



buzz

Flowering the Cross

“Now is the time for the color purple. It’s time for getting ready. Purple is the color of kings. We are getting ready for the king that is coming. But this king is also going away, and he’s coming again. It’s time for getting ready for the great mystery of Easter.” Excerpt from *Godly Play Story: The Mystery of Easter*

As we enter this Lenten season, God wants our hearts to be ready. Even Jesus had to get ready for this time.

“Long ago, Jesus went out alone into the desert to get ready. Deep inside he felt that God had important work for him to do. But he needed help to see clearly the way ahead. For forty days and forty nights he was in the desert by himself, wondering, talking with God, listening, making choices. I wonder why Jesus went into the desert? Maybe it was quiet and still. Maybe Jesus thought he could hear God better there. Maybe he needed to make time to listen so he would know which way to go.” Excerpt from *Make Room: A Child’s Guide to Lent and Easter*

What can we do to make space this lent?

We can talk to God with words, art, or music. We can be silent. We can read the stories in the Bible. And, we can ask hard questions and think about our choices. As your family thinks about Lent this year, Family Life Ministry Team is offering a few ways that you can choose to help get ready. For families with children, we will provide the MC USA Lent At-Home Guide where you can follow along each week with scriptures, prayers, and activities.

We are also providing a copy of a paper cross to each family with children or youth. There are additional copies of paper crosses in the breezeway at church for adult households to pick up during office hours so all can join in the flowering of the cross. This cross can be set on a table or hung on a wall or fridge. It can be used as a daily visual reminder of Lent.

Right now, it is very easy to see all the bad that is

happening around us and in the world. But God is at work. Good and beautiful things are still happening. Jesus’ love is still shining. This Lent, we invite you to look for God’s love and each time you find it, you can fill in part of the cross. There are many ways of doing this. For families, we will provide paper flower and leaf cut outs. Each time someone in your family sees an act of kindness by someone else, or someone else being the hands and feet of Jesus, write it down on a flower and then glue it on the cross. Each time a person in your family shows kindness to someone, write it down on a leaf and glue it on the cross. For youth and the wider congregation, you may write the act of kindness you experienced right onto your cross or you may draw flowers and leaves on the cross.

Youth and adults, it may be especially meaningful to also include ways you have shown kindness to yourself each day. You can be creative!

Be on the lookout for the good things happening in your home, in our community, and in our world and fill your cross with beauty.



As part of this spiritual practice this Lent, we are also offering an outdoor experience of flowering the cross. We will have a large cross located outside the church building during Holy Week, March 28-April 4. We invite each of you to bring cut flowers and attach them to the wires wrapped around the cross. When you come, gather around the cross and read the scripture and prayer (provided by the cross). Take a moment to make space in your heart for the story of Jesus’ death and the hope of resurrection.

—Mikki Bowman and the children’s cluster

Thank You

Waterford Mennonite Church Family:

Thank you for the plant given to us at the time of my mother's passing. The support and love of this congregation is wonderful! Thanks so much!

Bonnie (and Lyle, Tony, Ryan) Miller



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

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Pastoral Search Report

The Search Committee for the Pastor of Senior Ministries had its first meeting on February 3. The committee members spent time getting acquainted with each other and with the process search committees use with IN-MI Mennonite Conference.

We then focused on planning ahead. Planning how to fully include any candidates from the congregation was a major emphasis. Anyone interested should complete a Ministerial Leadership Information form (MLI). It is available on the MC USA website (<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/ministry-transitions-candidate-packet/>). If the form seems difficult, John Kaufman and Rachel Stoltzfus have agreed to serve as coaches to members of Waterford Mennonite Church. Applicants wanting confidential help in completing the MLI should contact John or Rachel directly. Applicants should also immediately contact Sharon Yoder at IN-MI Mennonite Conference (cell: 574-304-9418). If possible the MLI should be completed by March 31 so the Search Committee can consider it.

Our next meeting will be March 5. We will continue to report on our meetings in Buzz.

—The Search Committee: Arnold C. Roth, chair; Rachel Brenneman, Esther Farmwald, Elmer Wyse; Neil Amstutz, Pastoral Team Leader; Ron Guengerich, IN-MI Congregational Coach; Becky Horst, IN-MI Search Guide

Transition in Disabilities Advocacy

After more than eight years of serving as Waterford's Disabilities Advocate, Karen Pfahler is stepping down from that role. Karen has been a good support for persons and families interested or dealing with various issues linked to persons who are differently abled. She has been a voice for some whose voices are seldom heard, and she has also been a sounding board for us pastors. Karen has had a hand, for example, in the following practices and progress we've seen:

- Showing celebration or appreciation in worship through raised waving hands, rather than through applause or sudden loud sounds
- Placement of some braille signage by bathrooms
- Including a ramp to sanctuary platform as part of Welcoming Spaces 3.0
- Convening a supportive conversation among Waterford people interested in greater accessibility

In recent years Karen was blessed to also have in our church the support of two former Executive Directors of Anabaptist Disabilities Network – Tim Burkholder, and Eldon Stoltzfus. We thank you, Karen for helping raise and keep a greater disabilities awareness within Waterford Mennonite Church.

Issues of accessibility and inclusion in our community are multi-faceted and ongoing. Do you have a passion for improving the engagement in church life of people with varied abilities? If so, please contact one of the pastors with your interest in helping expand God's kingdom in this way. Or please let us know of someone at Waterford you believe would do well in this role. We pastors value such an advocate for the church as a whole and for our own ministries. Thank you.

—Neil Amstutz for pastoral team