

Your Gifts Matter

Endowment funds provide long-term support; earnings from endowments over \$10,000 allow the school to fund programs as designated by donors. **Gifts to established funds are welcome at any time!**

The class of '81 has its 40th reunion this year. They established the **Lee Eshleman Memorial Fund**, in honor of their classmate, an actor, artist, comedian, and friend, who died in 2007.

The class of '71 has its 50th reunion this year. Class member Chuck Hostetter provided a seed gift that EMS joined with an existing fund established in the 1990s to support Laotian immigrant students. Together, the gifts allowed EMS to establish the **Students of Color Endowed Scholarship Fund** in 2020.

The new **EMS Alumni Endowment Fund** combined general class endowments into one fund to support financial aid. Class representatives agreed



(l-r) Abby Garber '23, Nancy Bok '23, Joelle Blosser '22, and Anna Miller '23 created a thank you banner for a donor appreciation card.

that this approach strengthens the earning potential for class endowments less than \$10,000. The Alumni Endowment Fund balance was \$325,000 as of June 30, 2021, demonstrating the power of coming together to give. Find out what your class giving looked like last year at easternmennonite.org/alumni.

Students will launch the **Christmas Fund drive** on Tues., Nov. 23. Watch your mailbox, email, and phone to join us for the 73rd annual student drive! Or log on to make a gift anytime. easternmennonite.org/fund-drive

Welcome!

New faculty and staff members:

- **Karla Alderfer Tierney** – Dining hall manager
- **Benjamin Bixler** – high school Bible and humanities courses
- **Oscar Erazo** – fleet and grounds coordinator
- **Nathan Hershberger** – AP world history
- **Matthew Overacker** – PE and health, 6-10
- **Eliz Ozcan** – International Student Officer
- **Karen Suderman** – Adds high school Bible to English for International Learners role
- **Lucas Wenger** – algebra and pre-calculus



Pictured (l-r) on the campus bridge: Benjamin Bixler, Matthew Overacker, Lucas Wenger, Karen Suderman, Eliz Ozcan

And, new to our board of directors, is **Susan Godshall**. She brings experience from a career in teaching and administration internationally and in Pennsylvania, and recently as a chaplain. More on the full board at easternmennonite.org/board

More on new hires at easternmennonite.org/news



EMS Robotics I - IV classrooms are full. The robust program is what Kevin Carini envisioned when he was hired five years ago to teach physics and chemistry. The classes are held in the EMS MakerSpace, rooms that alumni will recall as "tech ed" and "shop."

In his first year, Carini offered a robotics club to a small but passionate group of upper level high school boys. By year two, a handful of students had signed up for Robotics I. Interest has grown steadily, with classes at capacity, boys and girls equally present. Read more, including information about computer programming offerings, at easternmennonite.org/news.

Today is written by Andrea Schrock '82 Wenger, director of advancement, and designed by Lindsey Kolb. Proofreading by Trisha Maust '95 Blosser. Photos by Andrea Wenger, student intern Abby Garber '23, Marsha Thomas, admissions counselor, and otherwise noted.

Paul Leaman, head of school

Send feedback to today@easternmennonite.org

Find past issues at easternmennonite.org/today

In admissions processes, Eastern Mennonite School does not discriminate on the basis of any race, color, handicap, national or ethnic origin, or religion, and admits students to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the school's non-discrimination policies, including its Title IX policy: Andrea Wenger, director of advancement, 540-236-6026. For assistance related to Title IX or other civil rights laws, please contact OCR at OCR@ed.gov or 800-421-3481, TDD 800-877-8339.



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TODAY

Volume 39, No. 1
Fall 2021

Bid and... Fan the Flame!

dinner • music • auction

Friday, Nov. 5, 6 p.m.



SAFELY-SPACED DINNER

At EMS, catered by Mashita (Korean)

MUSIC

by Good Company, local a cappella group including four EMHS alumni

LIVE AUCTION:

- At Nov. 5 event
- Preview all auction items online

Online auction

Open to everyone
Oct. 28 - Nov. 8

Register to bid online and/or to join us in person! (COVID permitting)

easternmennonite.org/auction



2021-22 Launches With Hope

Our buildings filled with 362 energetic masked students on August 17, 2021 (up from 354 last year): including 102 in K-5; 104 in 6-8; 156 in grades 9-12. Enjoy these photos from our first weeks, filled with hope for a year of learning together.

Top row (l-r):

- Kindergarten bicycle safety day
- Board members Dawn Monger and Caitlin Helmuth '95 Tice at Back to School Night
- Back to School Night
- 7th grade choral students practice solfège scales and signs with Jared Stutzman

Middle row (l-r):

- Girls middle school cross country team at the 47th EMS invitational
- Elementary students enjoy a visit from Honey the cow, of the Southland Dairy Farmers portable classroom.
- School Day Out (9-12) at Highland Retreat
- Elementary PE on a rainy day

Bottom row (l-r):

- The "Bigs and Littles" program (two photos) pairs new middle schoolers with students in grades 11 and 12.
- Varsity girls volleyball
- Boxer pups (belonging to teacher Larry Martin), are popular visitors to the 6th grade.

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.

VISION:

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

FOLLOW US:



Class of '14 at Homecoming 2019

REGISTER FOR HOMECOMING!

OCT. 15-16, 2021

Your registration lets us know you are coming (even if you don't eat!) and prepare plenty of food.

Join us for volleyball and soccer, a Saturday breakfast or picnic lunch, a family-friendly fun run/walk, building tours, and music celebration! Reunions for classes ending in 1 and 6.

Schedule (including COVID-related changes) and registration at easternmennonite.org/homecoming

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

FAITH COMMUNITY

THE ARTS

easternmennonite.org

Celebrating Alumni Stories

For nearly 30 years, EMS has highlighted alumni at homecoming in award categories including lifetime service, alumnus of the year, and later, young alumnus and community engagement. (See awardees 1992 to 2020 at easternmennonite.org/alumni).

That tradition is taking a new twist with the emphasis moving to celebrating alumni stories. This year, on Oct. 16, EMS will celebrate: Justin Weirich '06, doctor of osteopathic medicine in Fort Wayne, Ind., and John and Kathryn Fairfield, both class of '66. Read on for their stories.



Classmates (l-r): Justin Weirich, Jared Troyer and Daniel Martin, spring 2006



Ember yearbook meeting, 1966



John and Kathryn Stoltzfus Fairfield, both class of '66

Photos courtesy of Fairfield family

Kathryn and John Fairfield '66

Much has changed in the 55 years since John Fairfield and Kathryn Stoltzfus Fairfield earned their high school diplomas, along with 75 classmates, at EMHS in 1966.

But some core elements remain steady, the couple — now married nearly 52 years — observes. EMS remains true to its Anabaptist roots, they say, and continues to challenge students to wrestle with what it means to be followers of Jesus, committed to peace and nonviolence.

They got to know each other their junior year, working on the Ember yearbook, volunteering with the Young People's Christian Association, and singing in Touring Choir.

John's family moved to the Shenandoah Valley from Ontario, Canada, so his father could pursue studies at Eastern Mennonite

College. Kathryn came from a family involved in Mennonite education for generations. EMS alumni include her parents, Grant and Ruth Brunk '34 Stoltzfus, and siblings: Eugene '64, Allen '61, Ruth '67, and Helen '74.

All four of the couple's sons are alumni, three married alumni, and several grandchildren currently attend, or are alumni.

"I was 'first generation Mennonite,'" says John. "But I feel just as much part of the EMS story as anyone." His advice to people who may be new to the community and feel they don't belong? "Put time and energy into the community," he says. "Soon you will feel you belong."

Read about John and Kathryn's journey from EMHS around the world and back to the Valley again, as teachers, learners, justice advocates, and entrepreneurs committed to Kingdom building. easternmennonite.org/news



Kathryn and John Fairfield (center), with their sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren



Dr. Justin Weirich '06 (right) with a colleague at Lutheran Health Physicians, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Photo by Tim Brumbleloe



Justin '06 and Sarah (Beck) Weirich with their two children, Levi and Violet

Photo by Natalie Joy Photography

Justin Weirich '06, DO

Like countless other health care professionals, Dr. Justin Weirich '06 was among those who went the "extra mile" to serve clients during the height of a COVID-19 outbreak last year. A family medicine practitioner at Lutheran Health Physicians in Fort Wayne, Ind., Weirich and his colleagues observed a lack of sufficient COVID testing capacity in local facilities as pandemic numbers swelled in late 2020.

The worst months were late October through mid December," he recalls. "Positive cases were rising exponentially in Michigan, and the clinics in nearby Fort Wayne just couldn't do it all." To keep those patients from overwhelming hospital emergency services, Weirich and colleagues volunteered days off to staff a COVID-specialized clinic.

"It was a challenge," he recalls. "There was a shortage of healthcare professionals as people quarantined and cared for their family needs. But telemedicine has really grown into a valuable tool that continues to be regularly utilized today. This helped us keep up with our regular clients as well as in-person COVID clinic patients."

As a child, Justin watched his father, Gordon Weirich, MD, who has practiced family medicine for more than 40 years in Weyers Cave, Va. "Dad modeled generosity and empathy," Justin remembers. "I always knew I wanted to follow in his footsteps."

Those characteristics have led Dr. Weirich to take part in multiple surgical and medical mission trips to the Philippines, Honduras, and Bolivia, in addition to serving his local community.

Weirich graduated from EMHS in 2006, where he sang in Touring

Choir, and played basketball and soccer. The boys varsity soccer team won the Division I state title his senior year, a special memory. "I do call those my golden days!" he notes with a laugh. "But really EMHS was truly a gift for me, and I would never replace those years."

Weirich went on to earn a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Mary Washington and worked pre-and post-operative care at Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Harrisonburg. He earned his medical degree from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in 2016, followed by a residency in family medicine at Fort Wayne Medical Education Program.

Justin is married to Sarah (Beck) Weirich and has two young children.

Read more at easternmennonite.org/news



Go Flames!

Our Wildfire fans are excited to cheer on cross country, girls tennis, boys soccer, and volleyball this fall! Join us for a game or match. Find schedules and results at easternmennonite.org/athletics

Ember Re-do

Paging through old copies of Ember, the 2021 Ember staff noticed the stunning color image on the inside covers of the 1966 edition. A dash to the theatre department's costume closet resulted in this "re-do." Enjoy!



1966 original photo



2021 recreation

1966 photo, standing (l-r): Doris Cordell Lehman (by post); unidentified (can you help us?); Cheryl Miller Heatwole (foreground), Elizabeth Heatwole Yoder, Mary Lois Shank Swartz, Elsie Peifer Weaver.

2021 photo, standing (l-r): Paige Hutcheson '23, Emily Hess '23, Claire Parsley '23, Yejin Lee '23, Naomi Diener '23. Front: Anna Miller '23, Nora Godshall '23

Faith at Work

"Faith at Work" is this year's theme for chapel (grades 6-12) and weekly elementary gathering. Claire Parsley '22, and Elisabeth Fink '22, shared the following in an introductory chapel. To see chapel videos, search YouTube for "Eastern Mennonite School Chapel."

Claire: "Faith at Work" has been selected for this year's chapel theme. This school has students coming from a wide range of backgrounds and students who have had vastly different life experiences, so "faith at work" in these chapels will likely have different meanings and impacts on each of you.

... I believe [faith] is crucial so that we can motivate ourselves to grow, improve, and put all the gifts we have into our world. It helps us wake up with a purpose and hopefully makes everything seem more possible... everyone

needs a little faith that there's some reason, some purpose to their life. I hope chapel this year... will get you thinking about what you personally choose to put your faith in.

Elisabeth: ... the word "faith" may almost be misleading. It's definition is only that of a strong belief in God or religion. It's purely abstract and the word itself does not even imply physical action. This year, we want to look at how having faith leads people to do work.

Whether that is physically serving others because you believe it's the right thing to do, or whether it's believing in yourself and making changes in your own life, faith is the core idea guiding these decisions. True faith, though it is technically invisible, is evidenced by visible actions.

"If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give



Elisabeth Fink and Claire Parsley, both class of '22

them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith in itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (JAMES 2:15-17)

What this is saying is not that if you don't meet some sort of requirements then your faith "doesn't count," it's just saying that truly, if you believe something, it should change your actions. True faith is always at work.

Chapel speaker suggestions are welcome at chapel@easternmennonite.org