

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

May 17, 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 (Publications)
(This replaces the monthly WDC Memo.)*

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Unexpected

I don't know that I could say it was truly unexpected, since the weather report gave a 40% chance, but it certainly wasn't usual to see snow in May. We woke up to see several inches of snow on the ground and more falling. The Youth Ministry Council was meeting at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in Colorado and I was there as the Mennonite Camping Association representative.

We need the unexpected. The unexpected jolts us from our humdrum schedules and offers a new perspective. The day we had snow, the whole day felt different just because of the snow. We talked about youth ministry and how it was in the midst of change. We talked about how youth ministry needed to be done in a new way. We talked about what was important for faith formation and what could be done to get youth and their parents "on fire." There was a new energy and a bit of excitement.

Camps are one of those places where faith formation happens and one of those places where there is energy and excitement. Camps have the advantage of being the unexpected. Campers are away from their everyday lives and in the midst of God's creation. This gets said over and over, but it remains true.

Camps are also about hospitality. Hospitality is about being ready for the unexpected. We spend these weeks before the summer preparing for the many groups and campers that will visit us. We check buildings. We discover things that we hadn't noticed at the end of last summer (what is that fan doing there?) and things that became new over the winter (yep, another busted pipe). It's the time of year when we try to anticipate the surprises that we'd prefer to avoid.

Without question, there will be surprises that we have not anticipated and unexpected happenings. We pray that in these situations the unexpected adds to the energy and excitement of camp. We pray that our campers and guests will respond with grace and mercy when the unexpected is a pain in the pants. Mostly, we pray that everyone who comes to camp goes home rejuvenated and on fire in their faith.

With only a few short weeks before our summer youth camps start, we look forward to the excitement and the unexpected that these wonderful folks will bring with them. We look forward to the new energy that our weekend groups bring. In general, we just look forward to seeing you all again. ---*Olivia Bartel, Camp Mennoscah Director*

WDC Announcements

1. Torrey's Great (and so is the Pool) Celebration! June 5 at 3:30 pm at Camp Mennoscah. Be there or miss out on your chance to thank Torrey for seven years of great work at camp and see the new pool dedicated. We'll at least cut a ribbon, but we're hoping to dive headfirst into the summer with a pool party. Want to bring a gift for the new pool? Pool toys like balls, swimming goggles, and other floaty stuff make great gifts. Donations for the completion of the pool also accepted.

2. Not quite final call! If you haven't gotten your Camp Mennoscah summer camp registrations in yet, now is the best time. We're planning all sorts of snazzy activities and fun times. Our theme for the summer is "Got Spirit? Finding God in the Everyday." Camp registration forms can be found at www.mennowdc.org on pages 7 & 8 of the 2011 Catalog. Don't miss out on the shenanigans!

3. Grace Hill Mennonite Church is celebrating the congregation's 200th anniversary of its organization in Polish-Russia in 1811. During the months of June, July, and August, the church will be hosting a Sunday School lecture series on Anabaptist and Mennonite History as part of the celebration. All lectures will be from 10:50am-11:40am in the Grace Hill sanctuary and are open to the public. Grace Hill is located 7 miles east of Newton on 1st Street, 1 mile south, and 1/2 mile east.

- June 12: Lois Barrett (AMBS), "Reformers and Martyrs" (16th and 17th century)
- June 19: Lois Barrett (AMBS), "Freedom and Restrictions" (16th and 17th century)
- June 26: Mark Jantzen (Bethel College), "Seeking Out the Crevices of a Rigid Society" (18th and 19th century)
- July 17: Mark Jantzen (Bethel College), "Between Nationalism and Opportunity" (18th and 19th century)
- July 24: James Juhnke (Bethel College emeritus), "Migration: Go East, Go West, or Stay at Home Part 1" (19th and early 20th century)
- July 31: James Juhnke (Bethel College emeritus), "Migration: Go East, Go West, or Stay at Home Part 2" (19th and early 20th century)
- August 7: Dale Schrag (Bethel College), "From Nonresistance to Justice: Crossing the Jordan? Or Crossing the Rubicon?" (Middle to Late 20th century)
- August 14: Gordon Houser (The Mennonite), "Who are Mennonite in a Time of Diversity and Change?" (21st Century)

Announcements – Mennonite Church USA

1. [Please run this in your bulletins for the next two weeks:](#) Application deadline for Mennonite Voluntary Service is June 1! MVS is a way for young adults ages 20+ to serve God and others while living and working in a community. For more information about MVS, visit Service.MennoniteMission.net or e-mail Jills@MennoniteMission.net.

2. [Please run this in your bulletins for the next two weeks:](#) Bethel College Women's Association invites you to our Annual Public Faculty Lecture, June 2 at 7:00 at Krehbiel Auditorium in the Fine Arts Center on the Bethel campus. Our featured speaker is Dr. Ami Regier, whose interest is in the emerging form of novels today. Her presentation is titled "German Immigrant Stories as a Comparative Discourse in the Ojibwa Midwest." There will be a brief business meeting and refreshments after the program. We hope you will join us for this stimulating evening.

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