

buzz

Preparing the way for another coming



Within the past year our congregation, along with employees and friends of Moyer Electric, has done a marvelous job of facilitating Doug Cuney's re-entry into the local community from a state prison facility. The story of Doug and his wife Joyce has sometimes felt like nothing less than miraculous in terms of what God

has done in their lives. Now within the next few months Waterford has another opportunity to welcome back another, perhaps more familiar, face from prison: Kirk Martin, who is a congregational member.

In recent months, an ad hoc church group has been formed around issues of prison ministry and community re-entry, partly for Doug's sake but especially in anticipation of when Kirk would be released in 2016 from a state facility. The group consists of Russ Hochstetler, Gary Chupp, Jon. Wieand, Jeff Miller, Sheldon Swartz and myself. Russ, Jeff & I have all participated in a helpful informational workshop introducing people to the Transitional Coaching Program (TCP) offered by the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart. TCP builds small teams of transitional coaches prepared to walk with inmates before and after their local re-entry from Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities.

Although we don't plan to formally join TCP with Kirk, because we already have a strong informal support network for Kirk, we will probably draw on resources from TCP to help us facilitate and strengthen Kirk's ability to re-enter life outside prison.

One thing that pastors and this prison re-entry group recognize is a range of feelings within the congregation about Kirk's past behaviors and his future here at Waterford. I have reported over several years now of some dramatic work of the Holy Spirit in his life and of a depth of transformation in his faith and accountability, which was not there the last time he came out of prison. Nevertheless, I know that some in the congregation are understandably still cautious about how much to assist Kirk this time around. Therefore, we are planning on some kind of ritual or service of lament for congregational members in relation to our history with Kirk, prior to his release to us. This service has not yet been scheduled, but will likely be in January, without Kirk present. More details of that service will be forthcoming.

Kirk's re-entry time is coming around pretty soon. Because of college coursework and time cuts earned through good behavior, the very earliest Kirk may be released is at the end of January 2016, from the Chain O'Lakes facility where he currently is. With paperwork delays, this may likely end up in February or in March. Upon release to the local Community Transitions Program (CTP), he will have many needs, but the clear number one priority of these is for housing. Without a CTP-approved place to live in the community while he is initially on an ankle bracelet monitoring system, Kirk would be sent back to the depressing Elkhart County jail for his first six months "in the community." All other post-release needs of his are secondary to the housing need.

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We need your help providing transitional housing for a few months for Kirk. Do you have an extra room or perhaps a basement apartment you'd be willing to offer for Kirk's housing, for a period of three to six months? Here is what we know of the requirements at this time:

- A background check for the owner or occupier of the listed address
- A one-time CTP inspection of the property
- A telephone land-line (necessary for the ankle bracelet system)
- Telephone number for CTP to contact you
- At least one bedroom, not shared with anyone else
- No guns or alcohol in the home

Again, this commitment is estimated to be from three to six months until Kirk gets a job and saves enough money to get into a place of his own. He has some connections in the RV and business community and is highly motivated to find work quickly. We actually need two people willing to respond to this need – a primary residence, which would most likely be approved, but also a secondary one listed in case the first one falls through.

Time is important here for Waterford's response. We need to hear from you as soon as possible, but certainly by January 4. Might God be calling you to open up your home or a residential property you own as a temporary lodging for a member of our congregation who is eager to rehabilitate his life and give back to the community? Please be in prayer about this opportunity. If you are interested, or have some questions, please contact Russ Hochstetler at 574-537-4747 or at rchoch@maplenet.net

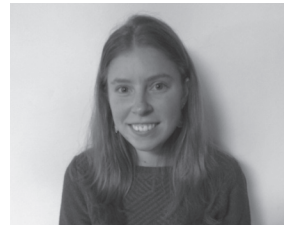
—Neil Amstutz, Pastoral Team Leader

Thank You

To my church family, thank you very much for your prayers and the lovely orchid. I am doing well, but have a journey of no bending, twisting and lifting ahead of me. I would greatly appreciate your continued prayers. I also enjoy phone calls and visits.

—Sherry Mast

Welcome to Ashley Beatty



My name is Ashley Beatty. I graduated from Goshen College in April. After graduation I decided to stay in Goshen and look for a job. I am now

working in Elkhart at two credit unions, Inova and Chiphone. I grew up in Washington, Iowa, where I attended Washington United Methodist Church. My parents are Mark and Susie Beatty and I am the oldest of three girls. I attended Iowa Mennonite School and graduated in 2011. After high school, I decided to go to Hesston College where I received my associates of arts degree. From Hesston, I transferred to Goshen where I studied business. In my free time I enjoy playing violin, reading, and spending time with my housemates.

Welcome to Evette Yoder



Hey Waterford! I'm Evette Yoder. I just wanted you all to know that I'm here and am interested in getting to know everyone. I started

attending Waterford at the beginning of 2014 and have been involved with the college group ever since. I just graduated from Goshen College this past April and have since started working at Oaklawn as a care facilitator. I am thoroughly enjoying life after college with my job, friends, and being involved with this wonderful caring community.

I am originally from Phoenix, Arizona where I grew up attending Trinity Mennonite Church with my parents Ruth and Lowell Yoder. I also attended Hesston College and did a year of service with Mennonite Voluntary Service in St. Louis where I was an assistant manager at Plowsharing crafts and additionally assisted with teaching children bike repair and safety at bike works. I have also volunteered with Mennonite Disaster Service in the summers of 2012-14 where I was a crew leader, leading groups in dry-walling and other remodeling jobs in New York and Colorado.



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