

# Common ground

## Everence 2016 report

Eastern District Conference and  
Franconia Mennonite Conference  
Joint Conference Assembly, November 4 - 5

*Let us then pursue the things  
that make for peace and  
build up the common life.*

– Romans 14:19 (NEB)

### **Everence values its strong congregational partnership**

For more than 70 years, Everence® has worked with congregations and their members, helping people of faith “build up the common life” through their financial decisions. These connections are vital to us, and we look forward to many more years of focusing on the best interests of your members – helping them create and implement plans tailored for their needs and aspirations to share with others.

As we have since 1945, we will continue to serve the Anabaptist community as partners in stewardship throughout 2016 and beyond.

### **Sharing Fund is helping congregations extend their reach**

The Everence Sharing Fund encourages churches to aid individuals and families in their congregations and communities by providing matching grants. Thousands of people benefit each year in all kinds of ways, including a homeowner in Pennsylvania whose roof (pictured) was replaced by a church’s volunteers.

Even though the congregation is quite small, members pitched in when they



learned that water was leaking into the house of a man who had to retire early because of an illness. One church member was even ready to pay for materials and do all of the work himself before the pastor suggested that it become a congregational project. It’s another example of doing better together, combining gifts of time, talents and financial resources.

### **Everence can help you offer financial coaching**

Everence recently launched a program to train congregational financial coaches, who will encourage, guide and help members of your community put financial goals into action. This ministry is for congregations wanting to take the next step to help people deal with budget, debt and savings habits.

Becoming a congregation that provides financial coaching is about identifying people with a passion to walk with and help others with their finances. Our coaching resources include a training manual and balanced money workbook to help participants allocate their resources in a healthy and sustainable way. Contact your Everence church relations representative to learn more.



## Spanish-language website offers Everence information

A new Spanish-language website offers foundational information about Everence at [everence.com/espanol](http://everence.com/espanol) and [everence.com/spanish](http://everence.com/spanish). Designed to provide an overview of what Everence offers its members, the website also includes contact information for Spanish-speaking staff available to answer questions about Everence products and services.



Martin Navarro, Church Relations Representative, is developing relationships with people and communities

whose primary language is Spanish. Martin, who is bilingual, meets with pastors, Everence advocates, small groups, individuals and families to talk with them about their financial stewardship journeys.

## Gospel of Luke curriculum focuses on 12 key passages

Luke highlighted stories from Jesus that address issues of wealth, poverty and generosity in his gospel. Everence now offers *The Gospel of Luke: the relationship between salvation, discipleship and wealth*, a new curriculum that focuses on 12 key passages. Many of Luke's stories were not included in the other gospels.

The lessons are designed to be versatile enough to be used by teachers in a classroom setting or pastors as sermon starters. Each of the 12 lessons includes teacher tips, introductory commentary on the key texts and discussion questions. You may download the lessons at [everence.com](http://everence.com), or contact Stewardship Education Director Beryl Jantzi at [beryl.jantzi@everence.com](mailto:beryl.jantzi@everence.com) for more details.

## Using our credit card aids more charitable groups

Everence Federal Credit Union donated \$16,200 to The Mennonite and MennoMedia in 2015 from our unique Rebate for Missions program. Rebate for Missions is supported by the credit union's 10 percent tithe of income generated when people use their Everence Visa credit cards.

In addition to these awards to national agencies, our credit union branch offices share Rebate for Missions money with charities in their communities. Since the program started in 1995, the credit union has given nearly \$400,000 in grants to churches, missions and relief organizations. Learn more at [everence.com/banking](http://everence.com/banking).

## Virginia couple honored with National Journey Award

Marvin and Sarah Slabaugh are generous with their time and financial resources, supporting their congregation, Weavers Mennonite Church, and a variety of mission- and education-related organizations.



Everence recognized the Slabaughs, of Harrisonburg, Virginia, with its national Journey Award for 2015. As part of the award, Everence donated \$5,000 to charities Marvin and Sarah chose. In addition to the national award, seven regional Journey Award winners chose charities to receive \$500 Everence donations. The

Journey Awards highlight how people are living out their faithful stewardship of their God-given gifts.

## Being generous is easier than you think

Everence Asset Management services help people increase their capacity for charitable giving through planned gifts, retirement security and investment services. You can grow your ability to make an impact on the people and causes you care about through professionally managed portfolios, access to faith-rooted investment choices and a personal relationship with a financial advisor.

We'll help you simplify your finances into a streamlined strategy, so you can spend time on what matters to you. Visit [everence.com/asset-management](http://everence.com/asset-management) for complete information.

## Lilly Endowment awards \$1 million grant to Everence

Everence learned in November 2015 that it was approved for a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, aimed at improving the financial lives of pastors. The grant allows Everence to launch a new program through Mennonite Foundation.

The three-year program – aimed at pastors who are part of Mennonite Church USA and Conservative Mennonite Conference – will include grants to help pastors experiencing financial difficulties. It also includes an education program designed to improve personal financial skills.