



Waterford
Mennonite Church

buzz

Pastoral Sabbatical

From Ministry Leadership Council

We enter this year 2022 with anticipation of change, of newness that will be unfolding with the days, weeks, months, seasons. We look forward still without knowing for sure the specific joys, growth, blessings, and challenges. What we do know is that God is with us. Emmanuel! We can count on this no matter what: Emmanuel!

Even as we celebrate Pastor Neil and prepare for his departure, your MLC continues to work hard behind the scenes. In our work with conference minister Sharon Witmer Yoder and congregational coach Marty Lehman to discern Waterford's next chapter, we are giving our attention to two related but different paths.

The first is our need for interim pastoral assistance during the transition, perhaps as long as August. We are hopeful that sometime in the next month we will know and be able to share with you the name of that person.

The second path is to discern a long term pastoral team leader. In our work together, we have concluded that it is best in our unique situation for MLC to serve as the Search Committee for this pastoral leader. We are meeting twice this month to process Waterford's needs and the direction for our future. We are hopeful that in February we will be able to announce a candidate of choice.

Please hold Waterford in your prayers for Pastor Neil in this, his last month of pastoral leadership, and the mix of relief and grief he feels. Also remember Pastors Cindy, Katie and Deron who will continue the work of ministry and providing

pastoral care to us. Pray for MLC discernment of interim pastoral assistance and long term pastoral leadership. Last, as you think of needs in our congregation, we urge you to prayerfully imagine Waterford not only maintaining but flourishing and opening our hearts in new ways, being led by the Spirit.



Finally, after a year's delay due to Covid, we are also delighted to announce that our Pastor Katie will be taking her well-earned sabbatical May 11 – August 17, funded by the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program. Katie has titled the theme for these

months away: *"Spillin' the Tea: Entering a Compassionate Story."* Be sure to read further as Katie describes her goals for her time away and for more information about Lilly's Endowment.

—Rachel Stoltzfus,
for Ministry Leadership Council

PASTOR KATIE MISZ, RECIPIENT
2020 LILLY ENDOWMENT CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM

Waterford Mennonite Church received a grant of \$49,990 to enable our own pastor, Katie Misz, to participate in the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. Waterford Mennonite Church is one of 28 congregations in Indiana selected to participate in the 2020 competitive program. Since the 1999 Endowment, the program's grants allow congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from ministerial responsibilities. As a grant recipient, Pastor Katie may use her "Sabbath time" experiences to engage in reflection and renewal and respite that may include travel, study, rest, prayer and immersive arts and cultural experiences.

Through the program, Indiana congregations may apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to support renewal experiences for their pastors. Waterford was awarded this grant a few years ago also when Pastor Cindy took her sabbatical. As a congregation we experienced the collaborative way Lilly partners with ministers and their families to develop experiences for their unique renewal needs and aspirations. As we know, congregational needs are considered also in that up to \$15,000 of the grant is available to fund interim pastoral leadership during the pastor's retreat, as well as for renewal activities within the congregation.

"Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve," said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment's vice president for religion. "We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well."

Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, noted that the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations integrates key attributes of healthy congregations, including a mutual respect for the renewal needs of both ministers and the congregations they serve.

"The program provides an opportunity for congregations to express appreciation for their ministers' service and leadership," Saler said. "At a time when leaders are often praised for their pace of innovation and productivity, the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations pays homage to the timeless wisdom embedded in the practice of reflection and renewal."

Theological Seminary in Indianapolis directs the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and a second program for congregations across the United States.

Spillin' The Tea: Entering a Compassionate Story

Katie's Renewal Leave

May 11–August 17, 2022

When a youth tells you that he or she is going to “spill the tea,” I suggest you listen. “Spilling the tea” is what current youth say to communicate that they are going to let you in on what is really going on in their lives. In popular culture, spilling the tea can sometimes lead to gossiping about others, but its genuine meaning derives from voicing honesty and vulnerability. In its origins, “spilling the T” stands for “spilling the Truth” (with a capital T).

For the youth at Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, spilling the tea is the practice of truth-telling. It is the vulnerable practice of alleviating stress by sharing the Truth of one's story. When youth spill the tea with me, I find myself entering into a holy space of sharing, listening, and highlighting the connections of God's story with our stories. For this renewal program, I am taking the lead from our youth by learning how to ease my anxiety and connect to God's larger stories in my life by “spilling the tea.” For this renewal program, I will develop tools to reject self-criticism, and I will discover more about the people and places that have compassionately welcomed me into their story. To my delight, I will do these tasks of renewal while sipping some delicious cups of tea.

With the help of several members in the congregation, including Becky Bateman, Mikki Bowman, Christa Graber Kauffman, Chris Judson, and Cindy Voth, I began crafting this sabbatical proposal in 2019 before the pandemic began. It was significant to experience this program with Cindy during her sabbatical, and since that time, JE and I have wondered about the possibility of applying for this program. We were thrilled to find out in October of 2020 that Waterford was awarded this grant to fund my sabbatical leave.

JE and I discerned with Waterford leadership to postpone our leave for one year, in hopes that vaccines would enable us to travel internationally. An unforeseen blessing of waiting a year is that it gave the advanced notice for JE to be able to request time away from his work for the duration of our sabbatical leave. I am thrilled that this means JE and I will be together for the entirety of our leave this summer.

While our exact activities remain unknown due to pandemic uncertainties, we still feel drawn to the theme of compassionate storytelling. This theme points to the intersection of our ministries of pastoring and mental health care. We hope that travel will still be possible in some way but are not yet sure where we will be during our time away. For renewal, we plan to do some training and reading in the areas of mindful self-compassion and biblical storytelling.

Plans are already being put in place here at Waterford for my time away! We look forward to finding ways in which Waterford will join us in the journey of compassionate storytelling. I know there are excellent storytellers among us, and I anticipate this theme will provide room for creativity and hope as Waterford shares stories with one another throughout the summer. Additionally, the grant will provide pastoral coverage while I am away. (See article on page 4.)

Thank you, Waterford for supporting pastors by providing renewal through sabbatical. I know my spirit is needing this renewal, and I am grateful for the gift of time away to nurture my relationships with myself, JE, family, and with God, so to continue in this good work for years to come.

—Pastor Katie Misz

Receiving New Members:

Ministry Leadership Council and the pastors are pleased to recommend to the congregation the following persons into membership at Waterford via transfer:

Colton and Shelby Eby, whose memberships are transferring from East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, IL, and West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, OH, respectively

David and Tessie Molina, transferring from North Goshen Mennonite Church, and

Jordan and Erin Smeltzer, transferring from New Paris Church of the Brethren, and Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, respectively

We give thanks for the deepened connections they have felt with Waterford even through and despite the pandemic when congregational interaction has been more limited. We are receiving them as members in worship on Sunday morning January 23. Please welcome them when you have the chance

—Ministry Leadership Council

Melissa Chupp To Provide Sabbatical Coverage



Family Life team has asked Melissa Chupp to serve as interim Pastor of Family Life during Pastor Katie's Sabbatical leave (May - August), and she has agreed. Melissa is

someone we trust to carry on the ministries at Waterford with love and excellence. People naturally seek out Melissa for advice and council, and she is organized and creative. Melissa has served as a sponsor, committee member, filled in as Sunday school teacher, and is well connected with the families of Waterford as a parent of three youth. As interim, Melissa will oversee Sunday School each week for youth and children, and she will coordinate two major summer events: the MYF service/learning trip and Vacation Bible School.

—Katie Misz

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· Katie Misz

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· Deron Brill Bergstresser

Pastor of Senior Ministries

· Cindy Voth

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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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