



Waterford Mennonite Church | December 1, 2019

buzz

Stephen Ministers Gather for Annual Retreat

Pathways Retreat, on the north edge of Goshen, provided the setting for the congregation's Stephen Ministers, Stephen Leaders, and Pastor Terry to gather for their annual half-day retreat on Saturday, November 9.

Stephen Leader Liz Gingrich guided the group in reflecting on her Celtic pilgrimage of last summer in the United Kingdom. She shared how Stephen Ministers might connect with Celtic Christian spirituality in ways they might find useful in more deeply sensing the presence of God in their everyday experiences. Among the concepts considered, participants reflected on the topic of "thin spaces," where the visible world and transcendent meet; and "thresholds," marking times of transition including those of life changes and letting go of the past to allow for something new to

emerge. This kind of awareness and

discernment was felt to be especially applicable to the caring relationships between Stephen Ministers and those receiving their care. Opportunity was given to spend time alone, in individual retreat rooms or outside walking the paths and the labyrinth, to consider what one had experienced in the group setting.

As the group gathered back together, Pastor Terry led a ritual of recommitment for Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers. Special recognition and thanks were given to John Birkey for the gifts he has shared with us through Stephen Ministry, as he ends his time with the team and anticipates other forms of service. Stephen Leaders Liz Gingrich, Mel and Lorna Claassen, and Bill Minter then led a discussion looking forward to opportunities for strengthening the program in the year

ahead, and the morning ended by sharing lunch together.

— WMC Stephen Leader Team



Stephen Ministers gather to pray for each other as they anticipate their service in the year ahead. (front row, l to r – Len Harms, Gary Shetler, Helen Bowman; back row, l to r – Marge Gingerich, Rachel Brenneman, Kay Miller, not present – Anita Myers and Cynthia Kauffmann.)



Liz Gingrich leads the group in considering how Celtic Christianity might influence their service in Stephen Ministry.



John Birkey was recognized for the completion of his service as a Stephen Minister.



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Pastoral Team Leader
· Katie Misz
Pastor of Family Life
· Terry Zehr
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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Another Step in the Pastor of Senior Ministries Transition

Pastor Terry Zehr has been diligently building relationships with our seniors at Waterford Mennonite Church and is being recognized by the seniors as their new pastor. Former pastor Velma Swartz has been absent from the congregation to honor our congregational policy of providing a 3-4-month time frame from the new pastor's arrival to allow time for the new pastor to settle into their position. We express our appreciation to Velma for her cooperation during this transition and affirm the cordial relationship that she has developed with Pastor Terry, our new Pastor of Senior Ministries.

Velma has been informed that after pastoral team and Ministry Leadership Council conversations, they have affirmed December 29 (or any time after that) as the date she is welcome to return. We look forward to seeing Velma back in the congregation.

— Timothy Burkholder, outgoing chair of the congregation.

Jubilee Fund Holiday Needs

As we head into the holiday season, we often see the need for assistance increase as those with income struggles look for ways to provide a special meal or buy a gift for their children. This year, as the manufacturing sector in our county has begun to slow, there are those who are losing their jobs and seeking work.

The Jubilee Fund is set up to help those who come seeking assistance with groceries or gas. Our practice is to offer a \$25 gift card to a household on a once every 6-month basis. Currently, we have no funds available to assist people.

Thank you to those who have contributed money to this fund in the past. Please keep those less fortunate in your hearts and minds during this holiday season. A designation of part of your offering for the Jubilee Fund will help cover this need and will always be appreciated by the office staff as we work to serve those in need in our community.



Karsten Hess, Eldon Stoltzfus and Rachel Stoltzfus shared stories and learnings from their trip to Benin in September with the congregation during the nurture hour on November 24. A recording of the session is available.