

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE Ballot, August 2025**NUMBER OF VOTES** _____(* = 1st full term; **= 2nd term; +=filling an unexpired term)**I affirm the whole ballot** _____**YES NO****Executive Board** (3 year term)

(2028) *Bethany Padgett (Peace Mennonite, Dallas, TX)

(2028) *Brandon Letona (Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena, TX)

Continuing members: Eric Buller, Moderator (Hoffnungsaue Mennonite, Inman, KS); Katherine Goerzen, Moderator Elect (Tabor Mennonite, Newton, KS); Wendy Funk Schrag, Secretary (First Mennonite, Newton, KS); Caleb Gingerich (First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, KS); Dave Wiebe (First Mennonite, Newton, KS); Chris Becker (Houston Mennonite, Houston, TX); Gabriel Pennington (Southern Hills Mennonite, Topeka, KS); Dan Kunzman (First Mennonite, Beatrice, NE)

Gifts Discernment Committee (3 year term) -To Be Determined...

(2028) * _____

(2028) * _____

(2026) + _____

Continuing members: Linda Goering (Eden Mennonite, Moundridge, KS); Wayne Albrecht (Peace Mennonite, Dallas, TX); William Cork (Houston Mennonite, Houston, TX)

Church Planting Commission (3 year term)

(2028) *Andrew Dungan (Summit Street Church, Beatrice, NE)

(2028) *Mario Rocha (Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz, Guatemala)

(2027) +Timothy Schrag (Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS)

(2026) + _____

Continuing members: Marlene McKittrick (San Antonio Mennonite, San Antonio, TX); Larry Dixon (Shalom Mennonite, Newton, KS)

Ministerial Leadership Commission (3 year term)

(2028) *Elizabeth Melendez (Houston Mennonite, Houston, TX)

(2028) **Samuel Voth Schrag (Peace Mennonite, Dallas, TX)

Continuing members: Cynthia Neufeld Smith (Southern Hills Mennonite, Topeka, KS); Gilberto Flores (Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Casa de Paz, Guatemala); Todd Schlosser (Tabor Mennonite, Newton, KS); Linda Ewert (First Mennonite, Newton, KS)

Resource Commission (3 year term)

(2028) **Debbie Goossen (First Mennonite, Beatrice, NE)

(2028) *Sara Mwangura (Rainbow Mennonite, Kansas City, KS)

Continuing members: Adam Robb (Bethel College Mennonite, North Newton, KS); Norma Duerksen (First Mennonite, Hillsboro, KS); Megan Turley (Houston Mennonite, Houston, TX); Kris Balzer (Buhler Mennonite, Buhler, KS)

Stewardship Commission (3 year term)

(2028) **Sarah Balzer (Southern Hills, Topeka, KS)

(2028) *Renetta Gooden (Hope Mennonite, Wichita, KS)

(2026) + _____

Other members: Cleo Koop (Tabor Mennonite, Newton, KS); Karl Swartz (Lorraine Avenue Mennonite, Wichita, KS); Vern Jantzen (First Mennonite, Beatrice, NE)

DESCRIPTION OF NOMINEES

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bethany Padgett, Musician and Sonographer. Recent positions held at Peace Mennonite Church include Chair of the PMC congregation 2024-25 which includes running the leadership committee meetings and congregational meetings, Chair-elect 2023-24, church deacon for several years and pastoral search committee member. My history with the Mennonite church started when I attended the Mennonite Church of Normal 2008-10. My previous experience with anabaptism was growing up attending Hope Church of the Brethren in Michigan.

Brandon Letona, Preacher, teacher, and worship team leader. Holding scripture as the maximum authority in our lives is essential in order to truly do all things with excellence and as unto the Lord. I believe our calling to love our neighbor and what that looks like is reflected directly through how intentional we are to live the word ourselves and reflect the character of God in our actions. In the midst of a world where hope seems lost we must take heart and recall we are called to live the present in light of eternity. Equipping the current generation from youngest to oldest so that we may truly be of blessing onto others by the renewing of our mind.

GIFTS DISCERNMENT

To Be Determined...

CHURCH PLANTING COMMISSION

Andrew Dungan, Pastor. I offer unique perspectives on how local churches can faithfully respond in places they've never been before. With years of nonprofit capacity-building experience, an advanced degree in interdisciplinary leadership, experience developing cadres of volunteers and two years as a pastor leading a church into the transition of "becoming a neighborhood church," I am glad to serve alongside the others on the Church Planting Commission.

Mario Rocha Iglesias, Music Teacher. For more than fifteen years I have had the opportunity and willingness to serve in different evangelization projects for children, youth and adults, in the areas of music, biblical education, and community service. This has allowed me to have the experience of planning the work of evangelization, decision making, and teamwork.

Timothy Schrag, College Student. I'm currently taking part in the Ministry Inquiry Program through Mennonite Church USA at my home church of Alexanderwohl. Through this program I'm hoping to learn more about the varying aspects of church ministry. As a current college student, I hope to bring this perspective of learning to my role on the commission, recognizing how much wisdom surrounds me through church leaders and mentors, but also the importance of all perspectives, including my own, as a young adult just getting my feet wet in the world of ministry.

MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP COMMISSION

Elizabeth Melendez, Retired ESL teacher. I've been a Mennonite since I was 17 years old, and have attended Houston Menn Church (HMC) for over 20 years. I lived in Puerto Rico before moving to the United States. I've traveled around the world mostly through Mennonite World Conference. I support congregational care for the pastor/family and church members. I love to learn about the Scriptures for through it we learn about God and his will for humankind. I have taught children at HMC. I love worship, prayer and communion meals. I believe in church training that prepares us for peace and justice.

Samuel Voth Schrag, Pastor. Samuel Voth Schrag is the pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas. He is committed to faithful Mennonite pastoral leadership. He has served on MLC for one term, as well as serving on the credentialing committee in Illinois Mennonite Conference when he was pastor in St. Louis and the MCUSA Executive Board.

RESOURCE COMMISSION

Debbie Goossen, Retired school librarian. *I am currently serving as chair for the Resource Commission and I am seeking a second term on the Commission. My over 30 year career, first as an English teacher and then as a school librarian, have helped me in the area of discerning resources for our WDC congregations. I am especially excited about the "Kids Meet Christ" Lilly Grant we have received and have enjoyed helping with the implementation of this 5 year program.*

Sara Mwagura, Teacher. *For the past two years, I have served as the Faith Formation director for the children (ages 0-12 years) at our church, Rainbow Mennonite.*

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Sarah Balzer, Community Organizer. *Sarah is the Lead Organizer of Topeka JUMP, a coalition of 35 faith communities in Shawnee County, Kansas. She helps build grassroots power to pursue justice by organizing people of faith to take collective action rooted in their shared values. In this role, she also has experience in fundraising, research, and community engagement.*

Renetta Gooden, Accounting Supervisor. *I have experience both professionally and in non-profit roles with finance and budgeting. I have served on the Camp Mennoscah Executive Board and Hope Mennonite Church's Vision Council where I have provided financial leadership and led or participated in the budget process. I have a deep commitment to the ongoing Mennonite Church and serving God's people.*