

Memo

March 2009

**A Word from Dorothy
About dying and death**

I attended an excellent workshop as part of the Stewardship University event on February 21 (led by Mike and Lois Miller, members of First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson). He is a financial planner; she is a registered nurse. Each has a strong faith and expertise that far exceeded their modest introductions.

Mike has the tool kit, he said, for dealing with the stewardship of life's resources. Things like wills, durable power of attorney for health, living wills, etc. are important (even required?) for Christians who do not fear death. However, Lois said that her work and focus is more complicated. It's about the process of dying--not death itself. The line between living, dying, and death has indeed become more blurred in our highly technological society. The future holds the promise of increasing technology and complexity concerning treatments and patient options. She said that 80% of deaths occur in a healthcare facility; 85% of medical costs are incurred in the last two years of life. Yet, we don't want to talk about death.

Here are some suggestions during this season of Lent:

1. Preach about dying and death. "Our lives are in Your hands." Do we believe this? Present the story of faith that includes thinking about human life, its possibilities and its limitations. Do include a framework for equipping people of your congregation to process issues of dying and death.

2. Prepare a worksheet for your congregation. Have each person list their wishes in case of disablement. Provide resources for the ethical decisions that everyone will face--and family members may have to assume in a crisis. Funeral planning should be part of every membership class experience. Every 18 year old should be presented with a durable power of attorney form as a right of passage (along with other symbols of faith and life).

3. Pass information about your own wishes to your family. Have integrity in your preaching. Model good stewardship.

..."Thy will be done on earth as in heaven..."
--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.*

Opportunity for Transformation

In the cold of winter and being chilled to the bone, I find myself comforted by the warmth of a simple blanket. Cocooning my body with layers of a simple blanket creates a sense of security and protection. With its warmth, brings the easing of body aches and pains. A simple blanket has the potential to transform me physically.

Finding physical comfort can be achievable with a simple blanket but what about feeling spiritually frozen? The blanketing concept can be applied to finding spiritual comfort. Layering your life in prayer and study of scripture has the potential to warm your soul, renew your spirit and restore purpose and direction...a spiritual transformation.

Vision 2012 is built upon prayer...an opportunity for spiritual transformation and an opportunity to live in warm, secure relationship with our Creator.

---Debbie Thimm, 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

March 1 - Pray for your pastor(s) and their leadership. How is the face of God reflected in your congregation?

March 8 - Pray for the WDC Executive Committee (Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, Doug Penner, Berni Kaufman) as they lead our conference (along with many others) in vision and mission.

March 15 - Pray for the musicians in your congregation. Thank them for their ministry and leadership.

March 22 - Pray for the WDC Staff Relations Committee (Delon Martens, Donna Becker, James Reiger, Rod Franz) as they plan for appropriate staffing in our area conference.

March 29- Pray for the WDC representatives (Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Berni Kaufman, Jacob Castro) at the Constituency Leaders Council at Amigo Centre in Michigan March 30-April 1.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS - lead pastor (full-time, summer 2009)

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

First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS - interim pastor (full-time, June 1, 2009)

First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS - interim pastor (full-time, May 1, 2009)

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

Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS - interim pastor (full-time, August 1, 2009)

Manhattan (KS) Mennonite Church - study-leave supply pastor (full-time for one year - August 2009 - August 2010)

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

Salina (KS) Mennonite Church - pastor (1/2 - 3/4 time, open immediately)

Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church - pastor (full-time, summer 2009)

Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS - youth pastor (1/2 time)

Transitions

Heidi Regier Kreider, pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS has been granted a sabbatical from April 13-July 26. **Fred Obold** will be the replacement pastor while she is away.

Clarence Rempel, pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS since 1994, has resigned effective April 30. On May 1, he becomes the new Associate Conference Minister for Kansas and Nebraska at Western District Conference.

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the March issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "Going into all the World: Church Website Basics."

Check It Out

Resources for Children's Ministry, Faith Formation and Christian Education are listed in this month's edition of Check It Out from the WDC Resource Library. Discover dozens of new books on raising compassionate children, teaching special needs children, prayer lessons for children and reinventing Sunday School. View this newsletter at www.mennowdc.org/Library.html. Call 316-283-6300 or email crlib@mennowdc.org to request one of these resources!

Trailmix

Sign up for Trailmix - morsels of info from the Conference Resource Library. Want to be among the first to know of new DVD's, curriculums and other resources available for loan? Sign up for an email newsletter from Marlene Bogard, director of the Conference Resource Library. Simply email crlib@mennowdc.org and put **Subscribe Me** in the subject line.

Seminar to address rural issues

Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS will sponsor a "**Building Vitality in Rural Congregations and Communities**" seminar on **March 7, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**, with Shannon Jung, Professor of Town and Country Ministries, St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO. Explore ways to build the future of your rural church. Register to Zion Mennonite Church, 316-799-2071. See information at: www.mennowdc.org/RuralCongregationsSeminar030709.pdf

Oklahoma spring meeting

First Mennonite Church, Clinton and Herold Mennonite Church, Cordell, will have their annual joint spring meetings **March 8-10** at the Herold Church. Jonathan Larson will be the guest speaker, sharing at both churches on Sunday morning and then each evening of the three-day session. There will be a potluck meal on Sunday evening, a men's breakfast on Monday morning and a Ladies luncheon on Tuesday.

Camp Mennoscah

It's **spring cleaning** time! Depending on the wonderful, yet fickle, weather of Kansas, Camp Mennoscah will be hosting a spring cleaning extravaganza on **March 2-4 and March 6-7** to prepare the camp grounds and buildings for the new season of campers and guests. Join us for a carnival of cleaning and landscaping fun on any or all days! Please call or email so we can plan meals.

2009 schedule: This year try one of our new retreats! 2009 catalogs are available in churches, or see our website: www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html. **MARCH 6-7** - Scrapbooking Retreat

21-22 - Sustainable Foods/Farming Retreat
APRIL 24-26 - Mennonite Men of the Plains Retreat
 27-29 - Retirees' Relaxation Retreat
MAY 24-25 - JOY Retreat (Just fOr You)
JUNE May 31-June 6 - Junior High I - Zac Bartel & Jason Peters
 7-13 - Junior I - Kevin Neufeld
 14-18 - PreJunior I - Duane Knoll
 18-20 - First Camp - Lindsey Miller & Dana Tolle (designed for first-time campers)
 21-27 - Junior II - Allen Jantz & Janet McGillivray
JULY 5-9 - PreJunior II - Delon Martens & Tammy Duvanel Unruh
 12-18 - Junior High II - Derek & Kara Klingenberg
 19-25 - Junior III - Adam Robb & Mariah Thompson
 26-31 - Senior High - Kelly Stucky
SEPTEMBER 11-13 - Mennonite Women in Mission Retreat
 20-24 - Work & Play Camp
OCTOBER 9-11 - MennoFolk Family Camp
 Contact us at 620-297-3290 or campmno@mennowdc.org for further information.

Prevention of clergy misconduct

A training session led by Marlene Bogard for the prevention of clergy misconduct will be held **March 14** at the Menno Center, Dallas, TX. It will be presented in both Spanish and English. If you have not previously received this training, it is **required** in order to uphold your credentials and accountability. See www.mennowdc.org for information and registration. Next year's training will be in Kansas in English only.

Tournament time!

The WDC Tournament Committee is again planning for the annual tournament for adults age 18+. The **basketball** tournament will be **March 17, 19, 20-21 at Bethel College**. The **volleyball** tournament will be **March 20-21 at Hesston College**.

The purpose of the tournament is: 1) To have a good time with other adults; 2) To become involved with your church members and fellow conference members; 3) To play with a fun, yet competitive, attitude.

Information has been sent to all WDC and South Central Conference churches. Information also available at: www.mennowdc.org/2009Tournament.pdf

From Reality to Hope:

Road Signs for the Church's Journey

What is God doing in the Mennonite Church? What does God want to do in the world through the church? Why do so many churches experience roadblocks? How do we join in God's plan?

Church teams are invited to an interactive consultation with Conad Kanagy, author of *Road Signs*

for the Journey: *A Profile of Mennonite Church USA* on **March 20-21** at Journey at Yoder (a campus of the South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, 1 mile north of Yoder, KS). **Ted & Company** will also perform on March 21.

This event is sponsored by South Central Conference, South Hutchinson Mennonite Church and Hesston College. For more information and registration: www.mennowdc.org/ConradKanagyMarch2009.pdf

Weekend with Ken Nafziger How can I keep from singing?

The **March 21-22** weekend includes three opportunities to sing, worship and learn with other Mennonites at **Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS**.

1. On Saturday from 2-5 p.m., join with dozens of other singers as we **explore the Hymnal Supplements** Sing the Story and Sing the Journey with Ken Nafziger. This is for choirs and choir directors, worship leaders and planners, pastors, song leaders, and musicians of all ages. Registration cost is \$20 / person or \$100 / church (bring as many as you want!). If you have not yet used these resources to help shape your identity as a worshipping congregation, this is a wonderful opportunity to be exposed to new hymnody, instrumentation, rhythms and more. Ken Rodgers will be accompanist.

2. All are invited for **worship** on March 22 at 9:30 a.m. Ken will lead the singing!

3. All are welcome again in the afternoon for a **hymn sing** at 2 p.m. with Ken. An offering will be taken for expenses.

These events are jointly sponsored by the WDC Music and Worship Task Force and Eden Mennonite Church. See brochure and registration information at: www.mennowdc.org/HowCanIKeepFromSinging.pdf Registration deadline is March 19.

Global food crisis

MCC US Washington Office will sponsor their Spring Seminar: "*Hunger for Justice: The Global Food Crisis*" on **March 28-30** at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS. For more information, go to: <http://www.mcc.org/us/washington/programs/seminar/>

WDC annual conference

The 2009 WDC annual conference will be held **August 7-8 at Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS**. Plan to attend this important time of fellowship and decision making! More information will be coming.

MMA offers financial counseling through Lutheran Social Services

Are members of your congregation facing difficult financial situations or need questions answered about a mortgage, credit reports, or even the household budget? MMA is offering a compassionate and thoughtful service that can help.

Confidential budget and debt counseling from a certified credit counselor (up to four sessions) is available to you at no cost through an arrangement MMA has with [LSS Financial Counseling](#), a service of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota. To use this reliable, free, faith-based service, call toll free (877) 809-0039. Among the services or topics are:

- Family budgeting skills
- Credit reports and improving credit skills
- Debt repayment plans
- Advice about identity theft issues
- Student and vehicle loan questions (borrowing, repayment, default, repossession)
- Home buying and mortgage information

Corrections to WDC Fall 2008 Directory

- p. 1 - Remove Marco Guete, replace with Gilberto Flores, email: gilbertof@mennowdc.org
- p. 15 - Remove Brenda Glanzer Lilliston from Constituency Leaders Council Reps, add: Berni Kaufman, 218 W Galle, Moundridge KS 67107; bernik@mennonitewomenusa.org; 620-386-0398
- p. 22 - Eldon Epp (First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS) change email to: e.epp80081@cox.net
- p. 27 - Beatrice Mennonite Church - new email: beatricemennonitchurch@windstream.net
- p. 30 - Remove Melissa Roth and her information (under Peace Mennonite Church)

Western District Conference coming events

March 2 - Pastors' Day Apart, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS
March 2 - Oklahoma Pastor/Spouse meeting/potluck, Joy Mennonite Church, Oklahoma City, OK
March 8-10 - Herold (Cordell, OK) and First (Clinton, OK) Mennonite Churches joint spring meeting
March 14 - Prevention of Clergy Misconduct training (English & Spanish), Menno Center, Dallas, TX
March 20-21 - WDC volleyball tournament, Hesston College, KS
March 17, 19, 20-21 - WDC basketball tournament, Bethel College, North Newton, KS
March 21 - *How Can I Keep From Singing* workshop, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS
March 22, 2 p.m. - Hymn Sing, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (open to all!)

June 12-14 - South Central Conference Annual Family Festival, Hesston College and Hesston Mennonite Church

June 30-July 5 - MC USA Convention 2009, Columbus, OH

Aug. 7-8 - WDC Annual Conference, Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS

Sept. 18-20 - "And You Welcomed Me: a Consultation of the People of God on Immigration", Dallas, TX (sponsored by MMN, hosted by WDC)

Conference Ministers' schedules

March 1 - Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, KS (MB)
March 2 - Pastors' Day Apart, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church (DNF, MB)
March 7 - Rural ministry workshop, Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS (DNF)
March 9 - MMA Advocate Dinner, Hesston, KS (DNF)
March 10 - Wichita pastor-peer group (DNF)
March 11 - Western KS pastor-peer group (DNF)
March 13 - Leadership Commission; WDC Executive Committee (DNF)
March 13-15 - Prevention of Clergy Misconduct, Dallas, TX (MB)
March 14 - WDC Executive Board Retreat (DNF)
March 16 - Buhler Mennonite Church Council (DNF)
March 19 - Retreat Day (DNF)
March 20 - Kanagy workshop, Yoder, KS (DNF)
March 21 - Nafziger workshop, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (DNF, MB); Resource Commission (MB)
March 22 - Hymn Sing, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (MB)
March 24 - MPN Resource Selection meeting (MB)
March 25 - Staff Relations Committee (DNF)
March 27 - Prairie View Executive Committee (DNF)
March 28-29 - Marriage Enrichment Seminar, Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (MB)
March 29 - April 1- Constituency Leaders Council, Amigo Centre, Michigan (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: Dorothy Nickel Friesen, dorothyvf@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