



# buzz

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## “From a Friend”

In last week’s issue of the Buzz, I asked the question, “How have you experienced God’s generosity in your life and through the ministry of Waterford Mennonite Church?”

Thirty years ago, Bonnie and I were broke college students, living in married student housing and each working 20-plus hours per week. We had begun attending Waterford, not because of any particular reason, but because we were tired of visiting other congregations.

One Sunday, we found in our church mailbox an envelope with a \$50 bill, signed simply, “From a friend.” We still don’t know the source.

A few years later, our first son was born prematurely, and he spent several weeks in neonatal intensive care. The morning after he was born, a woman in the congregation drove to Mishawaka to deliver sub plans to the school where Bonnie was teaching. Pastor Sylvia and others visited us in the hospital, and we were bathed in prayer by the congregation.

Two years later, Bonnie went on bedrest for the final two months of her second pregnancy. During those eight weeks, a man from the congregation volunteered to drive our oldest son to Elkhart twice each week for occupational therapy sessions. A gift from Waterford’s Sharing Fund helped provide child care and a portion of the income we lost from Bonnie being unable to work. We were again bathed in prayer.

And in those events, we were welcomed. And we were changed. The congregation we’d chosen for no particular reason had become our church home. Through the people at Waterford, we understood in a new way the God who gathers us in like a mother hen gathers her chicks.

In the years since, Bonnie and I have continued to be transformed by God and by this congregation. A senior adult woman has told me that she prays for me every day, by name. We have participated in spring break learning trips. We have experienced the joys of Baptism Sunday. We’ve been moved to tears in worship.

And many times since then, as have I reflected on these experiences, I’m been reminded of how the song (almost) goes: “My life flows on in endless song, . . . how can I keep from giving?”

So again, I ask the question: How have you experienced God’s generosity in your life and through the ministry of Waterford Mennonite Church? I invite you to share your gratitude story with others, perhaps at the beginning or end of your Sunday school class. I’d welcome hearing your story as well. (Bonnie would too!)

--Lyle Miller, Welcoming Spaces 3.0 coordinator

## Wedding Open House

Sarah Thompson and Jonathan Brenneman invite you to the Open House that is part of their wedding weekend in two weeks. Many of you may remember Sarah from when she attended Waterford in high school, or when she came to speak last year for Mission Sunday. Or perhaps you know her parents, George and Karen Thompson, who attended here throughout the last decade. The Open House will be at a booth at the Mennonite Relief Sale on Saturday, September 22, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. This is an open invitation for all who will be at the relief sale during that time to please stop by Sarah and Jonathan’s booth. They will be so happy to see you!

## What is this Open Space Technology Meeting?

The next step in our Mennonite Education Fund Review process is an Open Space Technology gathering, scheduled for Sunday Sept. 23, from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. We thank you in advance for coming out on a Sunday afternoon and trying something new. Please allow the rest of this article to be more in the form of FAQs, which I'm sure some of you have.

**What is Open Space Technology (OST)?** This is a particular format of workshop developed in the 1980's and used effectively since then around the world by corporations, governmental and non-profit organizations. It actually has nothing to do with computers and high tech, but everything to do with creating an open space where everyone's voice matters and the people collectively are responsible for what happens. In OST there is no preset agenda, because the participants bring it themselves. It is a highly participatory method that calls for you to speak up for what you believe, and listen well to others. We actually encourage you to Google "open space technology" and learn more for yourself.

**What characterizes how OST works?** OST largely operates by four rules that maximize participation in the present moment and reduce wasted time in the future. These will be explained more at the event:

- When it's over, it's over
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened
- Whoever turns up are the right people
- "The law of two feet"

**Why are we using OST in this review process?** This was a recommendation from our consultant Philip Thomas as a way to name early in our process what are the topics and the issues that Waterford people feel are the most important issues around Mennonite Education funding. This is instead of church leaders assuming to know what those issues are. This empowers the people to have their say about what really matters most. The most commonly voiced issues will become the basis for discussion in the Conversations That Matter sessions in this process, scheduled for Oct. 10 and Nov. 7.

**Who should come to this?** Anyone who has any particular beliefs or opinions about Mennonite

Education and how/if churches should fund it. We are especially encouraging high schoolers to participate, since they are the most directly affected in the present and the future. It is for anyone who wants their voice to influence what we talk about in future conversations pertaining to Mennonite Education.

**What if I can't make it to the event? Will it be recorded?** Sorry, but it will not be recorded because that would undermine the third rule above (actually the first three rules), and it would take away from the power of the moment and the people gathered. In today's world, it is impossible to avoid all schedule conflicts. This is intended as a full-participation event, not something for later spectators, although a summary report will be made publicly available afterward.

**Why does it take so long?** Actually, practitioners of OST claim that successful OST events with large groups seldom happen in less than eight hours, which is usually over an entire weekend. As we attempt OST for the first time at Waterford, we are adapting and condensing it as much as we think we can. About two-thirds of the time spent is usually in smaller group conversations that you go to because you choose that topic. You also get to go to several conversations that interest you, for as long as the conversation needs to last.

**Won't we get hungry during that time?** A light set of refreshments will be provided in a central passing space as more of a come-and-go buffet that will not disrupt the main conversations. You will take your food and drink with you to your conversations. There will not be a fixed time to sit down to eat.

**Will childcare be provided?** We don't have a confirmed answer yet, but we are making plans to provide some childcare in this time block. We understand that parents are some of the most likely in our congregation to have significant interest in this event. More details on childcare will come out in the last few days before the event.

**Who is planning this event?** Two ad hoc groups: The Mennonite Education Fund Review Committee (Jason Herrmann, Gordon Bontrager, Dan Stoltzfus, Jo Ward-Selman, Neil Amstutz) and the Conversations That Matter Planning Group (Aaron Lehman, Rose Shetler, Christa Graber Kauffman, John Kaufman, Neil Amstutz)

—Pastor Neil Amstutz, for both organizing groups

## Opportunity to Hear More About the Two-Way Mission in Ecuador

Come to hear more from the Ross Richer Family about the joys and challenges of their ministry among the Cofán people and what God is doing in the indigenous churches of the Rainforest. This special opportunity will be on Sunday September 30 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary and is open to all, so feel free to invite your friends.

Interwoven with the role of the Ross Richers in building relationships with the community and their ministry of pastoral accompaniment, has been the introduction of others to the unique beauty and diversity of this part of Creation through hosting several tours, including the Learning and Fellowship Tour, a Goshen College course on Ecological Economics in Ecuador, and a group of MMN Youth Venture volunteers. Waterford members who participated in these tours have shared what a rich experience this was and how grateful they were to be introduced to Christian brothers and sisters, as well as to others who are beginning to open themselves to learning more about Christ's way in circumstances very different than our own.

Let's be challenged to think more about what the Two-Way Mission means for Waterford going forward!

–Ecuador Ministry Support Team

## WMC Endowment Fund Applications Fall 2018

Applications for the Fall 2018 Waterford Mennonite Church Endowment Funds will be accepted through October 16, 2018. Applications can be found in the information rack beneath the bulletin board or online at the church website. Please submit all requests to Jeff Miller, Endowment Fund Chair.

The committee will meet mid-October to review new requests, and distributions will be made this fall.

This past spring the following awards were made:

- Anabaptist Disabilities Network – develop pamphlet for churches/conference – \$1,000
- Eastern Mennonite University – Michael J Sharp Peace & Justice Endowed Scholarship – \$1,000
- Waterford Mennonite Church – Conflict Transformation Workshop – \$2,000

Feel free to contact one of the Endowment Fund Committee members with any questions.

–Tim Burkholder, Jon. Wieand,  
Lyz Kauffman, Dave Hostetler,  
Neil Amstutz, & Jeff Miller (chair)



2018 Fellowship and Learning Tour Group with Pastor Iter



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- Mel Claassen  
*Business Manager*

#### Facilities Ministry

- Jan Oostland  
*Facilities Manager*
- Courtney Shetler  
*Custodian*
- Irma Perez  
*Custodian*

#### Pastoral Ministry

- Neil Amstutz  
*Pastoral Team Leader*
- Katie Misz  
*Pastor of Family Life*
- Velma Swartz  
*Pastor of Senior Ministries*
- Cindy Voth  
*Pastor of Community Life*

The *Waterford Buzz* is normally published weekly for members of Waterford Mennonite Church. Items for inclusion should be given to the editor by 5 p.m. Monday preceding publication.

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## Welcoming Our Benin Guests

If memory serves me correctly, last fall, worship focused on hospitality. I recall thinking this was quite timely considering I would soon be traveling to Benin and relying on the hospitality of strangers.

For me, travel has always involved hospitality. My first, and likely most profound experience (maybe because it was my first), with this was my semester in Costa Rica. At some point during my three months there I realized I had reverted to my Middle School self. I still had an independent streak a mile wide but now, all of the sudden, I was dependent on my host families for everything (like life for me in Middle School). I noticed this the most with going places. I couldn't drive and had to rely on our minimal ability to communicate and public transportation. My host mama took me to our usual group meeting point the first time and back to our house. She pointed out the President's House on the way home—that was my cue to pull the string on the bus. I realized I was completely out of my element and had to rely on my host family to help me safely navigate my everyday life. I couldn't just hop in my car and go to the store or to a movie. I had to ask how to get somewhere and find out if it was even wise for me to try. It was a humbling experience. It made me dependent on others, and consequently God, something I definitely wasn't used to.

Time and time again throughout my travels I have experienced people practicing the call of Hebrews 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." Granted I'm no angel, but I have had people on the bus make sure I get off at the right stop, ridden back to town in the back of a stranger's truck when the bus didn't show up, fed delicious food on countless occasions, had a gripping telenovela explained to me so my host mama and I could enjoy it together, taken to a family wedding with barely knowing the bride or groom, taken to a beautiful beach hours

away on the spur of the moment because my family thought I would enjoy it, and so much more.

While in Benin I had many similar moments. I literally arrived and after that my needs were met. I was fed, given a place to stay, and so much more. Our Benin hosts shared so much with me. I could see their joy in having us there and showing us all they are doing in the name of God to try to show hospitality to neighbor and stranger alike, in the name of God, in their country. Being a physician, I asked to spend extra time at Bethesda Hospital seeing them care for sick patients and learning how this developed out of the needs of the community when there were not enough health care providers in the area. That blossomed into working on sanitation conditions around them as they saw that was the root of many of the medical conditions they were treating.

Now it is Waterford's turn to be the host and show our Beninese guests what all we have been up to. This back and forth relationship that we have established with Benin Bible Institute gives us the opportunity to share our missions together. We not only support what they do in Benin but they get to experience and support what all we have done here. They will be taken to several different agencies that we contribute to with our time and money. You can also host them by planning a meal, having them stay in your home, or providing transportation. If there is something you think they would particularly enjoy doing (mission related or not) please contact the BBI Planning Group (Rod Hollinger-Janzen at rod@aimintl.org) as well.

—Mandy Schmidt

## Painting the Church House

We are looking for several volunteers for Saturday, September 29, to help paint the exterior of the church house. There is a sign-up sheet at the participation station. You can sign up for all or part of the day and we'll be starting at 7:30 a.m. In case of rain, we may need to reschedule for the following Saturday, October 6. Please contact J.D. Smucker if you have any questions.