

'I am not afraid for the future of the church'

By PHIL KNISS

Pastor, Park View Mennonite Church

(Presented at the Sunday worship service on July 31)

I am not afraid for the future of the church. I am thrilled to be part of the church of Jesus Christ in this post-Christian culture. Every poll paints a dire picture of declining attendance and diminishing loyalty to the church. Denominations are running back to the drawing board, scratching their heads, wringing their hands (in desperate prayer?) and coming up with new plans and strategies and programs to return the church to its glory days. But I am not afraid for the church.

I see Christians from every tradition, including Anabaptist, returning to their roots (being radical). They are rediscovering that the heart of church is living out their faith in covenant communities of disciples who participate in God's saving mission in the world. They are rediscovering the ancient practices that formed communities of Christians since the book of Acts.

They gather in groups small enough to sit around tables and break bread together and know each other deeply. They practice the life of Christ together, and take it into their neighborhoods and into the larger world. They worship together, discern together, study scripture and pray together. In the daily rhythms of their lives they embody God's reign wherever they are. They know that simply attending church, sitting in rows, and listening to 20-minute monologues, will not form true disciples of Jesus. So they join in communities to practice the life of Christ. I have great hope in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to turn a small group of seriously flawed human beings into the means by which God brings about his saving and reconciling mission.



Lowell Haarer, pastor of Zion Hill Mennonite Church, Isaac Villegas, pastor of Chapel Hill Mennonite, Carlos Malvaez, pastor of Manatí de Vida, Jason Gerlach, youth pastor at Community Mennonite Church and Conference Youth Minister, and Kevin Gasser, pastor of Staunton Mennonite Church, at Conference Assembly. Photo by Galen Lehman.

I don't know what this means for the church as we know it, or for the institutions that hold that church together. The church is being marginalized in our culture. But guess what? Whenever the church is shoved to the margins, it thrives. It happened to the church in the first three centuries, to the 16th-century Anabaptists, to Christians in Ethiopia in the 70s and 80s. The church thrives because it can't depend on the surrounding culture to prop it up. It has to lean hard on the Holy Spirit and each other.

The church won't thrive by God swooping in to forcibly resuscitate it. It will thrive when it engages in practices that create openings for God. Life comes from God alone. But God's life flows into and through us only as we purposefully create openings for it. That's what Christian practices do—create openings for God to act.

Will the Virginia Conference of the next 175 years look like it does today? Will

it have a substantial headquarters and staff and budget and programs? I don't know. But I do know that if we keep proclaiming Christ as Lord, if we keep leaning on the Holy Spirit, if we keep gathering at each others' tables to nurture the ancient practices of the church—Mennonite-Anabaptist Christians will, in fact, be alive and well and engaged together in God's saving mission in our neighborhood, and around the world.

I do not fear for the church. Rather, I joyfully seek to imagine and embrace God's future for God's people—in authentic community and mission, practicing the life of Christ in the world.

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The meeting of God's people

Meeting together as God's people is a spiritual practice that dates to the earliest days of the post-Pentecost church. It is a habit instilled in some of us from our earliest memories and adopted by others of us later in our lives. We have come to call these regular gatherings "church" and many of us continue this regular practice on the Lord's day, Sunday. I am reminded that "church" is much more than these regular meetings of God's people. While being a fruitful and faithful Christian is more than "going to church," I would also argue that we ignore this spiritual discipline at our own peril. God meets us uniquely in the gathering of the saints.

My Mennonite world has shown remarkable concern for my spiritual well-being by providing multiple opportunities to meet as "church" in this past month. I have attended small group meetings, participated in worship services of my own congregation, attended Pittsburgh 2011, and enjoyed Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly (where the presi-



Loren Horst
President of VMM

dent of Mennonite World Conference spoke). Talk about being blessed!

Each of these experiences became for me an intersection of God's grace. Take, for example, the recently completed VMC Assembly. I was blessed by conference delegates diligently doing the work of our conference in a good spirit. I was encouraged by the testimony of salvation through Jesus (from atheism) by a guest from Montenegro. As a person approaching retirement I was challenged by a speaker from Jamaica to not just "sit in the departure lounge waiting for my flight to arrive." I was invited into engagement in the world as I witnessed the commissioning of pastors here at home and workers overseas. I wanted to join them, again!

Just a few days ago I received words of appreciation from Bert Lobe from Mennonite World Conference who helped with the logistics of travel and hospitality for Bishop Danisa and Treziah Ndlovu, president of Mennonite World Conference. His email is really intended for our entire conference. I include the note in its virtual entirety.

On behalf of MWC I want to express our deep and sincere appreciation for your invitation for Danisa and Treziah Ndlovu to participate in your Conference sessions

in Harrisonburg a few weeks ago. Your interest and support of MWC and the global Anabaptist communion of churches is important to us. Thanks.

I thoroughly enjoyed attending your sessions as well. Both the input and the worship sessions were very moving. I was amazed at the strength of your mission efforts and the number of young people you recruit and engage in building God's kingdom. That evening service of sending was simply superb, very moving. And the music throughout was both enjoyable and reassuring. With organizations like yours, one begins to see and feel the great commission taking shape over again and one is grateful.

God's speed in your important work and thank you again for your interest and support.

In Christ, Albert C Lobe

And now I am challenged to be the church beyond all of these meetings too.

Loren Horst

Financial Focus	Virginia Mennonite Conference	<table border="0"> <tr><td style="background-color: #c6e0b4;">budget</td><td>\$268,603</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #f4cccc;">expenses</td><td>\$256,042</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #c6e0b4;">income</td><td>\$219,605</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #c6e0b4;">investments</td><td>\$17,246</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #f4cccc;">net</td><td>(\$19,191)</td></tr> </table>		budget	\$268,603	expenses	\$256,042	income	\$219,605	investments	\$17,246	net	(\$19,191)
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Patient endurance

By **NICHOLAS DETWEILER-STODDARD**

Small and foolish. Several black-clad people stand silently on the corner as noon traffic traverses the city square. After fifteen silent minutes a name is slowly spoken. A long pause, then another name. For thirty minutes names are read and held in silence. These are the soldiers and civilians killed this week in Afghanistan and Iraq. The people reading and praying on this Harrisonburg street corner have been there each Wednesday noon for at least a year. Martin and Tom hold a banner with the number of people killed and speak prayerfully—not angrily shouting—reminding themselves and passersby of the current suffering of civilians and soldiers. The responses to the vigil are largely positive with a recently returned US soldier walking over to express gratitude for the memorial acknowledgment of pain.

Before these black-garbed witnesses, a similar faith group read, prayed and sang on the square every Friday noon for six or seven years after the starts of the most recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Still other groups have gathered to pray and mourn on the anniversaries of 11 September 2001, 7 October 2011 and 19 March 2003.

These groups have been small in number, sometimes dwindling to just two people or fading altogether. Their rituals seem futile and foolish but they pray, lament and read the names of those killed knowing that doing so will at least keep the memory of the ongoing horrors of our wars alive for them. They find an important Christian practice in stopping their busyness for just one hour in the entire week to stand still to remember suffering soldiers and civilians and to reflect on becoming better peacemakers in their own lives.

This month, we remember the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks and in the month following, the tenth anniversary of our current war in Afghanistan. Ten years is a long time to mourn and to keep up hope! In ten years various groups around our Conference have reflected, prayed or spoken out for the thousands who suffered and died on 9/11 and the hundreds of thousands after. Our voices have sounded tiny, our prayers for peace seem unanswered, our public actions ineffective, our energy has faltered.

We may feel small and foolish, but this September let us renew our commitment to those who suffer in our world by remembering September 11, Afghanistan and Iraq in our worship services (resources at peace.mennolink.org or your congregation's peace advocate). Let there be time for the church to mourn, to repent, to lament, to pray, to act. Our call is not to effectiveness but faithfulness to Christ. May we hear the apostle Paul and not grow weary of doing what is right this September 11.

50th anniversary homecoming for Big Spring Mennonite Church

By **KATHY HOCHSTEDLER**
 Pastor, Big Spring Mennonite Church

Sunday, June 19, 130 plus folks filled “the little church with the big heart” to celebrate God’s faithfulness over the past 50 years. From a longing in the heart of Thelma Sours for Mennonite brothers and sisters to share in Bible study and fellowship, and the Mahlon Horst family who answered that call, a church was birthed. The Spirit was at work!

A significant part of the Big Spring story is the continuous flow of students from EMC/U, who came for a season and made Big Spring their church home. Some students came; put down roots and raised their families. Folks from the community, who found kindred spirits’ here made Big Spring their church home. They have supported a number of these young adults in service assignments. Part of the celebration included a world map on which individuals were invited to mark where they have lived and served.

Two current young pastors in the Mennonite Church, who grew

up in this small but vibrant church, provided the morning message. James Rissler, current pastor of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship and son of Ed & Jean Rissler and Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler, Pastor of Iowa City Mennonite Church and daughter of Omar & Catherine Stoltzfus, shared reflections on Phil. 1:3-6, 9-11, while recalling their experiences growing up in this church. They were asked to use their gifts in worship at a young age and nurtured by faithful pastors and SS teachers.

Musicians and artists from the past and present shared their gifts with all who came to celebrate.

The church was reminded that at 50 years of age, we are young. When placed in the context of the 175th anniversary of Virginia Mennonite Conference, BSMC is considered a teenager. Teenagers know how to celebrate! With grateful hearts to God those who worked hard to make this a day of celebration, went home to rest.

Sarah Bixler hired as VMC Coordinator



Carpenter as Conference Coordinator. Sarah served as interim Conference Youth Minister for one year in 2006-07

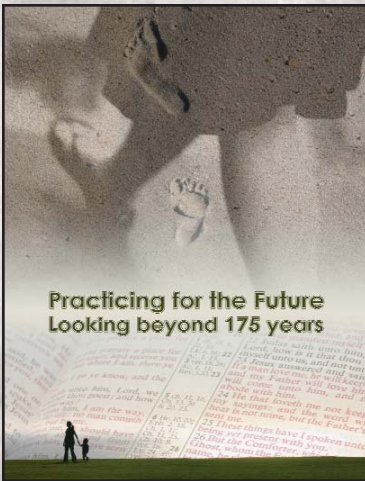
Conference Council appointed a search committee which hired Sarah Bixler to succeed Steve

and taught at Eastern Mennonite High School. She is a member of Zion Mennonite Church where she served as youth pastor. She is married to Benjamin and they have two children Calvin and Eve. Currently they are participating at Eastside Church, a new VMC church in Harrisonburg. Sarah’s strong relational, communication, and leadership skills will serve the conference well. Sarah began work on July 25 in this half-time salaried position.

Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly celebrates and looks beyond 175 years

By **DIANE BOWMAN**
VMC Staff Assistant

Photos by: Galen Lehman



"Practicing for the Future: Looking Beyond 175 Years" was a celebration of VMC's past legacy and what we can practice for the future.



Mary Thiessen Nation gave the message on Thursday evening: "The Practice of Prayer."



VMM worker in Belize **Nancy Marshall** shows a young participant in the activities on the lawn how to make a palm frond cross on Saturday.



Taste of Missions was a fun time of food from the global locations where VMM is involved, fellowship and music under tents on the lawn.

What a wonderful Assembly! Some have called it "the best Assembly I've ever attended!" We were aware of God's presence among us, as together we "practiced for the future" and "looked beyond 175 years."

It is hard to pinpoint exactly what made this Assembly special. Many gifts were offered, voices heard, and stories told; together they became an avenue for the Spirit of Jesus to challenge and strengthen His church for the future.

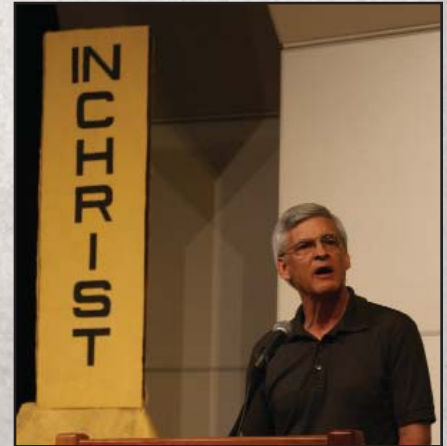
We were strengthened through our worship together. The Psalmist of Psalm 150 affirmed the variety of instruments with which we offered praise! Our voices, too, were lifted in praise, reflecting many languages, cultures, and styles that are part of our family of faith.

We were challenged by powerful teaching and preaching of God's Word. Through encounter with Apostle Paul in the book of Philippians, we were called to the ancient practices of our faith which will sustain us for the future.

We experienced the church as it is meant to be; a community of followers of Jesus which spans the globe. Numerous international guests and missionaries bore witness to the reality that the church of the future will transcend cultural boundaries, wherever the Spirit leads.

As we practiced being and becoming the body of Christ, we were strengthened in hope. In the words of pastor Phil Kniss, *we are not afraid for the future of the church!*

Plan now to join us next year in Chesapeake, Va. The Eastern District will host Assembly at the Mt. Pleasant Christian School, July 26-28, 2012.



Steve Dintaman was the worship speaker on Friday evening, bringing the message "Participation in Christ's Death."



A **bluegrass band** performed hymns during worship Thursday evening.



During the commissioning for mission workers, **Caleb Benner** receives prayer, providing a blessing and send-off.



Ruel Burkholder directs a **vocal group** on Friday evening. He led music during the Thursday, Friday and Sunday worship services.



The *tranSend* class of 2011: **Kaitlyn Bontrager, Jessica Hedrick, Kristina Reinhardt, Caleb Benner, Peyton Erb,** and the **Rodney and Eve Knepp family.**

2011 Assembly FACTS & FIGURES

Did you feel a bit crowded at Assembly 2011? It was the best attended in recent years. Steve Carpenter, outgoing Conference Coordinator, shares the following statistics:

Thursday worship: attendance **310**; offering **\$1,413**

Friday worship: attendance **445**; offering **\$1,911**

Saturday worship: attendance **521**, offering **\$2,375**

Sunday morning worship: attendance **approx. 1,200**, more than **30** musicians led the service, and offering exceeded **\$10,000**

600 gathered for lunch after Sunday worship

271 registered for daytime events, including **143** delegates from **55** congregations.

Delegates and fraternal guests converse after Ervin Stutzman's plenary session, "The Practice of Hopeful Living."



Kristina Reinhardt receives a candle symbolizing the light of Christ as she is commissioned for service in Albania.



Phillip Rhodes, a recently returned *tranSender* in Israel/Palestine, told a children's story in first century costume.



Giovanni Greco gave the message on Saturday, translated by **Willard Eberly**, on "The Practice of Faithful Witness."

Danisa Ndlovu, president of Mennonite World Conference, brought the message, "On Our Way Rejoicing" at the **Sunday morning worship service** attended by approximately 1,200 people.



Dementia education program offered in Fall at VMRC

By **MAUREEN PEARSON**
Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community

VMRC will present an evening of dementia education and awareness 7-8:30 p.m. Oct. 4 in Detwiler Auditorium on its campus, 1501 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg.

Featured speaker for the free program will be Jonathan M. Evans, M.D., M.P.H. Originally from Bethesda, Md., Dr. Evans is a community geriatrician who provides care to seniors throughout Central Virginia. He completed his medical school, internal medicine and geriatric training at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, where he remained a member of the Mayo Faculty until coming to Virginia in 2001. He has served as head of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine at the University of Virginia. In

addition, Dr. Evans is medical director for Trinity Mission nursing home and for the Laurels of Charlottesville.

The program is free and open to the community. It is sponsored by Memory Care at VMRC and the Alzheimer's Association Central and Western Virginia chapter.

Memory Care at VMRC has been offering free community education programs on Alzheimer's diseases and dementia since November 2007. In 2009, VMRC was invited by the Alzheimer's Association to become one of the organization's first corporate sponsors in the Harrisonburg area and the only retirement community asked to participate.

"We recognize that the diagnosis of Alzheimer's diseases will continue to

increase with the aging of America," said Valda Garber-Weider, R.N., coordinator of Memory Care at VMRC and director of Crestwood Assisted Living. "As persons' cognitive functions diminish, their family members need help with communication skills, stress relief and tips on how to stimulate memory recall. We're talking about improving the quality of life for both the person living with dementia and his or her caregiver."

The most recent statistics available from the Alzheimer's Association show that of the total number of elders living in nursing homes in Virginia, more than 40 percent of them have severe to moderate cognitive impairments. For information about the October 4 conference, call (540) 564-3559.

Children enjoy meaningful activities at "Happy Week"

By **EVA EBERLY**
VMM Mediterranean Regional Assistant

What occupies the long summer days for children who live in high-rise apartment buildings in densely-populated Italian cities? Many parents ask this same question! In the South, parks are usually few, crowded, and poorly equipped. Apartments have limited space for active play. Recognizing this opportunity to meet a felt need, the Mennonite churches in Italy developed a week-long program designed to provide meaningful, wholesome activities, and biblical teaching for children called "Settimana Felice" ("happy week"). With little curriculum available in Italian, organizers must create their own program and lesson plans.

Music, puppets, Bible lessons, creative crafts, active games and sports, Christian films, and snack time readily fill the 4 hours each morning in an atmosphere of acceptance, friendship, and love. At Centro Koinonia (Bari), the owner of the church facility offers his private pool one morning for the children to enjoy a swim—a highlight of the week! At the concluding event, children and staff pres-



Craft time at Happy Week.
Photos courtesy of Eva Eberly

children beg for more, "Why can't we have a 'happy month?'" they say.

Is it too big a dream to hope and pray for a Christian scouts program in the future or even envision a larger church facility or camp where children can freely run and play?

Note: Gifts from Children's Dept., Weavers Mennonite

Church and funds from Penny Power 2010 help finance children's ministries in Italy.

ent a program for parents to see and enter into what their children have experienced. Afterward a party in the church garden provides occasion for further fellowship.

This year was not only the largest "Happy Week" ever, but believers at Centro Koinonia for the first time organized and directed it, rather than missionaries or a team—an encouraging sign of maturity! A couple from Switzerland and a young adult from Termoli, Italy assisted them! Most of the 27 children who "maxed out" our tiny church center, came from un-churched families. Often the

Happy Week participants enjoyed each others' company.



SEPTEMBER 2011

Connections

Prayer Calendar

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by

4 Laura Amstutz asks us to pray for The Table as this congregation works to develop leadership and decision-making strategies.

5 Phil & Terry Witmer, La Mesa, Colombia, ask us to pray for Ricardo & Jenny whose 13-year-old daughter died suddenly last month. May God hold them gently and give them hope and comfort.

6 Peyton Erb, *tramSend* participant in Guatemala City, wants us to pray for peace in this country as elections are held on Sept. 11 and there is continual conflict in the political arena.

7 Join Rafael & Solange Tartari, Lezhe, Albania, in thanking God for the birth of their son, Paulo, last month. The miracle of new life! Everyone is doing well.

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

9 Maurita Eberly is concluding her two-month stay in Italy as a teacher of worship and music leading. Pray for those she taught as they put into practice what they have learned about true worship.

10 The Mennonite Hispanic Initiative, Harrisburg, celebrates its second anniversary this weekend—come and enjoy the festivities and bless this movement in God's Kingdom.

11 In an urban setting, Grace Schrock-Hurst is praying for more workers for their team to serve the poorest of the poor. May God hear and answer this prayer.

12 Pray for Caleb Benner, *tramSend* participant, as he teaches in the Lezhe Academic Center. May God grant him insight and patience for each day!

13 In Albania, Norma Teles has opened the Joshua Center for the new school year. The Roma children love coming to this early childhood ed. center and the mothers enjoy the interaction there. May God bless them as they learn.

14 Pray for Willard & Eva Eberly, Bari, Italy, as they meet a variety of people daily and witness to them about the joy that Christ brings into lives given to Him.

15 Bethany Tobin instructs the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class tonight on *Your Kingdom Come*, an overview of Christ's Kingdom, pointing the way for all nations to follow Christ. Pray for this session.

16 Pray for Jessica Hedrick, *tramSend* participant, as she teaches in the Lezhe Academic Center. May her students be attentive to both the subject matter and to spiritual concepts.

17 Pray that today the riders in *Bike Shenandoah 2011* will be safe and that they may raise many dollars for the Mennonite service agencies and Roberta Webb Child Care Center.

18 The Anabaptist Fellowship in Charlotte (N.C.) strives to be faithful in practicing the Anabaptist core values in meetings and in daily contacts, extending the peace of the Kingdom especially to those who visit with them.

19 In South Asia, Jacob & Hosanna live among many persons who have no knowledge of the scriptures, and they find ways to make them available. Ask God to enable their work.

20 Pray for Kaitlyn Bontrager, *tramSend* participant as she teaches in the Lezhe Academic Center. Ask God to give her students curiosity for the lessons she is teaching.

21 Rodney & Eve Knepp, *tramSend* participants, teach vocational classes at Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. Thank God they are living near the school with their two children and learning to know the community and culture.

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

23 If you have reserved your space, attend the fundraiser this evening to support Steve & Laura Campbell as they prepare to serve in Montenegro next year. Learn about their service and contribute prayers and finances.

24 Pray for Kristina Reinhardt, *tramSend* participant, as she teaches at the Lezhe Academic Center. Ask God to give her creativity and stamina for daily lessons and for her students to absorb them.

25 A missional community is emerging in Winchester, Va., where Chris & Heather Scott and others give leadership. Pray that *the exchange* can be who God is calling them to be.

26 Pray for Micah, Adam and Isaiah Riddle in their new school year. Ask that they will enjoy their classes, friends and teachers, and learn a lot in every way as the year progresses.

27 Pray for Sam Kraus who has returned to school in Kenya, getting re-acquainted with his classmates and teachers there. May he be a bright light among the students.

28 Thank God for Milt & Ann Troyer from Ohio who volunteer at the Lezhe Academic Center, bringing experience to this new school setting. May they find God's grace sufficient for each day.

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

30 The VA Relief Sale opens this evening with food, music and auction. Come and join in the festivities and benefit MCC, the relief arm of various groups of Anabaptist believers.



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

Announcements



Mennonite Hispanic Initiative will celebrate its second anniversary Sept. 9 and

10 from 7 to 9 p.m. Violinist Hector David from Hondruas will perform with Semper-Fi (his eight-piece band). David performed at the inauguration of MHI, and at its first anniversary celebration. He will perform two concerts and will lead music clinics at EMHS on Saturday from 9-noon.

Everyone is invited to enjoy an international meal to support Steve & Laura Campbell as they prepare for service in Montenegro. Come to Grace Mennonite Fellowship, 209 Lacey Spring Road, Harrisonburg, on Friday, Sept. 23, 6:30 p.m., hear from the Campbells and support them in prayer and financial contributions. To reserve your meal, contact Grace Good, (540) 896-7289 or office@trisselsmc.org by Sept. 19.

CrossRoads Heritage Center Events:

September 24, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Annual Harvest Day Festival with old-time fun for the whole family. Includes games, crafts, wagon rides, nostalgic music, Civil War era storytelling, foods of all kinds, molasses boiling, cider pressing, country store, etc. \$10 per car.

October 22, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., bus tour. Follow "The Burning" from Fishers Hill to Dayton, Va. Fee: \$70, includes lunch. Register by Oct. 17 at (540) 438-1275.

November 13 lecture, 4 p.m., Mt. Pleasant Church of the Brethren, off Boyers Road, Harrisonburg, Va. Focus:

Kirsten Beachy narrates women's stories from Civil War days. Donation welcomed. For details, see www.vbmhc.org



Women of all ages are invited to a weekend retreat Oct 28-30 at Best Western Plus Waynesboro. Weekend features include April Gunderson from Harrisonburg

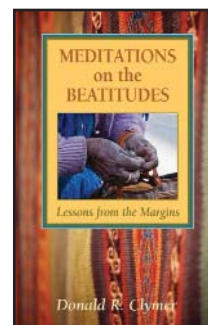
Mennonite Church speaking on "More than Water" along with special music, seminars, spa options, and more! Register by Oct. 10 for reduced retreat and hotel fees. Extra brochures may be downloaded at <http://vmconf.org/related/mwv.htm>.

Middle East Work Group Opportunity for 2012! Registration is now open for the Partners in Mission Work Group to Nazareth and Bethlehem, May 10-28, 2012. Group leaders will be Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor of New Testament, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and Spencer Bradford, Pastor, Durham Mennonite Church. The work group will volunteer their services at Nazareth Village, Nazareth, and at the International Center of Bethlehem at Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem. Group size will be limited to 18; and the work group is open to all interested persons on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information and to reserve your spot in the group, please contact Dorothy Jean (540-432-4276 or weaverdj@emu.edu) or Spencer (919-596-4702 or ecumenno@gmail.com).

Myron and Esther Augsburgers invite you to join them for **Footsteps of Paul's Journey**, May 26-June 8, 2012. The trip will include

eight days in Greece visiting Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea and Delphi. The final four days will be a cruise on the Aegean stopping at Ephesus, Patmos, Rhodes, Crete and Santorini. Dave & Joyce Eshleman are tour coordinators. For a color brochure, call (540) 434-1796.

Mennonite Church USA seeks a full-time Convention Planning Coordinator to be a part of its Convention Planning team. Responsibilities include coordinating events and activities related to the biennial Mennonite Church USA Convention. For more information, visit www.mennoniteusa.org/Home/NationalOffices/jobs/tabid/533/Default.aspx



Cascadia Publishing House recently released a book **Meditations on the Beatitudes: Lessons from the Margins** by Don Clymer, former director of communications at VMM and VMC who currently

teaches Spanish at EMU. According to Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, "Don Clymer's Meditations are creative, thoughtful, and substantive. Clymer does a beautiful job of setting up a personal story for each beatitude and then reflecting on it and the conflicting cultural value associated with it. Excellent material for study groups." The book is available at EMU's bookstore or online at Amazon.com or bn.com.