

Connections

Virginia Mennonite
Conference &
Board of Missions

April 2004
Vol. 14, No. 6

A year without a beer

Persons with addictions are often relegated to organizations outside the church. Recovery may be noticed, but it is not often celebrated. However, in at least one Virginia Conference church, that is not the case. In July 2003, more than 100 members of Grace Mennonite Fellowship in Lacey Spring, Va., helped David King celebrate a year without alcohol.

One evening last July, David and his wife, Karin, were going to what David thought was a surprise party for a friend. When they arrived at Grace Mennonite Fellowship, David discovered the party was not for a friend, but for him.

The invitations welcomed people to “a year without a beer” party. Friends decorated the church with Happy Birthday signs because, as one friend told Karin, it is a new birth experience to stop drinking. “He deserved something and I wanted to give him a little bit more encouragement,” said Karin.

David and Karin are relatively new to Grace Mennonite Fellowship, as they have only been attending for about a year and a half. Karin started a new job two years ago at Park View Federal Credit Union and was invited to Grace by Phyllis Liskey. They had previously attended another church, but stopped attending when they became unhappy with it.

In July 2002, Karin started attending Grace with their children. She told David after her first Sunday that she felt very welcomed and accepted there and soon David began attending as well. In October, during a service at Grace where many people were sharing testimonies of things they had been delivered from, David apologized to Karin for drinking and for the things it had done to their marriage. He committed himself to recovering.

To celebrate that event, Karin and some of their friends from Grace planned a party, but they decided to have the party a little bit early. Karin knew that the summer months are difficult for recovering alcoholics, because the heat makes them want to drink. She decided to have the party in July rather than in October, which would have marked the one-year anniversary.

“Grace Mennonite Fellowship has been very supportive of David during his recovery,” said Karin.

David made friends at the church through a house-building project. “One Sunday, someone stood up in church and said they needed help building a house,” said Karin. “David is a roofer, but he’s also good at building, so I encouraged him to do it.” As Karin and David became more connected to members of the church David began to drink less. He is now a trustee at the church.

David and Karin’s experience at Grace is not unusual. Pastor Rich Early said that one of the primary goals of the church is to reach out to the community. Six years ago, the church began with 25 members, all from Mennonite backgrounds. Today the church has around 200 in attendance, primarily from the community in Lacey Spring. Pastor Early said, “The community members are very active in owning the church, and hold many positions of leadership.”

Early said that the church reaches out to the marginalized in the community. They hold concerts and other events that relate to the culture of Lacey Spring to draw in community members. Church members are also active in civic organizations and they invite those they meet to attend church with them.

The church now has six pastors, with duties in various areas. This summer the church plans to expand its facilities to include an education wing and a fellowship hall.

In this dynamic church environment it is easy to see how people like David can find the support they need. Pastor Early said, “David’s story gives us hope that anybody can be transformed.”

INSIDE

Mission Connections



Learn more about the ministries in the USA that are supported by VMBM, including a small restaurant at the Marketplace, an outreach of Fellowship of Christ Church in Rocky Mount, N.C.

• Laura Lehman Amstutz
Lindale Mennonite Church

Two things essential

The cross has been the primary Christian symbol. Fish, doves, and flames show up from time to time, and we Mennonites also have a particular fondness for the towel and basin. The cross, however, has been fundamental for all Christians. Two intersecting beams of wood, one vertical and one horizontal, have drawn the attention of millions for over two thousand years.



Loren Horst
President of VMBM

In describing this cross of wood, many words are helpful. Of these, two are essential to understanding its significance—love and suffering. Love is further elaborated in this way: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” God expresses His reconciling love uniquely and most completely in Jesus. Christians practice and proclaim this love.

The second might be summed up by these words of Peter, “Christ suffered here on earth. Now you must be ready to suffer as He did.” Christians repudiate violence, choosing to accept suffering rather than inflict suffering on others.

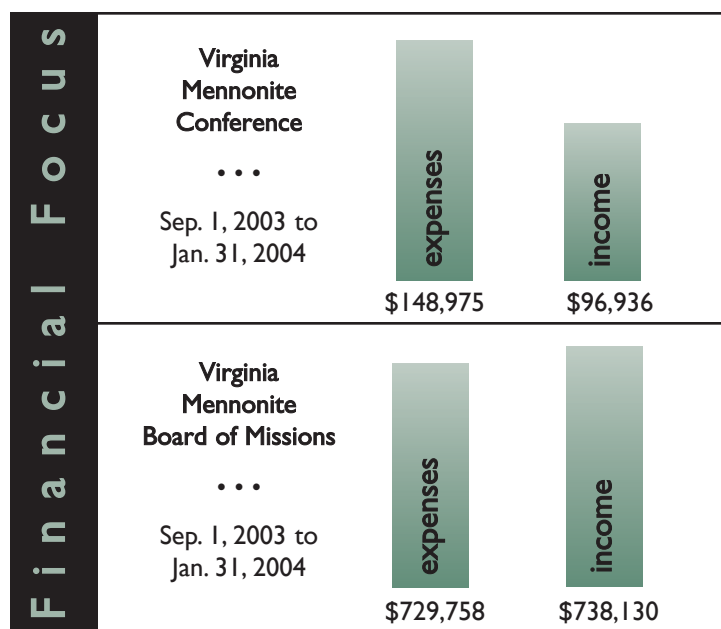
Put those two together and we have a most difficult thing. Christianity that embraces both love and suffering is neither popular here nor favored abroad. Much of the world is offended by our claim that God’s love is expressed uniquely in Jesus. Barriers and resistance to that love are the norm rather than the exception. Here at home, many Americans are offended by the notion that it is bet-

ter to suffer than to inflict suffering. Americans embrace the rights and obligations of self-defense and national security rather than the privilege of suffering like Christ. The cross is emptied of its meaning and its power.

I haven’t seen Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*. I don’t really want to. Violence has become the all-American entertainment and the portrayal of the violence inflicted against Jesus could simply be another dose under religious guise. A friend told me, however, that this film could be the most important missiological event in a long time. The gospel of Jesus Christ is presented clearly, he said. Could a film portray the significance of the cross? Could a movie demonstrate both God’s reconciling love in Jesus and the way of suffering? The Pope apparently thinks so. He was quoted as saying of the film, “It is as it was.”

Maybe, in fact, it does embrace the two things essential. Maybe there is no other way if a movie is to present the gospel in truth. I might muster my courage to see it. Would that we Christians might muster our courage to live it.

Loren Horst



Connections (USPS 007-205) is published monthly by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Virginia Mennonite Conference to connect congregations with each other and conference agencies.

Editor

Gloria Lehman

Assistant Editor

Rachel Smith

Circulation manager

Beth Brunk

Connections is distributed free to each household of supporting congregations. Subscription rates: \$5 per year, 2 years for \$9. Send subscriptions to *Connections* Circulation Manager, 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Phone 540-434-9727

1-800-707-5535

E-mail info@vmbm.org

info@vmconf.org

Web www.vmbm.org

www.vmconf.org

POSTMASTER Send address changes to 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Periodical postage paid at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Having fun with fundraising

Raising money for a new church building is a tedious, difficult, laborious task. Right? It need not be. The congregation at Lindale Mennonite Church near Harrisonburg, Va., has discovered that fundraising is not only a fun experience but a spiritual one as well. They have seen God at work in wondrous ways.

Starting in November 2002, Lindale has been using a variety of activities and events to raise money. Proceeds from an auction, a couple of “spec” houses, and the sale of cemetery lots have been poured into the building fund. Individual projects have also made their contribution. Two young men are performing oil changes on member’s vehicles as a way to raise money. Others have been donating receipts from the sale of note cards, tapes and CDs, model trucks, sand dollars and various craft items.

Special offerings have played an important role in Lindale’s quest to raise money. The first Sunday of each month is designated “Hard Hat” Sunday. During the offering time, a second offering is taken for the building fund using actual hard hats. On each of the other Sundays, children collect loose change with mugs. Who can resist a child, clutching a mug with both hands, staring into your face with pleading, expectant eyes? To date, the mug money alone has amounted to well over \$8,000.

Each quarter, a committee plans a social event. These occasions usually consist of a meal, activities for children, and some fun entertainment. One such occasion featured a chili cook-off and another a pie-baking contest where people could vote with their money for their favorite chili or pie. Entertainment has been provided by music and clogging groups, a clown-magician and storytellers.

Several major fund drives have been conducted along the way. Recently, a special drive was staged to raise money to buy chairs for the new sanctuary. First attempts failed to produce the amount needed. However, God miraculously intervened. Several local businesses were approached and agreed to help. A friend from the area offered a challenge gift of about half the remaining amount needed. This created a stir of excitement! Even the children got involved. One took money from savings and bought a chair. Another persuaded out-of-state grandparents to purchase several chairs. On the Sunday following the challenge gift, more



Debbie Rhodes fashioned a cash outfit to wear at Lindale’s barbeque fundraiser in 2003, where prizes were given for creative straw hats and sunbonnets. The cash on Debbie’s outfit was given to the building fund.

than enough money was raised to pay for the chairs. The service ended with the singing of “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow”!

The new building is expected to be completed in a few weeks. It isn’t paid for yet, so fundraising activities continue. But no one is complaining—everyone is having too much fun!

• Millard E. Showalter
Lindale Mennonite Church

Sending books abroad

In many places around the world, access to the printed word is limited. Libraries, schools, hospitals, churches, and pastors all need books to function. Using donated books and funds, Books Abroad ships books from six different centers in the eastern U.S. After a Books Abroad volunteer from another center visited the Mennonite Theological College in Musoma, Tanzania, last summer, she said, “I visited their library and cried when I saw how pathetic it appeared—some good books, but so old and worn.”

Many of our bookshelves hold books we’re no longer using. Consider donating good used books and Bibles or postage money to Virginia Books Abroad located at the Virginia Mennonite Conference Center. Last summer a youth Sunday School class at Warwick River Mennonite Church collected Bibles and gave project money for shipping.

Let your books bless others. Bring them to Books Abroad. Books not suitable for sending overseas are shared with Booksavers.

For more information contact Melba Heatwole at 540-434-9727 or 540-828-2999.

Making a difference to the poorest of the poor

Your purchase from Ten Thousand Villages does make a difference in the lives of many artisans around the world. Our group of 10 persons from across the U.S. and Canada was reminded of this when we visited some of these artisans in January. In Sri Lanka we visited the Gospel House and Golden Palm toy production centers where many of the workers are high school dropouts or as Ravi, Golden Palm's director stated, "We employ the poorest of the poor."

We saw the entire production process of the wooden puzzles that we sell at the Ten Thousand Villages Store in Dayton, Va.—screen-printing the design on rough lumber, jig-saw cutting, wood sealing, hand-sanding, painting, shrink-wrapping, and packaging. At each stage of the process there is a piece-by-piece check to be sure no piece is damaged.

Our group watched as Ibu Seelawathi, manager of the hand-sanding center, her two granddaughters, and several other women sanded each piece of each puzzle. Before Seelawathi began working in the sanding workshop, she was employed as a domestic helper in the Middle East, taking her away from her family and home for five years. She now enjoys working at home (where the workshop is located) and being with her family. With the income that her family makes, she has been able to build a new home and workshop to replace the old one that was in disrepair.

We saw firsthand the difference between the working conditions and income of the employees of the fair trade workshops and the commercial



Two of Ibu Seelawathi's granddaughters sand wooden puzzle pieces by hand in their workshop in Sri Lanka. These puzzles are later sold in Ten Thousand Villages stores such as the one in Dayton, Va.

coconut fiber extraction plant within walking distance near Madampe. In Indonesia we met blind Pak Ben Yamin who tunes the bamboo xylophones and Pak and Ibu Kardi who supply the batik rainsticks and flutes. Following a stroke, Pak Kardi's health is improving with therapy and treatments made possible by income from selling his products to Ten Thousand Villages.

These are only a few of the artisans we met and visited with to learn their stories. At almost every stop we heard, "Sell more so we have more orders." Ten Thousand Villages provides vital, fair income to people in Third World countries by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. Your purchase does make a difference.

• Elva Rhodes, Assistant Manager
Ten Thousand Villages, Dayton Farmers Market

Landstown sends scarves to Ukrainian orphans

Landstown Community Church adopted 91 orphans at Orphanage #4 in Odessa, Ukraine, as their Christmas project. Members at Landstown handcrafted 500 fleece scarves to send as gifts to all the children and workers at the orphanage. John 3:16 was translated and printed on a festive card that accompanied each scarf.

The scarves and money for the orphanage were delivered by Pastor Merlin Miller and Ken Smith during their trip to Ukraine on January 22-29. Please continue to pray for them as they make additional contacts in Odessa.

• Linda Miller
Landstown Community Church



In process, but not there yet

“Are people with disabilities excluded from ministry?”

Rodney Lebron, who stutters, directed this question to the dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 1992.

Rodney, a first-year seminary student, was preparing to fulfill his call to ministry.

However, the instructor evaluating his

practice sermon was unaware that Rodney’s stuttering was a speech impediment, and gave him a failing grade.

Many have been unable to look past Rodney’s stammering to see a man of God with a pastor’s heart. Yet even Moses was “slow of speech” (Ex. 4:10). It took ten more years of encouragement and discernment before Rodney would become pastor of Woodland Mennonite Church in Basye, Va. in September 2002.

Rodney Lebron grew up in the Warwick River Mennonite congregation in Denbigh, Va. “I have stuttered since I was a toddler. I attribute it to coming from a broken home,” he explains. “In first grade the counselors deemed me unfit for society and recommended I go to a mental institution, but my mom fought it,” he recalled.

“She got help from the church. They allowed me to attend Warwick River Christian School from first through fourth grades free of charge. The Christian schools looked beyond the disability into the person. That’s what made the difference,” he said. When asked how it feels to have this disability, he replied, “It’s a lot like trying to walk with a broken toe. Each time you take a step you have to be careful.”

It was Rodney’s Sunday School teacher, Ed Hinson, who first noticed his spiritual gifts. He brought the 13-year-old to the attention of Bishop Truman Brunk, Sr., who affirmed the boy’s calling. Still, little happened until Rodney graduated from high school with honors and the church helped him attend Eastern Mennonite College. There he studied Missions and Christian Ministry. As a college student in 1987, he began teaching Sunday School at Woodland Mennonite Church. Rodney served there from 1987 until 1992, all the while being mentored by Pastor Mark Martin. After his first



Pastor Rodney and Mary Ann Lebron

semester of seminary in 1992, he gave into discouragement and mounting financial pressures and dropped out of seminary.

In 1999, Rodney began employment at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community doing maintenance work, yet he never let go of his call to pastoral ministry. In 2000, Michael Shenk, a Northern District overseer, asked Rodney to return to Woodland and preach once every few months. By 2001, with just three people attending worship services, the church was in danger of closing. However, Rodney and Mary Ann, his wife of ten years, remained faithful and helped turn it around. Two years later Rodney assumed primary pastoral responsibility for the congregation with assistance from his overseer and Associate Pastor Norman Teague. The church still struggles, but attendance has increased to around 18. Pastor Lebron believes, “I can relate to people who are in pain and stressed because I’ve been there. I’ve learned that God will take care of me. I’m seeking Him to heal me of my own pain and learning to forgive others. I’m in process, but I’m not there yet.”

• Steve Carpenter
Conference Coordinator

Bearing fruit? Yes!

ad•vo•cate — *one who pleads in favor of, supports, vindicates or recommends publicly*

The Advocates for Mission dinners hosted by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions with the theme “Bearing fruit?” were held in January and February. In Stuarts Draft, Harrisonburg, Newport News, and Raleigh, persons who recently served in mission assignments told their stories of how God answered prayer and opened doors for ministry. They also told how their hearts were touched with the faith of believers in other places, bearing the fruit of spiritual growth in their own lives. VMBM President Loren Horst expressed appreciation to the attendees for their support of missions in the past years and shared about the vision for enlarging God’s Kingdom.

Advocates—people who pray, give, and go—are spreading Christ’s love and plan of salvation in many places. Are you an Advocate? Your participation in missions is essential to God’s mission in the world. Be a fruit bearer!

• Gloria Lehman
VMBM Director of Public Relations

A time of refreshment for youthworkers

God is present. *Zing!* God is longing. *Whoosh!* God is calling. *Ow, my eye!*

Once again this year's Youthworkers Retreat took place in Williamsburg in January. It was a time of relaxation and renewal, and we got to know each other through board games, group games, and conversation. We relaxed by shopping, visiting aquariums, sitting in hot-tubs, and sleeping. And of course we shot each other with finger-rockets, enabling us to release our pent-up aggression, frustration, and energy. (I want to take this time to apologize to any of the innocent bystanders who got hit during the Friday night melee.) All in all it was a pretty full weekend. Of course we also had a guest speaker who led us in the area of spiritual guidance and reflection.

Erik Swanson, a former youth pastor from Minnesota, led our group in exercises developed to see God's presence. Erik helped us notice God's presence in scripture, in our physical surroundings, in our bodies, in our creativity, and in our lives. With everything Erik reminded us, "Trust God is at work." Our goal for the weekend was to grow in our ability to help youth become more aware of God's presence in their lives. We were encouraged to help youth find God's grace in their lives, feel



God's longing to draw them near, and understand God's calling for their lives to be Disciples of Christ.

I am always touched by the deep commitment for youth displayed at the Youthworker's retreat. We came from different areas and different churches, but we all came with a love for youth. We came with different needs, but we all had the same desire to see the lives of youth transformed. We came for different reasons, but we all left knowing God is working in our lives and the lives of our youth.

• Jon Landis
Zion Hill Mennonite Church

Congregational Resource Center

We hear a lot these days about being emerging or missional churches and it's not only from Mennonite Church USA. How can we get a better grasp on all of congregational life being missional rather than having only a missions program? What does this mean for Christians and congregations in the 21st century?

The Congregational Resource Center has some resources that may inspire and help you as you discern this for your ministry and congregation.

- **Living into the New World:** How cultural trends affect your congregation by Gil Rendle (40 minute video in two parts with small leader's guide)
- **Church Next:** Quantum changes in how we do ministry by Eddie Gibbs
- **Missional Church:** A vision for the sending of the church in North America by Darrell L. Guder, Ed.
- **Mission-Focused Congregations:** A Bible Study
- **Letting Go:** Transforming congregations for ministry by Roy D. Phillips
- **Into the Future:** Turning today's church trends into tomorrow's opportunities by Elmer Towns and Warren Bird

- **The Postmodern Parish:** New ministry for a new era by Jim Kitchens
- **Holy Conversations:** Strategic planning as a spiritual practice for congregations - Gil Rendle & Alice Mann

Don't overlook the periodicals:

- **Congregations 2003** (Alban Institute) - Crossing Cultural Boundaries—taking risks, building communities; Leadership—expanding vision for changing times; Divided Loyalties—can we be in the world and not of it?
- **Leadership**, Summer 2003 - Emerging Leaders
- **Rev.**, Jan./Feb. 2003 - Where are you looking? Identifying 10 key worldviews and how they affect your church
- **Youthworker**, Nov./Dec. 2003 - Postmodernism Revisited

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Kathy Weaver Wenger at 540-432-4219 or wengerkw@emu.edu to make arrangements for evening use. Visit our website at www.emu.edu/mcrc to browse our catalog.

April 2004 Prayer Calendar

Sunday

**Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!
Seek justice, encourage the oppressed,
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.**

Isaiah 1:16b-17 (NIV)

4 Pray for overseers Michael Shenk and Sam Weaver as they gather tomorrow evening with pastors and congregational representatives from each of the Northern District congregations.

5 Pray for VMBM President Loren Horst and his wife Earlene as they return from three weeks in Jamaica. In addition to meeting with church leaders, Loren taught a missions seminar and preached in several churches.

11 *Easter Sunday*
The Lord is risen! Our sins are forgiven! We have eternal life! Hallelujah! Never-ending hallelujahs!

12 Pray for VMC's Executive Officers as they meet tomorrow to plan for the next Conference Council meeting and the delegate session in July. The officers are Joe Longacher, Steve Brown, Malinda Stoltzfus, and Ron Piper.

18 Pray for Paolo and Rosy Ribaudo who are leading the Emanuel congregation at Capaci, Sicily. Pray for wisdom and strength as they develop a new outreach in a nearby city where several members live.

19 Paul and Esther Kniss mentor Lalman and Rafina Sookharry, leaders of the Esperanza Mennonite Church. Pray for God's directions as they seek a new worship place of their own, plan Vacation Bible School, and witness for Christ.

25 Eastern Mennonite University is holding its 86th annual commencement today. Pray that God will lead each of the graduates as they make decisions about future employment and service opportunities.

26 Wednesday is the annual meeting of the Albanian Mennonite Mission Foundation. Pray that the board members (Albanians and missionaries) will make wise decisions regarding ongoing agricultural and development projects.

Tuesday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Matt Horst.

If you would like to sponsor one or more months of the prayer calendar, contact Gloria Lehman at gloria.lehman@vmbm.org, 540-434-9727 or 1-800-707-5535.

6 Pray for the people and churches of Haiti during this time of political unrest. Pray especially for a pastor whose house and church were burned to the ground, and for an orphanage where the food reserves were ransacked.

7 In Jamaica, the unexpected death of a mother of five children and one grandchild has been difficult for the family, the Retrieve Mennonite Church community, and for Omar and Dolores Beiler. Pray for God's comfort for all.

13 Pray for the staff of Virginia Mennonite Conference as they plan for this summer's VMC Assembly and YouthFest. Pray also for the volunteers who are serving on various committees, such as worship and children's activities.

14 Eastern Mennonite High School is hosting the Mennonite Secondary Education Council Choir Festival this weekend. Pray for the safety of the 15 other Mennonite choirs who will be traveling to Harrisonburg for this event.

20 A Partners in Mission team was scheduled to travel to Haiti this week. The departure for this team has been put on hold until the unrest in the country has subsided. Let us pray that calm will return and more lives will not be lost.

21 Pray for Eastern Carolina District's outreach advisory committee as they meet tomorrow evening. They will be joined by leaders of Mennonite churches in Puerto Rico who are interested in planting a church in High Point, N.C.

27 Thank God for each staff member of Virginia Menn. Conference, Virginia Menn. Board of Missions, and Virginia Menn. Aid Plans. Tomorrow morning they will enjoy a Staff Appreciation Breakfast together.

28 Pray for Pastor Ronnie Pride as he leads Fellowship of Christ Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., as well a growing ministry that includes job training, providing opportunities for small businesses, and rehabilitation for recovering drug addicts.

Wednesday

1 Pray for Southern District Chair Mark Wenger and Overseer Howard Miller as they meet with congregational representatives today to consider many issues, including health care for church employees.

8 VMBM is in conversation with the N.C. Mennonite churches and Mennonite Mission Network about possibilities for a new church plant in Charlotte, N.C. Pray for discernment in shaping the vision and identifying church planters.

15 On this tax date, pray that there will be a generous outpouring of contributions for the ministries of congregations, Virginia Mennonite Conference, and Mennonite Church USA.

22 A recent Elders' Seminar provided good input for leaders and potential leaders in the Mennonite congregations in Trinidad. The teaching was given by their own leaders; thank God for this indication of a maturing church.

29 Jesse Bergey is coaching the cricket team at Maranatha School for the Deaf which is preparing for the competition next month. He asks for us to pray for safety of the players as they practice, as injuries can happen in this sport.

Friday

2 The first training session for Missional Church facilitators in VMC will be held this weekend. Pray for the representatives from each participating VMC District as they are introduced to "Cultivating Missional Identity."

9 *Good Friday*
Thank you, Lord of the Universe, for taking all of our sins with you to the cross. We claim you as our great Redeemer.

16 Pray for Willard and Eva Eberly who travel from Italy to Albania tomorrow. Pray that they, along with others, will discern how the work in Albania might expand as well as how Albanians can best be prepared for leadership.

23 A recent Elders' Seminar provided good input for leaders and potential leaders in the Mennonite congregations in Trinidad. The teaching was given by their own leaders; thank God for this indication of a maturing church.

30 This weekend is the second training session for "Cultivating Missional Identity" for VMC's Missional Church facilitators. This resource will help each congregation look at their life and activities in light of missional vision.

Saturday

3 Keith and Tami Nice continue to lead a weekly Bible study in their home each Sunday evening. Pray for them as they give leadership and for the persons attending, some of whom are not connected to the church in any other way.

10 Pray for William and Joan Broughton who lead the Temple Hall Mennonite Church in Jamaica. Sunday School is a dynamic part of the congregation. Pray for the youth and children as they study God's Word.

17 Pray for Joe Bontrager as he attends the annual Urban Ministry Directors and mission leaders meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. Representatives from Mennonite mission agencies and conferences will meet for resourcing and networking.

24 Pray for the men and women who are graduating from Eastern Mennonite Seminary today. Pray for God's continued guidance in each person's life. Pray also for a smooth transition for those beginning new ministry positions.

Announcements

Do you need a resource speaker for weekend church retreats, social events or Sunday morning sermons? Storyteller Millard Showalter is available to provide a variety of programs of memorized stories, readings and scripture. All honorariums received will be given in support of the building fund at Lindale Mennonite

Church. To schedule a presentation, contact Millard at 540-867-5626 or meshow@gte.net.

Highland Retreat is seeking a half-time Director of Development. (More than half-time will also be considered.) The role of this position is to help advance Highland's camping mission by managing and developing its special funding programs. This is a salaried staff position that is open immediately. Interested persons may contact Paul Beiler at 14783 Upper Highland Drive, Bergton, VA 22811, 540-852-3226, or info@highlandretreat.org.

The Executive Committee of **Mennonite Women of Virginia** is currently looking for a vice-president, secretary, and missions needs secretary. Not only is this


committee compiled of great women, but the work is rewarding and there are numerous opportunities to meet other women from across Virginia Mennonite Conference. Meeting dates and times are flexible to meet the needs of those on this committee. For more information, contact President Deb Pardini at 540-942-9612 or pardinsp@hotmail.com.

The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center Board has called **Steve Shenk**, Harrisonburg, Va., to serve as director, effective June 1. Steve is a member of Park View Mennonite Church. Steve and his wife Karen are the parents of two grown children.



Pastoral Transition

Bruce Hankee was installed as pastor of Greenmonte Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va., on March 14.

Spirit led!

beloved... gifted... and more!

Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly and YouthFest

July 8-11, 2004

on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University

spiritual inspiration... fellowship... workshops
... delegate sessions... lots of youth...
missions festival... children's activities
...and more!

www.vmconf.org/assembly



youthfest

July 8-11
2004

worship

on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University

speakers

Battle of the Bands

improv comedy

team panic spiral

friends

...and so much more!

www.vmconf.org/youthfest

Connections (USPS 007-205)
Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions
Virginia Mennonite Conference
901 Parkwood Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2498



Periodical postage PAID
Harrisonburg, VA 22801