

# EMMETT & SHERRILL KESSINGER

Members since 1970

## Emmett Kessinger

### Birth Date:

July 27, 1934

### Place of Birth:

Chambersburg, PA

## Sherrill Kessinger

### Birth Date:

July 29, 1936

### Place of Birth:

Chambersburg, PA

## Did You Know?

Emmett is quite the story-teller. There's the day that his mother sent him to dump ashes from the cookstove onto the pile at the back of the yard. This seemingly simple task required him to venture through the domain of the family's cantankerous old rooster. When the rooster attacked Emmett, Emmett kicked back, leaving the animal paralyzed on the ground. He remembers being terrified that he would get in trouble, but then he heard his mother's response: "That rooster was ready to go." And that night, the family was treated to a delicious chicken and waffles dinner.

## Favorite Hymns

Dwelling in Beulah Land

Amazing Grace



Despite growing up in different family environments—Emmett one of six children, with the stretched finances and unending chores of a large family whose mother worked outside the home, and Sherrill as the younger of two children with a stay-at-home-mom—the Kessingers have a surprising number of shared experiences.

Emmett and Sherrill were both born and raised in Chambersburg, PA. They have fond memories of spending time at Wolf Lake, swimming in the summers and ice skating in the winters, and of spending time at the swimming pool and carousel at Red Bridge Park. Neither of their families did much traveling, but Emmett's family took a train trip to visit relatives in Lewiston, PA, each summer and Sherrill's family made bus trips to visit family in Greenvillage on Sundays.

And while Emmett and Sherrill attended different churches growing up—Emmett's family belonged to Second Lutheran while Sherrill's family belonged to St. Paul UMC—they both talk about the impact that church camp had on their lives, Sherrill at Camp Penn and Emmett at its Lutheran counterpart, Camp Nawakwa. Interestingly, they both name Marion Diehl as being highly influential in their childhoods. Marion was

Sherrill's Sunday School teacher at St. Paul, but also Emmett's 6th grade teacher at Buchanan Elementary. She held Emmett back at the end of his first year with her, believing that his math skills would benefit from a repeat of her class. Although district policy was to place students into another teacher's classroom for the repeated year, Marion fought to have Emmett placed into hers. Knowing where he was struggling, she believed that she could catch him up. Emmett credits Marion's decision for helping him to be successful in life, alluding to his long career in banking.

Emmett and Sherrill both worked at W.T. Grant during high school and went into people-oriented careers after graduation. Emmett says that he loves meeting and caring for people, something he was able to do through the Fortune 55 Senior program that he ran at Valley Bank, a job that led seamlessly into his second career as a bus tour guide. Having recently retired from that position, Emmett now serves as a visitation host for Geisel Funeral Home.

Sherrill has also worked in a variety of people-oriented positions, including jobs with the Chambersburg School District, migrant ministry, and YMCA. After retirement Sherrill began volunteering at Menno Haven, helping to transport residents around the facility. She says she liked spending time getting to know the people she was helping. She faithfully served in this position until COVID 19 made it impossible for her to do so.

Emmett and Sherrill have also been very involved in the groups and ministries of FUMC. Sherrill says the ministries of our church were always a good fit for her. She enjoyed working with children in both the Apple Place Nursery School and after-school tutoring program. And she has participated in a wide variety of music ministries, including the Chancel Choir, bell choir, and recorder consort, as well as playing the piano for the Hope class and funerals as needed. Prior to the Hope Class assuming the responsibility of decorating the church for Christmas, this monumental task belonged to Emmett. He remembers lugging in and decorating the 15 foot tree and hand-placing the many poinsettias around the sanctuary.

One of Emmett's other vivid memories of FUMC was the first Sunday that St. Paul began sharing our church's facilities, after their building was destroyed by fire. Emmett remembers the St. Paul pastor walking down the center aisle of the church at the beginning of the service on their first day with us, carrying a cross and singing the words to "Lift High the Cross":

Emmett and Sherrill are saddened by the waning dedication to the church in our modern culture and feel it is at least partially due to the fact that people are often busy doing other things on Sunday mornings. They miss the way that the Sabbath used to be honored in our community. And they miss the days when people sat on their front porches and visited with neighbors. The days when children could roam freely, because their parents knew that all of the neighbors were watching out for each other.

Now, Emmett and Sherrill try to maintain the close-knit feel of their childhood neighborhoods, by going out of their way to keep in contact with the people in their lives. They say that stopping to visit someone or simply writing a card is a small, but powerful thing. It doesn't take much time but can make a big difference in another person's life. This ties to some of the wisdom that Emmett and Sherrill would like to pass on to younger generations:

*Be careful not to become too busy. Because busyness can get in the way of the things that are most important in life—which, it turns out, are not things at all.*