

Stephen Ministry Highlights

April 22 marked the end of the first joint training of Stephen Ministers from three local congregations: Waterford, Berkey Avenue and College Mennonite. Waterford hosted the three and one-half month weekly training during which there were six participants. Stephen Leaders, Bill Minter and Mel Claassen, lead the majority of training sessions, with periodic leadership by Stephen Leaders John Smith and Sara Wengerd (College) and Shirley Dick (Berkey).

Two of WMC's three newly trained Stephen Ministers were commissioned during the Sunday, May 10, worship services. John Birkey and Cynthia Kauffmann were given the charge by Pastors Cindy and Velma to use and nurture the skills they learned in their 50 hours of training to walk alongside, support, encourage, and buildup those facing life difficulties to whom they are assigned by their Stephen Leaders. Our third newly-trained Stephen Minister, Jane Otto, will be commissioned at a later date after recovery from surgery.

During the evening of May 12, Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders from the three congregations gathered to celebrate the joint training of five new Stephen Ministers who will begin serving in their congregations' respective Stephen Ministries. Hosted by WMC, and ably lead in fun get-acquainted activities by Pastor Cindy, the 25 individuals had the opportunity to share one-to-one about the rewards and challenges of serving in this lay-caring ministry. The evening ended with opportunity of more informal conversation while enjoying one of the six homemade pies made by Pastor Velma. Initial participant feedback indicates this will likely become an annual event among these three Stephen Ministry congregations.

—Stephen Leader Team: Bill Minter, Mel and Lorna Claassen



WMC Stephen Minister commissioning of John Birkey and Cynthia Kauffmann during the May 10th worship service.



Shirley Dick (left), of Berkey Avenue congregation, shares with WMC's Gary Shetler about her greatest joy and challenge of serving in her congregation.



Participants and Leaders in the joint SM Training - From the left: John Birkey (WMC), Bill Minter (Stephen Leader, trainer), Doug Baker (Berkey), Everett Thomas (College), Jane Otto (WMC), Mel Claassen (Stephen Leader, trainer), Lorna Claassen (Stephen Leader) and Cynthia Kauffmann (WMC)



Pastor Velma, along with helping plan the gathering of three congregations' Stephen Ministers, prepares to offer her pie-baking talent to the group.

Look forward to hearing from Mike during both services on June 21, when he will share more about his vision for church planting in Goshen.



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- Ron Guengerich
Interim Pastoral Team Member
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- Velma Swartz
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 given to the editor by 5 p.m. Tuesday preceding publication.

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Planting a Missional Church



AMBS/ Mary E. Klassen

Mike Yordy also celebrated graduation this season, having completed a Master of Divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. He is pursuing church planting options in the Goshen area, which you can read about in the surrounding article.

Mike Yordy graduated in May from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and is working with Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference as he follows his call to missional church planting.

Mike will not be going abroad to carry out his call, but plans to work in Goshen, Indiana—a city considered “churched” by most standards, including a strong Mennonite presence.

But Mike and conference leaders see a mission field of unmet needs in the midst of this churched community: to people who have been wounded by life circumstances, who have never heard of Jesus, or who are agnostic or atheists.

Mike says, “I’m called to do church differently. While our churches are doing a great job meeting the needs of their members, a different kind of

church is needed to reach different kinds of people—and make them disciples of Jesus too.”

Though Mike’s calling has been shaped through his own experiences of being wounded, leaving the church, and then finding healing in church community, he traces his distinct calling to a moment on a missions trip to Cambodia.

“In the midst of extreme poverty and devastation of a people by a despotic regime, I met an elderly American man with a Cambodian prostitute. I was angry. Then I heard Jesus’ voice: ‘I came for them too.’”

Mike anticipates a simple church structure—not one laden with committees—that will have a simple focus, combining the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission: “Love God, Love People, Change the World.”

Love God. Worship will be informal, contemporary with biblical preaching.

Love People. Small groups will allow people to walk through life together, practicing discipleship and radical hospitality.

Change the World. Equip people to understand and use their gifts and passions for God’s mission and encourage building authentic relationships with unchurched people.

Mike will be working this summer with conference leaders to find a support team and other families interested in working with him to reach out to the unchurched and broken in Goshen.

—Kevin Miller

From Evan Judson

Hello all. I am currently in the process of looking for summer employment opportunities. If any members of the congregation have miscellaneous house/yard work, odd jobs, house/pet sitting, etc. that you need done, I would be willing to help. You can reach me at evanjudson97@gmail.com or (574)-349-7876 (call or text). Thanks!