

What an eventful year!

As I outlined in a recent list-serve message, this year 3rd Way Collective created or collaborated on 90 unique events including 7 service opportunities, 6 different guest speakers/keynote events, and numerous connecting points around food and fellowship both on and off campus. This year we interacted with more than 3000 students and community members (this number is our highest yet, despite creating fewer events than in the past). We collaborated with more than 35 campus and community organizations, and released another 29 podcast episodes. Four of our student officers are returning to continue their leadership positions, giving us more stability than we've ever had before.

It is clear that every week we have a broader network of people interacting with this unique movement. This year I have been invited to be a guest speaker, panelist, consulting voice, presenter and event coordinator in many different spaces both on campus and in our community.

But perhaps most importantly we continue to stand up for those in need of peace and justice, inspired by our unique Anabaptist faith tradition.

Our biggest hurdle (and primary source of stress for me) continues to be where our funding will come from. We continue to expand our giving base, however it has not been as easy of a task as we had hoped. We have been unable to find financial institutional support in the broader Mennonite world through denominational or congregational resources. On the bright side, in addition to the financial support of University Baptist and Brethren Church (as well as some fundraising help from State College Friends Meeting), there are now two other local congregations interested in supporting this ministry (Faith UCC and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Centre County). We do not know where those conversations will lead, but it is exciting to be affirmed in this way by our local faith communities.

As our recent missional survey showed, our congregation is generally affirming of this ministry, however there continues to be concern with how it will be funded. It is one of the challenging aspects of creative/outside-the-box ministry – it is broadly affirmed, yet hard to secure long-term funding.

Thank you for your ongoing love, support, and affirmation. We are still learning how to do this, and the willingness of this congregation to help make it happen is remarkable.

- Ben Wideman, Campus Pastor – May 18, 2018