

# Connections

Virginia Mennonite  
Conference &  
Board of Missions

December 2005  
Vol. 16, No. 2



## SAILING ACTS

Linford and Janet Stutzman explore Paul's journey of change

In reflective silence, Janet and I folded and stowed the stiff, white sails of SailingActs and sorted through the piles of brochures on gods and ruins collected during the 15 months of sailing the routes of Paul on my sabbatical from EMU. We fingered the broken pottery samples and remembered places like Lystra and Derbe. We were aware, as we winterized SailingActs in Tropea, at the southern tip of Italy in early August, 2005, that we were putting the most challenging and rewarding time of our lives to rest. Like Paul at the end of Acts, we were leaving the sea for Rome. Our learning journey was over.

After following Paul for 4,000 miles under sail, and another 2,500 on land, after exploring all 36 harbors mentioned in the book of Acts and all of the cities Paul visited during his ten to twelve years of mission journeys, our respect and appreciation for this outstanding apostle has soared. Paul was both a man of the sea and a man of land, an explorer of the Roman Empire with a vision of the Kingdom of God. Paul was perhaps the only man in history who had met both the living Jesus in his power and glory, and the most powerful man living, the ruler of the most glorious superpower the world had ever seen, the Caesar of Rome. Paul was a rare individual who not only could bridge the vast cultural and religious differences across the Roman Empire with the gospel of Jesus, but demonstrated how the good news can be relevant across the centuries, in every part of the world.

That evening, after the last tarp was lashed into place, the batteries disconnected, and the dock-lines secure, we took a taxi from the marina, caught the overnight train to Rome, and then the flight to Washington, D.C. As the plane descended into



Photos courtesy Linford Stutzman

(left) Linford and Janet Stutzman on their sailboat, named SailingActs, in one of the 36 harbors they visited as written about in the book of Acts.

(below) Linford walks to Rome on the ancient "Appian Way," a road built by the Romans as the main road into the city.

Washington, D.C., the center of the most powerful empire in the world today, I realized that following Paul through the Roman Empire was a journey that is not really over, for our world today is so like that of the first century. The world has become like the Mediterranean Sea, changeable, unpredictable, deadly and beautiful. Like Rome, America makes promises that it can only partially fulfill, and threatens those who resist the promises of peace, prosperity and progress it offers. Like Rome, America will not endure forever. It cannot give life. Paul would feel right at home in America.

What kind of letter would Paul write to the churches of Virginia Mennonite Conference? I believe he would encourage us all to imitate him, to explore our world, to experiment making the good news of the Gospel credible, relevant and attractive to everyone, everywhere. I believe Paul would remind us to never allow the dazzling displays of power and glory of our nation dis-

tract our vision from the power and the glory of the living Lord of the kingdom of God.

A book **Sailing Acts** describing the adventures, the people we met, the near disasters, our stupidities and triumphs, insights of Paul, ourselves, the world, and reflections on the life of faith on a sea of change, is scheduled to be released in early fall of 2006 by Good Books.

• Linford Stutzman  
Associate Professor of Culture and Mission  
Eastern Mennonite University



# Preaching at my father's funeral

It was a shock to hear the words, "Dad died this morning." That was October 2, 2005. My father, Paul Leonard Burkholder, had his 80th birthday on April 17 of this year. To celebrate that milestone, many of the Burkholder family gathered in southern Manitoba at my sister's place the last weekend of May. During that gathering, Dad took me aside and told me he was thinking about his funeral. Among other things, he wondered if I would be willing to preach (or was it, "bring the message?").



Owen Burkholder  
Conference Minister

I have been a pastor long enough to know that the closer one is emotionally to the deceased, the more difficult it is to perform the public functions. We were close but I thought the distance (between Alberta and Virginia) that we've had might make it possible—I said I would consider it when the time came. The only request Dad made was that the service would be "Christ-honoring."

Well, some four months later, the time came and I agreed to preach. What an awesome experience! We gathered in the Roman Catholic Church because it was the largest auditorium in the area. It seats 500 people and there were approximately 50 in the overflow area. The attendance at the Mennonite congregation is 60-80. So, there were people from Dad's business associations, attendees at vacation Bible schools from the past 50+ years, and friends of family members. Many of these have seldom darkened the doors of a church.

I began the message with, "Now, dear family and friends, Dad has gone to a great length to get us all together in church! You know very well that he would love to be standing here and addressing us one more time. The question of the day is, 'what would he say?'"

I proceeded to outline Dad's absorption of the Biblical text and the Jesus story within the Biblical story. I then focused on the Luke 22 version of Jesus and his disciples at that last supper and the words, 'You have stood firmly by me in my times of trial; and now I entrust to you the kingdom which my Father entrusted to me' (Luke 22:28-29 REV)

"If I may, I would invite us to place ourselves in this room with Jesus. Feel the love that God has for us in sending Jesus to share this human reality with us; live for a moment with the rebuke of Jesus for our self-centeredness, small-mindedness, and sin; now, enter into the invitation to share life with Jesus and in that sense bring heaven into our earthly realities."

I trust, Dad, that we fulfilled your wish that this service be Christ-honoring. Revel in His presence!

### Correction for the last paragraph of the "Happy Week" spreads to new places" article in the November issue:

Persons who've served on past teams take the curriculum developed here and use it in congregations in Sicily. This summer at Shalom Mennonite Church, 15 new children participated in their "Happy Week," opening doors to unreached families in their area of Palermo—known for its crime. How rewarding to see the investment of time and creative effort in preparing for Bible day camps producing fruit in other cities!

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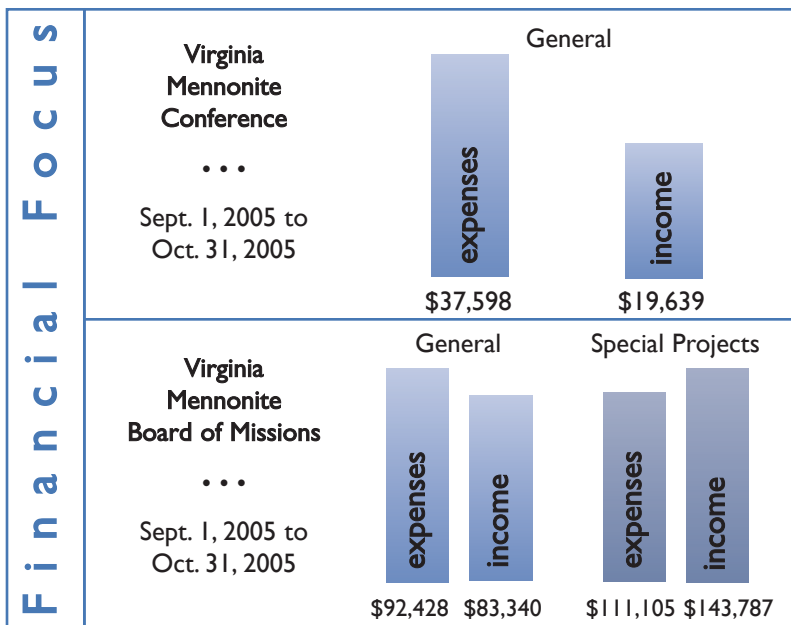
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# Living faith responses to abortion

The Mennonite Church USA supports a consistent ethic of life, which includes opposition to abortion. But we are inconsistent in acting on that belief. It is easy to be against something when it costs little or nothing. To prevent abortion we must seek to create conditions that make it possible for women to find ways through and beyond a difficult pregnancy. Otherwise James is speaking to us about a dead faith. (James 2:14-17) Our equivalent too often is, “(mother’s name), you must not have an abortion. Good luck and God bless you in your pregnancy and childrearing.”

Why are we inconsistent? Perhaps we avoid supporting single pregnant women and teens because we do not want to be seen as condoning sex outside of marriage. We do not know how to support someone while being clear that we do not agree with their actions. Maybe we are unwilling to challenge American cultural value of an easy life with an avoidance of suffering at all costs. Walking with women in pregnancy and childrearing is costly.

God gives life. We are to be stewards of that life. Each individual, family, and church can contribute to creating a climate like that of the early church of whom it was said, “see how they love one another”, or the church in Rome known for rescuing newborns left to die by the river. What would happen in our communities and our world if each congregation would discern how to be involved in one or more of the following responses to abortion?

- **Policy work to support child care and medical care.** Advocacy at local, state, and national levels could enable mothers to work without child care costs consuming their salary. Increasingly, children in the nation are without health care and live in poverty. If as much energy went into creating systems to support children and provide a living wage as now goes into antiabortion rallies, abortions would decrease—as they did 10 years ago when more supports were in place.

- **Adoption or Foster care.** Being an adopted child and the mother of an adopted child I cringe at the bumper sticker, “adopt one until there are none” with endearing pictures of animals. All children deserve a home where they are provided for and loved. Many of us between the ages of 30 and 55 live in homes larger than those we grew up in and would have room for other children if we did not set our housing, time use, and other living standards to those of our culture.

- **Mentor a pregnant teen, a single mother, a family in need.** Volunteer or support an organization dedicated to mentoring single mothers or create one if there are none in your area. Make the acquaintance of such a person or family and walk with them through the years.

It takes the whole church, extended family, and educational system to respond in ways that show our faith is alive. Just as the early church grew because of the outpouring of sacrificial love, may our own responses to abortion be born of a living faith that enriches saved lives and builds the church.

• Ann Hershberger  
Professor of Nursing at Eastern Mennonite University

## Church celebrates 100 years

Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church in Chesapeake, Virginia celebrated “100 Years of Building on Jesus Christ, Our Solid Foundation” the weekend of October 7-9, 2005. The crowd of 450 included folks who returned from as far away as Chile and Ecuador.

Every seat was taken for the Friday evening music program. A silence fell over the sanctuary when Daniel Smucker rose from his seat and moved to the front to testify of his rededication to the Lord in that very room more than 66 years ago.

Saturday and Sunday activities were held on the campus of Mt. Pleasant Christian School. Wet, windy weather did not dampen spirits but drove everyone closer together. Each corner of the school was occupied with clusters of people who were pouring over old photographs and memorabilia or simply enjoying a cup of coffee together, catching up, reminiscing and sharing stories. A community cookbook and scrapbook were for sale.

While the Hunt Family Fiddlers sang “Will the Sun Ever Shine Again”, clouds broke and glorious sunshine appeared. Dale Keffer, Pastor of Providence Mennonite Church, who attended the church and school as a child, spoke in the evening. A group of young men acted out scenes from the lives of those who chose a path of peace and nonresistance during wartime. Margaret Smith shared her journey of faith and the influence that Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church has had in her life.

Under a big tent on Sunday, Chester Wenger, a son of one of the earliest settlers in this church community, testified of God’s leading him and his family to serve in Africa. His son-in-law, Richard Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions, challenged the audience to move from their center of faith to new fringes of need beyond themselves. A look back over the past century gave the church a vision for the future.

• Linda Overholt  
Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va.

## Angel Food Ministries operating at Hickory

In an effort to make a positive practical difference outside their present circle of friends and acquaintances, Hickory Mennonite Church has become a distribution center for Angel Food Ministries (AFM).

Photo: Derek Pfaff



Rosemary King, member of Hickory Mennonite Church, holds a box of groceries that Angel Food Ministries distributes from the church.

AFM is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing grocery relief and financial support to communities throughout the United States. Starting regionally in Georgia in 1994, AFM has grown nationally. In August of 2005, over 125,000 families were fed in 32 states.

Angel Food Ministries places Christian tracts to spread the Gospel in each food order. Local churches and organizations often become distribution centers. Hickory Mennonite Church is the only church in Hickory that is a part of Angel Food Ministries.

Generally one AFM food box, or unit, will feed a family of four for about a week or a senior citizen for about a month. The food is all the same high quality one would purchase at a grocery store at about half the cost. There are no second-hand items, no damaged or out-dated goods, no dented cans without labels, no day-old breads and no produce that is almost too ripe.

There is no limit to the number of units an individual can purchase, and there are no applications to complete or qualifications to which participants must adhere. AFM food boxes are a great way for anyone to stretch their food dollars and, like most retail grocery stores, AFM also participates in the U.S. Food Stamp program, using the Off-Line Food Stamp Voucher system.

Hickory Mennonite Church has been involved in the program since May 2005 and from 15 units the first month to 53 units last month, we feel this program has the potential to be a vital ministry to people in the Hickory area. Rosemary King, the coordinator of the ministry at HMC, recently presented the program to the local network of social workers and the church office has become a busy place. Additional information can be found at [angelfoodministries.com](http://angelfoodministries.com)

• Jim and Ann Roth  
Hickory Mennonite Church, Hickory, NC

## Celebrating 91 years of ministry at 'Aid Plans'

The verse, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2) was the theme verse for Virginia Conference's (VMC) fifth Celebration of Ministry Banquet. Seventy-seven people, all of whom have been involved in the work of the Aid Plans, gathered October 29 to celebrate the 91 years of mutual aid ministry of the Virginia Mennonite Property Aid and Auto Aid Plans. The festive banquet, hosted by VMC at the Evers Country Buffet in Mt. Crawford, Va., marked a significant transition. On September 1, Aid Plan employees became part of MutualAid eXchange (MAX). The Aid Plans are now functioning as an agency of MAX, which was formed in 2001 by VMC's Property Aid Plan and nine other Mennonite mutual aid companies. MAX, headquartered in Kansas, includes 23 Anabaptist groups.

Those gathered enjoyed a delicious buffet, sang hymns, listened to the male a cappella voices of the Eversole Road Quartet and heard speakers address the Aid Plan's past, transitions, present state and future dreams. Glendon Blosser, chair of the Conference Historical Committee, shared a history of the Aid Plans. Brent Eberly, who has served as Executive Director of both Virginia Mennonite Auto Aid and Property Aid Plans since 1987, spoke of the transition and he accepted a plaque for his dedicated service. Henry Hawkins, Treasurer for the Plans, explained MAX from his perspective as a new board member. David Wine, President and CEO of MAX, shared his vision for doing mutual aid in the 21st century through MAX. He described MAX's insurance products as the "fuel" which fire the engine of mutual aid. He and his wife Sharon accepted a \$50,000 check from VMC for the MAX Share Fund's mutual aid ministries. The entire evening was emceed by Keith May, President of the Aid Plans.

• Steve Carpenter  
Conference Coordinator



(l-r) Steve Carpenter, David Wine, Sharon Wine, Brent Eberly

Photo courtesy of Ken Horst



Ken Horst, VMBM Mediterranean Regional Associate, teaches a Good \$ense Budgeting course at Palermo, Sicily. The course materials were translated into Italian by Eva Eberly.

## Good \$ense Budgeting translated and taught in Italian for first time

Sue and I were invited by the leadership of the Italian Mennonite Church to share the Good \$ense Budgeting course (translated into Italian) that is used by MMA for Stewardship Universities. We met for six classes from October 9th - 15th, usually from 9-11:30 p.m. The class size ranged from 25-30 students who were willing participants in the discussion. They eagerly became engaged in examination of the principles taught in the course.

This class served to evaluate the Italian translation of Good \$ense Budgeting done so superbly by Eva Eberly. Does this material merit being published for the wider reading and study in Italy? Would the book based on American culture connect with the issues facing people in Italy, especially the evangelicals? With a high unemployment rate, job insecurity, a lower earning base due to conversion to the euro, would the teaching on giving to the church and saving first, and then living without debt, work there? This led to lively discussions in each class. The lower earnings and a 25% unemployment rate gave added factors to consider. At the end, the class began understanding the concept that culture cannot dictate the management of money to a member of the family of faith. We begin with who we are before God. Our "worth" is because we belong to Him. Material possessions do not dictate our identity.

Working together on these down-to-earth, practical issues was rewarding. The application of this teaching now lies with the Italian church. We believe it is possible that these participants will now share what they have learned with others in their congregations.

• Ken Horst  
Mediterranean Regional Associate

## Tending God's garden in Jamaica

A year ago, I tended a garden filled with eternal seeds at Maranatha School for the Deaf.

A month ago, my cousin Melanie and I planted an earthly garden to constantly remind us of those eternal seeds we need to tend to. Today, through Hurricane Wilma and many days without sunshine our peas are standing strong. It was through that rain that God showed me the myriad ways that I can and have taken care of His garden. God depends on us to take care of His garden so that His plants can sprout and grow.

Although it's not always easy to labor in His fields, two specific memories remind me over and over of the importance. The first one involves a four-year-old boy named Devor. His first week in the dorm and at school was miserable for him and for everyone else. He was constantly on the move, biting, kicking, pinching, and fighting wherever he went. Continuous punishment didn't even seem to faze his little hands or his spirits one bit. However, about the time I felt like I couldn't take it any more I realized that this little boy was no longer biting, kicking, or pinching. He was changing. He was gaining respect for me when I wasn't looking and he was watching every move I was about to make when my back was turned. He recognized the love behind the punishment. The second memory is completely different. I've been greatly challenged by the thirst and hunger of my student and friend, Andrine. Many nights we would sit on our bunk beds and chat away. Many times I would answer her questions about God and many times we would pray together. Until one day she wrote me a letter. The contents of the letter thanked me for being like a sister to her and for discussing the Bible with her. A few weeks later I was told that she has been witnessing to another girl in the dorm.

I'm so thankful that God has allowed me to see a sneak peak of the value of the work we as Christians can do in the lives of the people around us. For Devor maybe I planted a seed and for Andrine, I was the water for the seed planted by someone else. Even though I may never see the harvest of these seeds, I pray that one day the harvest will be greater than what my little pea plants will yield in my earthly garden.



Monica Unzicker hugs Devor, a new student at Maranatha School for the Deaf.

• Monica Unzicker  
VMBM worker in Jamaica

# Eastern Mennonite School dedicates new addition



Eastern Mennonite School dedicated a new addition to the high school building in Park View on October 22, during Homecoming weekend at the school. The service of dedication, held in the new auditorium, engaged the gathered community using art, music, poetry and drama.

James E. Clemens composed and arranged the music for the service, which student groups from Eastern Mennonite School, including Handbell Choir, Orchestra, Junior Choir, and Senior Choir, then performed. The service also included a short history of the school, a multimedia art presentation and a drama presentation by the acting class.

The school first began using sections of the new facilities in January of 2005, and has since moved into the completed space. The new addition includes an acoustically designed auditorium with seating for 653 people, seven general purpose classrooms, two music classrooms, four practice studios, two art classrooms, one science classroom, and numerous offices, conference rooms and storage areas.

Eastern Mennonite School thanks everyone who supported the building with their contributions of time, energy, prayer and financial gifts.

The dedication was held in conjunction with Homecoming because the facility is meant to be a

community center, a center which Virginia Mennonite Conference groups and other groups in the community will be able to use.

Contact the school if you would like to schedule a tour of the new facility or schedule time in the space.

• Ben Bixler  
Eastern Mennonite School

## An encouraging word

On October 12, a group of 27 youth and adults gathered around round tables in the fellowship hall of the Asheville Mennonite Church. A service project was about to begin that required no tools or other special equipment.

Thirteen names of individuals or households were written on a board, people who are regularly prayed for but are distant geographically from the congregation. These included college students, people in ministry or service elsewhere, missionaries in or recently returned from their place of service, and others.

Remembering a time when they were away from home and received a word of encouragement, participants wrote encouraging letters to the names on the list. The group of 27 generated over 60 letters of encouragement and had great fun doing it!

• Pat McFarren  
Pastor of Asheville (NC) Mennonite Church

## Congregational Resource Center

**Young Adult Ministry** Need a jump start on your young adult ministry? Maybe you need someone to talk to or bounce ideas off of? Nan Kanagy, a seminary student and former youth and young adult minister, is available to consult with congregations about young adult ministry. Nan is an active member at Lindale Mennonite Church and a resident director at Eastern Mennonite University. Nan brings knowledge, experience and passion for young adults. We are excited that she is offering her gifts to the conference in this way. If you would like to talk with Nan, contact the Congregational Resource Center.

**It's your turn to help** Submit your list of Sunday School Resources. Sunday school classes are often at a loss for what to study next. The Congregational Resource Center is compiling a list of materials that classes have studied and would recommend to other congregations and classes. Send us your recommendations for children's, youth and adult Sunday school or small group study

material and we will add them to this list of tried and true resources. We will make this information (and some resources) available for Virginia Mennonite Conference churches.

Over the past six months, the Congregational Resource Center has been getting an overhaul. We are switching over to a new cataloging system, and in the process, have been weeding out older resource material. Now it's time to update! If you have suggestions for resources that you would like to see in the CRC, or if you would like to make a special monetary or resource donation, please contact us. We'd love to see our shelves replenish themselves with new, relevant material, and welcome your involvement!

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Jill Landis at 540-432-4219 or [crc@emu.edu](mailto:crc@emu.edu) to make arrangements for evening use.



# Connections Prayer Calendar December 2005

**Sunday**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

**“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him.”**  
 Matthew 2:11 (NIV)

**4** Milton and Mary Ethel Heatwole, Harrisonburg MC, participated with a prayer team in Southeast Asia and contributed excellently to the group, reports Skip and Carol Tobin. Thank God for this time of spiritual blessing for all.

**5** Pray the Holy Spirit will birth a living faith in the hearts of friends in Italy who are reading the "page-a-day" Scripture calendars given to them by believers. For many it's the first time they have read the Bible.

**6** Nancy Marshall, *traveler* participant in Orange Walk Town, Belize, gathers deaf youth together for worship each Sunday morning. Pray for this small group of energetic learners.

**7** Norma Teles, Brazilian missionary to Albania through VMBM congregations in November. Thank God for safe travel and enthusiastic reporting.

**8** The YES team just arrived in Lezhe, Albania. Pray for quick acquisition as they live in Albanian homes and find their place of service.

**9** Steve and Betsy Dintaman, Zion MC, serving with VMBM and Mission Network at the Lithuania Christian College, are seeking complete funding for this current term. Can you assist them in this way?

**10** Reach out to individuals and families with limited resources this season by providing some materials gifts. Also the gift of a visit is priceless to those who are lonely.

**11** Richard and Margaret Keeler's love for Christ radiates from them to the variety of people they meet. This quality reaches into the hearts of people who are seeking God. Pray for their continual strength for this task.

**12** Samuel Hernandez assisted with a soccer camp for children. He says, "The children played good 'futbol' and really focused on fun." Thank God for Sam's availability to reach out with love and consistency to the players.

**13** Pray for Mike and Kara Martin, from New Beginnings Church newly arrived in Lushnje, Albania as they serve in a missions internship, that this would be a positive year of service among the agricultural villages.

**14** Sponsors of students at the Maranatha School for the Deaf have sent Christmas gifts to their student(s). These tokens of love bring big smiles to the students' faces! Ask God to grant the students a safe holiday at home.

**15** Monica Unzicker relates closely with school administrators at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. She helped the students to prepare for the Christmas celebration held today. Ask for God's grace to sustain her.

**16** Pray for Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service which are sending aid to places where natural disasters have devastated entire communities. Ask for God's anointing on the MCC and MDS workers.

**17** Pray for the international students who are in the US and far from their families this season. Perhaps you can provide a "home away from home" for one or two. Make a connection through the colleges in your community.

**18** Jim and Ruth Mellinger give leadership to the Greensboro MF and are exploring additional ministries in Graham and Durham, NC. Ask for God's clear direction and committed people for new areas of ministry.

**19** Pray for the people who struggle with depression during the holiday season. May our connection with them bring the light of healing and hope out of darkness.

**20** Melissa Wenger, *traveler* participant serving in Atmore, Ala. will have an unusual Christmas this year. Pray for her to receive a double blessing as she shares this season with the Pearch Community Church.

**21** In spite of the hectic atmosphere during this season, take time to build harmonious relationships with family members, enhancing the connection of generations. Thank God for love and generosity shared in families.

**22** The Italian Mennonite churches take advantage of the Christmas season to reach out to those around them with the Good News. Pray God's blessing and guidance for their activities and witness.

**23** Pray for the mission leaders of VMBM as they seek to promote missionary vision, discern where God is at work, and provide opportunities for meaningful participation.

**24** Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free. From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Born thy people to deliver; born a child, and yet a King!  
*Hymnal: Worship Book #178*

**25** Oh, how joyfully, oh, how hopefully, wakes the earth on Christmas morn! God has spoken, death is broken. Alleluia! Christ is born!  
*Hymnal: Worship Book #209*

**26** Today, Boxing Day, is celebrated in many cultures as a day of sharing the abundant gifts that we have with those who have less. Let's pass on this custom as "a cup of cold water" in the name of Christ.

**27** VMC and VMBM seek your gifts in support of our ministries. We give deep thanks for those who have contributed in 2005 and encourage many others to give also.

**28** Pray for Roy and Joanne Hunsberger, Asheville, NC, as they prepare to serve for 5 months with the Mennonite Church in Trinidad and Tobago beginning in January. May God fit the details together for this new venture.

**29** Today Melanie Heatwole leaves her 4-month service term with the Maranatha School in Jamaica, returning to Va. for college. Join us in thanking God for her energy in touching lives with Christ's love.

**30** Today is a good day to reflect on the past year and count God's blessings. We can also remember the challenges that came our way. And then, "in everything, give thanks."

**31** Bring in the New Year with prayer: for the persecuted church around the world and for peace to reign in war-torn countries.

**Christmas**

# Announcements



**Sailing Acts:** in the fall of 2006, after spending time on SailingActs in the Mediterranean during the summer, Linford and Janet

Stutzman will be available to give presentations on their experience and insights gained by sailing Acts.



**Youth Work for Dummies,** the annual Virginia Mennonite Conference youth-workers retreat, will

be held in Williamsburg, Va., on January 20-22. Glen Guyton, youth minister at Calvary Community Church will be the speaker. The cost is \$125/person (double occupancy) when registration is received by January 1, 2006.

Treat yourself and your family to the Ted & Lee & Ingrid presentation **DoveTale**, a Christmas play that gives a fresh and funny look at the nativity, on Dec. 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Eastern Mennonite High School Auditorium, Harrisonburg. Tickets at the door or reserve preferred seating by calling 540-564-0210. \$10/adult, \$8/students and seniors; \$32/family. Doors open one hour before show-time.

Be a part of the **Partners in Mission** work group to **Nazareth and Bethlehem**, May 5-22, 2006! This unique, hands-on opportunity will allow participants to encounter the land of Jesus' earthly ministry and

relive the stories of Jesus as we meet, work, and pray with the Palestinian Christians. For an itinerary or more information, contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at (540) 432-4276, [weaverdj@emu.edu](mailto:weaverdj@emu.edu), or Kevin Clark at (540) 432-4217, [clarkka@emu.edu](mailto:clarkka@emu.edu).



**Travis and Gini Trotter** began a three-year term with MCC in September. They are assisting the Kek'chi people of Guatemala with community development and eco-tourism.

They are members of Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

## Pastoral Transitions



**James Mellinger** transferred from Lancaster Conference. He was installed on October 23, 2005 as pastor at Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship, Greensboro, NC.



**John D. Stahl** was licensed to ministry on October 23, 2005 as associate pastor at Immanuel Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

**Paul Kniss** transferred into Virginia Conference from Ohio Conference on a retired basis on Sept. 14, 2005.

**Catherine and Dan Longenecker**, who served VMRC until recent retirement, accepted an interim pastoral call beginning in September at the Americus (GA) Mennonite Church, until mid 2006.

*called and sent!*

*Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions*

**Will you serve in one of these places?**

**Engage in outreach in Donegal, Ireland**, with European Christian Missions partnering with VMBM. Teams in summer 2006 give opportunities for working with youth in various settings. Serve for a few weeks, a few months, or a couple years.

**Teach English in China** with VMBM's partner, China Educational Exchange. One- to two-year terms are available. This opening to enhance the lives of Chinese students of all ages yields opportunities for informal sharing of Christ and God's Word.

**Contact Beth Brunk, Human Resource Associate at VMBM by calling 540.434.9727 or 800.707.5535 or [beth.brunk@vmbm.org](mailto:beth.brunk@vmbm.org)**

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