

Developing Healthy Congregations

New Position Brings Intentional Focus on Healthy Congregations and Organizations

Congregations, conferences, and denominations have shown a marked interest in recent years in developing the organizational skills needed to work through conflict in a healthy manner. This is an encouraging sign. Churches often view the need for a third party to help them process a conflict as a sign of failure, which tends to keep congregations from seeking help until the conflict has escalated to the point that they cannot work through it alone. By that time, the church may already have deep divisions with many wounded individuals.

Developing healthy congrega-

tions has always been a goal of KIPCOR. While KIPCOR has been involved in many trainings and educational workshops, the vast majority of participants have been those involved in the judicial system, social services, public education, etc. While some training has been done with individuals and congregations, the majority of KIPCOR's church related work has been providing intervention services in serious conflict.

Our goal is to work not just with churches in specific conflicts but to help *all* churches become more knowledgeable about handling

See **Healthy Congregations**, p. 5

Inside this issue:

<i>Introducing Robert Yutzy</i>	2
<i>McCutcheon Headlines Lecture Series</i>	3
<i>New Lecture Series Look for KIPCOR</i>	3
<i>KIPCOR Calendar</i>	3
<i>HOPE is coming to McPherson and Harvey Counties</i>	4
<i>Divorce and Custody Mediation</i>	4
<i>Helping Kansas Courts Help Foster Children</i>	5
<i>Financial Corner</i>	6
<i>2006-2007 Donations</i>	7
<i>Support & Information Form</i>	8

Volunteer Spotlight on Leslie Frye



At 2:00 on Thursday afternoons, Leslie Frye makes herself available to people waiting for their small claims cases to be heard in the

McPherson County courthouse. Instead of the disputants presenting their sides to the judge and letting him rule, however, they may settle the case themselves through mediation. (Mediation is an informal problem-solving process facilitated by an unbiased third party, the me-

diator, who helps the parties identify the issues and reach a mutually satisfactory resolution through discussion, negotiation and problem solving.)

Leslie Frye, a volunteer with KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center, has coordinated the McPherson County Small Claims project since 2005 and has mediated approximately forty cases.

About eighty percent of the cases resulted in a signed agreement that was acceptable to both parties. Cases that were not resolved through mediation were heard by the judge.

Leslie became interested in mediation when she attended a workshop at her church in Charlottesville, Virginia, about 17 years ago. She had taken classes in communication and listening skills before, but mediation offered a process for handling conflicts that she found very helpful, both personally and professionally. Mediation is most satisfying for Leslie when people who thought they would not be able to reach an

...in one case, the two "former friends" had not spoken in months, but once they got a chance to be in a room, they not only resolved their dispute but also healed their relationship.

agreement find common ground. It is especially gratifying when someone brings a case against a friend

see **Volunteer**, p. 2



KIPCOR's new Coordinator of Congregational Ministries, Robert Yutz

A Self-introduction

Mennonite institutions seem to have a great affinity for acronyms. While I was finishing my degree, I was often asked what I was doing since leaving the family farm operation. I would tell people that I was a student in CTP's graduate program at EMU's CJP and that I was working part-time for the STAR program which is a part of EMU's CJP's Practice Institute and funded by CWS. This was usually followed by a look of either confusion or "Sorry I asked."

The longer answer was to say that I was a graduate student in the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (not the Clinical Journal of Pain) and that I worked for the Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience which was founded by the Conflict Transformation Program, housed in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding's Practice Institute and funded by Church World Service. The next awkward silence that followed was usually ended with, "Can you get a real job

KIPCOR is seeing more need for churches to develop discernment and decision-making models to deal with a rapidly changing culture that tends to strain organizations.



Robert (far right) gets an orientation on the hazards of role playing with experienced mediators.

with that?"


Well, yes. My name is Robert Yutz, the newest addition to the KIPCOR staff. My specific major is in conflict transformation and organizational leadership with a focus on developing healthy congregations.

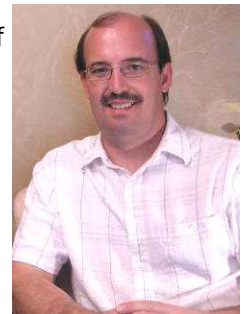
I would have to admit that I wasn't sure either if I would be able to get a job that fit my specific training. From 2005 to 2006, I served as an intentional interim co-pastor with my wife, Lu, in Yoder Mennonite Church, a rural congregation

about a mile north of Yoder, Kansas. I was able to use my work at Yoder for my required master's practicum and was fortunate enough to have Gary Flory, KIPCOR's director, be my on-site supervisor. That began a working rela-

tionship that led to an invitation from KIPCOR to consider joining their staff to work on developing their growing work with congregations and organizations.

KIPCOR is seeing more need for churches to develop discernment and decision-making models to deal with a rapidly changing culture that tends to strain organizations. My position as the Coordinator of Congregational Ministries is to help develop those discernment and decision making models to help congregations avoid times of crises caused by poor process, false perceptions, and misunderstandings.

Now when people ask me if I was able to find a job after finishing school, I can "simply" tell them that I am KIPCOR's CCM at BC. 



Volunteer - cont'd from p. 1


due to a misunderstanding—or because someone else talked them into it—and then can find a mutually acceptable resolution. She said that in one case, the two "former friends" had not spoken in months, but once they got a chance to be in a room together and talk things out, they not only resolved their dispute but also healed their relationship. She added that it was a real privilege to be a part of helping them regain their friendship. According to Leslie,

"It's like light bulbs go off in their brains, and simultaneously a load is lifted from their shoulders."

Leslie has a bachelor's degree in management, housing and family development with an emphasis in family and child services from Virginia Tech and a Master of Arts degree in theology from Bethany Theological Seminary. She has completed the Church of the Brethren Training in Ministry program and, as an ordained minister, is a member of a

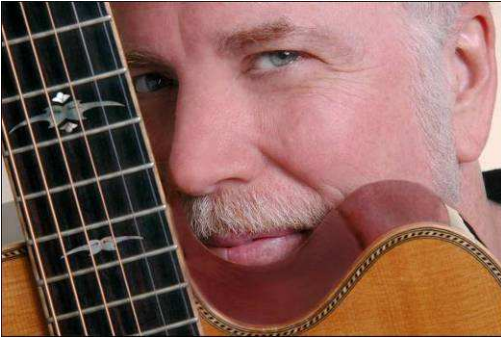
co-pastoring team at the Monitor Church of the Brethren in rural McPherson.

Leslie lives in McPherson with her husband, Jonathan, and their teenaged son and daughter.

We hope that the McPherson County Small Claims project is only the first of several services that the Community Mediation Center provides in McPherson County. 

Upcoming Events and Training

McCutcheon Headlines Peace Lecture Series



Nationally acclaimed singer, songwriter and peace activist, John McCutcheon will perform at Memorial Hall on the Bethel College campus on Saturday, February 16, 2008, at 7:30 in the evening. This concert is free and open to the public.

Including both traditional music and original material in his performances, John McCutcheon has become what one Australian paper called “the most overwhelming folk performer in the English lan-

Critics reserve their most lavish praise for McCutcheon’s mastery of the hammer dulcimer, an instrument on which he is widely recognized as a world master.

guage.” Critics reserve their most lavish praise for McCutcheon’s mastery of the hammer dulcimer, an instrument on which he is widely recognized as a world master. In addition to the KIPCOR concert, McCutcheon will speak at a Bethel College convocation on Friday, February 15th, and preach at Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kansas, on Sunday morning, February 17th.

Bringing John McCutcheon to Kansas is possible in large part to the generous support of the Peace with Justice Task Force of Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Peace Committee at Eden Mennonite Church, and the Ted Mueller Trust. We are still looking for additional help in sponsoring John McCutcheon. Contact KIPCOR

if you are interested.

Mark February 16th on your calendar! This will be a very special evening! 🐦

KIPCOR Calendar

January 7-18, 2008

[Practical Skills for Managing Group and Organizational Conflict](#)
Bethel Course #SSC 461
9 a.m. to noon
Kaufman House, 2515 College Avenue,
North Newton KS

January 22-31, 2008

[Practical Skills for Working with Culture, Gender and Power in Conflict](#)
Bethel Course #SSC 462
9 a.m. to noon
Kaufman House, 2515 College Avenue,
North Newton KS

February 16, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

[John McCutcheon performance](#)
Memorial Hall, Bethel College.
No charge.

Feb. 12-13 & 19-20, 2008

[Practical Skills for Managing Interpersonal Conflict](#)
Bethel Course #SSC 460
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Kaufman House, 2515 College Ave.,
North Newton KS

June 10-13, 2008

[Practical Skills for Managing Interpersonal Conflict](#)
Bethel Course #SSC 460
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Kaufman House, 2515 College Ave.,
North Newton KS

July 30 - August 1, 2008

[Domestic Mediation Training](#)
Bethel Course #SSC 464
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Kaufman House, 2515 College Ave.,
North Newton KS

New Lecture Series Look for KIPCOR

Last spring, the KIPCOR Steering Committee extensively reviewed the format of the Peace Lecture Series, now in its 35th year. Concerns prompting the review were the difficulty in attracting younger people to the peace lectures, and the increasing competition for audience time (reflected in the lecture series by smaller crowds).

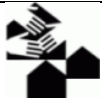
The Steering Committee developed the following recommendations:

- Reduce the total number of lecturers brought in by KIPCOR (but remain open to supporting speakers, even on short notice, who will be in

the area anyway).

- Find ways to bring in higher-profile speakers, especially by exploring ways of collaborating with other groups.
- Make one of the annual Peace Lecture Series events a performance” – music, theater, etc. – that may attract a larger and younger audience.

As we determine how these guidelines work over the next couple of years, we would invite your comments and thoughts on this, as well. Please feel free to contact any KIPCOR Staff or Steering Committee member. 🐦



The Community Mediation Center

HOPE Is Coming to McPherson and Harvey Counties

KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center is developing an educational and skill-building program, called HOPE, in conjunction with the 9th Judicial District Court. The primary goal of the Healthy Opportunities for Parenting Effectively (HOPE) program is to reduce the negative effects of conflict and divorce on children by helping parents learn new, healthy skills and co-parenting relationships.

The HOPE program will include a series of six classes starting on January 31, 2008, for parents involved in highly conflicted di-


vorces or other parental break-ups. The classes will involve presentations by guest speakers such as a retired judge, an attorney, a social worker, a therapist and court services officers, as well as videos, small group discussions and skill-building exercises. They will be co-facilitated by Jennifer Foster, the

The primary goal of the Healthy Opportunities for Parenting Effectively (HOPE) program is to reduce the negative effects of conflict and divorce on children by helping parents learn new, healthy skills and co-parenting relationships.

chief court services officer for the 9th judicial district, and Barbara Schmidt, manager of KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center. Although referrals to HOPE will be primarily by Court Order, referrals from other sources may

be accepted.

The program is being modeled closely after a very successful program called "Higher Ground" that was developed by the domestic court services department in the Johnson County District Court in 2004. According to Gary Kretchmer, co-founder of Higher Ground, "almost all of the parents (who completed the Higher Ground program) reported an increase in their own coping and communication skills. Eighty-six percent reported an improvement in the level of conflict and better communication."

Funding for HOPE is provided by a grant from the Kansas Supreme Court's Dispute Resolution Advisory Council and by fees paid by attendees. 

Divorce and Custody Mediation from an Attorney's Perspective

by Joe Robb

Do divorces have emotion and conflict? Absolutely. That's not a surprise. Can conflict be reduced or even at times eliminated to help a family or particularly their children? Absolutely.

In my almost 25 years of divorce (and other) practice, I've seen hundreds of emotion-filled cases and conflicts, but, thankfully, I also began providing mediation services almost 15 years ago. I have seen that many times when folks sit down with someone trained to help them comfortably express interests, consider options and solve issues they find at least some peace and that agreeing on things helps reduce conflict for their children. If Mom and Dad are in conflict they are stress filled and it absolutely affects their children.

I have many things that are professionally satisfying in what I do for


a living but I have to say that divorce and custody mediation is some of the most satisfying work I do. Most attorneys, even those who regularly practice in the divorce area, don't like doing divorces. They are difficult

I find immense strength in this work because maybe, just maybe, at the end of the day I've helped folks through one of the most difficult times in their lives.

and filled with emotion. Whether acting as an attorney for one of the parties or as a mediator (two very different yet in many ways similar roles) I find immense strength in this work because maybe, just maybe, at the end of the day I've helped folks through one of the most difficult times in their lives.

Amazingly, most of that professional satisfaction comes from the relief in folks' faces and voices when they realize that they have solved



some very important things short of having to go to Court. They've reduced conflict and all of the negatives of the Court experience. There are not many "absolutes" in life, but two are that divorces have emotion and conflict, and that through commitment folks can work to reduce that conflict in their lives and the lives of their children. Is that better for all of them? Absolutely. 

(Joe Robb is an attorney/mediator in Newton KS and a member of KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center panel of domestic mediators.)

Helping Kansas Courts Help Foster Children: A New Consensus Council Project

The Kansas Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) has selected the Great Plains Consensus Council (GPCC) to provide facilitation of permanency planning groups in Judicial Districts across the state. The GPCC is a part of KIPCOR – with the Great Plains Consensus Council name being used to more accurately reflect public policy work, just as KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center name is used to more accurately reflect interpersonal mediation work.

The goal of this work is to help Judicial Districts in Kansas identify gaps in how services are provided in foster care cases so children do not fall through the cracks. We will then assist courts and related agencies in finding ways to provide better and more efficient services. The process will use a hypothetical foster care case to flesh out these issues.


In addition to the District Court

Judge, participants in the process in each Judicial District will include representatives of the local Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) office, children in need of care (CINC) contractors, mental health and short term care facilities, guard-

The goal of this work is to help Judicial Districts in Kansas identify gaps in how services are provided in foster care cases so children do not fall through the cracks.

ian ad litem, district/county attorneys, law enforcement, and potentially other community service providers such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), citizen review boards, school districts, and guidance centers.

To complete this work, the GPCC has organized a team of Kansas experienced mediators and facilitators which include Kirsten Zerger and Gary Flory from GPCC, Roxanne Emmert-Davis (mediation trainer and former social work professor at the University of Kansas), Micki Armstrong (mediator and professor at Ft. Hays State University), Julie MacLachlan (mediator and attorney from Overland Park), and Joy Marlin (former coordinator of the Sedgwick County Juvenile Permanency Mediation Program with Midland Mediation/Kansas Legal Services). In addition, Larry Friesen, chair of the Bethel College Social Work Department, will be consulting with the team to develop evaluations of the project.

Initial plans are for this work to be completed in approximately two years. 

Healthy Congregations - cont'd from p. 1

differences and making difficult decisions. Helping individuals become aware of their own style of dealing with conflict, and how to express themselves and listen effectively in difficult conversations, are all key to the better functioning of the congregation. If congregations can become more skillful in dealing with disagreements as they arise, they will grow as a healthy community. One individual from a congregation we have worked with recently observed that the training we presented not only helped her in dealing with people in her church, but she also saw a change in the way she dealt with conflict in the classroom as a public school teacher.

Because we are seeing such a great need for this type of proactive education and training for congregations and their leaders, we have committed ourselves to creating a new position to focus specifically on developing models for discernment

and decision making processes as well as offering organizational analysis and help in visioning processes.

Robert Yutzy joined the KIPCOR staff as the Coordinator of Congregational Ministries on August 13, 2007. Robert comes to us after completing a master's degree in


We are seeking ways we can partner with individuals and conferences to make proactive training and education more affordable

conflict transformation and organizational leadership with an emphasis on congregational life from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Robert moved to North Newton with his wife, Luann, and three of their five children. His oldest two children at-

tend Eastern Mennonite University as undergraduates.

In addition to Robert's training in conflict transformation, he is also a graduate of Hesston College's Pastoral Ministry Program, Hesston, KS, and he has served three different congregations as a pastor. One of those pastorates was as an intentional co-interim pastor with his wife in a very conflicted church setting.

We are very excited about the breadth of experience KIPCOR can offer congregations and that our new coordinator can focus on putting our skills to use in developing healthy congregations and more effective decision making processes.

If you would like to know more about what we can offer, please contact Robert Yutzy, Coordinator of Congregational Ministries, at 316-284-5880. Robert is also available to be a guest speaker in your congregation, leadership group, or service club. 

Financial Corner

by Gary Flory



Writing a column on KIPCOR finances is a challenge – but this is a piece that needs to be written. Let

me start with the context in which this is done.

When I began as director of KIPCOR a little over nine years ago, I was the only staff person and was hired ½ time. We have grown since then to a talented and committed staff of five (4.5 full-time equivalent).

Our work has expanded to include a full-service community mediation center, extensive education and training programs in a variety of areas, congregational and organizational conflict, and public policy and environmental consensus building – plus a number of other areas that don't fit neatly into one of these categories, such as the Ulster Project involving teens from Northern Ireland.

In all of these areas, we are trying hard to

- blend theory and practice – recognizing that we must have both a solid theoretical foundation for our work, but also a willingness to “walk the talk,” and
- focus more on how early education and intervention can help difficult situations from becoming full-blown conflict (prevention is a part of good conflict resolution).

You will hear more about areas of KIPCOR work in future newsletters, but the point is we have grown rapidly while staying firmly within the KIPCOR mission.

And this is where we are faced with the real challenge. Bethel College is a wonderful setting for the work we do, and we are fortunate to

have the support that Bethel offers. But almost all of our programming funds need to come from other sources.

We are working to generate fees for more of our work. But a significant amount of our work is provided without cost or at a reduced rate, and even with fee-based work, we often provide much more time than we are paid for. That's part of the business we are in: We want to provide work that is needed, even if the people or organizations cannot pay

**We cannot do this work alone.
We can and should do it together.
And we need your support.**

for the service.

As some of you may have heard me say, entrepreneurs looking to make their fortune don't rush to set up an institute working in the areas of peace and conflict resolution.

With Steering Committee and office staff support, I have decided to spend a significant amount of my time in fundraising.

This is a bit scary for me, as my expertise is in the substantive work of KIPCOR and I have no background in fundraising. I can't approach people with a polished pitch, and, frankly, I wouldn't be very good at that.

All I can do is tell people what KIPCOR does, and why we believe our work is important for the community and the wider world.

Mostly I can talk to those who have an interest in helping find ways that people can resolve differences constructively – whether that be on an elementary school playground or in the Middle East.

We cannot do this work alone. We can and should do it together. And we need your support.

Elsewhere in the newsletter is a form – and we would invite you to fill

this out and send it in if you are interested in supporting KIPCOR or any of its programs.

In addition, I would be happy to visit with any of you about larger gifts, annuities, and estate planning bequests (and specifically how those funds might be used). And, of course, I would be delighted to speak to groups such as service clubs and Sunday School classes that might be interested in hearing more specifics about what we do.

If you are still reading – thank you! This has been a long piece, but an important one. KIPCOR needs your help now more than ever. Let us know how you think we can work together to move forward. 📧

KIPCOR Leadership

Staff

Gary Flory, KIPCOR Director

Sierra Hostetler, Student Assistant

Jean Isaac, Administrative Assistant

Barbara Schmidt, Manager of the
Community Mediation Center

Robert Yutzy, Coordinator of
Congregational Ministries

Kirsten Zerger, Director of
Education and Training

Steering Committee

Allison Boehm

Christine Downey

Nancy Edwards

Rodney Frey

Larry Friesen

Oswald Goering

Penelope Adams Moon

Maher Musleh

Sam Muyskens

Debbie Schmidt

Karin Kaufman Wall

Teddy Woods

Richard Zerger

Donations to KIPCOR July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

\$10,000-\$25,000

Flory, Rowena
Premer, Glenna

\$5,000-\$9,999

Rich, Margaret
Stutzman Refuse Disposal, Inc.

\$2,500-\$4,999

Kansas West Annual Conf. of the UMC

\$1,000-\$2,499

\$500-\$999

Claassen, LaVonda & Milton
Flory, Ann & Gary
Goering, Beth & Jacob
Goering, Elizabeth & Victor
Lynch, James
Newton Medical Center

\$250-\$499

Adrian & Pankratz
Flory, Barbara & Lowell
Goering, Jana & Mike
Jantzen, Elaine & Paul
Kough, Arlene
Miller, Dan & Jaynette
Rutschman, Naomi & Orville
Shawver, N. Trip
Somers, Robb & Robb Law Offices

\$100-\$249

Balzer, David & Kristina
Bartel, Floyd & Justina Neufeld
Buller, Linda & Paul
Claassen, Virginia
Claassen, Walter
Ediger, Byron & Janet
Esau, Rex & Constance
Faith Mennonite Church
Ice, Sue & Ted
Juhnke, James
Keller, Frank & Holly
Kreider, Alice & Gerald
Mathur, Balbir & Treva
Mennonite Church USA Menn. Men
Moyer, J. Harold & Rosemary
Mueller, Berneil & Ted
Penner, Carolyn & Don
Ratzlaff, Marlan
Reimer, Gladys

Siemens, Frances & Richard
Strait, L.J. & W.K.

Under \$99

American Assn. of Univ. Women
Bartel, Barry
Becker, Harold & Irene
Bertrand, Helen
Bohn, Anita & Stan
Claassen, John & Miriam
Ecker, Wanda
Ediger, Tina B.
Ewy, Lester
Friesen, Joe & Lois
Gaeddert, John & Mary
Goering, Fern & Roland
Goering, Verna
Goossen, Levi & Rose
Graber, Charles
Gross, Monica
Harder, Ruth
Harms, Ed & Marjorie
Hinz, Wilma
Isaac, Gary & Jean
Janzen, Judy
Johnson, Norma J.
Jost, Mary Ann & Walt
Kauffman, Ed & Gay
Kaufman, Steve
Kitch, Jeannette
Klaassen, Melvin
Knauss, Cliff
Koehn, Louise
Krehbiel, June & Perry
Lehman, Ralph
Loganbill, Luella
Miller, Berta
Neufeld, Donna & Harry
Neufeld, Kenneth
Oswald, Lonny & Voyce
Pauls, Vernon & Janice
Penner, Karen & Lawrence
Penner, Kaye & Virgil
Raber, Boots
Rahal, Lois
Ratzlaff, Marie
Regehr, Bill & Maurine
Renich, Paul & Roberta
Reusser, Loren & Peggy
Rinner, Esther
Schmidt, Christine Downey
Schmidt, Meribeth & Randolph
Schrag, J.O. & Esther

Shelly, Griselda & Maynard
Sizemore, Michael
Smith, Edwin & Mary
Stucky, Martha
Stucky, Ruby
Thieszen, Carl & Louise
Vorán, Carolyn
Voth, Jane
Waltner, Christine & Harris
Wedel, Marie
Wiens, Norma & Wendell
Wildeboor, Violet
Zehr, Janis & Orlyn
Zerger, R. Ann

Volunteers

Buller, Diana
Deckert, Jennifer Chappell
Claassen, John
Frye, Leslie
Kliewer, Judy
Klaassen, Donna
Loganbill, Wilma
Miller, Dan
Mueller, Ted
Nathan, Joshua
Nathan, Sandy
Oswald, Clark
Parker, Chip
Regier, Ray
Reimer, Gladys
Schrag, Libby
Zehr, Jeannie



Support KIPCOR

Knowing KIPCOR's work is expanding and in need of support, I/we wish to contribute the following amount:

- \$2,500
- \$1,000
- \$500
- \$250
- \$150
- \$100
- \$50

\$ _____ Other

I would like someone to contact me about an annuity, estate planning or other gift.

In support of:

- KIPCOR in general
- Community Mediation Center
- Congregational Work
- Education and Training
- Consensus Council

_____ Other

Please fill out and detach this form, make checks payable to KIPCOR, and mail it to P.O. Box 276, North Newton, KS 67117.

Your donation is tax deductible and counted as a gift to Bethel College.

Volunteer at KIPCOR

I would like to learn more about volunteering at KIPCOR:

preparing meals or providing baked goods for events

becoming a volunteer mediator

participating in role-plays during KIPCOR trainings

assisting with mailings and other office tasks; and/or

_____ Other

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone

E-mail

We're on the Web! www.bethelks.edu/kipcor

Kaufman House
2515 College Avenue
P.O. Box 276
North Newton, KS 67117-0276
316-284-5217
kipcor@bethelks.edu
www.bethelks.edu/kipcor



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
North Newton
KS 67117
Permit No. 1