



TODAY

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Many Churches, One Body

Our mission begins, “Eastern Mennonite School joins home and church in calling students to faith in Jesus Christ ...” You might ask, “How is this possible when students represent 14 denominational categories and 52 different church communities?” At school we focus on our similarities in Christ rather than emphasize denominational differences. After all, Jesus gathered an interesting mix of disciples to carry out the work of proclaiming the good news of God’s love for all people. I believe our school community’s strength of Christian witness lies in our ability to celebrate the many rich heritages our students bring to the EMS table.

EMS strives to give students a daily diet of spiritual nourishment as part of our routine while encouraging church involvement as the place for lifelong Christian community and influence. We preserve Wednesday nights for church youth activities and/or family time. Annually, we hold the Pastor’s Appreciation Breakfast that has become a favorite event of mine. Students invite and host their pastor and we staff simply love on our church leaders with gratitude for their leadership in our community. Students also hear from pastors periodically through our chapel programming. Bible classes, integrated topics of faith in all classes, lunch conversations, student-led Bible studies, team devotions, and Neighbor Groups all contribute to good organic spiritual foods.

Anglican
Baptist
Brethren
Catholic
Episcopal
Greek Orthodox
Lutheran
Mennonite
Methodist
Muslim
Nazarene
Non-denominational
Pentecostal
Presbyterian

Our students give me hope for the future. The affection, care, and respect given to one another exceeds the maturity given during my era of high school. We strive for EMS to be a haven of safety where the deepest of student questions, perspectives, and spiritual insights are shared confidently and without fear of belittlement. A place where, despite one’s background, they are sincerely beckoned just as Jesus called his disciples. As iron sharpens iron, thoughts deepen and values become owned as conversation and reflection occur over and over again. Our dedication to learning together within a diversely rich Christian community produces amazingly articulate young people capable of making positive differences in the world.

This issue of *Today* highlights Pastor Lee Martin as one of our alums serving God through church leadership. In addition, we celebrate all our alumni with photos from Homecoming 2015. Like yesterday, our students remain a touch of heaven on earth.

Paul G. Leaman, Head of School



Lukas Petersheim '17 makes origami peace cranes with Ross Erb and Phil Kniss of Park View Mennonite Church at the fall 2015 Pastor’s Breakfast. (Photo by: EMS Staff)

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars and join us for these great events:

Christmas Fund Drive: 11/24/15-1/8/16

“The Best Christmas Pageant Ever”

EMMS play 12/5 @ 7 p.m. &

12/6 @ 1:30 p.m.

EMES Christmas Program 12/8 @ 7 p.m.

EMMS Concert 12/11 @ 7 p.m.

EMHS Lessons & Carols 12/15 & 12/17

@ 7:30 p.m.

All performances at the Main Campus Auditorium

Details on these events and more can be found on Facebook.



faith excellence integrity service

www.easternmennoniteschool.org



School spirit was contagious at EMS Homecoming as students cheered our soccer and volleyball teams to victory. (Photos by: Nick Seitz '13)

Homecoming

Young Alumnus of the Year 2015 Allison Yoder '00 Seabeck

by Mary Golden Hughes

Being selected Young Alumnus of the Year came “totally out of the blue” to Allison Yoder Seabeck, who would prefer to play down her exceptional high school and professional accomplishments.

“I valued every opportunity to be involved at EMS—service, Touring Choir, orchestra, plays, sports, model UN, French Club—grabbing the chance to dabble in new things and explore my varied interests and curiosities. I’m astounded at how similar to an undergraduate liberals arts experience high school was for me.”

That quest to lead and know more led Allison to the College of William & Mary, where she studied linguistics and international relations. Unsure of what would be in store for her upon graduation, Allison now recalls, “God has an interesting way of planting things in your path to help you discover his purpose for you along the way.” As a linguist interested in the systematic side of language, previous study in Japanese enabled Allison to teach English in Japan. There God opened her eyes “to the beauty of cultural differences” and led her to meet her husband, who was also teaching in Japan.

An eventual move to Colorado afforded the opportunity to work for Prosci, a change management company, of which she is now President. There Allison applies her analytical and communications skills to help businesses produce effective change through communications and team development. Allison’s demanding client-driven career is augmented by the support of her husband and parents, who help Allison balance work with the care of infant daughter, Eliza. Staying connected in faith and serving a church community through praise and worship helps Allison stay grounded and focused on a greater call.



Allison Yoder Seabeck '00 receives Young Alumnus of the Year Award from Billi Winkler '80, Alumni Board President. (Photo by: Nick Seitz '13)

“It feels a little awkward and extremely humbling to receive this award. Although appreciative of the opportunity, I wondered if I should accept? Then I remembered chapels at EMHS and thought—if I could impact just one student through my presentation and show them that you can live a life rich with faith, family and business—in tandem...if that encourages just one student pondering about his or her future—I accept and take this gratefully.”

Lifetime Service Award 2015

Ron Brown '70

by Mary Golden Hughes

It was hard to keep track of Ron Brown when he attended EMHS. Juggling the demands of multiple activities like soccer, basketball, SCO, choir and course work kept Ron busy and focused while a boarding student, away from his missionary parents.

As a missionary youth, Ron never knew the concept of a stranger and lived the example that his parents set of being Christ-like to all he met. He recalls that same sense of welcoming extended to him at EMHS as a boarding student. It was not uncommon for Ron to be "taken under the wings of the loving Mennonite community" who had become his family. Whether it was going to classmates' homes for a meal, getting rides to activities or "just generally being loved on," Ron instantly felt he was a part of this special community and formed lifelong bonds of friendship which he still holds today. He also credits Touring and Chamber choirs and the opportunity to travel and minister to others as pivotal to his future career in the mission field.

Ron received his B.S. in Biology from Asbury College (KY) and a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from Eastern Kentucky University. The call to serve and extend the kindness he so gratefully received from others was answered when he and his wife Becky served the Native American community in Arizona. There Ron had the "privilege to lead in countless ways": as teacher, coach, parent, and being 'dad' and now 'grandad' to students in dire situations. His love for service in the world came full circle as he served as a missionary in Barcelona, Spain. His son's sudden battle with thyroid cancer brought Ron back to the U.S. and to employment with the Christian Medical & Dental Association, and ultimately to Global Health Outreach. There Ron has been instrumental in outreach services and placement of medical teams in closed countries, and involved in planting churches in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Ron credits his wife and four children for any measure of success he's ever witnessed. He quipped, "Behind every successful man is a surprised wife. But in all seriousness, nine-tenths of any success I've seen in my career is credited to the Lord and the rest to my family. I take no credit except to give it to those around me." Humbled to receive this award Ron stated, "Receiving this honor is truly a living tribute to my parents, who raised us for the kingdom, with the notion of service above self."

VISION:

Eastern Mennonite School aspires to reflect Christ's light as a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God's call.



Ron Brown '70 pictured with his wife Becky and their grandchildren after receiving the Lifetime Service Award. (Photo by: Nick Seitz '13)



Left: Members of the Class of 1945 enjoyed their 70th class reunion together. (Photo by: Nick Seitz '13)

Below: A highlight of Homecoming 2015 was the performance of *David the Shepherd Boy* led by former EMS music director Marvin Miller and performed by EMS alums and special guest vocalists. (Photo by: Nick Seitz '13)



2015

Founder's Alumnus of the Year 2015 Joseph Longacher, M.D. '55

by Mary Golden Hughes

At just 14 years old, Joe Longacher left the familiar surroundings of his Denbigh Colony to attend school at Eastern Mennonite. Excited about the opportunity to study and meet people from all over the country, Joe had no idea that foundational and life changing moments would lie ahead in the Valley.

At EMHS, Joe enjoyed a variety of activities: music, sports and academics. He also discovered that he really liked science



Joseph Longacher '55 Alumnus of the Year
(Photo by: Nick Seitz '13)

and enjoyed the process of organizing things so that others could benefit. He also greatly appreciated the close relationships he had with his teachers, who affirmed his gifts and gave him encouragement.

With this foundation in place, Joe received a B.S. in Biology from Eastern Mennonite College and then his M.D. from the Med-

ical College of Virginia (now VCU). When the draft board usurped his plan to study surgery further, Joe was assigned to work in a medical clinic on the WV and KY border. There he covered all aspects of medical care for an underserved population, including obstetrics, general surgery and internal medicine. He credits this time of serving others to help him hone his love of medicine and organization. During this time he felt called to internal medicine and to offering organizational and leadership assistance to causes who could use his skills.

For most of his career, Joe worked in a multispecialty clinic in Richmond and was a clinical professor of internal medicine at VCU. Despite the demands of medical practice and teaching, Joe took active roles in many professional and service organizations, again blending his love of working with people with his ability to manage projects and build cohesion in organizations. Joe also served the church and conference in countless ways, including, but not limited to: congregational leader, Sunday school teacher, moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference (for two terms), chairing the Conference's Faith and Life Commission and serving on the Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center planning committee and later as their president several times.

When asked how one person could balance so much with a demanding career, Joe responded with his noted dry humor and humility, "I have the congenital inability to say no. I also had loving parents who were always actively involved in their faith and saw it as their responsibility to make their community a better place for others. Their modeling of faith and stewardship coupled with the support of my dear wife and four children have allowed me to do things I never would have dreamed of back in Denbigh."

Pastor Lee Martin '77

by Elwood Yoder



In high school and during his first years of college, Lee Martin wanted to launch a career in forestry. But during a visit to the pastor's office at Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, Lee explained that "God had different plans" for his life.

At Eastern Mennonite High School in the 1970s, Lee loved Biology class with teacher David K. Mumaw. He also remembers being shaped by Christian Family Living class with Harvey Yoder, and daily chapels were formative in his life.

After two years attending Eastern Mennonite University, Lee took a break from studies and entered Voluntary Service in Mashulaville, Mississippi. There he regularly interacted with

Daryl Byler '74, his former EMHS cross country coach, who lived in nearby Meridian, Mississippi. Daryl's mentorship of Lee while running and then in service to others in the Deep South were crucial in helping to form Lee Martin's ministry identity.

When Lee graduated from college, he had earned a double major in Biology and Bible, accenting the two interests of his life. The Bible ministries major, though, had taken first place as Lee's life focus. After graduation from college, Lee worked as a youth pastor at Gospel Hill Mennonite Church, and soon became involved in camp leadership at Highland Retreat, a church sponsored ministry near Bergton, Virginia. His wife Peg, a graduate of Lancaster Mennonite High School, joined him in church work and camp life service.

On the very first Sunday of the new millennium, January 2, 2000, Lee became the full time pastor at Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church. A supporting congregation of EMS, Lee says that in most years there have been students from the church attending EMS. There is a strong public school connection at Mt. Clinton, though, and Lee affirms this for the families who choose to send their children to local County and City schools. Mt. Clinton provides an annual grant to students who attend Eastern Mennonite School.

Lee says that in grades 8-12 at EMS, his life was "profoundly shaped by the triad of home, church, and school." He remembers that Ernie Swartz taught his Sunday school class at Park View Mennonite Church, was his youth group leader at the church, and taught him Chemistry at EMHS. Lee's children Maria '09, and Curtis '13, are both graduates of EMHS.

When visiting Mt. Clinton Church on a bright fall October afternoon, it became clear that Lee Martin would have served God well in a forestry career. He is tall, athletic, strong, and has a great love for the out-of-doors. But somewhere in the mix of high school, college, and Voluntary Service, Lee discovered that God had a different plan for his life. In 2012 Lee earned an M.Div. from Eastern Mennonite Seminary. At the end of the interview, with open Bible and laptop on his desk, Lee grinned and acknowledged that he was pondering his upcoming sermon that he would preach at his rural congregation about six miles west of Harrisonburg.



Pastor Lee Martin.
(Photos by: Elwood Yoder)

Today is published six times a year for families, alumni and friends of Eastern Mennonite School. We value your input. Send your feedback and story suggestions to:
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MISSION:

Eastern Mennonite School joins home and church in calling students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service in the world.

Senior Gabby Archer '16 helped Kindergartner Norah Warren '28 make a peace poster during History Day 2015. Friendships quickly formed as students learned and worked in "family groups" during this K-12 experience. (Photo by: Andrew Gascho)



Our Walk, History Day 2015

by Erin Rhodes '16

It is not often that the entirety of EMS comes together. Sure, we do pep rallies and performances here and there, but how often do you see seniors holding the hands of second graders and fourth graders laughing at the same things as freshmen? This is what History Day is all about.

My little family of K-12 students spent the day traipsing around school to stations centered

on the polka-dot colored culture of the 50's and 60's. Most of my adopted high school children were quiet and complaisant, but our two Pre-K girls, after drinking malts for snack and get-

ting lollipops for shooting homemade rockets to the "moon," made up for our quietness with exuberance. They carried our Vietnam protest signs through the school with pride and weren't worried about running out of smiles to give.

After a morning of family time during which I gained a few new friends, we came back together as a school to walk to JMU on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. I wasn't on board with the idea at first until we were told its significance. "Marching gives us access" said speaker, Arthur Dean. The sacrifice of those before us gives us access to the things that make our lives worthwhile; this applies both to civil rights and to our faith history.

On the way to the walk there was a MLK quote on the side of a church. "I have decided to stick with love." This reminded me of the verse, "They will know we are Christians because of our love." As the school looks back on the pacifist response to the Civil Rights Movement, we must all remember not only the people who walked before us, but the people we walk with now and the people who will walk after us.