



buzz

How Can We Help Our Immigrant Neighbors?

by Pastor Neil Amstutz

If you're serious about continuing to find answers to that question, I want to hear from you. Back on March 12 in Sunday worship Julia Schmidt described some of the needs our undocumented neighbors are facing in the local community. Then on the evening of March 26 about 40 people attended an informational meeting led by Richard Aguirre and Julia Schmidt to explore some options for Waterford people to be involved. In the last six weeks, nearly two dozen Waterford people put their names on a list for Elkhart County HOPE Network to possibly contact them for assistance with transportation, expenses, or other needs for vulnerable immigrant neighbors.

But now what? Perhaps there are people interested in exploring possibilities of Waterford's active participation in the New Sanctuary Movement. However, I do not assume that, since that would be a major commitment requiring significant congregational processing. For those wanting glimpses of what being a sanctuary church involves and decisions going into that, I recommend listening to the following excellent 21-minute podcast from National Public Radio: <https://goo.gl/tBH18A> (click on link).

On behalf of Mission and Service Ministry Team (MSMT), **I am looking to form what we might call the Waterford HOPE Team.** This would be a working group of Waterford attenders to coordinate, oversee, and communicate the various ways Waterford people respond to these needs, whether individually or as a congregation. The group would be accountable to MSMT, parallel to the BBI Planning Group, Ecuador Ministry Support Team, Prairie View Elementary School Outreach Team, and other subgroups. It would consist of people who care about leading and managing ways Waterford people tangibly support vulnerable immigrants. Needs and opportunities for involvement would be communicated by and through this group.

Do you feel passionately about supporting and walking alongside such immigrant families as they feel threatened? Perhaps you want to help and want to see our church get involved, but aren't sure the way forward? **Then we need you to contact me,** and to help create that way forward at Waterford. I am willing to call forth and support such a group, but it's unrealistic and inappropriate for me to be the main point person for such a ministry here. Is God calling you to move out of your voluntarily chosen shadows to help vulnerable people who are forced to live in the shadows? It may not happen without a small group of people willing to give leadership to this, and the time is now. Thank you for thinking and praying about this.

Relief and hygiene kits urgently needed

Multiple crises around the world have depleted Mennonite Central Committee's warehouse inventory. Please help Waterford Mennonite Women replenish supplies. Leave your donations below the mailboxes through the end of May,

Contents for Relief Kits (*new* items only, in original packaging) Place contents in a box or bag. The kit will be re-packed in a new five-gallon plastic pail with lid.

- 4 large bars bath soap
- 1 plastic bottle shampoo (13-24 oz) in resealable plastic bag
- 4 large bars laundry soap (Fels Naptha®, Sunlight® or Zote® brands)
- 4 adult-size toothbrushes
- 4 new bath towels (medium weight, dark/bright colors)
- 2 wide-tooth combs (6-8 in)
- 1 fingernail clipper (good quality)
- 1 box adhesive bandages (minimum 40 count, assorted)
- 1 package sanitary pads (18-24 count thin maxi)

Contents for Hygiene Kits (*new* items, in original packaging). Hygiene kits are distributed in a useful, double-drawstring cloth bag (11¾ in x 16¾ in). Bags are available on the table below the mailboxes: 1 adult-size toothbrush, 1 large bar bath soap, 1 fingernail clipper (good quality), 1 hand towel (dark color).

What Does It Take to Be a Stephen Minister?

In preparation for the information session that will be offered during the May 7 nurture hour, the following questions and answers may help you consider your own sense of gifts and call to becoming a Stephen Minister.

How much of my time will it really involve?

There are 50 hours of training between August 30 and December 2017. As a trained Stephen Minister you will visit about once a week, for about one hour, with the person for whom you are caring. You will also attend a 2.5 hour monthly meeting with your peer Stephen Ministers for group supervision and continuing education.

How much money will this cost me? Nothing. The congregation has budgeted money for training materials and other meeting expenses.

Will our pastors still counsel people? Most definitely! Stephen Ministers complement the pastors' ministry and provide more care for people who need it. Along with the class shepherds, this ministry has become an important part of how our congregation cares.

What if I get over my head with people who need more care than I can provide? You will never knowingly be assigned persons who might be in that situation. The Stephen Ministry training also helps you to know exactly when and how to help your care receivers get professional help when necessary. The peer supervision group, Stephen Leaders, and pastors will also help you make such decisions.

How might I personally benefit from this experience? You will learn skills that will be valuable in your personal life as well as in your Stephen Ministry. Also, the satisfaction of helping another person is a wonderful blessing.

Who will be the care receivers? Participants in our congregation who are experiencing times of special need, and other acquaintances within our community who may turn to us for help. Thus, Stephen Ministry is also a way to reach out to others who do not have a church community.

Will the care receiver really want my involvement? Yes. Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinators will meet first with the potential care receiver. You will be contacted only after

the care receiver understands Stephen Ministry and has agreed to meet with a Stephen Minister of the same gender.

Are there other people as unsure as I am about this undertaking? Probably so! But the training will eliminate much of this anxiety as you will learn how to respond to people and, much more importantly, how to listen.

Are there persons I can talk to who have gone through this training? Yes. Hearing about the experiences of Stephen Ministers in considering this call can be most beneficial. Feel free to talk to current Stephen Ministers: John Birkey, Len Harms, Cynthia Kauffmann, Kay Miller, Mim Meyer, Gary Shetler, or Elmer Wyse.

How do I express interest? Attend the May 7 information session. You can also talk to Waterford's Stephen Leaders Liz Gingerich, Lorna or Mel Claassen, or Bill Minter. They will have further information and a form available for you to indicate your interest. After completing an Application of Interest, you will then have the opportunity to meet with these Stephen Leaders, ask any questions, and make a final decision together.

2nd, 5th, and 8th Graders: Preview Night April 26

On April 26 all of our Wednesday night clubs will host Preview Night, in which next year's incoming classes can try out their new clubs to get a taste for the excitement of next year. Venture Club will welcome 2nd graders, JYF 5th graders, and MYF 8th graders. Come and see what next year holds for you at Waterford!



Lacy Stoltzfus and Katie Misz demonstrate foot washing during the Maundy Wednesday service.



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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. Monday preceding publication.

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