



# LMC *a fellowship of anabaptist churches* Shalom NEWS

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2023



## STEP

*Equipping Leaders in LMC*



October–December 2023

Issue 4 / Volume 43

#### Bishop Elders Team

Keith Blank  
Rodney Martin  
Marcia Mylin  
Tuyen Nguyen

#### Shalom News Team

Sherri Martin, Managing Editor  
Sandra Granthon-Roman, Contributing Editor  
Rosita N'Dikwe, Administrative Assistant

Magazine design by Yoder Design Co.

*Shalom News* is published quarterly by LMC.  
PO Box 1635  
Lancaster, PA 17608-1635

717-293-5246 / 800-216-7249  
[www.LMCchurches.org](http://www.LMCchurches.org)

*Shalom News* (ISSN 0747-2706) is published by LMC, PO Box 1635, Lancaster, PA 17608-1635, quarterly for free distribution to all congregations in the Conference. Individual subscriptions are \$15 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Lancaster, PA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Shalom News*, LMC, PO Box 1635, Lancaster, PA 17608-1635.

© 2023 LMC, all rights reserved.

Questions or comments can be directed to [smartin@LMCchurches.org](mailto:smartin@LMCchurches.org)

 [facebook.com/LMCchurches](https://facebook.com/LMCchurches)

#### ON THE COVER

Large photo: STEP graduates in 2016. Photos provided by LMC.

Small photo: Students in the 2022 STEP orientation.

## A Word of Thanks

Marcia Mylin, LMC Resource Staff, LMC STEP Director,  
Bishop Elders Team



### Thank you, gracias, merci, danke ...

to our LMC congregations for noticing, affirming, sending, and supporting students who are sensing a call from God! I encourage you to continue to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and lives of those around you. Let's continue to call out and fan into flame the gift of God present in each congregational member. A growing number of STEP alumni are now congregational leaders, missionaries, youth leaders, worship leaders, and pastors. Your support is impacting the future of the Church for Kingdom purposes.


### What is STEP?

STEP teaches the basics of congregational ministry leadership – for pastors, those exploring a call, and other leaders. STEP is discipleship training at the first-year college level. STEP is a partnership between LMC, Eastern Mennonite University, and other supporting church groups and congregations.



Learn more at [lmchurches.org/ministries/step/](http://lmchurches.org/ministries/step/) or scan the QR code. Questions may be directed to Marcia Mylin at [mmylin@lmchurches.org](mailto:mmylin@lmchurches.org) or 717-293-5246 ext. 114.





Danwe N'Dikwe (right) conversing with another STEP student during a break. Photo provided by LMC.

# Listening to the Call of God Requires Surrender

BY DANWE N'DIKWE, AS TOLD TO SHALOM NEWS EDITORS

**Danwe N'Dikwe clearly remembers telling his STEP cohort during the first day of class, that he did not want to be a minister or a pastor!** Instead, curiosity and a desire to deepen his understanding of his journey with Christ sparked an initial interest in STEP. Not one to be particularly disciplined to dive into or stick to academic research or studies, when his pastor mentioned the 3-year study program, Danwe was intrigued. Looking at the curriculum and how it was set up, the structure felt right for him.

Since their early days of marriage in a congregation in Washington, DC, Danwe and his wife, Rosita, have always wanted to participate deeply in church life regardless of the position or leadership role. Danwe was asked to preach his first sermon while still in high school, and whenever he joined a church, he somehow ended up behind the pulpit. Preaching and teaching have always been in his heart. Going into STEP, the anticipation

to learn more and be better equipped to share a sermon or a devotional was quite appealing.

As with many good things in life, a sacrifice of time devoted to STEP studies affected his wife and seven children. Danwe believes that whenever people decide to follow Christ, there is a reprioritization of life. That is how it is meant to be. Family time and finances are crucial, and it can be hard to give them up if we think it all belongs to us. Christ may call us to give up certain things and not cling to them. He said, "Yes, it was a sacrifice to my wife and children, but it was a blessing because I was enriched in many ways. The logistics beforehand felt like it would be a bigger sacrifice than it was. It is often the case – the enemy will try to magnify things and make them appear worse than they are once you step out in faith. The enemy has a way of magnifying things that sound so important, and if we're not careful, we just give up on important things. The reality is that



The author with fellow STEP graduates in 2022.

when we say ‘yes’ to the Lord, beauty supercedes everything else.”

The most beautiful discovery that Danwe found was the rich relationships that formed among his STEP cohort during the three years of study. He’s often said he is grateful for the opportunity to journey with others who desire to know Christ deeply. He reflected, “I don’t think there’s any other experience I’ve had in my life like that one. It changed my perspective on how we do life together as believers. There was a willingness to be open; I think that’s what the Christian community should be. We started with different perspectives from different cultures. As we journeyed together during those three years, that became less and less important. Suddenly, it opened my mind to what we have in common – our Father God. I mean, being a foreigner, the cultural reality is always something I’m aware of, but when I got together with others who have grown up in different settings, I saw their perspectives in a new light. At the bottom are common shared beliefs that hold us together. All of the other outliers are not as important anymore. This is the real Christian life where it doesn’t matter where you come from, and it doesn’t matter what you know. What has shaped your view? Maybe it’s a cultural reality or your upbringing. It doesn’t matter as long as we have this common understanding of what Christ means to us. I’m also thankful because it helped me see a different light.”

Danwe identified that STEP is where people engage not because they need to, but because they want to. He sensed a genuine desire from everyone to be fully present, creating a unique environment where everybody listened attentively and shared deeply. That desire to engage entirely created the space for vulnerability resulting in deeply caring and praying for each other. He still emotionally recalls when a cohort member had to step away from the studies. Danwe noted, “We were all in tears.”

**“The LORD came and stood there, calling out as before: Samuel, Samuel! Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”**

During the third year of STEP, the Holy Spirit spoke specifically to Danwe through 1 Samuel 3:10 – *“The LORD came and stood there, calling out as before: Samuel, Samuel! Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”* It happened during a class while studying a chapter of the book, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* by Ruth Haley Barton. He was struck as the instructor Krishana walked the class through the chapter, *The Conundrum of Calling*. He said, “I think that was a turning point for me. You know, sometimes, I like to do things on my terms. Even going to STEP, I didn’t want to take on this or that role. It occurred to me that this is a posture of rebellion.”

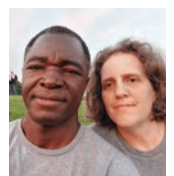
Ruth Haley Barton writes, “Any kind of authentic calling usually takes place where we have serious objections of some sort, places where we feel inadequate – where we confront our willfulness and our preconceived ideas about how we thought our life would go, where we think what God is asking us to

do is downright impossible or where we just don’t want to take the risk. But one of the ways we recognize calling is that it has come about in ways that could not be humanly orchestrated, and so it cannot be easily dismissed.”

Ruth highlights God’s creative design and the excitement children naturally have before there is anything to prove, before having a sense of what is socially acceptable or how to present oneself to the world. Calling from God often involves finding our way back to the way God created us to be. For Danwe, finding his way back involved the realization that he doesn’t have to manufacture anything. It simply means making himself available and willing. That’s exactly what Eli told Samuel. If the Lord calls you, just say, “I’m listening.” It is important to keep that willing posture before the Lord.

Shortly before STEP graduation, through much discernment, listening, and prayer, Danwe and Rosita accepted the Youth Minister role in their congregation. He fondly recalls a member of his cohort saying, “Hey, wait a minute! I remember you said that you didn’t wanna be a minister.” Danwe believes the Holy Spirit speaks to him daily, and there are times when His voice is compellingly clear. ■

*Danwe N'Dikwe is originally from Chad, Africa. He and his wife, Rosita, are members of Elizabethtown Mennonite Church – serving together as Ministers of Youth. They have seven children, four sons and three daughters.*





# Given to God as a Tithe – Called to be a Pastor

BY PHAM DINH TON

**My name is Pham Dinh Ton, and I am Vietnamese.** I am thirty-nine years old. I have a wife and two kids – a son and a daughter. I was born in a Christian family. My father has ten children and I am the last one. When I was a child, my father told me he would give me to God as a tithe. I did not know what it meant until God called me to be a pastor.

I love the Word of God. A pastor introduced me to studying the Bible from 2006 to 2008. In 2009, I received God's calling to be a pastor. God led me to a Korean pastor working with a Mennonite church. I worked for him, and he introduced me to the Mennonite Bible School. I studied from 2010 to 2013. I graduated at the end of the year 2013. In 2015, I was ordained to be a pastor of a Mennonite church. From 2017 until now, I have been taking care of two churches.

As a young pastor, I felt worried, tired and at times empty. I needed to learn how to deal with my thoughts of self doubt and ability to study more, to increase my knowledge and improve my skill set in pastoral care for my ministry, for the present and future of my congregation. This was my motivation that led me to look for a school to study in, and Bishop Tuyen Nguyen introduced me to the STEP program and encouraged me to apply. I joined STEP with joy and excitement. I did not worry about the school fee because Bishop Tuyen Nguyen helped me to apply for an LMC grant. However, I had to struggle a lot with my time. There was a lot of homework. It is easy to understand the content, but the language is challenging. Reading, understanding, and writing it down took me a lot of time.

Since I joined STEP, I have had to pause or stop some projects in my ministry. My family time has also been limited, affecting the amount of play time I can spend with my children. My little daughter (4 years old) said, "I would like you to have time to play with me." I struggled with balancing time to play with her while allowing time to complete my homework assignments. I thank God that He helped me to not give up and finish the first year of STEP. There were many times I would have liked to stop, to give up. But my supervisor, Bishop Tuyen Nguyen, did not allow me to stop, and

my wife also encouraged me to continue. I know God has provided me this good opportunity to study and the Holy Spirit will help me to move forward in His will. God wants me to help His churches in Vietnam. God reminds me in 2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." I recognize that God wants me to know Him clearly.

In my first year of STEP, God has taught me many things that are good and useful for me and my ministry. STEP has taught me to communicate for change by preparing my sermon with one theme. Anchored by one point that is easy to follow and understand, my sermons are better received by my audience, helping them to remember the scripture and apply it to their life. My pastoral care ministry skills have also improved with an increased ability to listen and ask effective questions. God teaches me to walk as His disciple through various disciplines like worship, reading the Bible, praying, meditating, and fasting. Here is where my faith grows, in a personal, closer relationship with God.

I am now starting my second year of STEP and I pray that God continues to bless my ministry and family. That God provides me the strength to never give up on the calling to be a pastor, no matter the cost. God bless everyone. I pray the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 1:17 "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." ■



Pham joins in a STEP class via Zoom.



Phuoc Thien Mennonite Church in Vietnam. Photo provided by the author.

*Pham Dinh Ton lives in Long Thanh District, Dong Nai province. It borders Ho Chi Minh City. He pastors two churches – Tan Hiep Mennonite Church and Phuoc Thien Mennonite Church. The numbers of the two churches are over 150 members including children. He often uses his free time to fellowship with members in the church with tea and coffee to build their faith. He says the job of a pastor is not easy, but he loves it.*



# Boundary Lines in Pleasant Places

BY ELVIN KENNEL

**In my faith journey, I have experienced several times where I felt that God was clearly nudging me into a “path shift.”** Three years ago, I felt a renewed nudge that my ministry was to shift from that of a schoolteacher and administrator into another ministry. After thirty-six years of my ministry in the education setting, I began to meditate and pray as to where God might be taking me. I sensed the shift might involve pastoral ministry in a congregation and chaplaincy but it was unclear. During that time, Psalm 16: 5-6 became my prayer and petition. *“Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”* I reflected on my past work in education with joy and gratitude but was willing to explore what God had for me moving forward. I met in discernment with many people who helped me clarify my direction. My wife and children blessed and supported my exploration.

I began to take pastoral care and chaplaincy classes through Eastern Mennonite Seminary. During this time, I became more fully aware of the STEP program and felt it would offer an ex-

cellent foundation for my new associate pastor and chaplain role. Joining STEP was an excellent decision as it has offered me spiritual direction, deeper Bible understanding, and camaraderie with a dozen others in my cohort. Yes, I am one of the older ones, who openly follow and seek God’s direction. Although the program takes time and commitment, it has been worth the sacrifice. I have been blessed by a financial grant from LMC and a church that has helped support me both financially and prayerfully, as they have seen the value of the STEP program.

As the Holy Spirit continues to guide my paths, I can look back and see that the Spirit’s leading brought me to this point. Once again, God granted me “boundary lines in pleasant places.” ■

*Elvin N. Kennel lives in Parkesburg, Pa. with his wife, Wendy. He has two grown, married children and one grandchild. He was principal at Lancaster Mennonite High School (2010-2020). He is a chaplain at Maple Farm in Akron, and is an associate pastor at Parkesburg Mennonite Church. He enjoys reading, sports, gardening, and visiting his mountain cabin. He seeks to embrace and share each day with hope and joy.*



## STEP Curriculum

STEP utilizes a fully developed curriculum with over twelve years of use. A newly revised edition of the STEP curriculum was completed in 2016. With Colossians 1:9-12, our prayer is that each STEP leader will live worthy of the Lord and please him in every way by . . .

**Being** – transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit for effective ministry.

**Doing** – activities of ministry

**Knowing** – the truth of God’s Word

**Leading** – God’s people as a servant leader.

***“STEP has been a big help in my new role as associate pastor. I found it very helpful to learn more about who I am and my own strengths and weaknesses. It gave me a lot of tools to prepare and preach sermons.”***

*– From a STEP Student*

***“I find my biblical knowledge has grown significantly. I am more intentional about practicing the disciplines and I am much better at identifying and holding personal boundaries both at home and in ministry settings!”***

*– From a STEP Student*



Year 3 students Shawn Connatser and Celeo Osorio catching up during a break. Photo by Felixa V. de Kunkle.

# Better Together, equipped to lead alongside Jesus

BY SAMMI WHITE

**I was led to join STEP after watching my husband go through the program in 2020. Seeing the transformation in his thinking, understanding, and relationship with Jesus made me excited to join.** He began to lead our family in practicing the Spiritual Disciplines and grew in his listening and study skills. We knew we would be better equipped to lead alongside one another, having gone through the entire three years together.

STEP has been a significant commitment, but certainly a fruit-filled one. Choosing to devote a portion of my week to homework and an entire Saturday a month to class has taken time from my young family, members of our congregation, and events in our community. That being said, I've noticed that the more time I devote to pray and meditate through the coursework, the more it benefits my life outside of STEP. I've become a better listener to the Spirit, my family, and my community. Clearly, the work, students, and instructors have been prayed over thoroughly.

Many things have been impactful during these two years. Of those highest on the list are the dedication and care of the instructors, the hunger for Jesus' Way from my classmates, and the tools given for teaching and listening. The focus on combining book learning with immediate practice has equipped me to serve in those areas more confidently. Before engaging in the courses, I felt a bit lost in navigating through the complex challenges of leading roles. Although there are still many questions to ask and complex problems, it has been a delight to walk alongside my cohort as we navigate many of these questions with the Lord.

These years have been a part of God's transforming work. I have discovered that I am passionate about teaching God's word and have grown in confidence in the Holy Spirit's guidance. A theme over these two years is that we minister first to God. As I serve others, my first and best service is to Him. One STEP assignment was to practice the Examen before serving. At this time, He made me aware of my desire to please certain people over Him. Through this practice and assignment, He emboldened me to hold fast to His Word in a new way while caring well for His people. The STEP program has been a gift to our family. ■

*Sammi White is a stay-at-home mom and a co-pastor of Stroudsburg Community Fellowship alongside her husband. They are part of a home congregation in North East Pennsylvania. They have three young children. Sammi delights in building friendships in their city and encountering God's presence in the seemingly ordinary moments of the day.*



Year 1 students Dakota Vaughn and Tania Madymba at STEP orientation. Photo by Felixa V. de Kunkle.

## STEP Grants

The LMC Grants Committee is thankful to be able to support and award thirty-five individuals with \$25,700 in their educational journeys in the past year. Seventeen of these individuals are STEP students.

- ▶ Leadership Education Grant: \$7,650
- ▶ Urban Education Grant: \$2750
- ▶ Women's Education Grant: \$940
- ▶ Ministry and Pastoral Health and Wellness Endowment: \$5,600
- ▶ STEP Study Award: \$8,760

To learn more about LMC grants, visit [lmcchurches.org/lmc-grants/](https://lmcchurches.org/lmc-grants/)

***"Resting in the Holy Spirit and listening to His voice greatly improved through STEP. Was grateful for the spiritual discipline books, study, and practice."***

***— From a STEP Student***

## STEP Program Stats

17

Graduating Classes  
since 2004

150

Total Graduates  
(approximate)

10+

Cultural Groups  
Represented

37

Current Students  
(12 women, 25 men)

22

Current Instructors



# The Value of the STEP Program

BY ETHAN MYERS

**Do you feel a calling to be a church leader, helping bring others closer to Christ? Would you like to learn how to effectively minister to others?** These are the first questions that one should ask themselves when considering if the STEP program is a right fit for them. These are the same questions I asked myself. STEP was mentioned to me, through church leadership, as a learning opportunity to help me grow in various areas of ministry. Our church had not had anyone participate in the STEP program previously, but we heard good reports from others who were in the program. I recognized God's calling on my life and after much prayer I decided to join STEP.

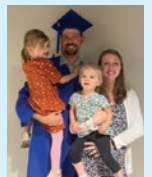
There is much work involved for students of the STEP program. There are various homework assignments that need to be completed each month working remotely from home and/or in other sites like church and community buildings. In addition there is also a monthly full day class meeting that takes place at the LMC headquarters in Lancaster County, which is about an hour-and-a-half drive for me. However, the work you put into this program is truly life-giving. The effort I put into the STEP program contributed to encourage me to be a better spouse, parent, friend, leader, and follower of Christ. The workload was not always easy, but it was rewarding.

For me, the STEP program's value begins when each student is placed in a cohort, to walk in life together for the three year duration of studies. The value of this group went far

beyond talking through homework assignments. We shared the hardships and blessings that we experienced. We prayed with one another and were invested in the lives of each other from a ministry standpoint and one another's personal lives. The conversations that we had with one another during our monthly Saturday class meetings were as meaningful as the homework assignments that we completed. Learning from one another with our different experiences was beneficial to us all.

My time overall with STEP was a great experience. The workload was trying at times, but I am incredibly thankful that I had this experience. The instructors were great throughout the program, and I believe this program truly is focused on growing leaders that God has called. Matthew 6:33 is a favorite verse of mine and one that continued to call out to me through my time in STEP. *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* In the times when I felt overwhelmed, I needed to be reminded to just seek God above all else and to trust in His provision. I have continued using what I learned in STEP within my ministry and everyday life. I believe God will continue to use the things I learned to help guide me wherever he wants to take me forward. ■

*Ethan Myers is incredibly thankful for his wonderful family, including his wife and two little girls. He is a member at Mercersburg Mennonite Church, serving on the Elder team and leading the congregation's young adult group.*



## LMC Education and Leadership Development through the Years

### 1950s & 1960s

Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) Winter Bible School program established – 100s of participants attend.

### 1960s & 1970s

The Paul-Timothy project and Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation offers programs and seminars for leaders. When attendance began to decline, a group of men from five Mennonite Conferences met in 1971 to discuss educational needs for their conferences. The decision was made to offer one week courses known as Keystone Bible Institute (KBI) Courses.

### 1972–1994

The Keystone Bible Institute (KBI) program begins offering one week courses. During that 22-year period, KBI expands to over ten locations and has a peak attendance of 1,600 to 1,700 participants. While in its prime, KBI offered courses on Intro to the New Testament, Management Principles and Theory, Anabaptist Theology, Home Arts, Managing Home Finances, and a class on the Life and Teachings of Christ. Some of these courses could be taken for credit which was awarded by Eastern Mennonite College.

It should be noted that at the beginning, these classes were for men. Later non-credit classes were added for women which included: home arts, knitting, ceramics, tailoring and the devotional life. Again, due to declining enrollment, KBI was eventually discontinued.



# A Word from the Chairman of the STEP Oversight Commission

Hello, my name is Tom Eshleman. I've been a STEP instructor for eight years and have recently begun chairing the STEP Oversight Commission. The primary purpose of the Commission is to give vision and oversight to the STEP program. I've witnessed STEP students profoundly impacted by the relationships they form with their fellow students who are also responding to God's call to ministry. The STEP program powerfully combines capable instruction, lively class discussion, and an environment encouraging spiritual growth and ministry competency.

As an instructor, I have been deeply impressed by the testimonies of students responding with courage and obedience to God's call. I have been impressed with students' depth of insight and spiritual maturity as they encourage one another to grow in areas of ministry that may be intimidating. I love seeing students step out with courage preaching in what sometimes is their first sermon. Frequently, they are amazed by God's faithfulness as they experience the Holy Spirit's provision and empowerment to fulfill the assignment. Many students discover gifts they need to be made aware that they carry. ■

*"I love how the Bible reading/study and the teachings of the Bible are helping to 'fill in' my knowledge and understanding of God's heart for his people. Pastoral care exercises have helped with the various people that I mentor and other interactions within the body of Christ."*

— From a STEP Student

## STEP Oversight

STEP is overseen by the STEP Oversight Commission which serves as a governing decision-making body. Members include:



Thomas Eshleman, *Chair*



William Higgins, *Instructor*



Mindi Hoover, *Admin Assistant*



Marcia Mylin, *Director*



Tuyen Nguyen, *Instructor*



Paris Rossiter, *Alumni*



Adalberto Santiago, *Instructor*



Lynn Shertzer, *Instructor*

There is also a STEP Academic Governance Committee that meets annually. This team is made up of LMC and EMU staff.

### 1997–1998

With the discontinuation of the KBI and other educational programs, Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) began to look at other alternatives to train and equip leaders. The bishops of Lancaster Mennonite Conference proposed a new initiative in leadership development which was reviewed and approved by the bishops in 1997.

In 1998, the conference hired staff for the development of this leadership initiative and also contacted Eastern Mennonite University to begin the conversation about the potential for the program to be a credit bearing initiative offered in Lancaster. STEP is the result of the collaborative work of LMC and EMU.

### 2004

The STEP curriculum work was completed in 2004, and recruitment began for the first cohort. Dale Shenk was hired as the Curriculum Developer. In addition, the board of bishops and other individuals provided support and contributed materials from their own work. Counsel was received from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference, and Franklin Mennonite Conference. The work of STEP was truly a collaborative effort.

Students progress through the program as a cohort. The curriculum integrates many topics and pastoral skills as well as personal and spiritual formation elements. During their time in STEP, students move through the entire Biblical record as well as work through the 26 articles in the 1995 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

### 2016–Present

A newly revised edition of the STEP curriculum was completed in 2016. STEP uses a hybrid model which includes in-person and zoom classes. Students hail from different states along with students from Tanzania, Africa and Vietnam. Since its inception in 2004, STEP has graduated approximately 150 students. Total current students in 2023 consist of 12 women and 25 men.

# Get involved with STEP

Do you have a hunger and desire to grow in your walk with Jesus? Has God called you to train and equip other leaders to become mature disciples of Christ? Are you sensing a call to some type of ministry? If so, have you considered STEP? The mission of STEP is to develop transformed leaders for skilled and Spirit-led ministry in congregations and the world.

For almost 20 years, STEP has been the primary tool to develop skilled and transformed leaders in LMC congregations and worldwide. Thank you for your faithful partnership in this Spirit-led ministry!

As one STEP student said, "The work that we had has helped to prepare me for my current role. Talking through difficult circumstances has been a real blessing. Encouraging one another as a group has been one of my favorite parts of STEP."

**Here are some ways you can support this Spirit-led ministry to develop transformed leaders:**

- ▶ Identify and support leaders from your congregation
- ▶ Provide financial support for students from other congregations
- ▶ Serve as a STEP supervisor
- ▶ Partner with a STEP student to serve as their intercessor or prayer partner
- ▶ Bring a special snack to serve to students while they are in class
- ▶ Serve a STEP student's family by providing childcare so the student can study
- ▶ Invite someone from STEP to speak at your church or small group

**For more information, contact Marcia at [stepdirector@lmcchurches.org](mailto:stepdirector@lmcchurches.org).**

## Byerland Congregation Supporting STEP Students

BY BARBEE MYER

The congregation at Byerland has embraced helping STEP students with different projects and assignments. Providing opportunities for the body at Byerland to use the variety of gifts God has given them. Several people in the congregation have committed to praying for and encouraging the students. Others have provided mentoring and accountability. Our congregation's support of STEP students has also helped foster leadership development during a recent leadership transition.



Matthew Fasick, Jen Fredrick, and Shawn Connatser listening to the speaker. Photo by Felixa V. de Kunkle.



## STEP Year 3 Missional Experiment: A Song of Lament!?!

BY LYNN SHERTZER

Over the years, I've heard so many stories of the trepidation of the pinnacle assignment of the STEP Program. From my vantage point as an instructor, I watch as many students have little or no idea how to proceed with the Missional Experiment that is part of the year 3 curriculum. It appears as a huge mountain! This experiment has the elements of the Song of Lament. *Where are you, O God in this experiment? Why have you left me all alone to do this experiment?*

As students work through the assignment, I hear whispers of hope and how God has been working along side them. By the end of Year 3, I hear words of praise for how God has worked in the process. Testimonies emerge of how students have developed their leadership skills and how they see the kingdom of God working outside of the church's walls. With one of the most important awareness being that the results are up to God! This Missional Experiment is a gift to God, the student, and ultimately the church. Praise be to God for this beautiful transformation in our emerging leaders!

*Lynn Shertzer teaches Preaching and Missional Experiment as a Year 3 course instructor. He has been teaching for STEP since its inception.*



# NEWS NOTES

## CREDENTIALING REPORT

In recent months, the following men and women were licensed, ordained, or installed:

**Tania Madymba** (*Bertho*) was licensed toward ordination as associate pastor at Evangelical Center for Revival in Middletown, Pa.

**Dale Hurst** (*Gale*) was ordained as associate pastor at Mountainside Bible Church in Palo Alto, Pa.

**Rich Nolt** (*Julia*) was ordained as pastor of administration at Crossings Community Church in Manheim, Pa.

**Joel Harnly** (*Corina*) was ordained as lead pastor at Community Church of Manheim in Manheim, Pa.

**William Helmlinger** (*Jennifer*) was ordained as youth pastor at First Mennonite Church in Berne, In.

**John Drouillard** (*Cheryl*) was installed as bishop of the Lancaster/New Danville/Willow Street-Strasburg Districts.

**Mike Clemmer** (*April*) and **Mark Wenger** (*Kathy*) were installed as bishops of the Lancaster/New Danville/Willow Street-Strasburg Districts.

**Kevin Kanagy** (*Nan*) was ordained as lead pastor and **Nan Kanagy** (*Kevin*) was ordained as associate pastor at Hope Community Church in Fleetwood, Pa.

**Jeremiah Martin** (*Shaelagh*) was ordained as lead pastor at Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown, Pa.

**David Heineman** (*Cheryl*) was ordained as chaplain at Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown, Pa.

**Keith Roberts** (*Beth Ann*) was ordained as pastor at New Providence Mennonite Church in New Providence, Pa.

**Michael Dickert** (*Anita*) was licensed toward ordination as pastor at New Danville Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

**Paul Williams** (*Michelle*) was licensed toward ordination as associate pastor at Mechanics Grove Mennonite Church in Quarryville, Pa.

**Emmanuel Punga Zakuba** (*Olive Kiasumu*) was licensed toward ordination as associate pastor at Evangelical Center for Revival-Philadelphia in Elkins Park, Pa.

**Matthew Havens** (*Patricia*) was licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Yorks Corners Mennonite Church in Wellsville, New York.

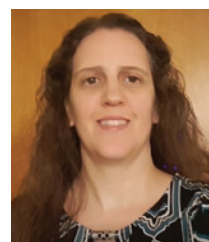
**Christian Peifer** was licensed toward ordination as pastor of youth and young adults at Mellinger Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

**Ken Hoover** (*Joy*) was licensed toward ordination as pastor at Sarasota Community Church in Sarasota, Florida.

**Brocklyn Sensenig** (*Brooke*) was ordained as associate pastor at Ephrata Bible Chapel in Ephrata, Pa.

## NEW STAFF

Rosita N'Dikwe began work as an administrative assistant in March of this year. As a part-time staff, she focuses primarily on event planning, Legacy Foundation grant administration, and other administrative support. Rosita and her husband, Danwe, are members of Elizabethtown Mennonite Church – serving together as Ministers of Youth. Rosita also serves as the church secretary. They have seven children, four sons and three daughters.



## WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL January – February 2024

**Text: Mark 10:1-11:11**

Meeting eight times, for seventy-five minutes each session.

Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. starting January 16.

Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m. starting January 18.

By Zoom or in person at the HUB450 located at 450 N. Prince Street, LMC office in Lancaster, Pa.

**Interested? Contact William Higgins at**  
**whiggins@lmchurches.org or call 717-293-5246**  
**ext. 121. Register by January 9, 2024.**





# UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at [LMCchurches.org](http://LMCchurches.org).

## LMC Women's Prayer Gathering

**Every first Friday of each month  
8:00 a.m.**

LMC at 450 N. Prince St. Lancaster, Pa.  
717-293-5246 ext. 114 for more  
information

## Prayer for the Nations

**Every first and third Tuesday of  
the month**

EMM/Hub450 at 450 N. Prince Street,  
Lancaster, Pa.  
Questions? Contact [Becca@hub450.org](mailto:Becca@hub450.org)

## LMC/EMM Quarterly Prayer Meeting

**October 19, 2023**

**3:00 p.m.**

West Community Room, Landis Homes,  
Lititz, Pa.  
717-293-5246 ext 102

## EMM – Kairos Course

**October 21 - November 21, 2023**

**Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and  
Saturdays at 8:00 a.m.**

Contact Krista Martin at 717-898-2251  
ext. 266

## Everence Development Conference For Fundraising Professionals

**October 3–5, 2023**

**7:00 p.m.**

Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square  
in Lancaster  
Register: [everence.com/devcon](http://everence.com/devcon)

## Mennonite Life – Collections

**Feature: Martyrs Mirror**

**November 2, 2023**

**7:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

Register by October 27  
[Mennonitelife.org](http://Mennonitelife.org)

## Mennonite Life – Rare & Used Book Auction

**November 10, 2023**

**6:30 p.m.**

Mennonite Life Community Room  
[Mennonitelife.org](http://Mennonitelife.org)



**EMM** VISION & FUNDRAISING BANQUET  
Eastern Mennonite Missions

**NOV. 2** DOUBLETREE RESORT BY HILTON LANCASTER  
2400 Willow Street Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602  
6 P.M.

**DEC. 6** WESTVIEW COMMUNITY ROOM AT LANDIS HOMES  
1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543  
10 A.M.

**MAR. 8 2024** SARASOTA COMMUNITY CHURCH  
4041 Bahia Vista St, Sarasota, FL 34232  
12 P.M.

REGISTER NOW AT  
**EMM.ORG/BANQUET**



Learn your own & others' stories  
**Become a Mennonite Life member!**

[mennonitelife.org](http://mennonitelife.org)  
**717.393.9745**



**Mennonite Life**



**Friendship**  
COMMUNITY

**Discover your  
PURPOSE!**

**APPLY NOW**

[www.FriendshipCommunity.net/Employment](http://www.FriendshipCommunity.net/Employment)



Feel at *Home*

in our **Safe, Affordable,**  
and **Loving** Community.

**Welsh**  
Mountain Home  
*Spring and Growing Together*

[WelshMountainHome.org](http://WelshMountainHome.org)

567 Springville Rd, New Holland | 717-355-9522