

## Kentucky Celebration honors pioneer missionaries

By **STEVE CARPENTER**

Conference Coordinator

Photos courtesy of Owen Burkholder and Steve Carpenter

On November 9, 130 people gathered at Lindale Mennonite Church for a Kentucky Celebration. Sam and Sarah Weaver conceived the idea and worked to make the evening a success. Sarah commented, "I well remember that experience in Kentucky and it was a highlight in my life." So it was with many people, who came together from Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Denbigh, Va. for a carry-in meal honoring those who gave so much of themselves to bring the gospel to eastern Kentucky. According to Virginia Mennonite Missions president Loren Horst, "The ministry of multiple lives devoted for many years has never been adequately acknowledged." This meal and celebration helped correct that oversight.

The work, which began in the mid-1940s, was hard. Many contributed, including two gospel teams from Eastern Mennonite School (now University), but little visible fruit remains except the changed lives of a few families and the West Liberty Mennonite Church. Nonetheless, God calls us to be faithful and it was that spirit of faithful service that was honored.

Mahlon and Leah Horst moved to Relief, Ky. in 1946; Mahlon reflected on their ministry and offered his new autobiographical book, *We Kept the Angel Busy*. Mahlon remarked, "Direl Fyffe is my best friend this side of heaven...Our connection has been a trail of tears." Ken Horst, born in Kentucky as Mahlon and Leah's oldest child, shared a brief history of the work of Virginia Mennonite Conference persons in that area. We



(above) The second team from Denbigh, Va., which worked in Kentucky. (Back row, l-r) Frank Nice, Joe Hertzler, Sam Weaver, Christy Yoder. (Front row l-r) Twila Yoder (Brunk), Alice Shenk (Nice), Margje Yoder (Fries), Sarah Alderfer (Weaver).

(below) Direl and Bertha Fyffe, Mary Showalter (received by her niece Ruth Showalter) and Leah and Mahlon Horst are presented with certificates honoring their pioneer missionary service.



remembered Jacob Shenk, then President of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and Kentucky missionary Melvin Weaver, who were killed in a plane crash which Jacob piloted, while exploring mission opportunities in Tennessee.

According to Ken, "No person represents the work of Kentucky more than Direl Fyffe and his family." Direl came to Christ through the efforts of Mennonite missionaries and then carried on their work. He recalled many times when local boys got drunk and tried to disrupt their church services. Direl commented, "The wrong use of whiskey is when you don't take it with a spoon." Ken also noted, "Bertha Brenneman from Denbigh, Va.

served many years as a teacher in Kentucky community Bible schools and as a registered nurse." She recalled a comment from a local person who said, "Bertha, your work as a nurse helped us realize you Mennonites weren't Communists after all." Bertha married Marvin Fanin and moved to eastern Virginia. After Marvin retired, they returned to Kentucky where Bertha was known as a Bible teacher. Meanwhile Direl pastored first at Paint Cliff, then at Crockett, and still later at West Liberty Mennonite Churches. In January 2007, Direl, a widower, married Bertha, who was also widowed. Shortly after they joined households, Bertha's home burned to the ground. They moved back into Direl's trailer but suffered significant uninsured losses in the fire. A love offering of nearly \$2,800 was collected to say "thank you" to the Fyffes. In her concluding remarks Bertha said, "You're looking at one of the most blessed and happy women in the world."

Another honoree, Mary Showalter from Waynesboro, Va., a gifted Bible teacher who made expert use of flannel graph lessons, spent three years ministering in Kentucky. Her niece, Ruth Showalter, accepted a certificate on her behalf because Mary, 93, is confined to a wheelchair and was unable to attend.

The personal reflections were particularly rich. We heard stories of a land with few cars, muddy roads, narrow valleys and simple living. There were tales of eating blackberries while listening for the cow bell signaling the lost cow had been found. Kathleen Weaver Kurtz, who was a child during her parents' (Melvin and Miriam) ministry in Ky., used family diaries to recall the reception the Mennonite missionaries received, "the

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# An Advent transmission

Ruth Ann and I bought a very well used van for our travels in which we have made a bed that is comfortable for her with her back troubles. Yes, the transmission had some challenges but we have made several lengthy trips without incident.

On a recent trip to Ohio to take father-in-law Fred Augsburg home we stopped in Philippi, WV to visit our grandchildren, his great-grandchildren. The transmission of the old van had recently been flushed and was working particularly well. On the return trip, Ruth Ann and I were going to by-pass the grandchildren because we had just seen them.

However, this grandpa automatically turned off the Interstate at the exit to the grandkids' place. Oh well, we would go through town and on home.



**Owen Burkholder**  
Conference Minister

Just as we were pulling up the hill out of Philippi the van lost momentum. I pulled the transmission into the next gear and nothing changed. Down one more gear and it took hold. "We better stop here," was the immediate consensus. So we came on slowly up the hill, turned off at the entrance to our daughter's place and stayed the night again with the grandchildren.

When the phone negotiations indicated the transmission was likely a serious challenge, we borrowed one of

their cars and came home the next day. Subsequent work by a local shop indicates that we will need a new transmission for the van.

What, do you suppose, has been our overall response to this circumstance? It is the wonder of feeling cared for!! Now, transmissions are not cheap and we will not be spared that expense but why the van 'chose' the hill on the way to the grandkids when it could have been somewhere deep in the mountains halfway home...go figure!

There were other remarkable stories told by the staff that day. We summarized it something like this: we are not spared the challenges of life, but we are cared for.

It is the advent season. Our gracious God sent Jesus to share in the challenge of human life itself and to transform it. Let us anticipate and revel in God's ultimate care!

*Owen Burkholder*

# Esther Kniss, 84, long-time missionary



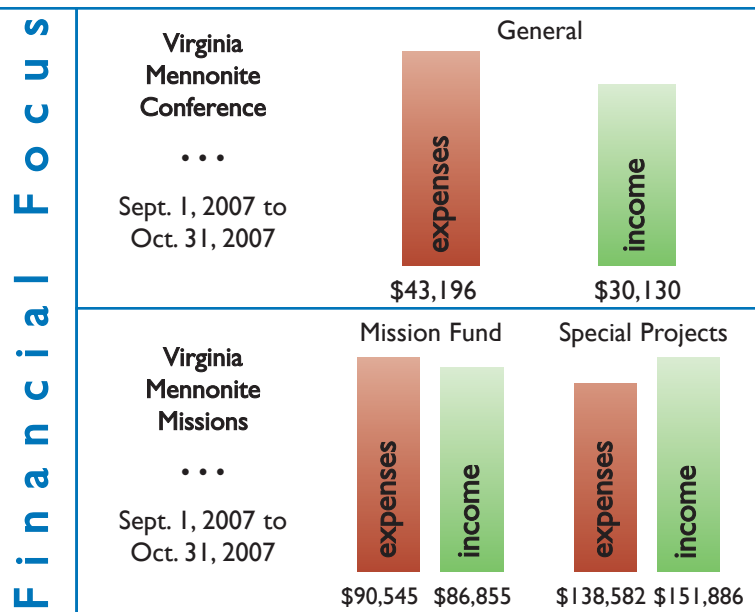
Esther Kniss, 84, died October 28 after a sudden illness. She and her husband, Paul, were mission

workers for 43 years in India with Mennonite Board of Missions (now Mennonite Missions Network). In the past eight years, they served in numerous short-term experiences with Virginia Mennonite Missions in Trinidad.

In India, Esther and Paul started Good Books, a bookstore that offered Christian books and a wide selection of other materials which brought many shoppers to the store. She also taught literacy to young women in neighboring villages. Esther spoke Hindi and several local languages, communicating well with almost everyone she met.

In Trinidad, Esther worked with organizing financial records for congregations and the church conference. She worked alongside the Trinidadians with instruction and encouragement for their leadership in this area of church life.

Her legacy of Christian commitment, personal integrity, and compassion for others inspires those who knew her.



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## Taking a Stand at Ft. Meade

### Present-day connections to WWI-era conscientious objectors

By E. DALE MAST  
Choice Books

In December 2006, the manager of the Army and Air Force Exchange store at Ft. Meade, Md., ordered a Choice Books display. Ivan Schrock, Choice Books Sales and Marketing, received the request and forwarded the news to his brother Eldon Schrock, operations manager for Choice Books of Northern Virginia. Eldon noted in his email reply, “I believe this is where our grandfather was held as a young man for being a conscientious objector.” And indeed it was.

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and joined the international forces already fighting in World War I. In June, all young men age 21 to 28 were required to register. Among them was Ivan and Eldon’s grandfather, Noah Schrock. On the first day of January 1918, the 24-year-old Amish man was called to go to Oakland, Md., where he and other draftees boarded the train for Washington DC. They arrived at 10 p.m. and waited until morning to be transported to Camp Meade where they received their first military meal.

During the following days at Camp Meade, Schrock and other recruits including Mennonites and Brethren who objected to military service chose not to report to training drills. Consequently, army officers nailed their barracks win-

dows open in frigid near zero degree weather. In addition, these steadfast young conscientious objectors (COs) were not given meals for three days. On the third day, higher ranking officers heard of their fate, and the group was moved to another location.

One evening, the group of pacifists was called to go and get their army uniforms. Schrock recounted the event, “I was worried, but thought the good Lord will take care of me. The other COs all went in and got their uniforms. They kept on saying, ‘They will treat you pretty rough if you don’t take a uniform.’ I was the last to go into the office. The officer looked at me and said, ‘You don’t look like the others.’ He opened my coat and looked all over me. Then he began to ask questions. He said I believe you are a church member. He asked where I lived and how many were in my family, how often we have church, and how many preachers we have. He asked a lot of questions. Then he said, ‘I don’t believe you want a uniform. Let me go into the next room and check with the boss.’ When we came out he said, ‘I don’t believe this man wants a uniform. We’ll have to pass on him.’”

When Schrock came out without a uniform, his fellow COs wanted to know what he told the officer. Schrock simply replied, “He did the talking. I only answered his questions.”

Nearly ninety years after this young Amish man was uprooted from his family and church community, Noah Schrock’s grandson Ivan Schrock delivered a Choice Books display to Ft. Meade.

In the year following, Choice Books has sold over 1,600 Christian and inspirational books from this display, selling more than 5 books per day! At times, the display is stocked with the book entitled *Don’t Throw in the Towel* authored by Noah Schrock’s son, Simon Schrock, author and Executive Director of Choice Books of Northern Virginia. Today, in the same place where Noah Schrock’s Christian beliefs were tested, where Noah suffered for his steadfast opposition to taking part in warfare and where over 400,000 soldiers were trained to fight in World War I, stands a Choice Books display proclaiming the “good news” of Jesus Christ to modern day soldiers and their families.

In addition to military bases, Choice Books displays are placed in supermarkets, mass merchandise stores, airports, drug stores, travel centers, hospital gift shops, and a variety of other retail stores. For more information about Choice Books, visit [www.choicebooks.org](http://www.choicebooks.org).



Confession  
of  
Faith

in a Mennonite Perspective

“We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God’s peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance even in the face of violence and warfare.”

from Article 22, Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective



A U.S. recruitment poster from the World War I-era featuring Uncle Sam. Conscientious objectors at that time had few rights or options and faced great hardships.

# Memorial flower garden remembers church members who have passed on

By RAY SNADER  
Knoxville Mennonite Church

The urban church with its limited space, frequently faces the issue of how best to memorialize members of the congregation who have died.

Unlike rural communities, today's church in the city usually buries its members in a cemetery that is not directly associated with the congregation.

Recently the Knoxville Mennonite Church tackled the issue of keeping alive the memories of past members and decided to memorialize them in a small flower garden adjacent to the sanctuary.

Near the center of the garden is a granite pad featuring brass tabs with the engraved name, date of birth and date of death of the deceased member. In the future a new tab will be added to the granite to memorialize other members.

At the dedication service for the garden, Overseer Ed Godshall suggested the garden can serve as a sanctuary and place for meditation, as well as a memorial. He

remembered the parting words of a man who said, "say goodbye to me but not to the thought of me."

Godshall also pointed to a number of passages throughout the Bible that confirm the need to remember and memorialize events and individuals, so that future generations do not forget their significance.

Don Yoder, a landscape architect from Indiana drew up the plans for the garden. He and his wife Marceil attended the dedication service.

Yoder explained that the Boxwood hedge around the outside of the memorial is representative of God's love that surrounds us continually and which serves as a continuous buffer from outside influences. In addition, the landscaper said



Don and Marceil Yoder (left) and John Teague, Chair of the Memorial Garden Committee, beside the memorial.

Photo courtesy of Ray Snader

Boxwood is considered to be "eternal." Yoder donated the large Dogwood tree at the center of the memorial which he said is representative of Christ," looking down on the garden." And the various flowers lining the garden's pathways add to the art design and are representative of new life.

Godshall said the living garden is a good reminder of those who have passed on "but who now are living eternally in the presence of God."

Benches have been added to the layout in an effort to facilitate an atmosphere of sanctuary and meditation.



Greenmonte's expanded sanctuary.

## Greenmonte Church expanding its sanctuary

Greenmonte Mennonite Church is making progress on an addition to expand its sanctuary.

In October, many in the congregation used markers to write scripture verses on the exposed concrete floor prior to having new carpet installed while singing "Standing on the Promises of God."

Pastor Bruce Hankee noted that it was touching to watch individuals, parents and children eagerly writing favorite Bible passages on the floor to affirm the authoritative foundation of God's Word in their lives and in the church.

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foreigners...were the objects of much curiosity and observation." Ruth Kurtz Hobbs commented on how difficult it was traveling between the remote towns by car. She recalled, "We had a flat tire every time we went to Paintsville except once—that time we had two."

The evening concluded with a photo presentation, prepared by Conference Minister Owen Burkholder, which strung together dozens of photos and an outline of the people and dates of VMC's and VMM's mission work in Kentucky. We laughed when we saw photos of the dominant modes of transportation, either on horses like Topsy and Gyp, or in a muddy Jeep. We cried when we saw side-by-side photos of Jacob Shenk and Melvin Weaver, who gave their lives in missionary service. During the evening we were reminded again of the joys and the costs of discipleship, and in everything we gave honor to Christ and those who sacrificed in His service. To God be the glory.

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## Korean church leaders meet with Virginia Tech president

### They present funds for non-violence scholarship



Rev. Sang Jin Choi (third from the left) and Dr. Charles W. Steger (fifth from the right) meet with other Korean-Americans and officials from Virginia Tech.

By **MEADOW WIRICK**

Christian Legal Aid volunteer with Fourth Street Community Fellowship

On September 25, Korean-American church leaders from Los Angeles and Northern Virginia visited Virginia Tech to donate funds for a non-violence scholarship to be established in response to the Virginia Tech tragedy in April. The Council of Korean Churches in Southern California donated approximately \$45,000, with additional donations from the Council of Korean Churches in Chicago and the Council of Korean Churches in Nevada. The Council of Korean Churches of Greater Washington donated an additional \$21,000.

This meeting was coordinated by Rev. Sang Jin Choi, Fourth Street Community Fellowship [a Virginia Mennonite Conference congregation] of Washington, D.C. Reverend Choi, on behalf of Korean-American pastors, arranged this meeting to offer condolences and encourage the Virginia Tech community, particularly the victims' families.

Korean-American church leaders asked the Virginia Tech president, Dr. Charles W. Steger, to use the money for scholarships or programs focused on the prevention of campus violence. Dr. Steger said that this support from the national Korean-American community will comfort the Korean-American students at Virginia Tech, as well as the greater Virginia Tech student body. He also expressed his hope that the Korean-American community continues to support Virginia Tech.

Fourth Street Community Fellowship (FSCF) is a unique congregation for the homeless, which is focused on ending homelessness and fostering racial harmony in Washington DC's low-income areas. FSCF runs a monthly legal aid services program sponsored by the Christian Legal Aid Society at the DC mission center for homeless residents.

## Children and adults enjoy Harvest Day 2007 at CrossRoads

By **J. ALLEN BRUBAKER**

Marketing Director, CrossRoads (VBMHC)

Hundreds of children enjoyed the crafts activities of Harvest Day 2007 held at CrossRoads on September 29. Warm sunshine provided ideal weather for outdoor activities. The children made dolls using clothes pins, toothpicks, leaves, peeled apples and a host of other things found in nature. They also painted pumpkins and gourds, tried cleaning clothes with a wash board, sawing logs with a crosscut, making butter and eating Johnny cakes, pressing and tasting fresh cider, grinding corn, feeding and petting barnyard animals and taking a ride in a horse-drawn wagon.

Adults listened to stories and music drawn from the Brethren and Mennonite heritage, assisted in harvesting sorghum to boil molasses, observed blacksmiths fashioning hooks, nails, and kitchen utensils, and watched thread being spun on spinning wheels and weavers making bed covers. The 1,000 participants who attended this fourth annual Harvest Day also enjoyed delicious homemade soups, ham sandwiches, cookies, pies, breads, and fruit and could purchase molasses, cider, pumpkins, pies, cookies, and cakes to take home with them.



There were activities for all ages at Harvest Day.



Photos courtesy of J. Allen Brubaker

# Eastern Mennonite Elementary School celebrates Grandparents Day

By MARIA ARCHER and BEN BIXLER

Contact Maria Archer at (540) 833-2500 • archerm@emhs.net

On October 25, students at Eastern Mennonite Elementary School (EMES), Harrisonburg, Va., spent the morning with their grandparents and other adult friends as they sang songs, played games, recited poems, and interacted with each other. This special occasion nurtured students academically, as well as spiritually and emotionally. The focus on young students' development is important to families at EMES. Grandparents play a particularly positive role in students' lives.

The intergenerational learning that took place on Grandparents Day was positive for both the younger and older generations. It helped children understand the importance of each person's

heritage and to respect different generations. Meanwhile, older adults gained a sense of purpose as they shared their experiences and knowledge with the young students.

EMES believes it is important to take time to show students that all members of the community are valued. EMES is a smaller school and a community in ways that other schools are not.

Everyone knows each other, each person has an important role to play, and everyone is accountable to one another. Teachers and students work together to create learning experiences. Others in the community add new insight and perspective through events like Grandparents Day. Students learn to appreciate



Jake Hall, a 3rd grader, and his grandparents.

what each member of their larger community contributes, and begin to understand their own importance to the community and world.

EMES also wants parents, grandparents and all those who play a significant role in the lives of students to be welcomed into the school, know who EMES is, and be a

part of the community. If you have a unique story or skill to share with the students at EMES, or if you have interest in EMES for your children or grandchildren, please contact Maria Archer to learn more about this unique education community.

Above photo courtesy of Ben Bixler  
Below photo courtesy of Willard Eberly

## Believers baptism has deep meaning in the Mediterranean

By EVA EBERLY

VMM Mediterranean Regional Assistant

Witnessing an adult baptism for the first time leaves an indelible impression, especially in a culture that traditionally baptizes infants or constrains everyone to adhere to a specific religion. Deliberately choosing to follow Jesus Christ and publicly confessing one's faith through personal testimony and water baptism deviates from religious expectations and profoundly impacts those observing. The joyful celebration of the entire church family at a believers baptism markedly



Willard Eberly presents the DeGiglio family, Pino (left), Anna and Francesco.

distinguishes it from the cold liturgical ritual in which the one baptized has no conscious choice or participation. In the Mediterranean region, true "anabaptisms" are still happening for those who discover the miracle of personal,

transforming faith in Christ. In most cases there's still a price to be paid: misunderstanding, rejection and criticism by family and friends. Nevertheless, Pino DeGiglio, 60, says, "Repentance is the greatest thing I have ever done in my entire life."

This year 11 new believers celebrated their baptisms:

- Palermo (Centro Agape) - three persons, one of whom came to faith after his wife prayed for more than 30 years!
- Lezhe, Albania - three teenagers, all from non-Christian families.

- Bari, Italy (Centro Koinonia) - Pino DeGiglio, whose wife and son had previously experienced the transformation of Jesus in their lives. It was contagious!
- Palermo (Shalom church) - four persons, some of whom are the first in their families to believe.

Although the church in this region shows slow but steady growth, the believers represent a small minority that struggles to have a significant voice in a nominally religious and secular society.

# DECEMBER 2007

## Connections

## Prayer Calendar

### Sunday

**30** The Riddles and Lehmans celebrated Christmas with their church friends in Italy. Thank God for their strong relationships and for their ongoing commitment to the ministry in Bari.

**2** Willard & Eva Eberly are attending the "Pastors to Missionaries" conference at Wycliffe Training Center this week and will speak in churches before and after the conference. Pray for a profitable, inspiring time.

**9** Nancy Marshall, in Orange Walk, Belize, leads the Jesus' Deaf Church in expressing the Christmas story through skits and sign language. Ask God to open the hearts of all who attend to hear the Good News and respond.

**16** Today the annual Christmas program is being held at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. Students happily receive gifts from their sponsors! Ask for God's blessings for students and staff.

**23** Robert Wenger was installed as an overseer in Central District. Pray for him as he seeks to encourage the pastors at Gospel Hill, Lambert, Riverside and Zion Hill while pastoring the Hebron Mennonite Church.

### Monday

**31** Pray for energy and wisdom for Paul and Evelyn Kratz, in Couva, Trinidad, as they relate to church members. As they close 2007 with an Old Year's Night gathering, may they have deep hope for the future.

**3** Paul Kratz leads the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago pastoral team which usually meets on the first Monday of the month. Ask God to give these church leaders His insight and energy for the challenging tasks they face.

**10** Aaron & Laura Kauffman, in La Mesa, Colombia, relate to people in a wide age span. Ask God to direct them in the various ministries with students, youth, young adults and older persons.

**17** Pray for the distribution of the page-a-day Scripture calendars, an annual year-end project of Italian believers to give their friends, families and neighbors a "taste" of God's Word. It's eagerly received.

**24** Ask God to abundantly bless Richard and Margaret Keeler as they relate to the Gospel Lighthouse MC in Sangre Grande, Trinidad. May the services during this season enrich the congregation for outreach.

### Tuesday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by

**Marvin Slabaugh**

**in loving memory of his wife, Carolyn, who shared his mission interests for many years**

If you would like to sponsor the prayer calendar, write to gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org or call 800-707-5535.

**4** This fall the Roberta Webb Child Care Center, which has operated since 1994 from the basement of Immanuel Mennonite Church, became a Conference-related ministry. Pray for the director and other staff members.

**11** Pray for Raleigh Mennonite Church (N.C.) which began "English Without Borders" ministry in order to serve the large Hispanic population around them. Side benefits are building relationships, and giving spiritual aid.

**18** Highland Retreat experienced a decline in youth campers last summer while also experiencing an increase in demand for rental space for church and family retreats. Pray for Paul Beiler who directs this ministry.

**25** Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing. Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn king. Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Hymnal: Worship Book #197

### Wednesday

**"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Romans 1:20**

**5** Pray for those VMC congregations who are in the midst of pastoral transitions including: Community, Immanuel and Washington Community Fellowship. Pray for wisdom and discernment for lay leaders.

**12** Patrick Weaver, a *transient* participant, invites your prayers as he hangs out and encourages children on Wednesdays at La Tabla, Costa Rica, a poor community where illegal drugs are available.

**19** Tara Kreidler and Danny Yoder, *transient* participants, are beginning Arabic studies with a tutor and getting acclimated to their responsibilities at Nazareth Village, Israel.

**26** Remember the persons in our communities who do not have an abundance of necessities and share something today, along with your friendship and prayers.

### Thursday

**6** Anita Rhodes, a *transient* participant at Nazareth Village, asks us to pray for the continued ministry of the Village, that the Word will be like seed on fertile soil in the hearts of visitors.

**13** People tend to be more open during the Christmas season and this offers opportune moments for missionaries and churches in Italy and Albania to share the Gospel. Pray that the Spirit of Christ would move in each opportunity.

**20** Remember in prayer Ardi Shahini, a *transient* participant, in his role as mentor to the youth leaders of the Mennonite Churches around Palermo, Italy.

**27** Ask for God to bless Dan Hoopert in Ukraine as he prepares for the new semester of teaching. May his interactions with friends and neighbors yield strong relationships and create a foundation of faith.

### Friday

**7** Pray for the annual conference of the Italian Mennonite Church this weekend in Palermo, Italy, on the theme of the history of the Anabaptist movement. A group from Bari plans to attend.

**14** Francesco and Martha Picone had to move from their apartment in Palermo. Pray for them as they get settled in their new home on the edge of the city.

**21** Norma Teles leaves Albania for a two-month furlough in Brazil. Pray for God's hand of blessing and protection over her journey home and as she visits Mennonite churches scattered over Brazil.

**28** Steve and Betsy Dintaman, at Lithuania Christian College, enjoy a break from their usual schedule, and take this opportunity for rest and interaction with others. Ask God to bless their many relationships this new year.

### Saturday

**1** Pray for "The Well," an emerging congregation of 30 persons in east Richmond, as we build relationships with the intent of this group aligning themselves with Eastern District and VMC.

**8** Outlet 10.27, from Graham, N.C., along with other churches, sponsors a skateboard ministry. An average of 70 kids who come skateboard, get a free lunch, and have half-hour Bible teaching. Four kids now attend their church.

**15** The Knoxville (Tenn.) Mennonite Church has been without a pastor for several years. Pray for the lay leaders who are sustaining the congregation's ministry and for wisdom as they discern their church's future.

**22** Pray for Emily Huffman as she moves from Rome, where she studied Italian, to Bari to begin an internship with *transient*. Ask for continued culture and language acquisition as she finds her place at Centro Koinonia.

**29** EMU professor David Brubaker will lead the annual Minister's Retreat Feb. 22-24 at the Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center. Pray for him as he prepares to lead on the topic "Managing Conflict in the Congregation."

# Announcements

**Experience the tastes of the tropics in mid-winter!** Come and enjoy a Trinidad meal prepared by Lavonne Lehman, on Friday, January 11, 5-6:30 p.m., at the Lindale Mennonite Church fellowship hall, 6255 Jesse Bennett Way, Linville, Va. Donations will be received to support Richard & Margaret Keeler's ministry in Trinidad. Reserve your meal by contacting VMM before January 7 at (540) 434-9727 or [info@vmmissions.org](mailto:info@vmmissions.org).

**You are invited to a Mediterranean Christmas Party** on Dec. 27, 6:00 p.m. at the Harrisonburg Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. Enjoy Italian food, hear Italian music, and see skits and videos of the evangelical witness in Italy and Albania. Greet Willard & Eva Eberly, long-time missionaries in Italy prior to their return for another term of service. Come and participate in God's mission in this part of the world! All donations will benefit the Eberlys' work. For more information, call or email VMM at (540) 434-9727 or (800) 707-5535.

**Let's Make a Deal: Your Heart is On the Line** is the theme for the Winter Youth Retreat at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, Jan. 4-6, for ages 13-17. This retreat will challenge youth to discover what your values are, what attracts your attention, and who is Lord of your life. One primary question will be explored: can *your* heart be bought or compromised? Dr. Ruth-Anne Wideman of Regent University will

lead the retreat. Come for good input and fun activities. For more information, contact WCRC at (757) 566-2256.

Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center will host its first **Quilters Retreat** from January 11-13. Quilters should bring their own projects on which to work. For those new to quilting, a beginning workshop will be held. The retreat focuses on quilting, connecting, and growing in faith. For more information, contact WCRC at 757-566-2256 or [programs@wcrc.info](mailto:programs@wcrc.info)

**Sister Care Prep**, a pilot program to teach congregational women to effectively care for other women, will be held Feb. 1-2. The Mennonite Women of Virginia Executive Committee will host this exciting training program at the Harrisonburg Holiday Inn, and Rhoda Keener, Executive Director of Mennonite Women USA, will facilitate. At least two women are encouraged to attend from each congregation. The cost for the weekend is only \$30 each, based on four women per room. For a registration form or more information contact Beth Pease at (540) 560-4737 or [peasebv@jmu.edu](mailto:peasebv@jmu.edu).

A **Sing the Story Hymn Sing** with Ken Nafziger, Professor of Music at EMU, and Jim Clemens, pianist and hymn writer, will be held January 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the Eastern Mennonite School Auditorium. The hymn sing will use the latest song book supplement to *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

You are invited to **Adult Winter Bible School** with pastor and Bible teacher Duane Yoder, February 10 - March 9 at 6:30 pm in the Eastern Mennonite School Auditorium. This will be a topical presentation on "The Biblical Basis for Mennonite Beliefs" including a weekly biography of a famous Mennonite leader.

The **2008 Ministry Retreat** will be held at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center on February 22-24. David Brubaker, Assistant Professor of Organization Studies at the EMU Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, will be the resource person on the topic "Managing Conflict in the Congregation." Friday evening: "Managing Conflict in the Early Church" Saturday morning: "Managing Conflict Starts with Managing Oneself" Saturday evening: "Managing Conflict and Change in the Congregation" Sunday morning: "The Character of the Christian Peacebuilder" Worship Leaders: Ben & Kathy Risser

Join tour leaders Ed and Edie Bontrager on a **Mission Fellowship Tour to Trinidad**, April 29 - May 7, 2008. The price has been reduced to \$1448. **Register by December 31 and save an extra \$30.**

- Visit VMM mission workers and national church leaders
- See the fascinating flora and fauna of Asa Wright Nature Center
- Enjoy a boat ride through Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary
- Observe leatherback turtles at nighttime egg-laying on the beach
- Stop at all six of our Mennonite churches
- Fellowship with our Trinidadian brothers and sisters

Contact Ed Bontrager at (540) 434-9727 or [ed.bontrager@vmmissions.org](mailto:ed.bontrager@vmmissions.org). Group is limited to 22 persons.

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



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