

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

January 3, 2012

*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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Pick My Brain

Believe it...or not

by Marlene Bogard, Minister of Christian Formation

One of the top requests we receive in the Resource Library is for the "perfect" story for using during Sunday worship. Most often the story is to be used during the designated Children's Time, and usually it is a book, not an object lesson, not a re-telling of the scripture, not a personal reflection, a book! A real book made out of colorful paper - with amazing illustrations, meaningful text and pages that turn by hand. (As opposed to the finger waving and pseudo-turning of pages that one may experience with a Kindle or Nook!) I have yet to see children turn away from a book that is respectfully and lovingly read to them. Adults, too, often squirm in their pews to catch a view of the pictures that are being shared with the children. Books, shared with children, the "least of these", as I recall the words of Jesus, have the potential to be holy material. Carefully planned moments with the children can be holy moments. They can offer children (and youth and adults who are listening) an opportunity to imagine, to visualize, to remember, to wonder about God, about how God is present in their lives, and much more. And so, it is with great pride that I remind you that we have one tremendous collection of Children's Literature here at the Resource Library - just waiting to be tapped, checked out, and shared.

To start off the New Year, I have created a brand-new listing of Children's Books for Telling in Church, the January, 2012 Check It Out. This colorful listing includes 17 of the brightest and best children's books we have purchased recently. Each one includes possible themes along with a short annotation. What do shoes, cows, red lolly pops have to do with God? Check out this list: <http://mennowdc.org/library/check-it-out/>. Copy it and pass it along to worship planners, storytellers, teachers and your church librarian.

WDC Announcements

1. New Video Catalog for 2012. 50 new DVD's were added to the Resource Library collection in recent months. See the brand new and updated 2012 Video Catalog at <http://mennowdc.org/library/video-catalog/>
2. The WDC Resource Library will be CLOSED on Wednesday, January 25 for training on our new Atrium library software. When you wake up on January 26, log in to our brand new on-line catalog and see what's new. We hope to capitalize on the new features quickly so that you can easily log in to your library record, reserve books, write reviews, generate lists and much more. The future looks bright! This upgrade is possible because of Vision 2012 funds that we have received. Thanks be to God!
3. As unbelievable as it may seem, planning for Lent is just around the corner— Saturday, January 21, 8:45—11 a.m., at First Mennonite Church, Newton, 429 E. First Street. The central Kansas group who prepared the Lent 2012 worship resources for MC USA will provide leadership. Please bring your own copies of Leader magazine; none will be provided. Register by January 16 by phone or email to the WDC office with the number of people from your congregation who plan to attend: [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300) or wdc@mennowdc.org.
4. The Moundridge churches are hosting a missional church seminar on Saturday, February 11, with Wilbert Sherk, Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Conrad Kanagy, Professor of Sociology at Elizabethtown College and Pastor at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. Registration will be \$25 per person or \$75 per church. This will be both an inspirational and instructional event. Outcomes for the seminar include:
 - Persons would understand the mission of God from Jesus through the Anabaptists to the Mennonite churches of today both locally and globally.
 - Persons would understand the present reality of the Mennonite church and the factors contributing to our diminishment in North America and tremendous growth in the global South.
 - Persons would claim core Anabaptist beliefs while discovering new ways of sharing their faith.
 - Persons would have a readiness to follow the Holy Spirit into new initiatives, some of which might not succeed.Registration information will be forthcoming. Now is the time for church leaders to decide about participation. The seminar will be most effective for churches sending their core lay leadership and pastors together.

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