

LIVE

Planes, no trains, and rental automobiles. Staff made a point of getting out in 2023.



REACH

Learning how to reach out as a core-area church plant or mission videographer intern.



GATHER

Learning, giving, praying and playing together as high-school students, youth leaders, and regions.



TEACH

Learning opportunities through publications, professional development or the credentialing course, just to name a few.



2023 IN REVIEW



Mo Friesen



Emery Plett



Betty Ramones



Beth Reimer



Andy Woodworth

National Office Staff Transitions

New people, new faces, new relationships! This past year we saw a number of staff transitions in the office. With transitions come farewells. Many thanks go to Tim Dyck for his many years of service to the conference as Executive Director. Also leaving the office this year was Wannetta Fast who served the conference in the finance office for 32 years! Adrienne Funk also bid farewell as she moved onto other interests. To each of these individuals we express our gratitude for the time and energy they brought to the Conference through their work in the office, whether behind the scenes or front and centre.

With leavings come new beginnings. In January, we welcomed Mo Friesen (Director of Next Generation) and Andy Woodworth (Conference Pastor). Later in spring we welcomed Betty Ramones and Beth Reimer into support roles in the front office and finance office. Finally, in July, we welcomed Emery Plett into the position of Executive Director. We look forward to the new vision and energy each of these individuals will bring to the Conference team.

A final change was the transition of Gerald Reimer from the Director of Church Planting to the Director of Global Outreach. In spring a hire had been made but due to personal circumstances this individual withdrew before beginning in the role. Our missionaries are thankful to have the position filled and we are excited for what Gerald will bring to the position.

Travel and Connections

The new Conference Pastor's goal for 2023 was to get out and connect with our churches and pastors. Over the year, Andy Woodworth visited all nine regions and was on-site at 40 of our 55 churches (73%), meeting personally with about three-quarters of our pastors.

Other new staff, Mo Friesen (Director of Next Generation) and Emery Plett (Executive Director) also spent significant time in churches and connecting with pastors, youth leaders and church chairs.

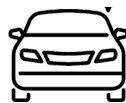
Staff Travel 2023



65,000
km flying



74 church
visits



35,000
km driving



23 rental
cars

Looking Forward to 2024

As we look to 2024 the office wants to make a concerted effort to get out to our different regions and churches. We want to listen to what is going on in our churches so we can better understand your needs and help you achieve your mission and vision. Then, together, we can advance the vision of the Conference: to **live, reach, gather, and teach**.

A Graduating Church Plant

Many Rooms Church Community (MRCC) didn't start with a church planting strategy but they learned early from other house churches and a wise local leader what a house church leader is (a shepherd) and what a church's shape/structure should be.

Against the odds (house churches typically last seven years), they have celebrated 20 years together. This cluster of small groups, of about 20 people per house in Winnipeg's core, has many strengths. They include discipleship through relationships, neighbourhood closeness, generosity in finances, time and resources, and intergenerational connections. And yes, there are weaknesses as well, including inconsistent biblical teaching, burnout for leaders whose homes are used weekly, and difficulty developing new leaders.

Yet through these 20 years, 10 of which were on EMC's subsidy program, MRCC has sponsored a dozen Syrian refugees, and sent their first missionary family overseas. They are thankful to the EMC for the belief in, and support of, their creative approach to church planting.

To God be the glory!



MRCC Leadership Team: (L-R) Stephanie Unger, David Guenther, Jen Kornelsen

An ASCEND Internship

An Ascend internship is for those interested in experiencing vocational ministry alongside missionaries for six to 12 months. The intern will experience a different culture, explore ministry giftings and experience ministry together with the local team. Andrew Reimer spent the last nine months serving in two very different countries. Here is how he describes his experience:

"I've always loved filmmaking and made tons of little movies as a kid. As I left Bible college, I tried to shake that hobby and focus on ministry, working in the church and camps and with missions. But I've spent the last year seeing if I can combine my two passions.



Andrew Reimer on set in Lesotho

"I left last May for Northern Ireland to join Soul Catalyst, a short-filmmaking team with Greater Europe Mission... and, in September, I journeyed to Lesotho. My personal work is as the team's videographer... making ... three- to five-minute videos that show what life and ministry is like here.

"It's quite exciting to not only be a part of cutting-edge mission work but to try to capture it in compelling images to encourage others. It can be uneventful, exhausting or exhilarating on any given day, and I'm grateful for the chance to use my passions for the kingdom."

Funding for an internship is shared between the intern, the Board of Missions, and through fundraising by the intern. For more information scan the QR Code.

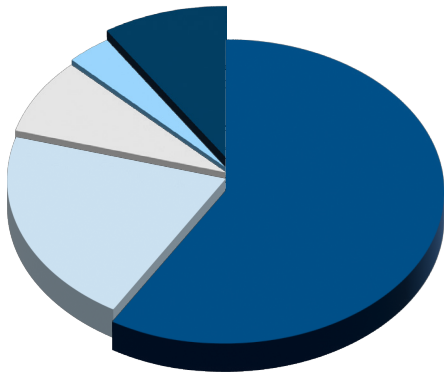
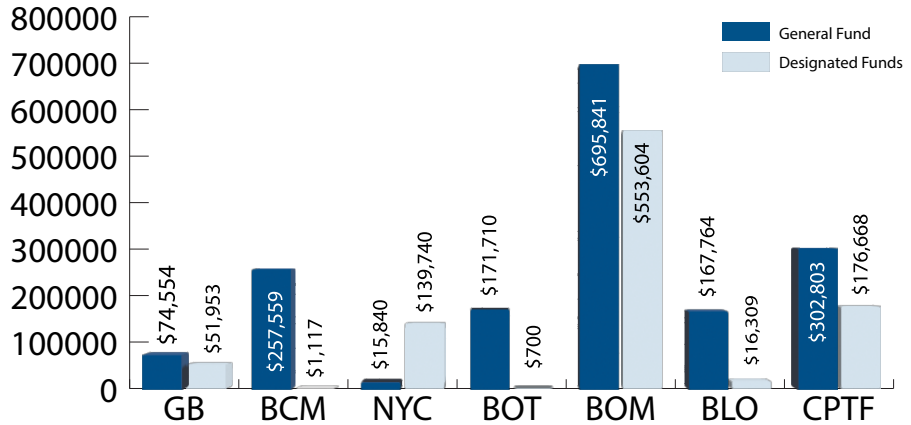


Looking Forward to 2024

We are recruiting a team to join Antonio and Esther Pitta to learn about ministering with Arabic-speaking migrants in Spain and hear from God about long-term mission work, whether in Spain, one of our other administered fields (Paraguay, Bolivia or Mexico), or with associate agencies around the world.

REACH

This is
your
reach



- Church - \$1,082,744
- Individuals - \$381,098
- Estate Fund - \$167,796
- Other Donations - \$148,274
- Other Income - \$61,444

made possible
by your sustained
generosity

*Unaudited information

GATHER



Abundant Springs group photo

Abundant Springs

Abundant Springs was finally able to resume our full event in 2023. There were over 600 students, leaders and support staff that shared a tremendous weekend together. It was a new experience for all the students, none of whom had been to Abundant Springs because the event was cancelled in 2021. Highlights included a student being asked to lead the doxology during a concert with Scribe Music, sessions that included corporate worship and challenges to trust



Jesus with the difficult parts of life, fun activities, and time together as the youth of the EMC. The National Youth Committee did fantastic work to implement a fun event that pointed leaders and students to Jesus.



Basketball at Abundant Springs



Abundant Springs visual aid



Abundant Springs workshop

YWC Conference (Winnipeg)

The National Youth Committee (NYC) has partnered with Youth Worker Community to help with training and equipping youth leaders. This fall, 60 EMC leaders joined the YWC Conference in Winnipeg. Following the conference, these EMC youth leaders gathered for a meal and some discussion. The NYC is continuing this partnership with the conference in Alberta and looking at an option for Southern Ontario. We are so grateful for the leaders that invest in the lives of our youth!



Attendees at YWC Conference



Sessions outdoors at Westfield Park



The morning run crew



Who can pack a minivan fastest?

Rosenort Festival: Jesus' Family Road Trip

Festival 2023 landed on one of the hottest weekends of 2023—not what was expected the first weekend in June. In spite of the heat that participants were not yet acclimatized to, up to 450 people showed up at Westfield Park in Rosenort, Man. Region 6 churches hosted EMCers with a variety of meals, including a wiener roast on site and catered meals from two local restaurants Avielashai (Filipino) and Restaurante Dos Banderas (Mexican). There were activities for all ages, including an “on-theme” activity—a relay to pack vans. Anything with water was a hit! The region provided a “Family Feud” event on Friday and worship and inspirational sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Conference Pastor Andy Woodworth used the theme, Jesus' Family Road Trip: the Joy and Mayhem of Being the Church Together, as a springboard for messages that were playful and yet had great depth about the very real challenges of being the church.



Missionary Fellowship



Project Builders Golf Classic



Young Adult Retreat

TEACH

EMC Publications: Topics Covered in 2023

The Armchair Anabaptist

The first season: 14 episodes on Loving Our Enemies

Hosts Kevin Wiebe and Jesse Penner interviewed 15 guests asking questions such as: How do we go about holding firmly to our faith convictions without becoming condemning of our brothers and sisters in Christ who see things differently? What does our perspective on eternity have to do with loving our enemies? What does loving our enemies NOT mean?



Growing Together

Does the EMC need to apologize on behalf of families who adopted Indigenous kids?

Women Talking: These are our people - a review

Theodidaktos

Time Machine Edition: what have past Christian leaders said that pertains to our current culture?



The Messenger

Six issues in 2023 with (normally) three full-length articles and four regular columns plus EMC news, affiliate agency news, letters, notices and an editorial. Topics were often written forms of presentations at EMC and EMC-sponsored events, and they included Christian vocation, unity, deconstruction, the state of the church, mental health, immigration and biblical exploration.



Social Media

Three to four posts per week on each of three platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and X, formerly Twitter) featuring calls to prayer, Throwback Thursdays, EMC event updates and EMC church news items.

EMC Today

Sent approximately every other week, these email newsletters kept church leaders informed about EMC events and resources relevant to them.

Missions and Prayer

Monthly prayer lists to assist in covering EMC missionaries and church planters with prayer — including both the prayer calendar and prayer corps documents for each EMC field.

Missions Alerts are sent to churches to keep EMCers informed on EMC mission fields.

Looking Forward to 2024

Wow! The EMC has been in Canada for 150 years. As we moved into the new year, we revised our logo to celebrate this milestone. It is amazing to think that we began the communities of Steinbach, Blumenort, Kleefeld and Rosenort. If you're local to any of these communities, be sure to take in some of the planned celebrations.



150 Years in Canada

The State of the Church

As a conference, our stated vision is to be “a movement of people advancing Christ’s kingdom culture as we live, reach, gather, and teach.” Considering all that we have come through over the past few years and the church trends we are seeing in Canada and within the EMC, that vision can seem overwhelming. We must consistently remind ourselves of Jesus’ words in the Great Commission: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). As we commit ourselves to Christ, we believe by faith that he will empower and guide us in these days. This is the eternal hope for a kingdom advancing conference of churches.

- A decade ago, in 2014, our average reported Sunday worship attendance was 150 people, with 3.5 baptisms per year.
- In 2019, just prior to the pandemic years, our average Sunday worship attendance was still 150 people with 3.0 baptisms per year.
- Post-pandemic, in 2022, our average Sunday worship attendance had decreased by 24% to 114, with 2.5 baptisms per year.
- In 2023, our average attendance came back up a bit to 120, an increase of 5% over the previous year and just 20% below the pre-pandemic numbers. Last year, the average number of baptisms per congregation was 2.7.
- In 2023, we highlighted four positive trends emerging from research data within the Canadian church and referred to these as our “4 White Pills.”
 1. Kids Ministry: Growing churches place a high value on children’s ministry. Providing a vibrant children’s ministry is important to young families.
 2. Men’s Ministry: Young men are looking for meaning in their lives, and they are reaching out, trying to discover truth they can anchor their lives to.
 3. Biblical Integrity: Making room for honest exploration of the Bible while upholding a firm commitment to biblical integrity is appealing to seekers.
 4. Genuine Experiences: There is a genuine hunger for a place where ordinary people can encounter an extraordinary God—through worship and other sacred practices.

2023 Rudiments Graduates



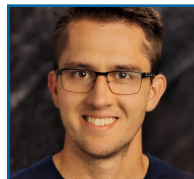
Erica Fehr
Kleefeld EMC



Emery Plett
Stony Brook Fellowship



Kevin Friesen
Pansy Chapel



Jonathan Reimer
Ridgewood Church



Mitchell Martens
Blumenort Community Church



THE ESSENTIALS
Ministerial Credentialing with the Evangelical Mennonite Conference

STARTING SEPTEMBER 2024

EMC Festival 2024

**Building Bridges,
Not Barriers**

June 28-30, La Crete, Alberta
www.emconference.ca/festival

Phil Callaway

EMC Boards

Members that began serving in 2023

- Cameron McKenzie, Fort Garry, BLO
- Glenn Loewen, Portage, BLO
- Gord Utz, Portage, BOM
- Frank Wall, Vanderhoof, BOT
- Sebastian Borda, Steinbach EFC, Nom
- Darren Plett, Steinbach EFC, Nom
- Anna Bueckert, Bow Island, Nom

Members finishing their service in 2024

- Sarah Barkman, Blumenort, BCM
- Dwight Plett, Mennville, BCM
- Carl Loewen, Steinbach EMC, BOM
- Peter Rempel, La Crete, BOM
- Andrew Kampen, Blumenort, BOT
- Cheryl Friesen, Rosenort FC, BOT
- Leonard Plett, Treesbank, Nom
- Josh Muehling, Fort Garry, Nom
- Anna Plett, Steinbach EMC, Nom

Thank you for your service!

The EMC boards (2024 vacancies)

- General Board (3)
- Board of Church Ministries (3)
- Board of Leadership and Outreach (2)
- Board of Missions (4)
- Board of Trustees (3)
- Church Planting Task Force (2)
- National Youth Committee (1)
- Nominating Committee (6)

In Summary: A Year of Transitions

The year 2023 was a year of transition in several facets in the life of the conference.

Conference staffing saw the completion of Tim Dyck's years of service and a new chapter with the leadership of Emery Plett as Executive Director. There was some uncertainty with the appointment of a missions director but by the end of the year, Gerald Reimer had agreed to make the shift from church planting to directing EMC global mission efforts. With the retirement of Wannetta Fast in finance, Beth Reimer took up those responsibilities. Mo Friesen took up responsibilities to help us gear our ministries with and for upcoming generations of the church. Andy Woodworth began as Conference Pastor. So, a year of transitions included anticipation, team building and forging new relationships. We are grateful for all of our conference staff and for their service to our churches.

The review of several conference programs and relationships began in 2023 and continued into the following year. Gerald Reimer's shift to missions provided a window of opportunity to review church planting. The Church Planting Task Force reviewed their models of staffing and ministry as they plan for the future. Secondly, a committee was struck to review how we might update the format and timing of EMC gatherings. Thirdly, we began a process of reviewing the nature and purpose of formal EMC partnerships, and updating how we view fellow ministries, appoint board members and support their kingdom efforts.

Finally, I want to thank all of the churches who form the conference, and the many people who also directly support the ministries of the EMC. Your generosity has sustained all of our ministries and mission efforts in the midst of lots of transition, so that we have met all of our budgeted obligations. May we continue our partnership in the gospel with the guidance of the Spirit and with God's ongoing provision in this next season of ministry.