



Advancement Team Update

The Advancement team does all the things that, well, “advance” the mission of the school!

- Students, faculty, and staff brought in **739 gifts totaling \$150,025 for Christmas Fund Drive** this year. Thank you for responding when students reached out by mail, phone and in personal contacts!

High School Scholarships

- Ignite Your Flame
- Blauch Brothers STEM

easternmennonite.org/scholarships

- EMS will join Harrisonburg’s **Great Community Give**, April 22, 2020; this is a city and county-wide celebration of philanthropy and the dozens of nonprofits that make our community strong. Help us meet our goal of \$10,000 this year! easternmennonite.org/gcg

- Mark your calendars for the annual **Golf Tournament** to benefit student financial aid and our athletic program: **May 1** at Heritage Oaks Golf Course in Harrisonburg. Sign up individually or grab a team of four. Details and registration at easternmennonite.org/golf

Fore the Flames Golf Tournament
May 1, 2020

- Nominate an alumnus** from a class ending in 0 or 5 to recognize at Homecoming Weekend, Oct. 16-18, 2020. Submit nominations for: Alumnus of the Year, Lifetime Service, Community Engagement or Young Alumnus awards online at easternmennonite.org/alumni

- Church Relations** – Paul Leaman, head of school, during story time at Community Mennonite Church in January, a way the school **builds connections** with local churches.



Photo by Jim Bishop

easternmennonite.org/support

Save the date

(continued from page 1)

May 1, 8 a.m. – Fore the Flames Golf Tournament, Heritage Oaks, easternmennonite.org/golf

May 7, 7 p.m. – Middle school instrumental concert, EMS Auditorium

May 21, 6:30 p.m. – EMES spring concert

June 5, 7 p.m. – Commencement concert, EMS Auditorium

June 6, 7 p.m. – Baccalaureate, EMS Auditorium

June 7, 2:30 p.m. – Commencement, EMU Lehman Auditorium

June 8 to 26 – Touring Choir Europe Tour

Winter Athletics schedules and results
easternmennonite.org/athletics

News
easternmennonite.org/news

Today is written, unless otherwise noted, by Andrea Schrock '82 Wenger, Director of Advancement and designed by Lindsey Kolb. Editorial assistance by Erin Kennedy Hess, Christine Fairfield '93 Glick and Trisha Maust '95 Blosser of the advancement team. Photos by Andrea Wenger and Andrew Gascho unless otherwise noted.

Send feedback to today@easternmennonite.org

Find past issues at easternmennonite.org/today



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TODAY

Volume 37, No. 2
Winter 2020

Save the date!

Details on the calendar at easternmennonite.org

March 10, April 15, May 6 – Drop-In Tours for prospective middle and high school students, 7:30 to 9 a.m. easternmennonite.org/visit

March 15, 4 p.m. – First Touring Choir program, EMS Auditorium. Full schedule at easternmennonite.org/tour

March 17, 6 p.m. – Planned Giving Seminar, presented by Everence in EMS Commons. Call 540-236-6024 with questions.

March 20 & 21, 7 p.m. – *Alice in Wonderland*, high school play, EMS Auditorium. easternmennonite.org/tickets

March 24, 7:30 p.m. – Spring choral concert, EMS Auditorium

March 27 – School Day Visit for prospective middle and high school students, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. easternmennonite.org/visit

April 24 & 25, 7 p.m. – *The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood*, middle school play, EMS Auditorium, easternmennonite.org/tickets

(continued on page 5 sidebar)



Elementary building celebration. Left to right: Mike Stoltzfus, director of business affairs; Wayne Witmer, Harman Construction; Jeff Shank, EMS board chair; Charles Hendricks, Gaines Group Architects; Marlowe Nichols '27; Maria Archer, K-8 principal; Teresa Anders, board of trustees; Frank Oncken, Chamber of Commerce; Paul Leaman, head of school. Story, page 4.

Strategic Pathways Guide EMS Toward 2022

Strategic plans generally go one of two ways: Onto a shelf where they collect dust, or into the life blood of a living, breathing organization’s story.

My vision for our new **Strategic Pathways to 2022** is the latter. Our Board of Directors – under the leadership of chair Jeff Shank '91 – adopted the document in October 2019. I then developed a strategic plan progress dashboard to make sure our plan didn’t slink off to the shelf.

Members of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) regularly plug in numbers and notes to track how we are doing with the intentions we have set collaboratively.

“How does this fit in the strategic plan?” “Which sub-point does this fulfill?” These are questions raised at both SLT meetings and around tables over discussions in the dining hall or when principals meet with teachers, or staff plan events.

With this issue of *Today*, we share our vision and examples of the progress we tally and celebrate, even as we adapt the plan and strive for more.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, contributions, and support as we move forward. Full plan at: easternmennonite.org/strategic-plan

— Paul Leaman, Head of School

EMS FAITH PRACTICES

An EMS Faith Formation Hub developed this content to post throughout the school as a reminder of our foundation. More on page 2.

- Our students are encouraged to grow in **relationship with Jesus** and to follow Jesus daily in life through attitudes and practice.
- Our students grow in understanding the process of **Biblical discernment** by asking questions, practicing spiritual disciplines, including serving others, prayer, studying scripture, and engaging with other people of faith.
- Our students grow in their understanding of **stewardship** of all God has entrusted to them, including the natural environment.
- Our faculty and staff invites **parents and churches** to partner in each student’s faith formation.
- Our faculty and staff are committed to **following Jesus Christ** in their lives which includes being peacebuilders, practicing nonviolence, seeking justice, using restorative practices, serving others, and being part of a reconciling faith community.
- Our school community is **responsive to cultural, racial, and socioeconomic diversity** and enables students to practice global awareness, cultural sensitivity, anti-racism and compassionate living.
- Our school community regularly engages in participatory communal worship through **singing** together.
- Our school community is committed to **walk with each other** in love, even when we **openly disagree**.

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:



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

FAITH COMMUNITY

THE ARTS



STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

Each “pathway” has one to five goals with multiple strategies for momentum. Following are examples of implementations toward varied goals.

easternmennonite.org/strategic-plan

1. TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL CULTURE

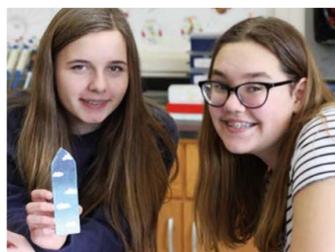


All faculty and staff were divided into one of three “Innovation Hubs” last year for out-of-the-box thinking: Faith Formation, School Culture and Scheduling. The hub work informed the strategic plan process and continues to shape implementation.

The Faith Formation Hub reviewed Mennonite World Conference core values and Mennonite Schools Council Encounter Curriculum to develop our school’s faith practices (see page 6). These practices are a foundation for everything we do.

We will continue to grow in our understanding and use of restorative practices. Teachers from each division and both of our principals will complete the Restorative Justice in Education certification at Eastern Mennonite University.

2. TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT LEARNING AND SUCCESS OPPORTUNITIES



Principals Maria Archer, K-8, and Justin King, 9-12, observe classrooms together at least once a week, providing feedback for teachers to continually grow as professionals and in support of diverse learners.

Seventh grade STEAM (STEM + Art) is an example of our goal to use experiential learning “every day, every class” where an engineering project starts by connecting it to art or music. More at easternmennonite.org/news

3. TO ACHIEVE ANNUAL FUNDING AND CAMPAIGN GOALS



Donor-supported initiatives keep our academics, arts and experiential learning strong. And there are many ways to give!

Nearly 40 people have joined the Virginia Education Scholarship Tax Credit Program this year so far; the program essentially triples your EMS gift by completing some simple paperwork with Paul Leaman, head of school. Funds provide need-based aid to eligible students.

Fall auction gifts funded Sphero-bolts in fourth grade. The small robots allow students to create games and codes and do robotic equations.

See easternmennonite.org/support

4. TO EXPAND ENROLLMENT INTEREST AND OPPORTUNITY



Attendance has been high at Open House events for our elementary program, and classes fill quickly.

We have room to welcome more middle and high school students, including children of alumni from nearby and out of the area.

Luka Sakai '21, joined EMS this fall from Michigan. His father, Ken '91 wanted him to experience the smaller school that he enjoyed as a dorm student. Luka lives with a host family and took part in this fall’s Chesapeake Bay trip for upper level science students (pictured above left) on Smith Island, Maryland.

Board of Directors

Read more about each member at easternmennonite.org/board

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Strategic Leadership Team

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K-8 Principal

Justin King
High School Principal

Michael Stoltzfus '94
Director of Business Affairs

Patsy Seitz
Director of Academics

Andrea Schrock '82 Wenger
Director of Advancement

After 15 Years, EMES is Home

Ribbon cutting, prayer and building tours on Jan. 28, 2020, marked the completion of a building renovation that gives Eastern Mennonite Elementary School a permanent home. The celebration came a little over 15 years after it first opened in the basement of Lindale Mennonite Church in the fall of 2005.

Maria Archer, K-8 principal has been with the school since its inception. “We learned,” she said as she remembered the past year and a half together in one building, “that when relationships are formed across grade levels, our students benefit. And, that when teachers of different divisions come together as a community, we are stronger.”

Previous months were full of planning and preparation, as the building project was completed.

- Jan. 25 – the covered bridge connecting our two buildings was finished just in time! Donors purchased inscribed bricks earlier in the fall that will be used in a walkway between the bridge and elementary school. A celebration is planned for May 21.



- Dec. 10 – First day of school! Everyone was thrilled to settle in.
- Dec. 7 – Staff and faculty (grades 6-12) moved supplies from the middle and high building to the lower building, while K-5 teachers settled in.
- Dec. 5 – Chapel for K-12 included a farewell and blessing as K-5 prepared to move. The architect, tradespeople and contractors joined so we could thank them.
- Dec. 4 – K-5 students carried backpacks to their new space with supplies. Parent volunteers moved furniture in the evening.
- Nov. 11 – Elwood Yoder (history and Bible teacher) interviewed Jim Rush (former government teacher), Lois Bowman '53 Kreider and Leo Heatwole '68 about the '64 move from Eastern Mennonite College to our current upper building. Thanks to Lois' 1964 diary

- a “primary source,” noted Elwood Yoder, with glee – she confirmed the exact move date of Jan. 23, 1964. We also remembered the '72 fine arts addition, '76 gym, '87 dining hall/classroom and Industrial Arts building, and '05 auditorium/art/music and classroom addition.
- Oct. 31 – A panel of donors shared why they support EMS, including building projects and financial aid. “We are investing in you!” they said.

Donors have made all of this possible. The community’s prayers, interest, volunteer hours, ideas and excitement have made it a joy. Celebrate with us!

Find coverage of many of these events on our website news section and Facebook page. You will also find links to local media coverage and a blog post by Elwood Yoder on the '64 building and Sam Weaver’s principalship.

Little Women

About 1,000 people filled the auditorium over four nights to laugh and shed a few tears for EMS’ production of *Little Women*, directed by Joy Anderson with musical direction by Jim Clemens. Students learned about all aspects of production as cast, crew and technical team members, in the pit orchestra, doing make-up and costume design.

