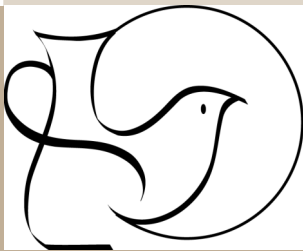


Conversations that Matter
March 15, 2026



April 26, 2026



The Waterford Buzz

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Worship
10:30 a.m. - Nurture classes for
all ages

Welcome Team

Greeters: Jerry & Joyce Troyer
Ushers: Dennis Myers, Carla
Miller, Wade Ramer
Audiovisuals: Colin Berkey,
Jordan Kauffman
Nursery: Barb Landes, Gretchen
Bateman; Brenda Janzen,
Neer Goswami

This Week at Waterford

Wednesday

7:00 p.m. - MYF

Friday

7:00 p.m. - John McCutcheon
concert

Zoom prayers

Monday - 8:30 a.m.

Waterford Mennonite Church

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Goshen, IN 46526
Phone 574-533-5642
office@waterfordchurch.org
www.waterfordchurch.org

From the Beehive: Conversation Café Report

Rose Shetler, MLC co-chair, on behalf of MLC

The fellowship hall was transformed into a cozy coffee shop on Sunday evening, March 15. As people entered, they were greeted by café-style tables for four, complete with red-checked tablecloths and candles. Serving tables held snacks brought by participants, along with coffee and tea. Harsh overhead lights were turned off, and lamps illuminated the perimeter of the hall.

Why this ambiance? The intent was to create a welcoming space reminiscent of a relaxed, informal coffee shop where people meet to connect. Forty-nine people attended the event.

Background

The most recent revision to the MEF (Mennonite Education Fund) Aid Plan guidelines was approved by a congregational vote of 83.7% at the October 12, 2025, congregational meeting. However, questions and concerns raised during the meeting, along with comments included on 29% of the ballots, indicated dissatisfaction with the revision process.

In the months following the fall congregational meeting, MLC initiated MELT (Mennonite Education Listening Tour), a process that gave people the opportunity to speak and be heard regarding their thoughts on Mennonite education and the changes to the MEF guidelines. Listeners took notes and compiled the data, which was then made available to the congregation.

The Process

While MELT focused on listening to individuals, Conversation Café created space for participants to listen to each other and gain understanding of differing perspectives in small groups of four.

Life at Waterford

Last Sunday Attendance

Worship - 345

Nurture Hour - 223

Finances – April 19, 2026

Operating Fund \$17,191.05

Mennonite Ed \$7,235.00

Either Fund \$5,979.00

Budget Total \$30,405.05

Four Way Mission \$50.00

Total **\$30,455.05**

Looking Ahead

May 3: Receiving New Members

May 10: Receiving New
Members

Pastoral Team

Cindy Voth, Pastoral Team
Leader

Monday - Thursday

Deron Bergstresser

Tuesday - Friday

Katie Misz

Monday - Thursday

Ursula Hess

Out of Office

Katie Misz - April 26-29

Cindy Voth - May 1-6

Office hours this week

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
9-12, 1-3

Tuesday, Friday
9-12

Greeter signup: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fRLd0Ydw_QxRiQUvRhUscNV-k0HV-oTcPnu61NyBcjM/edit?gid=0#gid=0

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

Janet Shoemaker, Editor
buzz@waterfordchurch.org

After reviewing the purpose of the gathering and the behavioral agreements (open-mindedness, acceptance, curiosity, discovery, sincerity, and brevity), the conversations began. Each of the three rounds included a table host who helped capture notes and ensured that everyone had an opportunity to speak. Participants rotated to new tables between rounds, allowing thoughts and ideas to be shared more broadly.

Round 1: Beliefs & Purposes

Participants responded to the question, “What is the purpose of Mennonite education?” while others listened for personal beliefs of those sharing.

Round 2: Philosophy & Purpose of MEF Guidelines

Participants reflected on the purpose statements in the MEF Aid Plan guidelines and then responded to the statements using the “triangles, squares and circles” framework.



“triangles, squares and circles” framework.



What three things did you notice?



What squares with your beliefs?

What question is circling in your mind?

Round 3: Relationships & Bridges

Participants considered the following questions:

- How do your own thoughts on education influence your relationships and interactions with others at WMC?
- How can we build bridges between those who have different opinions about funding of Mennonite education?

Throughout the evening, tables were abuzz with people sharing while others listened intently. There was a wonderful spirit of respect and care as participants engaged the questions and listened to each other.

The Results

As a follow-up to Conversation Café, MLC tabulated the comments and made them available via a link in last Friday’s weekly email from the church office. Paper copies are also available on the table outside the church office. We highly recommend reading through them.

In these comments, many participants affirmed the value of Mennonite/Anabaptist education for faith formation and biblical interpretation. Many cited the importance of teaching and learning about Mennonite/Anabaptist beliefs, distinct values, lifestyle, and worldview, as central purposes of Mennonite education. Other comments named an appreciation for lasting relationships and connections formed in the context of Mennonite education.

There was broad acknowledgement of the value of sharing the financial burden of Mennonite education. Mutual aid, servanthood, and a spirit of sharing were among the phrases used to express its importance within congregational life. Please read these comments for yourself because there are many more than what is highlighted here.

In general, the comments underscore that we hold much more in common regarding Mennonite education than we may realize. While a few comments raised questions about the value of Mennonite

education and others highlighted differences in opinion about how funds are used, the comments overall reflect a shared conviction about the importance of Mennonite education to WMC's mission. Also, pay attention to the Round 3 comments, where respondents reflected on how our opinions about Mennonite education funding affect relationships at WMC and how we can bridge—or live faithfully with—our differences.

We also encourage you to read the Conversation Café comments alongside the MELT comments to gain a broader perspective and provide context. The MELT comments were also linked in last Friday's email.

Thank you for reading this not-so-short summary and for your continued prayers!

Transfer of Membership

Carlos and Celina Romero have requested their church membership be transferred to Clinton Frame Church. We pray for God's blessings for them and our siblings at Clinton Frame.

Waterford Announcements

We are needing one or two additional ushers for our Sunday morning services. If you would like to be an usher, or put on the substitute usher list, please contact Glenn Reinford at reinfordgl@gmail.com or 574-304-3472.

June Nurture Hour Electives: During the month of June everyone is invited to participate in intergenerational electives in place of our regular nurture classes. As we plan for nine elective offerings, it is helpful to get a sense of how many would be interested in each of the electives. There is information on the electives and a card to mark your interest at the Participation Station. Please indicate the number of people in your household who are interested in any given elective and return your card to the basket on the table by May 3.

Anabaptist World Magazine 2026 Group Subscription: It's time to renew our group subscription to Anabaptist World magazine. If you would like to renew your subscription or begin a subscription, please complete the form in your mailbox (or on the table below the mailboxes) and return it with the subscription fee of \$49 to the Church Office **by May 3, 2026**. (Make check payable to **Waterford Mennonite Church**, with Anabaptist World on the memo line.

Lunch for Prairie View Elementary School Staff: We will provide lunch for the 95 teachers and staff on Monday, May 4, during Teacher Appreciation Week. We will be ordering pulled pork and mac n cheese from Big C's BBQ and offering a smorgasbord of salads and dessert to serve 10-12 people. You can sign up at the Participation Station to provide any kind of salad or dessert. Items may be brought to the church on Sunday, May 3, or dropped off at the church between 8:45 and 9:15 a.m. on May 4.

Looking Ahead: Sunday, May 3, will be our noon fellowship meal hosted by the Open Door class. Bring a dish to share. Remember to bring hot dishes in a crockpot or slow cooker.

MCUSA

In "Making peace in your town," Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Mennonite Church USA's denominational minister of Peace & Justice, shares how **two congregations model Anabaptist peacemaking** through disaster response, immigrant solidarity and hands-on community ministry rooted in Jesus' call to justice-centered peace. This article first appeared in the spring 2026 issue of MennoMedia's Leader magazine. Read it here: <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/making-peace-in-your-town/>

MMN

Just Peace Pilgrimages — South Africa Racial Justice Pilgrimage, hosted by [Iziko Lamagabane](#). This South African solidarity learning pilgrimage will explore the long history and legacy of settler colonialism and apartheid, which was an unjust socio-political policy that fostered racial segregation. The pilgrimage will focus on the social constructs created around race, land dispossession and how they so thoroughly defined, and continue to define, South African society. Join Mission Network's director for Africa and Europe Sibonokuhle Ncube and former executive director Stanley Green on this pilgrimage! **Dates: September 9-22; the optional safari extends the trip by 3 days. Registration deadline: July 15.** Contact Stephanie Weaver at StephanieW@MennoniteMission.net or visit MennoniteMission.net/JustPeace to learn more!

AMBS

AMBS Trees of Life Retreat:

May 29–30 (Friday at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Saturday at Camp Friedenswald). This retreat led by Janeen Bertsche Johnson, MDiv, DMin candidate, will weave together study of biblical texts about trees; understanding of trees as organisms and within ecosystems; ecological issues; and spiritual practices. It can be taken for credit or as a noncredit retreat. Limit: 15 participants. Register by May 4 for the for-credit course or by May 22 for the noncredit retreat. [ambs.edu/trees](https://www.ambs.edu/trees)

New! Ecotheology studies at

AMBS. Explore ecological concerns across theological disciplines through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's ecotheology offerings! Distance-friendly options include guest courses, a 21-credit-hour Graduate Certificate in Ecotheology, and an 80-credit-hour Master of Divinity with a major in Peace Studies: Ecotheology. A 52-credit-hour campus-based Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies with an Ecotheology concentration is also available. [ambs.edu/ecotheology](https://www.ambs.edu/ecotheology)

Spiritual Direction:

Foundations. Strengthen your skills in offering spiritual direction through the first level of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's supervised spiritual direction program. This course, which can be completed in person or fully online, will help you grow in confidence and competence as a spiritual director. The seminar begins Sept. 1; apply by July 15 to save \$200. [ambs.edu/seminars](https://www.ambs.edu/seminars)

Upcoming Events

Join **Mennonite Action Michiana** for our **April Dessert** and Solidarity meeting, Thursday, April 30, 7-8:30 p.m. at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, 23786 Sunnyside Ave, Elkhart. **Steve Thomas**, USA Co-Coordinator of Mennonite Men **will report on the recent joint initiative** of Mennonite Men, Mennonite Palestine-Israel Network (MennoPIN) and Mennonite Action staff **planting olive trees alongside Palestinian farmers**. They returned home eight days before the U.S. and Israel bombed Iran. Bring a dessert to share. Coffee and tea provided. Childcare also provided.

John McCutcheon Benefit Concert! Join us for a wonderful evening of music with the one and only John McCutcheon! A portion of the proceeds will go towards supporting the work of Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN). May 1, 2026, 7 p.m. at Waterford Mennonite Church. You can buy tickets (\$25) at: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork1/1953412>

Amigo Centre Wild Church Retreat, May 15-17. Experience the presence of God through observations of nature and sharing with others: witness the hope of the Creator in the delicate flowers; smell the aroma of new beginnings in the fresh pine air; and hear the wisdom of God through the voices of others. Facilitated by Sharon Brugger Norton, pastor of Outdoor Sanctuary Wild Church. **Register by May 1** at bit.ly/AmigoRegistration.

Saturday, May 9 the **Goshen Community Chorale** will present *Who Is My Neighbor?*, a community hymn sing held at College Mennonite Church. Dr. Regina Shands Stoltzfus will serve as liturgist for this sacred concert. Bradley Kauffman is musical director. The program will feature songs from the hymnal *Voices Together* (MennoMedia, 2020), with significant audience participation. The program will hold space for many emotions and sentiments, among them fear, anger, love, resilience, courage, and hope

Give soap full of hope — Help MCC collect bars of soap in April & May: MCC provides soap to hospitals, orphanages and refugee camps in countries where soap is expensive or difficult to source. There is a need for soap beyond what is supplied in kits. MCC Great Lakes invites you to take part in a special collection of bath soap and laundry soap throughout April and May. Find specifications and more information at mcc.org/soap. Drop off soap at the MCC Material Resources Center at the Depot.

Opportunity for kids

Created to Care Summer Camp: Join Mennonite Central Committee and Pathways Retreat on July 13-17 for a week of discovery, action and fun as we learn what it means to care for God's creation! Created to Care is a hands-on day camp (9 a.m.-12 p.m.) for youth entering 4th-6th grades who want to explore the connection between our faith and the natural world around us. The week will culminate with a visit to the Pokagon Band in Dowagiac, Mich., on Friday. Registration fee is by sliding scale. More information and registration at mcc.org/created-to-care