

Fourteen commissioned for overseas service with VMM

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN
VMM Director of Public Relations

In the outdoor space between Weavers Mennonite Church and Shady Oak, almost 250 people gathered to commission fourteen persons for service on July 15. The hot summer weather didn't include a storm that evening, and all enjoyed the "natural cathedral" for this time of worship, mission charge and prayer.

Carol Tobin, VMM Global Ministry Associate, noted in opening the service that "signs of growth are all around us, even in the ones who are to be commissioned, who like flowers, are produced in a context of nurture and rootedness and are now being sent off, given to other places so that the cycle of life may continue. It takes a special intentionality to seed life beyond the borders of our own gardens, to sacrificially take of that blessing and return it as a gift to God—for God to use elsewhere."

Worship music led by the team from Lindale Mennonite Church drew the congregation into a time of honoring God through song.

Loren Horst, VMM president, gave the mission charge, addressing those

commissioned as "average, normal human beings—who have been called by God and as people engaging in a 'dangerous' vocation. Yes, heightened physical risk. But 'dangerous' because the change likely to happen to you, the church, and the world is not under your control and you cannot predict it." Loren concluded with words from an African pastor: "I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me—my banner will be clear!" [1]

Ken Horst, VMM Director of *transSend* introduced the participants in the *transSend* program, a one-year internship which places persons in settings where they work alongside experienced mission workers or church leaders. Each one shared about the work that they expect to do in their location.

In the commissioning litany written by Carol Tobin, participants said, "Through all that you have created, your voice goes out through all the earth; in like manner, as fragrant flowers of Your own creation we send these out, clothed in the glory of your very spirit within and fragrant with the fragrance of Your love in their hearts."

Each person received a bundle of flowers representing the aroma of Christ and carried



Each commissioned participant received a bundle of flowers to remind them to carry the "aroma of Christ" with them to new places. Photos by Galen Lehman

it to the prayer station for their country or region. Audience members gathered around them and prayed for God's blessing on them as they take the beauty and aroma of Christ to other lands.

Everyone enjoyed the Taste of Missions afterwards with delicious international foods, under the summer moon, twinkling lights and flaming torches. Music by "Root Side Up" provided the background for good conversation and many expressions of love and care for those being sent to do God's Kingdom work.

[1] Pastor's quote from *The Minister's Little Devotional Book*, Tulsa: Honor Books, 1997, p. 119)



Taste of Missions offered delectable foods from the countries where workers serve.

Workers commissioned:

Betsy & Philip Fisher Rhodes, *Nazareth, Israel*
 Emily Gingrich, *Prague, Czech Republic* [with EMM]
 Marsha Kanagy, *Kaiserslatten, Germany* [with EMM]
 Malerie Plank, *Siguatepeque, Honduras*
 David Shenk, *Quito, Ecuador*
 Phil & Terry, Destin and Luke Witmer,
La Mesa, Colombia [with Mission Network]
 Willard & Eva Eberly, *Bari, Italy*
 Norma Teles, *Lezhe, Albania*
 Allen Umble, *Lushnje, Albania*

A half-serious lament



Loren Horst
President of VMM

With a bit of sadness this summer, I witnessed the final decisions associated with dissolving Ohio District of Virginia Mennonite Conference. It made sense

since the district had essentially become an “empty set” as Conference Minister Owen Burkholder put it. Chestnut Ridge, the last remaining congregation, had transferred amicably to Ohio Conference earlier. Still, since I had no vote I could not even officially dissent to any of the actions, even for sentimental reasons. A nearly 60-year era has passed. What remained seemed like “dividing the spoils.” The Ben and Edith Horst Trust will be divided up and distributed to other districts to continue to benefit some of the other churches and leaders who are not so near our ecclesiastical center (like those in NC, TN, KY). That seems good to me.

As we transfer congregations away, we continue to start new ones. A recent VMC/VMMissions’ church planters’ retreat saw 34 people gather from 10 nations of origin and praying in six languages. None were Pennsylvania Dutch. Churches continue to spring up. The Hmong church in Hickory is going well. A new outreach in Charlotte has begun. The old Hickory Mennonite Church is re-forming to become something new. It has “3:16” in its name now, maybe taking off from the Graham, N.C.,

ministry called Outlet 10:27. I’m not so keen on these cool names since I think they will become dated much more quickly. But then, I guess they can change it again. Ah, change! Maybe that is what gets harder with age.

A couple months ago I hired a man to build and repair some fences for me on the farm. It keeps the sheep from being killed on the road, saving them for slaughter later. I guess one kind of death is preferable to the other, for those of us who eat lamb. No one bothers to ask the sheep and we carefully hedge in their choices. In my work here at VMMissions, fences are called “parameters” and we think of them as good and necessary here too. Except maybe if you are the ones being fenced in, or fenced out.

For the most part I have learned to work with and even value the various parameters of policies, job descriptions, membership, doctrine, and organizational structure. Sometimes though I wonder if they really make that much sense. Maybe I’ve just learned better how to screen out that which is on the other side of the fence.

So, did we miss something in the decisions pertaining to Chestnut Ridge and Ohio District? Probably not. But maybe we weren’t paying attention to everything. And now I won’t even be as likely to notice. Chestnut Ridge is now on the other side of my fence, and Ohio District has ceased to exist.

Loren Horst

Seminary alums launch blog for young adults

Where do young adults go to discuss what’s right with the church, not just what’s wrong with it?

Two Eastern Mennonite Seminary alumni have created a blog and web magazine to provide a forum for young adults who are committed to staying in the institutional church but want to discuss what that means.

“Work and Hope: Finding Christ in the Church” (www.emu.edu/blog/work-and-hope) was created by Jeremy Yoder, a 2010 graduate currently living in Baltimore, Md., and Laura Lehman Amstutz, a 2006 alumna and Harrisonburg resident. Both completed the three-year master of divinity degree program. Their blog and quarterly online magazine will attempt to bring together various young adult perspectives about the church. The first issue of the magazine was launched July 20.

“We feel like there’s been much emphasis on that segment of our generation who is leaving the church,” Amstutz added. “We wanted to create a place for those of us who are staying to discuss what that means for us.”

Global Anabaptist encyclopedia online

GAMEO is an online encyclopedia providing information on Anabaptist-related topics, including history, theology, biography, institutions and local congregations. (www.gameo.org)

Financial Focus	Virginia Mennonite Conference Sept. 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010	Data is not available due to a change in accounting software and personnel.	
	Virginia Mennonite Missions ... Sept. 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010	Mission Fund contributions & income \$317,541	Special Projects expenses \$510,947
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Season of loss

By **NICHOLAS DETWEILER-STODDARD**

Active-duty soldiers whose jobs risk their lives are sometimes lauded for great sacrifice. Less commonly noted are the sacrifices of those seeking security through non-military means who lay down their lives in the vein of Matthew 16:24-25 and John 15:12-13. These late summer months have seen the deaths of a number of self-sacrificing peacemakers with ties to our Mennonite family.

On July 28, long-time peace activist and Christian Peacemaker Team member



Art Gish in Hebron, Palestine.
Photo by Kasper Ledet via Flickr

Art Gish was killed in a tractor rollover on his farm in Ohio. Gish lived a radical Christian discipleship as he actively engaged in peacebuilding, including his years in Israel/Palestine with CPT.

In another situation of tragic loss, ten members of International Assistance Mission's eye-care medical team were ambushed and killed in a remote province of Afghanistan on August 6. Among those killed was



Glen Lapp. MCC photo

Mennonite Central Committee worker Glen Lapp of Lancaster, Pa. Others killed also had connections and friendships to persons in our Virginia Mennonite

Conference community including Brian Carderelli of Harrisonburg, Va., Dan Terry of Janesville, Wis., and team leader Tom Little of Delmar, N.Y. The remaining persons shot to death were Dr. Karen Woo, Dr. Thomas Grams, Cheryl Beckett, Daniela Beyer, Jawad, and Mahram Ali.

These persons lived and died seeking a healed world, taking up their crosses rather than their swords to follow after Christ. Lapp's family wrote, "Three great passions were very close to his heart: he

sought to help meet the needs of those less fortunate, especially in developing countries... The opportunity to serve in Afghanistan was a perfect fit for him, and the realization of his passions... Although his absence is painful, we would not for one moment deny him the great fulfillment that his work there brought him." In an earlier blog post, Dr. Woo wrote, "The expedition will require a lot of physical and mental resolve and will not be without risk but ultimately, I believe that ... the effort is worth it in order to assist those that need it most." Little's wife, Libby, echoed the same saying her husband knew there was a very real cost but was committed to working where he was needed most. Lapp himself wrote in recent report, "The main thing that expats can do [in Afghanistan] is to be a presence in the country... Treating people with respect and with love and trying to be a little bit of Christ in this part of the world."

We join Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite Central Committee, International Assistance Mission, the people of Afghanistan and the families of the dead in mourning these great losses and taking strength from their cross-bearing examples of living in God's way of peace.



CELEBRATING **175** Years
1835-2010

Warwick River Mennonite Church celebrates the history of VMC

By **NELSON BAER**

Our morning worship opened with rousing music from the Lucas Creek Band, followed by an inspiring message, "Celebrating God's Grace in Our History," by former Denbigh resident Myron Augsburger. After enjoying a fellowship meal together, we again assembled for an afternoon program, featuring:

(1) Highlights from the minutes of the first Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly at Warwick River Mennonite Church, May 13-14, 1910, as reviewed by Susan Ackerman. This was the first meet-

ing in the 75-year history of Virginia Conference which was held outside the Shenandoah Valley. It was also the meeting in which George R. Brunk I was recommended as bishop for WRMC.

(2) A five-minute slide show of WRMC history, assembled by Nelson Baer and accompanied by the Shenk Strings.

(3) A reflective and entertaining tribute to the ministry of Bishop Truman and Ruth Brunk, by Myron Augsburger.

(4) A 30-minute segment from our Mennonite community folk opera, *Pieced Together*, revised and directed by Steve

Fannin. Selah Shenk was music director, and we were honored to have Elsa Bergey and Curt Holsopple return to the community to perform the *Dear Joe, Dear Alice* segment.

A very popular highlight of the occasion was the large display of photographs from Bob Schaefer's Centennial Display Collection. We also enjoyed the spirited four-part congregational singing of familiar hymns, led by Jay Shenk.

Our thanks to all who came and helped us celebrate our common heritage.



A tribute to Tomson

By EVA EBERLY

VMM Mediterranean Regional Assistant

As recounted by missionaries Leon Zimmerman and Norma Teles. Photos courtesy of author.

Tomson died in May 2010 following a series of heart attacks, a tragic loss to the Lezhe Mennonite Church. His vibrant faith and presence is greatly missed.

“The motto of my life is now, ‘Go therefore. . .and make disciples. . .’” was Tomson’s final affirmation in his testimony before baptism in 2008. [Read that story in the December 2008 *Connections*.]

As a commanding officer in the army of Enver Hoxha, the communist dictator, Tomson had sent his soldiers to destroy churches, mosques, and all evidence of religion. At baptism he publically committed himself to Jesus Christ and a radical new way of life that would build up the Church in Albania!

Missionary Leon Zimmerman first met Tomson at his job in an insurance office. Their friendship blossomed over coffee and conversation in the following months as Tomson eagerly began devouring the Scriptures and Christian books given him. As they discussed salvation and the life of faith, Tomson soon opened his heart to Jesus and was baptized.



Tomson sharing his testimony prior to baptism.

Tomson’s family called him “man of the Book” because he took personal Bible study so seriously and delighted in discussing it. Occasionally he preached, sharing the fresh, new truths he was discovering. One that especially impressed him was, *“Love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. . .”* Since Marxism taught that man is only mind, this verse had special meaning for Tomson. He felt however, that few Christians really live this truth!

He evidenced deep concern for his wife and family, most of whom were

Tomson was baptized in the Adriatic Sea by Paul Kropf and Leon Zimmerman.

traditionally Muslim, but carefully avoided pushing them. During recent months they accepted gentle invitations to special church events. Marxism prohibited demonstration of emotions or feelings, and emphasized meeting obligations and duties. After reading *“Husbands,*

love your wives even as Christ loved the Church,” Tomson asked, “How can I learn to express my feelings and tell my wife that I love her?” But his wife understood! “At first I was upset that Tomson went to church but seeing how he changed, I was happy! Tomson was a new person. He had so much love!” At the memorial service in the Lezhe church, his son-in-law stood to testify that Tomson was a transformed, loving man!

Tomson’s wife and other family members now attend church regularly. She says, “I want to take his place in the church and in following Jesus!”

Work and faith in Gulf cleanup efforts

By LAURA LEHMAN AMSTUTZ
Eastern Mennonite Seminary



James Åkerson

Eastern Mennonite Seminary student James Åkerson found the two weeks he spent this summer helping with clean up from the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico a “natural extension” of his Christian faith.

Åkerson, who is about half way through his program of study at EMS, is a forest ecologist and program director for the National Park Service. Normally he works in insect and disease control and invasive plant management. When he heard about the oil spill and follow-up efforts, he made sure that his disaster response form was up to date. He was asked to leave immediately for Pensacola Beach, Fla.

“I saw my work with beach clean-up as an extension of creation care,” said Åkerson. “It was good for me to be there, because I saw first-hand the impact of my oil use.”

“One thing I learned is that it is my use of oil and demand for plastic that caused this disaster,” he continued. “The best thing for us to do to prevent this kind of thing from happening again is to reduce our own use of oil.”

Åkerson often finds intersection with his work in the Parks Service and his seminary studies. He is a part of the Creation Care group at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church where he attends and recently completed an internship.

“Creation care is something that should never be divorced from faith,” said Åkerson. “It has been our job to care for the earth since creation. Even before the fall described in Genesis, we were called

to be stewards of the earth.”

“There is a big difference in treating creation like it is ours and remembering that we are just caring for it for someone else,” Åkerson stated. “I think it’s a wrong sentiment to say that because you own something it is yours. Really, you’re just taking care of it for now.”

Åkerson’s primary duty while on the beach clean-up crew was to make sure that local wildlife was not endangered. In Pensacola, this meant making sure that the birds that nest in the dunes and the sea turtles that lay eggs on the shore weren’t disturbed during the clean-up efforts.

“I had day shift for three days, and I’ve never been so glad to have night shift in my life,” said Åkerson.

“For the clean-up workers the heat and humidity, combined with the clean-up suits they were required to wear meant that we could only work 20-30 minutes of every hour or we would suffer from heat exhaustion,” he said. “I didn’t have to wear the protective clothing but was plenty hot in my long pants and shirts.”

Åkerson is taking several seminary classes each year so he can work them around his job with the parks service.

“Each class I’ve taken is a great tool,” said Åkerson. “I have found joy in my seminary studies, and I enjoy the ministry opportunities I have at Harrisonburg Mennonite and in the local community.

“I have felt a call to ministry since childhood,” he continued. “I have held a long litany of church positions, including teaching, leading Bible study and book keeping. My internship at Harrisonburg Mennonite confirmed that I was on the right road.”



Maxine & Donovan Smith, fraternal delegates from Jamaica Mennonite Church, share in worship.

“Peace for Troubled Minds in Troubled Times” is theme of Trinidad conference

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN
VMM Caribbean Regional Assistant

The 26th Annual General Meeting of the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago opened on August 6 with a “youth explosion.” Youth from each of the six congregations performed songs and dramas, to a crowd of 125 people. Excitement was high, and the message of Christ was clear.

On Saturday, delegates gathered in the Diego Martin Mennonite Church for the business session. Reports were presented and approved, interspersed with Scriptures and songs. The revised constitution of MCTT was adopted in the afternoon.

Sunday morning, church members and guests met in Charlieville Mennonite Church for worship. Donovan and Maxine Smith, fraternal delegates from Jamaica Mennonite Conference, shared in the service; Maxine sang a song, and Donovan preached on the theme. In Jamaica, they lead the Calvary Mennonite Church.

As everyone enjoyed the delicious meal, conversation flowed and some sang with the instruments that were brought in for the service. Warm fellowship bonded the church members and they look ahead to another year of God’s leading and grace.

VMRC looks at the six sides of wellness

By MAUREEN PEARSON
Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community

When it comes to incorporating activities and programs at VMRC, staff at the Harrisonburg, Va., retirement community look to what are commonly known in the aging services industry as the six dimensions of wellness: social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and vocational.

So, in organizing its Food for Thought program, the Wellness Center at VMRC teamed with the Harrisonburg (Va.) Farmers Market to provide education and entertainment to market-goers this year.

Jeff Hersh, director of the Wellness Center at VMRC, discussed with his staff a program promoting healthy foods each



month. Fitness Assistant Kristen Evans developed it into an exciting collaboration with the Farmers Market.

The Food for Thought program focuses on a different “power food” each month. Educational promotions promote the benefits and uses of that food. Residents and members of the public are invited to attend free information sessions about the food of the month which include samples. Food for Thought seeks to support local businesses that specialize in organic, healthy foods and have hosted local food vendors to the retirement community campus. Market vendors of the

power food of the month now offer informational flyers prepared by VMRC detailing the health benefits of the food along with recipes and ways to use it.

But the community collaboration does not stop there. The VMRC Concert Series at the Harrisonburg Farmers Market was developed by VMRC’s assisted living staff. Joey Warren, Crestwood life enrichment coordinator, lined up some family-friendly musical performances ranging from bluegrass to jazz for the fourth Saturday of each month through September.

Congregational Resource Center

FALL IS PROGRAM-PLANNING TIME, and the Congregational Resource Center has many good resources to help the process. A new acquisition is called “Church Programs & Celebrations for All Generations” by Rachel Gilmore. In addition to traditional religious & secular holidays, the author has ideas for an arts festival, back to school, volunteer, and spiritual gifts celebrations and much more.

TWO NEW HENRI NOUWEN BOOKS ARE IN:

“Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith”

“Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit”

Two of his longtime students, Michael Christensen and Rebecca Laird, have compiled these books from Nouwen’s courses & unpublished writings.

The CRC now has 9 volumes in the **“Feasting on the Word”** series.

If you preach from the *Revised Common Lectionary* you’ll want to check the **16 articles for each Sunday** from a theological, pastoral, exegetical and homiletical perspective. Year A, Volume 1 (beginning Advent 2010) is the latest to arrive.

The addition of a new bookcase initiated the re-doing of the entire CRC this summer. Almost 3000 volumes, CD’s, DVD’s and kits are being moved and sorted, and the result is a fresher, more user-friendly space. Do come and visit! The book sale cart is always open as well.

Hours: 7:30-5:30 Mon-Fri
Other hours by appointment.
Linda Alley, Director
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SEPTEMBER 2010

Connections

Prayer Calendar

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

4 Michael & Ruth continue to learn the Urdu language so that they can share "heart-to-heart" with the people in their community in South Asia. Ask God for His strength to continue this difficult task.

3 Pray for those who participated in the vacation/seminar in Sicily who haven't experienced new life in Christ, but witnessed the power of the Gospel there. May they be drawn into relationship with God.

2 Thank God that Peter Lehman, *TranSend* participant, had a good summer serving as staff member of Pura Vida Missions, Costa Rica. He invites our prayers as he shifts to participating in a discipleship training program.

1 When Nancy Marshall has the opportunity to travel to remote areas of Belize, she visits with Deaf adults who desire transportation to the Jesus' Deaf Church. Pray that some method will work out for these isolated Deaf persons.

9 Celebrate tomorrow evening with the Mennonite Hispanic Initiative on their first anniversary as supporters gather for a fund-raising dinner and concert by Hector David and outreach event at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

10 God redeemed Francesco from a dangerous, careless lifestyle to new life in Jesus. This is his wedding day in Rome, Italy, to a lovely Christian girl. Pray blessings for them as they serve God together.

11 Pray for pastors and church leaders who gather at Waynesboro MC for an introduction to ABIDE, a process of resourcing, gatherings, events, coupled with prayer, to assist small to mid-sized churches in their outreach.

5 Chris & Melody Riddle, Bari, Italy, are winding up summer activities and preparing their sons for school. Ask that God will help them with the transitions that are needed to make this a successful school year.

6 Fatmir, an Albanian believer, built a room on his house as worship center for his village. Pray that God will use him to bring many to faith in Christ.

7 "The Story of His Glory" is the topic of the *Perspectives* (H'burg) presentation this evening. Mary Thiessen Nation is the instructor. Pray for the students to grasp more of God's glory in this session.

8 Allen Umble encourages the group of believers meeting in Fatmir's home. Ask God to give him double wisdom and insight for this responsibility.

9 Andrea & Sheila Crocivera, Italian *TranSenders*, begin their service this month. Pray their vision for "MySpace," a center for reaching youth of Palermo, Sicily, for Christ, will flourish under the Spirit's guidance.

10 Tomorrow a fundraising meal is held to benefit the Witmer family at Weavers MC Shady Oak at 6:00 p.m. featuring Colombian dishes. If you have reserved your space, come and support the Witmers' ministry in La Mesa, Colombia.

11 A "ride for service," Bike Shenandoah is held today, beginning and ending at EMHS. Jump on a bike and join the fun, or sponsor a rider. Agencies that benefit are VMM, MCC, Third Way Media and NewBridges.

12 Richard Keeler and Brother Ramon from the Sangre Grande MC in Trinidad are attending a seminar on expository preaching in Memphis for two weeks. Pray that this will be a good learning experience for all.

13 Malerie Plank, *TranSend* participant, continues enjoying and adjusting to working as a nurse in Siguatepeque, Honduras. Pray for her as she extends her comprehension of medical Spanish.

14 James Rhodes instructs the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class tonight on "Your Kingdom Come," a comprehensive overview of Christ's Kingdom, pointing the way for all nations to follow Christ. Pray for this session.

15 In South Asia, Jacob & Hosanna relate to youth and lay leaders of the believers group in their community. Pray for them to have clear insight and patience for all the situations they face.

16 Steve & Betsy Dintaman are into the new semester at LCC International University in Lithuania. Pray that God will use them to meet the needs of the varied students studying there.

17 When Maxine Smith was in Trinidad, she and Margaret Keeler discussed the organization of Friendship Bible Coffees in Jamaica. Pray that plans will come together for this method of outreach.

18 Today is Heritage Day at CrossRoads Heritage Center. From 10 a.m.-3 p.m., everyone is invited to see how farm tasks were done in the past. Enjoy activities, music and foods items, and thank God for this legacy.

19 Pray that Eastside Church, in Harrisonburg, will gain traction as they kick off the fall, reaching out effectively to those who do not yet have a relationship with Christ, or have walked away.

20 David Yoder meets with church leaders each month in Trinidad, encouraging them in their roles and assisting as he can. Pray for God to give him wisdom and insight for each meeting.

21 This evening, Mark Fesmire instructs the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class on "Mandate for the Nations," showing Jesus' great strategic interest in Gentiles. Pray that the class will see new meaning in the Great Commission.

22 Remember in prayer today Giovanni & Fiorella Greco, Italian church planters, as they continue their ministry in Italian cities that have no believers' church. They face many spiritual obstacles.

23 Steve & Betsy Dintaman are into the new semester at LCC International University in Lithuania. Pray that God will use them to meet the needs of the varied students studying there.

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25 Today is Heritage Day at CrossRoads Heritage Center. From 10 a.m.-3 p.m., everyone is invited to see how farm tasks were done in the past. Enjoy activities, music and foods items, and thank God for this legacy.

26 Today at 6 p.m., Springdale MC is hosting an ice cream social with a display of historical items, followed by a video presentation of Springdale's history at 7 p.m. Come and celebrate the godly heritage in this place.

27 Pray for the thousands of people that are enduring the affects of tremendous weather events that harm, kill and destroy. Ask God to hold them in His hands as they strive to recover.

28 In *Perspectives* (H'burg) this evening, Linford Stutzman will instruct on the climactic book of Acts, the Gospel being spread by Apostle Paul. Everyone is welcome to attend one class free of charge. Come and see!

29 Pray for the organizers of the Virginia Relief Sale, held on Friday and Saturday this week. For details, go to www.vareliefsale.com

30 Pray for the teachers in the Mennonite elementary schools in Virginia Conference. May they have love, patience, and wisdom as they guide young lives daily.

If you would like to sponsor the prayer calendar, please contact Gloria Lehman at (540) 434-9727 or email gloria.lehman@vmissions.org



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

Announcements

You are invited to attend a **fundraising event** for **David Shenk** who will be serving in Quito, Ecuador, for two years through Mennonite Mission Network and Virginia Mennonite Missions' *tranSend* program. The event on Saturday, September 4, at Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, 5-6:30 p.m., will include Joe Yoder's Barbeque Chicken, Ecuadorian food and guests, music by David, and a silent auction.

You are invited to the **Mennonite Hispanic Initiative "First Anniversary Celebration"** September 10 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. Gathering is at 6:30, an authentic Hispanic meal is at 7 p.m. Come and hear Hector David, a solo violinist from Honduras, who combines a variety of styles ranging from classic to contemporary. Pastor Byron Pellecer of Iglesia Discipular Anabautista will share, and other Hispanic leaders will tell stories of God's work among the Hispanic people in the Harrisonburg area. To reserve your place, call Marvin Lorenzana at (540) 560-2842. The meal is free. An offering will be taken to support this ministry.

Join **Bike Shenandoah**, "ride for service" on Saturday, September 18, beginning and ending at Eastern Mennonite High School, 801 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg. Go to www.bikeshenandoah.org for details.

All are invited to a **fundraising meal** for **Phil, Terry, Destin and Luke Witmer**, September 18 at Weavers Mennonite Church Shady Oak, at 6 p.m., featuring Colombian dishes. Donations will support their ministry in La Mesa, Colombia through VMM and Mennonite Mission Network. RSVP to

Ashley Hill at juhill2@yahoo.com by September 10.

For women of all generations, cultures and places: the **Fall Women's Retreat** will be held October 29-31 at the Best Western Inn and Suites Conference Center in Waynesboro, Va. Cindy Voth, Associate Pastor of Youth and Family Life at Lindale Mennonite Church in Linville, Virginia will serve as resource speaker. The focus will be *Encountering God In The Ordinary - Connecting, Celebrating and being cared for by your sisters of the faith*. Through scripture, stories, singing, visual arts, and other special features, we will be invited to discover everyday sacredness in our own journey. If you need a brochure, call or email Kathy Hochstedler at 540-438-9454 or kjhoch@verizon.net.



Regional celebrations continue with three events in September:

Sunday, September 12—**Hymn Sing** at the Hildebrand Mennonite Church building 6:30-8:00 p.m. This historic site is located in Augusta County, Va., at 538 Hildebrand Church Rd, between Hermitage and Madrid.

Sunday, September 26, 6 p.m., at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., an **ice cream social** followed by a video presentation of Springdale's history at 7 p.m. For more information regarding these events, contact Amy Mumbauer at (540) 949-8945 or asmumbauer@gmail.com

Sunday, October 10, **Park View Mennonite Church** hosts the October event celebrating VMC's 175th anniversary, at 7 p.m. This

occasion will celebrate VMC's commitment to the church educational institutions within the Conference. A documentary will be shown that interviews persons who have been witnesses to and participants in Mennonite education in Virginia. Included in the evening's program will be a choir from EMHS singing selections from *David the Shepherd Boy*, the Park View choir singing a chorus from *The Holy City*.

There are two openings for



- **A single woman to work as nanny** for two families with young children serving in South Asia. In this internship setting, language and culture learning will also be facilitated. Beginning time: January 2011 or as soon as possible.
- **Individual or couple interested in environmental renewal** in Louisiana, learning and serving with recovery projects from damage done by Hurricane Katrina and the recent oil spill. Beginning time: March 2011.

For more information, contact Ken Horst, *tranSend* director, (540) 434-9727 or (800) 707-5535, ken.horst@vmmissions.org



Virginia Mennonite Missions welcomes **Lars Åkerson** as *Partners in Mission* administrator. He began August 18.