



(from left clockwise) Olivia Smucker, Leah Wenger, Bessie Ferdinand and Megan Good. Photo by Sandy King.

## Finding God's purpose at the Middle School Retreat

**By SHAUN DAVIS**  
 VMC Western Region Conference Youth Minister

As part of our roles as Western Region Youth Ministers for Virginia Mennonite Conference, my wife Wendy and I were excited to plan the middle school retreat for Sept. 26-27. The theme, "Discovering God's Purpose for your life" fit this age group. Isaac Villegas, pastor of Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, agreed to be our speaker. We were especially excited that the worship team from Durham Mennonite Church, made up of middle and high school aged youth, participated by leading worship: a great example of youth allowing God to use them.

Finally, after months of planning, the weekend arrived—and so did the rain! Free time was the first thing on the schedule and all the outdoor activities available would have been much more enjoyable had it not been raining. Fortunately, the

input sessions were indoors, and Isaac did a great job of challenging us to find God's purpose for our lives. He used himself as an illustration by telling us that when he was younger, he thought his purpose in life was to be a soccer player. But, after two injuries he began to search for God's purpose for his life. In the second session, Isaac showed us some classic commercials to demonstrate the difference between the plans of the world and God's plans.

Later that night we played a memorable game of capture the flag—again, in the rain! Fortunately a prepared sponsor provided an indoor scavenger hunt for those not wanting to brave the wet weather. And, whether wet or dry, everyone had a good time.

In our final session the following morning, Isaac handed out apples to several youth and instructed them to gather seeds from the apples. The youth were



Skip and Carol Tobin

Courtesy photo

## Tobins join VMM staff

Virginia Mennonite Missions is pleased to announce that Skip and Carol Tobin are joining our staff beginning November 1. Skip and Carol were long-term mission workers in S.E. Asia, most recently in a partnership between VMMissions and Eastern Mennonite Missions. This partnership continues as they move into staff roles, with VMMissions and EMM sharing the cost of employment. They live in Harrisonburg, and will be based in the VMMissions office. One full-time-equivalent position will be shared between them. Their responsibilities for VMMissions will include working with the global church planting efforts of VMMissions and partners, and providing support for VMMissions workers and ministries. As "missional ambassadors" they will be available to speak and share in Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations.

sent out to plant the seeds on the retreat center grounds. Isaac explained that even though we may never see the seeds we plant grow to maturity, it is our call to plant and water the seeds of the Kingdom.

It is our hope that more than just apple seeds were planted over the weekend—we hope that God planted seeds of purpose into the lives of every youth and sponsor that attended.

# Stewards of God

One of the more common questions I am receiving right now is, "How is VMissions doing?" The question is a question of stewardship. It comes in the context of the end of our fiscal year (August 31) and the current recession. I've never ridden a really good roller-coaster, but this past fiscal year might count.



**Loren Horst**  
President of VMissions

In light of the difficult times, we are especially grateful for the loyalty demonstrated by our churches and individual supporters. Repeatedly through the year we faced challenges, and then were exceedingly blessed by a word of goodwill, an unexpected act of generosity, and the continuing awareness that God is still doing his work through VMissions. We have prayed. We have discerned. We have worked hard. We are stewards of the resources that God has entrusted us with. No more. No less.

We were especially blessed with strong continuing congregational support.

- Congregational giving to our General Missions Fund was actually slightly up and individual support of the General Missions Fund was strong too!
- Loss of value of endowments and estate funds was significant with ripple into reduced ministry support.

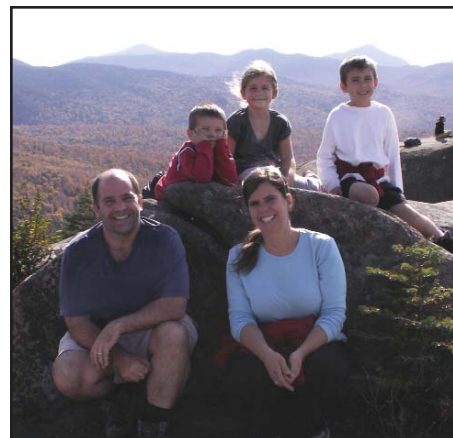
- VMissions' pre-audit report shows a nearly balanced year, no small miracle in light of all of the challenges!
- Total giving to our General Fund and Special Projects combined however was actually down 6%.
- In light of this decline, we are implementing

comparable reductions in our financial planning for the 09-10 fiscal year just begun in September.

Challenges remain. There is no lack of creative and compassionate vision in Virginia Mennonite Conference and Virginia Mennonite Missions. Sometimes we see the needs of our communities and the world even more urgently. We are committed to being responsible stewards of God and partners with others in Virginia Mennonite Conference.

### A Note of Appreciation

I wish I could thank three individuals personally this year. The results of prior estate planning added three estate gifts to VMissions in a year that would have been even more difficult without them. These three persons are being blessed in God's presence. We are blessed by their thoughtfulness. Estate gifts add long-term resources to the work of VMissions.



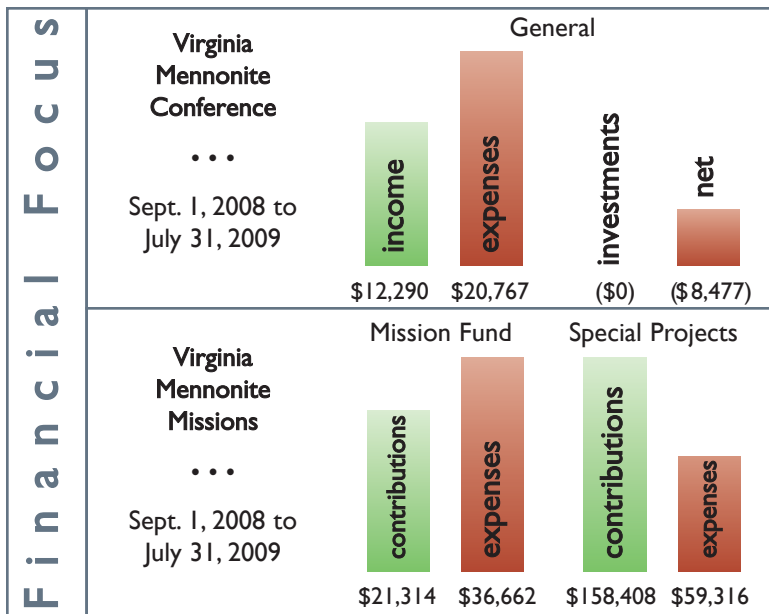
Kent, Joy, Drew, Olivia and Clay Kauffman Courtesy photo.

## Kent Kauffman named Highland Director

Highland Retreat has completed the search for a new Executive Director and has called Kent Kauffman to fill this role. Kent brings gifts of leadership, administration, hospitality, and breadth of experience.

For the past ten years, Kent has been serving as Director of the Wilderness Camping program at Spruce Lake Retreat, a Mennonite camp in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania.

Kent will begin his assignment December 1, replacing Paul Beiler who has served as Executive Director at Highland for the last ten years. Paul is retiring at the end of November.



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

Send subscriptions to **Connections** Circulation Manager, 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802

**Phone** (540) 434-9727  
(800) 707-5535

**E-mail** info@vmmissions.org  
info@vmconf.org

**Web** www.vmmissions.org  
www.vmconf.org

**Editor**  
Gloria Lehman

**Assistant Editor**  
Jon Trotter

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

*Connections* is distributed free to each household of supporting congregations. Subscription rates: \$5 per year, 2 years for \$9.



# Zion Mennonite Church re-creates 1885 service

By **MANDI STOLTZFUS**  
Zion Mennonite Church

Zion, 1885. People arrive at church in horse and buggy. Men enter the building from the west entrance, women from the east. They sit separately on their respective sides, the pews divided down the middle by a wooden barrier three feet high. The minister opens the worship time by calling out a hymnal number for the song leader, who remains seated, to lead. Slow tempo in singing, conservative dress and warm fellowship abound.

On Sunday, September 13, 2009, Zion recreated a traditional 1885 service. All adult classes gathered in the sanctuary during the Sunday school hour to hear Jim Rush and Elwood Yoder present an illustrated lecture of the history of the Zion congregation. A slide show provided many unique glimpses into Zion's founding families, including the Alger, Showalter, Shank and Lantz families whose descendants are current members. Zion and Trissels Mennonite churches worshipped together until 1948, when they formed their own congregations. Patty Baer ended the Sunday school time with a children's story.



Worship began with regular activities such as announcements, offering and sharing joys and concerns. Welby Showalter, song leader, offered a brief 1885 Mennonite history. Pastor Clyde Kratz then began the 1885 worship experience by opening with prayer and calling out, "Song number 18." Seated near the front and facing forward, Welby led the congregation in "Where Two or Three with Sweet Accord," sung in long meter to the tune of Old Hundred ("Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"). Clyde's sermon was titled "Sin, Repentance and Reformation" with a focus on sin and the need for repentance. Prayer, a benediction and "Our God, Our Help in Ages

Past" concluded the service.

A few interesting items about this Sunday service: Some members came dressed in 1885-style clothing, including the coats of Clyde and Elwood. Welby wore suspenders and parted his hair in the middle. Men sat on the left side and women with small children on the right. A detailed model of the 1885 church building was displayed in the sanctuary. A potluck meal followed with delicious foods that members may have eaten in their homes at that time.

All who attended Zion in the past are invited to the Homecoming celebration May 23, 2010. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
Connections		November 2009	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (that press run)			
		4,300	4,300
b. Paid Distribution (Sum of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)			
1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions (based on PS Form 3541) (includes paid distribution above normal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		50	
2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions (based on PS Form 3541) (includes paid distribution above normal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		31	
3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mails (including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS)		0	
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)		0	
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)		81	
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 6, 7, 8, and 9)			
6. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies (based on PS Form 3541)		2421	
7. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies (based on PS Form 3541)		1665	
8. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)		0	
9. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		0	
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 6, 7, 8, and 9)		4086	
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15b and 15d)		4167	
g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers at page K10)		133	
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		4300	
i. Percent Paid (15b divided by 15f times 100)		2%	
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the <u>November 2009</u> issue of this publication.		<input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.	
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner			
<i>Gloria L. Lehman</i> Gloria L. Lehman, editor		Date: <u>October 7, 2009</u>	
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**Virginia Mennonite Conference**  
**and**  
**Virginia Mennonite Missions**  
 thank all individuals and congregations  
 for faithful support  
 in this past fiscal year ending August 31.  
 We thank God  
*and you*  
 for enabling us to carry out God's mission in the world.



Willard and Eva Eberly with Armida and Pino at Bari Castle in Italy. Courtesy of Willard Eberly.

## God's Word achieving His purposes

By **EVA EBERLY**

VMM Mediterranean Regional Assistant

"More than 20 years ago you befriended me and shared the Gospel with me. I'm calling to let you know that I've personally accepted Jesus into my life!" As Armida pours out her story, we listen with amazement, since during those years we'd lost contact with each other! During a deep depression that medication failed to heal, the Spirit reminded her of the message she'd received through our lives and ministry in Sicily. As she cried out to the Lord, the inner anguish began lifting. In Jesus, she's discovering new life, hope, and healing, not only for depression, but also for troubled and broken family relationships.

Since then we've been following Armida's spiritual pilgrimage by phone. She now lives in Torino (Turin) where she found a believers' church and received baptism. Touched by the transformation of her life, Armida's husband now attends church with her! Together with her, we're believing and praying that the Gospel will capture the hearts of her entire family, including adult children.

Now there's a new chapter to this story. During the summer Armida and husband, Pino, spent four wonderful days with us here in Bari, renewing our friendship and strengthening our fellowship in Christ. Our church was greatly encouraged as Armida shared her faith story with them. She recalled how the page-a-day Scripture calendar had impacted her life. She brought along literature we'd given her that she'd kept and treasured all these years! It was especially moving since our church had just distributed 100's of pieces of Christian literature and Bibles in the city of Bari. What a marvelous reminder that God's Word is powerful and "*will not return empty, but will...achieve the purpose for which [He] sent it!*" (Isaiah 55:11)



## New pastor accepts leadership of Centro Agape

By **MARTHA PICONE**

Centro Agape, Palermo, Italy

Passing the pastoral "baton" from Francesco Picone to Franco Arena on May 31, marked a milestone in the history of the Centro Agape Mennonite Church. A year earlier, Picone had informed the congregation of his intention to resign, asking them to seek God's will for a new pastor. After time and much earnest prayer, Franco Arena, a faithful elder in the congregation, expressed willingness to accept the pastorate. With the congregation's wholehearted affirmation Franco, with wife Ina beside him, was installed as pastor for a two-year term.

In a letter to the congregation, Picone expressed his love and gratitude for their love and trust that enriched his own life during his 23 years of leadership. "We prayed, struggled, laughed, cried, and rejoiced together. I ask you to show that same love for your new pastor."



Franco Arena holds a gift from former pastor Francesco Picone. Franco's wife Ina is the center. Photo by Shawn Green

To Franco he said, "Today with God's help and the blessing of the congregation,

you assume pastoral responsibilities. In 'heredity' I can only leave to you lots of work and acts of service." Referring to Elijah's blessing in II Kings 2:1-14 Francesco said, "May God give you a double portion of the Spirit." Handing a Bible to Franco he added, "Instead of a mantle I leave you the Scriptures. As Elisha used his mantle to do wonders, I pray that as you share the Word of God it may touch the hearts of those who listen."

Picone will continue serving as an elder in the congregation but will dedicate time and energy to other aspects of the Mennonite Church in Italy: developing a website, offering Bible correspondence courses from an Anabaptist perspective, directing the Bible School, guiding the translation and publication of Anabaptist literature in Italian, as well as encouraging missions among the Italian churches.



# New congregation in VMC: Manatíal de Vida

By **ED BONTRAGER**

VMM USA Regional Director

Pablo\* came to Juan Carlos one day, discouraged, despondent, and at the point of being plagued with suicidal thoughts. Pastor Juan Carlos Malvaez befriended Pablo and led him to the Lord. He is now the keyboard player in the church. Carlos and his wife, Wendy, reach out to persons needing hope and renewed life.

At Virginia Conference Assembly in July, the Manatíal de Vida (Fountain of Life) congregation was the newest to be received as a member of the Harrisonburg District and the Virginia Mennonite Conference. For six years the church, now with 60 members, has met at the Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Carlos was born in Mexico City and moved to Brooklyn, N.Y. He came to Harrisonburg in 2002 and met Wendy from Honduras. After attending Ridgeway briefly, Carlos asked permission to use a separate room in the church to share with another Hispanic family in Bible study.

As more Hispanic people were attracted, the church met in the fellowship hall, and then in December, 2003, moved to the auditorium for Sunday afternoon services.

Pastor Carlos said that people are attracted to the church because of the message and the fellowship they receive. The members invite their friends to church; about 95% have come through personal invitations.

Along with uplifting and inspirational worship services, the church now has seven cell groups called “houses of peace.” They meet throughout the week, with trained leaders. This is one way they are living out their mission statement, part of which says, “Making disciples, forming leaders and mentors of the Kingdom who know their calling and find the purpose of God in their lives.”

Carlos and Wendy envision a church that continues to “preach, teach, heal, and deliver,” the first half of their mission statement. When the hopeless receive new hope, when unbelievers become Christians, when recommitments are made—these are all things that keep encouraging them in reaching out to people like Pablo.

(\* Name has been changed)



Juan Carlos Malvaez, pastor of Manatíal de Vida.

Courtesy of Ed Bontrager

## A Penny Power hair-growing challenge

By **GLORIA L. LEHMAN**

VMM Director of Public Relations

The Penny Power jugs filled the little “garden shed” outside the main exhibit building at the Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale on Saturday, Oct. 3. Congregations of all sizes brought jugs of various sizes to this place where Park View Federal Credit Union counted, weighed and bagged the coins and paper money. The total so far (without the matching funds) is \$24,069.52.

Aaron Boggs, pastor, explains Crossroads Mennonite Church's collection of \$1,281.57 this way: “In the spring, I was trying to come up with a way to motivate Crossroads to give beyond their typical total—some-where around \$300-350 for the past several years. At the same time, folks repeatedly asked me where my son, Cayden, gets his curly hair. It comes from my side of the family and his hair looks exactly like mine did when I was a kid. Folks asked me to show them. So I promised that if they raise \$1,000 or more for Penny Power, I will grow my hair for one year so that they can see the curls. It was a highly motivating goal. Of course, my hair hasn't been longer than 1/2 inch for about 15 years, so who knows if it's still curly.”

All of us will be able to observe Pastor Aaron's curls at Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly next June.

For your congregation's Penny Power total, visit [www.vmmissions.org/pennypower](http://www.vmmissions.org/pennypower)



(above) Aaron Boggs, today Photo courtesy of Lisa Lehman  
(below) One year from now? Artist's impression



# EMU: How does it really rate?

By **JIM BISHOP**

EMU Marketing and Communications

Photo courtesy of Jim Bishop

Eastern Mennonite University placed in the “third tier” rankings in the “best liberal arts colleges” category in the 2010 edition of America’s Best Colleges” by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine. EMU moved up from the fourth to the third tier last year. The exclusive listings were published in the magazine’s Aug. 24 issue and made available online at [www.usnews.com/colleges](http://www.usnews.com/colleges). The 2010 “America’s Best Colleges” guidebook was released Tuesday, Aug. 25.

What, more precisely, does this ranking denote?

The Carnegie Foundation defines a national liberal arts school as one “emphasizing undergraduate education and awarding at least 50 percent of its degrees in the arts and sciences.” There were 266 schools measured in the liberal arts category; most are private institutions; 28 are public.

Each college and university received a score based on 15 indicators, including peer assessment, graduation and retention rates, faculty-student ratios and class sizes, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources and alumni giving.

Within the 65 colleges and universities in the third tier, EMU rated high with an average freshman retention rate of 78 percent, well above the national average,

and in the percentage of full-time faculty (88 percent). EMU’s alumni giving rate of 27 percent ranked 11th highest among all schools listed in the third tier.

In a separate listing, EMU ranked 11th out of 100 schools cited for “most students studying abroad” with 72 percent of its 2008 graduates having participated in international study abroad programs.

“Being ranked in the third tier of such an impressive list of schools is quite an accomplishment. I’m happy that we maintained our ranking in the third tier, and also that we were recognized for the high percentage of students who study abroad,” said BJ Miller, director of institutional research and effectiveness at EMU. “Our cross-cultural experience is clearly a ‘stellar example’ of a study abroad program to look for according to their definition,” she added.

Ask the admissions staff, or just about anyone else at EMU, and they’ll likely reply, “Rankings such as *U.S. News* are helpful as prospective students consider which school is best suited to their interests, needs and goals. A better way to find out what makes EMU distinctive is to come visit the campus, talk to some faculty and students, ask questions and begin to grasp a sense of the university’s mis-



sion of preparing students to serve and lead in a global context.”

Upcoming special Campus Visit dates are: Nov. 12-13, 2009, Feb. 25-26, 2010 and Mar. 20, 2010. Persons can register online at [www.emu.edu/admissions/campusvisit](http://www.emu.edu/admissions/campusvisit), email [admiss@emu.edu](mailto:admiss@emu.edu) or call toll free (800) 368-2665.

EMU believes that the closer you get, the better we look.

## Congregational Resource Center

**WHAT DO YOU NEED** for the Advent and Christmas season in your congregation?

**Help in sermon planning? THE CRC HAS**

*Leader Magazine*, more than a dozen books with segments on the lectionary scripture, and *Believer's Church* commentaries.

**Help in making worship shine? THE CRC HAS**

drama resources, short thematic video clips, prayers, litanies, children's stories and more.

**Help in planning Christmas programs?**

**THE CRC HAS** kits and books on Hanging of the

Greens services, “A Night in Bethlehem” learning stations, creative children's, family and cross-generational events.

**Help with alternatives to commercial**

**Christmases? THE CRC HAS** “Have yourself a happy little Christmas,” “Whose Birthday is it Anyway?” and additional ideas for generating your own joy.

**Stop in to browse and be energized by the resources we have to make your ministry**

**easier.** You don't have to dig it all up “from the dust of the earth!” Whether you are on the

pastoral team, Christian educator, youth worker, Sunday School teacher, or member of a planning team, **THE CRC IS WORTH A VISIT THIS FALL!**

Located in Eastern Mennonite Seminary building, 1181 Smith Avenue, Harrisonburg.

Call (540) 432-4219 for director Linda Alley.

Open every weekday 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and at other times by appointment.

Email: [crc@emu.edu](mailto:crc@emu.edu)

Website and Online Catalog:

[www.emu.edu/seminary/crc](http://www.emu.edu/seminary/crc)



# NOVEMBER 2009

## Connections

## Prayer Calendar

### Sunday

**1** The congregation The Table in Harrisonburg, experiences significant turnover with each academic season. Pray that God will bring out the gifts of participants, and strengthen the ministry wherever our young adults go next.

**8** Pray for Giovanni and Fiorella Greco, Italian church planters at Termoli, Italy, and the baptized believers in their growing group of 30 persons. Sometimes there is opposition to this group. Pray for them to be steadfast.

**15** EMM workers, Paul & June Kropf, work with an Albanian couple to plant a new church in Tirana, Albania's capital city. Several have been baptized. Pray the Spirit's anointing over this ministry.

**22** Pray for the Alpine Mennonite Church, Red Hills, Jamaica, as they gather for worship today with Pastor Morris Baker. May the community around them see the church as a lighthouse of Christ's love.

**29** Sundays are full days for Richard & Margaret Keeler as they pastor Sangre Grande Mennonite Church, Trinidad. Two worship services are held. Pray that each one will be spurred on to witness clearly for Christ.

### Monday

**2** Nancy Marshall has begun a new week of teaching the class of deaf students in Orange Walk, Belize. Ask for God to give her special creativity and strength to meet the rigors of teaching daily.

**9** Rodney Nice serves at the Maranatha School for the Deaf assisting the teachers in the classroom and planting vegetables and fruits. Thank God for his willing hands, and ask God to give him opportunities for witnessing.

**16** MC USA conference leaders from Pa., N.Y. and Va. meet today in Lancaster, Pa. to consider a cooperative church planting initiative. Pray for God's guidance.

**23** In this week when many families gather, pray for family bonds to be strengthened, and for broken relationships to be restored.

**30** This current term of missionary service for Leon Zimmerman and family through EMM ends next summer. Intercede for them as they seek God's will regarding their future in Albania.

### Tuesday

**3** This evening, Dr. Paul Gupta teaches "How Shall They Hear?" in *Perspectives*-H'burg. This lesson explores what culture is and how to advance the Gospel among the least evangelized.

**10** A mission worker with extensive experience in Yemen will teach the *Perspectives* - H'burg class this evening as the topic "Building Bridges of Love" is discussed. It is Christ's love that builds bridges in any culture.

**17** Pray for Terrence Jantz, EMU faculty, as he teaches "Christian Community Development" this evening in *Perspectives* - H'burg. The progress of the Gospel should rivet our attention on the poor and broken of the world.

**24** "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches" is the topic in this evening's *Perspectives* - H'burg class, taught by Carol Davis, Global Spectrum. Living, organic, fruit-bearing churches that are the embodiment of the risen Lord is the goal.

### Wednesday

**4** Today, a group meets to plan Va. Conference Assembly held at the Univ. of N.C. in Raleigh, June 24-26. Pray for wisdom as they shape the event and for God's presence in each detail.

**11** On Saturday evening, many will gather at EMHS to honor the legacy of John R., Esther and Evelyn Mumaw. Pray for a spirit of generosity as they give to support the ministries of VMC.

**18** Remember the Gehring family as they go to the West Indies Theological College, Trinidad, on Wednesday evenings, for Richard & Barbara to teach classes. Roxy & Olivia go and do homework or visit students.

**25** The "gratitude attitude" is important for strong mental health and encouragement of family, friends and church brothers and sisters. Nurture yours today as you express your gratitude to God.

### Thursday

**5** Pray for Glendon Blosser, chair of VMC's Historical Committee, and others who will meet today to plan the kick-off of VMC's 175th anniversary at Weavers Mennonite Church on April 10.

**12** This weekend Mary Thiessen Nation is the resource person for the Mennonite Women of Virginia's annual retreat in Richmond focused on "Hope." Pray all will be refreshed by God's Spirit.

**19** Tomorrow morning VMC's Development Officers meet at "The Gathering Place" to consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Pray for grace.

**26** On this Thanksgiving Day remember to give "thanks to God for his indescribable gift" of Jesus Christ our Lord! (2 Corinthians 9:15)

### Friday

**6** This weekend, Italian Mennonites meet in Palermo for the annual conference. Christian counselor, Gianfranco Giuni, speaks on the theme, "The Christian Family." Pray blessings over this event.

**13** The Centro Koïnonia congregation sponsors a family seminar as an outreach to the city of Bari, Italy, this weekend. Family counselors, Gianni & Licia Saiten, provide the input. Pray that many will be drawn to participate.

**20** On Fridays, Lindsey Nice teaches cooking classes for the older girls at Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. This is both fun and educational. Ask God to give Lindsey the patience she needs for each session.

**27** As Christians who live in, and not of, the world, this day gives us the opportunity to resist consuming material goods, and instead, share our excess with others. What is God calling you to do?

### Saturday

**7** Haley Kirschnick serves with the Nice family at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. Pray that each day will bring her new insight for her work and opportunities to witness for Jesus.

**14** Pray for *TranSenders*, Dino & Mara who organize and lead activities for children while their parents participate in the family seminar. May they all have fun and learn new truths about the Bible.

**21** The youth of Carlsen Field Mennonite Church meet on Saturdays for fun and fellowship. Thank God for Avi Jaimani's leadership with this group and ask Him to bless each one who attends.

**28** Pray for the multitudes of "unreached peoples" in countries all over the world who need to hear the good news of Christ's love so that they may glorify God.

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by

**Eleanor Minger**

in loving memory of her husband, Joe.  
Their anniversary is November 17.  
Joe's legacy of faith and witness lives on.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."  
Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

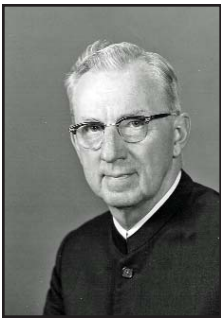


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 Virginia Mennonite Conference  
 901 Parkwood Drive  
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## Announcements

**Books Abroad** has 60 good used church hymnals. These books contain lots of well known hymns. If you are interested call (540) 828-2999.

You are invited to VMC's **Celebration of Ministry banquet** honoring the legacy of the late John R., Esther Mosemann and Evelyn King Mumaw at the EMHS dining hall in Harrisonburg, Va., on Saturday, November 14, at 6 p.m. There is no cost for the meal. An offering will be received. RSVP to Diane Bowman at (540) 434-9727 or [diane.bowman@vmconf.org](mailto:diane.bowman@vmconf.org) by Nov 9.



John R. Mumaw, 1965

On Sunday, November 1, you are invited to the 8th annual **Festival of Praise** concert, at 4 p.m., performing in the Eastern Mennonite School auditorium. The concert is free but donations are encouraged in the form of an offering which will benefit earthquake disaster relief in L'Aquila, Italy.

Wendell Nisly, a music teacher and choir director at Calvary Christian Academy in Mt Clinton, Va., will present the **fall lecture** sponsored by the **CrossRoads Heritage Center** on Sunday, November 1, 4 p.m. at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, 420 College View Drive, Bridgewater, Va. His theme will be, "Lift Your Glad Voices: Nurturing the Four-Part A Cappella Tradition." Wendell holds a master's degree in choral conducting from JMU in Harrisonburg, Va. Calvary Christian Academy hosts the annual Shenandoah

Christian Music Camp, with Wendell as one of the leaders of this camp. [www.vbmhc.org](http://www.vbmhc.org), [info@vbmhc.org](mailto:info@vbmhc.org), (540) 438-1275.

Everyone is invited to come and hear **Mark and Sarah Schoenhals** share their vision about their upcoming mission work in Thailand on Sunday, Nov. 15, 5:30 p.m. at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. Join us for a unique experience in Thai food and culture! Please RSVP to Ellen Blosser by phone 540-435-9850 or [omalley114@yahoo.com](mailto:omalley114@yahoo.com).

The **2009 Mennonite Women's Fall Retreat** is November 13-15 at Holiday Inn Select, Richmond. Enjoy a time for learning, fellowship, laughter, prayer, stories, and solitude. Speaker is Mary Thiessen Nation, faculty member at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. The theme of the retreat is *Hope: Anchored but Unseen*. Cost will be the same as last year, "early bird" \$70, regular registration \$80. It will also cost approximately \$100 for the motel and meals if individuals share a room. Scholarships are available. Contact Edith Sherk Kuhns at (540) 949-7474 or [eashenk@yahoo.com](mailto:eashenk@yahoo.com)

**Middle East work group opportunity for 2010!** Registration is now open for a Partners in Mission Work Group to Nazareth and Bethlehem, May 7-24, 2010. Group leaders will be Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor of New Testament, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and Les Horning, Pastor, Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship. The work group will volunteer their services at Nazareth Village, Nazareth, and at the International Center of Bethlehem at Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem. For more informa-

tion, contact Dorothy Jean (540) 432-4276 or [weaverdj@emu.edu](mailto:weaverdj@emu.edu) or Les (540) 382-8787 or [lesliehorning@verizon.net](mailto:lesliehorning@verizon.net)

The **CrossRoads Heritage Center**, 1921 Heritage Center Way, Harrisonburg, is offering **self-guided candlelight tours** of campus buildings decorated for Christmas, with hosts and musicians in various locations. These tours will run from 7-9 p.m. on December 4 and 5, with gifts available for purchase in the lower level of the Welcome Center. Tour fee is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12. Children 5 and under, free. (540) 438-1275, [info@vbmhc.org](mailto:info@vbmhc.org), [www.vbmhc.org](http://www.vbmhc.org).



On September 28, **Alicia Horst** began serving as Executive Director of NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center, Harrisonburg. Alicia grew up

in Italy and has spent significant time in Latin America. She has a MDiv degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a BA in social work from Eastern Mennonite University. "I'm really pleased to work with NewBridges," said Ms. Horst. "They have a great reputation in the community for helping many immigrants, as well as working with agencies across our community to improve services to people new to our country."

New contact information: (540) 438-8295, [AHorst@NewBridgesIRC.org](mailto:AHorst@NewBridgesIRC.org)