

Summary of What We See
in Mountain States Mennonite Conference
November 2015 to August 2016
Reported by
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- We began our work with MSMC on November 1 by worshipping at Beth-El where we immediately made friends and declared it as our “home church.”
- The next weekend we were a part of the Pastors & Spouses Retreat at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp. Along with meeting dozens of new friends, we worshiped together in sessions led by Chuck Neufeld.
- We take part in meetings of the Leadership Board and at times with leaders at large in the conference.
- December 1-6 found us in Orlando, FL at the Mennonite Church USA's Conference Ministers' meetings. This included conference ministers from Canada and the US.
- Our first major trip visiting churches began in Alamosa, CO, then on to Farmington, Carlsbad, Albuquerque and Taos, New Mexico.
- We enjoy meeting with Annie Lengacher Browning, acting Conference Minister, and Karen Cox, Moderator, as well as with the pastors in the southern area (South East C O Mennonite Pastors) and those pastors in Denver and beyond (Denver Area Anabaptist Ministers).
- Annie, Linford and Mary Etta, along with artist and designer, Ken Gingerich, developed a “**Common Prayer**” from Luke 1 for all of us to use in our private prayers. We know churches are praying this together as well. What is God showing us in this prophetic message?
- **Where is the life in our conference?** It's in an Assembly like at Ghost Ranch (2015), at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Mennonite Disaster Service projects, and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sale in Rocky Ford, CO!
- **Other energizing ministries** that are bubbling up are in Todd Wynward's “Watershed Discipleship; RAWTools turning guns into garden tools; Neighborhood churches; Casa de Paz, having Fernando & Rebeca from Mexico City among us; possible new conference organizational structures; and new things too early to speak about, give us glimpses of what God's Spirit is doing in Mountain States Mennonite Conference.
- In April we led a day retreat for pastors at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Colorado Springs. There we experienced friendship, prayer and silence.
- In **Silence** we seek God's face together for the well-being of Mountain States Mennonite Conference. This comes as a plea from our brother, Doug Spence, member at Albuquerque Mennonite. Mother Theresa said, “The problem with us is that we've forgotten we belong to each other.” Through prayer we become bonded as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- An ordination service was held for Wilmer Villacorta and Mary Etta King on April 30.
- Top four directives from Faith & Life in May are to:
 - reach out and build relationships outside the church
 - engage a resource team to do conference work around conflict and pastoral issues
 - discover a stimulator of finding unity in diversity
 - teach and model prayer practices
- These directives match the priorities of the conference which are:
 - Prayer and Faith Formation

- Diversity
 - Relational Accountability
 - Contextual Passion in ministry
 - Leadership Development
- We completed our goal of visiting all 21 churches in MSMC by the middle of May. This gives us a better perspective of the whole conference. Most congregations are small. The question is: “How can we survive?” By reaching our neighbors. Together we minister in the Name of Christ.
 - Everence Financial Services sponsored an event in early May for pastors and spouses in the Castle at Glen Eyrie in Colorado Springs. Pastors may apply for a grant given by Lilly Foundation to reduce personal debt in order to be more free to serve their congregations.
 - In recalling the history of MSMC since 2006 in a gathering of past leaders of the conference and the Leadership Board, we looked back over the last century and were encouraged to 1) lament and let go of what is no longer relevant and 2) engage the vision and emerging projects.
 - One new thing that has emerged is the call for Theda Good's ordination at First Mennonite Church in Denver. We may disagree on what is biblical and how the Spirit wants to lead us, but as a conference of churches **we can agree to disagree in Love**. May the world say of us, “See how they love each other.”
 - Let us also pay attention to our visions and dreams so that in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit we will move forward as the Early Church did in Acts!
 - **WE CAN DO THIS!** is a phrase that someone uttered recently in one of our pastors' meetings. Let us join the movement of the Spirit and together minister to the enormous needs around us.
 - **“GOD, HELP US!”**