

December 2009/January 2010

A Word from Dorothy

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...

...is imagination! As I ponder my ministry and vocation, it seems that the essential quality for faithfulness is a huge dose of imagination. If, for example, I simply try to maintain what has been, there is shifting into low gear and slowing down. Area conferences that only try to preserve and conserve will face certain death. And, I might add, congregations that simply try to keep going with what has been will also die. This is why I pray for imagination. How can WDC claim new vision? What is it that God is calling us to be and do? How do we connect to God's mission in the world? How is your congregation praying for imagination?

...is inspiration! I am exhausted by the screaming rhetoric that dominates print and television news. I want to cover my ears and close my eyes when interviews "on the street" depict ordinary citizens using language of "socialism" and "death panels"--an overstatement at best, a lie at worst. Where can the Christian message of shalom break through? Where is the Good News proclaimed with joy, hope--and sanity?

...is perspiration! The Good News takes effort. I visited Houston Mennonite Church as they hosted the 20th annual Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale. Along with other Texas congregations, they raised over \$45,000 in eight hours. We were sweating! We worked! We joined together in a visible action. There is a nonviolent protest going on at the School of Americas (now with a fancy name) in Georgia where training for torture takes place. Standing up for one's beliefs takes physical effort. Didn't Jesus pray till drops of blood dripped to the garden's ground? Would that our knees would ache from praying! Would that our congregations would incorporate the talent of "sweat equity" on its list of options for members to contribute to the church.

...is perspective. With the new year, I am looking for some new perspectives for WDC, for our congregations, for myself. What is the next year's promise? What is the Spirit doing among us? How are we responding to the nudging of God's activity? Let's tell the Good News story.

--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.*

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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

Dec. 6 - Pray for the WDC Leadership Commission as it interviews candidates for pastoral leadership in WDC.

Dec. 13 - Pray for the Vision 2012 Steering Committee as it guides the prayer and funding campaign for WDC. We need 200 more people to give \$1000 to meet our final goal!

Dec. 20 - Give thanks for the gift of Immanuel--God with us.

Dec. 27 - Praise God for the gift of 2009--its blessings and its challenges.

Jan. 3 - Pray for the WDC Conference Minister search committee as it discerns new leadership for our area conference.

Jan. 10 - Pray for the WDC Executive Board as it meets for a day of retreat--prayer, planning and goal-setting on Jan. 16th. Pray for David Wiens as he is installed today at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK.

Jan. 17 - Pray for the meeting of the WDC Texas pastors in Dallas on Jan. 23.

Jan. 24 - Pray for our global community as we welcome new immigrants in our communities. How do we express our hospitality?

Jan. 31 - This Sunday is the final day of WDC's fiscal year. Thank God for the generous gifts of time, talent and treasure which have been offered in the name of our common mission to "witness, dwell and connect to God's mission in the world".

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms available)

Beatrice (NE) Mennonite Church - interim pastor (part-time, March 1, 2010)

First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS - pastor (full-time, summer 2010)

Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS - pastor (full-time, March 1, 2010)

Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church - pastor (full-time, June, 2010)

Western District Conference - conference minister (full-time, June 15, 2010)

Transitions

Bethel Mennonite Church, Hydro, OK will dedicate their family life center on December 6.

Gail Cross will become interim pastor at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE on March 1, 2010.

Lou Gomez, pastor at Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS, will be ordained there on December 13.

Willmar T. Harder, pastor at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS, has resigned effective early April 2010. He and his family will be going to Bolivia with MCC.

Carl Hohman, church leader at Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, died on November 4.

Gary Janzen has resigned as Supply Pastor at Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, effective December 20. He will become pastor at the Garden Community Church, Hesston, KS.

Charles Rickel is serving as Interim Pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Hydro, OK.

Ervin Stutzman will become Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA in January 2010. There will be a special installation service at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, VA, on March 7, 4:30 p.m.

David Wiens will be installed as pastor at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK on January 10.

Bob Yates began as Youth Worker at Buhler (KS) and Hoffnungsau (Inman, KS) Mennonite churches on November 29.

Survey Says...??

Have **you** taken the survey yet? In an attempt to improve the WDC website, the Resource Commission is asking for ideas. Visit www.mennowdc.org and find the survey link on the home page. It will only take three minutes - we want to hear from you!

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the December issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "Are We A Leader-Sending Congregation?"

Check It Out!

New Youth Ministry Resources! Featured in the December 2009/January 2010 edition of Check It Out from the Conference Resource Library are a dozen excellent new resources for those who care about ministering to youth in our congregations. Three new titles from Faith and Life Resources and highlighted (two super practical for service trips and worship) and one more theoretical. Also find insights on keeping your kids "cyber-safe," on loving the rude, obnoxious kids, on creating team challenges to form community and using TV clips for teaching. You may view this at www.mennowdc.org/2009-12-CIO.pdf Call or email us to reserve a resource: 316-283-6300, crlib@mennowdc.org.
--Marlene Harder Bogard, Resource Library Director

IRA Charitable Rollover set to expire December 31, 2009

Could you take advantage of this way to contribute to your church, conference or denomination? If you are age 70 1/2 or older, The Charitable IRA Rollover permits taxpayers to make donations directly to charitable organizations from their IRAs without counting them as part of their adjusted gross income and, consequently, without paying taxes on them. The transfer must come from a traditional or a Roth IRA. The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000 and the contribution must be a transfer made directly from the IRA account to the charity. Contact your IRA trustee for more information.

You are invited to

"Night at the Conference Resource Library!"

Lots can happen if you dare! Gather your small group, Sunday school class, large family or small church and schedule a night of customized activities, hosted by Marlene Bogard, Library director. Choose from storytelling, book-talks, scavenger hunt, creative prayer or simply previewing new DVD's and reviewing new resources. Hot or cold drinks for a small fee, and food is optional - bring your own!

Remember folks, the Conference Resource Library is a real gem. Even though this is our busiest year in history, we know there are hundreds of folks out there who have yet to explore our 12,000 items. Come, explore, discover! Dozens of dates are open in the coming year. Contact Marlene if you are interested. 316-283-6300, crlib@mennowdc.org

P.S. A donation to WDC would be very nice.

Closed

The WDC office will be closed from December 24 through January 1. Open again January 4, 2010!

Camp Mennoscah

- Be part of the future! The Retreat Commission has created a **strategic planning questionnaire** to help plan for the next 20-30 years at Camp Mennoscah. Please help us build a better camp for you by taking the online survey (10 short questions) at www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html. Tell us your dreams and wishes, your thoughts and memories. If you would like to talk to someone in person, contact Camp Mennoscah.
- There's still time for you, your family, and/or your church group to **join us in 2010!** We have spaces available and some of the best prairie wildlife you could imagine. Gather together for a day, a weekend, or several days to enjoy the river, our wild neighbors (turkeys, deer, raccoons, and fishy friends), and some good times in God's creation. Contact us for more information and to make a reservation.
- Help! We've always had great volunteers at Camp Mennoscah, and this year we have two extraordinary Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. But their terms end at the beginning of June—Torrey and Olivia will be without help unless you can help us **find more stunning MVS workers!** Talk to people who would contribute to our camping ministry and let them know about this opportunity for service.
- Camp Mennoscah contact information: campmno@mennowdc.org; 620-297-3290.

Hymnsing for Christmas

All are invited to a special musical evening on **December 12**, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Bethel College Mennonite Church led by Dr. William Eash. This is a fundraiser with proceeds divided 50% for Western District Conference Vision 2012 and 50% for Bethel College. Let's sing together!

Preventing Clergy Misconduct

A one-day seminar - "**Preventing Clergy Misconduct**" - will be held Thursday, **February 4, 2010**, from 8:15 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS.

All WDC credentialed ministers who have not attended this seminar in the past are **required** to attend in order to uphold credentials and accountability.

Cost: \$75, registration deadline is January 28, 2010. See website for brochure/registration form: www.mennowdc.org/PreventingClergyMisconduct2010.pdf

Christmas Vespers

All are invited to Christmas Vespers featuring **Five Times Harder** (instrumental and vocal group), **Tony Brown** (baritone soloist), **Ken Rodgers** (organist, accompanist) at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS on Sunday, **December 20**, 4 p.m. Free-will offering to benefit Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Seminary courses in Kansas or online:

- The Church's Witness in the World: Mission and Peace, Jan. 5-21, Lois Barrett, professor; register by Dec. 15
- Theology and Ethics of the Gospel, Mon. evenings, Feb.-May, Jerry Truex, professor
- Family Systems and Pastoral Care, Tu. evenings, Feb.-May, Keith Harder, professor
- The Arts in Worship, four weekends, Feb.-May, Cynthia Neufeld Smith, professor
- Understanding the Church's Contexts, online, Feb.-May, Lois Barrett professor; registration deadline for all spring courses: Jan. 12

For more information contact Lois Barrett, Director, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary—Great Plains Extension, PO Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117; phone: 316-283-7098; email: lbarrett@ambs.edu. Or go to www.ambs.edu/GreatPlains. Students not yet admitted can register for one course (credit or audit) at: www.ambs.edu/admissions/register-online.

AMBS - Pastors Week

"*Known to us in breaking bread*" is the topic for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Pastors Week 2010 in Elkhart, IN on **January 25-28**, featuring Dr. Mary H. Schertz. Questions--contact 574-296-6269.

For more information or to register online: <http://www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek>

Eastern Mennonite Seminary

Eastern Mennonite Seminary would like to be a resource to church leaders --

- **School for Leadership Training** offers "*Staying Centered in Christ in a Right and Left World*". One free registration is available for a first-time SLT attendee from each area conference. See coupon at www.emu.edu/seminary/sit.
- **Distance learning courses** are offered January 11-April 30, 2010: "*Managing Congregational Change and Conflict*" and "*Pastoral Care*". See: www.emu.edu/seminary/distancelearning

Creation Care

“Creation Care: Stewards of the Earth”
(February 12-14 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, PA) offers a wealth of resources for leading your church toward environmentally responsible practice. Join others who are passionate about caring for the Earth in an interactive, inspiring weekend sponsored by MMA, Church of the Brethren, and Laurelville. Visit:
Laurelville.org/creation_care.html or call 800-839-1021 to register or for more information.

“Revival” CD

A special new **collector’s CD** from Third Way Media includes recordings of three archival Mennonite Hour radio programs by B. Charles Hostetter and David Augsburg. The CD: *“Invitation: Classic Hymns of Revival and Mission,”* features 25 musical recordings from the original Mennonite Hour a cappella singers. For information, go to: store.ThirdWayMedia.org or call 800-999-3534. Third Way Media is a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network and all proceeds support the outreach of Third Way Media.

Laser toner cartridge

First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS, is offering at no cost an unused laser toner cartridge that is suitable for use in Canon 510 (and more) copiers. Contact them at 620-947-5662,
secretary@fmchillsboro.net.

Western District Conference coming events

Dec. 4-7 - Discipleship Now
Dec. 12 - Hymnsing, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS
Dec. 24-Jan. 1, 2010 - WDC office closed
Feb. 4, 2010 - Prevention of Clergy Misconduct seminar, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS
March 12-14, 2010 - Scrapbooking Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
April 26-28, 2010 - Retirees’ Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
May 23-24, 2010 - JOY Disabilities Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
July 9-11, 2010 - WDC Annual Conference, Lakeview Conference Center, Waxahachie, TX
July 30-Aug. 1, 2010 - Young Adult Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 5-6, 2010 - Mental Health Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
Sept. 19-23, 2010 - Work & Play Camp, Camp Mennoscah

Conference Ministers’ schedules

Dec. 1-5 - Conference Ministers meeting, Elkhart, IN (DNF, GF, CR)
Dec. 7 - Texas appreciation pastors dinner (GF)
Dec. 8 - WDC staff meeting (All)
Dec. 9 - Staff Relations Committee; First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS search committee (DNF)
Dec. 10 - I-70 pastor-peer meeting, Topeka, KS (DNF)
Dec. 11-21 - Vacation (GF)
Dec. 11 - Leadership Commission; WDC Executive Committee (DNF)
Dec. 12 - WDC Executive Board; Hymnsing (DNF)
Dec. 13 - Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro KS (DNF); Lou Gomez ordination, Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS (CR)
Dec. 14 - Vision 2012 Steering Committee; Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS (DNF)
Dec. 15 - Prairie Peer Group, Pretty Prairie, KS (CR)
Dec. 17 - Missional Peer Group, Hutchinson, KS (CR); Staff Christmas dinner (All)
Dec. 18 - Prairie View Board (DNF)
Dec. 21 - Jan 1 - vacation/holidays (DNF)
Jan. 3 - Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, KS (CR); Comunidad de Esperanza, Dallas, TX (GF)
Jan. 9 - Texas youth leaders, Centro Menno (GF); Camp Mennoscah strategic planning retreat (DNF)
Jan. 10 - Mi Redentor, Dallas, TX (GF)
Jan. 15-17 - AMBS seminar, Dallas, TX (GF)
Jan. 16 - WDC Executive Board retreat (DNF)
Jan. 17 - House of Healing Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX (GF)
Jan. 19 - Bethel College women's circle meeting (DNF)
Jan. 22-23 - Texas pastors' meeting; Dallas, TX (GF, DNF)
Jan. 24 - Luz del Evangelio Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX (GF)
Jan. 31 - Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX (GF)
(Marlene Bogard-MB; Gilberto Flores-GF; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt-DG; CR--Clarence Rempel)

The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members.

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