

First Alumni and Friends Tour goes to the Middle East

Betty Holsinger Shenk '75 looked forward to her travels with Eastern Mennonite University Alumni and Friends Tour to Israel and Palestine. On return, however, she called the two-week tour "a trip of a lifetime," she said. "Its impact will be lifelong."

From Oct. 20 - Nov. 3, 24 participants learned about and discussed the region's Biblical history, explored archaeological sites, engaged in current social issues of Palestinians and Israeli Jews, and enjoyed local food and the unique geography of the region.

Professor Linford Stutzman '84, SEM '90 and his wife Janet SEM '91, who have led many semester and summer international cross-cultural trips for EMU, guided the group. Participants included alumni, parents of EMU alumni, and friends of EMU students.

A hallmark of EMU cross-cultural trips is making personal connections with local residents. The group visited a family farm under threat of settlement expansion; heard from an Arab Israeli and Israeli Jew who are business partners; and met two guides, a Palestinian Muslim and an Israeli Jew.

More travels in EMU's unique immersive and educational format are in the works. A trip to Cuba, led by Elaine Zook Barge '75, MA '03 and her husband Nathan Barge '84, leaves March 2018. (While the trip is full, a wait list has been started.) The Stutzmans will lead a fall 2018 Mediterranean Voyage. In summer 2019, Professor Jerry Holsopple '80 will lead an exploration of Lithuania.

CJP alumnus hopes to transform conflict in Holmes and Wayne counties

Lydell Steiner's vocation came calling in the form of a persistent acquaintance who recognized his skills might fit a community need. The Ohio native was a team pastor at Kidron Mennonite Church when a community member repeatedly asked if he'd consider developing local mediation resources.

At the time, Steiner was enrolled in Eastern Mennonite Seminary, but the recurring request for local mediation made him reevaluate his educational path. He eventually decided to transfer into the graduate program in conflict transformation at EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, and devoted the required semester-long practicum to exploring mediation possibilities in Ohio.

Steiner and his community partners have created [Connexus](#), a nonprofit organization committed to "transforming the culture of conflict in Holmes and Wayne counties of Ohio."

"Our goal is not so much to develop the empire," explains Steiner. "It's to build the capacity in our community so that, if there are people who want to develop their own practice, they have those skills. It's not about Connexus so much as it's about our long-term community goals."

How can EMU be of service to your congregation and conference?

Contact the church relations office to schedule the president, dean or a faculty guest speaker at 540-432-4597 or ChurchRelations@emu.edu.

Ohio Mennonite Conference

Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Six students from Ohio Conference were enrolled in the spring 2017 semester at EMU.

Giving

Ohio Conference churches gave \$87,487.91 in matching grants to their students at EMU during the year ending June 2017.

- ▶ **Susan Schultz Huxman**,
president
- ▶ **Kirk Shisler**, *vice president
of advancement*
- ▶ **Stuart Showalter**, *associate
director of development*
- ▶ **Les Horning**, *director of
seminary admissions*
- ▶ **David Yoder**, *admissions
counselor*

Our Mission

*EMU prepares students to
serve and lead in a global
context.*

*Our community of learning
integrates Christian faith,
academic rigor, artistic
creation and reflective
practice informed by the
liberal arts, interdisciplinary
engagement, and
cross-cultural encounter.*