

“A second challenge is the increasing brokenness of family systems. ... As youth pastors, we face unhealed hurts and pains that teenagers carry around because of divorces. That pain used to be the exception; it is now the rule. ... It’s no longer just about a bunch kids showing up to have a good time. ... It’s a lot messier now.”



Dwight Regier (second from left), youth ministry leader at First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., interacts April 11 with youth group participants Jordan Schroeder, Kate Jolliff and Ashlynn Hamm. (Photo by Laurie Oswald Robinson)

To help youth pastors better deal with that messiness, Regier will relate one-on-one with them in spiritual companioning. As the youth pastors strengthen their own walk in Christ, they can more effectively empower the youth to find Christ’s calm in a chaotic world.

He will also support Blasdel in his role of forging a deeper communal partnership between youth pastors across the two area conferences. (Continue reading this article at: www.mennowdc.org/resources/publications/wdc-news/look-underneath-the-May-2012-link)

Formation of WDC Human Sexuality Discernment Task Force

The Western District Conference Executive Board announced the formation of a Human Sexuality Discernment Task Force at the Western District Annual Assembly held at Bethel College last year. The task force has been busy! The written responses from the delegates attending last year’s Western District Annual Assembly have been reviewed and tabulated. (Continue reading this article at: www.mennowdc.org/conference-life/ministries/task-forces/ see “March 2012 report”)

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WDC News

May 2012

WDC ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
July 6-8, 2012
Magnuson Hotel & Meridian
Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK



—John 17

WDC Annual Assembly to help congregations become one in Christ

by Marlene Bogard, Assembly Planning Director

Worship. Discernment. Fellowship. Learning. Community. Testimony. Add 'em all up and it's a pretty good definition of our theme for WDC Assembly 2012:

Becoming One to be Sent in Christ. Jesus, in his John 17 prayer, invites us to join and act on the unity we already have. As we are able to express our unity through love, we will fulfill our mission of representing Christ to the world.

WDC Assembly will begin in Oklahoma City on Friday afternoon, July 6, as we gather around tables for conversation, Bible teaching, stories and big-picture thinking.

This year, we will celebrate in three worship services, held Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning. Each will feature lively singing led by Chris Dick and Christine Crouse-Dick, and preaching by Illinois Mennonite Conference Minister Chuck Neufeld and Eugene Thieszen, pastor of Herold Mennonite Church in Bessie, Okla.

Also featured will be dramas written by Carol Duerksen of Hillsboro, Kan. and testimonies of God at work in our congregations.

Saturday morning we will carry on the rich tradition of learning together, as participants choose from 11 Learning Communities, each 90 minutes long. That afternoon, our assembly will gather to listen, discern, affirm new leaders and engage carefully with resolutions that are being presented.

I invite you to come. Learn about and practice unity. Smile and celebrate our growing edges. Trust that God will be present among us. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. Together, we are Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Full information on registration, lodging, learning communities and schedule is available at www.mennowdc.org (Upcoming Events).

New joint Youth Ministry Network to help build stronger ties in tough times

by Laurie Oswald Robinson, editor, WDC News

Jesse Blasdel is a seasoned pastor who has served in youth ministry since 2006. But he is experiencing new challenges in his role that make him very grateful to have the support of the new Youth Ministry Network.

The network – a partnership of Western District Conference (WDC) and South Central Conference (SCC) – is forging a stronger link between congregations and the area conferences in their joint mission of forming youth in Christ. The area conferences have commissioned two youth ministers who will jointly assume the shared services formerly provided by Doug Krehbiel, whose term ended Jan. 31.



Jesse Blasdel

Blasdel, student outreach pastor at South Hutchinson Mennonite Church (SCC), is commissioned as Youth Ministry Event Leader. Dwight Regier, a lay youth ministry leader at First Mennonite Church (WDC), and former director of a short-term mission program for young adults, is serving as Network Team Leader.

They are guiding a Youth Ministry Committee of youth pastors from both area conferences. The network is helping them develop new ways to support each other in the forming of faithful disciples among the youth, steeped in an increasingly secular and broken culture.

“Challenges in youth ministry have become more intense in the past couple of years,” Blasdel said. “One challenge is counteracting a culture that teaches kids the most important thing in life is personal happiness. That doesn’t support our Christian value of enduring suffering and sacrifice that are sometimes part of living in radical Christian discipleship.”