



buzz

Lenten Worship Preview: “Between Me & You”

Although the heavy snowfall in early February may have made us think spring is a long way off, Easter comes fairly early this year, and that is not an April Fool’s joke. That also means we enter into Lent while yet in the cold middle of February. Last week’s Buzz reminded us to bring scarves each week of Lent for use in children’s time and then eventually to be donated.

This year’s Lent and Easter theme, “Between Me & You” highlights covenants that God makes with God’s people. But despite God’s perfect intentions for relationships, we inevitably find sin entering as a barrier in the midst of God’s desired relationships. The theme is intentionally multifaceted, referring simultaneously to relationships between us and God; between people; and between people and the rest of creation. We are anchored by the reassurance that, as Easter dawns after six weeks of both the joys and disappointments of these relationships, a new reality is revealed of nothing ultimately between us and God.

The table below gives more details of the series:

Date	Theme	Preacher	Scripture
Feb. 18	1: Me & You & the Creatures Too	Cindy Voth	Gen. 9:8-17; Ps. 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mk 1:9-15
Feb. 25	2: Me & You & the Generations after You	Neil Amstutz	Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps. 22:23-31; Rom. 4:13-25; Mk 8:31-38
Mar. 4	3: Me & You & Working it Through	Cindy	Exo. 20:1-17; Ps. 19; 1 Cor. 1:18-25; Jn 2:13-22
Mar. 11	4: Me & You & Darkness in View	Neil	Num. 21:4-9; Ps. 107:1-3, 17-22; Eph. 2:1-10; Jn 3:14-21
Mar. 18	5: Me & You & Covenant New	Cindy	Jer. 31:31-34; Ps. 51:1-12; Heb. 5:5-10; Jn 12:20-33
Mar. 25	6 (Palm Sunday): Me & You & an Alternative View	Katie Misz	Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29; Jn 12:12-16
Apr. 1	Easter: Nothing between Us	Neil	Acts 10:34-43; Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; Jn 20:1-18

Why Come to Conversations That Matter?

As was introduced in last week’s Buzz, we’re planning another round of Conversations That Matter sessions this winter and spring. The three planned conversations fit together, preparing us for the third one, which will be on some aspect of LGBTQ issues. You need not come to all three conversations in order to participate, but we believe the quality of the third conversation will be better if people have attended all three.

But let’s get you interested in showing up for the first one, at 6:30 p.m. on Wed. Feb. 28. The general theme of how we interpret the Bible will be fleshed out via a specific example: what we believe the Bible says about homosexuality. But again the emphasis will be less on what we specifically believe, and more on **how** and **why** we interpret the Bible in that way. So why should you come to this session on February 28, knowing that many Christians disagree strongly on this subject? Let me suggest five reasons you should come:

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- **Because you want a chance to share what you believe.** Some of you have been waiting to have something like this discussion. Some of you are happy you'll finally get a chance to summarize your view of the Bible on this subject. In fact, most of us are honestly flattered when someone sincerely wants to know what we believe and why.
- **Because you're curious what others believe.** For too long and for too many people, this may have felt like a taboo subject, so there are many people in church about whose beliefs you're curious. You may know what some of your friends and relatives believe, but what about other sisters and brothers in your own church? This session aims to give you a safe and respectful place for you to hear others' beliefs and for you to be heard.
- **Because you feel like a minority voice.** If you have ever thought that most of Waterford thinks differently than you do, then there is a place for your voice here. No it's much stronger than that: there is a need for your voice here. Conversations That Matter is most productive with a diversity of viewpoints. I know for a fact we at WMC do not have unanimity on this subject. So you are depriving yourself and other church members of a growth opportunity in Christ if you stay away.
- **Because you're scared.** Yes, this is the most honest reason for not coming. How then could this be a reason to come? I'm not promising this will be easy. But what stands in the way of our own growth is usually something we fear. And it often takes some chance at a safer, easier way to face that fear, in order for us to risk doing what scares us. So here's the paradox: You know that talking about sensitive subjects at church scares you. That is precisely why you should come.
- **Because there's childcare.** Venture Club, JYF and MYF are already happening during the first two scheduled conversations. So if your child under third grade is why you're staying home, come on out and share in this experience. We're offering childcare at all three sessions this spring because we think it's that important.

*—Pastor Neil, for the CTM Group:
Aaron Lehman, Rose Shetler,
Christa Graber Kauffman, John Kaufman*

How Do YOU Support Developing Pastoral Leadership?

Some of you might answer that question by pointing to Waterford's Mennonite Education Fund, including its generous support for students attending a Mennonite seminary. Others might point to our sabbaticals policy for pastors, which has benefitted several Waterford pastors over the years, myself included, and which will be put into use by Pastor Cindy this summer on her planned renewal leave. (More about that in future Buzz issues.)

I want to inform you of a new opportunity for encouraging pastors and strengthening their long-term leadership. Recently Everence has partnered with the Lily Foundation for a series of initiatives to provide practical financial assistance to pastors. One of these initiatives is a debt-reduction grant. Many pastors and spouses arrive at their churches carrying significant educational debt. This grant, continuing into spring 2018, provides a total of \$6,000 to qualifying pastors toward repaying educational loans: \$3,000 from the pastor's congregation and a matching \$3,000 of Lily funds through Everence.

Pastor Katie Misz has applied and qualifies for this program, so **Ministry Leadership Council invites members of the Waterford congregation to contribute toward this \$3,000 goal.** This is not merely a "love offering" of personal support for Katie and JE. In addition to being "good stewardship" for Waterford to take advantage of matching money for debt reduction, this is also a concrete gesture of standing behind the formation and calling of pastors for our churches, which is ultimately the aim of this grant in the first place. Your participation in this program furthers this aim.

So we invite your contributions to this fund by March 30 if at all possible. Checks should be made out to Waterford Mennonite Church, with "Pastor Debt Reduction" on the subject line. Please take note of two important aspects of meeting this goal:

- Because these funds provide a personal benefit to an individual, remember that contributions are NOT tax-deductible.
- If we exceed this \$3,000 goal, additional funds raised will also go to Katie and JE.

As you, the people of Waterford, have demonstrated generous support for your pastors in the past, so we now seek your tangible support that would strengthen the long-term ministry possibilities for Katie and JE here among us. Thank you.

—Pastor Neil, for Ministry Leadership Council

Deepening Relationships in Open Spaces

“I am claustrophobic. Words are inadequate to describe the sense of feeling closed in which results in changes in heart rate, breathing, and level of anxiety. When feeling claustrophobic I inevitably begin thinking: ‘I just need more oxygen, higher ceilings, less noise, and yes please, more open space!’” This was the opening paragraph of the application I submitted for a Lilly Sabbatical Renewal Grant. The narrative continues to describe a deep desire for wide open spaces to be able to intentionally tend my significant relationships with God, self, others, and all of creation. My life, as well as yours, is surrounded by relationships and the calling to faithfully tend them as a person of God. So the renewal leave theme is: *Deepening Relationships in Open Spaces*.

My renewal leave will be from June 4 to September 9, 2018. With the gift of receiving a Lilly Grant I will experience lots of new open spaces in God’s amazing creation! Throughout the time away I will have space and time for solitude retreat days, trips with my husband Luke, a 24-day family trip out west (which includes time with both sets of grandparents), overnight trips to Chicago with each of our children, and a long weekend away with my best friend Aimee Weishaupt. These open spaces will include the National Parks of the Grand Canyon, Olympic, Glacier, Yellowstone, Badlands, Black Hills, and Mount Rushmore. The leave will also include museums and sightseeing in Chicago and Seattle, as well as exploring the State Park on Mackinac Island. My time away will conclude with a trip with Luke to Tahiti and the French Polynesian Islands in the South Pacific which will create lots of open space for hiking, biking, and kayaking.

While my family and I will be dwelling within this theme, various planning groups have discerned the ways the congregation will also be incorporating this theme into your life together to help create a shared formational experience. Here at WMC there will be a summer worship series in June and July that focuses on healthy relationships and ways to strengthen relationships with God, self, others, and all of creation. Within the renewal theme, as well as living into our new directional statement, there will be a variety of intergenerational opportunities to get to know others within our faith community. This will include monthly fellowship activities, as well as an exciting joint nurture hour gathering as the adult classes will rotate in meeting with the children and youth during June and July (There are no preparations...just come together in

the fellowship hall as three hosts will lead the group through various get to know you activities. Come excited to get to know others in our faith community! More info coming soon!)

In addition, we desire to create new open retreat spaces in our sanctuaries. The physical sanctuary will be accessible every Wednesday to be used as personal retreat space and prayer guides will be provided. In addition, a walking prayer route will be created throughout our wetlands to be accessed seven days a week during daylight hours, also with weather-proofed prayer stations. As we embark on this new journey, each person in the congregation will receive a new journal with guided contemplative and active prompts to guide our reflections throughout the renewal leave. Then we will regather on September 16 for a fall picnic where we will be able to share some of our reflections with each other.

The Lilly Grant will also cover a 0.3 FTE Interim Pastor during my leave. It is a joy to share that Mariah Martin has joyfully accepted our invitation to return this summer. Last summer we got to know Mariah as she completed an internship at WMC through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Early in April we will have another Buzz article which will provide detailed information for the various activities for the congregation (including dates for all of the events). On behalf of the pastoral team I invite the congregation to join us in praying for this summer and for the open spaces we will enter as we intentionally tend to our significant relationships with God, self, others, and all of creation.

—Cindy Voth, Pastor of Community Life

Corrections and Changes for the Directory

Richard and Kathy Miller’s address:
702 Emerson St.

Kirk Martin’s new address (by Feb. 24):
1202 Westbrooke Ct
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- Elvina Schmidt
Bookkeeper
- Janet Shoemaker
Coordinator of Administrative Ministries
- Mel Claassen
Business Manager
- JD Smucker
Worship Coordinator

Facilities Ministry

- Jan Oostland
Facilities Manager
- Courtney Shetler
Custodian
- Irma Perez
Custodian

Pastoral Ministry

- Neil Amstutz
Pastoral Team Leader
- Katie Misz
Pastor of Family Life
- Velma Swartz
Pastor of Senior Ministries
- Cindy Voth
Pastor of Community Life

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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In Defense of the Crooked Hall Tree

There is what was called in my home a “hall tree” on our platform during Lent and it’s crooked. This hall tree was made for me by my grandpa, Noah Sommers, when he was 90 years old and I treasure it. It’s beautiful! But evidently the wood was not completely dried when he made it and it has developed a crook, or a curve – it doesn’t stand straight! This bothers me so I put it in the corner of our entryway, turned just right so the crook isn’t noticeable and it’s always ready to hold your coat or hat when you come to visit.

In thinking about our Lent/Easter services and the use of scarves during the service I was thinking about a way to display the scarves and have them available for use during the children’s time. I thought about

this hall tree—but the crook may bother some of you like it bothers me. Should I use it? Well, this is Lent – a time of introspection, acknowledging our faults, our sins, our imperfections, and to confess and find new ways of living into faithful discipleship, love, service and commitment to God. Now there’s nothing this “tree” can do about its crook – but this tree can be a reminder that its imperfection does not diminish its usefulness, its service, its beauty. We are all imperfect, but please don’t stand in a corner to hide your imperfection, and don’t let anyone else put you there either. Come into the light Jesus brings and be open to the new ways we can covenant with God, others and the world around us.

—Lorraine Reinford

JYF Winter Retreat at Amigo Center February 9-11

