



# buzz

## Endowment Fund: Announcing Distributions, Inviting Applications

The Endowment Fund is pleased to name the following distributions that were approved at its recent meeting, totaling \$5,000. Since we did not meet in the fall as we usually would, these are considered the Fall 2016 distributions.

**Pathways Retreat Center Outdoor Hospitality Project:** \$2,000 awarded to provide for improved signage, lighting and landscaping at this day retreat center on the north side of Goshen. This is part of a larger project of outdoor improvements that included a parking lot and rain garden. Many local people, including Waterford pastors, make regular use of this retreat center.

**Introduction to Spiritual Retreat and Direction:** \$1,500 made available for retreat time and spiritual direction for members of Waterford's Ministry Leadership Council and Lay Ministry Partners. These funds will be available (until used up) at Pathways Retreat Center for lay leaders to schedule a spiritual retreat and possibly meet with a trained spiritual director.

**Retirement Housing Support through Benin Bible Institute:** \$1,500 was awarded to help make affordable housing possible for BBI Professor Alphonse Godonou (who visited Waterford in 2005) in his pending retirement. Such pastoral care gestures exceed BBI's regular budget capacity, and recognize decades of sacrificial giving by BBI faculty members.

With new participants on the Committee (Jeff Miller and Mark DeVito) we re-discovered the great joy and privilege of discerning how to give away God's money for special ministries. These distributions will happen in the month of February. In order to return to the regular Endowment Fund schedule, we now invite applications for the Spring 2017 cycle, which should be submitted by April 1, 2017, with decisions on expected distributions to be made by June 1.

The Waterford Mennonite Church Endowment

Fund exists to further the ongoing mission of the church by providing a vehicle for above-budget gifts to be invested for the church's work. Do you know of worthy causes or ministries locally or around the world that could use some additional support to get started or to accomplish a special project? By the Fund guidelines, applications may not be for projects that are normally within the church's operating budgets. A summary of how the Endowment Fund works and an application form are available in the literature rack in the foyer or on the congregational website. —Neil Amstutz, pastoral team leader, on behalf of the Endowment Fund Committee: Vyron Schmidt; Mark Devito; Kathy Myers; Jon. Wieand; Jeff Miller

## Soul Food Wednesday Conversations

Two upcoming Soul Food Wednesday evenings will provide Waterford with opportunities to engage and discuss more about how we wish to be a community of congregations in Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. This follows after our special joint nurture hour on January 22 when we learned more from Conference Pastor Dan Miller about the "Renewing a Vision" proposal that will be up for a vote by delegates at the Conference's Annual Sessions in June. Copies of this Conference document were distributed in church boxes on Jan. 15, and more will be available at SFW.

On February 8 and 22, you are invited to stay after the meal for guided conversations in table groups, starting at 6:30. Again, the status quo of what it means to be a member of our diverse Conference may soon be changing. This proposal is about addressing the polity question, "How alike do we have to be, to still stay together in one Conference?" We hope everyone has a chance to name their questions, comments and affirmations about the proposal.

You will also have opportunity to give your individual feedback to a Listening Committee (consisting of MLC members and Conference delegates) before,  
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during and after the nurture hour on Feb. 12 and Feb. 26 in the church library area. A desired outcome of the SFW sessions and the Listening Committee is to provide better congregational feedback to our Conference delegates in advance of regional gatherings in March and the later Annual Sessions. – Neil Amstutz, pastoral team leader, on behalf of Ministry Leadership Council

## Advocating for the Disability Community

As a congregation that financially supports both Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADnet) and MDC Goldenrod, we have been asked for support concerning the repeal of the Affordable Health Care Act. According to ADnet, “the ACA has increased the quality of life for people with disabilities by providing Medicaid expansion...to many.... who were not previously covered, and by making it illegal for insurance companies to refuse coverage based on pre-existing conditions (read disabilities or chronic illness).”

A repeal will also affect the residents of MDC Goldenrod who depend on the Medicaid Waiver to provide financial assistance to live in a supported environment, benefit from music and art therapy, community-based learning and many other opportunities. Without this waiver, many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities would not have access to these services.

Both organizations are asking people to contact congresswoman Walorski and let her know how much these services mean to people with disabilities. Congresswoman Walorski –Phone: (202) 225-3915,-<https://walorski.house.gov/contact/>. If you want to educate yourself more about this issue, The ARC has some good information on their website: <http://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy> (The ARC is an organization supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.) Please pray for the leadership of our country as they make decisions affecting millions of vulnerable people.–Karen Pfahler, Disability Advocate

## School Opportunities

There is an urgent need for people who are willing to be paired with one student for Reading Camp. It runs from January 31-March 23 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00-4:00.

In this program twenty students at five elementary schools are paired individually with an adult to listen to the student read and do reading activities. You can volunteer for both days each week or just one. If you are interested, contact Michelle Kercher at [michelle@goshenschools.org](mailto:michelle@goshenschools.org). The schools participating are Waterford, Model, Parkside, West Goshen and Chandler.

Secondly, Prairie View has a need for used sweatpants, mostly in smaller sizes, i.e. 4-6. If you have unused sweatpants at home or if you would like shopping at the Depot or Goodwill to purchase some, please put them into the Prairie View tubs at either end of the entrance hallway. Prairie View is very appreciative of our support.

–Len Harms, on behalf of Prairie View Outreach Team

## Ecuador Learning and Fellowship Tour

Do you feel overwhelmed by the world's problems – injustice, violence, pollution, habitat loss? Do you care about people everywhere, do you want them to know God's loving power? Do you care about the planet? Take an adventure to the most biodiverse region on earth and see how God is working through Jerrell, Jane and their children in the Ecuadorian rainforest.

It isn't too late to sign-up for the Ecuador Learning and Fellowship Tour. The dates are March 17 to March 30. The cost is \$1,800 per person. See the bulletin board for the flyer with more details.

Come experience God's creation in an area known for it's peak biodiversity in plants, birds, mammals, and amphibians. Contact Laurina Graber-Ditzler to sign up, or for more information.

–Laurina Graber-Ditzler



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