

# A shared tomorrow

## Everence 2017 report

Central District Conference Annual Meeting  
June 22-24, 2017  
Bluffton University

*Look out for one another's  
interests, not just for  
your own.*

– Philippians 2:4  
(Good News Bible)

### **Everence® values our strong congregational partnership**

For more than 70 years, Everence has worked with congregations and their members to help 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 faith community as partners in stewardship throughout 2017 and beyond.

### **Congregations do more good with help from Everence Sharing Fund**

The Everence Sharing Fund encourages

churches to help people in their communities by providing matching grants. Thousands of individuals and families benefit each year, including a former pastor and district minister in Virginia.



Several congregations pitched in to help Randy Coblenz when his doctor prescribed intravenous antibiotics to treat Randy's Lyme disease. The disease wasn't responding to oral antibiotics, and IV antibiotics often work better in situations like Randy's when an infection affects the brain.

But his insurance doesn't cover long-term IV antibiotics treatment, and the cost topped \$30,000. Grants from the Sharing Fund supplemented the congregational assistance.

### **Reaffirming our commitment to strengthen the broader church**

Everence is reviewing our church relations programs and activities to find ways to strengthen our focus on helping congregations remain healthy during a time of shifting member participation and changing patterns of giving.

We are reaffirming our commitment to the broader church and evaluating how Everence can be most effective in supporting the faith community.

Our five-year plan includes a priority to strengthen our church relationships. We will continue to partner with congregational leaders on lifting the faith community through stewardship, mutual aid and generosity.



## Generous living in a self-centered world

A new Everence curriculum, *Generous living in a self-centered world*, is designed to help us live counter to our culture through biblical models of generosity. The curriculum starts with Cain and Abel and ends with the Apostle Paul, exploring biblical stories and the connections with our modern-day American context.

The six-lesson study is an exploration of the biblical world to help first-world Christians wrestle with how to embody generosity while living as citizens of the most privileged and wealthy nation in the world. It takes a sense of purpose and discipline to not get caught in the riptide of culture that draws us into the world's flow.

Download the leaders guide at [everence.com/resources-for-adults](http://everence.com/resources-for-adults).

## Using our credit card aids more charitable groups

Everence Federal Credit Union donated \$16,200 to Friends United Meeting and Christian Peacemaker Teams (\$8,100 to each organization) in 2016 from our 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.

Our members voted online to choose the recipients, and we had a record of nearly 2,000 votes cast – more than triple our number from previous years.

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, Everence Federal Credit Union has given more than \$400,000 in grants

to churches, missions and relief organizations. Learn more at [everence.com/banking](http://everence.com/banking).

## MCC volunteer honored with National Journey Award

Johanna Sutter of Goshen, Indiana, received the Everence National Journey Award for 2016 because of the ways she models Christian stewardship. As part of this recognition, Everence donated \$5,000 to Mennonite Central Committee in her honor.



Johanna has volunteered for years at the MCC Great Lakes Material Resource Center in Goshen, collecting items for school kits and relief kits and assembling them for distribution to people in need throughout the world.

Johanna grew up in Germany during a time when food, clothing and other essentials were in short supply after World War II. Her family received a bundle from MCC, and she later worked at an MCC children's home in Germany. She moved to the United States in the mid-1950s and started volunteering for MCC after a long teaching career.

## Pastoral Financial Assistance Program helping in a variety of ways

Our Pastoral Financial Assistance Program, overseen by Stewardship Education Director Beryl Jantzi, has been more successful than imagined,

strengthening the financial health of pastors and building capacity for their ongoing financial support from their congregations.

In 2016, more than 100 financial assistance grants for pastors were approved. Half of the assistance money came from a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, and half in matching dollars raised by congregations and church conferences.

In addition to direct financial support, Everence is hosting educational events across the country for pastors and their spouses. And we're offering financial planning subsidies to help pastors and their families get the support they need for long-term financial stability.

## Stewardship education resources for all ages are available from Everence

If you need a good topic for study for a Sunday school class or another setting, visit [everence.com/resources-for-adults](http://everence.com/resources-for-adults) to see all kinds of adult education resources. Leaders guides and curriculum resources are available for you to download. We offer a variety of topics related to stewardship, including discipleship and Jesus' stories about money.

Everence also offers educational resources for church leaders at [everence.com/resources-for-church-leaders](http://everence.com/resources-for-church-leaders), featuring tools for increasing generosity within your congregation and ways to assess stewardship initiatives you already have in place.

Stewardship-related resources for youths and children are available at [everence.com/resources-for-youth](http://everence.com/resources-for-youth), including materials on how real-life topics relate to biblical perspectives about how we use our gifts of time, talents and money.