

MINUTES
Western District Conference Annual Assembly
Delegate Session July 27, 2019
Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas

Session 1: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Moderator Ray Reimer (Zion/Elbing, Kan.) called the delegate session to order and welcomed all to the Annual Assembly at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas. Delegates stood to represent their congregations during a roll call of WDC churches. Ray welcomed guests and those representing the 14 displays set up around the delegate tables. He thanked Bethel College for hosting WDC. Brad Kohlman, vice president of institutional advancement, welcomed the delegates and guests to the campus. Moderator-elect Lois Barrett (Church of the Servant/Wichita/Kan.) read greetings from South Central Mennonite Conference.

Minutes. Secretary June Krehbiel (Eden/Moundridge, Kan.) highlighted the minutes from the 2018 delegate sessions and moved to accept the minutes as written. Peter Goerzen (Tabor/Newton, Kan.) seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mennonite Church USA Report. Representing Mennonite Church USA, Glen Guyton, executive director, and Shana Peachey Boshart, denominational minister for faith formation, shared greetings from the larger church. Shana spoke briefly about the recent convention in Kansas City, including the delegate vote allowing churches to each send one youth delegate to future assemblies. She also shared the strategic plan of the Executive Board, new staff changes, concern about the federal government reinstating the death penalty, leadership development, and a Deep Faith Conference set for 2020 in Indiana.

Conference Minister Report. Heidi Regier Kreider reflected on the present state of WDC. She offered ways to care for our churches and environment.

- Let us take courage in our relations with our congregations. Iglesia Cristiana Menonita Camino Nuevo in Dallas, Texas, a church plant in 2015, has now closed and we give thanks for the efforts of groups like this.
- Let us take courage in responding to the border crisis. God loves all people. To take courage is to join the work that is going on by offering food and clothing, going on learning tours and preparing kits to support detainees.
- Let us take courage to respond to sexual abuse. We walk with congregations to support survivors and vulnerable persons and to hold church leaders accountable.
- Let us take courage in our financial resources as economic realities shift.
- Let us take courage in our care for God's natural creation.

Credentials Committee. Marlene Faul (Bethel College Church/North Newton, Kan.) reported:

- 51 WDC churches and 4 plants with 280 eligible votes
- 119 delegates attending this assembly
- 39 churches and church plants represented
- 16 churches and church plants not represented
- Number of votes represented at WDC 2019: 247
- Votes not represented: 33.

New Congregation. The Executive Board presented a recommendation to accept Iglesia Camino de Santidad of Liberal, Kan., as a WDC member congregation. Weldon Martens (Grace Hill/Whitewater, Kan.) seconded the motion. Motion carried. Pastor Moises Romero spoke for the new congregation. The

delegates heartily welcomed the many from Iglesia Camino de Santidad in attendance. Heidi Regier Kreider offered a prayer of blessing, and Ray Reimer presented a book as a gift.

Ministerial Leadership Commission Report. Peter Goerzen (Tabor/Newton, Kan.) presented the MLC report. Those with new assignments in WDC churches or credentials during the past year include:

- Eric Buller, interim pastor, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.
- Peter Emery, interim pastor, Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan., License Toward Ordination (LTO)
- Asia Frye, pastor, Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, Kan.
- Lois Harder, bridge pastor, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.
- Tom Harder, pastor, First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kan.
- Mike and Karen Isaacs, interim pastors, Turpin Mennonite Church, Turpin, Okla.
- Linda Lewis, chaplain in Manhattan, Kan. (LTO)
- Karen Mascho, ordination, chaplain in Tulsa, Okla.
- Gene Miller, transitional pastor, Manhattan Mennonite Church, Manhattan, Kan.
- Kristine Regehr, transitional pastor, Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan., and Joy Mennonite Church, Oklahoma City, Okla. (LTO)
- Renee Reimer, associate pastor, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan. (LTO)
- David Richardson Spaite, chaplain in Kansas City, Kan. (LTO)
- Jaime Roche, church planter, Iglesia Palabra Viva, Liberal, Kan.
- Randy Smith, interim pastor, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.
- Samuel Voth Schrag, pastor, Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, Texas
- Steve Wilcox, approved for ordination, pastor, First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kan.
- Luann Yutzy, transitional pastor, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

Stewardship Commission Report/2020 Budget. Dwight Flaming (Alexanderwohl/Goessel, Kan.) and Beth Yoder, WDC business manager, presented a report from the Stewardship Commission and presented the 2020 budget recommendation. Dwight asked: How can delegates respond to make the ministries of WDC happen? The commission will continue to provide stewardship encouragement to staff, but delegates and congregations must respond to support WDC.

Beth Yoder reviewed income and expenses from fiscal year 2018 and reported that Knudson and Monroe had audited and affirmed the financial records. Expenses totaled \$489,107. Total income in 2018 was \$489,107 with 73% from contributions. WDC is now fully staffed, causing an increase in budget. She presented the 2020 proposed budget of \$608,327. New line items are the sabbatical fund and building repair loan.

Announcements:

- Assembly Planner and Associate Conference Minister Kathy Neufeld Dunn thanked the planning committee.
- Through a drawing of names, Jennie Wintermote, Resource Library director, gave books to three delegates.
- Everence representative Mark Diller offered greetings; the organization provided refreshments during break.

Session 2: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Moderator Ray Reimer opened the afternoon session of the delegate session.

2020 Budget Vote. Ray presented the Executive Board motion to approve the proposed 2020 budget presented earlier. Dwight Flaming seconded the motion.

Rosie Epp (Zion/Elbing, Kan.) asked why we have increased the budget when we have not met the most recent one. Ray responded that we need to be more generous as a conference. Recently we have chosen not to spend what we have budgeted. We could do more. Moderator-elect Lois Barrett explained that we have neglected some sources of income: We have been paying for our office space by renting out space but not paying ourselves for the space we use and that has not paid for new roofing and heating/air conditioning. Now we need to add to the budget to do so. We do not want to cut back on programming or staff, but we do need to pay for the building. Ray also noted that WDC has had a sabbatical policy for staff for 15–20 years but with no funding in the budget. That has been added this year. Don Schmidt (First/Newton, Kan.) expressed concern about the difference of \$120,000 (24%) between last year's income and the proposed 2020 budget. He asked how the Executive Board hopes to make this happen. Ray responded that no specific plan is in place, but all of the board is in agreement. Motion carried.

Church Planting Commission Report. Marv Zehr (Shalom/Newton, Kan.) presented the report. He challenged delegates to increase support for church planting and specific congregations through 1) sister relationships with no financial commitment or 2) partner relationships with financial commitment. Associate Conference Minister Byron Pellecer shared additional information on how he and others are calling, equipping, and commissioning church plants with the Holy Spirit's guidance. New conversations are with groups in Houston and Florida.

Resource Commission Report. Christina Litwiller (Salina/Salina, Kan.) explained that besides the Resource Library, the commission supports a variety of task forces and oversees the Mustard Seed Grants to congregations. Caleb Yoder (Alexanderwohl/Goessel, Kan.) reported briefly on the MCC South Texas-Mexico Borderlands Tour in May. Phil Schmidt (Tabor/Newton, Kan.) spoke for the Goessel churches in thanking the conference for supporting the summer outreach day camp for children in their community (an example of a Mustard Seed Grant). Christina noted that \$250 Mustard Seed Grants are still available. Kathy Neufeld Dunn and Christina have led S.S. teacher trainings for two congregations and are willing to offer this for others.

Camp Mennoscah Report. Michael Unruh, Camp Mennoscah executive director, presented the report from camp. Eight members of WDC churches serve on the camp's Board of Directors. More than 600 campers attended camps this summer, including 325 from WDC churches. God's spirit shows up at Camp Mennoscah in a variety of ways, including 900 volunteer hours offered to put up the whale playground and make dining hall improvements.

Ballot. Ray asked those completing terms of service on commissions, committees, and task forces with WDC to stand and be recognized with applause. Roberta Harms (Grace Hill/Whitewater, Kan.) of the Gifts Discernment Committee presented the 2019 ballot. Ray asked for additional nominations from the floor. There were none. Jeff Koller (Eden/Moundridge, Kan.) moved to accept the ballot as presented. Weldon Martens seconded the motion. Because of a request for a written ballot, the motion was denied. The delegates voted using the written ballots (see results below).

Open mic time:

Joni Fornelli (Peace/Lawrence, Kan.) requested funds from churches to support a Dismantling the Document of Discovery Coalition. A training is expected to be held in Newton in fall.

Norma Duerksen (Trinity/Hillsboro, Kan.) suggested creative fundraising techniques for WDC: churches could raise money for buckets of tar for the new roof at the North Newton offices (and Conference

Minister Heidi could go up on the roof when the amount is reached). Other ideas: Giving Tuesday in fall, fifth Sunday offerings for WDC.

Rosie Epp encouraged WDC churches to support the 2019 Mennonite Church USA Churchwide Statement on the Abuse of Child Migrants. Making MCC Immigration Detainee Care Kits is one way to help.

2019 Election Results. The tellers reported the results of the ballot count. All names on the printed ballot received a majority of votes counted.

Executive Board:

Lee Lever (Austin/Austin, Texas)

Jim Stucky (Faith/Newton, Kan.)

Gifts Discernment Committee:

Eric J. Jantzen (Rainbow/Kansas City, Kan.)

Dwight Mueller (First/Halstead, Kan.)

Eldon Epp (First/Ransom, Kan.)

Church Planting Commission:

Tim Amor (Beatrice/Beatrice, Neb.)

Alberto Parchmont (Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero/Pasadena, Texas)

Ministerial Leadership Commission:

Dave Stevens (Hope/Wichita, Kan.)

Rachel Ringenberg Miller (Shalom/Newton, Kan.)

Todd Schlosser (Hoffnungsau/Inman, Kan.)

Resource Commission:

Steve Wilcox (First/Halstead, Kan.)

Valerie Klaassen (Grace Hill/Whitewater, Kan.)

Stewardship Commission:

Darlene Powers (Faith/Newton, Kan.)

Dick Koontz (Bethel College/North Newton, Kan.)

Announcements.

- Kathy Neufeld Dunn invited all to the Family Festival Saturday evening with music at Mojo's and outside activities for children.
- WDC Assembly 2020 will be July 31 to Aug. 2 at Camp Copass, Denton Texas with Dr. M. Daniel Carroll (Rodas) as keynote speaker. Dr. Carroll is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton Graduate School and author of *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*.
- Reference Council is scheduled for Sept. 14 in Newton with all Executive Board, Commission members, and Gifts Discernment members encouraged to attend.

Lois Barrett with the Resolutions Committee presented a resolution of thanks:

*Whereas Bethel College has graciously provided facilities and services for the Western District Conference Annual Assembly, and
Whereas the Assembly Planning Committee and conference staff have labored long and well to organize this Assembly, and
Whereas Glen Guyton and workshop leaders have taught and inspired us through their presentations,
We, the delegates to the 2019 Assembly of Western District Conference, resolve to express our appreciation to all these people and thank God for the opportunity to meet together for worship, fellowship, and faith sharing. We commit ourselves to be witnesses to what God is doing through Western District Conference, its congregations, and its people.*

Lois moved to accept this resolution. Katherine Goerzen (Tabor/Newton, Kan.) seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ray concluded the meeting by reading from Philippians 1:3-6: "I thank my God everytime I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. ..."

Berni Kaufman (Eden/Moundridge, Kan.) moved the meeting adjourn. Carolee Neufeld (First/Hutchinson, Kan.) seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, June Krehbiel, secretary

