



buzz

Pastoral Transitions

Pastor Neil's Transition—From Ministry Leadership Council

It is only a week until Pastor Neil's last Sunday on January 30, and the celebration of his years of ministry with us. Anticipating this major change, we also trust in God's continued presence with Neil and Janette as well as with all of us here at Waterford. Ministry Leadership Council hopes to be able to announce interim pastoral coverage in early February. We also continue discerning our long term future in the search for our next pastoral team leader.

On Sunday, the 30th, we will hear from groups of people across the congregation who have worked with Neil and experienced his ministry over the years. You will have a number of opportunities for sharing reflections and appreciations Neil's seventeen years of ministry.

Best practices when pastors end their ministry.

It is considered wise practice in churches during pastoral transitions for the departing pastor to be completely away from the congregational life for a period of time to allow for necessary adjustments to new realities on both the part of the departing pastor and the congregation. Mennonite Church USA offers guidelines for pastoral transitions:

"The former pastor's attendance at church activities during the first 12 months of a new pastor's arrival is discouraged to give the congregation and new pastor space to bond and move forward with the new leadership team. The former pastor will decline invitations to participate in weddings and funerals, except in rare occasions when the former pastor considers an invitation at the request of the current pastor. Otherwise, the former pastor may attend the event without exercising public leadership."

Neil and Janette expect to remain in the Goshen community, and you may see him around. When you do, be friendly and talk with him. Neil and Janette will likely be missing you just as you are missing them. However, remember to refrain from engaging with Neil about congregational concerns and business you would normally have talked about with him.

—Rachel Stoltzfus for Ministry Leadership Council

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A Pastor Forever Blessed

To the people I love at Waterford (which is all of you), the time has come for me to bow out as a pastor here. What growth has accompanied these seventeen years! The biggest growth I refer to is within myself, as a pastor and as a person. Although not a full generation has gone by in my time here, the difference is immense between an energetic 40-year-old father of 3 children under high school age and a 57-year-old empty nester who's slowing down but still discerning my calling and "what's left" before retirement. Thank you for befriending and nurturing Janette and me and our children!

This is also a different congregation: I did an unscientific census from the households that have photographs in our Fall 2020 church directory (the newest directory is due out in February). With adjustments for new people not photographed and for households who have since died or gone elsewhere, of the households now actively connected to Waterford, 55% were already here when I came as a pastoral candidate. Put another way, 45% of our active households have been here less time than me. You may be excited or dismayed by those numbers, but there's no denying it is not the same congregation I came to.

In my final sermon, I reviewed some faith milestones that have occurred in these seventeen years. I have walked with so many of you through significant rituals and major changes in your lives. But as I move on after



February 2, I will no longer be your pastor. The accompanying article from Ministry Leadership Council names the understandings I have with the congregation for disengaging from congregational life. I will abide by those understandings, even as Janette and I remain in the Goshen community. If you run into me around town, please say hi! I'm sure I will miss you and trust that many friendships will endure. I may ask about your life and family but I don't wish to engage with you on whatever is happening in church life. This church is in good hands with the pastors and other leadership persons in place. I appreciate the future possibility of returning to Waterford as our church, even as I can make no commitments at this time about our church direction. I truly have no idea where God will lead us in the coming year and beyond.

I will remain a pastor forever blessed by the love, generosity and earnest devotion to Jesus of Waterford Mennonite Church.

Grace and peace to you,

Neil B Amstutz

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers and Leaders Recommit for Another Year of Service

During its monthly “virtual” peer group supervision gathering on January 6, the congregation’s Stephen Ministry celebrated the recommitment by six Stephen Ministers and four Stephen Leaders to another year of service in 2022. Cynthia Kauffmann was acknowledged as she completed her service as a Stephen Minister.

Stephen Leader Bill Minter led Stephen Ministers Rachel Brenneman, Helen Bowman, Marge Gingerich, Kay Miller, Anita Myers, and Gary Shetler in a ritual of recommitment to faithfully accompany hurting people and to support one another in providing the best care possible through the presence and help of Christ.

Pastor Deron led Stephen Leaders Mel and Lorna Claassen, Liz Gingrich and Bill Minter in a ritual of recommitment to lead our congregation’s Stephen Ministry by working together with Pastors, Senior Adult Ministry Team and SS class Shepherds.

In closing, each of the Stephen Ministers lit a candle and shared a prayer of blessing for one of their colleagues, and a final blessing was then offered by Pastor Deron.

—Stephen Leader Team

Thank You Cynthia!



It is with mixed emotions that we, the Stephen Leaders and Ministers, acknowledge the need for Cynthia Kauffmann to step away from her involvement in Stephen Ministry at this time. We are grateful for her active involvement since 2015. Cynthia is a sensitive caregiver, thoughtful, with a bit of humor sprinkled in. As she focuses on her personal journey of health, we pray that our faithful God will surround her with love and healing.

—WMC Stephen Ministry

Mission

Annual Mission Sunday

Mission Sunday is scheduled for February 6. Rod Hollinger-Janzen will bring the morning message out of his experience in working with churches in West Africa. He will also be using the book, *Unless a Grain of Wheat*, edited by Thomas A. Oduro, Jonathan P. Larson and James R. Krabill. It traces the six decades that North American Mennonites and African Independent Churches have navigated their faith journey between the ancient traditions of the ancestors and the newer claims of Christ upon their lives. It has been a shared endeavor resulting in mutual learning, forgiveness and growth. In the nurture hour following, Rod and Lynda will report on their trip to Africa in October. All adults are invited to join this shared experience.

The special Mission Offering taken will again be shared equally between the Goshen Ministerial Association's "Emergency Fund" for needs in the community (of which there are many) and two projects associated with BBI and African Mennonite churches. These are:

1. \$2500 will go for Waterford's "BBI New Generation Scholarship Fund" to help in the training of Eric Noukpliguidi, Cyprien Dossou-Yovo and Daniel Tossenou for becoming teachers at BBI.
2. Any remaining amount would go for the Kishелеle Bible translation of the New Testament for printing, community meetings and travel of

the translation team. The total cost for this project is \$3175; any help will be appreciated.

May God bless you as you plan for this special Sunday. Thank you for your commitment to mission.

—Arnold Roth for
Mission and Service Ministry Team

Thank You

Thank you Waterford Mennonite Church for your love and support we have felt in the passing of our son Tyler, through your many prayers, cards, texts, phone calls, visits, food, kind words and your continued prayers as we navigate this first year without him. Even though we no longer attend there anymore we still have a real Christian love for the people of Waterford. This is also a reminder to us that the church of Christ is not contained in one building.

With grateful hearts,

Len & Kathy Emery, Amy Emery and family

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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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