

Western District Conference 2016 Budget Narrative

The Western District Staff, along with our Executive Board and four Commissions, work to provide resources for our churches, assist churches with pastoral leadership, provide scholarships and continuing education for our leaders, support new churches and invest in youth ministry through the support of congregational youth pastors and leaders and a subsidy for Camp Mennoscah.

In light of staff transitions this past year, the Executive Board and Conference Minister Heidi Regier Kreider are preparing to hire new staff to carry on the work of the conference in the library, faith formation and other resourcing for congregations, church planting, and supporting pastors across the conference.

The Conference Resource Library, the oldest and largest Mennonite Resource Center in the United States, provides resources for adults and children in a variety of formats. The primary focus for resourcing in 2016 will be faith formation in WDC congregations. Our Librarian and Resource Commission will provide practical, meaningful ways for congregations to facilitate the work of ministry and to build faith in their congregations. Checkout the online catalog of over 12,000 holdings at: www.mennowdc.org/library

The new WDC Church Planting Commission has been working for a little over a year, and has developed new guidelines for church-planting partnerships and ongoing sister-church partnerships. The commission is currently supporting church plants in Wichita, KS and Dallas, TX, and exploring other opportunities.

Their desire is to shift the focus of church planting from “conference planting churches” to “churches planting churches” with additional financial support from the conference. The commission has also selected several churches to be pilot congregations for a study of *Mission Essentials: A Guide for Experiencing God’s Mission in your Life* by Brad Briscoe. In Fall 2016 the Commission plans to expand the study to include all WDC churches..

Together with Western District’s Mennonite Men of the Plains and Women in Mission, Western District offers seminary scholarships to all WDC seminary students that are taking classes for credit at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

We are a part of a joint youth ministry network with South Central Conference that helps support our work with youth. Bi-Conference Youth Ministry Network Team Leader Dwight Regier’s goal is to relate one-on-one with church youth pastors and leaders of both conferences. In addition to providing spiritual companionship he helps our youth workers develop new ways to support each other in the forming of faithful disciples among youth.

Ways you can partner with Western District’s ministry

The success of this budget depends on our churches support. Contributions from member congregations make the services and programs of Western District Conference possible. If our congregations would contribute \$50 per member or \$100 per attendee, our delegate-adopted budget would be fully funded. We understand that this is not possible for some congregations; however, we have many congregations that can and do give more as mutual aid for their sister congregations. We commend those congregations who have dramatically increased their giving to WDC. This mutual aid guarantees that we can provide services to **all** our congregations and we **all** benefit from these connections.

When congregations keep the Western District Conference line item the same year after year, it means a gradual reduction in the services we can offer due to inflation. We have reduced staffing and have been creative in providing services through grants, consultants, volunteers, and part-time employees. We will continue to be diligent in stretching our revenues to provide strong support to our pastors and congregations.

We are committed to serving our churches and pursuing God's redeeming mission in the world.

