

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

August 2, 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.mennondc.org (Conference Life / Publications)

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Clarence's Clarion Call

Joy in Christ

The theme, *Bridges to the Cross*, for the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Pittsburgh seemed to take me right to Jesus over and over again. It began on Pastors' Day, July 4, with Mary Thiessen Nation reflecting on her 20 years of engagement with the poor in Los Angeles. Hope was found in God and transformation was found in Christ's death, resurrection, and present kingdom rule in the world. She repeated this Christo-centric litany numerous times. Mary and staff brought the best of their social service and educational skills, but Jesus Christ was the indisputable Source of personal healing and community transformation.

At the other end of the social/economic spectrum, John Stahl-Wert heads up the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation with the purpose of raising up Christ-centered leaders to bring redemption to all aspects of society. Ministry includes prayer and Bible studies with the city's business entrepreneurs who are seeking to leverage their jobs for the kingdom. Business leaders formed in Christ have tremendous influence in shaping the workplace and community life toward greater peace and justice. "Ministry is who you are where you are."

Our Dwelling in the Word passage at Assembly from I Corinthians 3 warned us about being distracted by jealousy, quarreling, and partisanship, and then took us right to our unifying center, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

As I shared at Western District Conference Assembly, "I don't always find joy in what I hear from pastors or from churches. I have shed some tears this year about the

heartaches of ministry and the challenges of “keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” within congregations and within the conference. And yet the bottom line of my life and my emails is “Joy in Christ.” The Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed me from the guilt and bondages of sin, has called me as son and even friend, has given me a home in the family of God, has granted me incredibly meaningful and purposeful work, and is preparing an eternal home for me. What is there not to like about that? *Joy in Christ!!!*”

Prayer Requests

Aug 7 – Pray for Sembradores de Buenas Nuevas (Sower of Good News), our new church plant in Hutchins, Texas.

Aug 14 – Pray for the "Let's Talk about the Future of Adult Sunday School" conversation to be held on August 23 at the Western District Conference Offices, that imagination and new ideas about Adult Faith Formation will be shared and embraced.

Aug 21 – Pray for Jerry Acostas, the newly appointed church planter for Wichita, Kansas. Remember the Church Plant Support Team and the supporting churches: Church of the Servant, Hope Mennonite, and Lorraine Avenue Mennonite.

Aug 28 – Pray for Doug Krehbiel who will be ordained today at Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS. Doug serves as Youth Pastor at Tabor and as Youth Minister for the Western District Conference and for the South Central Mennonite Conference.

Coming Events

August 6-7 – Young Adult Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

August 23 – Let's Talk About...the future of Sunday School, WDC office

August 20 – **CANCELLED** - Day on the Farm, rural Hillsboro - **CANCELLED**

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

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

September 29-30 - WDC Staff 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 August issue of *The Parish Paper* at www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life / Publications). The topic is “How to Prevent Bad Behavior during Times of Change”.

WDC Announcements

1. See an energizing, fun video of WDC Assembly by going to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXhTjJsiYnk. Use in your WDC Assembly reporting, or just show at your next congregational meeting or Sunday morning sharing time. Or - catch the link at www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life / Annual Assembly).

2. Join others who care about what happens in Adult Faith Formation by coming to : **"Let's Talk about ...the future of adult Sunday School on August 23, 2011** at 7:00 pm at the Western District Conference Office at 2517 N. Main in North Newton, KS. Marlene Bogard, Minister of Christian Nurture will facilitate our conversation and provide a myriad of resource ideas. RSVP to 316-283-6300 or wdc@mennowdc.org.
3. We welcome additional feedback on WDC Assembly. If you did not take time to fill out a form, email us with: suggestions, as well as affirmations and concerns. Thanks! wdc@mennowdc.org.
4. Day on the Farm (originally scheduled for August 20) has been CANCELLED, due to the extreme heat and drought of this summer. Look for this event to be held again in August 2012.
5. Mental Health Spiritual Retreat--Camp Mennoscah's Mental Health Spiritual Retreat is just around the corner! This year's retreat is September 4-5 and is on the theme of The Miraculous in the Everyday. Join us for fellowship and some of the best everyday miracles possible. Contact us at campmno@mennowdc.org or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) for more information.
6. Work & Play Camp! We're looking ahead to the end of September when the weather is cool (we hope) and the company stunning (we know). The annual Work & Play Camp at Camp Mennoscah will be September 18-22. Bring a friend and share in a task! Want more information? Contact us at campmno@mennowdc.org or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290)
7. Red HOT Summer! Camp Mennoscah has had a sizzling hot summer both in temperatures and in the number of campers. We had 40 more campers this year than we did last year with 538 campers! We are so absolutely-smasholutely thrilled! On top of all those campers, we had 174 workers and volunteers. That's an awful lot of folks having fun. Thanks for making Camp Mennoscah a rocking, hopping place to be.
8. Tom and Lois Harder, Co-Pastors of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church along with their three daughters have just returned from a sabbatical, spending two months in Paraguay. On Sunday, August 21 they will be giving a concert as "Five Times Harder" at 4:00 p.m. A faspá will follow around 5:00, and they will give a presentation on their time in Paraguay at 6:00 p.m. at Lorraine Avenue church, 655 S. Lorraine, Wichita, KS. All are welcome.
9. You are invited to celebrate the witness of Mary, mother of Jesus, on the evening of Sunday, August 14, 8:30 p.m. We'll listen to Mary's own words and the words of those who have known God's love through her. This vesper service will include song, poetry, dance and prayer in the spirit of *lectio divina* or "holy reading." The service takes place at New Creation Fellowship Church, 221 S Muse, Newton. Renee Kanagy, Mary Herr, Yolanda Kauffman and Sara Dick are the planners. For more information about the conference about Mary at AMBS that prompted this service, see the April 11 issue of *Mennonite Weekly Review* or the on-line press release in *The Mennonite*:

http://www.themennonite.org/public_press_releases/AMBS_conference_asks_what_Mary_might_mean_for_Mennonites_today.

10. See the attached news release about Moses & Sadie Mast receiving the Everence Regional Journey award.

MC USA Announcements

1. In the development of your pastor's salary and benefits this coming year, congregations are encouraged to use the Guidelines for Pastors' Salaries and Benefits that are prepared each year by the Mennonite Church USA Leadership Development Team. These guidelines are available from <http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Default.aspx?tabid=122>. *Now several free software tools are available to help use the guidelines including a database application and a spreadsheet at <http://manygifts.org/software.htm>. Please pass this information on to those responsible for recommending pastoral compensation in your congregation. In addition software is also available to conduct a pastoral review and to administer a survey in times of pastoral transition. Our office can assist you in such situations. A link to these free resources is also available from the WDC website: www.mennowdc.org, Conference Life - Resources - Congregational Resources.*

2. In a moment of honesty is there anyone in your church who would say, "I feel a little bit on the outside"? What do you do with that? How do you work with that as a community - especially if there are differing beliefs? What makes us distinctive as Anabaptists? Honestly - what do you do? Please join this conversation at the Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series, Fall 2011 at Hesston College on October 28-30: Getting Beyond Them and Us--to We. Go to www.hesston.edu/AVDS or to the AVDS Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=124590297632796> for more details.

Western District Conference
2517 North Main, PO Box 306
North Newton KS 67117
[316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300); FAX: [316-283-0620](tel:316-283-0620)
Email: wdc@mennowdc.org
Website: www.mennowdc.org



News Release
For Immediate Release
July 29, 2011

Moses and Sadie Mast receive Everence Regional Journey Award

DENVER, CO – Moses and Sadie Mast were named the recipients of the Regional Journey Award from the Everence office in Denver, CO. This award recognizes that Moses and Sadie, Spencer, OK, have used their time, energy and possessions to help others.

The award was presented to Moses and Sadie on July 29, 2011 at Western District Mennonite Conference's annual assembly at Bethel College. Created in 2001, the Journey Award highlights what people of faith are doing as stewards of their God-given gifts.

"Moses and Sadie epitomize for me what it means to be a good steward of what God has provided but beyond that, they also represent for me what it means to practice stewardship as a Christian attitude and practice which has effected all aspects of their lives and every stage of their faith journey" Rhoda Blough, Church Relations Representative, said.

The Masts have a faith that naturally touches on the real world. They don't give many reasons for why faith should impact financial decisions; such things simply go without saying. The Christian faith and its teachings about finances are consistently embodied in their choices.

The Masts attend Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City and are retired. They are very active with Oklahoma Center for Conscience, which is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provoke new thinking about the realities of war and ways to prevent it.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. Everence offers banking, insurance and financial services with community benefits and stewardship education. Everence is a ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches. To learn more, visit www.everence.com or call (800) 348-7468.

Everence offers banking products that are federally insured. We also offer securities and other products that are not federally insured and are subject to the loss of principal. All products not available in all states.

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*For more information, contact Rhoda Blough (303) 5123-5959,
rhoda.blough@everence.com*