has involved lots of hours of solitary driving. Those driving times have been both tiring and renewing. I have the time when leaving a situation of intensity, work, and negotiation (yes, a necessary ministry skill), to drive away and let the miles become a healing time, a breathing time, a quieting time. On the other hand, I have used the time to prepare for the next meeting in my mind, rehearsing the agenda, praying for the leaders, thinking about strategy, and gathering strength and energy for that next ministry encounter.

But I always carry a bath towel and I always use cruise control. I need practical ways to assist me, to protect me, to keep me focused and safe.

I've wondered if I have "bath towels" and "cruise control" in my conference ministry work. Surely, prayer and spiritual retreats are bath towels. Surely, friendships and loving relationships are bath towels. Surely the rhythms of rest, laughter and playing with grandchildren are my bath towels. And, I'm

guessing, that my regular spiritual direction sessions, my annual accountability plans, my spouse's observations, and my colleague's consultations are my cruise control.

Does the conference have such things? Does the congregation have ways to protect and ways to control—in a positive way? May we together find ways to strengthen the times of engagement and disengagement in our calling to be Christ's followers.

--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.**

Join in the prayer journey

Do you find yourself on a journey or just a series of photo shots in your prayer life? The two are very different. The first implies a continuous, molding process where changes may occur ever so subtly sometimes without our conscious knowledge. It is only in looking back that we can actually see where we have been and who we have become. On the other hand, stopping here and there for a quick prayer when the conditions seem right may be nothing more than a few moments to remember. Join in the prayer journey of Vision 2012.

--Debbie Thimm, Beatrice (NE) Mennonite Church, 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

Sept. 7 - Pray that teachers, pastors and those involved with congregational Christian nurture will be inspired, and energized at "Jumpstart" on Saturday (13th). Also give thanks for Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, as it celebrates its 50th anniversary this weekend.

Sept. 14 - Pray that the Holy Spirit will give wisdom and discernment to Peace Mennonite, Dallas, TX and Houston (TX) Mennonite churches in their interview process with the pastoral candidates. Also pray for Jeff Wintermote as he is installed as pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS today.

Sept. 21 - Pray for Renee Kanagy as she is installed today as pastor of New Creation Fellowship Church, Newton, KS.

Sept. 28 - Pray for Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK in its pastoral search process and for Dave Gerbrandt, associate conference minister for Oklahoma, as he supports all pastors in Oklahoma.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK - pastor (full-time, immediate)

Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church - youth pastor (1/2 time, immediate)

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

Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX - pastor (full-time, immediate)

Transitions

Jacob Castro from San Antonio (TX) Mennonite Church will serve as one of three CLC (Constituency Leaders Council) representatives for Western District Conference which meets twice a year.

LeNora Duerksen, director of senior ministries at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS, mourns the loss of her sister, Becky, on August 24.

Peter Emery is the interim pastor (3/4 time) at Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church beginning September 1.

Asia Frye began in mid-August as youth pastor (1/4 time) at First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS.

Greensburg (KS) Mennonite Church, which was destroyed by a tornado in May of 2007, will hold a dedication service on November 2.

LaVeta Habegger died on August 19. Husband David served as pastor and church planter for Western District Conference in the 1970's and 80's.

Tom and Lois Harder, pastors at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS, grieve the loss of his mother, Bertha Harder, on August 23.

Ray Reimer is the interim pastor (2/3 time) at First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS beginning September 1.

Check It Out

Radical discipleship - Is your congregation ready to "go green?" What is a Christian response to environmental issues? How can Anabaptists make Jesus the real agenda of social activism? Want to read an intriguing story of a soldier who walked away from the war in Iraq? This month's issue of **Check It Out** from the Conference Resource Library highlights stories, insights and challenges from folks who live radical Christian discipleship. As usual, the listing may be found at: www.mennowdc.org/Library.html. Email or call us to reserve materials for your use: crlib@mennowdc.org / 316-283-6300.

Camp Mennoscah

What a great summer we had! The summer ended successfully with no major catastrophes and a whole lot of fun! Now we're seeing all of our late summer groups and planning for fall and winter. Several retreats are coming up, and we hope to see you there!

Our fall season will start with the **Mennonite Women's Retreat, September 5-7. Work and Play Camp, September 14-18**, is an opportunity for folks to have a grand time and help us prepare camp for winter. Then **October 10-12 is our MennoFolk on the Prairie Family Camp**—everyone is invited to join us for all sorts of camping fun.

If you can't make it out to Camp Mennoscah to visit, please keep us in your prayers and/or contact us about other ways to support our camping ministry. We can be reached at 620-297-3290 or campmno@mennowdc.org.

Happy anniversary!

Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS is celebrating its 50th anniversary with weekend festivities **September 6 and 7**. WDC congregations and friends are invited to attend. The yearlong theme is "Faith! Celebrate the Journey." For more information, contact the church at: 316-283-6370.

Jumpstart

Jumpstart, a biennial Christian nurture event sponsored by WDC Resource Commission, will be on **September 13** at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS. Jumpstart is for everyone who cares about Christian nurture in the congregation, especially pastors, teachers, Christian education committees. Register by September 4! See: www.mennowdc.org/Jumpstart2008.pdf

Camp Mennoscah house dedication

The WDC Retreat Commission and Vision 2012 Steering Committee invite everyone to Camp Mennoscah on **September 14, at 4:00 p.m.** for the dedication of the new Director's house, followed by a time of fellowship and fasma (refreshments). It is anticipated that this home will be a welcome retreat for those who will be camp directors for many years to come. *Thank you to the many volunteers who helped with the building of this house!*

Interim Pastors' training and lunch

All pastors serving as an intentional interim pastor (trained) assignments and those available for or serving in shorter-term supply interim pastors for WDC congregations are invited to a fall meeting for resourcing, sharing and lunch on **Thursday, September 18**. Intentional (transition) Interim Pastors will meet from 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Interim (supply) pastors will join them 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. An invitation will be sent; RSVP required. June Thomsen, intentional interim pastor at Salina, along with Dorothy Nickel Friesen, will coordinate the fall and spring meetings of interim pastors.

Proclamation by Design:

Worship and the Visual Arts

Attn: Pastors, worship leaders, banner makers, worship center designers - join others in experiencing a creative and enriching day for anyone interested in worship planning and the visual arts in the congregation - **October 11, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.** at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS. Sponsored by WDC Resource Commission and Faith & Life Bookstore, Newton, KS. See www.mennowdc.org/ProclamationByDesign.pdf for brochure and registration information.

WDC Reference Council

October 25 (9 a.m. - 1 p.m.) - at First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS. Featured speaker will be Jonathan Larson. We will look at issues of globalization and mission--how does WDC connect and serve? This meeting is for all WDC leaders and pastors.

Music & Storytelling

On **October 26 at 7:00 p.m.**, Jonathan Larson will present an evening of music and storytelling at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS. An offering will be taken for WDC.

Pastors' Day Apart

The next Pastors' Day Apart will be **October 27 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** The topic is "Global preaching: What say you?" with Jonathan Larson. The location is Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS. Put this date on your calendars!

Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series

We live in a digital world. FaceBook... cell phones... google... blogs... Does this new world present fresh challenges to being faithful to Jesus? Does it impact community? Education? How we gather and process information? Does it change the way we view reality? The AVDS Series at Hesston College on **November 7-9** will address: **Digital Discipleship: Forming Faith in an Electronic Culture**. For information, go to: www.hesston.edu/AVDS

Software

Software for calculating pastor salaries according to Mennonite Church USA salary guidelines is available free to WDC congregations. Please inform the persons responsible for this in your congregation that details are available at: www.mennowdc.org/Materials.html. In addition other software is available to help with pastoral reviews and pastoral transitions.

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the September issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "The Change Agent's Checklist".

Western District Conference coming events

Aug. 31-Sept. 1 - Mental Health Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 6-7 - Women's and Girl's Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 12 - Staff birthday - Nancy Funk
Sept. 13 - Jumpstart, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS
Sept. 14, 4 p.m. - Dedication of new Director's House, 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, Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS
Oct. 25 - Reference Council, First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS
Oct. 26 - WDC Fundraiser with Jonathan Larson, First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS
Oct. 27 - Pastors' Day Apart with Jonathan Larson, Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS

Conference Ministers' schedules

Sept. 2 - Urban Initiatives task group (MG)
Sept. 3 - Safe Sanctuaries, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS (MB)
Sept. 5-6: Meeting with Texas pastors and leaders, Dallas, TX (DNF)
Sept. 6 - Texas churches meeting, Dallas, TX (MG)
Sept. 7 - Safe Sanctuaries, Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS (MB); Faith Mennonite Church 50th anniversary, Newton, KS (DNF)
Sept. 8: Host Kansas Christian Leaders Forum a.m.; Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church Executive Board p.m. (DNF)
Sept. 8-11 - MC USA new immigrant churches planning committee meeting, Dallas, TX (MG)
Sept 9: Vision 2012 steering committee (DNF)
Sept. 12 - Women pastors' lunch, West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (DNF)
Sept. 13 - Mennonite Education Agency (IBA) meeting, Dallas, TX (MG); Jumpstart! (DNF, MB)
Sept. 13-14 - Houston, TX (NW)
Sept. 14 - Mi Redentor Church (MG); Install Jeff Wintermote, Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS; Camp Mennoscah house dedication (DNF)
Sept. 18 - Interim pastors' meeting (DNF)
Sept. 19 - Retreat Day (DNF)
Sept. 20 - Install Renee Kanagy, New Creation Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF)
Sept. 20-21 - Houston churches (MG)
Sept. 23 - Wichita pastor-peer meeting; Great Plains Seminary Board meeting (DNF)
Sept. 22-28 - Winnipeg, MB and Kitchener, ON (MB)
Sept. 25 - Low German Task Force (DNF)
Sept. 26 - Prairie View Executive Committee (DNF)
Sept. 27 - Dallas area youth/homeless shelter (NW); Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF)
Sept. 28 - Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF)
(*Marlene Bogard-MB; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt--DG; Marco Güete-MG; Doug Krehbiel-DK; NW--Nita Wilson*)

The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members. Submit articles and correspondence to:

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