

WDC Associate Conference Minister (Texas-based)
Sandra Montes-Martinez

As part of my first report for the WDC Annual Assembly as Associate Conference Minister I would like to express my profound gratitude to the congregations, pastors, staff, and leadership team in Western District. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve since 2008 as an administrative assistant and church planting support and now as ACM.

I strongly believe that God is calling all of us in these challenging times for the church and humanity in general, putting the resources and relationships needed to strengthen and equip His people to bear witness and form communities of faith that embrace “what is good... to do what is right, to love mercy, and to live humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

As part of my responsibilities, I’m working alongside Violeta Ajquejay Suastegui, the Administrative Assistant for Texas, and the support of all WDC staff in the following areas:

Implement the WDC core task of Networking Anabaptist Church Planting
Church Planting:

- As staff liaison for WDC Church Planting Commission, I have met with board members to learn more about the work done by the commission during the year 2020 to understand the hopes and challenges of what it means to do church planting in WDC from the commission perspective. We will prepare for a strategic plan that will be proposed in the Fall of 2021.
- Regular communication and mentoring with church planters.
- Building relationships with potential church planters.
- Support and oversee church plants in WDC.
Aposento Alto in Wichita: We are working to incorporate members of the congregation to the support group and prepare the congregation to be received as an established congregation in the 2022 WDC annual assembly.
Palabra Viva: supporting the church planting, providing resources and educational material for the ministry.
- Facilitated the conversation with Iglesia Cristiana Casa de Paz in Guatemala.
- Developed the **Church Planting Essential Procedures** in cooperation with CPC. This set of processes will provide guidelines for church planting in WDC.

Support the WDC core task of Sustaining Transformational Pastors.

- Provide support for pastors, meeting (every other week) with Bilingual pastor peer group and Hispanic Ministry pastors (monthly). This virtual meeting has been a great way of supporting each other in a more fraternal and safe space for pastors, beyond the regular business check-in.
- Facilitate conversations where pastors share meaningful practices in their congregations with peers.
- Receiving and following up on annual accountability plan for credentialed ministers.
- Assisting congregations with pastoral transitions and pastoral discernment processes.
- Maintaining regular communication with WDC pastors and congregational leaders in Texas to assist in congregation matters.
- In cooperation with ACM Kathy Neufeld Dunn, provide Hispanic pastors and leaders with a general virtual training on Safe Sanctuary.
- Supporting congregations in their challenges faced during transitions to virtual and in-person church.
- Constant communication and companionship to pastors, supporting them in health, emotional, and ministerial challenges.

- Proposed and promoted financial support for pastor's mental health treatment after listening to pastors dealing with emotional distress as a result of the challenges of dealing with a church in times of pandemic. We proposed to assist ministers with the expenses of therapy and mental health support virtual event; approved by WDC Ministerial Leadership Commission.
- Receive training and certification on Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201.

Administrative

- Weekly meetings with CM Heidi Regier Kreider for orientation and updates
- Monthly WDC staff meeting.
- Supporting Texas branch of the Resource Library, serving pastors and congregation with new materials.
- Oversee Administrative Assistant for WDC Texas.
- Translation and interpretation of meetings and material.
- Attend MC USA Conference Ministers virtual gathering.
- Support WDC Assembly 2021 planning team.
- Writing monthly articles/announcements and translations for Sprouts/Garden and other publications.
- Attended in person MennoCon 2021 as WDC delegate.
- Assisting pastors and congregations with applications for grants and Hope Fund to support their ministries.

Institutional relationships

- Facilitate a virtual and in-person seminar at MennoCon 2021
- Represented WDC at Iglesia Menonita Hispana assembly (a constituent group part of MC USA).
- Presented for the Everence Executive Board the History and Relationships of Everence in the Hispanic Church
- Participated in AMBS Pathways for Tomorrow Consultation.
- Serving as Director of the Anabaptist Missional Leadership Academy (ALMA), a program of the Hispanic Mennonite Church/ MC USA, and serving in the Leadership Discernment Committee (LDC) of MC USA.

May God help us to continue serving with love and wisdom for His glory.