



Waterford Mennonite Church | August 30, 2020

buzz

Stephen Minister Training Offered in 2021

Waterford Mennonite Church's Stephen Leaders are recruiting persons to train during the January – April 2021 period to serve as Stephen Ministers. Given the likely COVID-19 reality into next year, training will be provided remotely by the Stephen Leaders. Stephen Minister trainees would need to have access to a computer at home that has audio and video capability, good Internet connection, and be able to operate the Zoom conferencing software. The computer should be located in a private space in the home so that confidential sharing can occur without being overheard by others who may be present in the household.

We as Stephen Leaders will provide training in a variety of topics such as: listening skills, Christian assertiveness, maintaining boundaries in caregiving and grief. The training is distinctively Christian and focuses on God as the one who heals as we care.

The training schedule may vary somewhat from typical in-person training – (i.e. shorter but more frequent training sessions to reduce “Zoom fatigue”). The required 50 training hours will likely require 17 weekly evening training sessions, plus 3 extra Saturday morning sessions).

Being a Stephen Minister is considered a “high effort – high reward” ministry. Stephen Ministers use the skills they learn not only in their caring ministry, but also in their everyday relationships. When Stephen Ministers have completed their training, they will be commissioned and ready to serve. Working under the supervision of a trained peer group facilitator, Stephen Ministers will be available to meet weekly with persons experiencing life-changing situations such as: bereavement, divorce, single parenting, job loss, terminal illness, long-term illness, and many others.

If interested in applying to be considered for training as a Stephen Minister, contact Stephen Leaders Lorna and Mel Claassen, Liz Gingrich or Bill Minter. They will have further information for you. After completing an Application of Interest, you will then have the opportunity to meet with these Stephen Leaders, ask any questions and make a final decision together.

The following questions and answers may help you consider your own sense of gifts and call to becoming a Stephen Minister:

How much of my time will it really involve? There are 50 hours of initial training during the January – April 2021 period. As a trained Stephen Minister you will visit about once a week, for about one hour, with the person you are caring for. You will also attend a 2.5 -hour monthly meeting with your peer Stephen Ministers for group supervision and continuing education.

How much money will this cost me? Nothing. The congregation has budgeted money for the training materials, and other meeting expenses.

Will our pastors still help and counsel people? Most definitely! Stephen Ministers complement the pastors' ministry and provide even more care for people who need it. Along with the class shepherds, this ministry has become an important part of how our congregation cares.

What if I get over my head with people who need more care than I can provide? You will never knowingly be assigned persons who might be in that situation. The Stephen Ministry training also helps you to know exactly when and how to help your care receivers get professional help when necessary. The peer supervision group, the Stephen Leaders and the pastors will also help you make such decisions.

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How might I personally benefit from this experience? You will learn many skills that will be valuable in your personal life as well as in your Stephen Ministry. Also, the satisfaction of helping another person is a wonderful blessing.

Will the care receiver really want my involvement? Yes. Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinators will meet first with the potential care receiver. Only after the care receiver understands Stephen Ministry and has agreed to meet with a Stephen Minister of the same gender will you be contacted. Persons 18 years or older are potential care receivers.

Are there other people as unsure as I am about this undertaking? Probably so! But the training will eliminate much of this anxiety because you will not only learn how to respond to people but also, and much more importantly, how to listen.

Are there persons I can talk to who have gone through this training? Yes. Hearing about the experiences of Stephen Ministers in considering this call can be most beneficial. Please feel free to talk to current Stephen Ministers: Helen Bowman, Rachel Brenneman, Marge Gingerich, Cynthia Kauffmann, Kay Miller, Anita Myers, Gary Shetler.

— *the WMC Stephen Leader Team*

Endowment Fund Reminder

Applications for the Waterford Mennonite Church Endowment Fund will be accepted until October 1, 2020. As a reminder, the fund exists to further the ongoing mission of the church by providing a vehicle for above budget gifts to be invested for the church's work. A complete copy of the Endowment Fund Guidelines can be found under the big bulletin board or at waterfordchurch.org. Please feel free to talk to one of the committee members if you have any questions and submit the applications to Jeff Miller.

— Endowment Fund Committee:
Neil Amstutz, Douglas Graber, Ruby Hochstedler, Jeff Miller,
Rachel Stoltzfus, Lyz Zimmerman



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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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Change with Anabaptist World

For years, WMC and other churches have sent death notices to *The Mennonite*. Now, with the merger of *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite World Review*, the new publication, *Anabaptist World*, will not publish death announcements as *The Mennonite* did, but it will publish obituaries.

For a \$50 fee, they will edit your submitted obituary to conform to their style and condense (if necessary) to 350 words. The obituary will be published in the printed issue of *Anabaptist World* and online at anabaptistworld.org. You may email the obituary to editor@mennoworld.org, or mail to Anabaptist World, PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114.

Because of this, we will no longer be sending obituaries from the church office to be published in the magazine. If you would like to send one in for your family member, you are welcome to do so.