

## Members of VMC attend MC USA convention in Columbus



By **GLORIA L. LEHMAN**  
 VMM Director of Public Relations

From June 30-July 5, almost 8,000 Mennonites from all over the US gathered for worship and workshops in the convention center in Columbus, Ohio. 'Convention going' is a highlight for many adults and youth in MC USA. Members of Virginia Mennonite Conference joined in, beginning with bus trips to the center, delving into the well-planned worship services and attending workshop sessions.

Youth heard dynamic speakers-Shane Higgs, Brenda Matthews, Leonard Dow and sang along with music led by Jeremy Kempf and worship led by Peter Eberly, youth pastor at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. Adults heard Jim Schrag, Juana Nunez, and Virginia's own Marvin Lorenzana. Both groups heard Shane Claiborne. Tim Shue led the adult worship music. A wide variety of hymns and worship songs were included.

Paul Peachey from the Park View Mennonite Church was the oldest

(Above left:) About 3,000 youth and adults joined the Friday night Hymn Sing in the Nationwide Arena.  
 (Above right:) Denton Yoder, (blue shirt) Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship, participates in the delegate session Friday morning. (Below:) Michael Shenk III, pastor of Valley View Mennonite Church, with youth Tessa Turner and Kent Yankey, visit the VMM display. This is the first convention in which Valley View youth have participated. Photos by Gloria Lehman.



Mennonite at the convention. Jerry Holsopple's brightly colored 12-foot tall cross provided the focal point for youth worship. This cross will be kept at Eastern Mennonite University provided by EMU and friends from Immanuel Mennonite Church.

Virginia Mennonite Conference

congregations were allotted 85 delegates plus 9 delegates from the VMC leadership. Morgan Kraybill represented VMC as a young adult delegate and commented, "I believe our presence is increasingly appreciated and valued." Approximately 300 youth and sponsors attended from VMC churches.

Virginia Mennonite Missions had a display in the large exhibit hall and promoted the one-year missions program, *tranSend*. Hundreds of people came by and enjoyed the sample of trail mix to energize them for the journey.

**continued on page 5**

# Sam's Place



**Owen Burkholder**  
Conference Minister

That's the sign over Sam Weaver's head in the picture below. Sam uses this particular table at a local restaurant so much that the owner gave him a name plate. Sam is retiring as overseer of

Northern District on August 31, 2009 having served in that capacity since 1996.

Born February 22, 1934, he was immediately in the middle of a formational contest. The attending doctor wanted to name him "George Washington Weaver" since he shared that man's birthday. His father had just returned from New York, having seen John Mosemann off to Africa. Lloyd Sr. wanted to name him "Orie" after Orie



Sam at the booth labeled "Sam's Place."

O. Miller who was influential at the time. And, his mother Sara wanted to name him Samuel

"called of God." When the initials SOW emerged the doctor was sure he would get the swine treatment. His mother turned that another way. Samuel was to, "sow the seed" and he was reminded of that persistently, another way to refer to Sam's place in life.

Beginning at age 14, Sam's place to finish growing up was Newport News. There he met and married, Sarah Alderfer.



Sam worked for the Colony Dairy and rose to the director of the wholesale division—an on-the-job introduction to finances and marketing which served him well in his church-ly administration years. In 1963 when their older children were 7 and 4, they made the move to Harrisonburg 'for one year' so Sam could further his education.

When Sam was called to serve as youth minister at Lindale, Bishop Truman Brunk insisted on ordaining him in Newport News; he was "on loan" to Northern District!

Sam was VMC youth minister (employed by VMBM) 1966-68; EMHS principal from 1968-81; and the first full time VMC Executive Secretary and director of Virginia Mennonite Conference Center 1981-91. Since 1991, he continues in the EMU Development office.

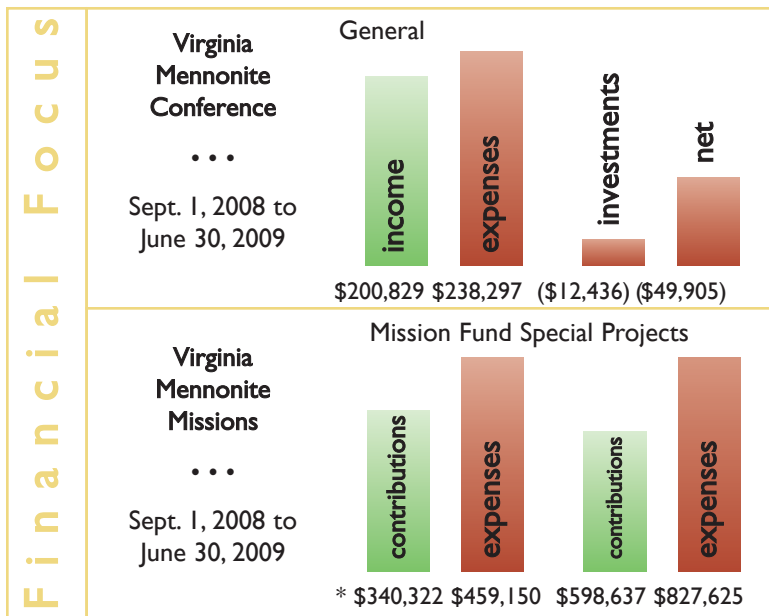
Sam's place has been to build the infrastructure and support mechanisms for the church institutions he served. In 1985 he worked with Linden Wenger to establish the first 'Ministerial Training Trust Fund' account to provide assistance for seminary and other enrichment training for pastors. Those accounts have multiplied and the current (depressed) value would be around \$250,000.

When Sam gets reflective about his oversight work, he acknowledges that Truman Brunk Sr., and Linden Wenger were his role models and mentors. When he came upon challenges, Sarah would ask him, "What would Linden & Truman have done?"

Sarah's relational gifts have blossomed as they relate to the various congregations. Sam says of Sarah, "She doesn't know any enemies." And, "Sarah's gift has been to keep me stable." Together they say, "We will miss visiting these churches."

Sam feels great about the current position and direction of Northern District. With Simeon he can now say, "Let your servant depart in peace."

*Owen Burkholder*



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## Peacemaking activities at Greenmonte Fellowship

From Greenmonte Fellowship in Stuarts Draft, Va., here are some of the examples of their current activities where they have felt called to follow the Prince of Peace to work at justice and peacemaking in their community and the world:

- Our congregation established a school and church at Grippis Farm in Zambia, a squatter community. We dug a well and addressed the main components in the community that keep people poor. We pay for teachers salaries, supply the school with supplies, and have sent several medical and mission teams over the past two years. A non-profit outreach has been started under the name *Grassroots Heroes International* which has begun several new ventures to give people economic incentive and hope: a chicken house, bakery, and garden. This outreach has been a significant way for our congregation to think about poverty and how we can bring justice to these wonderful people.

- Our associate pastor, Seth Hankee, has organized 12 churches in Augusta County for the Nehemiah Project, which will take place on July 12-17, 2009. Nehemiah Project will bring together junior and senior high youth along with adults to refurbish homes of the needy in Augusta County.
- We are partnering with Advancing Native Ministries to help in their Warehouse for the Nations, to send crucial materials to indigenous ministries that are reaching out all over the world. Their organization sends containers of needed items that local ministries in other nations can use to bring justice to people.
- We reach out to families in our community by providing Christmas gifts for the children of prisoners through the Angel Tree program.
- Pastor Bruce Hankee is currently calling together local clergy to pray and investigate ways that we can network and

partner together to respond to the needs of the poor and unemployed during this economic crisis, with Christ's compassion.

- We have a compassion ministry team that responds to the needs of families who need assistance as they go through difficult financial times. Our approach is not simply to apply a band aid and give money, but to be concerned about the emotional, spiritual, and social totality of each person and to build a support network of individuals around them.
- We have been supportive of the International Justice Mission which seeks to free children from sexual slavery and oppression in the workplace. Several members have volunteered at the IJM center in Washington, D.C. and our Sr. High Sunday School class completed Biblical study of justice and raised enough money to set five people free.

## Regional Youth Day relates to southern areas of VMC

By WENDY HOSTETTER DAVIS  
Western Regional Youth Minister

On January 1st of this year, my husband Shaun and I began our position as the "Western Regional Youth Minister." Our job is to relate to some of the more isolated churches in Virginia Conference, those in the TCK & Eastern Carolina Districts, as well as Christiansburg Mennonite



Church, in Virginia. Realizing the emotional and physical distances between our churches, we began to dream about connecting the region's youth and youth sponsors. From there, the idea of a "Regional Youth Day" took root.

On June 13th that dream became a reality. We waited eagerly as nearly forty youth from six of our twelve congregations drove down Valley Haven Retreat Center's long bumpy drive and pulled into the field to park & register for the day. Youth and sponsors checked in and signed up for their afternoon activities - swimming, boating, games and more. Then they headed to the field where we all spent lots of time laughing as youth got tangled up in the human knot, popped balloons, and played a human version of rock-paper-scissors.

Volunteers from the local churches provided an excellent hamburger lunch and no one complained about the picnic blanket accommodations! The afternoon activities and group games flew by; before we knew it, it was time to head to Mtn. View Mennonite Church for the closing service and evening meal. Chuck Hostetter shared a short devotional and the service ended with a much-enjoyed slide-show of the day's activities. After the evening meal and quick good-byes, we disbanded and headed our separate ways. All in all the day was successful. Youth and their sponsors began what will hopefully be an ongoing connection with other area youth groups. We look forward to planning more regional events in the future. And we were excited to hear both youth and sponsors say, "We want to do this again!"

# Reaping what others have sown

By **EVA EBERLY**  
VMM Mediterranean Regional Assistant

“My curiosity was greatly stirred as I observed the dramatic transformation in my cousin, Antonella, when she committed her life to Jesus. For two years, I earnestly investigated the Bible she gave me, seeking answers to the questions in my heart, and began experiencing the Lord’s presence,” shares Maria Lavacca of how the seeds of the Gospel began producing fruit in her life.

Maria taking vows at her baptism.



Maria, now a young adult, was born into an Italian family that had immigrated to Switzerland. Presently she lives in her father’s town of origin near Bari, drawn back to her roots by her Italian fiancé. Maria traces her interest in discovering Truth to a specific moment during childhood while studying the “Ten Commandments” in a religious education class. Being an artist, she was struck by the second commandment that prohibits making images for worship. How was it that the church she occasionally attended, displayed a host of images used as objects of worship?

From Switzerland, her cousin Antonella, monitored Maria’s spiritual growth with caring concern and counselled her to find a believers’ church for nurture and fellowship. Last year through divine providence and mutual Swiss friends, she found us and Centro Koinonia! How thrilling to minister to someone who asks serious questions



Joyful worship following Maria’s baptism. Photos courtesy of Willard & Eva Eberly

about faith and the Bible! Having never been in a believers’ church before, Maria testifies with amazement how the acceptance and loving relationships with her new spiritual family nourish and confirm her faith. Her commitment has truly blossomed among us.

Following Jesus Christ is not all “roses” however; there are also “thorns” of renunciation, rejection, and sometimes suffering. Because of her decision to fully identify with Christ, Maria’s engagement has been broken.

At Maria’s recent baptism, tears mingled with joyful songs of praise for the spiritual harvest being reaped from the “seeds” of Antonella’s testimony.



By **ALLEN UMBLE**  
VMM worker in Albania

Local believers with a team from Germany which served in Lushnje.

*Fatmir is a local believer in Lushnje area and a friend with whom Allen Umble often shares fellowship and encouragement.*

# Fatmir encounters God

Seven years ago when the house of Fatmir’s family in northern Albania had deteriorated to the point where they needed to live in a tent and keep the baby warm with a hair dryer, he told God that if He would provide a house for his family he would believe in Jesus.

In another story, Fatmir recounts the time that he was waiting with his pistol ready to kill the missionary who would be travelling along that road. As the van approached it slowed down as the missionary inside sensed a great need for the

group in the van to pray. When Fatmir approached the missionary, something beyond his control caused him to reach out to shake the missionary’s hand instead of reaching for his pistol. Fatmir returned home with a feeling of shame that he, a man, did not carry out what he had set out to do.

But Fatmir, now changed by the power of God, boldly tells others about Jesus in the village where he lives near Lushnje. He also makes trips to his people of northern Albania, where many of his family have come to know Jesus.

More than once Fatmir has expressed his appreciation for the foreign missionaries that have come to Albania to share the Gospel. Thank you for your concern for the people of this land as expressed through your prayer and financial support for my presence here.

## Mennonite Hispanic Initiative launched in Harrisonburg

By **MARVIN LORENZANA**

Adapted from MHI brochure

The Mennonite Hispanic Initiative (MHI) is developing a unique model of integrating both theoretical and practical aspects of church planting. The final goal is not only to plant new Hispanic churches in the US, but also to develop a church planting model designed around the principles of the *Simple Church* paradigm which emphasizes discipleship-making using a cell-group church structure.



Byron Pellecer

Pastor Byron Pellecer and family have moved from Miami, Fla., to Harrisonburg where Byron and his wife Hildalejandra spearhead this church planting project. Pablo & Graciama Hernandez and Carlos & Xiomara Madrid are


joining this initiative as associate church planters. The men are also attending EMS and working toward an M.Div degree.

The MHI will develop leaders that will be theologically capable, ethically healthy, and denominationally connected, and will potentially become church planters and trainers, faculty and staff in Mennonite higher education institutions, and advocates for the Hispanic church in MC USA.


The MHI offers theological formation at three levels: Seminary education where students may receive a Certificate of Ministerial Studies or an M.Div perhaps through the Bridge Builders program, at Instituto Biblico Anabaptists (IBA) offered to all new disciples attending MHI churches, and in cell groups with an emphasis in practical theology and spiritual formation.

MHI will incorporate two Mennonite Hispanic ministries already meeting in Harrisonburg: Manantial de Vida that meets at Ridgeway Mennonite Church led by Juan and Wendy Carlos and Immanuel Mennonite Church Hispanic Ministry led by Francisco and Juana Machado in the northeast sector of Harrisonburg.

Marvin Lorenzana, who is giving oversight and coordination to this says, "Help us reach out to more than 10,000 Hispanics in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham area with the Gospel!" Your support through prayer, serving as short-term cross-cultural missionaries in Harrisonburg, and by giving monetary resources will be greatly appreciated.



**REGISTER NOW**  
Registration details at [www.perspectives.org/harrisonburg](http://www.perspectives.org/harrisonburg)

 **Perspectives**™ Tuesdays, September 1 - December 8, 2009  
on the World Christian Movement 7:00 - 9:45 pm  
Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Rm. 123  
Harrisonburg, Va.

Contact Philip Rhodes with questions at [philip.rhodes@vmmissions.org](mailto:philip.rhodes@vmmissions.org)

**Locations of Perspectives offered in Virginia  
Fall 2009**  
(Look for classes in North Carolina in Spring 2010.)

**Hampton, beginning August 17  
Lynchburg, beginning September 1  
Harrisonburg, beginning September 1**

continued from cover

You can see more about the convention by going to [goshen.edu/mpress](http://goshen.edu/mpress)

Plan now to attend the next MC USA convention July 4-9, 2011, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Eric Musser, pastor of Huntington Mennonite Church, and Lewi Blosser, delegate, engage in discussion following worship on Friday.



# Join the fun at the Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale, October 2-3

By **SHERRILL GLANZER**

Relief Sale Publicity Committee

Since when is "serving" so much fun? Since learning how the relief sale proceeds make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world! In 2008, donations of time and money made it possible for the Virginia sale to send over \$230,000 to MCC for their relief programs.

This year we are responding to needs in our own backyard as well as those met by MCC's relief programs. The funds raised for special projects will be divided between People Helping People, SACRA, Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and MCC's Grocery Bag project.

As usual, we will be counting on "small change for big change" from Penny Power jugs. Donations of quilts, handcrafted wood items, art and other items are needed for our grand live and silent auctions.

The children's auction.



Auctioneers assisted by a volunteer during the quilt auction. Photos courtesy of Sherrill Glanzer.

Keep those forms and digital pictures coming! Baked goods are always a highlight and lots of pies and other items are needed for Friday and Saturday sale.

Our third annual Down Home Shenandoah radio show Friday evening will be all about the music!

Check out the website to learn more about the sale and how you can be involved. [www.vareliefsale.com](http://www.vareliefsale.com)

Terry Burkhalter's Sonny and Cher give rides to sale participants.



## Mennowood takes on improvements and initiatives

By **MARION SHACKFORD**

Mennowood Executive Director

Adapted from VMC report book, 2009

New initiatives were undertaken and challenges from past years were resolved successfully in the past year. The first project of the newly incorporated Mennowood Foundation was to raise funds to purchase a new 15-passenger wheel-chair accessible van for the residents. This van was purchased last August.

The Country Store for residents was completely remodeled and re-opened with a new look as a store/cafe/ice cream parlor. The administrative office was also renovated to provide a private office for the new comptroller and a private office/chapel for the chaplain.

Looking ahead, funds will be used for much needed capital improvements to the independent living building and for furnish-upgrades in the assisted living building.

# AUGUST 2009

## Connections

## Prayer Calendar

### Sunday

**30** The first session of Perspectives in Harrisonburg is held Sept. 1 at EMS. Pray for the coordinating team preparing for the students and covering the details necessary for students to learn about God's purposes in the world.

### Monday

**31** Registration for classes at EMU is held today. Pray for the students and faculty as they engage in education and spiritual journeys that will impact daily life.

### Tuesday

**This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Rosalie & Robert Eshleman in loving memory of their son, Lee Edward, whose birthday was August 28, 1963.**

### Wednesday

**"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"**  
Hebrews 13:5

### Thursday

**2** Richard & Margaret Keeler are back in Trinidad after being on home leave for 2 months. They are worshipping with the Sangre Grande Menn. Church today. May God doubly bless this group of believers.

**3** Shirley Roth returned to Nazareth Village, Israel, last week after a long wait for a visa. Thank God for her return to this ministry and pray that God will bless her as she directs this special place of learning.

**4** Remember the outreach of Greensboro (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship to a homeless shelter for families where church members seek to relieve human need. Ask God to bless Jim & Ruth Mellinger as they lead this endeavor.

**5** Remember your spiritual birthday today, and thank God for the gift of salvation.

**6** Pray for total healing for Rosanna, Pastor Pino Arena's wife in Sicily, struggling with debilitating health problems since Nov. Thank God for their church Shalom Menn. that has rallied around them during this time.

**7** Dillion & Esther Sinclair from Alpine Menn. Church are Jamaican delegates to the Annual General Meeting of the Menn. Church of Trinidad & Tobago. Pray they will experience warm fellowship with the church there.

### Friday

**1** Tomorrow an Italian meal will be served at Harrisonburg Mennonite to support Chris & Melody Riddle and family, reappointed to Italy. If you have registered, be sure to attend and give your blessings to the Riddles personally.

### Saturday

**8** The Menn. Church of T & T conducts the business of the church with delegate sessions today, held at the Charleville Menn. Church, Trinidad. Pray that the church will be empowered to move forward in witness and service.

**9** Today all six congregations of the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago meet for worship. May each person be inspired to live as a witness for Christ in the year ahead.

**10** Jamaica Mennonite Church junior youth camp is held this week at the Maranatha School in Jamaica. These lively persons love the recreation there. Ask God to meet them in a real way amid the fun.

**11** Today Paul & Evelyn Kratz leave Trinidad after serving over two years there. Thank God for their faithful service with the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago. May He watch over them as they make the transition to Va.

**12** Pray for Michael, Ruth and daughter Lia in South Asia who are taking a family vacation this month. They were in intensive language study this summer. May God enable them to communicate well with their neighbors.

**13** This month Dino and Mara Colonna, the first international *Travelers*, move from Turin to Bari, Italy (a 16 hr. trip) to begin their assignment in September. Remember them in prayer today.

**14** Pray for Christians in places where they are persecuted for their faith. They ask us to pray that they remain faithful to Christ and witness strongly for Him.

**15** **OUTLET 10.27's** outreach to a skate-board park in Graham, N.C. enriches the lives of youth who love skating and absorbing adult attention. Pray for the church leaders who give direction to this witness.

**16** Believers of Centro Koinonia (Bari) participate in a family camp at a mountain retreat; for some it's the first time. Pray God would use this experience to strengthen their faith and commitment.

**17** A PIM team from Va. is assisting with VBS teaching at the new congregation in Trinidad, Carlsen Field. Thank God for their availability and ask Him to bless the students with open hearts and minds to learn His Word.

**18** Jamaica Mennonite Church senior youth camp is held this week at Maranatha School. Youths attend from around the island. Pray that Christ will light up the lives of both the staff and participants during the activities.

**19** Speaking appointments plus two fundraising events are planned this month for the ministry of Chris and Melody Riddle in Italy. Pray that a generous outpouring of prayer and financial support will bless this missionary family.

**20** Parents and students are making adjustments to the more complicated school schedule as the new school year opens. Pray that God will give each one the patience and endurance that is required to do well.

**21** Remember Norma Teles in prayer as she prepares for another year at Joshua Centre, an early childhood development school for Gypsy children. Her school makes a difference in their lives!

**22** Pray for worship and music leaders as they prepare for Sunday morning worship services. May God lead every part, and draw His people close to Himself.

**23** Today Rodney & Lindsey Nice are commissioned for service at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. They are serving through VMM's *Travelers* program. Their 3 children accompany them. Pray for God's leading.

**24** Ask God to bless the older persons in your congregation and thank Him for the wisdom they share with the younger generations.

**25** Both VMC and VMM are at the end of the fiscal year. If you have contributed to the needs for them to meet their budgets, thank you! If not, please send a contribution today.

**26** Allen Umble leaves Albania to spend his vacation visiting his elderly mother in Pa. Pray God's special blessings of protection, rest, and renewal.

**27** Thank God for beautiful garden blessings! Share any excess with those who don't have enough.

**28** Mennonite Youth Fellowship camp in Trinidad is held this week-end. Ask God to deeply bless the leaders and youth as they focus on the theme "Slaying Your Goliaths."

**29** Rodney & Lindsey Nice and family are preparing to leave Stuarts Draft, Va., and go to the Maranatha School in Jamaica to serve for 2 years. Ask God to give them endurance to finish all the details of moving to another country.



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

## Announcements

**Vespers in August at CrossRoads** from 7:00-7:45 p.m. Please bring lawn chairs.  
 August 2 - Meditation from Brian Moore.  
 Special Music: Anthony Keim & family  
 August 9 - Family Night - starting with picnic at 5:30. Bring sandwiches for your family and finger foods to share. Dinnerware and drinks provided.  
 Meditation: Jonathan Brush.  
 August 16 - Meditation: Earle Fike.  
 Harmonia Sacra hymns by Sam & Jan Showalter.  
 August 23 - Worship led by youth. Lars Akerson and Jon Spicher will share their 8,500 mile faith adventure by bike to Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay.  
 August 30 - Worship led by Robert & Linda Alley. Instrumental music: Mary Kay Adams & Becky Hunter.

**A free concert of contemporary Christian music** given by Rodney & Lindsey Nice will be held on Friday, August 7, at 6:00 pm at Ridgeview Park in Waynesboro, Va. Everyone is invited to attend; bring a chair or blanket. Rodney and Lindsey will also share about their two-year mission assignment at Maranatha School for the Deaf in Top Hill, Jamaica. An informational booth will provide the location for anyone desiring to contribute to Rodney and Lindsey's support. Come out and praise the Lord with us!

**A women's community Bible study** is being offered at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church using Beth Moore's study: Daniel-Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy. The first six week study will be held Tuesdays, Sept. 22 thru Oct. 27. Morning sessions are from 9-11 a.m. Evening sessions are

6:30-8:15 p.m. Registration and a \$20 member book fee to HMC are due by August 23rd. For registration details contact: Jeannie Smith 564-0332. Come join your sisters (and bring a friend) as we learn to live with integrity in today's self-absorbed society. The second six-week portion of this study will be offered Spring 2010 using the last portion of the study guide.

**What's for dinner tonight?** Let's try *kim chi* (cabbage with chiles and seasonings), *bul-gogi* (thin slices of marinated sirloin) or *dahk galbi* (barbecued chicken), steam-cooked rice, *kimbap*, *bori cha*... On Friday, October 23, 2009, at 6 p.m., **you are invited to join the Stephens City Korean Community Church for Korean cuisine** at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg. Pastor James Rhee will share how God is working with this young church in VMC's Northern District. Hear Korean musicians and meet the new Associate Pastor Kyunghwa. This event is a fund raiser for this new church plant in the Winchester area. For more information call Jim & Aldine Musser, (540)868-0136.

**Zion Mennonite Church** celebrates its 125th anniversary in May 2010. A series of events will occur from Sept. 2009 to Sept. 2010. The first event will be a worship service on September 13 in the style of 1885 worship services. See Zion's web site for evolving events and details. [www.zmcva.org](http://www.zmcva.org)

**Myron and Esther Augsburger** invite you to join them on a 15-day trip to the **Oberammergau Passion Play** in Germany and Italy. The dates are May 14-28, 2010. The trip will begin in Zurich. Following the Passion Play travel will continue into Italy with visits to Venice, Florence, two days in Rome and end in southern Italy, visiting Pompeii and the spectacular Amalfi Coast. Tour coordinators are Dave and Joyce Eshleman. For a brochure with complete details, call (540) 434-1796.