

# SING!

College Mennonite Church

November 2016



## Care in the Community of Faith

*So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good.  
Every time we get the chance, let us work  
for the benefit of all,  
starting with the people closest to us  
in the community of faith.*  
—from Galatians 6:9-10 *The Message*

In a recent meeting, I was amazed as we pondered together the many and various ways people find connection and care in and through CMC. From baby showers to end-of-life care, from prayer shawls to home repairs, from financial assistance to member-to-member visitation, both formal and informal pastoral care is a large part our life together as a faith community. Thanks be to God that it is happening in many and varied ways.

Our church family offers steady and loving care surrounding the end of life. It is an area of pastoral care where we are particularly well practiced, as we experience the loss of at least 25 people each year. I have often wondered what the cumulative effect of grief is for our congregation when we lose so many dear ones each year. How could we even measure this corporate grief? In many ways, we just “keep on keeping on” as a body because that is what is necessary. Life keeps moving. Ministry keeps happening. There are

times, however, when it is important to slow ourselves and let the grief wash over us, sink deep into us, and perhaps well out of us through our tears and sighs.

I am grateful that we have an All Saints service each November and a Longest Night service each December near the winter solstice to remember, reflect, give thanks, and grieve. These are both occasions when we can collectively breathe deeply, reflecting on our grief, individual and corporate, and allow our laments to stretch out longer. On Sunday, Nov. 6, we celebrate our All Saints service during morning worship. (See p. 5 for the names of those we will honor.)

In this issue of *Sing!*, you will read about a few of the different ways our congregation offers pastoral care to one another and beyond.

—Pamela Yoder

### In this issue:

- The comfort of prayer shawls
- Pastoral care visitors
- Giving and receiving care
- Helping with little-big things
- Our core ministries
- Youth share “highs and lows”



**Artwork:** The “Mennonite Angel,” a commissioned painting created by Kathy Stiffney, is inspired by what CMC member Elizabeth Yoder saw from her hospital bed just before she died on Feb. 25, 2016. She said the ceiling was thin, offering her glimpses of lace, beautiful fabric, and people dancing. “I see a Mennonite angel. She is wearing plain clothes and has a covering on her head ... and wings.”

# Sing!

We worship together

Every Sunday

9:15 a.m. – Songs for Gathering

9:25 a.m. – Off-site Worship

Radio: WGCS 91.1 FM: the Globe

Online: [www.collegemennonite.org](http://www.collegemennonite.org)

Greencroft Communities: Ch. 13

9:30 a.m. – Worship service

interpretation in Spanish and, on request, American Sign Language

11 a.m. – Fellowship and Christian education classes for all ages

## Pastoral Team

Phil Waite, pastoral team leader

Gwen Gustafson-Zook, outreach & worship

Marty Lehman, administration

Daniel Yoder, Christian formation – youth

Pamela Yoder, pastoral care

Talashia Keim Yoder, family ministry

## Ministry Coordinators

Claudia Granados, Hispanic ministries

Sheila S. Yoder, Deaf ministries

*College Mennonite Church is a member of **Mennonite Church USA**, an Anabaptist community of believers.*

*To learn more go to:*

*[www.collegemennonite.org](http://www.collegemennonite.org)*

*[www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org)*



## Asking for and Receiving Mercy

### This Month in Worship at CMC

*Kyrie eleison* is Greek for “Lord, have mercy,” an ancient Christian prayer. Only two words in Greek, this simple prayer speaks volumes. Jesus commands us to show mercy, but perhaps more difficult is asking for and receiving mercy.

By asking for mercy we acknowledge our own powerlessness and our utter dependence on God. We are incapable of making events turn out justly, or even as we might want them to turn out. We are powerless. That the sun comes up and the earth still spins is through no cause of our own, but reflects our total dependence on God, as all life is dependent on God.

Our wider American culture celebrates human, and particularly individual, volition. We have the power. We are independent. We see it in our foreign policy conversations. We have the power to intervene in extraordinarily complex situations to make them come out the way we want. This sense imbues many aspects of life in our times.

Asking for mercy also has a moral quality to it. While our power has limits, we often use the power we have to undermine God’s intentions for creation. *Kyrie eleison* is a confession, expressing our need and desire for God’s forgiveness.

By its very character, Christian worship acknowledges the limits of human power and our dependence, ultimately, on God and not ourselves. Christian worship also acknowledges our sin and need for forgiveness. But it always moves toward celebrating a God who acts in mercy and love and rests on a foundation of hope. —Phil Waite

### November “Mercy” Worship Series: Bible Study Guide

For the first three weeks of November, we continue our worship series focusing on “Mercy.” To study the texts and stories for each Sunday, here is a suggested reading list:

Nov. 6	Beatitudes	Psalms 145:1-5, Luke 6:20-31
Nov. 13	The Glorious New Creation	Psalms 98, Isaiah 65:17-25
Nov. 20	“Father, forgive them ...”	Psalms 46, Luke 23:33-43

# Prayer Shawl Ministry

## Symbols of the Congregation's Love and Support

Mennonite Women started providing prayer shawls for the pastoral team to distribute about eight years ago. Since then, about 175 shawls have been given as a symbol of the congregation's love and prayer support.

When Tim and I started attending CMC, I was excited to see an already active prayer shawl ministry. I am honored to help coordinate having a supply of prayer shawls available. I know that there are several in the congregation who generously make and donate their shawls; but I don't know who you all are. Let me know who you are. Most of us make the shawls at home, but you might see some of us quietly knitting during services or meetings.

Those who make shawls do so for several reasons. Knitting and crocheting is something we love to do. Holding the yarn and making the shawl provides an opportunity to pray for the person who will eventually receive the shawl. There is a sense of satisfaction that our hands are providing something that will comfort the recipient. When I started making shawls, I was working full-time and couldn't participate in daytime women's activities. Prayer shawls were something I could make at home and have a sense of contributing to the ministry of the church.



Mary Swartzendruber (at left) has been making shawls for

some time. She tells me that her goal is to make one a month to provide love and care to others who are hurting.

Those who receive the shawls report the comfort they feel when wrapping the shawls around their bodies. Some have reported the comfort and love they felt during a long and lonely sleepless night. Others have used them to keep warm while sitting beside the hospital bed of a loved one. Because of the love and comfort received, some pass them on to others who are in pain or dealing with the loss of a loved one.

Prayer shawls are given to those who are dealing with serious illnesses and/or loss. Contact the church office if you think someone would benefit from receiving one of these shawls. Mennonite Women and the church office keep a record of all who receive a shawl.

Working with Pamela Yoder, we have started making small pocket prayer squares. Pamela takes them with her as she visits members. You will soon see a basket of them at the information centers. They are there for you to take—to put into your pocket or purse as a reminder of the care and prayers of your church family. Or give one to someone as a reminder of your care and prayer.

If you are interested in helping make prayer shawls, there is a new brochure with instructions for knitting or crocheting prayer shawls. It is available in the literature racks in the hallway. If you want more information, contact me at [cjlichti@gmail.com](mailto:cjlichti@gmail.com).

—Carolyn Lichti

“Shawls ...  
made for centuries  
universal  
and embracing,  
symbolic of  
an inclusive,  
unconditionally  
loving God.

They wrap, enfold,  
comfort, cover, give  
solace, mother, hug,  
shelter and beautify.

Those who have  
received these shawls  
have been uplifted  
and affirmed, as if  
given wings to fly  
above their troubles.”

—written in 1998 by  
Janet Bristow © 2004  
[www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com)





# A Representation of God's Love

## The Ministry of Pastoral Care Visitors at CMC



*We have a great gift in our team of Pastoral Care Visitors at CMC—24 individuals who offer care and support on behalf of the congregation. Together they offer care to 38 people, most of whom can no longer attend worship services and other church activities.*

*The group meets monthly for spiritual sharing and input and to share from their relationships and offer counsel and support to one another. When we gather together, even if not all of us are present, it is a beautiful representation of God's love being offered and extended on behalf of the church. You will get a glimpse of that beauty in the stories on these pages.*

—Pamela Yoder

### On the Receiving End of Care

Being a pastoral care visitor has been a wonderful opportunity. Each person I visit is unique and offers me glimpses into her past and present life. As you might imagine, much time is spent reminiscing, and I am always impressed with the vibrant life each has had. The biggest surprise is how I get to witness aging with grace—it is preparing me to interact with my parents as they age and move into their later years. I feel grateful for the ways in which I have been on the receiving end of care. Many times my visitees want to know how they can pray for me! Their deep faith is inspiring.

I had been visiting a non-verbal woman for several years. I always left wondering if my visit really helped. At our monthly pastoral care meetings we talked about ways we could connect with non-verbal residents, and someone suggested singing. My next visit I sang, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." At the end she grabbed my arm and said,

"Thank you." I was filled with joy and a renewed sense of commitment to visiting. Now I take my hymnal and sing old familiar songs, and while she has not since responded like the first time, I see her agitated body relax and I know that she is listening and remembering the songs that are part of her being.

—Jane Short

### Revived and Uplifted

I have visited three people who were in their nineties. One of them was a retired teacher, so I related easily to her since I am also a retired teacher. We loved to talk about incidents that happened in our classrooms. She liked homemade cookies very much, so I always took her one when I went to visit. One time I made a mistake and took her four. She told me later that she ate all four of them as soon as I left. Not good for her!

Another person I visited was also in her nineties. She was a musician. I am not very musical, but all of my children and grandchildren inherited that gift from their father. So we had some common ground there. However I found out she loved nature, so we talked about the great outdoors. We talked about walking in the woods, wild flowers, trees, birds.

Whenever I visited I always shared a poem and some scripture and prayed for each person, after first asking permission to pray. They all gladly approved.

It's difficult to get up and go—visiting, that is. It takes honest effort. But every time I went I felt so revived and uplifted that I am now beginning to look forward to my contacts. I would encourage others to join in, and you, too, may find yourself blessed more than you realize.

—Mary Bontrager

## Larger Than Those of Us Who Gather

As a pastoral care visitor, it has been my privilege to witness up close the strong faith and deep sense of belonging of our members who can no longer attend our services. I have felt their welcome, and I have heard them sing, pray, repeat scripture, and tell of their faith even in the last hours of their lives. This reminds me that our congregation is larger than those of us who gather regularly. —Judy Kennel

## Sharing Stories and Songs

One of the benefits of pastoral care visiting to me has been learning so much of the past lives of my visitees. Olive Wyse, for instance, was taught the 23rd Psalm by her mother and at age three recited it at a family reunion!

Shirley Gingerich and I sing duets from the hymnal. Her eyesight is good enough at age 96 to read the fine print at the bottom of the page naming the persons responsible for the music and lyrics. —Phyllis Miller

(pictured below with Shirley Gingerich)



## All Saints Remembrance—2016

Each year on the first Sunday of November, in our All Saints Remembrance service, we remember the loved ones from our church family who died in the past year.

This year we remember:

S. Glenn Yoder  
Joyce Oyer  
Jacob Loewen  
Frances Troyer  
Celesta Snyder  
Ruth Covington  
June Landis  
Jeremy Lemarr  
Mary Crouch  
Elizabeth Yoder  
Devon Schrock  
Opal Gunden  
Menno Friesen  
Harold Bauman  
Rachel Fisher  
E. Joe Richards  
Glenn Musselman  
Paul Hunsberger  
Esther Schrock  
LuEtta Neumann  
J. B. Shenk  
Ethel Stutzman  
Ethel Umble  
Walter Massanari  
Esther Yoder  
Oneta Gardner  
Don Shoemaker  
Frances Greaser

## Stephen Ministry

The Stephen Ministry program is another important relationship-based caregiving ministry at CMC. The program teaches laypersons to provide one-on-one care for individuals who request support. Stephen Ministers are caring Christian friends who listen, understand, accept, and pray for and with care receivers who are working through difficult times or crises. The confidential relationship, usually conducted by weekly visits, may continue for months or years. At CMC we have 14 lay members serving as Stephen Ministers, who are trained and supervised by our Stephen Leader team of five, including Pastor Pamela Yoder.



# “I Believe God Is Calling Me ...”

## A Testimony of Giving and Receiving Care

When Gordon Dyck, long-time member of College Mennonite Church, was diagnosed with ALS, he and spouse Judy Beechy knew he'd eventually have to move into a healthcare facility. They explored the Prospect Park Living Center in Estes Park, Colo., near where they live. They were pleasantly surprised to discover that the chaplain there, Brenda Fox, is a Mennonite by choice who goes to Boulder Mennonite Church.

Brenda's father also had had ALS. Therefore Brenda knew what he had gone through and also knew how ALS affected her mother and the entire family. Brenda connected well with both Judy and Gordon and visited them quite often even before he moved to the healthcare facility.

Brenda asked Gordon, “What do you feel God is calling you to do at this stage of your life?” Gordon, who had given his life to pastoral ministry and pastoral counseling, thoughtfully came up with three responses:

**One:** *“I believe God is calling me to wind down my life with integrity, transparency, gratitude, spiced with humor and with a minimum of bitterness and depression.”*

**Two:** *“I believe that God is calling me to share responsibility to care for my body with others and to do so without resistance and in ways that enhance both my life and my caregivers' lives, as well as our relationships.”*

**Three:** *“I believe God is calling me to be more clear and explicit with my family, friends, and others about my life's primary values—a commitment to help create and live in caring communities from families to nations (including neighborhoods, workplaces, and churches) with the spirit of Jesus, characterized by compassion, nonviolence, and justice.”*

Now that Gordon is living at Prospect Park Living Center, he's discovered that he's been able to relate meaningfully to his caregivers. One, a woman who has had a difficult life, is going through a divorce. She and Gordon have had a number of discussions about marital relationships. They have also played some imaginary games with each other, helping her to deal with the point in her life as a child when she felt most abandoned.

Another male caregiver is a war veteran who was wounded in Iraq and has subsequently joined Veterans for Peace. When Judy's extended family had a reunion in Colorado, this caregiver arranged for the family to have a picnic in the national Park, and he and a friend went along.

Gordon says he has a lot of time to think, but he rarely gets depressed. Although he is dependent on the care of others for his basic needs, he is obviously letting his life be a blessing to others. Suzanne and I were deeply inspired by Gordon's testimony when we visited them in early October.

A month ago Gordon “graduated” from hospice care because his breathing and weight are more stable than they were when he moved into Prospect Park Living Center. But he continues to live in the same room in the center.

—Richard Kauffman



Photo: Judy Beechy and Gordon Dyck with their golden retriever Mitzy in Gordon's room at Prospect Park Living Center, Estes Park, Colorado.

# When Little Things Are Big

## The Unique Ministry of CMC-MDS

A faulty faucet. A plugged toilet. A stove hood to be installed. A pocket door off its track. A room needing paint. Furniture to be moved. A faulty thermocouple. An unworkable garage door. Stuff to be boxed up. Unassembled bookcases. A needed ramp for accessibility. Twigs on the roof. A fallen tree. A damaged mailbox. Overgrown shrubs. Dirty windows.

Although inconvenient, such things can be little for many of us who have the resources. But they can be big for those of us who lack physical strength, are short on funds, are uncertain where to turn for help, or live alone.

Five years ago, Richard Yoder from our congregation observed that some among us respond to those who needed help with little-big things like those noted above. He also had a vision of a standing group at CMC that might provide “handyman” help more systematically. So he called a number of us together on July 14, 2011. Out of this meeting emerged a ministry called College Mennonite Church—Mennonite Disaster Service (CMC-MDS).

This ministry has a dual focus. One is to offer handyman service (minor maintenance, small repair, cleanup, etc.) to persons in our congregation with health and financial limitations

**Working side by side ... was a refreshing new way to build new relationships.**

without family or friends who can provide such assistance. The other focus is to coordinate CMC’s engagement with our denominational agency, Mennonite

Disaster Service (MDS). Because of its dual focus, this ministry is accountable to both the Community Life and Outreach commissions.

When a need for handyman help comes to the attention of the CMC-MDS leadership team, one or two from the team go on-site to assess the need, determining how and when it might be remedied. The team then sends out a call for help to the group of volunteers. Since June 2012, CMC-MDS has responded to 54 calls for help. In most cases the needs can be alleviated by volunteers. When the need is beyond the resources of CMC-MDS, referrals were made to professionals.

Responding to handyman needs is a form of pastoral care. As physical needs are met, quality of life is enhanced and relationships are built and nurtured. One person who received some help wrote, “What a wonderful service for those of us with few mechanical skills or with advanced age! I have longed for such service for 20+ years and am so grateful for CMC-MDS.” Sometimes there are “holy moments.” One volunteer remembers how, after a project was completed, the person in need served donuts



and drink for volunteers. After the group prayed together, someone reminded them that they were having a form of communion.

As volunteers work together, friendships are built and nurtured with goodwill, teamwork, and humor. One volunteer reflected, “Working side by side with fellow volunteers was a refreshing new way to build new relationships.”

CMC-MDS is just one of the many forms of caring in our congregation that authenticate the gospel of our Lord. —Ron Kennel

Photo: Don and Libby Reber are very grateful for their ramp.



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# Contributing to CMC's Core Ministries

Recently Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) selected "10 Young Women Changing the World." One of the 10 is our own CMCer Kate Showalter Stoltzfus. Kate currently lives in Pittsburgh, Pa., where she is co-founder of Propelle, an organization that helps women entrepreneurs take flight through networking events, workshops, and individual coaching.

Kate is just one example of many who grew up in our CMC family and are now serving in our local community or around the world as teachers, medical doctors, professors, voluntary service workers, immigration attorneys, musicians, pastors, just to name a few.

In the past number of years, as we've moved to the ministry group model, we've seen an increase in contribu-

tions being directed to special ministry funds. It is easy to assume that money for the General Fund/Spending Plan is just money spent on lights or heat for the building. We tend to forget it includes our core ministries—raising our children to be followers of Jesus and sending them into the world to change lives.

Ministry to our CMC children, youth, and their families is one of our core ministries as a congregation. We've been doing these ministries for years, and we will continue for years to come. It is central to what we are about as a congregation. Teaching and equipping our children and youth in the ways of Jesus, so they can serve in whatever location God calls them into once they reach adulthood, is at the core of what it means to be an Anabaptist Christian. —Marty Lehman

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## "Highs and Lows" Are Pastoral Care for Youth

Adolescence is a time of change. When we think of pastoral care, we usually think of big life changes like health crisis, death, or a family crisis. These things are not often a reality for youth. However, when your number of years on earth is small and you do not have blessing of

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time to give you a different perspective, the life changes of adolescence (that adults easily forget or block from our memories) are big life changes. A knee injury and six weeks of healing means not only missing most of a sports season, but also missing out on part of your growing self-identity. A friendship that ends might have the

same emotional weight as a death does later in life. A divorce forces you to renegotiate the relationships in your family much like the death of a parent later in life.

In MYF and Genesis we are using a model of pastoral care that is focused on our everyday needs, is communal, and fits our theology: group-based care. Sunday school always starts with a version of sharing time, or as we call it, "highs and lows." Everyone (youth and adults in the

room) has the opportunity to share the best and worst part of the previous week.

This is a holy time when youth are learning to give and receive deep care for each other by listening, sharing openly and appropriately, respecting confidentiality, and helping each other see God's hand in our lives when it might be difficult to see it on our own. But this holy time does not happen automatically. It is a circle of trust that is reformed and rebuilt each fall as one class graduates and another class joins.

What is shared is focused on our immediate needs. What we are doing has huge potential for the long term, because youth are learning to care for each other's spiritual well-being and getting a taste of giving and receiving counsel in the congregation. We might just be talking about watching movies with friends, piles of homework, or unjust referees and artistic judges. However, we are building the capacity for the church to care for each other and be the love of Christ in action for each other no matter how deep our hurts, high our joys, or diverse our experiences, beliefs, and identity. —Daniel Yoder

## Mark Your Calendar

- Nov. 9, 16 and 30 **Wednesday Night at CMC** – 6 p.m. meal and 6:45 p.m. activities
- Nov. 13 **Congregational meeting** – 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
- Nov. 24-25 **Thanksgiving holiday** – office closed

*Sing!* is a monthly publication of College Mennonite Church. Send inquiries to [communications@collegemennonite.org](mailto:communications@collegemennonite.org).

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