

June/July/August 2009

A Word from Clarence The Little Big Things

It was my second Sunday as a churchless former pastor. I had to do something I hadn't done for a long, long time. I had to find a church to go to. I woke up on Sunday morning on my "get-ready-to-preach" time, and decided to be cool and look for church information online the way my children would. An hour later, I was still in the dark about where we might go, because I couldn't find information about worship service times.

So here's my first little big thing. Keep your websites current and post worship and Sunday school times and location on the home page. I began with the church that had given us several invitations, but when I went to the website I knew the Sunday morning information was out of date. Another church required a sign-in to get to relevant information, so I googled on. I found out about an upcoming men's retreat that sounded like a real possibility in May of 2006. Whoops!

I gave up and went to the yellow pages. Very few churches posted worship times, so I called the church to which we had been invited. The voice recording was so faint, I couldn't understand it. I tried our better phone, and thought I'd caught the time. Getting basic entry information should not be this hard! If I had been a tentative seeker rather than a committed worshipper, I would have gotten the Sunday paper and stayed home. The little things really do matter—current website, telephone book, answering machine.

We did go to the church from whom we had received multiple, uncoordinated, personal invitations. These persons including the pastor were aware that we were in transition and took the initiative to invite us. Pastors, who are the people you can invite? Many churchless people are waiting for an invitation. It is a little thing to invite. It is a big thing to be invited. Clearly this church had a culture of inviting and after we arrived, we noted a culture of hospitality.

Little big things that we noted: We were greeted and welcomed by three different people from the door to the sanctuary. An usher seated us and gave us a bulletin. Our seatmates greeted us and shared their names. Others spoke with us after the service and tried to make

connections. Hospitality after the service is as crucial as hospitality before the service. The little big things do matter. I think we might be back soon.

--Clarence Rempel, Associate 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 for Summer 2009

In the summertime heat,
In the threshing of wheat,
In the celebration of graduations,
In the teaching at Bible School,
In the welcoming of new pastors,
In the planning for our annual conference...
In all of these events,
We ask for your Holy Spirit to fill us anew.
Inspire our ministry,
Bless our leaders,
Increase our generosity.
Break down barriers and
Build a new humanity.
In the name of Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

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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 7 - Give thanks for the 13+ years of pastoral ministry of Debbie Schmidt at First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson as she is farewelled today. Give thanks for the 50th anniversary celebration of Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS today.

June 14 - Ask God's blessing on Errol and Virginia Koehn as they assume pastoral leadership of Gospel Fellowship Church (Faith Mennonite) in Montezuma, KS.

June 21 - Pray for the cast and band of the musical, "The Upside Down King", as they prepare for Kansas performances and then ministry at Mennonite Church USA convention at Columbus, OH.

June 28 - Thank God for the ministry of Lee Suderman, lead pastor of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS as he retires.

July 5 - Pray for the delegates (and others) who attended Mennonite Church USA convention in Columbus, OH that God's Spirit will empower our denomination to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

July 12 - Pray for the WDC Resource Commission as it designs a "vision" for its ministry as part of the WDC mandate to resource congregations.

July 19 - Pray for the WDC Executive Board as it has its final meeting before our annual conference sessions in August. The Board prepares the delegate sessions but also delegates the specific plans to a Program Committee which has designed some new features this year: Learning communities and a Music Festival.

July 26 - Pray for Doug Luginbill as he completes six years of pastoral leadership of Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS, today.

August 2 - Pray for the speakers, musicians, artists, Learning Community leaders, WDC staff, delegates, children, youth and all persons who will attend the annual WDC sessions this coming weekend on the Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church campuses in North Newton, KS.

August 9 - Give thanks for the First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, KS as it celebrates its 125th anniversary.

August 16 - Pray for Steve Schmidt as he is installed as lead pastor of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS today.

August 23 - Give thanks for the Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church as it celebrates its 110th anniversary today.

August 30 - Pray for Joe Wuest, one-half time youth pastor, as he is installed today at Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

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

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

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

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

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

Transitions

Peter Emery, Interim Pastor at Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church, graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary on May 16 with a Masters in Religion.

John and **Bernice Esau** mourn the death of their son, **Keith**, on May 9 in Dallas, TX.

Correction: **First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, KS** will celebrate their 125th (not 150th) anniversary with activities on August 8 and 9. See <http://www.fmcprettyprairie.org/> for schedule of events.

Richard Gehring, co-pastor at Manhattan (KS) Mennonite Church, received his D.Min in Preaching from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago on May 14. The title of his thesis was "*Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength: Engaging the Listeners' Whole Being Through the Incorporation of Creative Arts into Preaching*".

Daniel Klaassen, from Grace Hill Mennonite Church and a Bethel College student, is a summer Ministry Inquiry Program participant at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS.

Congratulations to **Christina Litwiler**, pastor of Salina (KS) Mennonite Church and **Alan Stucky**, pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, KS, on their graduations from AMBS with M.Div degrees on May 23.

Nita Kay Nikkel (Nita Wilson) is in Guatemala from May 24 to July 25 with CASAS (Central America Study and Service) living with a hosting family, taking daily Spanish lessons and participating in classes about Latin American culture, customs, traditions and religions. WDC received a grant from the Schowalter Foundation to assist WDC staff members to become better acquainted with other cultures and Nita was awarded a travel scholarship towards her study/service experience. Upon return, she will live in Wichita and be exploring ministry options.

Ray Reimer, now interim pastor at Des Moines (IA) Mennonite Church with his home in Sioux Falls, SD, will begin as Interim Pastor for Hope Mennonite

Church, Wichita, KS on September 1 for a six-month period while the congregation searches for a new pastor.

Travis Riesen, from Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS and a Hesston College student, is a summer Ministry Inquiry Program participant at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, AZ.

Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS (Associate Member of WDC) has named Bruce Hostetler as Interim Pastor, and Denton Jantzi as Interim Associate Pastor.

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the summer issues of **The Parish Paper**:

June - "One Congregation: Many Locations"

July - "Lay Testimonies Strengthen Financial Giving"

August - "Shepherding Congregations Through Grief Storms"

Check It Out goes perky!

Yup - when you look at the June 2009 issue of *Check It Out: new resources from the WDC Resource Library* - you will see color! That is if you view it on-line at <http://www.mennowdc.org/2009-06-CIO.pdf>. Perhaps you CAN judge a book by its cover! Let us know what looks good to you and we will be happy to reserve it for you or send it out to you. 316-283-6300 / crlib@mennowdc.org

Camp Mennoscah

Summer camps have started! Our first youth camp of the summer began May 31st with approximately 50 campers. We're excited to see all the campers and family/church groups back again this year. Please keep Camp Mennoscah in your prayers for a safe, fun, and grace-filled summer.

Visit us—we'd love to see you! Open weekends at Camp Mennoscah at the Retreat Center are June 27-28, July 25-26, August 29-30, and October 3-4. October 24-25 the Main Camp facilities are available, and both facilities are available November 14-15. Contact Camp Mennoscah to reserve or for questions at 620-297-3290 or campmno@mennowdc.org.

It's a Prairie Tales Summer at the Conference Resource Library!

So far, 20 children have signed up and we have room for more in our wonderful, expansive new children's library! Encourage children in your congregation from age 3-12 to either join the Summer Reading Program or the Summer Story Time from **June 10 - July 22** to hear stories about prairie animals, foods, travels and join in the fun with a corn-shucker and stretch out on a bison hide. See www.mennowdc.org for more information, or email the WDC Resource Library (crlib@mennowdc.org) - where we always have lots of ideas!

WDC annual conference

The WDC annual conference will be **August 7-8** on the Bethel College Mennonite Church and Bethel College campuses. This year's highlights include:

NEW! Discovery Day - optional, pre-conference activities on **August 6**. Five topics to choose from: 1) Holy Listening in Community, led by Kathryn Damiano; 2) Dignity, Peace and Care for Creation, MCC Central States; 3) MennoTour, Kaufman Museum, Robert Kreider; 4) They Never Taught Us That in Church Council School, Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution; 5) Back Side of Camp, Camp Mennoscah. Annual Conference brochures (coming soon!) will give more information. Must register.

Reference Council - A meeting for WDC leaders (pastors, members of all commissions, committees, task forces, WDC delegates to MC USA assembly, WDC persons elected/appointed to institutional relationships including MC USA committees, boards and agencies), on Friday, **August 7**, 1:30-4:00 p.m. at Bethel College Fine Arts Center.

NEW! Pastor/Spouse Appreciation Dinner - All pastors and spouses are invited to an appreciation dinner on Friday, **August 7** at 5:30 p.m. at the Schultz Student Center at Bethel College. No charge, but must register to attend. (See brochure.)

Worship - will feature communion, music drama, and young adult speakers! All are welcome to attend worship, regardless of delegate status.

NEW! Learning Communities - Input/interaction on a variety of topics will be offered on Saturday, **August 8**. Topics include: Immigration, End death penalty, Spiritual formation for children & adults, Teaching the Bible in the congregation, Missional leadership, Congregational change/systems, Dealing with difficult issues in the congregation, Holistic Health, Creation Care, Cross-cultural communication, Stewardship of dying, Contemplative worship, New forms of church, Mental health of our children. Pick two to attend and register.

NEW! Music festival - A variety of music groups will perform throughout the campus Saturday evening, **August 8**. Enjoy the music and refreshments on the Green!

Children/youth - Child care available for 0-5 year olds, activities planned for children/youth age K through 8th grade.

Registration forms with schedule and all information will be available mid-June at churches, at the WDC office or see: www.mennowdc.org Coming Events. Registration fee: \$50/adults, \$25/ages 0-8th grade. **Please register by July 24**. Meals may also be purchased. Low-cost lodging available at Bethel College dorms (contact Shirley Dietzel - 316-284-5202).

See you at Annual Conference!

Resource Library to the rescue!

Feeling the \$\$\$ pinch? We are filling an essential need for information, resources and enrichment by providing over 11,000 books and DVD's for you and your congregation. Why buy when you can borrow? Why spend when you can share? Search our on-line library catalog at www.mennowdc.org/Library.html, then call or email us with your requests: 316-283-6300; crlib@mennowdc.org.

Munch on the Trailmix

Do what almost 100 other Menno's have already done: sign up for Trailmix, an email newsletter from the Conference Resource Library that includes morsels of information on new resources and ideas. Email us at crlib@mennowdc.org and put "subscribe me" in the subject line.

Upside Down King musical

Don't miss seeing the "Upside Down King" musical! If you saw it in January 2008, you'll want to see it again. And if you missed it then, don't miss it now! Performances will be at Bethel College Krebbiel Auditorium on Friday, **June 26** (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, **June 28** (2:00 and 7:30 p.m.). Offerings/donations to send musical to Columbus 09.

Day on the Farm

Take part in a family activity at the farm that supports a good cause and have fun with your children or grandchildren at the same time. The annual Agri-Urban **Day on the Farm** will be **August 15** at the farm of Carol Duerksen and Maynard Knepp northeast of Goessel, KS, and is designed to promote the relationship between rural and urban families and to give children a chance to experience some aspects of farm life. Activities, which run continuously from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. will include pig catching, goat milking, horseback riding, tractor wagon rides and a branding demonstration. A meal will be served at 11:30. While the day is free, it is designed to help raise funds for Mennonite Agri-Urban, Inc., which sponsors the event.

Ignite!

Ignite! is a resourcing event for youth sponsors, pastors and workers on **August 23**, from 3-8 p.m. at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS. It will inspire and equip your youth ministry for the coming year with ideas, resources, networking and workshops. Ignite! will have something for everyone, whether you have a giant-sized youth group, a tiny youth group, or a youth group without a youth pastor. Registration fee is \$20 which includes a banquet meal. RSVP to Nancy Funk by August 14: 316-283-6300, wdc@mennowdc.org.

Prayer labyrinth kit

Check out a handy kit that enables you to set up your own experiential multi-media guided prayer labyrinth experience. Excellent for special events, retreats, Holy Week, Faith Formation for youth, young adults and adults. For full information, visit www.mennowdc.org/PrayerLabyrinth.pdf.

Seagoing Cowboys

A program to honor "seagoing cowboys" will be held **June 9**, at 7 p.m. at the Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS. This program is part of a five-state tour featuring a short documentary film about the seagoing cowboys who tended livestock sent on ships to Europe and China following World War II for post-war rehabilitation. Of the 7,000 men and boys who made these trips, nearly 1,000 of them were Mennonite. For more information, see: www.seagoingcowboys.com

Corrections to WDC Fall 2008 Directory

p. 2 - remove Esther Vazquez from Executive Board
p. 14 - remove Doug Shima from Bethel College Board of Directors
p. 21 - First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson - add June Thomsen, Intentional Interim Pastor (as of July 1)
p. 25 - Salina Mennonite Church - remove June Thomsen, Interim Pastor; add Christina Litwiller, Pastor

Western District Conference coming events

June 7 - Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS, 50th anniversary
June 10-July 22 - Prairie Tales Summer Reading Program and Story Time, Conference Resource Library
June 12-14 - South Central Conference Annual Family Festival, Hesston College and Hesston Mennonite Church
June 26 and 28 - *Upside Down King* musical, Bethel College, North Newton, KS
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. 9 - First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, KS, 125th anniversary
Aug. 15 - Day on the Farm, rural Goessel, KS
Aug. 23 - Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, 110th anniversary
Sept. 6-7 - Mental Health Spiritual Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
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)

Sept. 20-24 - Work & Play Camp, Camp Mennoscah
October 9-11 - Mennofolk Family Camp, Camp
Mennoscah
October 30-November 1 - Anabaptist Vision and
Discipleship Series, Hesston College, KS

Conference Ministers' schedules

June 1 - Oklahoma Pastor/Spouse quarterly meeting,
First Mennonite Church, Clinton, OK (DG)
June 2 - Wichita Pastor Peer (CR); Resource Selection
Committee for MPN (MB)
June 6 - Teach AMBS-Great Plains class on Teaching
the Bible (MB)
June 6-7 - Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS 50th
Anniversary (CR)
June 7 - First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS (DNF)
June 8 - Staff Relations Committee (DNF)
June 9 - Staff meeting; Great Plains Seminary Board;
Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF)
June 10 - Western KS pastor-peer group (DNF)
June 12 - South Central Conference opening worship,
Hesston, KS (DNF)
June 14 - Gospel Fellowship Church, Montezuma, KS
(CR)
June 18 - Interim Pastors' meeting (DNF, CR)
June 18-21 - Central Plains Conference, Freeman, SD
(MB)
June 20-25 - Vacation (DNF)
June 23 - I-70 Pastor Peer Group (CR)
June 26 - Prairie View Board (DNF)
June 28 - Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel,
KS (DNF)
June 29-July 5 - MC USA Convention, Columbus, OH
(DNF, MB, GF, DK)
July 7-20 - Paraguay (CR)
July 11 - Resource Commission meeting (MB)
July 12 - Bethel College Mennonite Church, North
Newton, KS (DNF)
July 17 - Executive Committee (DNF)
July 18 - Executive Board (DNF)
July 19 - Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF)
July 23 - Vision 2012 Steering Committee (DNF)
July 24 - Prairie View Executive Committee (DNF)
July 26 - Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF)
Aug. 7-8 - WDC Annual Conference, North Newton, KS
(all staff)
Aug. 9 - First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, KS
(DNF)
Aug. 15 - Day on the Farm (DNF)
Aug. 16 - Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel,
KS (DNF)
Aug. 17 - MC USA Leaders Breakfast (DNF)
Aug. 23 - Ignite! (DK, MB); Deer Creek (OK)
Mennonite Church (DNF)

Aug. 25-26 - WDC Staff Retreat, Camp Mennoscah (all
staff)
Aug. 28 - Prairie View Board (DNF)
Aug. 30 - Goessel Mennonite Church, KS (DNF)
(Marlene Bogard-MB; Gilberto Flores-GF; Dorothy Nickel
Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt-DG; Doug Krehbiel-DK;
CR--Clarence Rempel)

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