

# Community Mennonite Church

## *2016 Annual Report*



January 2017

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## COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT

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2016 was a busy year both for Council and in the life of the congregation. Membership of Council included:

- Chair - Heidi Derstine
- Vice-Chair - Alisha Huber
- Administrative Commission Chair - Ruth Stoltzfus Jost
- Outreach Commission Chair - Hadley Jenner
- Worship Commission Chair - Jeremy Nafziger
- Community Life Commission Chair - Lee Good
- Youth Commission Chair - Joyce Peachey Lind
- Member-at-Large - Ben Bailey

Jennifer Davis Sensenig serves as the Pastoral Team rep on Council with our church administrator keeping minutes at each meeting.

While the gifts of Ruth, Jeremy and Ben will be missed, in January we are excited to welcome Greg Yoder (worship commission chair), Larry Miller (administrative commission chair) and Elena Histan Stuckey (member-at-large) to Council.

Personnel Committee consists of the Council Chair, Vice-Chair, Administration Commission Chair and Lead Pastor. Nitsuh Agaje, who has been our church administrator over the last four years, followed her heart to Boston in late summer. We welcomed Ellen Quinlin as church administrator in August. As Ellen takes on this new role we appreciate her willingness to learn new systems and her kind and gentle spirit. We are excited that Kent Davis Sensenig will begin as our custodian sometime in December after Ker Ferdinand resigned.

The personnel committee conducted a thorough review of the insurance policy CMC has been using for many years and compared it to marketplace options. We were pleased to find that our current rates with the Corinthian Plan, which is administered by Everence, were better than the marketplace with more products offered.

This year Pastor Dayna is in the third year of her four year contract. Therefore she went through a comprehensive evaluation process that included congregational input. Thoughtful reflections affirmed Dayna's ministry and work and offered meaningful suggestions for 2017. From the review process, there was strong affirmation for Dayna's pastoral leadership and to renew our call to Dayna for another four year term. More information about the results of the review and a vote will follow in June 2017.

Each Council meeting we received updates on the vision process and building renovation. We are thankful for the many volunteers that helped make both of these initiatives possible.

Each month, we reviewed the church's financial statements and began working on the 2017 budget in July, which allowed Council time to collect data. We worked extensively with Finance to create a 2017 budget that makes good use of our resources. In June and November, we met with Pastoral Team to discuss important issues facing our congregation and the Virginia Mennonite Conference. We held our annual congregational meeting in November. We provided time for reporting, giving thanks to outgoing leadership, discussing our 2017 vision and affirming new leadership positions.

Council passed a number of policies this year, which included:

- Committee creation/dissolution policy
- Disbursements from Capital Reserves & Operating Reserves
- Photo Permission Proposal
- Guidelines on when to overspend a budget and when to request reserve funds
- Guidelines for using CMC as a pass-through

We welcome and encourage you to read through the policies in our CMC policy manual at <http://cmcva.org/about/policies-statements-and-positions/>.

An updated organization chart, emergency preparedness plan and sexual harassment policy are expected to be passed after the new year.

In order to submit the IRS form 1023, we changed our bylaws to include a conflict of interest policy and a plan in case of the church's dissolution. While CMC is automatically a nonprofit because it is a church, we had to submit this form in order to be recognized as a tax exempt organization on a database that companies like Google and Dell use when giving discounts to non-profits. Alisha was instrumental in filling out this form to save us money in the future.

Council invites you to stay current on our events by reviewing our meeting minutes at: <http://cmcva.org/commissions/church-council/council-meeting-minutes/>.

Thank you all for the energy, time and resources you give to CMC. It has been humbling and gratifying to serve in this role and to walk with you through the joys and challenges we face as a congregation. Thank you for allowing me to grow and be challenged by the role of Council Chair. I am grateful for the deeper relationships I have created with many of you. May we all continue to stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for our souls (Jeremiah 6:16).

Heidi Derstine  
Council Chair

## LEAD PASTOR'S REPORT

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“Thus says the LORD: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16. With this theme verse CMC completed a vision process during 2016 that included Appreciative Inquiry work (Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver) as well as specific adaptations for CMC, especially identifying blindspots among us and examining the idea of “rest for our souls.” Through multiple and multi-form engagements with the many voices and visions of CMCers, we decided in November that there are three **Core Practices** of CMC that we want to affirm and bless through existing commissions/committees, namely: Stories in worship; Welcome of children and youth in the life of the congregation; and Bible stories for real life. We further decided to form task forces or committees for three **New Initiatives** of CMC, namely: Art projects in and around the church buildings; an MVS unit; and Interchurch/interfaith activities that engage our diverse community. Finally, there are two areas for **Active Discernment**: Mid-week Kids Club; and becoming a Green Congregation. This degree of clarity about God’s good word to us will help us live into our vision as a peace church where everyone is welcome.

During the past year CMC welcomed 17 new members: 16 transfers and 1 baptism. Their testimonies of faith offered in worship inspired those of long-time members, and the next generation. We also welcomed 7 new babies born to CMCers and pastors hosted 5 gatherings for new attenders to become better acquainted with CMC and build relationships.

I served with both the Building Committee and the Development Committee in 2016 and now celebrate their accomplishments in the Everyone Welcome campaign. Chairpersons Jeremy Nafziger and Stuart Showalter, respectively, exemplified joyful service through big projects that will benefit the congregation for many years to come. Among many improvements, we are enjoying the beauty of original brick exposed behind the lofty archway in our fellowship hall and a renovated office suite--two high traffic areas for CMCers and community members.

CMC piloted a Leadership Development Process this year, led by Lee Snyder, Sue Cockley, Lonnie and me. Our 7 CMC participants ranged in ages from 20s to 50s. It was valuable to have several members of Council among this pilot group and we are tweaking and considering something similar in 2017, perhaps with a Sep start date. We also piloted a monthly Birthday Offering, but have decided to discontinue it in the future.

In terms of ministry in the local community and conference, I personally supported the first **Holy and Beloved** gathering for local Mennonite women in ministry of all kinds. The April gathering included 60 women and plans are emerging for a 2017 reprise. In Sep I completed 5 years of service with Harrisonburg District’s Mission Advisory Committee who sponsored the political yard signs that read: *No matter where you’re from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor.* I also participated in a focused Mennonite

pastor's Bible study on scriptures related to the divisions among our churches regarding same-sex relationships. I continue to participate in an ecumenical lectionary study group for local pastors preaching from lectionary scriptures.

Finally, as President of Faith in Action, focused on local justice for immigrant neighbors, I helped pass a Welcoming America resolution in Harrisonburg City Council to make ours a more immigrant-friendly community. Faith in Action is becoming a trusted multi-faith organization to which both congregations and immigrant leaders turn when there are local concerns to address.

With a newly-installed projector and screen in the sanctuary, I preached more sermons this past year enhanced with slides. In addition to audio sermon recordings, we also began posting sermon manuscripts on our website to connect with persons beyond those in our Sunday morning worship service. I also contribute a column several times this year to *The Mennonite*.

As lead pastor I am responsible for supervising our staff, who are gifted and committed people. I enjoy working closely with Pastor Jason, Pastor Dayna and Ellen, our church administrator.

Though I will continue to develop worship themes for CMC, in 2017 Pastor Dayna will be relating formally to Worship Commission. This will allow me time to support the renewal of our congregational practice of Gifts Discernment as well as engage CMC with the Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity program, which several CMC leaders will attend. I am grateful for the wisdom, collaboration and support we experience as a Pastoral Team. Our model of three pastors and three pastoral elders to share the work fits CMC well. We were grateful this year to have Mike Brislen join us for several months as Pastor Jason began his study leave. At year's end Brian Martin Burkholder completes 2.5 years as Pastoral Elder and CMC affirmed Mike Brislen to continue serving with Pastoral Team, beginning a term as Pastoral Elder through 2019.

For 2017 CMC Council and Pastoral Team chose a short verse from Romans to remind us of God's sustaining power at work through our lives:

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)**

This verse brings to a hopeful conclusion Paul's vision for a church making peace among each other (Jewish and Gentile) and proclaiming peace in the midst of the Roman Empire. We hope it will inspire CMC to be church in whatever circumstances we face in 2017.

Pastor Jennifer Davis Sensenig

Lead Pastor

## **GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

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**Sue Cockley:** Chair, responsible for the gifts survey; identify persons to serve in key leadership roles (Council, Pastoral Elders).

**Jim Yoder:** Relates to Administration Commission.

**Shannon Sneary:** Relates to Outreach Commission.

**Mary Jo Bowman:** Relates to Worship Commission.

Our committee did not have members to cover the Youth and Community Life positions.

The primary feature of Gifts Discernment this year has been the difficulty of finding members for our committee! The Pastoral Team have made numerous inquiries, but were unable to find the two people we were missing. In addition to this, it seemed that other leaders at CMC were needing to know about open positions and who would be filling them earlier (September, October) than in previous years. This meant that we felt a bit of pressure to cover for our missing committee members and get open positions filled several months before the official January 1 start date for new terms.

The accessibility of job descriptions remains a problem for us. Also, the lack of an up-to-date directory, with photos, is a real hindrance. One mitigating factor is Dayna's knowledge of new church attendees and her willingness to meet with us to pass on names and contact information. Jason also met with me several times to suggest people for Youth commission roles and his adjustment to his own work schedule helped to cover some of the gaps. Our job would have been very difficult without their assistance.

We continue to find that we often discover situations where a committee is virtually inactive or not functioning well within the church structure. We are not tasked with fixing these situations, but we usually end up working with the Commission Chair to remedy them. This year I also met with Council to discuss the future of two committees.

We have had trouble filling some key roles, but it is unclear to me if that is because we have fewer congregational members who are willing to volunteer, or if it is a result of a smaller Gifts Discernment committee.

In addition to the Gifts Discernment Survey sent out in the fall, we also set up a table in the Fellowship Hall during coffee time two Sundays in a row to invite people to talk about open roles and what they might be interested in doing. This was more successful than I had expected (maybe it was the trail mix!)

With one month to go before the new terms begin, we are still filling some positions, but in general I think we are on track with previous years.

Sue Cockley  
Gifts Discernment Chair

## **PRAYER COMPANION MINISTRY**

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Purpose: A caring member of CMC to be available for prayer after Sunday morning worship service. This is to provide a safe place to request the presence of the Holy Spirit to envelope CMC and/or individual for petition of prayer.

After an informal meeting with some interested church members in 2012, Pastoral Team created Prayer Companion Ministry. A Prayer Companion would be available after the worship service for anyone interested in a prayer time and also to lift prayer up for CMC as we move as a community of believers. After a six-month trial, a decision was made to increase membership of committee and make appropriate changes to prayer location and the surrounding aesthetics. This committee was given place for sign-up on the Sunday morning Worship Calendar. Prayer Guidelines were established along with Pastoral Team for our members to abide by. A "Prayer Request" insert was placed in Worship Bulletin to be filled out and placed in two marked boxes located in the sanctuary for "silent requests". All prayer requests are given to pastoral team for consideration. The Prayer Alcove was established, a stain glass commissioned to this location, and the aesthetics of the alcove increased with carpet, lamps, heating for comfort, etc.

This committee will now relate to Community Life Commission and be added to Gifts Discernment committee for addition of members.

Appreciation goes to Pastoral Team for establishing this ministry; Worship Commission for finding and clearing space for us, and Property/Building Committee for heat and repairs.

Current Members: Sharon Wyse Miller, Keaton Shenk, Lois Kauffman, Joyce Osborne, Sue Cockley, Esther Stenson, Mary Jo Bowman, Nancy Heisey, and Linda Pfamatter

Linda Pfamatter  
Reporter

## **ADMINISTRATION COMMISSION**

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### *Facilities*

The former Property Committee was divided this year into Facilities Committee, Roberta McCorkle, chair, and Grounds Committee, Mike Zook, chair.

This year has seen the completion of our building renovation which expanded our fellowship hall, renovated nursery, offices, classrooms, and other spaces, and upgraded

HVAC, sound, and other systems. This was funded by the Everyone Welcome Campaign and reserve monies.

Rentals and ways we share our buildings.

- Community Preschool
- Patchwork Pantry
- IR&S
- El Camino Discipular
- Seventh Day Adventist Church
- The Table
- Skyline Literacy Citizenship Classes
- Rosetta Stone (parking only)
- Harrisonburg Dance Cooperative
- One Time Uses - Weddings, Community meetings, etc

As part of our visioning process we are hoping to use the Dream House Annex to house an MVS unit by next year.

Other Matters

Ellen Quinlin began as church administrator this year.

Ker Ferdinand ended his custodial job in November and Craig Serrels covered this work until Kent Davis Sensenig was hired in Ker's place.

Ruth Stoltzfus Jost  
Administration Commission Chair

### ***Facilities Committee Report***

In April this committee was created from Property Committee. Members Roberta McCorkle, Ray Horst, Sam Miller and Tom Sawin sought to respond quickly to urgent needs in the church and Annex (Dean House) coordinating and communicating with the church administrator and custodial staff.

Primarily, the committee "put out fires" responding to: a prayer room roof leak; cockroach infestation; plumbing and electrical malfunctions; and dire painting and window and railing repair needs. After extensive consultations and with the assistance of Administrative Chair Ruth Jost the committee oversaw the replacement of unsightly exterior signs.

Roberta McCorkle

**Finance Committee**

Renovation

Since 2016 has seen the close of the renovation project, a summary picture of this project should be noted. It is a big part of our finance activity and will continue to be in the picture because the Everyone Welcome Campaign is a three year effort (construction beginning in August, 2015). The three components that the congregation voted on at the start of the project related to financing were: estimating project cost (\$550,000), committing to outreach ‘beyond ourselves’ (\$50,000), and securing a project loan (\$400,000).

Related cumulative totals:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Project expenditures	<b>\$761,142</b>	\$322,737	\$438,405
EW receipts	360,590	159,155	201,435
Reserve funds transferred	<u>54,162</u>	<u>9,603</u>	<u>44,559</u>
	414,752	168,758	245,994
Mortgage loan	<u>400,000</u>		400,000
Funds available	<b>814,752</b>		

End of **November** EWC **cash balance:** \$53,610

Note: Included in the total expenditures is \$15,000 Mission & Outreach disbursement, that is a part of the “beyond ourselves” commitment, so a balance of \$35,000 still needs to be disbursed. Secondly, also included is \$4,762 principal portion of the mortgage payment leaving our current renovation loan balance at \$395,238. Additional project costs yet to be finished are estimated at \$3,450.

Annual Budget

The annual operating budget for 2016 is following pretty close to budget. Some increases in insurance costs were not fully anticipated resulting in budget overages. At the end of November undesignated contribution is short of budgeted target by \$11,825. A note of this shortfall will be made known in December and hopefully we will meet all of our expenditures for 2016.

David Stenson  
Finance Committee Chair

## **Church Administrator**

2016 has been quite a busy year here at CMC. Of course, the most noticeable has been the completion of the amazing renovation of the building, which began back in August of 2015.

Council hired ADP to outsource our payroll and taxes, which is a huge weight lifted off of the Church Administrator's plate. With respect to my work, I have been busy learning and settling in. I am responsible for the day-to-day clerical office work and handling of the finances; maintaining all contributions, processing invoices, copying the Worship Service recording, updating of our weekly Worship Service Bulletins and our weekly Newsweekly, Prayer Requests and Sharing, filing, taking council minutes, and of course, assisting the pastoral team, commission and the various committee members where and when needed.

I would like to thank the pastoral team members, council members and the finance committee members for your contribution in helping and facilitating the work I do. I wish you all many blessings in the New Year.

Ellen Quinlin  
Church Administrator

## **Grants Committee**

Members: Cindy Lamb, Melissa Rudacille, Steve Cessna, Millard Osborne, Chair.

There are two major parts to our committee's responsibility and it is with a deep sense of joy that we are able to share in providing financial assistance to our members and regular attenders. One part is our Compassion Fund for special needs or emergencies which come up and give stress to personal budgeting. The second part is managing educational grants for our students in Mennonite/Anabaptist schools.

A. Compassion Fund is for helping our own active CMC members, or regular attenders. Financial needs are presented to Grants Committee for consideration from small groups, pastors, or Sunday School classes. Each request is confidentially considered on an individual basis. Requests larger than \$600 will be taken to Church Council for approval. There is a limit of \$1,200 per family per calendar year. These grants are not loans, but given as gifts. If a person wishes to replenish the Compassion Fund, they are free to do so at any time.

B. Educational Grants – Mennonite Undergraduate Institutions

CMC will provide \$1000 each year to students who attend a Mennonite/ Anabaptist Church college or university. Students and/or parent(s) must be full or associate members at CMC for 10 months prior to the school year for which they are requesting

grant money, and currently be attending CMC. Students must be enrolled full-time in school, and may receive grant money for 4 years while getting their first degree.

The total number of undergraduate students this 2015-2016 school year has been 14 with the following detail: EMU – 7, Goshen College – 3, and 1 each at Bethel, North Newton KS; Hesston College; Canadian Mennonite, Winnipeg MB; and Juniata College, Huntingdon PA.

In addition we have two graduate students at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

### *Educational Grants – Eastern Mennonite School*

Children and youth of CMC whose guardian/parent(s) are members of CMC are eligible for educational need-based grants to attend Eastern Mennonite School (Kindergarten to Grade 12). Completed CMC application forms may be submitted to request funds. The amount of each grant is determined by the household's demonstrated financial need through a third party financial aid agency and the FAST eligibility form. The full amount of eligible financial need for each student is met by CMC (50%) and EMS (50%).

For the current 2015-2016 school year there are 10 students at EMS whose families are eligible for financial aid.

Summary – Again, we are thankful that we are able to share in the particular needs of others in our church family and encourage each of our children and youth in pursuing their educational goals.

Millard Osborne  
Grants Committee Chair

### ***Building Committee - "Everyone Welcome" Church Renovation Project Report***

At the start of the year, we faced "stage II" of the renovation project. The north hallway, with the nursery, restrooms, and pastors' offices was more or less done and the new focus was the fellowship hall, the ramp entrance, the basement, and a few other things. The fellowship hall work, in the oldest part of the church, was intended to get rid of the restrooms built into the north side of it and to open the north wall to the new hall, making space and improving traffic.

There were parts of the renovation project, it has to be said, that involved finding the things one dreads to find in old buildings even while knowing that they're going to be crop up: beams that weren't really holding up what we thought they were, drain pipes that weren't actually intact, and so on. And at first we didn't know what to make of what we found in the closed off end of the fellowship hall; we just knew we didn't want to mess it up.

It turned out to be the remnants of the front of the 1907 church—a brick wall (we knew that was there), an arch, a window, some intriguing paint that could have been a mural under plaster. Models were made and sketches were drawn and the building committee (in several of its 40 meetings over the course of the project) developed a way to keep the arch, put two openings in the brick wall, keep the window opening that was there, renovate the brick wall, and include HVAC and chair closets for about what we'd been planning to spend anyway.

It came together well, and we dedicated the building in June and declared everyone was welcome. It turns out that the Methodists had used the same phrase in the same building in 1931, and that while there was apparently nothing new under the sun and that maybe our understanding of everyone being welcome is as imperfect now as theirs was then, but that insofar as "being welcome" means being able to enter a church by a ramp, use the restrooms, move about freely, and get up the podium, we had done our part, while continuing to work in our own congregation and denomination to make it mean more than that, or something you can't get for \$740,000 plus \$50,000 in giving to other congregations and projects. That turns out to be the final cost.

The story of how we went from \$600,000 to \$790,000 has been pretty well documented, with the figures and sums all available on the church website and various reports. Mostly, it came from the unexpected, and with another part coming from the things we (and by we, I mean, I) didn't know to expect and perhaps should have.

The final thing of this unexpected type was to come after the building dedication, which doesn't really seem fair or likely, but that's how it went. We had saved the basement carpet replacement for last, scheduling it for summer when there was no Sunday school or preschool to work around. We took up the old carpet and some tile came with it. We tested the tile and the mastic used to hold it down, and neither one contained asbestos. Great news. But new glue and the old mastic would combine to make a sludge likely to seep up through the aforementioned new carpet, so the mastic had to be removed. The tile came up easily, the mastic less so, and neither without parts of the concrete beneath. So the remnant of the concrete had to be coated with more concrete. Also, a lot of drywall and trim was in poor shape, or had holes from other renovation work. The carpet replacement expected to cost \$12,000 turned out to be more like \$38,000, not even counting what we didn't have to pay for a heroic painting effort by Tom Sawin and a number of people he masterfully coerced into volunteer painting and repair gigs.

After that came a great bike rack, surprising hard to locate, and lovely landscaping along the bank by Water Street. Some subtle changes improved the sanctuary; besides the new speaker and projector, there are new lights that don't put your hymnal into the shadow of the person seated in front of you, or your own. The prayer room, in a few weeks, will be nearly perfect. There was another round of painting, and a stained glass window will be installed in the brick wall in the first week of February 2017.

There isn't the space to thank everyone who had a part of this project, or even to mention them. The building committee—Johann Zimmerman, David Vogel, Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Joe Yoder, Mike Zook, Julia Alderfer Stauffer, Ray Horst, Teresa Yoder, and John Murch—met many times for many hours. Johann also provided expert engineering consultation. And there would have been little progress, fewer free extras, relatively little attention to detail, and much worse organization had Jack Rutt not been the project manager; it's impossible to walk through the renovated areas and not remember what Jack did to make them the way they are, and he did it kindly, generously, and professionally.

Our building came to be what it is today through any number of projects just like this one, each adding a part to a site that has held a church since 1790. Some projects were new construction, like the sanctuary that was added in 1951; some filled in spaces, like the north hall rooms in 1927. Everyone Welcome was unique among them for how it improved on what was there, tied parts together, made the old work better. At the building speakeasy that proceeded this whole project, we quoted the building report that started the project: "The building task force recommends that [the renovation] resolve or alleviate issues of simple accessibility and the more complex issues of making the building, as a whole, more tuned to what we wish our church to be—not the building, but the church. While this set of recommendations makes the church more accessible, it also, not coincidentally, makes the church building more like us." It did.

Jeremy Nafziger  
Building Committee

### **Grounds Committee**

Along with the wonderful updates and improvements inside, the Everyone Welcome Campaign also allowed for some great additions outside. The majority of these improvements only made sense to do while other construction was happening so costs were often shared between the campaign budget and maintenance expenses. Some of the most noteworthy improvements are as follows:

Outdoor Lighting - lighting updates were made around the entire church structure which reduced light pollution, installed LED lights, put certain lights on timers and improved overall lighting during evening hours especially in darker areas.

Handicap Access - a new handicap accessible walkway was installed on the north side of the building. This sidewalk was installed with a heating system imbedded in the concrete to make it usable 12 months out of the year. In addition a handicap accessible door was installed leading into a wider hallway inside making for a much more user friendly handicap access.

Improvement in the South Entrance - new concrete steps were poured and the sides were faced with local limestone to match the old church foundation. The sidewalk

leading into the playground area was widened while a portion of sidewalk inside the playground area was removed.

New Fencing & Landscaping along Water Street - a new black chain linked fence was installed along Water street. The fence was moved up the hill from its original placement which allowed for a section of plantings to eliminate mowing a steeper section of grass. These plantings should mature over time and give color and texture to an area that was once an eye sore and hard to maintain.

New sign - a much needed sign was installed below the Memory Garden to direct church guest as well as to inform weekly visitors about the various organizations that use our facility.

Bike rack Relocation - the bike rack was moved to a section in front of the church along Rt. 42. With the new location bike and vehicular traffic are no longer competing with each other. It also sends a message to folks passing the church that we are indeed a bike friendly church community.

Memory Garden Additions - the last portion of the Memory Garden was installed outside the Preschool. This portion was on hold until the new outdoor heating unit was installed. Additional smaller plantings are planned for the entire Memory Garden over the next several years to bring even more color to this area.

Future projects - the two larger shade trees in the playground area need to be addressed. Both need extensive pruning and future plans are being made to replace the Ash tree which will eventually die due to the Emerald ash borer. Also the area outside of the playground where our current storage shed is located needs some attention as well. Ideas of a patio area for coffee/lunch have been discussed but the committee is open to hearing your ideas to make this a more useable space. If you have any other ideas on how to improve our church grounds please contact Michael Zook at: [zook20@comcast.net](mailto:zook20@comcast.net).

Mike Zook  
Grounds Committee

## **COMMUNITY LIFE COMMISSION**

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Community Life Commission Annual Report for 2015

Individual Committee Chairs:

Adult Education - Kent Davis Sensenig  
Small Groups - currently unfilled, being handled by Dayna Olson-Getty  
Greeters - Sue Swartz  
Hospitality - Jennifer Ulrich and Rosemary Good  
Retreat - Linda Martin Burkholder

New Attenders Ministry - currently unfilled, being handled by Dayna Olson-Getty  
Prayer Partners - Sharon Wyse Miller  
Pastoral team representative: Dayna Olson-Getty

Community life continues to thrive and is an accurate reflection of the general health of the congregation. I am deeply appreciative of the many hours volunteered by committees on Community Life Commission to facilitate a welcoming, growing congregation and coordinate activities, which enhance our congregational life. LIT (Learning Interesting Things) continues to be incorporated into Monthly Gatherings, and is currently being coordinated by Pastor Dayna Olson-Getty. LITs continue to have inconsistent attendance which may be due to conflicting schedules, or the need to use that time during Monthly Gatherings for conversation, fellowship or committee meetings. That time during Monthly Gathering will continue to be available for CMC attendees to share significant life events, resourcing, or fellowship time with table games.

Lee Good  
Chair of Community Life

### **Retreat**

Church retreat took place October 21-23 at Camp Brethren Woods. Turn out was very similar to the previous year with over 175 attendees, with more families staying overnight. This year we used the camp's catering. While it didn't satisfy everyone, most comments were positive. The catering significantly reduced the work of CMC members regarding food prep, but did increase the cost a bit. We will likely need to increase the per person cost by a few dollars next year to cover the increase.

The focus this year was on the vision process. Saturday morning featured engagement time with a panel reflecting on the process of the past year and small group discussion followed with reports back to the group. Eight focus groups; four before lunch, and four after lunch, each focused on a particular potential initiative that came out of the vision process. Attendees were positive and engaged, though some noted that this retreat was hard work, and a bit less restful than in some years past.

Dayna will be stepping down as co-chair of retreat to allow space for her to begin relating to worship commission. She feels retreat committee is well organized. A retreat committee timeline outlining what to do when is in place which should make for a seamless transition to new leadership.

### **CMC Small Groups**

Small group committee, which is currently chaired by Dayna, has focused this fall on pairing interested people to existing small groups, or starting new ones. Adam Yoder and Jenni Holsinger have agreed to lead a new attender's small group that will meet until May. The response to these initiative so far has been positive. This committee will

also work together to come up with a “Small Group Handbook” as a resource for newly formed groups, as well as helping long established groups refocus and decide in an intentional way whether they will continue. Gifts Discernment will call a chair from current SG members, allowing Dayna to step down as she anticipates relating to worship commission.

### *Prayer Partners*

Prayer Partners ministry requested a place on a commission, and Community Life seemed like the most natural fit. The prayer partners serve as a companion to those who are looking for someone to pray with them on Sunday mornings. They also pray for requests placed in the box, as well as those shared with the congregation. This ministry appreciates how the renovation of their space has made it feel much more welcoming. Some trim and paint would add a nice touch. This request has been added to the facilities committee list of upcoming work.

### *New Attenders*

Scheduling meals to welcome new attenders had become challenging, so a new plan was attempted. Two brunches were held in the Dean House during Sunday School which allowed us to welcome 40 new adult attenders! There are plans to hold another one in December.

Respectfully submitted, Lee Good  
CLC chair

### *Welcomers*

CMC Welcomers greet and welcome all who come to worship on Sunday mornings, one person in the Fellowship Hall and one person in the north hallway. The following persons were on the rotation for 2016: Rebeca Barge, Wilma Gingerich, Ken and Martha June Graber, Hadley and Jan Jenner, Sharon Miller, Millard Osbourne, Gloria Rutt, Keaton Shenk, Sheri Smucker, and Sue Swartz.

Sue Swartz organized the schedule and Gloria Rutt represented the group at Community Life Commission meetings. Welcomers were reminded by the church office when they were “on duty,” and notified the office when they made changes to the schedule. Dayna Olson-Getty served as the pastoral team representative for the group.

Sue Swartz  
Welcomers Coordinator

### *Hospitality*

Jen Ulrich and Rosemary Good co-chairs with Joan Kauffman, Shelby Hertzler, Roberta Fernandez, and Kathy Stoll formed an outstanding team.

Sunday mornings- Provided coffee in the months with Sunday School and cold beverages in the summer months

The committee provided food for the congregational meeting in November. The committee decided to serve a simple meal of soup, rolls, veggies and cookies. Members of the congregation helped by providing the soup and cookies.

Potlucks were held monthly in the fellowship hall except during the summer months, June - September when we hold them at Morrison Park. We have good help with set-up from the 7th and 8th Grade Sunday School classes.

Hospitality used \$500 of its budget to help pay for an exterminator when it was discovered there were cockroaches in the kitchen.

Jennifer Ulrich

### *Adult Christian Education*

Our committee—Kent Davis Sensenig (chair); Reta Halteman Finger; Dayna Olson-Getty; Mike Brislen; and Jenni Holsinger—enjoyed another year of brain-storming; eliciting ideas and teachers; and facilitating/organizing offerings and opportunities for faith-formation and discipleship-learning among CMC’s adult attenders.

Following our traditional guideline of seeking a balance of “Word” (biblical study); “Walk” (contemporary lifestyle topics); and “Worship” (spirituality) themes and topics for each quarter (fall, winter, and spring), we were able to arrange for three new classes each quarter, alongside on-going, self-organized, fellowship-oriented groups like the Men’s (Donut) gathering and the “Quilting and Conversation” circle (as well as quarter-long or occasional associations like the “(Sunday) School of Rock” musicians (Ben Bailey, Danny King and crew); coffee-klatch with young adults; new-members orientation etc.)

Highlights from the past year include: 1) Reta Finger’s two-quarter exploration of the Gospel of John (and now a comparative study of the Synoptic Gospels); 2) a series on “Local Initiatives to Reform Criminal Justice” featuring many advocates from the wider Harrisonburg community; 3) Ray Horst’s unique “Songs and Scriptures in Spanish” offering; 4) Pastor Dayna’s series on “Nurturing Healthy Christian Sexuality”; 5) Pastor Jennifer and Hadley Jenner’s introduction to Faith in Action and its focus on making Harrisonburg a more immigrant-friendly community; 6) Jeremy Nafziger and Jacob Sider Jost’s historical tour of Christian hymnody; 7) the Millard Osborne-organized class on Aging/Retirement, which drew on the experiences and insights of many CMCers; 7) a similarly many-voiced exploration of “Faith and Science Narratives” featuring science-minded CMCers in our midst; and 8) our first ever “Yoga as Spiritual Discipline” class (!), generously led by Lisen Reichenbach.

Kent Davis Sensenig  
Adult Christian Ed. Committee Chair

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## OUTREACH COMMISSION

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The Outreach Commission oversees CMC's work both locally and globally and consists of six at-large members of varying terms with Jason Gerlach as the Pastoral Team representative. Additionally, many representatives to local organizations in the community periodically report by invitation to the Outreach Commission. The members of the Outreach Commission currently serving are; Katrina Swartz (term ending 2016), Aliese Gingerich and Sara Kiser (terms ending in 2018), Ben Wyse, Nelly Moreno Sherk and Hadley Jenner, Chair, (terms ending in 2017).

The existing CMC Organizational Chart currently lists some seventeen organizations under the Outreach "umbrella." That is currently under review by Church Council to simplify lines of reporting and accountability. To that end, Outreach has developed a list of criteria for including organizations connected to Outreach related to; those on our premises, those that appeal for volunteers or those that have a direct financial connection to CMC. Currently under consideration is having only nine organizations with a Liaison to Outreach. Those nine are; Community Preschool, Patchwork Pantry, Mennonite Disaster Service, Everence, Virginia Relief Sale, Open Doors, Bridge of Hope, Faith in Action and Highland Retreat. The new Organizational Chart will soon be on the CMC website.

The Outreach Commission 2017 budget of \$61,135 is 13.2% of the total CMC budget of \$464,487. However, of this Outreach budget about 63% is dedicated to various Mennonite institutions based on current membership (e.g. Mennonite Church, USA; Virginia Mennonite Conference; Virginia Mennonite Missions, Harrisonburg District and Inter Anabaptist Partnerships). The other nearly 37% is our Local and Global Ministries portion of the budget that is more directly under our control. In terms of trends, while our giving to the various Mennonite institutions above has been fairly flat over the last five years, our Local and Global Ministries has seen a modest rise from \$20,635 in 2013 to \$22,500 in 2017. Nevertheless, our total Outreach budget relative to total church budget has declined slightly in the last five years from 14.4% to 13.2% currently.

One significant Outreach decision this year was to prepare a set of decision-making guidelines about how we spend our funds. This was adopted in March this past year and has been put to good use as we weigh the need and suitability of using CMC funds to support various programs/projects.

These Guidelines are already available for review under the Outreach Commission tab at CMC's website.

Another significant Outreach decision this past year was to increase the funding for Service Grants which are awarded to those young adults five years or less out of High School interested in some form of voluntary service. This year we had three Senior High MYF students going into different types of voluntary service. We have now moved from support of \$1200/pp to \$2000/pp in the 2017 Budget.

Developing multiple visions for how we want to organize “doing church” has involved the whole congregation this past year. Outreach has been a strong proponent of creating a VS unit at the Dean House. Now at year’s end that vision has received strong backing from the CMC and plans are underway for the creation of a VS Unit Task Force in the first quarter of 2017.

One peculiarity this year was the need to develop a budget before we had embraced our visions as a congregation. Thinking ahead, Outreach trimmed some budget line items from 2016 levels going into 2017 and adjusted other lines to come up with a new budget line item, “Vision Support” for \$4000. It is anticipated that this budget line would help support needed expenses in developing a VS Unit in the Dean House. In a subsequent 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday offering about 75% of what was “trimmed” was returned to those “trimmed” plus an additional sum for “Bikes for Refugees.”

Outreach continues to monitor possibilities for using the Mission project portion of the Everyone Welcome Campaign (i.e. a \$50,000 total for which \$15,000 was expended in 2015). Several potential contributions have been considered but not yet acted on. It is possible that some vision work related to exchange visits and purposeful work in cultivating new relationships with our diverse neighbors will lead us in fruitful directions for this Mission project.

Generally our meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month or before monthly Council meetings. Do let me know if you have any concern or issue you want us to address and feel free to talk to anyone on the Outreach Commission if you have any question.

Hadley H. Jenner  
Outreach Commission Chair

## *Everence*

Timothy and Ruth Stoltzfus Jost served as Community Mennonite's Everence Representatives again this year. CMC received \$3000 in Everence Sharing Grants, of which \$1100 was given to Our Community Place, \$650 to Open Doors, \$1000 to New Bridges; and \$250 for Community Preschool. These funds matched equal contributions from CMC. Timothy attended Everence training events, referred individuals to Everence for services, and placed announcements of Everence events and services in the CMC newsweekly. A number of CMC members attended Everence seminars on various topics.

### *Community Preschool*

Community Preschool continues to meet in the CMC basement area (directly under the stage area). Classes continue to be held for 3-year olds on Tuesday and Friday mornings and for 4-year olds on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons. This past year we had 2 sessions of children with 15 students in each group and one session with only 8 attending most of the time.

We have been hurting financially since we have been asked to pay \$500 a month rent to Community Mennonite Church. As we are working at receiving scholarships help we are hoping to include children who have need for this experience, but their parents can't afford it. The preschool continues to be a 501 © (3) entity separated from CMC and the Board continues to want to maintain ties with the church.

With the printing of attractive brochures, we have invited CMC persons, former parent and present parents and others to consider adding to a Scholarship Fund to assist needy children. The teachers and the Board have worked this year to plan for a new way to include more children. At this time we have one class of 3 year olds meeting 2 days a week. A second class of older 3's and young 4's meeting 3 days a week. Both of these classes are full with waiting lists. The third class of 4 year olds and early 5's will meet early afternoon 4 days a week. This class needs two spaces filled as yet.

The teachers, Jennifer Runion, Lisa Moomaw and Betsey Branner and the Board are looking forward to the year's construction to be complete so that the playground will again be fenced and gated. Then new mulch can be added to prepare for fall. The playground has been improved by adding a sturdy rainbow climbing unit that both the preschool children and church children are enjoying.

The Preschool Board continued with the same group working together: Eliot Swartz as President, Eileen Gingrich as treasurer and Joyce Osborne as secretary. Three parents represented the 3 sessions of children and Pat Martin a retired teacher and during the spring, Donna Heatwole needed to resign because of family illness. We are looking for a person to join the board with a business background or experience. Three parents will be joining the board in the fall to represent each class of children.

We rejoice that Jennifer Runion continues as Teacher-Director working with Lisa and Betsey. These three teachers share their care and love and joy with the children.

CMC continues to offer limited assistance for 1-2 or possibly 3 families who are unable to pay full tuition. This amounts to only \$25 a month toward the full tuition. This year we helped 3 families through this fund. We look forward to another full and rewarding school year 2016-2017. As we begin this year we celebrate the beginning of 34 years of serving children. Again, the Community Preschool teachers and the Board look forward to continuing good working relationship with Community Mennonite Church. Written at the conclusion of the school year 2015-2016.

Joyce Osborne  
Secretary of the Board

## **WORSHIP COMMISSION**

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This is not a report on worship services but a report on worship commission and what it did in 2016. The services report, perhaps, would be more interesting but the whole church was at those and knows what happened, and only the worship commission was there for the meetings. Worship services, rather than reports, however, are the point of the commission meetings.

Yet the connection from meetings to worship is not so direct as the name of the commission suggests. In fact, some portion of a worship commission meeting is spent discussing services that have already happened, and we (in 2016, the commission consisted of Brendon Derstine, Valerie Serrels, Alisha Huber, Jodi Nisly Hertzler, Dorothy Jean Weaver, pastor Jennifer Davis Sensenig, and chair Jeremy Nafziger) were slower to point out things that went wrong than we were things that went right. In part, that's because many things went right, were meaningful, had an effect, made us think, brought us to God and God to us. And the things that went wrong were fewer and more mundane, like time flew, or there were extra chairs on the stage from the week before, or something else. Both the sublime and ordinary weighed on the things we'd like to do the next time, which is the way it works.

What might not work as well was the translation or transmission of this extensive thought and discussion to the many people who plan worship services and lead worship at CMC. The worship commission worked on a series, thinking of themes, scripture (of note, CMC used the revised common lectionary passages for a full liturgical year in 2016 except for the Sunday of retreat, when whatever the text was supposed to be just couldn't be bent far enough to reach Keezletown), music that might be reused, readings, and worship arts. Worship commission makes rough guides, not plans; the plans came from the worship leader for each Sunday (24 different people in 2016), song leaders (16), preachers (including 15 Sundays where none of pastors preached; instead we had a guest, several speakers, no sermon, or music), people who played prelude (29), led children's time (18), and read scripture (more than 60), helped by about 40 or 50 people who sang in choirs and 40 or more who also played instruments. It is impossible to

overstate the gift we're all accustomed to of a talented congregation that's also willing to participate in the time we spend in worship. One cannot begin to count the hours or the prayers or the plans or the practice or the discipline that was freely involved, and counting them is probably a waste of time anyway when one can just be grateful instead.

The Epiphany series on the theme verse for the year, Jeremiah 6:16, stood at the crossroads and looked for the good way. It was also the start of the church's vision process, something that would come up in worship a number of times throughout the year, and the theme verse itself proved amazingly versatile. In Lent, we turned toward grace with the beautiful Year C stories—forty days in the desert, Abraham, the prodigal son, some narrated by Ted Swartz. More than 300 people were in church for Easter—one of four times we had more than 300. (For the year, the average attendance was 234, up 9 from the previous year and the most since 2013.) The vision process was the focus for April and May—both balloons and cell phones were prominently involved—until the season of Pentecost when we welcomed the heavenly guest and, at the end of June, dedicated our renovated church building with Lego, a long reading, brass, and a band. July was for travelling mercies, August for faith heroes, and in September we came back to the ancient path from Jeremiah. And it all started over for Advent, the end of the calendar but the start of the church year and the first time in maybe five years that the worship commission eschewed the materials from MC USA and took our own path to welcome Emmanuel.

We sang, too: 290 hymns, including 50 or so that we sang more than once. We sang about a quarter of the songs in the blue hymnal, about 30 percent of the green, and more than one third of the purple.

One development outside of worship services that bears mentioning: As part of the vision process, the worship commission created an art projects committee to work on church art outside of the service but somewhere in or around our church building. They will begin work in 2017.

As will new chairs of the worship commission. After five years as chair and a member of church council, my term has ended. To have had a part in the work that results in services in which we worship our God together, was itself a religious experience and an experience of religion that I've never had before. To ask for people's time and have it be given freely was the greatest gift; and that so many were willing to do it, the greatest surprise; and that it turned out that so many were glad to have been asked, the greatest joy. That we were all together in worship each week was a feast, a satisfaction, the thing it's hard to go without. Thank you for everything, and I look forward to next week and the one after that.

Jeremy Nafziger  
Worship Commission Chair

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## *CMC Ushers Committee*

The ushers serving this year have been Alden Hostetter, Dan Beachy, Dirk Miller, Greg Kopp, Jim Bishop, Jonathan Nofziger, Matt Gingerich, Matt Ruth, and Matt Waidelich. Matt Waidelich took over usher duties for Jonathan Nofziger after Jonathan and Grace moved to Liberia this summer.

This year we began using the online CMC Worship Calendar for the usher schedule, which has been helpful. Ushers are scheduled to usher every-other week and have Head Usher duties every eight weeks. Ushers are normally able to find another usher to switch with when needed, and Mike Zook and Lonnie Yoder have also been available as usher subs for times a switch couldn't be made.

The ushers have been very flexible and accommodating with the changes created by the renovations this year. Their efforts have been rewarded with a new lock/keying system that enables them to unlock and lock everything needed with one key!

Dan Beachy  
Usher Coordinator

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## **YOUTH COMMISSION**

### *Nursery*

The toddler nursery was relocated upstairs after renovations were completed, and has been nicely re-decorated. The committee keeps tabs on toy donations, weeds out toys that are worn out and provides snacks to have on hand for Sunday mornings. A request was made to find a space in the church building for an infant nursery. A small room in the basement has been furnished with a rocking chair and a changing table, and is a cozy area for parents with infants. Rachel and Justin have moved, so Tiffany Showalter is now the chair.

Submitted by: Joyce Peachey Lind

### *Venture Club*

Sponsors who served this year were Jonathan Tieszen, Greta Kreider, Gretchen Cessna, Lindsey Fast and Erika Metzler Sawin. Venture Club welcomed new members in the fall at the Murches' donut party. We became accustomed to gathering a small group for activities on Tuesday evenings after the taco meal. Those included game nights, joining MYF, and Christmas crafts. We continued many traditions like an annual

overnight lock-in at church, distributing cookies to college students, and snow-tubing. All of our sponsors are in the process of becoming approved adults.

Greta Kreider

## *Senior MYF*

The events listed below only give a glimpse into youth group life, and its many activities.

Since our last report, six seniors have graduated, and we've welcomed the following freshman: Afton Lehman, Iris Cessna, Alia Brislen, Lane Burkholder, Mira Yoder, and Isaac Sawin.

Joe Yoder has continued in his role as youth sponsor. After years of great service, Sandy King & Steve Witmer decided to release their roles as sponsors, so in their absence we've added Mariah Martin and Abi Shank Zehr. Throughout the year, youth group sponsors have deeply enriched the experience of weekend and weeklong trips as well as weekly activities.

Sunday school in 2016 included the following instructors and topics. During the spring, Jason Gerlach taught the MYF Sunday school class using a form of a modified Samoan circle process: class sessions ranged from a multi-week conversation on human sexuality, to the role of church doctrine in faith, to Genetically Modified Food (GMO). During this fall, David Shenk taught the MYF Sunday school class focusing on immigration. David's use of media, personal story, and an election cycle in which immigration policies were in focus provided for a very much appreciated Sunday school quarter.

The Senior High MYF spent the first weekend of December at Highland Retreat for our annual Snow Camp weekend. Throughout the weekend, Hanna Heishman led sessions in which she shared about her own life experiences in the Ministry Inquiry Program as well as through worldwide travel. She framed her sessions in regards to images of birds in flight. She provided numerous opportunities for hands-on engagement including mosaic art and pastel coloring.

This year the youth group meets regularly on Thursday evenings, and maintains a rotation of input sessions, local service events, and fun activities – this rotation helped pattern the gatherings each month which often took place the first, second, and third Thursday of the month. The variety of activities has been greatly appreciated.

The youth group has participated in Community Mennonite Church's "Monthly Gathering" and has been thankful for the opportunity to eat supper with the whole congregation as well as meet as a group during the second hour.

This year CMC graduated six seniors. Those seniors were recognized during the second hour of a Monthly Gathering, they each had an opportunity to present a little about their lives during this event.

In sum, we have grown closer as a group and closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ. We have been blessed with the opportunity to meet, with an adequate meeting room, and

capable leadership in sponsors, and the sense of a strong blessing from the entire congregation. Thus, we thank all of you who are praying for each member of the youth group, as well as for your financial support and kind words of encouragement to each member of the 2016 youth group.

Jason Gerlach, Joe Yoder, Mariah Martin, and Abi Shank Zehr

### *Mentor/Mentee Coordinator*

Five new mentees found mentors for 2016. CMC had a mentor/Mentee recognition for graduating mentor/mentee pairs in May and we had a Mentor/Mentee picnic in October. I continue to send out notice of birthdays to mentors the month their mentee has one.

Tom Sawin  
CMC Mentor Coordinator

Above all, clothe yourselves in love,  
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

***Colossians 3:14***