

# WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

**May 31, 2011**

*A weekly communication for:  
WDC Churches and Pastors*

*WDC Executive Board, Commission, Committee and Task Force members*

*Any content may be used in bulletins and newsletters and forwarded to congregational leaders and members.*

*WDC E-Memo is also available at: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org) (Publications)  
(This replaces the monthly WDC Memo.)*

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## **Clarence's Clarion Call**

### **How has God shaped my heart for church planting?**

Coming out of seminary, I was invited by the Northern District Conference of the then General Conference Mennonite Church to plant a new Mennonite church in the rapidly expanding southeast suburbs of Lincoln, Nebraska. Maranatha Mennonite Fellowship was launched in 1978 with four couples and a half dozen college students.

It was exciting to covenant together to be the church of Jesus Christ. I remember our first baptisms for which we had to borrow a church and a baptistery. I remember a life transformative worship service in which we knelt and pledged our allegiance to Jesus as Lord.

I also remember hard times where the opposition of oppressive spiritual forces became tangible in my spirit and with our family. There was resistance to new territory being claimed for the kingdom of God. There were difficulties to surmount I had not imagined. We were cited by the city for using a house as a place of worship. We were sued by a former member who claimed we had bilked him out of his contributions. I learned that church planting is hard, hard work that takes unbelievable amounts of patience and perseverance.

One of the results of that is that I have the greatest admiration and appreciation for the church planters of Western District Conference. Church planting is good work. It is

intensely spiritual work of inviting people out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13).

That five-year ministry in Lincoln, Nebraska, forever shaped my heart with a desire for new churches for new believers. Secondly, God heart for lost humanity is shaping my heart.

In Luke 14 Jesus tells the story of a man who prepared a great banquet and the town folk were invited, but they all had last minute excuses for not coming – I got land, got a new truck, got a wife. The man says, “Go, invite the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. Go to the broken. Invite the suffering.” There was still room. The man says, “Go out to the roads and country lanes and *compel* them to come in, so that my house will be full” (Luke 14:23). God’s deep down heart desire is that the lost be found; the alienated find community; the broken and battered be restored.

This story also reveals another dimension of God’s global restoration plan for the planet. When people are invited to the salvation banquet of God, they are called to be together, to share fellowship, to share food, to share life. Jesus didn’t come to create superstar Christians; Jesus came to build a church (Matthew 16:18) – the family of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### **Prayer Requests**

June 5 – Thank God for the generosity of God’s people in giving and volunteering towards the construction of the new swimming pool at Camp Mennoscah. Pray that staff and campers will encounter Jesus Christ and meet the Spirit in this summer’s camping ministry.

June 12 – Pray for congregations welcoming new pastors – Brett Klingenberg at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, and Cleo Koop at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

June 19 – Pray for Mike Hiebert who is being ordained at the Goessel Mennonite Church today.

June 26 – Pray for Christina Litwiller who is being ordained at the Salina Mennonite Church today.

### **Coming Events**

June 18 – Circle of Grace training, First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS

July 4-9 – MC USA Convention, Pittsburg, PA

July 29-30 – WDC Annual Assembly, North Newton, KS

August 6-7 – Young Adult Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

August 20 – Day on the Farm, rural Hillsboro

September 4-5 – Mental Health Spiritual Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

September 9-11 – Women & Girls Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

September 18-22 – Work & Play Camp, Camp Mennoscah  
November 11-12 – Sister Care Workshop, sponsored by Mennonite Women USA,  
Central Kansas

### **Parish Paper**

View the June issue (“What is the Pastor’s Role in Church Finances”) of the Parish Paper at: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org), Conference Life / Publications.

### **WDC Announcements**

Check out WDC’s new website! [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)

Torrey's Great (and so is the Pool) Celebration! Don't forget to join us for a rollicking celebration of Torrey's greatness and the new pool on Sunday, June 5, at 3:30pm at Camp Mennoscah. We don't know yet if there will be water in the pool (it seems like a long shot), but we'll be having a grand time regardless. Bring your Torrey story to share and--if you like--a gift for the pool. Gift ideas? Try something fun and floaty or a donation toward finishing those last square feet of pool.

Make No Excuses, Simply Come to the Banquet/No Pongan Excusas: Simplemente ven al Banquete, (Luke 14:15-24) is the theme for the upcoming Western District Conference Annual Assembly, set for July 29-30 at Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church. You, as a member of a WDC church, are invited to this banquet of resourcing, hands-on learning, meaningful worship, fruitful conversations, remembering, planning and dreaming. Sara Wenger Shenk, President of Associated Mennonite Biblica Seminary, will be the featured speaker. [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)

Eleanor Wismer Kaufman, organist at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, will present a recital there featuring the organ as an accompanying instrument on Sunday June 26 at 3:30 p.m. This recital is the second in a series celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 22 rank Moeller pipe organ. Eleanor will accompany Vada Snider, flute, Ben Lichti, trumpet, Matthew Schloneger, tenor, Rebecca Schloneger, violin, Diane Fast, soprano, Chris Kliewer, bass and the Chancel Choir, directed by Marles Preheim. A free-will offering will be received to cover expenses and to ensure the future of the organ. A reception will follow the recital.

Are you looking for a ride to the MC USA Convention in Pittsburgh July 4-9? Or, do you have a group that is carpooling or taking a bus and have room for more riders? Let me know and I will try to connect riders with rides. --Nancy Funk, [wdc@mennowdc.org](mailto:wdc@mennowdc.org); 316-283-6300

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