

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

January 10, 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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Pastoral Openings

*Congregational Information Forms can be viewed at: www.mennowdc.org –
Congregations/Pastors - Pastoral Openings*

Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, KS - Lead Pastor

First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, KS - Pastor

News and Transitions

Dave Gerbrandt, Pastor at First Mennonite Church, Clinton, OK, retired on December 31, 2011. He continues as WDC Associate Conference Minister for Oklahoma on a part-time basis.

Zachary Gleason, who has served as Interim Pastor at Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City, OK since December of 2010, was called as Pastor beginning January 1, 2012.

Our sympathy to **Doug (Conference Youth Minister) and Jude Krehbiel** on the death of Jude's father, Homer Kerr, age 101, who died on December 21 in Iowa.

Robert Yutz will begin as Interim Pastor at Goessel Mennonite Church on January 22.

WDC Announcements

1. You are invited to an **open house/farewell pizza lunch for Doug Krehbiel**, Western District and South Central Conference Youth Minister, on Tuesday, **January 17** from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. at the WDC office (2517 North Main, North Newton). Doug will conclude his ministry with WDC/SCC on January 31. Youth pastors are especially invited! Youth Pastors will meet at 1:00 for a meeting for consideration of a Bi-Conference Youth Ministry Network paradigm going forward.

2. **New (and Not-So-New) Pastor Orientation** is being planned for Thursday, **March 22**, 3-8:30 PM, at the Western District Conference office, North Newton, Kansas, for pastors who have come to the Western District in the past three years. We will explore the vision, core tasks, resourcing, history, and character of our Area Conference. It will be an opportunity to build relationships with pastoral colleagues. It is scheduled to coincide with the Clergy Misconduct Training the next day.

3. Note to WDC Pastors and credentialed folk: Place on your schedule the **Prevention of Clergy Misconduct Training, March 23** at Bethel College Mennonite Church. This full day of training is mandatory for all credentialed ministers in the WDC. If you have not been to a training in five years, it is strongly suggested that you attend, in order to become refreshed and reminded of how important it is to create practices of self-care, boundary management, safe touch and healthy internet and media practices. Marlene Bogard, Minister of Christian Formation will provide the training. Registration information to come.

4. All are invited to "**Maintenance to Missional: Looking Back So We Can Move Forward**", a missional church seminar on Saturday, **February 11**, in Moundridge, KS. Presenters are Wilbert Shenk and Conrad Kanagy. Cost: \$25/person or \$75 per church for as many as can come. An informational flyer is attached; please register by February 3.

5. A **Damascus Road Training** event will be hosted at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS **February 16-18** with a registration deadline of January 23. Damascus Road Training is an initiative of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. It lays the groundwork for dismantling systemic racism in congregations, conferences, and communities. For the full registration brochure go to: www.mennowdc.org - Upcoming Events.

6. The Western District Conference **Ski Retreat** is just around the corner! The trip **leaves on Friday evening, January 27, and returns Tuesday morning, January 30**. We will again be skiing at Copper Mountain ski area in Colorado. The cost of the trip includes sleeper bus transportation from North Newton, two nights lodging, ski rental, and lift tickets for three days of skiing. Costs have actually gone down a little, and we are working hard to make this more family friendly. Adult package costs \$480, 13-17 year-olds cost \$440, and 12 and under cost \$330. We offer discounts if you prefer to drive in on your own and if you own your own equipment. This is a first come/first served event, so please respond promptly by calling or emailing your reservation to the WDC office ([316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300) or wdc@mennowdc.org).

7. **Basketball and volleyball tournaments** have been a spring tradition among Western District and South Central Conference churches for many years. Should the tradition continue? Does your church have a basketball or volleyball team that would participate in a WDC-organized tournament this spring? Is there interest in continuing these tournaments? Please e-mail us soon (by Jan. 20) at: wdc@mennowdc.org to tell us if you have a team and if you have interest in helping to organize a tournament.

8. The Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church (Goessel, KS) is taking a fresh look at how we have church attenders and guests indicate their attendance at our weekly services. Currently we ask that people sign a Friendship Register. We would like to know what is done at your church. Please email suggestions to alexmenno@mtelco.net. Thank you.

Kansas Announcements

1. Christopher Shaw will lead a Hymn Festival entitled Arise, Your Light Has Come at the Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS, on January 22 at 7:00 p.m. (note change in time). The recital is the final one in a series celebrating the 50th anniversary of its 22 rank Moeller pipe organ. The Festival is an epiphany celebration of word and song, featuring the Bethel College Mennonite Church Chancel Choir, Chancel Bells and instrumentalists. A free-will offering will be received to cover expenses and to ensure the future of the organ. A reception will follow.

2. The Western District Conference Immigration Task Force is hosting Caleb Lazaro on Tuesday, January 17 at 7 pm at New Creation Fellowship in Newton. All are welcome! Caleb Lázaro was born in Trujillo, Peru and immigrated with his family to the United States at age six. He is currently working alongside grassroots movements in the United States and Peru, advocating for economic justice, non-violence and the restoration of human dignity. Caleb is also a founder and co-pastor of the vibrant community [El Centro](#) in Colorado Springs, Colorado—a Christian church deeply involved in advocating for a redefinition of citizenship within the United States. He travels on a regular basis, creatively educating faith communities and activist groups on themes such as social justice, contemplative Christianity, interfaith dialogue and the Anabaptist tradition. Caleb is currently a student in the Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program at Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado.

Mennonite Church USA Announcements

1. This spring, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary offers two online courses. Tuition discount (50%) is available to students taking a first online course from AMBS if they are not already enrolled in a masters level theological program.

Turnaround Strategies for Church, taught by Gerald Shenk, Ph.D., encourages collaboration among pastors. This course may be especially helpful to congregation leaders who are looking for interaction with others to address issues in their congregations. Churches must change, in order to be vital and continue to grow. This course examines dynamics of church renewal with strategies for change that seek to be true to the Gospel and to the congregational context. Open architecture in the design invites working pastors, congregational leaders and others who care for the vitality of local churches to collaborate, share best practices and review pertinent case studies together. Participants will find this virtual peer group a place to share current challenges, experiences with problem-solving and prospects for creative renewal in

congregational life. We seek to learn from careful reflection on what God is doing with each congregation in its own specific context, rather than reviewing simplistic solutions or cloning formulaic approaches. Rural and small churches will receive special attention. We assess the many contours of internal dynamics, using the tools of congregational studies, plus interviews and site visits to examine other examples in the wider social context. For more information: <http://www.ambs.edu/turnaround-strategies> or call AMBS registrar at [800-964-2627](tel:800-964-2627).

Biblical Foundations of Peace and Justice, taught by Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament. Study pertinent biblical passages and historic peace church understandings while reflecting on peace and justice praxis today. For more information: <http://www.ambs.edu/biblical-foundations> or call AMBS registrar at [800-964-2627](tel:800-964-2627).

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