MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL WDC ZOOM NETWORKING MEETING ON IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE WORK. April 21, 2022: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (hosted by the WDC Immigration Task Force: Pat Cameron, Kendra Davila, Anali Gatlin, Ryan Goertzen-Regier, Kathy Neufeld Dunn, Raylene Hinz-Penner, Karin Kaufman Wall)

1. Attendees were asked to sign in their names, home city and home churches in the chat box. 31 attenders and 2 resource persons joined the Zoom networking meeting.
2. The meeting was recorded and can be accessed for use in sharing with your home congregation at this link:   
   Topic: WDC Refugee and Immigration Justice Zoom Event 4/21/22  
   Start Time: Apr 21, 2022 06:11 PM  
     
   Meeting Recording:  
   <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/8TZeDP87oWOpX6if-obTCObzEXUF7yQd7xuYsh6m8AwfEFslej7e7p6vyxudLfuU.tBFkz5zXCzgSJnzj>
3. Kathy opened with a centering moment proclaiming post-Easter universal citizenship through Christ and read the Immigrant’s Creed (see chat box). She offered an opening prayer.
4. Those in attendance were asked to report what their church is working on or how they are planning to help:
5. Annette Voth for Zion. Volunteer with IRC. Previously worked at Chase County Jail with detainees.
6. Jay Goering for Eden. Raised money for IRC. Looking to help with settlement.
7. Lois Barrett for Church of the Servant. Collected household items.
8. First Mennonite, Newton, helped to set up apartments
9. Ben Woodward-Blackbill, Shalom, Cleaning Supply Drive for IRC
10. Kendra Davila, Hesston Mennonite, Angel Tree, Cleaning supplies drive, More supply drives intended
11. Darlene Dick, BCMC. Seekers’ SS Class has contributed to IRC: several have attended orientation and volunteer (Wes Schmidt-Tieszen, Valetta Seymour, Darlene Dick, Mary Ann Boschmann). Raylene will respond to inquiry from Karen Ediger of BCMC Deacons about use of the Caring Fund for rent and medical expenses for IRC resettlement candidates.
12. Roberta Harms, Grace Hill, assisted with WDC drive for cleaning supplies
13. Karin Kaufman Wall, MCC. Organized 13 adults/youth to set up an apartment in Wichita for an extra large family.
14. Charity Stowell, Harrisburg, VA, MCC Newcomer Connections Coordinator, ([welcome@mcc.org](mailto:welcome@mcc.org)) presented a power point (see link to recorded program) describing MCC’s goals—to connect to organizations serving refugees/asylum seekers; to connect congregations; to build a network of welcoming Anabaptist communities. She described opportunities and offered next steps. She also announced an MCC Webinar at 2 p.m. Eastern Time on May 10 addressing the trauma of migration.
15. Jen Rafter, Development Coordinator for International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Wichita, also located in 24 other U.S. cities, described with slides the work of IRC (see link to recorded program) now ten years old in Wichita at 420 South Emporia. She described the various services IRC offers and especially the resettlement process and needs for current Afghani (and other) refugees. In FY22 they have received 409 persons from Afghanistan in addition to 100 persons from other countries. Because their resettlement services were so decimated during the years 2016-2020 due to the harsh curtailment in numbers of refugees allowed to enter the U.S. by the Trump administration, it has been necessary for IRC offices like Wichita to gear up quickly for the current numbers of refugees they are receiving, resulting in chaotic delivery of services as they try to staff up and move offices. Jen described ways to help, including monetary gifts ([www.rescue.org/Wichita](http://www.rescue.org/Wichita)), in-kind donations, donation drives, especially gift cards which allow recipients the dignity of purchasing their own needed clothes, bedding, etc., volunteering, and landlords. **She also made a special plea for laptops, new or used**. Volunteer services include providing orientation, transportation, teaching, and new programs are planned in family mentoring, even an opportunity to help a participant donate hours on her Habitat for Humanity house.
16. Sandra Martinez, WDC associate minister in Texas, reported on the immigrant/resettlement work they have been doing in Texas the past several years, describing many services comparable to those IRC provides. She especially highlighted the work of the San Antonio Mennonite Church in their hospitality ministries. She noted that they receive 150 people per week they help with a variety of needs. They keep up to 50 people at a time and will be building larger facilities. She invited the help of the WDC sister churches and invited us to contact her directly (Sandram@mennowdc.org). She also noted that the San Antonio Mennonite Church will be reporting on their work at the **WDC Annual Assembly to be held Friday, July 29-Sunday, July 31 at Camp Copass, 8200 E. McKinney St. Denton, TX**
17. The WDC Immigration Task Force would welcome a couple of new members to join our task force. Contact Kathy Neufeld Dunn ([kathynd@mennowdc.org](mailto:kathynd@mennowdc.org)) to indicate your interest. Watch the WDC weekly newsletter for an announcement of a panel discussion to be offered by the most recent south borderlands tour from this area. The Task Force will offer an update on the work on the south border for WDC churches via a ZOOM panel discussion in the near future.

(notes by Raylene Hinz-Penner, April 22, 2022)