

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE Ballot, August 2023

NUMBER OF VOTES _____

(* = 1st full term; **= 2nd term; +=filling an unexpired term)

I affirm the whole ballot. _____

YES NO

Moderator-Elect (1 year term)

(2024) Eric Buller (Hoffnungsaus Mennonite Church, Inman, KS)

Executive Board (3 year term)

(2026) *Caleb Gingerich (First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, KS)

(2026) *Dave Wiebe (First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS)

Continuing members: Delon Martens, Moderator (First, Hutchinson, KS); Wendy Funk Schrag (First, Newton, KS); Willmar Harder (Buhler MC, Buhler, KS); Ben Woodward-Breckbill (Shalom, Newton, KS); Aurora Parchmont (Iglesia Menonita Casa de Restauración, Houston, TX); Lee Lever (Houston Mennonite Church, Houston, TX)

Gifts Discernment Committee (3 year term)

(2026) *Linda Goering (Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS)

(2026) **Eldon Epp (Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS)

Continuing members: Alberto Parchmont (Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena, TX); Rachel Voth Schrag (Peace, Dallas, TX); Eric Jantzen (Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, KS); Dwight Mueller (First, Halstead, KS)

Church Planting Commission (3 year term)

(2026) *Jim Unruh (First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS)

(2026) *Marlene McKitrick (San Antonio Mennonite Church, San Antonio, TX)

(2025) +Katherine Graber (Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX)

(2024) +Steve Nikkel (Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS)

Continuing members: Alberto Parchmont (Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena, TX); Adela Gutierrez (Iglesia Luz del Evangelio, Dallas, TX)

Ministerial Leadership Commission (3 year term)

(2026) *Gilberto Flores (Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz)

(2026) **Todd Schlosser (Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS)

Continuing members: Cynthia Neufeld Smith (Southern Hills, Topeka, KS); Gail Graber (Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS); Samuel Voth Schrag (Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX); Micah Hurst (New Creation Fellowship Church, Newton, KS)

Resource Commission (3 year term)

(2026) *Norma Duerksen (First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS)

(2026) **Graciela Tijerina (Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS)

Continuing members: Derek King (Eden, Moundridge, KS); Debbie Goossen (First, Beatrice, NE); Stephen Wilcox (First, Halstead, KS); Melissa Atchison (Manhattan Mennonite, Manhattan, KS)

Stewardship Commission (3 year term)

(2026) *Karl Swartz (Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS)

(2026) *Jeanette Stucky (Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, KS)

Other members: Cleo Koop (Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS); Pauline Buller (First, Hutchinson, KS); Sarah Balzer (Buhler Mennonite Church, Buhler, KS); Dick Koontz (Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS)

DESCRIPTION OF NOMINEES

MODERATOR ELECT

Eric Buller, Pastor of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS. *As moderator-elect, I bring experience as a leader and pastor to WDC. I have pastored twenty-four years in WDC congregations. I have served previously on the Gifts Discernment Committee and the former Peace & Social Concerns Committee. I have also worked closely with our conference pastors in various leadership roles. I have found friendship, fellowship, and theological affinity in WDC as we follow Jesus together to witness, dwell, and connect in mission.*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Caleb Gingerich, Mennonite Disaster Service - Communications. *Caleb has been a FMCC delegate (2017, 2019, 2022), is a Bethel College graduate (class of 2019), was on the MC USA Executive Board Staff (nearly 2 years), is a current member of Mennonite Disaster Service Staff, is on the Anabaptist Communicators Board (current), and regularly attends Rainbow Mennonite Church in KC.*

David Wiebe, High School math teacher. *I've served on various committees and on the church board at First Mennonite many times over the years, but I've also attended many WDC assemblies and GC/MCUSA conventions as a delegate. I have appreciated the opportunity to connect with the broader Mennonite church body. I have also been a part of several international church communities while serving overseas both in India and Africa.*

GIFTS DISCERNMENT

Eldon Epp, Chaplain. *Eldon has experience as both a pastor and as a hospital & nursing home chaplain.*

Linda Goering, Retired social worker. *My name is Linda Goering and my home church is Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge. I am retired but continue to bake and garden for Farmers' Market. I have been on other WDC committees and have attended a number of annual conferences and MCUSA Conventions. I have been involved in my home church and used WDC resources and networking.*

CHURCH PLANTING COMMISSION

Steve Nikkel, Financial Advisor. *Steve has been involved with leadership at a church plant in Wichita for a number of years.*

Katherine Graber, PreK special education teacher. *I grew up cradle Mennonite in a non-Mennonite large city. I sought the smaller Mennonite connection by going to Eastern Mennonite University for college. My semester abroad during college was to Mexico and Guatemala allowing me to strengthen my Spanish and began to love the Latino culture. I spent a year in Nicaragua with MCC SALT program after college. These travel experiences have allowed me to see a variety of Mennonite churches throughout Central America. I think my travel experience gives me a diverse view to assist with church planting.*

Marlene McKitrick, Retired from a career in Early Childhood Education and Social Work. *Marlene grew up on a farm in Minnesota. She attended Hesston College and then graduated from Goshen College. She has had careers in Social Work and Education. While living in Denver, her family was a therapeutic foster family for 15 years. Also, while in Colorado, she was part of the church planting of Peace Mennonite Community Church in Aurora. She is married and has four adult children and five grandchildren. Marlene has lived and worked in a wide variety of cultures and geographical locations. These experiences have given her opportunities to learn and grow. She has been so fortunate to experience several wonderful church communities and wishes to serve the WDC in planting and growing new churches.*

Jim Unruh, Chaplain at Tyson Foods and Minister of Outreach at First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS. *Following MDiv from Palmer Seminary, served on the pastoral team of a multi-cultural, bilingual church in Norristown, PA. Spent ten years as solo pastor at Faith Mennonite*

Church, South Hutchinson. Have participated in many faith-based community initiatives alongside my wife Heidi, including an outreach with children called the Garden, and several spiritual small groups. Currently represent First Mennonite Church at the LightHouse, housing formerly homeless young adults. Isaiah 61:1-4 inspires me that as church folks show kindness and build relationships, this releases the gifts and talents of people in the community to expand the kingdom of God.

MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP COMMISSION

Todd Schlosser, Pastor at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS. Thank you for considering me for this role with the Ministerial Leadership Commission. I have served on MLC for 4 years and have appreciated the experience of being part of this commission doing important life-giving faithful work. It is uplifting and invigorating to hear the stories and initiatives of our pastoral leaders and our congregations and to do what we can to provide some support and care. My pastoral experience within WDC includes being a pastor at Bergthal Mennonite Church (Pawnee Rock, KS), interim pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church (North Newton, KS), and current pastor at Tabor Mennonite Church (Newton/Goessel, KS).

Gilberto Flores, Pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz, Guatemala City. Ordained Pastor (Active), Professor of Practical Theology (current), Director of Hispanic Ministry/Director of Anabaptist Biblical Institute General Conference Mennonite Church (1996-2005), Director of Denominational Ministry, former Office of Leadership Mennonite Church USA (205-2008), WDC Associate Conference Minister (2008-2015), currently serving as Pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz, Guatemala City and collaborating with Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Latinoamericano (SEMILLA). Any office or commission connected with pastoral ministry has to be holistic in all that concerns pastoral ministry. It is very important to care about pastors beyond administrative and educational perspectives.

RESOURCE COMMISSION

Norma Duerksen, Retired Pastor. Norma has always valued the resources that informed congregational life, pastoring, and personal spiritual nurture. Norma hopes to help the conference continue to provide these resources to our churches and their leaders.

Graciela Tijerina, Retired Pastor. I have served on the board for Iglesia Menonita Hispana, and I currently service on the MCC board. Service the community in different ways.

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Karl Swartz, Attorney. I have practiced law in Wichita, Kansas for 38 years. My areas of practice include business transactions, banking, real estate, oil and gas, and other business-related areas. I have also served on our firm's Executive Committee since the early 1990s, and served as the firm's Managing Director for 14 years. While I have not been active at the conference level, I have been very active at LAMC, and have served as Council Chair and Congregational Chair on several occasions. In March I will complete a combined 4-year term as Congregational Chair, which position absorbed the Council Chair position two years ago. I think my administrative experience and leadership experience in my job and at the congregational level, as well as legal work in my areas of practice, align well with the Stewardship Commission's duties overseeing personnel matters, property matters, policies, and legal matters.

Jeanette R Stucky, CPA. I have previously served on the Stewardship Commission and have a background in accounting.