

BIBLE & RELIGION DEPARTMENT

The Newsletter of the Bible & Religion Department at Eastern Mennonite University

FALL 2014

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Greetings, Haverim!

The Bible and Religion Department has moved! After 17 years in Blosser House, we now have a new space in the renovated Roselawn. As many of you know, Roselawn was a residence hall on the northwest corner of campus. It was a popular dorm when I was a student back in the late '80s and early '90s. Now the first floor houses the Intensive English Program. The second floor is home to the Language and Literature department and the Applied Social Sciences department. We are on the third floor alongside the History department and the department of Psychology.



When I was a student, the Bible department was located on first floor of the Science Center. The fledgling Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (then called the Center for Conflict Transformation) was in Blosser House, a space it quickly outgrew. When they moved across Mt Clinton Pike to Martin Store, it was decided that the Bible and Religion department would take their place in Blosser House, allowing for the old offices to be turned into a classroom, SC 109.

At that time Blosser House seemed like an improvement. But it also had its drawbacks. The upstairs office was cramped and tiny and it was hard to keep the entire house at the same temperature, to name just two issues. But the biggest drawback was that we were on the far edge of campus, isolated as a department, missing the informal interdisciplinary conversations that could happen if we were closer to other departments. As we anticipated this move, we were eager for the chance to interact with colleagues from other departments. Now at

any given time we find ourselves gathered around the coffee maker or microwave or eating lunch with colleagues from two or three other disciplines.

While I thought about and looked forward to who would be in the new space and eagerly anticipated such interactions, I hadn't thought much about what the new space itself would be like. That has been the biggest and most pleasant surprise. The architects, designers, contractors did a wonderful job. Nancy Heisey says that it is the nicest office she has had in 40 years of working. Not only are the offices nice, the furniture all matches and is new, attractive and useful, unlike the old castoffs we had in Blosser House. The new Roselawn also includes well-designed "identity areas" where department staff such as Joan Chamberlain, our office manager, has a desk and we have our printer/copier and necessary office supplies as well as a small kitchenette. There are also new classrooms, conferences rooms, and lounge space for both students and staff.

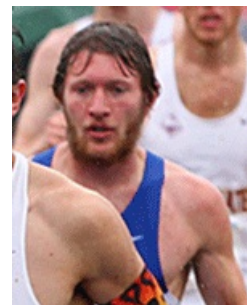
Next time you are on campus, please stop in and see us in our new home.

– Peter Dula, chair

Students in Action

Jacob Landis (Congregational & Youth Ministry, 2015) – preached in PA and in an EMU chapel and represented EMU at the NCAA cross-country nationals. Visit our [Facebook page](#) for additional links.

Evan Knappenberger (Philosophy & Theology, 2015) – was instrumental in creating an MCC [Sunday School curriculum](#) designed for congregations working with veterans.



Faculty Comings & Goings

Peter Dula – attended "Confessional Improvisation: Wittgenstein and Cavell after Augustine," a Young Faculty Workshop at Princeton's Center of Theological Inquiry June 9-13. He presented "To Put Away Childish Things: I Corinthians 13 in Cavell's Memoir." He also gave a paper on Alain Epp Weaver's Mapping Exile and Return at the American Academy of Religion in San Diego in November.

Ted Grimsrud's latest book was published by Cascade Books in November. It's called *The Good War That Wasn't—And Why It Matters: World War II's Moral Legacy*. On January 18, he was a resource person for Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville OH, where he preached, taught Sunday School, and led a discussion session on theology and same-sex marriage.

Nancy Heisey – October 27-28, Nancy made presentations in Lancaster, PA, to Young Anabaptist Historians, "Giants in the Earth," and "**The Questionable Past and the Brethren in Christ**" at Messiah College. General topic: The diaries and letters of twentieth century Mennonite and Brethren in Christ mission and service workers provide rich reflective material that move my work in early Christian studies behind and beyond early Christian "fathers." My sister M.J. Heisey and I were presenting together the background to our forthcoming book on Elsie Bechtel.

Carmen Schrock-Hurst – spoke at the Nov. 14 VA Mennonite Pastor's Consultation on the Bible, reflecting briefly on the challenges of teaching Bible to an increasingly Biblically illiterate student body. On Dec. 5, 19 students from Carmen's Spiritual Formation class took part in an all day retreat at Camp Overlook. Small group leaders Lana Miller, EMU undergraduate campus pastor, Jason Gerlach, associate pastor at Community Mennonite Church, and Dawn Monger, associate pastor at Lindale Mennonite helped to facilitate the day's retreat.

Andrea Saner – is finishing edits on her forthcoming book with the tentative title, *Too much to grasp: Exodus 3:13-15 and the Reality of God*. She attended the SBL annual meeting in San Diego in November.

Haverim Breakfast 2014

On Oct.11, nearly 75 persons gathered in the Discipleship Center for the annual Haverim homecoming breakfast to hear Jonathan Bowman (1999 Culture, Religion and Mission, 2008 MDiv, pastor at Landisville Mennonite Church) reflect on his time at EMU and lessons learned.



Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP)

Four students experienced ministry during the summer of 2014.

Chris Parks, senior from Philadelphia, PA served with Hyattsville Mennonite church in Hyattsville, MD.

Hanna Heishman, senior, from Keezletown, VA with West Phillie Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, PA.

Nathanael Ressler, junior, from Mt. Veron, IL, served with Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, IN.

Evan Knappenberger, senior from Charlottesville, VA served in a joint placement with MCUSA Peace and Justice Support Network, MCC Peace Education Office and EMU to produce a [S.S. curriculum](#) on working with veterans and congregations.

Check out our [MIP webpage](#) for student reflections on their experiences and for links to their chapel services. We are recruiting now for MIP students for this summer. Let Carmen know if you are aware of a current student who you believe would benefit from the MIP experience.

Thanks to Haverim

Thanks to Haverim for again partially underwriting the cost of an all-day spiritual formation retreat for the students in the Spiritual Formation class fall semester. Haverim funds were also used to provide a small stipend for three local pastors who each met weekly with a group of six students from this class. Student evaluations from the class consistently rate the retreat and the small groups as high points of their learning experience.

Alumni Updates

Corben Boshart (Biblical Studies, 2013) – After graduating I moved back to my home community to take some time to figure out my future plans. Throughout the year, I've been working at the local Mennonite nursing home in Kalona, IA. Its been one way to stay working in a missional place while discerning where I should direct my life next.

I've spent a good amount of time considering a call to ministry and what form that could take. One idea I've discussed with church mentors is the possibility of becoming a pastor. So with that in mind I've done my best to

immerse myself at my home church- becoming a youth group leader, worship leader and engaging with our church in a period of congregational conflict. These have been ways for me to gain more experience with congregational life and to get a sense for what the church in North America can look like on an everyday level while I ponder what form my ministry might take.

In late May through June, I went with the EMU contingent that spent three weeks in Iran attending conferences and traveling. At the beginning of the trip, I had been pondering graduate school and was leaning towards attending AMBS. On the trip, however, I met a number of professors and students from CMU whom I was impressed with. I thought their knowledge, passion, interpersonal nature, and ability to articulate their faith were all notable attributes for one group to share in common. So after the trip ended in June, I drove up to Winnipeg to visit the campus and was again impressed with the university's vision and emphasis on its bible and religion department. As a result, I've settled on studying there in the fall. I see it as a great place for me to continue to discern my call while building my personal capacity and resources for a life in ministry. I'm not sure if I mentioned this in my first e-mail, but I'll plan on earning my masters in theology while there.

Of course joy more than duty motivates me to let you know I was ordained by Central Plains Mennonite Conference on November 9th with Salem Mennonite Church ("South Church" of Freeman, SD).

Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard (Biblical Studies, 2007)

While at EMU, EMS and in the 2.5 years since I didn't care much for set-apart leadership credentials. But in my first years of pastoral experience, the licensing process and ordination interview preparations I was surprised to find myself not only grudgingly accepting the practice of ordination, but eager for it. The Nov. 9 worship service and reception following turned out to be an unexpectedly emotional and meaningful experience.

A big thank you is in order to both the undergraduate B&R department and the seminary body, faculty and staff for playing critical and compassionate roles in a 14-year journey toward ordination (that's half my life!).



Photo: the blessing with CPMC Conf. Ministers Dave Boshart, Tim Detweiler and the Salem Deacons

Russell Pyle (Philosophy & Theology, 2003) – I have just finished my first year of my Phd in Counselor Education at the University of New Mexico. I have made the following presentations this year:

- Buddhist Psychology (EMU Homecoming, 2013)
- Incorporating Wellness Factors in Counselor Supervision (Shared Learning Conference, UNM, 2013)
- The Broken Compass: The inter-relationship between faith and trauma (Association of Humanistic Counseling Conference, 2014, to be presented in June)
- Counseling Supervision from an EcoWellness Perspective (Association of Humanistic Counseling Conference, June, 2014)

Margaret Southerington (Culture, Religion and Mission, 2004) 'm living and working in England now, living in a small mission community house in the city of Birmingham. It's a really neat set-up, really. It's linked with a Christian organization called Lee Abbey, and the idea is to have a household of Christians who live, share, and pray regularly together, living deliberately in inner city areas around the UK to be a Christian presence and try to make an impact in the community around us. We work normal jobs to support ourselves while we do this, and as I've just moved here about a month and a half ago, I'm still searching for a place to work while I'm here. I've found a part time youth pastor position in a church.

What have you been doing since leaving EMU? [We'd enjoy hearing from you!](#)

Our New Digs

We are now located in Roselawn on the south end of the third floor. In mid-October we moved into the newly renovated and amazingly transformed residence hall. **Come visit us!**



Nancy comments "My Roselawn office is the nicest office I have had in 40 years of working. And I'm so grateful to finally be able to settle down after wandering over the face of EMU since May!"

Carmen states "I love my new office and the opportunity to cross paths with colleagues from other departments. We used to be so isolated from campus in the Bible and Religion house, and now it feels as though we have "grown up" and are able to interact with people we never saw before. I also love the stream of students through the building, the beautiful view that awaits me every time I climb the stair tower, and the satisfaction of knowing that we are using a building that once was slated to be destroyed. This feels like EMU at its best."

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