

WDC Associate Conference Minister (Kansas-Based)
Kathy Neufeld Dunn

2021-22 was a year of discernment. Is the pandemic functionally over or not? What safety issues need to continue to be emphasized or revised—whether they be abuse prevention practices or Covid prevention measures? How can congregations safely minister to and offer faith formation to little ones and their families? What does church membership look and sound like these days? Where have all the pastors gone? Why are there so few candidates looking for churches? How can our task forces assist congregations in working for justice in the name of Jesus in these fraught times?

Resourcing Healthy, Missional Churches

Israel-Palestine Task Force: The task force maximized its reach by offering a virtual book club on April 5, 2022 with author Jonathan Kuttub online discussing his book, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*. Members of WDC congregations, as well as MennoPIN friends engaged the discussion.

Immigration Task Force: Near Valentine's Day, the Immigration Task Force invited WDC members and friends to listen to their hearts and donate household cleaning supplies for refugees through the International Refugee Committee, Wichita, KS. Donors were generous. On April 21, the task force hosted "Refugee and Immigration Justice" zoom meeting with keynote speakers from MCC and International Rescue Committee, Wichita.

Farm Worker Health Task Force: The task force is always glad to hear how our WDC dollars are stretching so far to assist the Kansas Department of Health and Environment serve migrant farm workers, whether they speak Low German, Spanish, or another language. They are all beloved children of God who need health care.

Abuse Prevention and Response: I continue to work to assemble a standing group of volunteer specialists who would offer abuse prevention and respond with appropriate resourcing in the event of a credible allegation of abuse. I am also working with US and Canadian colleagues to create a resource document to offer best practices and policies in the event of abuse allegations against non-credentialed or credentialed persons in MC USA or MC Canada churches.

Sustaining Transformational Pastors

Chaplaincy Support: I hosted a chaplains' zoom for support and prayer on January 31, 2022. I have also been faithfully involved in the Prairie View Chaplain's Advisory Group that helps to plan ministers' resource meetings (currently virtual), one on recognizing depression and anxiety, another on trauma and resilience.

Ministry of Presence: Though the majority of ministry support for WDC congregations has continued to be via phone, Zoom, and email, in the last few months I've been doing more listening to pastors and church leaders over coffee at Mojo's and in my office. I also had the honor to represent WDC at 2 ordinations, several services of blessing and release, and several memorial services.

Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201: I continued to offer Healthy Boundaries training, both the basic and advanced workshops virtually twice a year drawing in WDC ministers and others from around MC USA. Shout out to Michelle Schrag for administrative acumen and Tim Amor as capable tech support for these trainings.

Connect Congregations and Pastors with MC USA and additional resources:

Bi-Weekly Area Conference Ministers' Meetings: It was another year of building trust and resourcing one another as MC USA Area Conference Ministers. We were looking forward to time in-person with our Canadian and US colleagues in early December, but we had a virtual ACM "retreat," instead (sigh). Maybe this December?

Search Committees: This has been a year of transitions for ministers and congregations in WDC. As of now, over 25% of our churches are in one state or another of transition, with four of my congregations in active search processes. It's a challenging time.

Coordinate Assembly Planning: Many thanks to Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, for hosting our first ever hybrid 2020-21 WDC Annual Assembly July 30-August 1, 2021. Thank you to the hard working and creative Annual Assembly Planning Team. Thank you to our resource people and storytellers from near and far. Thanks also to the dedicated tech support people who did a wonderful job. Annual Assembly 2022 will be in Denton, TX.