

**Introducing new WDC staff:  
Jennie Wintermote**



*Coming  
Events*

April 23, 2016—Spring Reference Council, “Held Together in Mission: Being Church in the Rural Context”, First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE

July 29-30, 2016—Annual Assembly, “Held Together in Mission”, Bethel College, North Newton, KS

October 22, 2016—Fall Reference Council, “Held Together in Mission: Being Church in the Urban Context”, Dallas, TX

WDC welcomed **Jennie Wintermote** as the new 1/4-time WDC Resource Library Director on December 1. She currently also serves as 1/2-time supply pastor at New Creation Fellowship Church in Newton, KS, and has previously worked as a summer library assistant at the WDC Resource Library and as a 1st grade teacher. Jennie graduated from Hesston College and Bethel College, and is pursuing her master’s degree in Library Science from Emporia State University.

*“Since I was in middle school I hoped to someday ‘grow up to be Marlene’ (former WDC Resource Librarian and Minister of Christian Nurture). I am humbled to have this opportunity to continue her good work of connecting individuals and churches with resources to challenge and help people grow in their faith and their relationship with Jesus Christ. I am also excited to dream about the future of the library, discerning what form the collection will take in the future, and what resources will meet your needs. I would love to meet you and hear what you appreciate about the library, and what your hopes and dreams are for the future of the library.”*

Visit the Resource Library Monday through Friday from 8 am-5 pm (closed 11:30-12:30 for lunch). Jennie is available at the library on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-11:30 am; other WDC staff can assist you when she is not there. Stop by, call or email Jennie (316-283-6300, [crlib@mennowdc](mailto:crlib@mennowdc)).

**Want to know what’s happening in Western District Conference?**

Subscribe to **WDC SPROUTS**, a weekly email with articles from staff and information about WDC and Mennonite Church USA. Sign up for a free email subscription at:

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**Western District Conference** is a regional grouping of Mennonite Church USA congregations located in Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

**Western District Conference**

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# WDC Garden

*Stories from Western District Conference  
February/March 2016*



## Missional Discipleship Initiative

**P**astors and over 30 participants from five congregations in Dallas, TX (Luz del Evangelio, Casa de Dios, Comunidad de Esperanza, Monte Horeb and Camino Nuevo) met December 5, 2015 for a presentation on the Missional Discipleship Initiative (MDI), co-sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Hispanic Initiative. Marvin Lorenzana from Mennonite Mission Network led the resourcing event.



MDI is a discipleship model in which congregational leaders are trained to support and equip Missional Discipleship Groups of 2-3 people who meet together weekly to be accountable to pray, read the Bible and share their faith. Participants in the December 5 event are excited to explore implementation of this initiative in the coming year.



## WDC Loaves & Fishes grant helps congregation feed children



From Pastor Brad Roth, on behalf of the West Zion Mennonite Mission Team, Moundridge, KS —



*The Christmas program was a particular highlight. Our sanctuary was full of parents coming to see their children perform songs about Jesus' birth. I gave a simple, relevant presentation of the Gospel message (Jesus was born among us because he loves us!). Afterward, we mingled with parents and kids downstairs while enjoying pizza together. In our rapidly post-Christianizing culture, Christmas is still one holy-day that people get."*

*"We are deeply grateful for the Loaves and Fishes grant of \$500 WDC awarded our congregation to help cover the cost of food at the K-4 Moundridge Youth Ministries (MYM) program we host at West Zion.*

*In 2014, we have seen an average attendance of 70-80 children with around 20 helpers and teachers. Children learn about Christ in a safe environment, and we serve them a hearty meal. Volunteers from many different congregations make this ministry possible.*



### What is a Loaves and Fishes Grant?

During September 2014 - September 2015, the WDC Resource Commission offered *Loaves and Fishes* grants of \$500 to WDC congregations seeking to multiply God's grace in their communities. Applications from twelve congregations were approved and awarded. These grants were made possible through Vision 2012 funds.

**More Loaves and Fishes grants will be available in 2016!**

## Comments from the Conference Minister

By Heidi Regier Kreider

On a recent two-week stretch in January, I experienced the breadth of diversity within Western District Conference. In those 14 days, I preached at and met with committees from several central Kansas congregations; I joined a rural ministry pastors' discussion group, a gathering of pastors along I-70 highway in Kansas, and a meeting of interim pastors; and I then drove south to visit churches and pastors in Turpin and Clinton, OK, and Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, TX.



In my travels, I relished the beauty of the rolling native prairie of eastern Kansas, and the wide-open space of the Oklahoma panhandle with its flat line of horizon, highlighting the glow of sunrise and sunset. I navigated humming streams of traffic in Dallas and Houston, mesmerized by the surrounding blur of lights, gas-stations, restaurants, businesses, office and industrial buildings, schools, churches, shopping malls, houses and apartments. I enjoyed sharing fellowship with church members while eating chicken and noodles, pancakes, arroz con pollo, baleadas, "hot pot" Thai and Mongolian soup, and chili.

I listened as church members and leaders shared visions of building projects, sabbatical and transition plans, response to the "Rainbow" resolution, stories of interfaith collaboration and advocacy in their community, sadness at the decline in their church or excitement about new members, the importance of leadership education and youth mentoring, church planting and sister-church relationships, questions about how to relate to local economic and social issues, the profound challenges of pastoral care concerns, and the fervent desire to live out Jesus' call to radical discipleship. I strained to understand conversations in Spanish, music and prayers in Chin, and differences in theological perspectives and Biblical interpretation. Yet in the midst of it all, I could comprehend the language of the heart expressing conviction, hope, praise, prayer, lament, love, hospitality, pain, joy and blessing.

I am grateful for the beautiful and complex mosaic that is WDC, a kaleidoscope of people and places enlivened and connected by the Spirit of God. What a blessing it is to travel among this network of very different congregations, communities and cultures! I look forward to visiting congregations and pastors I have not yet met, as opportunity to continue to discover and learn, to practice curiosity and openness to what God is doing among us.



In one gathering of pastors, I offered these words from Ephesians 1:15-19: *"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."* This is my prayer for each one in WDC.

