



buzz

THE POOR PEOPLES' CAMPAIGN: A LEGACY OF REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

I'm sure that all of us at Waterford Mennonite Church are familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and work, which focused on dismantling segregation and strengthening civil rights for African Americans.

Dr. King's understanding of the situation of poor and disenfranchised people continued to deepen and evolve as he worked with and advocated for them. He increasingly observed that poor folk in the USA were caught in a web of interlocking injustices, and he realized that in order for freedom and prosperity to thrive in the African American community and beyond, it was not only racism that needed to be fought. Dr. King noted the economic policies that favored the wealthy and corporations and kept the poor working for inadequate wages and in difficult conditions. He also bumped up against the reality that during the Vietnam War, the U.S. government was willing to spend "whatever it takes" to engage in a war that bolstered a corrupt South Vietnamese government and was destructive to the hopes and dreams of most ordinary Vietnamese people. When Martin Luther King, Jr. and others approached the government with plans to wage war on poverty through government programs that would only demand a small fraction of the spending which was taking place in Vietnam, the response was always, "it costs too much."

For the last several years of his life, Dr. King focused on how the "evil triplets" of racism, economic exploitation and war conspired together to keep poor people of many different backgrounds in poverty and divided against each other. In response, he led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in organizing a Poor Peoples' Campaign, demanding

poverty relief, guaranteed income, and low-cost housing for poor and low wealth people across the USA. While finishing details of a poor peoples' march on Washington, Dr. King was assassinated in April 1968. The march took place under the leadership of Ralph Abernathy, and a large group camped on the Washington Mall for 6 weeks during May-June 1968, pressing for the demands which Dr. King had identified.

In our generation, this vision of Dr. King's has been renewed by The Poor Peoples' Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, through the combined leadership of Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis (www.poorpeoplescampaign.org).

This movement joins excellent scholarship by a variety of economic experts with political advocacy alongside poor and low wealth people. It adheres to nonviolence as a principle of sustainable change. The platform of the PPC is broadly based on spiritual values. Christians will feel at home in this movement, which is also open to people of all or no religious affiliations. There are regular online events held such as "Moral Mondays" during which Revs. Barber and Theoharis give voice to directly affected people, and lead participants in thinking about and responding to the many national challenges poor people face in this country. Phone calls/emails/letters to political leaders and legislative representatives are encouraged and facilitated in the service of PPC's drive for equal rights for disadvantaged people. PPC focuses on political change but is not a partisan organization. Rather, PPC advocates for legislation that reflects its values—"Everybody has a right to live."

The Poor Peoples' Campaign advocates at state and local as well as national levels. Each community in this country has a role to play in reversing the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty,
See **Poor People's Campaign** on back

Thank you

We want to thank you for your prayers and also the cards, food, phone calls, emails and the gift card in memory of Tina's husband.

—Tina Chandler and Sandy Kauffman

Thank you very much for the care packages we received from your church. They were so appreciated.

This year has been very different for all of us. The packages reminded us no matter how bad things get, there is always good right around the corner. Let us all remember God is Good. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Prairie View Elementary School Cafeteria
and Custodial Staff



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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.

Janet Shoemaker,
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Pastoral Search Committee

The Search Committee for the Pastor of Senior Ministries met on March 5. The committee members reviewed the Ministerial Leadership Information Forms (MLI's) of three people who have indicated an interest in the job. Becky Horst indicated the conference office has at least four more MLI's for us to review. Our next meeting will be on Friday, March 19.

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

To our Waterford Church Family,

We and our extended family in this local area want to thank you for the love you showered on Eldon, our beloved husband, dad and papi/grandpa, especially during his last year of illness and passing. As you know, Eldon loved Waterford and many of your messages reminded us of the ways he was active—assisting with senior adult ministries, missions and service, teaching Sunday School, visiting during coffee time in the foyer, and yes, as called upon, walking with people on their final journeys in his work with Goshen Hospice. Your cards, notes, calls, visits and prayers that came first for him and then for us have lifted our hearts in this time of heaviness and sadness. Seekers members especially, your faithful care throughout the long months in spite of COVID restrictions blessed both Eldon and me. Bridgebuilders, we also want to recognize your care and support for Dan and Angela and their family. Thank you.

We have chosen June 12, at 10 a.m., here at Waterford Mennonite Church, for a memorial service to celebrate Eldon's life. The service will be streamed for those who cannot be present in person.

—Rachel, Dan and Angela, and
grandchildren Sam and JoLee Stoltzfus,
Khalid and Kassy Miller

Poor People's Campaign

(cont. from front)

ecological devastation, the war economy, and the false moral narrative of religious nationalism.

There is a Goshen/Elkhart/South Bend local cluster of the Poor Peoples' Campaign. Currently, meetings are biweekly on Sunday evening at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Won't you join us?

For more information, email Rod Hollinger-Janzen: rodneycastle@waterfordchurch.org; or call 612-6091.