

April 2009

**A Word from Dorothy
Pockets of faith**

There is much talk about "emergence" these days. This conversation is about the springing up of faith communities that demonstrate the marks of the early church: sharing of resources, living simply, sharing the good news, living in community. Duh. Doesn't that sound so familiar? Isn't that what Anabaptists died for in the 16th century? Isn't that so Mennonite? Well, maybe not so much.

I am well aware of both the "decline of the mainline denominations" and "Mennonites today are less able to articulate theological distinctives, they are less inclined to support conference and denominational leadership and they are more likely to regard Mennonite beliefs as an impediment to the message of the gospel" (Kanagy, ROAD SIGNS FOR THE JOURNEY, p. 9-10). I have read lots of articles and participated in many discussions where we either moan or whine about the current state of the church.

We should, probably, actually mourn deeply the loss of vitality of the Christian church and our Mennonite congregations. We should beg for mercy from our God for the mistakes we make over and over and over. However, if we truly believe in a resurrected Jesus and a forgiving God, then we must not fall victim to despair and guilt.

So I'm back to the obvious--the distinctives of our Biblical faith which has Jesus Christ as our foundation. We are people of God's own choosing, living out our faith in everyday ways through the disciplines of prayer, service, witness. Yet, we are also people caught up in our cultural expectations of consumerism, materialism, and militarism. To remain faithful, we will need to take a hard look at ourselves and review and re-charge our spiritual batteries. What new forms of discipleship are emerging in your community? What new calls are being heard? What new pleadings are there? What resources are we needing? Who is speaking? Who is listening? Can "small groups" be revived with new energy? Can worship be less culture-bound? Are we able to anoint new leaders?

We, as Easter people, must be about remembering and reclaiming while we creatively imagine and daily practice our faith. Hallelujah!

--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.**

Blessings in the Small Stuff (or Things)

In recent months, my spouse, Harold, and I did some day trips. To my home community to find my great grandfather's grave site in the middle of a section of land (1879). To a nearby city to explore the nation's smallest free zoo. To go fishing with grandchildren. To intentionally observe budding and bursting nature. To discover interesting people in out-of-the-way "greasy spoons." To attend an end-of-life celebration. We found God, and joy, and blessing in many small things.

Vision 2012 is sort of like that: experiencing great blessings through the small, sacrificial gifts of God's people in congregations all over the WDC—and the large gifts as well. Through the snatched moments we pray for WDC—and our longer petitions. Through the short—and long—committee and board meetings—all for the glory of Christ and the Church.

--Rosella Wiens Regier, chair of Prayer Partners 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

April 5 - Pray for the humility of Jesus in our congregations in spite of the crowds around us yelling for a different kind of ruler in our culture.

April 12 - Hallelujah! What a Savior!

April 19 - Give thanks for Clarence Rempel's 15 years of pastoral ministry at First Mennonite, Newton and his "yes" to serve WDC as an associate conference minister beginning May 1.

April 26 - Pray for all "First Immigrant" congregations in WDC that they might find a place of healing and hope among us.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

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

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

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

Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, KS - pastor (full-time, summer 2009)

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)

Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, KS - community services coordinator (1/2 time, May 1, 2009)

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

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

Transitions

Keith Albrecht, from Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS, has received the 2008 MMA Advocate of the Year award.

Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church will celebrate their 110th anniversary on August 23.

LeNora Duerksen resigned as Director of Senior Ministries at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS on March 4. She continues as chaplain at Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community in Buhler, KS.

Christina Litwiller will become the pastor at Salina (KS) Mennonite Church in May 2009. Christina will graduate from AMBS in May. Congratulations!

Rosella Wiens Regier, Vision 2012 Prayer Partner chair, suffered a stroke on March 24 and remains at Newton Medical Center for care. Cards may be addressed to her home at 1404 Axtell Rd, Newton KS 67114.

Weldon Schloneger, pastor at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE, has announced his retirement effective March 1, 2010. Also, Florence Schloneger will close Bottle Creek Retreat in April.

Steve Schmidt will become the lead pastor at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS August 1. He currently serves Emmanuel Mennonite Church, La Junta, CO, and also previously served New Creation Mennonite Fellowship, Newton, KS. Welcome back to WDC!

Gordon Scoville, Broadus, MT, will join the staff of First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS as Intentional Interim Pastor beginning late May for one year.

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the April issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "What Do People Want in Their Pastors?"

Check It Out

On the Way with Jesus: new resources on being missional, evangelical and faithful.

This month in Check It Out you will discover 15 new titles on missional thinking, evangelical doing and faithful discernment. Here are some sample titles: Jesus Wants to Save Christians by Rob Bell; The Great Emergence by Phyllis Tickle and ReJesus: a wild Messiah for a missional church. The full listing is available on our Library home page: www.mennowdc.org/Library.html. Call 316-283-6300 or email crlib@mennowdc.org to get first pick!

NEW Video / DVD catalog completed

The 2009 Video / DVD catalog for the Conference Resource Library is now available on our website: <http://www.mennowdc.org/2009VideoCatalog.pdf>

What to do next:

1. Print it out for your Church Library or Christian Education Office / Supply Room.
2. Bookmark it on the web and refer to it often!
3. Tell your friends and neighbors.

Trailmix: morsels of info from the Conference Resource Library - Sign up!

This is a newly-developed email subscription list from the Conference Resource Library. Sign up by emailing crlib@mennowdc.org and putting "subscribe me" in the subject line. These morsels are also available on the library page: www.mennowdc.org/Library.html. This is information that is not available via Check it Out.

Camp Mennoscah news

- Camp Mennoscah has two more retreats before the summer youth camps begin! All retirees or wannabe retirees are invited to join us **April 27-29** for our **Retirees' Relaxation Retreat**. We're going green with a theme of Great God! Great Gardens! The **JOY (Just fOr You) Retreat** for those with special

needs is **May 24-25**. We'll be doing all sorts of fun activities based on our theme of The JOY of Growing! Limited scholarships are available for the JOY retreat.

- Break through the boredom of your everyday summer and come to Camp Mennoscah! Our **summer youth camps** begin **May 31** and we're having fun and learning from stories in Mark and Luke with the theme of Breakthrough! Limited scholarship funds available. The 2009 Camp Mennoscah catalog can be found at www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html.
- Empty nest making you blue? Don't fret! If your campers have grown up and you're missing that summer camp experience, we have a place for you. We still have **openings available for cooks, kitchen staff, and one nurse**. Nurses and head cooks are paid positions or can choose instead to receive a parent discount (up to full camp fees) for a camper. Kitchen staff receives a parent discount for a camper (up to full camp fees) —only a fun-loving attitude and the ability to follow directions needed.
- Camp Mennoscah announces that **Michael Unruh and Jennie Warkentine** will be joining the Camp Mennoscah staff as Mennonite Voluntary Service workers at the end of May. They will be filling the positions of general maintenance assistant and office/kitchen assistant. Both are long-time Camp Mennoscah supporters. We are very excited to have them, and welcome them with open arms.
- **Open dates at Camp Mennoscah:** Weekdays are also available in the spring and fall. Dates reserved on a first-request basis. Main Camp only (bunk/staff houses, dining hall, cabins): May 9-10, May 16-17, October 23-25. Retreat Center only: May 22-24, June 27-28, July 25-26, August 28-30, October 2-4. Both Main Camp and the Retreat Center: June 6-7, September 4-6.

For more information, contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 or see: campmno@mennowdc.org.

WDC annual conference

*The Program Planning Committee (Kathy Neufeld Dunn, Dale Schrag, Gilberto Flores, Katherine Goerzen, Rose Moyer, with Bill Zuercher and Dorothy Nickel Friesen) has been meeting and announces the beginning shape of our summer conference - **August 7-8** on the Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church campuses. Start planning to attend and here are some tidbits:*

1. Theme: "Becoming a new humanity"
2. Text: Ephesians 2:11-22
3. Friday night - worship at BCMC; focus on youth/young adults; lots of music and drama; communion, a processional.

4. Saturday - begins with worship and then a 2-hour learning community - a longer time to focus on key issues in the church; 1 hour delegate session for essential business; lunch; then repeated learning communities; then supper. Evening worship followed by a Music Festival on the BC campus open to public with ice cream on the green.
5. A worship packet will be developed.
6. Doug Krehbiel and friends doing middle/junior high school.
7. Looking for pre-school, elementary school and child care folks.
8. Prayer spaces to be developed.
10. Encourage folks to attend and build relationships.

The Corinthian Plan

Together, providing health care for pastors and church workers

All congregations should have received a packet of information regarding the Corinthian Plan with a request form. An Ambassador (WDC has dedicated folks who will call you) will follow up and encourage all congregations to get a quote and make a decision regarding participation in this new plan which involves mutual aid and ensures access for all pastors and church workers. The plan needs 80% participation; the window is open until October 1, 2009. For more information, see:

<http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Home/Leaders/TheCorinthianPlan/tabid/725/Default.aspx>

WDC basketball tournament results

Thirteen teams from WDC and South Central Conference churches participated in the WDC basketball tournament March 19-21 at Bethel College. Division I champion was **Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church**, Goessel, KS. Division II champion was **Tabor Mennonite Church**, Newton, KS.

Missional leaders meeting 2009

"Leading by Example" is the theme of the 2009 Missional Leaders meeting in Denver, CO, **May 2-4**. Components will include Dwelling in the Word, practical applications, case studies and worship in local congregations. Meeting is open to area conference leaders, congregational leaders and others with a heart for Missional Church. For information: www.MennoniteMission.net or call Becky Tyson at 866-866-2872.

Stories of Struggle, Stories of Hope

Central District Conference and Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes is sponsoring a **Nurturing Peacemakers Retreat** on **May 8-10** at Camp Friedeneswald, Cassopolis, MI. This is designed to be a time of renewal for folks working for peace. Cost: \$40, financial aid available. Register by April 22. For information: www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net or call 800-662-2264.

Upside Down King musical

Special preview before Columbus! There will be three "dress rehearsals" at Krehbiel Auditorium on the Bethel College campus on Saturday evening, **June 27**; Sunday matinee and Sunday evening (**June 28**). Details later--but tell your friends and reserve the dates! Offerings for expenses to send cast and band to MC USA!

Women & Girls Retreat

All WDC and South Central Conference women and girls (grade 3 and up) are invited to the annual Women and Girls Retreat, scheduled for **September 11-13** at Camp Mennoscah near Murdock, Kansas. The theme for the weekend is "*Our Kaleidoscope of Life*."

Karen Andres, associate pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church, and Marcene Entz, recently retired from 28 years of teaching music, will be the principal speakers. Through their "Mary & Martha" skits, Karen and Marcene will reveal the patterns of their friendship that have developed due to various life experiences such as following God's call to ministry and dealing with depression. They want listeners to know: "Like Mary and Martha, what makes our relationship colorful is recognizing the unique gift we are to one another as sisters in Christ. We hope, through our sharing, others will be encouraged to find their own colorful, uniqueness created by God."

Saturday afternoon seminars include topics such as healthy eating/healthy living, recovering from abuse, building women-to-women relationship across cultures, parenting/grandparenting in the electronic age, and more. Intergenerational activities and programming for girls are also planned. Complete information will be sent to churches in July, and registration is due by August 25. For further information, contact Judy Reimer, retreat chairperson, by telephone (620) 327-4765 or email rjreimer@embarqmail.com.

Summer seminary courses

Interested in taking a summer seminary course? Check out these options -

Eastern Mennonite Seminary -
www.emu.edu/seminary/courses

AMBS — Great Plains Extension - *Teaching Bible in the Congregation*, contact: Lois Barrett, lbarrett@ambs.edu; 316-283-7098

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary -
<http://www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/summer>

Corrections to WDC Fall 2008 Directory

p. 29 - House of Healing Mennonite Church - new mailing address: 7730 Chorus Way, Dallas TX 75237

Western District Conference coming events

April 24-26 - Mennonite Men of the Plains Men & Boys Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

April 27-29 - Retirees' Relaxation Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

May 2 - Discipleship Now, Wichita, KS

May 24-25 - JOY Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

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

Aug. 22 - Day on the Farm, rural Goessel, KS

Sept. 11-13 - Mennonite Women & Girls Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

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

October 9-11 - Menfolk Family Camp, Camp Mennoscah

Conference Ministers' schedules

April 1 - return from CLC (DNF)

April 4-8 - Preach Holy Week, Mt. Lake, MN (DNF)

April 9-10 - vacation; office closed (DNF)

April 14 - Low German task force (DNF)

April 15 - Inman Mennonite Church (DNF)

April 16 - I-70 pastors' meeting, Topeka (DNF)

April 19 - Farewell for Clarence Rempel, First/Newton (DNF)

April 20 - Denominational leaders in KS, Wichita (DNF)

April 21 - WDC Consultant training (DNF)

April 22 - MC USA leaders' breakfast; Western KS pastor-peer group; Program planning committee (DNF)

April 24 - Prairie View Board retreat (DNF)

(Marlene Bogard-MB; Gilberto Flores-GF; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt-DG; Doug Krehbiel-DK)

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

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