

# MCEC in Ministry

Spring 2017

Through the Eyes of a  
Youth Minister - Page 18

Discover Carrie's insights,  
observations and learnings about  
youth ministry. She's living it!



**Mennonite  
Church**  
Eastern  
Canada

# MCEC in Ministry



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# Navigating Uncharted Territory

It seems like every few days, I'm remarking to someone that my role as Executive Minister is "definitely not a boring one!" I think we all realize that congregations and the wider church are being confronted with an unprecedented degree of change and uncertainty. Our patterns of congregational life are at times dramatically changing. The society around us is becoming increasingly secular at a pace that we may not have anticipated. The challenges of constantly changing technologies, the speed of environmental degradation, the ongoing shifts in our local and global economies, and the number of displaced persons on the move around the world have all contributed to the new challenges and uncertainties that we face on an almost daily basis.

After admitting to all the challenges before us, my next remark is usually, "This is an exciting time to be the church!" I believe that with all my heart. I think God is using our current challenges and this season of uncertainty to help us as a church to go deeper. We are being pushed to ask some foundational questions. "What does it mean to follow Jesus in the world today? What is the primary purpose of the church in today's society?" The challenges confronting us are an

excellent opportunity to reframe how we think about church. We are being invited to rediscover the rich resources that come from our biblical faith and from our relationship with a Risen Christ who is at work transforming us and our world.

We also do not face these challenges in isolation. Together as a community of congregations, we can support each other as we find our way through uncharted territory.

MCEC is doing its best to participate in that support by asking what it means to help position our congregations for the future. In this report, you will note that MCEC is supporting the next generation of youth leaders through coaching and mentoring. You will see how resource persons like Stuart Murray and Alex Elish have helped us think differently about what it means "to find God in our neighbourhoods." In these pages, you will discover that our new congregations are breaking fresh ground and helping us to increasingly become an intercultural church. MCEC is also actively engaged in discernment about Future Directions. We are collaborating with regional and national leaders across the country to redefine how we work together as a national Mennonite body to support congregations as they reach out to their neighbourhoods with the peace of Jesus Christ.



David Martin  
MCEC Executive Minister

**"God is using our current challenges to help us as a church to go deeper."**

- David Martin

This is definitely not a boring time to be the church! Although much may appear uncertain, the Spirit of God is actively at work among us bringing fresh vision and renewed energies for aligning ourselves with God's ministry of reconciliation and transformation. In the changes that we are experiencing, God is positioning the church for a new day of relevancy and a fresh outpouring of the healing ministries that are continually flowing from our congregations into our neighbourhoods and our world. To that end, I invite your ongoing prayers and engagement as we join God in positioning the church for the future. ♦



# Providing a Place to Belong

**"W**e aren't actually even inviting people to come to church," admits Erika, outreach pastor at Westview Christian Fellowship. "Church culture is so foreign to many of those in our community, but there are some people who have chosen to come."

Westview Christian Fellowship, established 29 years ago by the Mennonite Brethren denomination, has now become a small church in the Queenston neighbourhood of St. Catharines, ON. They have become a parish church with 20 - 30 people gathering on a Sunday morning, but with 200 - 300 throughout the week!

The Queenston neighbourhood is filled with life and energy but is also under-resourced, with high rates of poverty and homelessness.

Vic Ratzlaff, pastor at Westview for the past 15 years, and Erika considered their neighbourhood together. Vic asked her, "If there is anything that you could do here, what would it be?" Erika's reply was immediate, "I want to go out into the neighbourhood," she said. Vic encouraged her to do just that.

"There is a whole neighbourhood out here that doesn't have anyone taking care of them," she says. She found herself drawn to work with sex trade women. Thursday nights would find her and two other women walking from 9:00 p.m. to midnight handing out drink boxes, underwear, socks and condoms to sex trade workers.

At the same time they opened a drop-in centre, now called Westview Centre4Women. "I was so excited that first day 10 years ago when we opened the door and there were three women standing there!" she remembers. Centre4Women encourages respect and dignity and has become a safe place for women in the neighbourhood. They offer coffee, haircuts, clothing and a place to belong. "In depressed neighbourhoods, the banks pull out and then the grocery stores," explains Erika. "People can't get to grocery stores outside of the neighbourhood and have to buy expensive groceries at the local gas station!" For a small donation women can access items from the Plentiful Pantry. They have access to single rolls of toilet paper,

*Centre4Women*

*Photo: Westview Christian Fellowship*





*Westview pastors  
Vic Ratzlaff and Erika Klassen*

*Continued from page 5...*

a handful of tea bags or a cup of sugar - just enough to get them through to the end of the month when their cheque comes again.

Throughout the years Westview has sought to know where they fit within the larger church body. At a summer BBQ Erika overheard people from The Commons sharing their story of joining MCEC, which then began Westview's own path. "God chose to reveal himself through Jesus whose passion and life work was with those whom our culture didn't know what to do with," says Erika. "We are excited to find a support network in MCEC where we can engage with each other as we, together, intentionally serve our communities."

Westview Christian Fellowship, formally accepted into membership by the MCEC Executive Council, looks forward to being received by the community of congregations at the Annual Church Gathering in April. ♦

# Led by the Holy Spirit

"If your heart is comfortable in joining MCEC and becoming a part of the Mennonite family," said Pastor Fanosie, "then that is wonderful! You can do this!" These words confirmed the leading that Pastor Yared was sensing in his heart. He is pastor at Meheret Evangelical Church in Kitchener, ON.

Mehert Evangelical Church, established 20 years ago, has 120 members who worship in Amharic. Their youth are a group of 50 or so who function in English as do the children of the congregation. They rent space in St. Mark's Lutheran Church in downtown Kitchener, worshipping together on Sunday afternoons.

"When I arrived as pastor two years ago I saw

that the congregation was not connected to a denomination," said Pastor Yared. "When I checked with Mennonites, I felt as though the Holy Spirit guided me to them." Pastor Yared remembered Pastor Fanosie from Ethiopia and contacted him. Fanosie is pastor at Zion Mennonite Fellowship and is part of the MCEC Mission Council.

In November the Mission Council met with Mehert Evangelical Church leaders for an interview and discussion. They recommended to MCEC that Mehert be received into membership. Mehert Evangelical Church is excited to be received by delegates at the Annual Church Gathering in April.



*Worship*

*Photo: Meheret Evangelical Church*



"As a church and as a pastor, my big dream and vision goes to the great commission in the Bible that Jesus gave to us in Matthew 28:20. We want to go and make disciples and do evangelism with all people in Canada," says Pastor Yared. "Twelve or thirteen people have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour since I came two years ago. Some of them were baptized last year. I am leading two of them in foundational teaching right now and they will then take baptism."

Mehert Evangelical Church, along with meeting on Sunday afternoons, also meets for weekly prayer and fasting. They gather for a mid-week



*Church Camping*  
Photo: Meheret Evangelical Church

teaching time and each Sunday morning before worship the men meet for prayer and breakfast

"We don't even need to tell anything about us," says Pastor Yared when asked about their congregation. "I only want to mention that we are ministering, preaching

and teaching the kingdom of God and the Gospel of Jesus. Jesus is our centre, our head, our leader - no one else."

They have a small group meeting in Guelph with an evangelist from their congregation and they have a vision to open a

congregation in Hamilton. "People have asked us to come but we don't have enough evangelists and pastors," says Pastor Yared. "We are limited right now but God is able - He can provide everything." ♦



# A Story of God's Faithfulness

A small group of people gathered in Chinda Kommala's living room to worship and follow the Anabaptist faith. It was September 2004, the beginning of Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church (LCEMC). With a vision to share God's gift of love, hope, healing and peace to all people in their community and beyond, LCEMC soon outgrew the tiny living room and began to search for a new home.

Their first building was in the office space of a rice warehouse where they worshipped for five years. In time, they found this space to be too cramped and crowded. After years of searching and prayer, an answer was found just down the street in another industrial area in the heart of the Emery Village neighbourhood in Toronto, ON. Many hours went into renovation, painting and reupholstering in their new building, and they were ready to open their doors on September 26, 2010.

A small group of people gathered in a living room for worship and following the Anabaptist faith.





Guided by the Great Commission found in Matthew 28, LCEMC also reaches out to the people of Laos. Being a Christian is not common in Laos and the government is wary when it comes to the Word of God. LCEMC dreams of building a church in Laos so that Lao Christians will be able to openly hear the Good News. In the meantime, they continue providing people in Laos with necessities such as clothes, food, and schooling.

In 2011 they merged with Toronto United Lao Mennonite Church, an MCEC congregation founded in 2000.



Photo: Chinda Kommala

## Pastors Chinda and Ongath baptize Abby.

Photo: Jason Martin



Now under the co-leadership of Pastors Chinda Kommala and Ongath Phounsavath, LCEMC is a group of 40 - 60 people with a love for Lao, Thai and all of Toronto. Worship alternates between English and Lao with translation into Lao during English services. Leadership training, Bible study, monthly youth group meetings, relationship building with the local and wider Lao community, as well as with other congregations, keep LCEMC busy.

From the beginning several MCEC pastors have walked with them as they became established: Dale Bauman, Gerald Good, Mary Mae Schwartzentruber, Brian Bauman and Jason Martin, who served as an assistant pastor and as youth leader until 2014. They also established relationships and ties with other congregations:

Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Steinmann Mennonite Church, and Wanner Mennonite Church.

LCEMC has been an MCEC emerging congregation since 2006. They now desire to become full members and look forward to being received by the delegates at the Annual Church Gathering in April. ♦

**LCEMC dreams of building a church in Laos so that Lao Christians will be able to openly hear the Good News.**



## This Is What God Has Called Us To Do

**"W**e were called to do ministry in the middle of a war," said Michel Monette at last year's Annual Church Gathering. The Hells Angels and Rock Machine biker clubs were at war in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve area of Montreal. "A car exploded in the neighbourhood in 1995, and a child playing in the school yard across the street was killed by shrapnel. This wasn't the type of neighbourhood you moved your family to! But when God calls you to something, you do it," said Michel.

In 2004, Michel and Lynn Monette started a church in the poorest white Francophone neighbourhood in Canada. There was one other small congregation, Roi des Rois (King of Kings), in the area and their numbers were decreasing. Michel and Lynn's church was also struggling and in 2008 the two groups merged.

However, they still floundered. Lynn had a vision for their congregation as a café – a safe place to talk – where she and Michel could begin to walk with folks to help them learn to know

God. Last year they began to offer a breakfast on Sunday mornings to anyone in the neighbourhood. They felt this was the last thing to try before closing the church. Their small congregation of 10 now serves 30 - 50 breakfasts on a Sunday morning and 5 - 20 people from the street come into the service each week!

Michel shared the story of a man who brought his wife and children to church. During each service the man would drive around the neighbourhood to ensure that nothing



bad happened while his wife and children were in the building. He was a “watcher.” Michel discovered that the man was also a drummer, and asked him to play drums with the worship team. He joined the team and early one Saturday morning came to Michel and said, “I was working for the devil and watching so that my partner in the Hells Angels wouldn’t get hurt. Now I want to work for God, and for good.” When Michel shared this story at last year’s Annual Church Gathering, he and the man were in discussion about baptism. “It doesn’t make sense to give the front of the worship area to a non-Christian, tattooed, big man — especially to have him play drums!” said Michel. “I knew though, that if he would come, he would begin to know what it is to be a disciple of Christ.”

Roi des Rois recently changed their name to *Hochma*, which is a Hebrew word meaning wisdom. Michel explains, “When God works or speaks, it is Hochma.” When they began to look for a denomination, they were excited to find that MCEC joins evangelism and social work together, while holding relationships central.

**“We were called to do ministry in the middle of a war. This wasn’t the type of neighbourhood you moved your family to!”**  
- Michel Monette

As they continue to serve their under-resourced neighbourhood, Michel is convinced that Christ is the solution for the neighbourhood. Most recently they received some criticism from the city as they have opened their doors to the neighbourhood as a “heat stop” — a place of reception for the homeless, authorized for reception at night but not for sleeping. Some of the patrons have slept on the floor at Hochma on provided pillows and blankets. This has raised concerns from the city. “I understand the city’s concern that our people are volunteers and may not have the proper training, but people need a warm place to sleep!” says Michel. Church volunteers continue to welcome the homeless with coffee, biscuits and all night movie screenings.

Hochma has been welcomed by the Executive Council of MCEC as an emerging congregation and look to be received by the congregations of MCEC at the Annual Church Gathering in April. ♦

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*From MCEC and Dave Rogalsky  
MCEC/Canadian Mennonite Report*



**Lynn & Michel Monette**  
*Photo: Michel Monette*



*Wondimu and Teso:  
Members of the Elders' Council  
Photo: Dave Rogalsky*

# Oromo Disciples of Christ

**"M**ennonites fit us best," says Senbeto, a member at Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa. They have applied for emerging church status in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and anticipate being received in April 2017. They chose to join MCEC because their sense of mission, as well as the content of their preaching and teaching, fit best with MCEC as they strive to bring the gospel to Oromo residents in Ottawa and all other people.

The group started in 2004 with a prayer and sharing of the word in the Oromo language in the residence of one of the current members of the church. Later they moved to All Saints Lutheran Church in Ottawa and chose the name Ottawa Oromo Christian Fellowship. They continued gathering for bi-weekly fellowship, prayer and studying of

the Bible together. By 2010 they had outgrown their space, reorganized as Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa and began to meet in rental space at St. Martin's Anglican Church. They now meet weekly with around 50 people taking part, 27 of whom are adults. Since 2011 they have also organized a yearly conference of Oromo speaking congregations. The congregation is led by a five-member elders' council.

They hope that their congregation will be steadfast in faith, tackling obstacles which keep them from following Christ. Worshipping God, growing spiritually and reaching others with the good news are key goals of the church. They want to lead lives that are examples for others so that others will want to come and follow Christ too. They see that their youth have the potential to go around the world with the Good

**"Mennonites  
fit us best!"**

**- Wondimu Senbeto**

News. MCEC's focus on peaceful co-existence with Christ as the source of that peace has led them to join Mennonites in peace and evangelism.

At the same time they desire to grow in numbers, though not at the expense of spiritual strength. Looking at their homeland and other places, they see the troubles of being followers of God in this world. They are convinced, however, that even in persecution, God is with them. They trust in God. ♦

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*From Dave Rogalsky  
MCEC/Canadian Mennonite Report*



# Church Planting ... From Across the Pond

**F**inding God in our neighbourhoods. That was the exciting theme for last year's Annual Church Gathering. Stuart Murray and Alex Ellish from the UK arrived ready for a whirlwind schedule of meeting pastors and church planters to talk about how to be a Christian church in a post-Christendom world.

"How might we rehabilitate evangelism?" "What is the role of church planting today?" These questions and more challenged the group of approximately 40 church planters and pastors meeting prior to the Annual Church Gathering in Leamington, ON.

"I truly believe that MCEC has been led by God in bringing Stuart and Alex to share their experience with us," said one of the participants.

Not only were those gathered challenged by Murray and Ellish, they were also encouraged by their colleagues.

Brian Bauman, MCEC Mission Minister, says, "There are unique challenges in starting a new church and/or leading a new church that is made up of new Canadians. Church planters welcome the opportunity to come together and share their stories with one another." ♦



*Stuart Murray and Alex Ellish  
with MCEC church planters and pastors.*

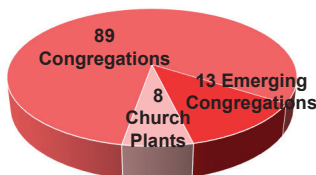


# MCEC By the Numbers...

**352** attended  
Annual Church Gathering 2016  
in Leamington - Finding God In  
My Neighbourhood!

**1**  
Congregation welcomed @ ACG 2016  
into Emerging Membership  
- Shalom Healing & Worship Center

**1**  
Congregation welcomed @ ACG 2017  
into Full Membership  
- Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church



**110**  
MCEC Congregations/Faith Communities

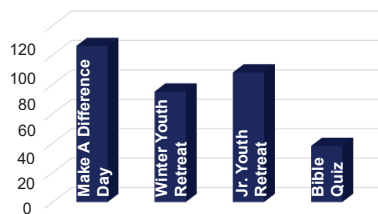
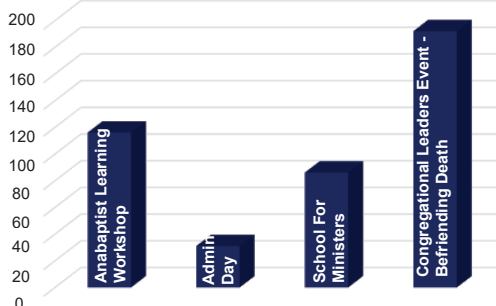
**4**  
Congregations welcomed @ ACG 2017  
into Emerging Membership  
- Hochma  
- Mehert Evangelical Church  
- Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa  
- Westview Christian Fellowship

**14**  
languages of worship

**16%**  
of MCEC congregations are  
first generation Canadian  
congregations

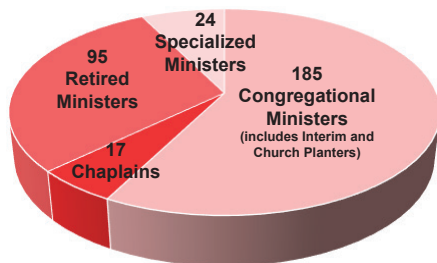
**24%**  
of MCEC congregations hold  
services in languages other  
than English

**425**  
Persons Participated  
in these Leadership  
Development events



**307**  
Youth and Jr. Youth Impacted  
at Faith Formation Events

## Pastoral Leadership



**321**  
MCEC Pastors

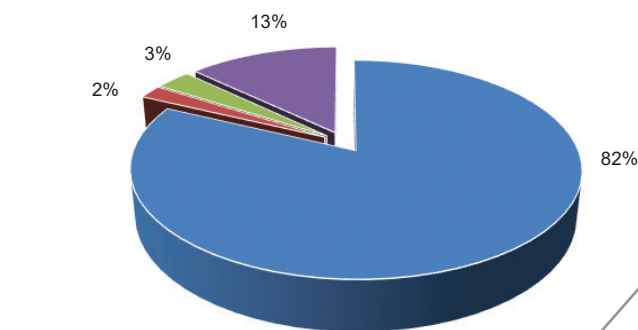
**11** ministers ordained or licensed in 2016

**12** Interim Pastors providing ministry  
in MCEC congregations in 2016

**18** pastoral placements in 2016

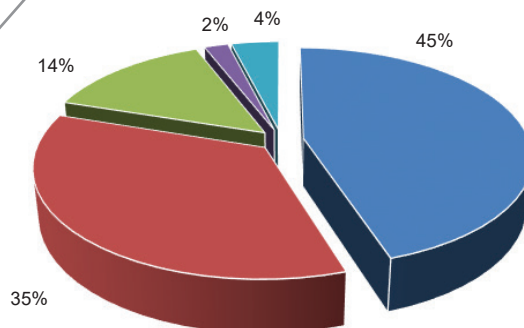


# Funding Our Ministry



- Congregations
- Corporate & Individual
- Interest
- Restricted Funds

- MCEC
- Wider Church
- Schools
- Camps
- Publications



## Investing in Ministry

### Beyond Tomorrow

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is grateful to individuals and families that choose to support our shared ministry through an estate gift. Estates are made up of assets from years of hard work and careful management. MCEC takes equal care with these special contributions.

Proceeds from estates help to ensure that MCEC remains healthy by stabilizing MCEC funds. These funds ensure that MCEC will have resources for mission, congregational and leadership development into the future.

Thank you for contributing to MCEC through your estate. Your faithful and generous giving will serve the Church beyond tomorrow.

Through planned gifts, MCEC gratefully received financial support from the following estates:

Orville Bechtel  
Norma Dettweiler  
Ivan Kuepfer  
Mildred Ropp  
Sam Shantz  
Enid Schmidt

# Youth Ministry Coaching: Embracing Ministry

**"K**enda Creasy Dean writes in one of her books that youth ministry is a spiritual discipline," says Jean Lehn Epp, MCEC's youth pastor/worker coach. "To me that was eye-opening – my 'aha!' moment. I was not just doing youth ministry but it felt to me that I was embracing ministry."

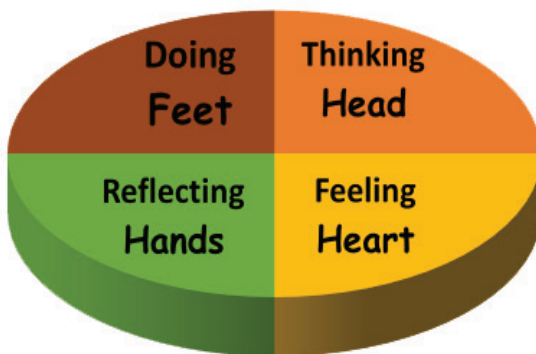
There is a gem in the MCEC Leadership Office that has been honed and shaped over the last number of years. Youth ministry coaching is one of those secrets that needs to be shared.

Jean Lehn Epp has been involved in youth and family ministry throughout MCEC as an ordained minister. "Someone asked me if I would be interested in being a coach to youth

ministers and I said, 'Of course! I would love to do that!'" She explains, "To me it feels so natural to coach because it is a culmination of my 19 years of formal ministry. Some people write books and memoirs – this is my memoir!"

The MCEC Youth Pastor/Worker Coaching Program supports beginning youth workers/pastors in MCEC as they enter their first formal ministry experience and explore their own pastoral identity and vocational calling. Topics include leadership styles, ministry models, youth in crisis, connecting with parents, and visioning. Jean leads the youth pastor/worker through a visioning process within their church or support group – drawing congregational leaders, youth sponsors,

## Growing in Faith



Based on Corinne Ware's *Discover Your Spiritual Type*

"The whole point of youth ministry is that you want the youth to experience all four ways of knowing God."

- Jean Lehn Epp







*Jean leads a coaching session.*

*Photo: Jean Lehn Epp*

and youth together. The visioning workshop is based on Corinne Ware's *Discover Your Spiritual Type* – doing, thinking, reflecting and feeling. "The whole point of youth ministry is that you want the youth to experience all four ways of knowing God," says Jean. "Lots of churches are really good at one or two areas and weaker in other areas. It's affirming to see where strengths are as well as how weaker areas might be strengthened."

Jean works one on one with youth pastors/workers and in group settings. Sometimes individuals do not feel that they have the time for a full year of youth ministry coaching, especially since many youth pastors are working

limited hours per week. She tailors the program to the needs of the congregation and the youth minister.

She says, "A lot of youth ministers have fallen into their positions. Congregations often hire people because they are young and grew up in the church, or have worked at camp. That's great! But often they aren't really equipped for ministry." Jean has coached young youth ministers, older youth ministers as well as youth ministers who have a degree and are looking for more support and resources.

"Supporting youth workers with a coaching relationship is really supporting the whole congregation,"

says Jean. "In five years (often the number of years that a youth is in a youth group) there can be a lot of intentional ministry happening. It doesn't matter who is doing the youth ministry as long as they can reflect intentionally about what they are actually *doing* with youth ministry. We grow leaders in five years!"

If you are interested in youth ministry coaching, contact Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister, at [hpaetkau@mcec.ca](mailto:hpaetkau@mcec.ca). ♦

# Through the Eyes of a Youth Minister

**"W**hen I started three years ago, I would sit in my office on a Wednesday night and wonder if more than one or two youth would show up. Sometimes only one or two would come so we would go for a coffee instead," says Carrie Lehn, youth minister at Ottawa Mennonite Church (OMC).

Three years later OMC has 17 – 20 youth in their group. Carrie credits this to large numbers of youth in those age groups, families who are very involved in the church, but also to the fact that Ottawa Mennonite has been intentional about youth ministry. "Ottawa Mennonite Church has always done youth ministry well," says Carrie. "They have had a full-time youth pastor for many years. Even when they felt

that they did not have enough work for a full-time youth pastor, they would pay the youth pastor a full-time salary and he or she would volunteer outside of the church for some of those hours." Youth pastors at OMC invested in the larger community: some did chaplaincy and others worked at the university with Christian student groups. "OMC has a history of really caring about their youth and the fruit of that is being seen," she says.

Carrie values long-term youth ministry. "Too often youth pastors are perceived as someone who can stay for three or four years," she says. "If you stay longer, you can build stronger relationships and trust." Carrie points out that she can be a bridge between youth, who are now young adults, and the congregation when those young adults come home from college or university.

"Authenticity is key to keeping our youth," she says. "I am not a parent, and I imagine it is very anxiety inducing to think that your youth might not be a part of the church or follow in your faith footsteps. We need to be very careful not to operate out of an anxiety of losing our youth. One way we combat that is being very authentic and honest about our struggles and our doubts."

**"Authenticity is key to keeping our youth... being very authentic and honest about our struggles and our doubts."**

Carrie believes that youth ministry is a story-telling narrative; you tell your story and they tell their story, and you build a story together. "I try to bring people to the youth from our congregation to tell their life story so that we can all learn from each other. If a youth hears a story from an adult, and the youth is struggling with that issue too, perhaps that is an adult with whom the youth can connect and get support from," says Carrie.

Youth group was important to Carrie when she was growing up. Often it was the highlight of her week as she met with her friends. "It was a place to ask questions and to dig into faith," she recalls. "I found it to be this awesome space and I felt very mentored and loved by my youth pastors. I want to provide that for OMC youth. I want to give them the experience that I had." ♦

**Youth ministry is a story-telling narrative; you tell your story and they tell their story, and you build a story together.**

**- Carrie Lehn**



Ottawa Mennonite Youth

Photo: Carrie Lehn





# Connecting Youth Ministry Leaders

"There is a hunger among youth workers and pastors for something more," says a report submitted to MCEC. Ben Cassels, Stephen Cox, Sara Erb, and Michele Rizoli are pastors within MCEC with a passion for working with youth and youth ministry. Through a series of meetings, they listened to youth personnel across MCEC, gathering recommendations, suggestions and feedback. The report continues, "We did not know how hungry people were to build connections with each other and to find ways of networking and resourcing one another in youth ministry." Sara brought their findings to Henry Paetkau, MCEC Area Church Minister. For their suggestions to move forward, a coordinating role was needed.

Liz Weber has been appointed Coordinator for Youth Leaders to be that point person within MCEC. "We believe that Liz has ideas and skills that are needed to work with those who foster leadership skills and form faith among our youth," says David Martin, Executive Minister.

In February, leaders of youth met together for an evening with Andy Brubacher Kaethler to talk about trends in youth ministry. "It felt as



though that evening met a need – it was a start," said Liz. "I'm continuing to look for ways to keep those connections going."

Liz has created a Facebook page for leaders of youth as one way to continue that connection, share resources and advertise events. "Facebook is a place many of us are already so it seemed like a good place to try and connect," says Liz. She is also contacting congregations to find out who the youth personnel are.

"I was recently at an event where youth groups were brought together," says Liz. "I noticed that the sponsors were talking together like old friends. That's the kind of support I am hoping for throughout MCEC. Youth ministry is exciting but can also be draining. It was inspiring to see the support between youth leaders."

If you are a youth worker, sponsor or pastor, you don't have to wait for Liz to find you; you can reach her at [youthministry@mcec.ca](mailto:youthministry@mcec.ca). ♦



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MCEC Youth Leaders

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*Liz Weber*  
*Coordinator for Youth Leaders*



# Snapshots of ReLearning Community

"ReLearning Community has taught me how to be more aware of who I am and what my purpose is as a Christian, by disciplining myself to take time out to focus on my relationship with God so that I'm freer to express God to other people."

- Mark Gerber, Wanner Mennonite

"Sometimes the most beautiful moments in life happen in difficult times. ReLearning Community gives you a mechanism to really take hold of those moments to enrich your whole life journey through them."

- Krista Kinsie, Preston Mennonite

"ReLearning Community is an exciting process - challenging, but exciting. Being in the church isn't something to do alone, it is a community, and is about connecting with people."

- Kathryn Cressman  
NithValley Mennonite

"This has changed the way that I preach, the way that I talk to my kids about faith and has opened my eyes to my neighbourhood."

- Norm Dyck, Listowel Mennonite

For more information:

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A portrait of Willard Metzger, a middle-aged man with grey hair, a mustache, and glasses, wearing a suit and tie. He is standing outdoors with green foliage in the background.

# Mennonite Church Canada

MC Canada image

## Humbly Proud of My Church

Willard Metzger, MC Canada Executive Director

The times we live in seem to be growing more uncertain with each passing day.

A change in government in the USA has created many uncertainties. There is civil unrest around the world. Fifty-four per cent of world-wide refugees in 2015 poured out of Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia, according to the United Nations. Policies are rapidly changing. How will Canada and the USA get along when our governments seem ideologically opposed?

In Canada, we are still trying to understand the complexities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. What exactly does it mean for us as Christians, and particularly as churches? How do we go about reconciling relationships with Indigenous Peoples?

Our own Future Directions process has created uncertainties. How will we decide what is important to do together? How will we fund what we need to do together? Despite all these uncertainties, you have continued to do what the church does best: serve others by extending the peace of Christ.

In MCEC alone, 40 congregations have welcomed 59 families of 194 refugees in 2016. That's roughly 40% of MCEC congregations!

A number of MCEC congregations have participated formally or informally in the work of trying to figure out what it means to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples. Many will be participating in a 600-km Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights this spring. The route will take walkers through treated lands from Kitchener-Waterloo to Ottawa.

It's been inspiring to work with the leaders of all five of our Area Churches (MCBC, MCA, MCSask, MCM, MCEC) on our Future Directions process. Across all the regions of our church, delegates and leaders at annual meetings and gatherings have provided helpful insights into the challenges and opportunities we face together as a national family.

As congregations, some are wrestling with decline and disagreement while others are challenged to engage energy and vitality. In addition to unique initiatives, you have maintained your regular worship patterns, run Sunday schools and Bible study groups, ministered to youth, families, young adults, and seniors, done community outreach, supported camp workers, engaged with MCEC ministry, and partnered with MC Canada Witness workers overseas.



**"May God bless us  
as we continue to  
do what we do best:  
Extending the peace  
of Christ in our  
service to others."  
- Willard Metzger**

In Steve Carpenter's book, *Mennonites and Media: Mentioned in It, Maligned by It, and Makers of It*, the author writes that Mennonites as a group have batted well above average for their size when it comes to our presence in the media.

I would add, more importantly, that we bat well above average in ministry, too. For all of this, I am humbly proud of you – because you are a gift from God. Gifts deserve to be celebrated! And celebrations are created out of gratitude.

Thank you for being the church so needed in the world today. I celebrate you! May God bless us as we continue to do what we do best: extending the peace of Christ in our service to others. ♦

## MCEC Congregations

1. Agape Fellowship
2. Avon Mennonite Church
3. Bethany Mennonite Church
4. Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church
5. Bethel Mennonite Church (Elora)
6. Blenheim Ecumenical House Church
7. Bloomingdale Mennonite Church
8. Breslau Mennonite Church
9. Brussels Mennonite Fellowship
10. Calvary Church Ayr (Mennonite)
11. Calvary Mennonite Church
12. Cassel Mennonite Church
13. Chin Christian Church (Kitchener)
14. Chin Christian Church (Ottawa)
15. Church of the Living Word in Ottawa
16. Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville
17. Community Mennonite Fellowship
18. Crosshill Mennonite Church
19. Danforth Mennonite Church
20. East Zorra Mennonite Church
21. Église Évangélique Mennonite de Joliette
22. Église mennonite Ichtus
23. Elmira Mennonite Church
24. Erb Street Mennonite Church
25. Erie View United Mennonite Church
26. Faith Mennonite Church
27. First Hmong Mennonite Church
28. First Mennonite Church
29. Floradale Mennonite Church
30. Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church
31. Grace Lao Mennonite Church
32. Grace Mennonite Church
33. Grace New Life Mennonite Church
34. Hagerman Mennonite Church
35. Hamilton Mennonite Church
36. Hanover Mennonite Church
37. Harrow Mennonite Church
38. Hawkesville Mennonite Church
39. Hillcrest Mennonite Church
40. Hochma
41. Hunta Mennonite Church
42. Jane Finch Faith Community
43. Kingsfield - Clinton
44. Kingsfield - Zurich Mennonite Church
45. KW House Church
46. Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church
47. Lao Christian Fellowship
48. Leamington United Mennonite Church
49. Listowel Mennonite Church
50. Living Water Community Christian Fellowship
51. Mannheim Mennonite Church
52. Maple View Mennonite Church
53. Markham Chinese Mennonite Church
54. Markham Christian Worship Centre
55. McArthur's Mills Christian Fellowship
56. Medahnnialem Ethiopian Evangelical Church
57. Meheret Evangelical Church
58. Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal
59. Milverton Mennonite Fellowship
60. Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship
61. Nairn Mennonite Church
62. Niagara United Mennonite Church
63. Nith Valley Mennonite Church
64. North Leamington United Mennonite Church
65. Open Table
66. Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa
67. Ottawa Mennonite Church
68. Petiscodiad Mennonite Church
69. Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship
70. Poole Mennonite Church
71. Preston Mennonite Church
72. Quest Christian Community
73. Rainham Mennonite Church
74. Refuge de Paix
75. River of Life Fellowship
76. Riverdale Mennonite Church
77. Rockway Mennonite Church
78. Rouge Valley Mennonite Church
79. Shalom Worship and Healing Centre
80. Shantz Mennonite Church
81. Soul House
82. St. Agatha Mennonite Church
83. St. Catharines United Mennonite Church
84. St. Jacobs Mennonite Church
85. Steinmann Mennonite Church
86. Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church
87. Tavistock Mennonite Church
88. The Commons
89. The First Mennonite Church
90. The Gathering Church
91. The Network Church
92. The Village International Mennonite Church
93. Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church
94. Toronto Mennonite New Life Church
95. Toronto United Mennonite Church
96. Tree of Life/Arbre de Vie
97. Valleyview Mennonite Church
98. Vineland United Mennonite Church
99. Wanner Mennonite Church
100. Warden Underground
101. Waterloo North Mennonite Church
102. Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church
103. Waters Mennonite Church
104. Wellesley Mennonite Church
105. West Hills Mennonite Fellowship
106. Westview Christian Fellowship
107. Wideman Mennonite Church
108. Wilmot Mennonite Church
109. Windsor Mennonite Fellowship
110. Zion Mennonite Fellowship



**Mennonite  
Church**  
Eastern  
Canada

**Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ**  
making disciples • growing congregations • forming leaders

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