

Advancement News



ADMISSIONS

Register at easternmennonite.org/visit to join virtual visits to learn about 6-12th grade openings! Apply to be added to elementary wait lists.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join us April 30 at Heritage Oaks course in Harrisonburg to benefit student financial aid and our athletics program. Details and registration at easternmennonite.org/golf

1917 CIRCLE

Include EMS in your will and join our **1917 Circle** to sustain future generations of students or help support a major project. Learn more about this and other planned giving options at easternmennonite.org/planned-giving

ALUMNI IN CHAPEL

Virtual chapel allows for speakers from afar. Alumni guests have included:

- Esther Augsburger, former art teacher, on her 90th birthday
- Lisa Schirch '86, social media as a peacebuilding tool
- Keith '55 and Ellen Helmuth '55, Lifetime Service award winners
- Donor panel: Karen Ewell '74 (Tenn.), Steven Kauffman '15 (Pa.), Alison Yoder Seibeck '00 (Colo.), Andrew Zapanta '93, (Va.)
- Andrew Hershberger '03 and Josh Kraybill '10 on EMS solar
- Class of '95: Heather Ruark, Elizabeth Segal Butala, Obed Diener with Trisha Blosser, EMS
- Andrew Jenner '00, EMS Community Engagement award
- Joy Kingsley-Ibeh '93, model and entrepreneur
- See these and all our chapels by searching for "Eastern Mennonite School Chapel" on YouTube.
- Mary Zook '15 Tapolyai on Indigenous People's Day

HOMECOMING 2021

Join us Oct. 15-17! Five-year reunions for classes ending in 1 and 6.

ALUMNI AWARDS

Nominate an alumnus from a class year ending in 1 or 6 to recognize at Homecoming. Categories: Lifetime Service, Alumnus of the Year, Community Engagement Award, and Young Alumnus. easternmennonite.org/alumni-award

LinkedIn

Join EMS alumni LinkedIn group to connect, recruit, or find a job. Search the school on the site.

JOIN OUR ALUMNI BOARD!

Now that we're all "fluent" in Zoom, we can expand our Alumni Board beyond the local area! The board meets three times a year to hear updates. They also advise on Homecoming, the golf tournament, and alumni awards.

Fill out the form at easternmennonite.org/alumni to be considered.

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 Glick '93 Fairfield, and Trisha Maust '95 Blosser of the advancement team. Les Mis photos, p. 6, by Joaquin Sosa and Andrew Gascho. Coffee chats photo, p. 5, by Mike Kenneally on Unsplash.com. All other photos by Andrea Wenger.

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

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Thank You!

Christmas Fund Drive Success

With new tools – postcards written from home and an online platform – we surpassed our Fund Drive goal!

As of January 25...

- **\$166,443** total gifts to support students, teachers, and staff
- **492** generous donors
- **1,672** postcards mailed

THANK YOU students, alumni, teachers, staff, and friends who responded in spite of trying times with energy and generosity!



Susan Stoltzfus with second graders on their first day back after distance learning.

State of the School 2021: A New Era

A global pandemic – paired with societal awakening about equity and division – forces a once-in-a-generation opportunity to evaluate what matters. For EMS, that has meant a chance to review everything from daily schedules to sacred traditions.

A lot of the work we've done since March of 2020 has been painful. But as we move into 2021 and prepare the 2021-22 school calendar, we think deeply about a new era. We don't want to return to the way things were always done. We will build on what worked well, and use this opportunity to change.

We will continue:

- to strive toward our vision of being a Christ-centered learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God's call.
- our interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes experiential learning and 1:1 mentoring that keeps social and emotional well-being in the forefront.
- our commitment to nurturing academically prepared, compassionate, service-minded students.

(continued on page 3)

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:



LES MIS AVAILABLE

Our fall outdoor COVID-safe production of Les Misérables boosted the spirits of cast and crew, families, teachers, and our safely distanced audience.

See the video on demand at easternmennonite.org/les-mis

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

FAITH COMMUNITY

THE ARTS

easternmennonite.org



Paul Leaman, Head of School



Maria Archer, K-8 Principal



Justin King, High School Principal
(at the solar barn raising)

A Call for Prayer

We were fortunate to complete fall classes in person – with extended holiday breaks – with no incidents of COVID among students, staff or teachers.

We welcome prayers for:

- ongoing discernment and decision making.
- support of students and families who have had direct experience with the realities of COVID-19.
- faculty who carry heavy loads teaching both in-person and distance learners while navigating their own family life.
- students who are missing out on most of the traditions and experiences that many of our alumni remember as pivotal and life shaping.



Touring Choir sang outdoors for parents, faculty and staff one time in fall 2020. The usual process and cycle of choirs was adjusted due to COVID.

A Sacred Tradition Evolves

One of the sacred traditions that has evolved in the last 10 years, regardless of a global pandemic, is choral singing. Since 1917, singing together has been a key part of community building, worship, and academic excellence at EMS. Changing demographics and changing church practices bring a new era.

“It’s no longer appropriate for me to call out a hymn number in chapel and assume or expect that a critical mass of students will know the song or be familiar with it,” says Jared Stutzman, choral director. “The shared cultural background of hymn-singing and communal singing in EMS’ history was a powerful part of a tight-knit community, but it could also be unhealthy and exclusive for those who didn’t share it.”

As our students increasingly come from church backgrounds where hymns aren’t sung or where communal singing isn’t a focal point of worship, we are moving to make our singing more inclusive and accessible,” explains Stutzman. “Singing together will always be a part of who we are, and hymns will always be a part of our heritage and practice.

But our approach needed some tweaks,” he says.

EMS music teachers and strategic leadership have confirmed the intention to continue choral singing as an academic, worship, and performance endeavor at EMS. To that end, the middle school curriculum will now include exposure to choral singing and sight reading, building on the strong K-5 music program taught by Joy Anderson. Regular singing in the K-5 weekly gathering, and 6-12 chapel will continue (after COVID), involving student leadership, local guest musicians, and presenting new songs in accessible ways.

Introducing students to communal singing, worship, and choral music at a young age will allow them to understand and enjoy it, regardless of prior experience, teachers believe.

“I’m especially excited about the development of a meaningful vocal music curriculum at the middle school level,” says Stutzman. “The Touring Choir tradition and its life-long impact on students is well-known, and we intend to keep it strong. Building a more inclusive support structure for communal singing in middle and high school is important too.”



(State of the School, cont. from p. 1)

With fresh vision, we will:

- make time to develop and implement innovative teaching practices that foster engagement in meaningful ways for students.
- explore creative ways to meet the high demand for an EMS education, particularly for elementary age students.

- view curriculum and practices through a racial equity lens, develop a more diverse faculty, and strive for a student body that better reflects the diversity of our area.
- continue our emphasis on peacebuilding and creation care.

View updates throughout the year: easternmennonite.org/news

Above photos: We have “found” larger, COVID-safe classroom space this year in the gym, auditorium foyer, dining hall, and Commons. Lunch outside is common for all grades, weather permitting.

Increasing Student Diversity

With the country’s awakening to racial inequities, alumni have asked how they can help increase student diversity at EMS. Thanks to seed money planted nearly 30 years ago, a new **Students of Color Scholarship** is a way to help.

The original endowment was established in the early 1990s to enable Laotian immigrant students at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church to attend EMHS. The family that provided the seed money is happy to see the scope broadened to include support for students of color from any ethnic background.

Earnings from the fund have been tapped over the years for the school’s routine financial aid process; broadening it as a scholarship will, the school hopes, invite more donor support, as well as make it more accessible.

An unsolicited gift from **Chuck Hostetter** ’71 designated for students of color in summer 2020, prompted review of the original endowment, conversations with



WELCOME TO EMS! Five new students from the Dosan Dream School in Seoul, South Korea joined their host families and began orientation at EMS in mid January. Four returning Korean students arrived in January as well. Learning about new cultures and languages is one way to work for peace.

the founders, and revamp.

Hostetter was moved to send a gift after running across a stack of letters in storage. The letters were sent to him by EMHS classmates while living with his family in Nigeria during his senior year.

“That support from peers meant so much,” he wrote. “I see now how my life trajectory took shape, influenced by other cultures. I’m grateful to support this fund in appreciation for what those EMHS friends meant to me, and to support the insights and gift to

humanity people of color bring to school communities.” **Hostetter hopes his classmates – who will mark their 50-year class reunion this fall – will join him in supporting the scholarship.**

Gifts of any size to the fund may be sent to the school, designated “Students of Color Scholarship.” Recipients will be named based on an application process and financial need. Endowment funds sustain students beyond this generation, as earnings increase over time.



Solar News

The sun now provides about one third of the school’s energy needs, thanks to installation of 357 panels in October in a “solar barn raising.” See live stats from the array, timelapse of the installation, video tour (with alumni Andrew Hershberger ’03 and Joshua Kraybill ’10), national news coverage, and images at easternmennonite.org/solar.



Peace Pledge

Lynette Mast took the opportunity of a presidential inauguration to talk with her kindergarten class about promises. They reviewed the Peace Pledge they had signed early in the year where they promised to: respect ourselves and others, communicate better, listen, forgive, respect nature, play creatively, and be courageous.



Flames News

Adjusted winter sports are in season with precautions. Varsity girls and boys basketball teams are distance learning while they play. Watch the action by searching “EMS Athletics” on YouTube.

Photo: Fans welcome boys varsity basketball seniors from a safe distance outside.