

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

November 22, 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 (Conference Life / Publications)

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Mundane and Trivial Hospitality

by Olivia Bartel, Director-Camp Mennoscah

I would like to write something profound in this camp article. I find, however, that I am consumed with the mundane and trivial. I check to make sure there is toilet paper in the bathrooms. I wonder whether I should sweep the floor again because it's a bit scritch-y. I write thank you notes to volunteers who donate their time and skills. I wipe spider webs off the windowsills and make sure there's enough space in the freezer for the next group.

Mundane, brain-deadening tasks. It's sometimes hard to remember that each of these trivial things adds up to the total experience that Camp Mennoscah guests have. We aren't a plush resort with fancy gimmicks that will entice people to come back. We're a simple and rustic camp and we rely on our Christian hospitality and what we offer in creation and community to invite folks to return. So each of these small things adds up to one big thing—a mundane and trivial hospitality. If the floor is sandy or the counters grimy, if the toilet paper roll is empty or paperwork delayed, it can irk you until you don't notice the brilliant stars in the icy night. Instead of laughing with friends, you grump about whatever wasn't cleaned. You miss out on all the reasons we want you to come to Camp Mennoscah.

I try hard, but I fail on a regular and consistent basis. For this reason, I am grateful for flexibility and grace. The flexibility of staff to change plans at the last minute, the wondrous grace of groups in handling maintenance "surprises," and the willingness of the Retreat Commission to work with me on the numerous and ever-changing tasks of camp are only three of the many things I'm thankful for.

Thank you to everyone who has scrubbed a toilet or swept a floor at Camp Mennoscah. Thank you to everyone who has sent Camp Mennoscah a small note of gratitude for our ministry. I pray for every volunteer and donor, every guest and camper. Your visits to Camp Mennoscah are a gift to us.

May your Thanksgiving be mundane, trivial, and full of gracious hospitality.

WDC Announcements

1. 2012 Camp Mennoscah Reservations—Reservation forms for groups scheduled for retreats in February – September 2012 have been sent or emailed. If you are the contact person for your church or family group and have not received the reservation information, please contact Camp Mennoscah at campmno@mennowdc.org or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290). Another great year is ahead!

2. Bluestem Wish List—Just in case you've forgotten, Bluestem is the house on the new camp property (to the east). We've been working hard here at Camp Mennoscah to get it ready for small groups or families, but now that we're nearing the end of this project, we find we need a few items. Most of these items are for the kitchen. Our Bluestem Wish List can be found on the Camp webpage at www.mennowdc.org or give us a call at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) and we can help you out. Thanks for helping us out!

3. Camp Mennoscah Gathering--All late-night donut junkies who are fans of Camp Mennoscah are invited to a gathering of Camp Mennoscah folks on December 2nd beginning at 11pm at Druber's Donut Shop in Newton, KS. The first 40 people to arrive wearing a Camp Mennoscah tee shirt get a coupon for a free donut! (Be prepared to pay sales tax and any amount over the coupon amount.) Outgrown your last Camp Mennoscah tee shirt or worn it to shreds? No problem--make your own tee shirt! Use duct tape and a marker or whatever you choose. Best homemade Camp Mennoscah tee shirt/tee shirt design wins a prize!

4. Have you ever wondered about appropriate honorariums when WDC staff speak in your church? See the WDC Honorarium Policy attached. It's also available on WDC's website: www.mennowdc.org/leadership/staff/

5. 90 pages x 4 selections per page = about 360 possibilities! That's right folks, check out our Music Lending Library Catalog on line at:<http://mennowdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/MusicSeason.pdf> and you will find a gigantic listing of Advent and Christmas music for you to borrow. It's not too late to make your requests to crlib@mennowdc.org or call Marlene B at [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300).

6. What's the church's greatest vice? Ser-vice. Get it? OK, bad pun but a lead in to a seriously good event for your youth. Out of the Pew on January 7, 2012 at Journey at Yoder will give your youth a chance to work in the trenches with the Hutchinson MVS unit, connect with Mennonite service agencies, worship together with a Christian rock band, see a wacky talk show, hear an awesome speaker and have great fellowship and

fun! Yes, all this for only \$10! More information at: <http://mennowdc.org/conference-life/youth/> Registration deadline is December 12!

7. The WDC Office and Conference Resource Library is closed this week Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving. Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Kansas Announcements

1. BETHEL COLLEGE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION extends a huge thanks to all who contributed to the Fall Fest Market on the Green, bought New Year's Cookies, or ate at the Swiss-German meal. Our sales exceeded all expectations and, because of your generosity, we will be able fund special projects benefiting the College community.
2. The Bethel College Women's Association is hosting one of the Six Places of Christmas on December 3 at Goerz House, 2512 College Avenue, North Newton from 10 to 4. Please come tour the beautiful home decorated for Christmas, browse through our gift shop, and select some baked goods to enjoy at home! We will also be selling homemade candy by the pound. Hope to see you there!

Mennonite Church USA Announcements

1. Youth groups: God is working in incredible and creative ways in the city. Come and See! You can serve this summer in cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, L.A., Miami, or San Antonio. Make a difference and have time for reflecting together about what you're experiencing. Check things out at www.DOORNetwork.org.

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