



**Western
District
Conference**

*An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA*

2517 N. Main • PO Box 306
North Newton, Kansas 67117

Tel: 316-283-6300 • Fax: 316-283-0620

E-mail: wdc@mennowdc.org • web: www.mennowdc.org

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE REPORTS

To the One Hundred and Twenty Sixth
Annual Session of the
Western District Conference
of
Mennonite Church USA

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Conference Minister
Heidi Regier Kreider

This past year my work has focused especially on pastoral search processes, visiting congregations, Annual Assembly and Reference Council planning, coordination with staff, updating personnel policies, and MC USA denominational matters. My report includes activities according to my job description:

1. Develop, build and articulate vision for the WDC –

- Fall Reference Council took place Oct 22 in Dallas on the theme *Held Together in Mission: Being the Church in the Urban Context*. Approximately 55 people attended from Anglo, Chin and Hispanic urban congregations in WDC. Lois Barrett presented Biblical and theological reflections, and storytellers from several congregations shared about experience in urban ministry. Participants engaged in lively discussion, and enjoyed a delicious meal and hospitality by Iglesia Luz del Evangelio.
- I worked with the Assembly 2017 and 125th anniversary planning teams and wrote articles for *Sprouts* and *Garden* on a variety of topics including our 2016 theme *Held Together in Mission*; the 2017 theme *Rooted and Built Up*; WDC's 125th anniversary and upcoming annual assembly, updates on the WDC partnership with Kansas Leadership Center, and each of the three elements of the WDC mission statement (Witness..., Dwell..., Connect...).
- WDC together with South Central Conference received a 2017 Leadership Transformation Grant from Kansas Leadership Center (Wichita, KS). This provided WDC with 26 training spots for KS residents in any KLC program in 2017, which we are promoting especially for representatives from Executive Board, commissions, staff and Camp Mennoscah, as well as other congregational leaders and members. As of May 2017, 17 persons from Kansas are registered for KLC training through the 2017 grant. In addition, 4 WDC members from TX and OK are registered for KLC training, assisted by Ministerial Leadership Commission funds raised through training scholarship application fees. WDC hosts monthly Leadership Lunches facilitated by several pastors, to discuss leadership competencies presented at KLC in relation to scriptural and Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives.
- WDC received a Schowalter Foundation grant to develop an Interpretation/Translation Ministry Team. I am beginning to plan implementation of this project to appoint a standing team of persons to provide language interpretation for Executive Board and Commission meetings, Assembly and Reference Council. This is to help us move toward greater competency in cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, and inclusion of the gifts and leadership of members from all parts of WDC.

2. With Associate Conference Ministers, share the responsibility for relation to WDC pastors and congregational lay leaders, consult with congregational search committees about pastoral placement; and be an advocate for pastors and congregations to elected or appointed conference leadership.

- Each associate conference minister and I relate to a particular group of congregations and pastors in WDC. I meet periodically with several pastor-peer groups, a pastor-congregation review consultants' group, and the Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania support group. Other ways I connect with leaders includes processing pastors' annual accountability and sexual ethics commitment forms; consultation with congregational leaders seeking resources for discernment, pastor/congregation reviews, visioning or conflict transformation; and promoting resources for pastors such as WDC continuing education, seminary and sabbatical scholarships, and Everence matching grants for pastors' financial assistance.
- I am grateful that work with congregations in pastoral transition this past year has resulted in calls to new pastors:
 - Eden - Dianne Schmidt began Oct 2016 as Associate Pastor
 - Alexanderwohl - Caleb Yoder began Feb 2017 as Pastor
 - Faith - Marshall Anderson begins June 2017 as Associate Pastor
 - Hoffnungsau - Lynn Schlosser begins Aug 2017 as Pastor
 - First-Halstead - Steve Wilcox begins Aug 2017 as Pastor

- Shalom - Benjamin Breckbill begins Sept 2017 as Associate Pastor.
 - I led services of ordination for Robert Yutzy at First-Halstead and Jaime Cazares at Casa Betania, and preached or gave presentations at West Zion, First-Halstead, Comunidad de Esperanza, Luz del Evangelio, Hoffnungsau, Southern Hills, Ransom, Shalom, Hanston, First-Hutchinson, New Creation Fellowship and Faith. Several of these featured reflections from my experience on the April 2016 *Come and See* learning tour to Israel/Palestine. I visited for worship at Zion, Manhattan, First - Newton, Grace Hill, Salina, Aposento Alto, Rainbow, Goessel, First-Hillsboro, and First-McPherson. I consulted with the Aposento Alto Support Group regarding future direction for that church plant; attended a festival hosted by congregations in Dallas, TX; together with moderator Anita Kehr met with Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church in discernment of their relationship with WDC; communicated with Kingman Mennonite Church regarding their decision in Feb 2017 to withdraw from WDC and join South Central Conference.
 - Former WDC conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen represented WDC at a celebration dinner on Oct 8 sponsored by MCC and MC USA in recognition of Lawrence and Betty Hart in Clinton, OK, where Lawrence has served for many years as pastor at Koinonia Mennonite Church.
 - I attended WDC training events on *Prevention of ministerial misconduct*, Oct 20, and *Congregational ministry in the face of sexual abuse and domestic violence*, April 29.
- 3. Serve as the person responsible for overall organization and operation of WDC; regularly meet with and report to Executive Committee and Executive Board.**
- I meet regularly with the Executive Committee and Board to plan agenda and give leadership regarding vision and priorities for WDC, Annual Assembly and Reference Council, policies that guide our work, and relationships within and beyond WDC. I also work with Gifts Discernment Committee in consultation regarding nominees to serve on WDC board and commissions.
- 4. Maintain overall administrative oversight of conference functions and activities, delegating appropriate tasks to other staff.**
- I lead monthly video-conference staff meetings with KS and TX staff together, and meet weekly with each associate conference minister as we continue to coordinate work in the first year of again being fully staffed. I hosted a Christmas staff dinner for Kansas staff/spouses, and planned an all-staff retreat in January at Camp Mennoscah focused on the theme *Rooted and Built Up in Christ*.
 - I worked with Staff Relations committee on annual staff reviews, updating WDC personnel policy, and preparing staff Memos of Understanding for 2017.
 - Jeanette Roberts provided coverage in the Resource Library in April and May while Resource Library Director Jennie Wintermote was on maternity leave.
 - Staff updated the facility-use policy for the WDC property in North Newton, KS.
- 5. Be familiar with all district committees and serve as the staff liaison as designated; coordinate the allocation of staff time and program budget to these committees; assist committee leadership in seeing their function in relation to a unified conference mission.**
- I met regularly with Ministerial Leadership Commission and helped to facilitate credentialing processes. I worked with Commission representatives to coordinate Pastors' Afternoon Apart in July 2016 on the theme *Holy and Whole: Faithful Response to Sexual Abuse in the Congregation*.
 - I meet periodically with Stewardship Commission, and worked with the commission and Business Manager Phyllis Regier to develop fundraising and thank-you materials.
- 6. Be responsible to see that WDC is adequately represented in relation to a variety of external and internal groups, including inter-Mennonite relationships.**
- The list of institutional relationships on the WDC website has been updated to describe current procedures and procedures relevant to these relationships.
 - MC-USA: I attended Constituency Leaders Council in October 2016 and March 2017 together with WDC representatives Anita Kehr and Ryan Koch; presented a devotional for Mennonite Church USA Executive Board at meetings in Kansas in Nov 2016, hosted board members for a visit at WDC

office, and joined them for *Loss of Turtle Island*, a participatory learning experience that depicts the historic relationship between European settlers and the Indigenous nations in this country. I attended annual MC USA/Canada Conference Ministers' meetings in Richmond, BC in Dec 2016, where discussion topics included sexual boundary training, the new Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure, fundraising, multi-cultural opportunities and entrepreneurial leadership in conference contexts, and conversation with AMBS and Eastern Mennonite Seminary representatives. It was a privilege to help host Palestinian leaders Alex Awad and Jonathan Kuttab for MC USA-sponsored speaking tours in Kansas. WDC appointed Magdalena Ramer Wenger (First-Hutchinson), Andrew Moore (Rainbow) and Erick Martinez (Monte Horeb) as youth representatives for the Step Up program at Orlando 2017. I attended an MC USA webinar on *The BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Movement* in preparation for the Israel-Palestine resolution at Orlando 2017. WDC pastors were invited to participate with MC USA in *Flourishing in Ministry*, a national research study focusing on pastors' wellbeing in ministry. WDC received a grant from MC USA as part of a larger Schowalter Foundation grant to plan regional events to build relationships across theological, geographical or other differences, as part of the "Christian Community" priority in the MC USA Purposeful Plan. We are still discerning use of these funds.

- WDC and Camp Mennoscah updated a Memo of Agreement for 2017. I attended the Camp's annual meeting on Sept 18, and met for conversation with the board chair.
- I met for conversations with the Bethel College board chair, Campus Pastor / Director of Church Relations, and Director of Education and Training at Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR) and attended KIPCOR's 30th anniversary celebration. I was asked to serve on the Bethel College presidential search committee, which is continuing its work into Fall 2017.
- Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary: AMBS-KS Center (which was hosted at WDC) closed December 31, 2016. I worked with WDC staff, Executive Board and AMBS to plan a reception March 12 marking this conclusion. We give thanks for faculty and administrators who shaped this program. I Attended AMBS Pastors' Week on the theme *Cultivating Inter-Cultural Leadership for Diversity-Oriented Churches*, and a leadership clinic on *Congregational Leadership and Ministry in the Face of Sexual Abuse*.
- Other: I meet quarterly with Menno Leaders - representatives from Hesston and Bethel Colleges, Prairie View, South Central Conference, WDC and Bluestem Communities. I attended several special events: Anabaptist Vision Discipleship Series conference at Hesston College on the theme *When the Unthinkable Happens* relating to resilience and healing in the face of trauma; a seminar on immigration issues presented by MCC-Central States and Sunflower Community Action of Wichita, KS; the 63rd anniversary dinner at Prairie View mental health center, Newton, KS; and the Everence Advocate/Pastor appreciation dinner in Hesston, KS, in April 2017.

7. **Professional Growth / Personal:**

- Several continuing education events enriched my learning this year: AMBS webinar on *Congregational Leadership and Ministry in the Face of Sexual Abuse* and online short course on *Transforming Congregational Conflict, Nurturing Healthy Communication*; Denominational Leadership program in Fall 2016 sponsored by Duke Divinity School focusing on shift from "decision-based" leadership (management, planning/budgeting, staff supervision and problem-solving) to "design-based" leadership (vision-casting, building alignment, managing change and conflict, and creative innovation); *Equip to Lead* program at Kansas Leadership Center in April 2017
- Regular meetings with a spiritual director and a monthly reading/reflection day nurture my spirit.

I thank God for the dedicated ministry of WDC staff, moderator Anita Kehr, Executive Board, commissions and committees, credentialed ministers, leaders and members in all WDC congregations. It is a blessing and joy to work with and among you all! I ask for your continued prayers, participation, and financial support of WDC as we join together in a common mission: To empower Anabaptist/Mennonite congregations to **Witness** and invite others to faith in Jesus Christ, **Dwell** in just and loving relationships, and **Connect** to God's mission in the world.

Associate Conference Minister (Texas-Based)

Byron Pellecer

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17 NRSV).

The following report reflects activities based on my responsibilities as Associate Conference Minister in Texas. I work closely with the Church Planting Commission to nurture emerging congregations and sister church partnerships. I advocate for intercultural transformation, undoing racism, and Hispanic ministries across WDC. Furthermore, I seek opportunities to connect and maintain a relationship with other agencies and institutions within MC USA.

Texas churches are in metropolitan areas where multicultural diversity is a reality and it is reflected in both established and emerging congregations. Across the State we have Hispanic-Latinos, Anglos, Asians, and Garifuna ethnics groups as a vivid witness of our cultural vastness but above all, as a testimony of God’s grace, love and mission.

Despite the current anti-immigrant sentiment, our congregations, whether established or emerging, are benefitting from the immigration influx. Newcomers tend to seek affinity groups, hospitable and welcoming communities in cities and churches. Therefore, this phenomenon impacts our congregations in a positive way, growth in attendance and membership, that is. On the one hand, the influx of immigrants in cities and in churches challenges the dominant culture with new social, cultural and language adjustments. On the other hand, newcomers face cultural assimilation in every area of life.

To top it off, second and third generations are a combination of both cultural realities which are reflected in “new ways of church life.” Consequently, questions like: How to be the church for this century and how to plant new congregations? Demand from us, 21st century Christians, to wrestle with those questions and many more. The truth is that the face of the church has already changed. Perhaps, another challenge to consider is the need of a less inward church life and more of missional / outward church!

Implement the WDC core task of “Networking Anabaptist Church Planting Partnerships”. I have engaged in conversations and or meetings with Church Planting leads in Plano, Fort Worth, Arlington, Oklahoma City, Liberal, Omaha, Matamoros Mexico and in Guatemala City. Out of these conversations we have some concrete results. Aposento Alto in Wichita and Garifuna Church in Houston, were affirmed by Executive Board as Church Plants for WDC. We are in conversations with an English-speaking church plant initiative in Fort Worth. At this point, they continue discerning affiliation within WDC.

Church Planting Trainings. The Church Planting Commission discerned to train three individuals by attending Exponential, an interdenominational church planting training event, and SENT 2017, a Mennonite Missions Network church planting summit. Lee Suderman attended the Exponential training and Jaime Cazares and myself attended SENT 2017. The proposed goals were: 1) To learn from other church planter from inside and outside MC USA. 2) To train consultants/coaches. We also appointed two Commission members to attend the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) sponsored by WDC. Violeta Ajquejay will attend in October and Veronica Robles will attend in July.

Supervise and nurture church planting pastors and their families. I meet with church planter pastors on regular basis. The meetings are either in presence or via phone calls. The goal is to provide moral and spiritual support, training, and resources at personal, family and ministerial levels. Also, we address growing strategies and resources for their ministries. Furthermore, I am attending two different support groups to provide support and or resources for both the church plant and their pastors.

Texas Staff Meeting. I thank God for the gifts that Sandra Montes-Martinez brings to the Conference, especially to the ministry and operation in Texas. We meet on weekly basis for planning, evaluation, and

implementation. We assist and provide administrative support to congregations, pastors, Hispanic Ministries, and church planters. Our support ranges from church documents, files, meetings, trainings, event coordination to Annual Assembly planning.

Kansas Staff Meeting. I meet with Heidi Regier Kreider, Conference Minister, on weekly basis for reporting, planning and strategizing. We communicate via zoom, emails and over the phone and whenever possible at WDC conference room.

Joint Staff Meeting. Once a month both Newton and Dallas offices get together to plan, report and conduct administrative and ministerial business.

Support the WDC core task of “Sustaining Transformational Pastors.” Equip and support WDC pastors and congregations in Texas. I have visited and preached in several Texas congregations and occasionally in Kansas. I attend pastor peer groups for Anglos and Hispanic pastors, serve in congregation pastor reviews as a consultant, assist with local congregation projects and promote inter-congregational gatherings.

Intercultural transformation and undoing racism in WDC; connect pastors and congregations to WDC and Mennonite Church USA resources and mission. Assisting congregations, pastors and MC USA agencies has been also part of my ministerial duties. We have connected MCC, Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH), Everence, Goshen College, MEA / Hispanic Ministries (IBA – Anabaptist Biblical Institute, SeBAH / Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary), MMN, AMBS, Menno Media, Everence and MC USA Executive Office with Texas congregations, WDC Hispanic Ministries and pastors. Last summer, we joined efforts with Hispanic Ministries of MEA, WDC Hispanic pastors participated in the pastor retreat and Continued Ed in Goshen College, Goshen, IN. I attended Hope for the Future, a people of color gathering within MC USA and preached during Pastors week at AMBS on Jan 23-26. I participated in the Come and See Israel-Palestine tour experience.

Coordinate WDC Annual Assembly planning when it takes place in Texas. This year, our WDC Assembly is held in Arlington, TX. The planning and coordination has been made possible as result of a team effort. After selecting the location, we concentrated in every detail needing attention for this assembly. The Assembly Planning Team: Sandra Montes-Martinez, Peter and Katherine Goerzen, Wayne Albrecht, Heidi Regier -Kreider, Norma Duerksen, Bill Zuercher. In similar fashion, our WDC staff members: Nancy Funk, Phyllis Regier and Kathy Neufeld Dunn have played a key role. I am very grateful to this wonderful and tireless team, their gifts, advice, and wisdom had made Assembly possible. (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

Serve as WDC liaison to Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH), Instituto Bíblico Anabautista (IBA). Across WDC we have three established Anabaptist Biblical Centers and four more emerging, providing leadership development and theological training from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective. We have 7 volunteer tutors and approximately 20 registered and or active students. We anticipate that both centers and students will grow in number as 2017 progresses.

Likewise, we have implemented the Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary (Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano – SeBAH) for theological training. For both programs, Spanish is the language preferred. I have served in both program as tutor for IBA and professor for SeBAH. In addition, I served in the Academic Advisory Committee of IBA.

Personal Spiritual Growth. I have read several books on Mission, Leadership, Politics, Social Justice, Culture, and Psychology.

Associate Conference Minister (Kansas-based)

Kathy Neufeld Dunn

This has been a wonderful first year of learning about, resourcing and encouraging the pastors and congregations of Western District Conference under my care and counsel. It's also been an important time of learning the "bigger picture" of how Western District Conference and our congregations interact with Mennonite Church USA. Below is a summary of major events that I coordinated, as well as ministerial emphases of the past year. Thank you for this opportunity to share my gifts as Associate Conference Minister (KS-based).

1. Resourcing Healthy, Missional Churches

- ◆ I continue to support the work of new and existing task forces:

The Israel Palestine Task Force is deeply engaged in helping our delegates and others understand the theological and political contexts of the work of so many Mennonites through the years in the troubled land of Israel-Palestine. They hosted a speaking tour with a Palestinian Mennonite human rights lawyer and an American Jew who affirms justice for Palestinians and Israelis. They have also updated resource lists of books, websites and DVDs on Israel-Palestine.

I'm learning about the breadth of WDC through the Low German Task Force. It's a great example of how a faith-based organization is partnering with a state committee and doing good work together in support of families in need.

There is significant interest in forming an Immigration Task Force in our conference. The question is what the group's focus will be. There is so much work that could be done in this area, including refugee resettlement and support, as well as support of undocumented immigrants. Can one task force help congregations work at all of these ministries?

- ◆ I've begun to offer congregational training in and introductions to Circle of Grace and Safe Sanctuaries, as well as other themes as congregations' request.
- ◆ Working with two enthusiastic WDC pastors to plan a major resourcing focus for next year, "Year of Evangelism," with the support of the Resource Commission and Executive Board. We pray it will be very practical, as well as a vital conversation-starter for WDC churches as we seek to be witnesses to the good news.
- ◆ I have visited almost all of the congregations in some capacity that I am responsible for. I will continue to schedule Sunday morning visits. It is a joy to bring greetings, share news of the wider conference, and join in worship and ministry with these churches to hear what's on their hearts and minds. It is vital ministry to build relationships in times of calm that are then available to lean on in times of storm.

2. Sustaining Transformational Pastors

- ◆ I coordinated and hosted one Prevention of Clergy Sexual Abuse training (Oct 20) and became trained as a trainer (May 10-11) for future "Healthy Boundaries" seminars for all credentialed ministers.
- ◆ I planned "The Good, Bad & Funny about Money," a pastoral families' financial planning event and celebration (Feb 19) funded by Everence and Lilly. The public was invited to a Ted & Company show that helped to raise money to assist our pastors in financial need. What a joy!
- ◆ I have supported two WDC pastors who are interested in continuing to explore topics of adaptive leadership through monthly Kansas Leadership Center Competencies Lunches. Each month we invite anyone who wants to come to explore a different leadership topic. Dialogue has been thoughtful and inspiring.
- ◆ I have hosted gatherings for chaplains two times this year for conversation and care.
- ◆ I continue to get to know, encourage, and offer counsel to the ministers (pastors, chaplains, retired leaders) I support. We have so many gifted, insightful, compassionate ministering people among us. Praise God for each of them.

3. Connect pastors and congregations with WDC and MC USA resources and mission

- ◆ I have been getting to know “the lay of the land” of WDC and MC USA, so I can better connect pastors and congregations with denominational resources and mission. Some examples include attending the Deep Faith Conference in October (a fascinating cross-section of faith formation leaders), participating in the annual Area Conference Ministers’ gathering (Dec 1-3), attending the Oklahoma Council of Communion twice to learn what Christian leaders in that state are concerned about and focused on missionally, as well as attending PREP (a Mennonite Women USA gathering).

4. **Coordinate Assembly planning** – Since I coordinated the 2016 Assembly, I have very little responsibility for this year’s Assembly, but I’m being as supportive as I can be to Byron, Sandra, Heidi and the rest of the planning group as they ask questions and make decisions.

5. Serve as WDC liaison with Dove’s Nest, Anabaptist Faith Formation Network and other assignments

- ◆ I represent WDC at a new Prairie View Chaplain’s Advisory Group. This group seeks to expand awareness about resources available through Prairie View, as well as brainstorming ways to support the chaplaincy ministry there.
- ◆ I am getting to know all the work that has gone into the Anabaptist Faith Formation Network. It’s a joy to work with a fellow Area Conference Minister. Shana Peachy Boshart has creative faith formation ideas and how to share them with others. I’m learning a great deal from her.

Conference Resource Library Jennie Wintermote, Library Director

Resource Library highlights

- **11,663 resources**
- **710 new resources** added this year
- Quality **children’s department** full of great read alouds for **children’s time** during worship, **Sunday school**, and other church activities (or at home!) to help kids learn **Anabaptist values** such as peacemaking and justice
- Commentaries, Bible studies, and topical books to help with **sermon prep, small group study, youth group, or individual study**
- **Christian Fiction** for all ages (adults & children of all ages)
- **Box of Books program** that allows church libraries to check out **25 books for two months** to extend their library’s collection
- **Preschool Story Hour** during Fall & Spring (ages 3-5), **Elementary Story Hour** in Summer (ages 3-8)
- **Online booklists** for timely and popular topics such as immigration/refugees available in our **online library catalog** at <http://mennowdc.org/library/catalog/>
- **Reserve and renew items**, as well as make your own book lists, using your library card, on the online catalog. If you don’t have a card yet, call, email, or stop by today.
- Growing **bilingual/Spanish** collection
- Music lending library with multiple copies of **anthems for church choirs** or small musical groups

In 2016:

- **7,130** items checked out/renewed
- **710** items added to the collection
- **11,663 total** resources available

- 6,271 searches done on our online card catalog (<http://mennowdc.org/library/>) and 351 searches performed from the mobile app

Did you know you or any attendee of your congregation can visit our library at **2517 N. Main Street, North Newton, KS**? You can also contact me via email or phone to request materials be sent to you! **(316) 283-6300** or crlib@mennowdc.org.

Conference Treasurer

Phyllis Regier

This report will be posted online after the annual audit is completed. See <http://mennowdc.org/annual-assembly/#2017annualAssembly>.

Youth Ministry Network Team Leader

Dwight Regier

Conference youth ministry in the Western District and South Central Conferences has two main components:

1. Network Team Leader
 - a. Meet individually with youth pastors for consultation, resourcing, pastoral care, and prayer
 - b. Lead monthly lunches for youth pastors for sharing, input, and discussion
 - c. Seek vision and coordinate with the WDC/SCC Youth Ministry Committee
2. WDC/SCC Youth Ministry Committee
 - a. Lead the planning of two high school and one junior high conference-wide events each year
 - b. Support smaller events envisioned and planned by youth pastors within the conferences

As Network Team Leader, I have the privilege of hearing where God is at work in the ministry of our youth pastors. I get to be in on conversations about discerning God's vision for their youth and youth groups. I am continually challenged and encouraged by the commitment and dedication of these leaders: their love of God; their commitment to Jesus Christ and his church; their compassion for youth and their desire to see these youth become dedicated followers of Jesus. I am also privileged to meet with the youth pastors as a group for lunch on a monthly basis. I love the way that the ideas and energy grow and grow when you get that many youth pastors together.

The WDC/SCC Youth Ministry Committee is made up of youth pastors and others who volunteer to help conference-wide events happen (currently Isaac Landis (Whitestone), chair; and Clayton Gladish (Hesston Mennonite). This past year the committee led the Know Jesus event in January and coordinated with Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp for Snow Camps for junior high and senior high youth.

Please keep our conference youth in your prayers as they seek to understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And pray too for the folks who are walking with these youth and helping them see the signs of God's Kingdom along the way.

Executive Board

Allen Jantz, Secretary

The WDC Executive Board meets at least six times a year. At each meeting, the Board reviews financial reports, reports from WDC Commissions and Committees, staff and conference minister reports. The Executive Board also makes recommendations to the Gifts Discernment Committee for nominations and appointments to the Board, Commissions and Committees. The Executive Committee meets at least six times a year prior to each Executive Board meeting. Board members are: Wayne Albrecht, Norma Duerksen, Allen Jantz (Executive Secretary), Norma Johnson, Anita Kehr (Moderator), Cynthia Loganbill, Ray Reimer (Moderator Elect), Jim Stucky, Kristen Swartley, Conference Ministers are: Heidi Regier Kreider, Byron Pellecer, Kathy Neufeld Dunn.

Highlights of four board meetings held since the 2016 report are as follows:

September 2016:

- Reviewed constitution and by-laws and member responsibilities.
- Provided reflections from Annual Assembly 2016. The planning team indicated that it was good to have an Executive Board structure to follow; the 2017 planning team provided an overview of upcoming plans.
- Received the financial and audit reports from Knudsen Monroe & Company.
- Initiated discussion on how WDC tracks WDC representation to other institutions.
- Provided names for consideration to serve on a variety of committees and councils.
- Heard a report on plans for October Reference Council, Dallas, TX.
- Provided endorsement for a Kansas Leadership Center “Transformation Grant.”

November 2016:

- Provided evaluation of WDC in light of the WDC Mission Statement, focusing on three core mission priorities. Members further responded to a number of questions, including seeking answers to “How do we care for our relationships within the conference?” and “How do we strengthen relationships between congregations?” The Executive Board also heard information about the work of Constituent Leadership Council and relationships between conferences, as well as the denomination’s Purposeful Plan.
- Began planning for the WDC 125th Anniversary and centered on the theme, “Rooted and Built Up in Christ” with a scripture text focusing on Colossians 2: 6-7.
- Requested additional information from the Church Plant Commission fundraising proposal.
- Received a report on the development of the Kansas Leadership Center “Transformation Grant” approval.
- Approved the certification of church plants: Iglesia Aposento Alto and Evangelical Garifuna Church.
- Approved changes to the partnership agreement with Camp Mennoscah.

January 2017:

- Heard from membership of the Church Planting Commission regarding their fundraising proposal. The Executive Board continued to seek additional clarification.
- Approved revision of the personnel policy, including working changes, clarifying exempt and non-exempt employee status and various other items.
- Approved increase in the HSA contributions for all employees who are on the Corinthian Plan to \$1500 per employee.
- Approved the 2017 housing allowance designation for credentialed staff.
- Heard a report on the plans for the 125th Anniversary celebration, Reference Councils, Annual Assembly, as well as MC USA Convention.

March 2017:

- Heard reports on the work of WDC, specifically the work of the Church Planting Commission and the Stewardship Committee.
- Approved the affirmation and timeline [of the CPC fundraising proposal] and requested that the Executive Board receive ongoing reporting and maintain dialogue as the process proceeds. Fiduciary responsibility continues to be with the Executive Board.
- Received a report on ongoing plans for the 125th Anniversary Celebration.
- Approved the release of Kingman Mennonite Church, with the hope for conversation to honor the MC USA guidelines with the understanding that the WDC delegates would have the final vote on the request at Annual Assembly.

- Heard reports on Annual Assembly planning, MC USA Convention, the Step Up program, and Future Church Summit.
- Initiated discussion on Reference Councils within the structure of the WDC Constitution and Bylaws.

Gifts Discernment Committee

Brian Stucky, Chair

Beginning in January the Gifts Discernment Committee began preparing for the 2017 Annual Assembly. The Committee once again requested pastors from each of our Western District Congregations to provide names of individuals from their congregations for certain positions who they felt would feel a calling to serve on a board or commission of the conference. We would like to thank pastors for the names that were forwarded from which to work and very much facilitated the work of the Committee.

The Gifts Discernment Committee, on behalf of the conference, wishes to thank those, when called, to have their name placed on the ballot for a second term as well as those who have agreed to have their name placed on the ballot for an initial first term. The Committee, as in the past, strives to prepare the ballot so that the board and commissions will have diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, as well as representation from a cross section of congregations and the conference's geographical area.

The Gifts Discernment Committee would like to thank Conference Minister Heidi Regier Kreider for her guidance and wisdom in the discernment process in this past year. Committee members: Brian Stucky, chair, Roberta Harms Secretary, Jane McNair, Susan Jantzen, Phyllis Goertzen, Ryan Koch and Heidi Regier Kreider, Conference Minister

Church Planting Commission

Marv Zehr, Chair

Byron Pellecer began as Associate Conference Minister and staff person for the Church Planting Commission, living in Dallas and having oversight for all of our Texas congregations as well as church planting throughout our conference.

We continue to plant new churches as well as provide resources for existing church plants in our conference. This year we have designated two church plants: Houston Garifuna in Houston, TX and Iglesia Menonita Fuente de Agua Viva in Omaha, NE. We continue to explore possible new church planting in Liberal, KS, and Matamoros, Mexico. Byron maintains contact with each of these opportunities with regular reports to the commission regarding their readiness to be named as church plants.

We have worked on a fund-raising proposal to provide additional funds for planting new churches. A feasibility study was conducted by Virgil Penner which indicated that before such a drive is launched more information needs to be released in order to inform our conference of the need and procedures for planting new churches. Called *50/50 Kingdom Builders*, the focus for this drive would be on individuals and families rather than congregations with the understanding contributions would be over and above contributions already being made to support the conference. The goal would be to secure 50 giving units to give \$50 per month for 5 years, which would total \$3,000. If successful this would raise a total of \$150,000 for church planting over six years. We hope to have more information on this to share at the annual assembly in August.

As part of the above plan for fund raising, we are working on a set of guidelines for church planting in our conference. These guidelines would include items such as: area to be targeted; approach to be used; feasibility study; role of the Church Planting Commission; leadership selection, funding arrangements; and regular reviews of church plants.

We have approved a document called Sister Church Guiding Principles. This invites the formation of sister church relationships to provide prayer, encouragement and relationships with new church plants.

These will focus more on the building of relationships rather than on financial support. Doug and Raylene Penner, members of Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, KS, have agreed to provide leadership for the development and oversight for these sister church relationships.

In addition to the sister church relationships, we plan to develop another document that will outline partnership relationships with new church plants. Such partnerships would include both forming relationships and financial support with new church plants.

Under Byron's leadership we are finding increasing opportunities for new church planting in our conference. The challenge for us is to secure the necessary funds to do church planting and the leadership that is necessary for successful new church beginnings.

We solicit the prayers and financial support of churches in WDC as we seek to extend the Kingdom of God among us.

Marvin Zehr, Chair; Violeta Ajquejay; Nita Nikkel; Veronica Robles; Virgil Penner; Lee Suderman and Byron Pellecer, Associate Conference Minister

Ministerial Leadership Commission

June Thomsen, Chair

Members of the Ministerial Leadership Commission are: Peter Goerzen, Gail Graber, Terry Rediger, Brad Roth, Dave Stevens and June Thomsen.

The Ministerial Leadership Commission has fulfilled its constitutional duties in the past year in the following ways:

A. **Granted credentials for ministry:**

Licensed for Specific Ministry

License toward Ordination

John Garland, San Antonio Mennonite Church, San Antonio, TX

Sandra Montes-Martinez, Iglesia Menonita Monte Horeb (Mount Horeb), Dallas, TX

Caleb Yoder, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS

Karen Mascho, Joy Mennonite Church, OK

Ordination

Robert Yutzy, First Mennonite Church, Halstead, KS

Derek King, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS

Jaime Cazares, Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania (Bethany House), Newton, KS

B. **Supported the personal and spiritual growth for pastoral leadership through**

- Continuing education and seminary grants. 35 persons received support between April, 2016 and May, 2017. This is our largest budgeted item.
- Encouraging matching funds for Lilly/Everence pastoral financial assistance grants
- Encouraging the use of grants from the Kansas Leadership Center
- Assigning mentors to those licensed toward ordination

C. **Provided resources for congregational leaders:**

- July 29, 2016. *Holy and Whole: Faithful Response to Sexual Abuse in the Congregation*. Presenter: Melissa Hofstetter, PhD, MDiv.
- April, 2017. Provided lunch for a group of pastors meeting to discuss learnings from their Kansas Leadership Center experiences.

- April 29, 2017. *Congregational Ministry in the Face of Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence*. Presenter: Kathryn Goering Reid, MDiv.

Other policy work by this Commission included

- Developing, with the conference minister, a procedure for orientation of pastors new to Western District, in lieu of a credential transfer interview.
- Updating *WDC Education Expectations for Pastors Serving in WDC* in light of *Six Core Competencies and Education Grid – MC USA*.
- Adopting the *MC USA Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure*, revised November 2016, and updated relevant procedures and forms.

- D. Upheld ministerial ethics regarding the Rainbow Resolution by meeting with pastoral and lay representatives of three congregations to review their processing of decisions to bless same-sex couples by offering wedding services.

We have been greatly aided and blessed in our work by the careful guidance and resourcing of our Conference Minister, Heidi Regier Kreider. TBTG

Resource Commission

Jeff Koller, Chair

The Resource Commission continues to follow the direction given in our mission statement. We are to “Empower WDC congregations as they witness to Jesus Christ in the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition, connect with God’s mission in the world, and provide faith formation resources for all ages.”

2016/2017 was our first year with the new “settled” staff. At our last report, we were waiting for Heidi Regier Kreider to begin her duties as Conference Pastor to make hiring and staffing decisions. After she assumed her new position, she and the Executive board decided to hire a ¼ time Resource Librarian along with a ¾ time Associate Conference Pastor. With this new direction, interviews were held and Jennie Wintermote was offered and accepted the library position. The Associate Conference Pastor position was filled by Kathy Neufeld Dunn, and we are operating with full staff again. Praise the Lord!

In the past year, we have worked on the following projects –

Gave blessing and direction to an emerging initiative, “Year of Evangelism” Watch for this opportunity to learn and grow together in sharing the Good News in holistic, Anabaptist ways.

Funded a new multimedia bible study – “Upside Down King”.

Funded two keynote speakers, Alex Awad and Jonathan Kuttub to help our delegates more fully understand the religious and political context of Israel-Palestine before the MCUSA Orlando convention.

Funded 3 youth to “Step Up” into leadership at the national convention.

We heard reports from the Task Forces that relate to the Resource Commission.

We are discussing ways to revitalize/revive the Historical Committee. We seek input from interested folks in the conference on ways we can continue to preserve our story in ways that make our faith stories significant to future generations.

We continue to endeavor to utilize funds in a way that will serve to deepen the faith of the people who use the many resources of the Western District Conference and Resource Library.

The current Resource Commission members are: Katherine Goerzen (Tabor Mennonite, Goessel); Vicki Hinz-Ensz (First Mennonite, Beatrice); Gordon Houser (New Creation, Newton); Ann Hiebert (Alexanderwohl Mennonite, Goessel); and Jeff Koller (Eden Mennonite, Moundridge).

End Death Penalty Task Force

John Tyson, Chair

The WDC Death Penalty Task Force has been engaged in encouraging congregations to reach out to their legislators in support of efforts to abolish the death penalty in Kansas. The scale tipped further toward the possibility for legislative movement this fall and a subsequent bill HB2167 was heard by the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee in February. One particular WDC congregation authored a letter to Governor Brownback encouraging him to support the bill, and the letter was printed in the local newspaper. At this time, movement has stalled as budgetary issues remain at the forefront for the Kansas legislature.

Members of the Task Force are: Stan Bohn, Duane Friesen, Peter Goerzen, Tim Huber, Jim Juhnke, Jeff Koller, John Tyson

Historical Committee

Roger Juhnke

The WDC Historical Committee has been inactive this year.

Israel-Palestine Relations Task Force

Jakob Whitson, Chair

For over 65 years, Mennonites have engaged in peacemaking in Palestine and Israel. Today, deteriorating conditions in the Occupied Territories have reached a crisis point. On July 4, 2015, the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly at the Kansas City, national conference passed a Resolution, *A statement of support for our Palestinian and Israeli partners in peacemaking*. This task force was created to further educate congregations on the peacemaking effort in Israel and Palestine, and inform delegates about the upcoming resolution.

The resolution pleads that we all develop a better understanding of the social, economic and political context of the conflict; reflect on our own theological and political understandings of the land of Israel-Palestine; and discern ways we can seek a more just future for all peoples of Israel and Palestine.

To accomplish this we are encouraging each congregation to discern the 2017 Resolution on Israel-Palestine. We especially encourage Mennonite Church USA delegates who will be attending the 2017 Conference in Orlando to be prepared to vote on the resolution.

To accomplish the important goals of the 2015 resolution, we are encouraging congregations to review the resources found on the [Mennonite Palestine-Israel Network \(MENNOPIN\)](#). This web site provides comprehensive resources including the 2015 Resolution, *A statement of support for our Palestinian and Israeli partners in peacemaking* as well as the 2017 Resolution on Israel-Palestine that will be voted on in Orlando.

To fulfill the goals of the 2015 resolution and to prepare delegates and congregations for the 2017 resolution the Western District Conference has developed the Israel-Palestine Task Force. The WDC Task Force is available to help initiate each congregation's engagement and study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Letters have been sent to each congregation in the WDC that appear similar to this report, all recent feedback has been positive. We await more feedback as the conference in Orlando approaches, while also supplying more information to each congregation upon request.

Task Force members have also engaged in the organization and hosting of the Kansas portion of MC USA's Jewish Voices for Peace Tour. Task force members have written articles for the WDC newsletter, Sprouts, encouraging engagement in the study of the Kairos Palestine and the 2017 Resolution on Israel-Palestine.

The current members of the task force include: Jakob Whitson, Chair, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church; Tom Harder, Co-pastor, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church; Bob Atchison, Manhattan Mennonite Church; Katie Mitchell-Koch, Lorrain Avenue Mennonite Church; Elizabeth Raid, Bethel College Mennonite Church

Low German Mennonites from Mexico Support Task Force (LGMFMSTF) Harold D. Thieszen

When did this task force begin?

1. Officially in January 2004.
2. WDC member Tina Block Ediger (and others) conducted a survey of Low German farmworkers in Kansas. That survey document reported high occurrences of medical needs.
3. It is a partnership between WDC via LGMFMSTF, represented by the task force to monitor and advocate for Low German healthy living, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), who supplies vouchers for bi-lingual health promoters to enable and include the service to Low German farmworkers across the state of Kansas.

The task force meets three times a year with the KDHE director of the Farm Worker Program. The task force is accountable to the WDC Resource Commission. The guiding statement from the Mennonite Central Committee Canada program based in Steinbach, Manitoba is: *"MCC seeks to share God's love with LGM people by working in a mutually beneficial relationship with local leaders, communities and organizations to enhance their capacity to address such issues as poverty, conflict, literacy, health and natural disasters."* The WDC task force added a fourth goal: *"to share our common spiritual background and faith."*

The Farmworker Health promoters identify Farmworker families in need of medical, dental or mental health needs. Through translation services, vouchers for medical assistance, and educational opportunities, the KHDE funds are awarded to needy families. The salaries of the Farmworker promoters are administered and paid by WDC through grants from KDHE. The WDC task force representatives on the KDHE Advisory Council are Lotti Boschmann and Harold D. Thieszen.

The LGMFMSTF members are: Margaret Goering, chair; Harold D. Thieszen, vice-chair; Milton Claassen, secretary; Lotti Boschmann, Carola Ratzlaff, Lici Roth and Kendra Baldrige, Director of the KDHE.

Worship and Music Task Force Carol Klingenberg

Task Force Members: Carol Klingenberg, Kay Schroeder, chair, Holly Swartzendruber.

The purpose of our task force is to facilitate resourcing events to promote music and worship in the church. Our specific tasks are to maintain and grow the anthem collection housed in the WDC offices. All of the anthems are listed online.

Many area choir directors use the choral music library to obtain music for their choirs. It continues to be an important resource for the music in our churches as it provides a wide variety of music to enhance worship at no cost to our churches.

Since our last report on April 4, 2016, we have catalogued music that has been donated by other churches. We sadly said goodbye to Steven Miller, South Central District representative.

As a task force we will work on projects that will promote and resource worship and music in our churches.

Youth Ministry Committee
Isaac Landis

This past year has been an active one for the Youth Committee, which is currently made up of Clayton Gladish (Hesston Mennonite) and Isaac Landis (Whitestone Mennonite). Much of our focus through January of this year was planning Know Jesus, which was held on January 28-29 at Hesston College. This year we had over 200 Jr. High youth and sponsors attend this event, which is a great turnout for this event. Mark and Kendra Horst were the speakers, and a worship band of Hesston College students led the music part of the event. A highlight of Know Jesus is the Anabaptist Game, where the youth are transported back to the 1500's as a group of early Anabaptist Christians who are trying to find leaders of the Anabaptist movement. Many thanks go to Michele Hershberger for planning this game and to Hesston College for hosting this event! A huge thank you also goes to Meg (Leatherman) Inghram who served as the coordinator for this event.

Another initiative that the Youth Committee is currently working on is the development of a youth discipleship and leadership development initiative. The vision for this initiative is for conference churches to identify youth who exhibit leadership gifts and who are willing to commit the time to meeting together throughout the year for the purpose of discipleship. An objective of this group will be to create an annual event for Sr. high youth that would focus on service and worship. We have recently received approval to use funds for this initiative, and we hope to create a job description and look for a person who can provide further vision and to lead this initiative.

The Youth Committee continues to work with Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp to plan Snow Camps for both Jr. and Sr. High. This past year we had a good representation of South Central and Western District churches at Sr. High Snow Camp.

The main challenge facing the Youth Committee is the fact that there are only two of us currently serving on the committee. With the decreased staffing at the conference level, all of the event planning has fallen to the Youth Committee, and both Clayton and I struggle to find the time and energy to give regular attention to conference youth ministry events. There also seems to be very little interest in conference events for high school youth at this time. We seem to be constantly reinventing the Youth Committee to reflect the current realities.

Stewardship Commission
Dwight M. Flaming, Chair

A big thank you to the following Stewardship Commission members for their dedicated service to the Western District Conference: Dwight M. Flaming (chairperson), Karen Zehr (secretary), Stephen Hochstetler (Staff Relations Committee liaison), Leanna Ediger, Darlene Powers (Trustee Liaison), and Emily Voran. Phyllis Regier, Business Manager, and Heidi Regier Krieder, Conference Minister provide invaluable staff representation and support to the commission.

We conducted meetings August 16, 2016; October 25, 2016; March 2, 2017; and April 25, 2017. Our focus through the year has been to give oversight and account for the WDC finances and property.

During this past year we learned that all of the staff positions at WDC have been filled. We are excited about the potential that this has for our conference ministry. Since personnel costs are the biggest component of our budget, we recognize the importance of securing adequate funding through individual donations, grants, and other sources so that all ministries receive the necessary funding required.

We recognize that financial support must increase to support our current level of staffing. We are very grateful for the many years of support received from Agri-Urban. With the decision to end this program, we are looking for ways to replace and increase this lost income. We will continue to seek ways to encourage donations from all demographics throughout the conference. It is vital that support comes from many different groups of people. We will encourage WDC staff to help generate enthusiasm and support for WDC programs which we hope will translate into increased giving.

We are blessed with committed WDC staff who strive to operate programs and manage facilities and property in a responsible manner. We are thankful for the many financial gifts received throughout the year and in response to our annual fund drive request letters.

Next year's budget and Stewardship Commission business will include some of the following considerations:

- 1) Supporting and building upon a very loyal, faithful, and generous foundation of WDC member congregations,
- 2) Ongoing emphasis on church plants,
- 3) Planning and adapting to changes in WDC community membership—potential loss of churches and support of new church plants,
- 4) Generosity initiatives in light of changing social and generational dynamics relating to conference financial support and participation.
- 5) Ownership, management, and maintenance of 2500 Place, N. Newton.

The commission is very grateful for the financial and spiritual support from our constituents. We look forward to meeting the challenges, and providing the WDC with resources to help spread the good news of God working among us.

Staff Relations Committee
Sondra Koontz, Chair

The Staff Relations Committee meets at least quarterly with the conference minister to discuss policy issues that affect conference staff. Committee members also provide support for the conference minister, offering a place for open discussion of joys, concerns, and issues facing the conference.

This has been a busy year for policy discussions. Committee goals are to show WD staff that all work is valued, and to recommend policy that indicates a spirit of fairness and equality which we believe is a value of WD. Committee members have undertaken the following:

- Received annual staff reviews.
- Revised wording of staff memos of understanding.
- Revised the WD personnel policy manual and forwarded it to the Executive Committee for approval.
- Sent conference ministers' housing allowance requests to Executive Committee.
- Recommended to the Executive Committee that WD continue with the Corinthian Plan and increase the Health Savings Account (HSA) to \$1,500 for all employees beginning in 2016.
- Recommended to Executive Board that non-credentialed staff receive the annual percentage listed in the MCUSA pastor salary guidelines, and that prorated by their FTE, an experience unit be added for staff with 1-20 years of experience and 1/2 unit for years 21-30.

Staff Relations Committee members: Sondra Bandy Koontz, Christy Schunn-Sebes, Stephen Hochstetler

Trustee Task Force
Phyllis Regier, Staff

The Trustees Task Force was formed to review loan applications for the Revolving Loan Fund, make recommendations as to the acceptance of property or disposal of property, evaluate and enter into legal contracts (real property) and to supervise and manage Conference property.

Revolving Fund

As of January 31, 2017, the Revolving Loan Fund had two loans receivable totaling \$31,402.

2500 Place Building

During 2016 the 2500 Place Building in North Newton had 3 tenants. One rental unit was unoccupied for most of the year causing a loss of revenue for the building of just over \$4,000. The unit has now been rented and we are anticipating a more profitable year in 2017. In 2016 there were no major renovations or repairs needed in the 2500 Place Building. Renting out the portion of the building not needed for Western District covers the cost of maintenance and other building expenses which allows Western District to use the building for their staff offices at no cost to the WDC budget.

Gary Rediger (Chairperson), Eric Bruce, Rick Krehbiel, Leanna Ediger, (Stewardship Commission liaison) and Phyllis Regier (ex officio)

Camp Mennoscah 2016 Report

Greetings to you on behalf of the Camp Mennoscah staff and board of directors! My name is Michael Unruh, and I began as executive director in early September. I grew up with a great love for Camp Mennoscah and have served in a variety of roles at camp before taking on this most recent position. As I write this report toward the end of April, we are eagerly anticipating our Summer 2017 youth camping season, which is just over a month away! Looking back on the 2016 camp year, we are challenged by several outcomes, while encouraged by others.

Financial: Over the past five years since we became an independent organization, we have continued to learn and grow. Part of the growth process has included seeking financial support to sustain the ministry of Camp Mennoscah. Contributions, which typically account for about 40% of revenues, experienced a sharp decline in 2016. Executive director transition contributed to a decrease in time spent with constituents and to sending only one of our semi-annual fundraising letters. **Operating Revenues in 2016 were \$301,509.** About half of our operating expenses support our year-around staff and summer staff. Other expenses include facilities upkeep, programming, utilities, and groceries for camps and retreats. **Operating Expenses in 2016 were \$338,839.**

Youth Camps: In 2016, we had about 30 more youth campers (566) than the previous two years. Western District Conference churches comprise the largest group of campers by church over the last three years, with around 300 per summer, and South Central Conference has a steady presence. We are continuing to reach more children and youth who are from non-Mennonite congregations, which we attribute primarily to campers sharing their good experiences with friends. This number has increased from 114 in 2014 to just over 150 in 2016.

Volunteers: We had 235 volunteers come and spend time at camp in 2016! In addition to the typical service project groups and annual Work and Play Camp, we have begun a Youth Volunteer Weekend so that campers can spend time contributing to the ministry of Camp Mennoscah and continue to develop friendships with one another through meaningful work.

Projects: With the bathhouses completed in 2015, we are looking forward to the next projects in the year to come:

- A new cabin in the boys' cabin area, completed April 2017.
- Dining hall and kitchen renovations, to be completed by Summer 2018.
- A new playground to replace "The Whale," which was taken down due to safety concerns, completion TBD.

It has been a joy to nurture relationships with Western District Conference churches and other constituents, and **we thrive on your continued prayers, encouragement, volunteer efforts, and financial support.** Thank you for joining with us in this important faith formation ministry!

Camp Mennoscah Staff

Michael Unruh – executive director
Olivia Bartel – camp director
Gardell Stucky – facilities director
Deborah Dimmick – office assistant
Amy Wedel – long-term volunteer

Board of Directors

George Leary – chair
Jonathan Miller – vice chair
Willmar Harder – secretary
Renetta Gooden – treasurer
Mariah Banning
Greg Bauer
Mike Doerksen
Kent Erb
Valerie Klaassen
Miriam Krehbiel
Patrick Loganbill
Kevin Wilder
Jim Yoder



Kansas Mennonite Disaster Service Annual Meeting - January 15, 2017

Submitted by Jordan Miller

Don Horst opened the meeting on an icy Sunday by talking about Moses. Moses didn't see himself as a leader, but with God's help he was able to do all that was asked of him. Don shared that just like Moses, when he has served as a projector director with MDS the volunteers with the needed skills were provided.

We enjoyed beautiful music provided by Kaitlyn Webb and Julie and Halle Krehbiel.

Don shared the treasurer's report. We started with a balance of \$21,597.38, had an income of \$25,846, expenses totaling \$20,528, and ended the year with a balance of \$26,930.37.

Region III Director, Wayne Stucky shared about the duties that have kept him and his wife Carole busy over the last year. He reported on bylaw changes at region level, and introduced, with pictures, the other members of the Region III board. Dennis Ries serves as Vice Chair of the board, Rob Ren serves as secretary, and the new treasurer is Ted Redding. He also shared about projects in Region III. We finished a project in Lusk, Wyoming, have a project in Corpus Christi, Texas, and San Antonio, Texas and will open a project on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota in April.

Jeff Koller, Regional Operations Coordinator, on staff with MDS, shared that currently the biggest needs in his area are that roofers are needed in Corpus Christi, Texas. He reminded people that it is icy here and nice and warm in Corpus Christi.

We viewed a slideshow of projects that Kansas MDS volunteers have helped with in the past year. These projects included the bridge project in West Virginia, building fences outside of Medicine Lodge, helping after flooding in Belle Plaine and Derby, and monitoring the rebuilding efforts after the tornado in El Dorado.

Jordan Miller shared about the Partnership Home Project in Wakefield, Nebraska. Five churches in the Newton area provided volunteers to build the home. It started in the First Mennonite Church parking lot with building the walls for the home. The walls were loaded on a truck and taken to Wakefield, Nebraska and each week a host of volunteers made the trip to work for a week. Jordan shared that if he had to summarize what the most important component of the project was, he would have to say it was relationships. Relationships between volunteers, between volunteers and the homeowners, and relationships between volunteers, homeowners, and the people of Wakefield were all important. He shared pictures from all aspects of the project. Wayne Stucky closed the meeting with prayer.

Mennonite Agri-Urban

Alan Entz, President

We want to give thanks for what God has done for Agri-Urban over the years. We have been blessed with the help of many people that make Agri-Urban work. We want to thank you all for your hard work over the years.

Thank you to all participants for your donations of time, money, and energy in 2016 that helped us give \$8591.74 to the different organization that we support. This total is the Kansas and the Nebraska AU organizations combined.

The Agri Urban board has felt that with the way the agriculture landscape has changed over the years and that there are fewer farmers feeding cattle for Agri-Urban it is time to close this organization down when we still have a sizable amount of money to distribute. We will be closing the books on this organization in 2017. Agri-Urban was started in 1972, in those 45 years Agri-Urban distributed \$1.6 million to Western District, Bethel College and Mennonite Church USA. We want to thank everyone who made Agri-Urban thrive those 45 years.

Mennonite Central Committee Central States
Michelle E. Armster, Executive Director

"... Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:36-39, NIV

These verses, MCC's focus text for this year, are part of the larger passage known as the Parable of the Sheep and Goats. In this parable, the King separates the sheep and goats based on those who have and/or have not served those who need food, clothing, water, shelter, and hospitality. Because of your generosity and love for MCC, we are able to live out this call as followers of Jesus. We know we can't do this alone.

Last year, MCC's work took us to 54 countries (including the US and Canada) where we have 528 partners and are involved in over 700 projects. In every country where MCC works, we partner with local churches and organizations with similar values.

Thank you so much for supporting and partnering with us!

Your support has helped us to show the love of Jesus by:

- providing tutors for Roma children in Serbia
- Supporting places/spaces, in Afghanistan, that provide women with access to education
- Providing formerly incarcerated persons with basic hygiene items when they are released from prison
- In India, working beside farmers to find better ways to farm and support their families
- Providing food and other needed supplies to orphanages, hospitals and flood-affected communities in North Korea.
- Offering a Pipeline to Prison Learning Tour to New Orleans, Louisiana.

Since we participate in over 700 projects, these are just a glimpse of the ways we love our neighbor.

This year, we are committed to visit with you. We intend to have at least one staff person present at MCC related conferences and gatherings. If there are other ways we can connect, let us know. We have staff who has traveled to: Colombia, Honduras, Haiti, Israel/Palestine and Zimbabwe.

They are available to speak on their experiences and learnings. Other staff are available to share on programs for young adults, Thrift Shops, peace and justice, immigration, anti-racism, anti- sexism, mass incarceration and preach.

We are here for you. Thank you for being a part of MCC's ministry of *relief, development and peace in the name of Christ.*

What's Mennonite Men? If you were to google "Mennonite Men", you would find these images.



Mennonite Men promotes groups and resources for men and provides grants for young churches to acquire their first building, as seen on the right. If you guessed the picture on the left or on the right, you are correct. We're not the ones in the center.

As a partnership of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Men is about...

Promoting fellowship

We encourage men to join or form groups to connect with one another on their spiritual journey. Check out our website. The resource tab provides models of what men can do together. In partnership with Mennonite camps and centers, we offer retreats for men to engage issues such as masculinity, sexuality, conflict, wilderness, sports, and generativity from an Anabaptist Christian perspective.

Providing resources

Beyond work and weather, what can men talk about? Mennonite Men helped to bring about the *Closer Than a Brother* booklet series and *Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality*, the latter of which is being translated into Spanish. We are now in process of developing online resources that can be downloaded for men's groups and *Peaceful at Heart: Embracing Healthy Masculinity*, an in-depth exploration of masculinity from an Anabaptist perspective.

Extending grants

Mennonite Men is known for extending grants to young congregations for their first meeting place, granting over 1.8 million dollars through our JoinHands program. Last year we gave \$40,000 to West Hills Mennonite Fellowship in Baden, Ontario and have other pending grants. As a fund-raising arm for the Mennonite Church, we invite individuals and congregations to support JoinHands. We especially ask churches pursuing building projects to give to JoinHands as a way of sharing resources and serving "fair balance" with congregations in need (2 Corinthians 8.13-15). Look for our church display on the right at this or a future conference.



Following six years of fruitful ministry with Mennonite Men, our board said farewell to Don Yoder when he retired last July as Coordinator. The board is happy to welcome Steve Thomas of Goshen, Indiana in this role.

To learn more, support or engage Mennonite Men, visit Mennonitemen.org or contact:

- Steve Thomas (Coordinator) at SteveT@MennoniteMen.org or 574.202.0048
- Brent Voran (Regional representative) at bcvoran@cox.net or 316.284.2657



Prairie View recently celebrated the 63rd anniversary of our ministry. On those occasions, we reflect on our history and our heritage. The milestone also led me to focus on our identity, our core values and what the future holds for Prairie View. Every word in our statements of mission, vision and values continues to have significant meaning. Perhaps the single word that guides my activities and most influences my own perspective is: Advocacy. It's an important part of our mission. And it is a serious responsibility.

For Prairie View and its leadership, advocacy is the responsibility to ensure the current and future well-being of this organization, protect the interests of our staff and effectively represent and care for those we exist to serve. It requires prudent stewardship, well-informed decision-making and sound operational practices. Advocacy entails nurturing key relationships and seeking the opportunity to influence. It involves providing and interpreting information to broad audiences. Sometimes, fulfilling the role of advocate necessitates sharing unpopular messages or challenging long-standing practices. Advocacy requires that we focus on the mission for the long-term good and do not waver in our commitments to compassionate and competent care.

Last year we ministered to approximately 12,000 children and adults, in the spirit of Christ. We engaged in about 700 patient encounters every day. More than half of these patients needed help from our patient assistance fund or sliding fee scale, because they were underinsured or uninsured. About one-third of our staff financially support Prairie View, in addition to their personal service. We receive charitable support from a number of local, family, corporate and community foundations and hundreds of individual donors, so that we may continue to minister to those experiencing such intense need. Without this generosity, many would be left without treatment for their mental illness or addiction disorder.

Prairie View is proud to acknowledge our Mennonite identity and continue the traditions of our faith. We have recently added a new prayer ministry where our staff personally pray for the requests shared by patients and their families. This is an expansion of the e-mail prayer chain ministry that has long been in place for our staff.

Our part-time chaplain is working with others to develop a resource kit for pastors to support their work with individuals and families facing mental health challenges, as well as to protect their own well-being. We also have materials for church use during mental health awareness month and similar observances.

Your support of Prairie View is an investment in the future of this essential purpose. And that support takes many forms.

- *You and your congregations can be vigilant about legislative and public policy issues that affect access to behavioral health services.*
- *You can help educate our communities by hosting learning experiences such as Mental Health First Aid or other trainings or presentations.*
- *You can invite someone from Prairie View to lead a Sunday School discussion or share the message during a worship service.*
- *You can facilitate supportive therapeutic environments by coordinating group activities and service projects.*
- *You can help those without resources who are in need of behavioral health treatment by providing financial support to our patient assistance fund.*

PRAIRIE VIEW MISSION: *To foster healing and growth in individuals and communities by providing behavioral and mental health services with compassion, competence and stewardship in the spirit of Christ.*

PRAIRIE VIEW VISION: *Renewing spirit. Discovering Strengths. Pursuing Excellence.*

PRAIRIE VIEW VALUES: *Continuing our heritage as a Christian, caring community, Prairie View honors these values that guide our decision-making:*

advocacy for those whose voices are not strongly or widely heard;

quality and competence leading toward excellence;

respect for the beliefs of individuals and communities of faith;

communication with integrity, dignity and sensitivity;

actions based upon justice, grace, acceptance and forgiveness;

and the sustainability of the organization.

Respectfully submitted, Jessie Kaye, President and CEO

Western District Women in Mission

Pam Schrag, President

Our year began with our January meeting at Western District offices. South Central officers met with us to plan for the Spring Salad Supper on March 23rd. The Bethel College Women's Association served the meal in the Cafeteria at Bethel College. There were 130 women who dined on taco salad and homemade desserts. The theme this year was Living Faithfully in our Communities. Leah Mueller, Christine Schweitzer, Barbara Krehbiel Gehring and Mary Herr shared their stories and the band, Hopeful Blues, shared their musical talents.

On May 5-7 Mennonite Women USA presented a SisterCare 2 seminar. It was a two-night, three-day retreat. The event was underwritten by the Schowalter Foundation, Eden Mennonite Church Endowment Fund and Western District Women in Mission. There were 18 registered women, representing 3 states. Carolyn Holderread Heggen and Rhoda Shenk Keener lead the women in time for personal reflection, conversation and learning activities. The retreat give practical guidance for self-care and growing your personal mission in Christ-centered direction.

Upcoming events to be putting on your calendar:

- Womens and Girls Retreat at Camp Mennoscah – September 8-9
- Western District Conference in Arlington, TX - August 4-5

Things to look for:

- We are currently building a website and developing ways to connect more women. If you have thoughts or would like to be a part of this process email us at westerndistrictwomen@gmail.com

It is our hope to find a variety of ways for women to connect as we learn, grow and empower each other to listen to the call God has for each of us.

A shared tomorrow

Everence 2017 report

Western District Conference
Annual Assembly
August 4-6, 2017

*Look out for one another's
interests, not just for
your own.*

– Philippians 2:4
(Good News Bible)

Everence® values our strong congregational partnership

For more than 70 years, Everence has worked with congregations and their members to help people of faith “build up the common life” through their financial decisions.

These connections are vital to us, and we look forward to many more years of focusing on the best interests of your members – helping them create and implement plans tailored for their needs and aspirations to share with others.

As we have since 1945, we will continue to serve the faith community as partners in stewardship throughout 2017 and beyond.

Congregations do more good with help from Everence Sharing Fund

The Everence Sharing Fund encourages churches to help people in their communities by providing matching grants. Thousands of individuals and families benefit each year, including a former pastor and district minister in Virginia.



Several congregations pitched in to help Randy Coblentz when his doctor prescribed medications to treat a disease that affected his speech and mobility. The disease wasn't responding to an oral medication, and a different form of medication often works better in situations like Randy's when an infection affects the brain.

But his insurance didn't cover the type of long-term treatment prescribed, and the cost topped \$30,000. Grants from the Sharing Fund supplemented the congregational assistance.

Reaffirming our commitment to strengthen the broader church

Everence is reviewing our church relations programs and activities to find ways to strengthen our focus on helping congregations remain healthy during a time of shifting member participation and changing patterns of giving.

We are reaffirming our commitment to the broader church and evaluating how Everence can be most effective in supporting the faith community.

Our five-year plan includes a priority to strengthen our church relationships. We will continue to partner with congregational leaders on lifting the faith community through stewardship, mutual aid and generosity.



Generous living in a self-centered world

A new Everence curriculum, *Generous living in a self-centered world*, is designed to help us live counter to our culture through biblical models of generosity. The curriculum starts with Cain and Abel and ends with the Apostle Paul, exploring biblical stories and the connections with our modern-day American context.

The six-lesson study is an exploration of the biblical world to help first-world Christians wrestle with how to embody generosity while living as citizens of the most privileged and wealthy nation in the world. It takes a sense of purpose and discipline to not get caught in the riptide of culture that draws us into the world's flow.

Download the leaders guide at everence.com/resources-for-adults.

Using our credit card aids more charitable groups

Everence Federal Credit Union donated \$16,200 to Friends United Meeting and Christian Peacemaker Teams (\$8,100 to each organization) in 2016 from our Rebate for Missions program. Rebate for Missions is supported by the credit union's 10 percent tithe of income generated when people use their Everence Visa credit cards.

Our members voted online to choose the recipients, and we had a record of nearly 2,000 votes cast – more than triple our number from previous years.

In addition to these awards to national agencies, our credit union branch offices share Rebate for Missions money with charities in their communities.

Since the program started in 1995, Everence Federal Credit Union has given more than \$400,000 in grants

to churches, missions and relief organizations. Learn more at everence.com/banking.

MCC volunteer honored with National Journey Award

Johanna Sutter of Goshen, Indiana, received the Everence National Journey Award for 2016 because of the ways she models Christian stewardship. As part of this recognition, Everence donated \$5,000 to Mennonite Central Committee in her honor.



Johanna has volunteered for years at the MCC Great Lakes Material Resource Center in Goshen, collecting items for school kits and relief kits and assembling them for distribution to people in need throughout the world.

Johanna grew up in Germany during a time when food, clothing and other essentials were in short supply after World War II. Her family received a bundle from MCC, and she later worked at an MCC children's home in Germany. She moved to the United States in the mid-1950s and started volunteering for MCC after a long teaching career.

Pastoral Financial Assistance Program helping in a variety of ways

Our Pastoral Financial Assistance Program, overseen by Stewardship Education Director Beryl Jantzi, has been more successful than imagined,

strengthening the financial health of pastors and building capacity for their ongoing financial support from their congregations.

In 2016, more than 100 financial assistance grants for pastors were approved. Half of the assistance money came from a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, and half in matching dollars raised by congregations and church conferences.

In addition to direct financial support, Everence is hosting educational events across the country for pastors and their spouses. And we're offering financial planning subsidies to help pastors and their families get the support they need for long-term financial stability.

Stewardship education resources for all ages are available from Everence

If you need a good topic for study for a Sunday school class or another setting, visit everence.com/resources-for-adults to see all kinds of adult education resources. Leaders guides and curriculum resources are available for you to download. We offer a variety of topics related to stewardship, including discipleship and Jesus' stories about money.

Everence also offers educational resources for church leaders at everence.com/resources-for-church-leaders, featuring tools for increasing generosity within your congregation and ways to assess stewardship initiatives you already have in place.

Stewardship-related resources for youths and children are available at everence.com/resources-for-youth, including materials on how real-life topics relate to biblical perspectives about how we use our gifts of time, talents and money.

Report to WDC Conference from MennoMedia

Summer 2017

New Resources for the Entire Church, from Herald Press

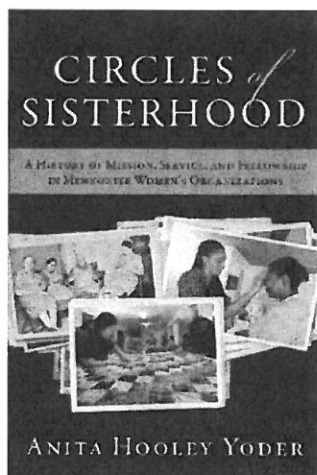
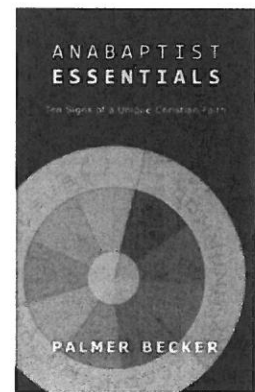


Reunion: The Good News of Jesus for Seekers, Saints, and Sinners

The message of Jesus changed the world . . . until the world changed the message. Join Bruxy Cavey, bestselling author and teaching pastor at The Meeting House, in the pages of *Reunion*: a dynamic investigation of the most earth-shattering, piety-smashing, life-changing news ever. Dig into Scripture with Cavey as he unfolds God's message for the world. Learn why you shouldn't follow the Bible (but why you'll want to read it to learn how to follow Jesus). Discover your true citizenship in the Jesus nation, where you might be ready to die for a cause but never willing to kill for one. Glimpse a God who is love itself and who, like it or not, just can't stop thinking about you. \$18.99/available May 2017

Anabaptist Essentials: Ten Signs of a Unique Christian Faith

Jesus. Community. Reconciliation. These sum up the core values of Anabaptist faith and life, writes pastor Palmer Becker in this concise new resource. In *Anabaptist Essentials*, Becker introduces readers to the key convictions and practices of Anabaptism, the Christian tradition of the Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren in Christ. From the believers within a 16th-century movement to those today who try to follow Jesus, create community, and practice peace, Anabaptists have a rich witness to offer the wider world. Designed for study by small groups and for use as a resource for Christian formation and conversation, this clear, readable guide to what makes Anabaptism unique will equip readers to live out a more radical commitment to Jesus. \$12.99

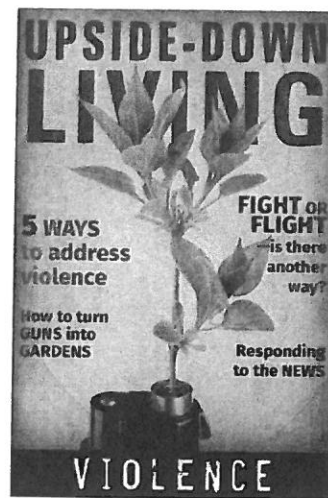


Circles of Sisterhood: A History of Mission, Service, and Fellowship in Mennonite Women's Organizations

The saga of Mennonite women's organizations is a story of struggle and triumph, productivity and misgivings, questions and celebrations. During the 20th and 21st centuries, women's groups have offered Mennonite women a means of serving others by sewing clothing, laboring over quilts, rolling bandages, and packing school kits. Women's groups have also provided Mennonite women the opportunity to test their skills as leaders and give voice to callings they felt in a church that has not always valued their gifts for ministry. In this vibrant portrait of Mennonite Women USA, Anita Hooley Yoder paints with both broad and subtle strokes the one-hundred-year history of an organization that nurtures local church women's groups and connects Mennonite women across the world. \$24.99/available June 2017

Upside-Down Living

Weary of Christian faith wrapped in a flag and trapped in your heart? Tired of faith as usual? Live out your Christian faith through the lens of Jesus. Follow values that seem so countercultural they appear to be upside down. Each compelling six-session Upside-Down Living Bible study helps us encounter the teachings of Jesus and wrestle with living out the kingdom here and now. The Bible isn't a cookbook with solutions for every ethical dilemma, but it helps us raise the right questions, encounter the teachings of Jesus, and discover new ways of faithful living in the world. Ideal for Sunday school or Bible study sessions, each topical study covers a specific theme or issue and comes with thought-provoking discussion questions and activities. Live upside down. Topics include Sabbath, technology, money, identity and aging, violence, and sharing faith. *\$9.99 each*



Hymnal Project Update

What songs connect you to God and your community and empower you to serve? What songs do you turn to in joyful or difficult times? What are your heart songs?

These are questions the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee is asking and is inviting Mennonites to respond to in a survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MWSC_Heart_Song as it embarks on a listening and study phase toward developing a new hymnal collection to be released in 2020.

“We want to hear from people across the church about the music and worship practices that sustain them,” said project director Bradley Kauffman. “We are developing intentional ways of listening and are asking what existing content has the durability to enhance worship in coming decades.”

The new worship and song collection is being designed to succeed *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992) and its supplements *Sing the Journey* (2005) and *Sing the Story* (2007). This new collection will take into account the breadth of the Mennonite church and the diverse ways Mennonites sing and worship, will be available in bound and digital formats, and will include an accompaniment volume. The collection is to be owned by and available throughout the denominations. The survey is open to everyone who has specific ideas for a new collection. Those filling out the survey can recommend songs from existing Mennonite collections and beyond for inclusion in the new collection. The survey will remain open throughout 2017.

Another important element is a call for new and original content. Authors, songwriters, composers, and artists can submit their original work online at <http://mennoniteworshipandsongcollection.org>. This online submissions portal will be active throughout 2017.



Russ Eanes, Executive Director, MennoMedia, Harrisonburg, Virginia

MENNONITE CHURCH USA EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT TO AREA CONFERENCES



"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love." –1 John 4:18 (NRSV)

The theme for Mennonite Church USA this biennium—which will also be the theme for the 2017 Convention coming up in Orlando, Florida, in July—is "Love is a Verb." It suggests that love is a kinetic concept, one that is only realized when it is put into action. Amid a challenging year for the church, the nation and the world, Mennonite Church USA continues to seek ways to live out God's love in a variety of settings. Following are some glimpses of that work in the past year:

The "**Hope for the Future**" gathering held in Hampton, Virginia, looked at issues of racial/ethnic diversity and built upon an Intercultural Competence Call to Action to encourage continued transformation and undoing of racism in the church. About 70 people attended.

The **Gathering Place** (thegatheringplace.us) has continued to grow, offering a virtual space for youth workers to network and find resources and support. More than 40 youth workers met in person, as well, at "The Gathering 2016."

Ervin R. Stutzman was appointed by the Executive Board to a third three-year term as executive director, through 2018, when he plans to retire. The board praised his "non-anxious style of leadership."

The **Mennonite Church USA Archives** made the move from Goshen College (Indiana) to the denominational office in nearby Elkhart. Jason Kauffman was named full-time director of archives and records management.

The Executive Board's Leadership Development office and Everence are partnering to make **debt reduction grants** available to pastors. With matching funds from the congregation, individual grants can be for as much as \$5,000. About 115 grants have been issued so far.

The **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)** is now widely available across the church, with 16 people qualified as IDI administrators. Mennonite Church USA provided 10 scholarships for training.

More than 100 Mennonite church planters, coaches and other leaders met for a national church planting summit titled "**Sent 2016**" in New Orleans.

Culture Shock, Mennonite Church USA's first leadership conference for youth of color, took place in Hampton, Virginia.

The Mennonite Church USA **Panel on Sexual Abuse Prevention** continues to refine and prioritize its work as the church grapples with this important topic. The panel's term runs through 2017.

A **reconciliation process** begun in 2010 bore further fruit this year when the annual assembly of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America welcomed 25 local Mennonites to continue that story of repentance and forgiveness related to the historic persecution of Anabaptists.

Plans continued for the **2017 Convention**. A new model for the Delegate Assembly is envisioned, largely clearing the agenda to make space for consideration of church identity and mission at the Future Church Summit.

The "**Deep Faith**" conference was a cooperative venture of several US and Canadian Mennonite entities, including Mennonite Church USA. It energetically looked at faith formation for all ages.

Joy Sutter, a hospital administrator from Harleysville, Pennsylvania, was nominated as moderator-elect of the church beginning in 2017.

A team of Mennonite Church USA scholars began a **series of conversations with Pentecostal counterparts in the Church of God** (Cleveland, Tennessee) to seek mutual understanding and common witness.

The **Mennonite Church USA Offices in Elkhart, Indiana**, are debt-free thanks to the generous giving of 23 donors, years ahead of schedule. The building was completed in January 2012.

Women from across the country gathered in Leesburg, Virginia, for the **Women Doing Theology conference, "I've Got the Power,"** exploring power at work in people and systems.

MennoniteUSA.org / www.facebook.com/MennoniteChurchUSA / Toll-free: 866-866-2872



MENNONITE EDUCATION AGENCY 2016 REPORT TO AREA CONFERENCES

Greetings from MEA! In this report, you can get a glimpse of some of the work we do in cooperation with five colleges and universities, two seminaries, two Ministerios Hispanos programs, more than two dozen primary and secondary schools in the Mennonite Schools Council (MSC), Mennonite Early Childhood Network (MECN), and others. In 2016-2017, a total of 10,787 students are enrolled at Mennonite institutions (not including Ministerios Hispanos).

By providing networking, support, collaboration, resources, professional growth opportunities, scholarships and more, we ensure the opportunity to provide exceptional academics with Anabaptist values. Our distinctives include: following Jesus Christ, being peacemakers, intentionally building community, developing dedicated and disciplined learners, serving others, and embracing differences. Some of the particular activities and initiatives of the past year include the following:

- MEA staff assisted with the search for and **calling of two new presidents** for Mennonite higher education. Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Virginia) called Dr. Susan Schultz Huxman, and Hesston College (Kansas) called Dr. Joseph Manickam. Both are beginning their terms in 2017. In addition, MEA continues to work with Goshen College (Indiana) as it seeks a successor to Dr. Jim Brenneman and also is supporting Bethel College (North Newton, Kansas) in its presidential search.
- MEA staff worked with Eastern Mennonite University through the **investigation process** into allegations against former EMU Vice President of Enrollment Luke Hartman and a review of EMU policies related to Title IX and the Clery Act.
- Planning and preparation took place for the March 2017 **Education Leaders Gathering**, “Beyond Buried Treasure,” which was held in partnership with MHS. It was the second joint conference for Mennonite Health Assembly and MEA.
- The annual **Hope for the Future** event, co-sponsored by MEA, brings together people of color who are leaders in Mennonite churches and institutions to network and generate change. About 70 people participated in 2017.
- MEA executive director Carlos Romero continues to assist with administration of the **Intercultural Development Inventory**, providing the training for Mennonite college, university and seminary boards and other Mennonite Church USA organizations.
- A monthly calendar of **Prayers for Faith and Learning** is sent out to help people focus their prayers for schools affiliated with MEA.
- MEA expanded its advertising and outreach with a **four-page color insert** in the January 2017 issue of *The Mennonite*, which can be used as an ongoing promotional piece.
- A group of 36 people began training in this year’s **Values-Based Leadership** program in October. The program, co-sponsored by MEA, has seen more than 500 people take part since it began in 2001.

Finally, from all of MEA, we want to say THANK YOU!

Thank you to members of your conference who are serving on Mennonite educational boards and committees, and thank you to the 31 congregations who supported Mennonite education with total giving of \$73,479.25 from Feb. 1, 2016 to Jan. 31, 2017*.

*(*Giving includes gifts for higher education, MEA, Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education and Hispanic Ministries.*

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary: Sara Wenger Shenk, president

Area conference connections

AMBS students from Western District Conference congregations

- **Master of Divinity:** Melissa Atchison (Manhattan); Asia Frye (First–Hillsboro); Ron Moyo (Faith); Caley Ortman (Faith); Kristine Regehr Bottorff (New Creation); Renee Reimer (Bethel College, Rainbow); Angie Smith (Lorraine Avenue); Hank Unruh (First–Hillsboro); Michael Unruh (Tabor)
- **Master of Arts in Christian Formation:** Kay Schroeder (First–Newton)

AMBS board members: Yvonne Diaz, Terlingua, Texas; Sara Dick, North Newton, Kansas; Byron Pellecer, Grand Prairie, Texas

This year at AMBS

Commencement: At the time of this report, 21 students anticipate graduating from AMBS on May 20. Eleven graduates will earn the **Master of Divinity** degree; three the **Master of Arts in Christian Formation**; two the **Master of Arts: Peace Studies** and one the **Master of Arts: Theological Studies**. Four students will receive a **Certificate in Theological Studies**, representing one year of study. ambs.edu/commencement

MDiv Connect: Are you feeling drawn to deepen your understanding of Scripture, Anabaptist theology and faith — without relocating? Through AMBS’s **Master of Divinity (MDiv) Connect** program, you can earn a seminary degree in your current setting. By taking 12–14 credit hours per year in online and hybrid formats, you can complete the 80-hour program in five and a half years. Connect students can receive the full amount of need-based tuition aid by taking at least 12 credit hours per academic year. ambs.edu/mdivconnect

Schedule a visit: Those interested in learning more about AMBS are invited to attend a Seminary Preview Day or Evening in the fall or spring, or to schedule a personal visit on another date. Meet students and professors in person, attend classes, join us in worship and get first-hand information about financial aid and scholarships. Explore how we educate leaders for God’s reconciling mission! ambs.edu/visit

Lifelong Learning: The Church Leadership Center offers many opportunities for you to continue your education and strengthen your leadership skills: webinars, short courses (both on campus and online), workshops, Pastors Week, Leadership Clinics and more. (These are non-degree options.) ambs.edu/lifelong-learning

Host a “Reading the Bible with Jesus” workshop: Encourage your congregation or area conference, or join with other area congregations, to host itinerant Bible teacher **Bryan Moyer Suderman** for 1–2 days of digging deep into one of the Gospels to gain tools for reading and interpreting Scripture like Jesus did, in light of today’s world. These workshops are available in English and Spanish. ambs.edu/workshops

Pastors Week: Participants in the 2017 event, held Jan. 23–26, focused on *Cultivating Intercultural Leadership for Diversity-Oriented Churches*. Save the dates for **Pastors Week 2018:** Feb. 26 – March 1.

!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth: Students (grades 10–12) can explore ministry, develop their leadership gifts and listen for God’s call through a Congregational Experience and a Group Experience. Encourage someone you know to apply for 2018! ambs.edu/explore

We thank God for your support and ask for your prayers as we prepare leaders for the church through programs that are biblically, spiritually, ethically and theologically grounded.

Rooted in the Word, Growing in Christ

August 2017 • AMBS • 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517 • 574.295.3726 • ambs.edu

The 2016-2017 academic year at Bethel College is nearly over, and we have much for which to be grateful. We thank God for the following (and much more):

- A strategic plan that is beginning to unfold.
- Campus ministries opportunities for students, including:
 - Centering prayer
 - Tough Talks and Tasty Treats (discussing faith questions)
 - Navigator Bible Study
 - Weekly Chapel Services
 - Threshers for Christ Bible Study
 - Fellowship of Christian Athletes with continually increased participation
 - A newly launched small group initiative
 - Special events, like 24-hour prayer and packaging 25,000 food packs.
- Eight wonderful student chaplains who help monitor and lead spiritual life activities on campus.
- A beautiful campus with well-maintained facilities.
- The women and men of our excellent faculty and staff, who give of themselves tirelessly, who teach and instruct carefully, who model Christian character daily.
- A newly formed Anti-Oppression Task Force, which seeks to address issues of oppression and intercultural competence on our campus.
- A release of *Mennonite Life* with major articles on performing in prison, on Mennonite/s writing, and in memoriam of Robert Kreider.
- Commissioning and hosting important research on American Mennonites and social engagement for the common good, presented by Perry Bush of Bluffton University.
- Hosting the Mennonite Faculty Conference, which focused on the theme “Fidelity of Place,” inspired by Robert Kreider.
- Hosting this year’s Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship, around the theme, “Uniting for Social Change,” with keynote speaker David Anderson Hooker of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.
- Hosting Drew G.I. Hart of Messiah College as this year’s Staley Distinguished Scholar, for presentations on racism and the church.
- Hosting Arli Klassen of Mennonite World Conference for a pair of speaking engagements during her tour.
- Hosting Palestinian and Jewish Voices for peace, with extended interaction with Palestinian human rights lawyer and chairperson of the Bethlehem Bible College board of trustees, Jonathan Kuttab.
- A concert choir tour, which traveled as far north as Winnipeg. The tour was a benefit for Mennonite Central Committee, and raised over \$20,000 for MCC’s work of relief, development, and peace in the name of Christ.
- Providing speakers and musicians for congregations roughly two-thirds of the Sundays while classes are in session. Contact Peter Goerzen to schedule!
- Working closely with AMBS-Kansas Center to provide courses for seminary credit and continuing education.

In gratitude for the prayers and good wishes from the Western District Conference, we humbly ask for your continued support, as we seek to build, for generations to come, upon the foundation that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.



2017 Report to Western District Conference

Spiritual Life Week

Spring semester's Spiritual Life Week took place April 2-8 and featured **Pastor Paula Snyder Belousek** of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, Ohio. Mennonite minister and author **Todd Wynward** led a week-long series of activities during fall semester's Spiritual Life Week, Nov. 6-12.

Bluffton offering faith-based master's degree for educators

Master of Arts in Education students in Bluffton's new faith-based concentration of study will learn to ground their work in Anabaptist faith and values while refining their philosophy of teaching with other faith-driven professionals.

The concentration is an outgrowth of the Mennonite Education Agency's Anabaptist Learning Institute program which features 10 credit hours of Christ-centered graduate-level coursework.

"Faith is often seen as something you add on to education or is really the purview of the chaplain or the pastor. However, this program will explore how faith connects with the way disciplines are taught," said Dr. Gerald Mast, professor of communication.

Mast teaches two of the classes in the program. All classes are offered online or through Zoom video-conferencing technology, meaning classes can be taken from the convenience of the participant's home.

For more information, contact Adult and Graduate Studies at Bluffton by calling 419-358-3897 or emailing adulted@bluffton.edu.

SIMPLY
INNOVATE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY

Simply Innovate, the Campaign for Bluffton University, launched in September to provide students and teaching faculty with a new science building and the resources to sharpen program delivery to move Bluffton confidently into the future. The five-year campaign includes a comprehensive goal of \$26 million with a priority on opening a new science building. So far, more than \$12 million has been raised.

Thank you!

Bluffton University currently enrolls two students from Western District Conference churches: **Aubrey Bartel**, Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., and **Emily Huxman**, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

Church Matching Scholarship support is \$1,200 for 2016-17.

#BeaversAll

Alicia Rodriguez '16, Phoenix, Ariz., spent two months in Bangladesh where she developed nutrition modules for Mennonite Central Committee. Topics ranged from affordable nutrition to preventing diabetes.

Read more about Alicia and other Bluffton students, faculty and staff at www.bluffton.edu/beaversall

Find us on the web
and social media!
www.bluffton.edu

For more information, contact **Robin Bowlus**
Senior director of advancement
operations and public relations
bowlusr@bluffton.edu

**Seminary alums making a difference,
“Welcoming the Neighbor.”**

During the divisive election season, **Matt Bucher** (2014 grad), pastor of Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg created a simple wooden sign that read, in Spanish, English, and Arabic, “No matter where you are from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor. This sign was planted in the church lawn. Some months later, **Nick Meyer** (2014 grad), pastor at Early Church in Harrisonburg, suggested that this message needed to be broadcast to a wider audience. A graphic artist helped Matthew and Nick develop a colorful version of the sign that could be easily printed and displayed.

These signs have now appeared in all 50 states, and are starting to show up around the world. Information about ordering signs can be found at the “Welcome your neighbors” Facebook page.

**2017 School for Leadership Training: January
16-18**

In a time when it seems dividing differences are becoming more and more pronounced, both in the church, and in broader society, nearly 250 participants at EMS’ SLT explored ways to counter this trend.

Led by keynote speakers Christena Cleveland and Drew G.I. Hart, participants explored healthy ways to navigate interactions with the “other,” while owning our own particular world-view lenses. The biblical story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37 was a focal point in the worship services.

EMS Commencement

Seminary commencement was held on Saturday, April 29. Nine students received the Master of Divinity degree, one student received the Master of Arts in Religion degree, and three students received certificates in ministry leadership. The commencement speaker was Erin Dufault-Hunter, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Fall semester distance learning options:**Online:**

- New Testament: Text in Context, 3 SH, **Dorothy Jean Weaver**
- Christian Tradition I, 3 SH, **David Evans**

Hybrid:

- Leadership and Administration, 3 SH, **Lonnie Yoder**
- Christian Ethics, 3 SH, **Mark Thiessen-Nation**

For more information:

<http://emu.edu/seminary/distance-learning/>

Statement of Purpose

Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares men and women to serve and lead in a global context. In response to God’s saving grace, we educate students to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God’s Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators, and transformational leaders.

Susan Schultz Huxman, *president*

Fred Kniss, *interim seminary dean*

Les Horning, *director of seminary admissions, and
associate director of church relations*

For the most up-to-date information on EMS,
give us a call, visit us on the web, “Like” us on
Facebook!

www.emu.edu/seminary

540-432-4260

Prepare for civic engagement and tough conversations in polarized times at 2017 Summer Peacebuilding Institute

The skills taught for 22 years at Eastern Mennonite University’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute have always been relevant to people in the United States, but now they have a renewed significance. Learning how to communicate in polarized communities, turning conflict into connection, recognizing and analyzing systems of oppression, taking steps in your community toward dismantling those systems — these are some of the peacebuilding skills that more than 3,000 people from 124 countries have learned since SPI began in 1994.

Now there’s a heightened awareness among many living in this country — citizens and non-citizens alike — that participation in marches and protests, and even the fuzzy concept of “resistance,” isn’t enough to solve the serious challenges the country faces.

Throughout May and June of 2017, SPI offered 23 five- and seven-day courses, with several focused on strategic organizing, nonviolent resistance, coalition-building and tough conversations.

Undergrads publish research on using the 'Judas technique' to track pest beetle in Guam

Research on the Coconut rhinoceros beetle by two Eastern Mennonite University students and one professor was recently published in the scientific journal *Environmental Entomology* featured on the news site of the Entomological Society of America, *Entomology Today*. Modern advancements in the miniaturization of radio transmitters allowed Professor Matthew Siderhurst and biochemistry majors Diego Barahona and Kat Lehman to employ the “Judas technique” in following tagged beetles to breeding sites on Guam.

“Because adults tend to aggregate at the places where they lay their eggs, we speculated that it would be possible to find areas with dense populations of this

pest insect by tracking individual beetles,” says Lehman.

Siderhurst has worked on several agricultural pest projects in Hawaii, Guam, and Australia since earning his PhD in entomology from Colorado State University. He and his students were joined by University of Guam researchers in August 2015 for this endeavor, funded by a USDA Forest Service grant. Siderhurst has taken students researchers to Hawaii and Guam almost every year since he came to EMU a decade ago.

How can EMU be of service to your congregation and conference?

Contact the church relations office to schedule an EMU student worship team in your congregation, as well as the president, dean or a faculty guest speaker. ChurchRelations@emu.edu or 540-432-4597

Our Vision
EMU envisions a learning community marked by academic excellence, creative expression, professional competence, and passionate Christian faith, offering healing and hope in our diverse world. To this end, we commit ourselves to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

— **Susan Schultz Huxman**, *president*
— **Kirk Sishler**, *VP of advancement*
— **Matt Ruth**, *director of admissions*
(540) 432-4597 www.emu.edu
ChurchRelations@emu.edu

President opens year with message on Christ-Centered Passionate Learning.

During the 2016-17 school year, the college is focusing on its core value of "passionate learning." President James E. Brenneman opened the year by sharing three descriptions of what it means to be a passionate learner. He said "A passionate learner, first of all, never stops asking 'why,' and is the most excited, most curious, nosiest person in the room," sharing examples of Youtube videos that show children discovering things for the first time. He added that passionate learners are first and foremost listeners, encouraging everyone to listen most closely to those who think and act differently than us. "Make a friend, a real friend, this year, of someone with whom you have major ideological, religious, cultural or political differences," he said. Lastly, he said passionate learners are lifelong learners, as demonstrated by his father-in-law, who, with an 8th grade education, built a successful HVAC company, learned to fly an airplane, built computers, started an accounting business, and recently became an Uber driver, all by figuring it out on his own. He encouraged all to keep learning up until our dying breath. Brenneman, a 1977 graduate of Goshen College, will resign as President following the 2016-17 school year.

Conference connections

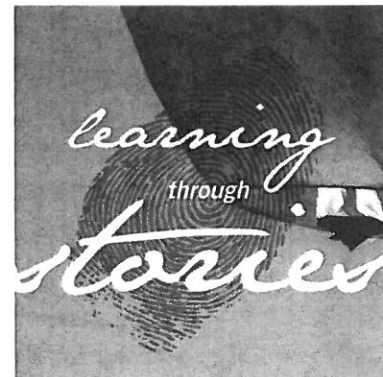
This academic year we have 12 students enrolled from 10 Western District Conference congregations. Those churches generously pledged \$26,388 in congregational student aid for the academic year. The Goshen College Church Aid Matching Grant program provides a dollar-for-dollar match of the first \$1,000 per student and a 1:4 match after that, up to full tuition.

Students from the conference are involved on- and off-campus in many edifying ways but we specifically recognize students who studied and served abroad for a semester through GC's Study

Service Term (SST) program. Grant Flaming from Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church and Nathaniel Dick from Bethel College Mennonite Church spent a semester in Tanzania on SST. Gabriella Castanon from San Antonio Mennonite Church and Mark Kreider from Bethel College Mennonite Church spent a semester in Peru on SST.

2016-17 Campus ministries theme

The Campus Ministries theme this year is "Learning Through Stories." Eleven Ministry Leaders, six Worship Assistants, and countless other Goshen College students provide leadership as we explore what it means to learn about "the other," given the world we live in oozes with pain and injustice often brought on by a lack of understanding. In the first chapel of the year, Campus Pastor Bob Yoder shared that we might be tempted to rely on what we already know rather than to learn something new. We should not be lazy. Learning the "story behind the story" requires patience, time and perseverance. Students and employees were also invited to engage the theme through the GC Prayer Book, which includes twelve devotions written by students as well as over a dozen different ways to pray. This material is available to people in both print and electronic formats. Visit www.goshen.edu/faith/campus-ministries to learn more about GC Campus Ministries.



For more information, contact Dan Koop Liechty, Director of Alumni and Career Networks. Call (574) 535-7002 or e-mail churchrelations@goshen.edu.

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA REPORT

May 2017

Hesston Presidential Transitions – The Hesston College Board of Directors and Mennonite Education Agency appointed Dr. Joseph Manickam as Hesston's ninth president. Manickam assumes office on July 1, 2017, and an inauguration celebration will be held September 22-24 as part of college homecoming activities. Dr. Manickam is currently director of the Institute of Religion, Culture and Peace and faculty member for peace studies at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The search committee praised Dr. Manickam's relational abilities and his strong intercultural competency, which have been common threads in his work. He is a 1987 Hesston College alumnus and served five years as the associate director of Admissions. His undergraduate degree is from Goshen (Ind.) College and he holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in intercultural studies from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, Calif.). The board and agency previously appointed Benjamin E. (Ben) Sprunger as interim president at Hesston. Sprunger has served the college community well over the Fall '16 term and will continue through Spring '17.

Starting the year – Hesston College's official fall 2016 enrollment numbers gave a total student headcount enrollment of 401. Included in total enrollment is a four percent increase of new students who started at Hesston of 215 in 2016, as compared to 206 in fall 2015. Spring enrollment was strong overall at 420 students.

RN to BSN – Starting January 2017, Hesston College launched a RN to BSN program for registered nurses looking to complete a bachelor's level degree with 27 new students. The associates degree program (ADN) expanded in August 2015 to include a four-year bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) program. The RN to BSN program is offered as both a one-year or two-year option and courses will be online and on-campus. For more go to www.hesston.edu/nursing.

Community Read – The 5th Hesston book selection for the 2016 read was "Spare Parts" by Joshua Davis. The book tells the true story of four undocumented teenagers, born in Mexico but living in Phoenix, who were inspired by their high school science teachers to build an underwater robot out of "spare parts" and compete against corporate-sponsored collegiate teams. Davis shared about his work in a presentation in October.

Homecoming 2016: Home Sweet Hesston – Hesston College and over 450 alumni and friends celebrated homecoming 2016, "Home Sweet Hesston," Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, along with Hesston High School and the larger community. Homecoming 2016 marks Hesston High School USD 460's 50th anniversary, which transitioned from the former Hesston Academy. More than 265 Hesston College alumni attended 12 class reunions. Dual alumni that attended both Hesston High School and Hesston College resourced the weekend as presenters and performers. Many events throughout the weekend were

shared events and open to the community including, the keynote presentation, "Compassion and Integrity in an Age of Fragmentation" by 1973 HHS and 1975 Hesston College graduate John Paul Lederach and the "Promise of Living" Gala concert.

AVDS Conference – Hesston College's 2017 Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series (AVDS) event *When The Unthinkable Happens*, worked to answer the question, "How can congregations and our communities work together to be ready for traumatic events and to build resilience and bring healing and hope in the immediate aftermath and in the days and months following?" On Feb. 17-19 Kate Wiebe, director of the California-based Institute for Congregational Trauma and Growth, gave keynote presentations on campus along with STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resiliency) trainer Donna Minter, Mennonite Disaster Service(MDS) Executive Director Kevin King and area resource persons.

Congregational student aid – Hesston College offers a match grant for scholarships provided by students' churches. During the 2016-17 year, 66 churches contributed \$140,048 in student scholarships to 99 recipients. Hesston College matched a total of \$87,629. The average church aid per student was \$2,121 while the average church-and-college aid per student was \$2,300. **If your congregation is interested in providing a scholarship program to support Mennonite higher education, contact the Church Relations Office at 866-437-7866.**

Read these full stories and more at www.hesston.edu. For questions or more information, contact Dallas Stutzman, Director of Alumni and Church Relations toll free at 866-437-7866.

2016-17 campus theme verse - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord..... Jeremiah 29:1-13 (NIV)

Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA Statistics and Connections

2016-2017 Academic Year Students – 11

Congregational Student Aid – 6 congregations provided \$15,432.00 in tuition assistance for 11 students as of April 30, 2017.

Hesston College Board of Directors –

Annette Brown, Preston Trail Community Church, Frisco, TX

Anna Gomez, Iglesia Menonita Buenas Nuevas, San Juan, TX

Luke Roth-Mullet, New Creation Mennonite Fellowship, Hesston, KS

Unified and Designated Giving – We are grateful for the financial support of conference churches to Mennonite colleges and Mennonite Education Agency through Unified and Designated Giving and for personal contributions given from individuals.

Ben Sprunger, Interim President

Dallas Stutzman, Director of Alumni and Church Relations

Mike Zucconi, Director of Development

Phyllis Weaver, Development Officer

Allie Shoup, Omar Reyes, Charles Hostetler and Michael Smalley,

Admissions Representatives

2017 REPORT TO WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The mission of MHS is to strengthen and extend Anabaptist-affiliated health and human service organizations. The following organizations belong to our network of 75 ministries and are located near Western District Conference congregations:

- Bethesda Home, Goessel, Kansas
- Mennonite Friendship Communities, South Hutchinson, Kansas
- Prairie View, Newton, Kansas
- Bluestem Communities - Kidron Bethel Village, N. Newton and Schowalter Villa, Hesston, Kansas

Activities

- The Values-based Leadership Program, led by eight Mennonite groups, welcomed 29 leaders in the 2016-2017 class. Participants gain self-awareness and an Anabaptist perspective on leadership. Registration is open for the next class at www.vblp.org.
- Mennonite Health Assembly met in Jacksonville, Florida in March 2017 along with the Mennonite Education Leaders Gathering. In addition to keynote speakers and workshops, an all-boards meeting facilitated by Mennonite Church USA executive leadership introduced plans for the Future Church Summit this summer in Orlando.



Character Collaboration



Culture Change

- ValuedLeadership.org is a website framed around themes of Character, Collaboration, Culture and Change to help leaders explore what it means to be an Anabaptist organization today. Webinars and resources on the website are free and available to anyone who is interested.

- Around the Globe - We partner with China Christian Council for workshops and an Executive Residency Exchange program to support developing senior care services. We also participated in an interfaith eldercare conference in Lebanon.

For Thanksgiving and Prayer

- We are grateful for the significant contribution of hundreds of volunteer board members and staff leadership who carry out the missions of the organizations listed above.
- We pray for wisdom for our elected leaders in Washington as they consider changes to Medicaid and Medicare, which are critical programs that provide services for vulnerable people in our communities.
- We give thanks for the wise counsel of our national board, including Maribel Ramirez Hinojosa from Iglesia Menonita Buenas Nuevas and Houston Mennonite Church, and Lowell Peachey, President/CEO of Mennonite Friendship Communities.

Submitted by Rick Stiffney, President/CEO

www.mhsonline.org

Be local. Be global. Be the Gospel.



One day we will celebrate with sisters and brothers from every culture, tribe, tongue and nation

God's healing of creation and reconciliation of all things in Jesus.

We not only anticipate that day with joy, but also are invited to be partners and co-laborers with Christ in inviting and welcoming people from every tribe and tongue to be a part of that celebration, which will gather around the throne of

God. We celebrate the brothers and sisters, and each congregation in Western District Conference, who have shared their lives, their prayers, and their resources to realize God's dream of healing the nations and of a world redeemed through Jesus

Christ. Thank you for your generosity and partnership with Mennonite Mission Network in God's project. With sincere appreciation!

Stanley W. Green
Stanley W. Green
Executive Director

Western District Conference + Mennonite Mission Network

Worker support around the world



Margrit Kipfer Barron—Coordinates Christian education ministries of the Bolivia Mennonite Church, and prepares leaders and supports church plants.

» First Mennonite Church, Beatrice

Gamaliel and Amanda Falla—

Serve as coordinators of pastoral accompaniment with the Colombia Mennonite Church (IMCOL).

» Houston Mennonite Church

Mark and Mary Hurst—Build Anabaptist networks, lead conflict transformation trainings, and pastor.

» Eden Mennonite Church

Wayne and Jeannie Larson—Serve in an undisclosed location working with a media training ministry for youth.

» West Zion Mennonite Church

Franciso and Juanita Machado—

Anabaptist church planters in Spain.

» First Mennonite Church, Halstead

» Manhattan Mennonite Church

» Turpin Mennonite Church

Mary Raber—Teaches at theological schools in Ukraine.

» Faith Mennonite Church

» Hope Mennonite Church

» Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church

Laura Schlabach—Administers long-term development projects in the growing Mongolian church.

» San Antonio Mennonite Church

Dan and Kathryn Smith Derksen—

Provide logistical support, develop peacebuilding programs, and engage partners in program development.

» First Mennonite Church, Halstead

» Grace Hill Mennonite Church

» Shalom Mennonite Church

» Tabor Mennonite Church

David and Rebekka Stutzman—

Serve as church planters in Mannheim, Germany.

» First Mennonite Church, Beatrice

George and Tobia Veith—Work with the local church, teaching in a local university, and mentoring pastors and young people.

» Eden Mennonite Church

Discipleship program

Missional Discipleship Initiative—

Relational disciple-making for mission-minded leaders.

» First Mennonite Church, Beatrice

» West Zion Mennonite Church

Service participants



Christian Service sites

MVS Unit in Kansas City

MVS Unit in San Antonio

SOOP site in Austin

SOOP site in San Antonio

SOOP site with World Hunger Relief, Inc. in Elm Mott, Texas

Mennonite Voluntary Service

Elsa Goossen and Emily Wedel are serving in Alamosa, Colorado.

Kathlyn Miller is serving in Washington, D.C.

Service Adventure

Samuel Hatch is serving in Anchorage, Alaska.

Robert and Sondra Tolle are serving in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

SOOP

Linda Doll and Sylvia Schmidt—Divide, Colorado

Norman and Vicki Lichti—Washington, D.C.

Dwight Mueller—San Antonio, Texas
lb and June Thomsen—Tucson, Arizona

Linda Washburn—Hamilton, Ontario

Youth Venture

Kate Chervenky served in India.

Travis Duerksen served in Indonesia.

Amanda Entz served in Lithuania.

Isaac Entz served in Lithuania.

Mission banks



Children from First Mennonite Church Newton, Koinonia Mennonite Church, Faith Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Church of the Servant gave a total of **\$385.73** to missions.

Prayer partners



47 people have committed to pray daily for Mission Network ministries.

Congregational giving to Mission Network



During Mission Network's last fiscal year, August 1, 2015, through July 31, 2016, 39 of 56 Western District congregations (70 percent) gave **\$279,306**, or an average of **\$7,162**.



May God richly bless you for the many and varied ways in which you are engaging in God's mission in the world!

Joe Sawatzky

Joe Sawatzky
Church Relations Representative

Thank you for your continued partnership in God's mission!

www.MennoniteMission.net Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872