

Shenandoah Valley MCC Installation and Award Ceremony

There's a new MCC in Virginia! Shenandoah Valley Metropolitan Community Church in Winchester, Virginia, celebrated receiving the prestigious Emerging Church Award from the UFMCC, our parent denomination, from the Rev. Elder Darlene Garner. The Rev. Gail Minnick was installed as Pastor by Elder Garner as well at the 5 pm service on Sunday, 27 April.

Open Door MCC Lay Delegate Adam DeBaugh represented ODMCC at the service and joined 75 people from Shenandoah Valley MCC and six other churches, including nine area clergy.

The Rev. Mary Bohacek, the out-going intentional interim pastor for the past seven months celebrated communion. Newly installed Senior Pastor the Rev. Gail Minnick preached a wonderful sermon on "Doubting Thomas," explaining that Thomas' ministry should not be characterized by his wanting proof of Jesus' resurrection but by his search for truth and his ultimate ministry.

Rodney Ritenour and Tyler Thompson, lay leaders of SVMCC for the almost two years the congregation has been in existence, received the Emerging Church Award from Elder Garner. SVMCC was begun by the Rev. Michael Hydes, while he was pastor of New Light MCC in Hagerstown. They meet at the Centre (Friends) Meeting House, 203 North Washington Street in downtown Winchester.

The MCC Emerging Church Award was established in 2007 to recognize a new church start that, in spite of the challenges of its particular situation, demonstrates its commitment to becoming a vibrant and healthy church that offers relevant ministry to its community. Previous recipients have been Journey MCC in England, Open Circle MCC in a Florida retirement community that now has over 100 people in worship each Sunday, and MCC Joao Pessoa in a small rural community in Brazil that has an exciting ministry for the poor and homeless.

A wonderful dinner was provided by the congregation after the service for a great time of eating and meeting new and old friends from Winchester and around our Network.

This is an inspiring and blessed congregation and I expect great things from this new church. Please keep them in your prayers and if you ever visit Winchester, please plan on worshipping with them Sunday evening.

By Adam DeBaugh, Lay Delegate