

Annual Report - June 2023 (Activities from June 2022 - June 2023)
Heidi Regier Kreider, WDC Conference Minister

It has been a privilege to serve WDC in the various areas of my ministry role over the past year:

Tending WDC's mission and vision through work with Executive Board, commissions, committees and annual assembly:

- At Annual Assembly 2022 at Camp Copass, TX, I preached, assisted in preparing the delegate agenda, and co-led a workshop. As Assembly 2023 approaches, I have been working closely with the Executive Committee to prepare delegate assembly agenda and related materials.
- As staff liaison with the Ministerial Leadership Commission, I provided administrative and pastoral support for ministerial credentialing, accountability and support; discernment of policy and procedures; and resourcing for ministers and congregational leaders.
- I also serve as the staff liaison for the Gifts Discernment Committee and the Hope Fund Task Force.
- I worked with the Stewardship Commission and Business Manager to develop new grant-writing guidelines for WDC, consult on budget and financial matters, and prepare invitations and thank-you letters for financial contributions. We thank congregations and individual donors who generously support WDC's mission and ministry!
- I provided administrative support for the board-appointed Anti-Racism Audit Team which concluded an audit of WDC's organizational and leadership structure in October 2022. A summary and full report of the audit in English and Spanish has been posted on the WDC website, including recommendations for action steps going forward. It is one of my priorities to continue working with WDC staff, Board, commissions and committees to cultivate racial justice/equity and intercultural competence in WDC's work.
- Considerable time was given this past year to discerning future facility needs and options for the 2500 Place building together, in consultation with representatives from Executive Board, Stewardship Commission, Trustees and staff. With the Executive Board's recent approval of a recommendation to sell the 2500 Place building, my attention has turned to working on plans for WDC to lease a reduced amount of space as a continuing tenant in the building.
- Over the past year I wrote eight articles on various topics for the WDC website, and coordinated a *Windows into our Ministry* series of articles by WDC's four commissions.
- A significant focus this past year was planning for a conference-wide Listening Process affirmed by the Executive Board to empower the vitality of WDC congregations by hearing their stories, strengthening relationships, and supporting their witness and mission. See <https://mennowdc.org/wdc-listening-process/>. Over the coming year, 3-person listening teams from WDC will visit congregations to worship and to facilitate conversation about what is most vital for congregations, their hopes for the future, and what resources from WDC can best support congregations' mission. This comes in recognition of changes and challenges caused by the recent pandemic and other current issues. I am grateful to Doug Penner and Wendy Funk Schrag on the planning team for their assistance in facilitating pilot visits to congregations, writing grant applications, sending an invitation letter to congregations, and recruiting and orienting volunteer listening teams. We are excited that a number of

congregations have already indicated interest in hosting a listening team! We seek additional volunteers to serve on listening teams, particularly persons who are bilingual in Spanish and English.

Supervising and supporting staff:

- I deeply appreciate each of WDC's dedicated and gifted staff members, whose daily work is instrumental in fulfilling WDC's mission of empowering congregations and implementing our core ministries of sustaining transformational pastors, resourcing healthy missional congregations, and networking church planting partnerships. I facilitate staff meetings and consult with associate conference ministers to coordinate our work together. At our annual staff retreat at Camp Mennoscah we reviewed WDC's mission and priorities, discussed the anti-racism audit report and listening process plans, and experienced team-work through a camp service project.
- Last Fall we enrolled WDC staff in the Employee Assistance Program sponsored by MC USA, when the opportunity was opened for conferences to join MC USA's EAP.
- I helped to arrange for staff/pastoral coverage during Kathy Neufeld Dunn's sabbatical leave at the end of 2023.
- At a Christmas potluck lunch, WDC staff thanked John Good who concluded as volunteer building manager for the 2500 Place office facility. We appreciate his generous service to WDC over the past 10 years.
- Business Manager Beth Yoder is concluding her role in July, with plans to move to Minnesota where her husband Caleb Yoder has accepted a pastoral call. We give thanks for Beth's faithful work with WDC over the past 5 years.
- We will welcome Shari Scheffler as the new Business Manager beginning in July, and are in the process of filling a new part-time Fund Development Coordinator position to strengthen financial support for WDC's ministries.

Supporting credentialed ministers and congregations

- The associate conference ministers and I each serve as liaison for a group of congregations and ministers in WDC, and we also relate to congregations through our roles as staff liaisons for the Resource, Church Planting and Ministerial Leadership commissions.
- Last year I had approximately 30 visits with 22 congregations, to lead in pastoral credentialing, installations or release/blessing, offer a sermon or other presentation, attend special events, or facilitate congregational conversation. Over this past year I have worked with six of WDC's congregations that are in pastoral transition, by resourcing church leadership groups, search committees, pastors and pastoral candidates. I worked with the associate conference ministers to support congregations and ministers facing complex challenges or conflict, and I participated in meetings with two congregational leadership groups to discuss questions and concerns related to the MC USA resolution on repentance and transformation, and affiliation with WDC and MC USA.
- The associate conference ministers and I hosted regular zoom meetings with interim/transitional pastors to discuss best practices and offer support, and we met regularly with the Pastor Review Advisors' group to equip them as they work with congregational leaders to facilitate pastor / congregation reviews. I am grateful for Keith Harder, Marvin

Zehr, Chuck Neufeld and Jim Stucky, who have now stepped down after many years of serving as pastor/congregation review advisors. Continuing advisors are Roger Neufeld Smith, Kathy Goering Reid, Lee Lever, and Doug Penner, and we seek additional persons to offer their experience and skills in this role. See <https://mennowdc.org/internal-and-external-resources/#pastor-congregation-review> for more information about the role of advisors.

Nurturing institutional relationships:

- Attended regular zoom meetings with conference ministers across MC USA and annual MC USA / Canada conference ministers' retreat, Nov 30 - Dec 2 in San Francisco, CA, and served as a WDC representative to MC USA Constituency Leadership Council meetings in October (zoom) and March (in San Antonio)
- Participated virtually in Indonesia 2022 Mennonite World Conference Assembly, July 5-10.
- Joined a learning tour to Guatemala Aug 11-17 for MC USA conference leaders, sponsored by SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist seminary in Guatemala City.
- Served on the planning committee for Bethel College's Worship and Arts Symposium, *Joining Voices Together*, which took place in November 2022.
- Brought greetings from WDC at Camp Mennoscah annual meeting
- Attended IBA/SeBAH graduation hosted by Hesston College
- Attended Pastors and Leaders Week Feb 13-16 at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary; offered reflections at a local ministers' gathering hosted by AMBS on the topic of a calling persons into pastoral ministry; and provided input to AMBS in its development of a new Practical Leadership Training Program beginning this September.
- Attended an "Anabaptism at 500" pastors' gathering with coordinator John Roth hosted by MennoMedia, and participated in a Community Bible study group.
- WDC received another Leadership Transformation Grant from Kansas Leadership Center (jointly with South Central Mennonite Conference) which provides 40 training spots for WDC members in core training programs of the 3-step KLC Path in 2023.

Supporting stewardship and donor relations:

- Contacted donors to invite additional contributions to support annual assembly expenses.
- Prepared annual fundraising letter to congregations and individual donors and sent thank you cards
- Consulted with staff on use and purchase of a WDC vehicle

Nurturing professional growth:

- Topics for reading this past year included mental and emotional health, contemplative ecology, loss and grief, repentance and restoration, appreciative inquiry and congregational discernment, women's and indigenous concerns.
- Took a vacation trip to Gainesville, FL, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, the first congregation I served as pastor.