



# Formed by gratitude



**Owen Burkholder**  
Conference Minister

I have great blood! My blood is type O Negative (universal donor), and CMV Negative (it does not contain cytomegalovirus.) The attendants at the blood donor room tell me my blood can be pulled off the shelf and used immediately for trauma patients, and it can be used in young children.

I was quite pleased with myself when they first explained all of this to me. Then I considered more deeply, and said, “What do you have to do with your blood type? It is completely beyond your control. It is pure gift.” Of course, that led to thoughts of so very many things for which I can take no credit: intelligence, gender, parents, teachers, preachers, time and location in human history. Life itself is gift.

So, rather than living pridefully with all of these things, I have determined to live gratefully. I hope to be “formed by gratitude.”

This is the exercise to which we invite all who will participate in VMC Assembly at Chesapeake later this month. Think through how you have been formed—what has shaped your faith to this point? Parents, teachers, youth leaders, pastors, friends, spouse, traumatic events, spiritual disciplines...How have you been shaped by your encounter with the Bible? And, of course, it is the God of the Bible toward whom it points who is the object of our faith. How will you let yourself be “formed by the risen Christ?”

Another reality in my consciousness is the death of my brother-in-law, Paul Gingerich, this past March. Coping with my own grief journey has been helped by remembering Paul’s gratitude for his own life. While the three-year journey with lung cancer had its challenges, and Paul wasn’t really looking forward to death, he maintained that the life he was given was indeed gift. His wife, Joyce (Ruth Ann’s sister), tells us that even as a boy, he would be singing his gratitude for life while he was mowing the lawn!

I share here a song he wrote in preparation for a congregational retreat in the 1970s:

## WE ARE YOUR CHILDREN

Paul E. Gingerich

You have given life abundantly,  
And you cleanse our every sin.  
As we share your love along the way,  
Holy Spirit please shine in.

### CHORUS

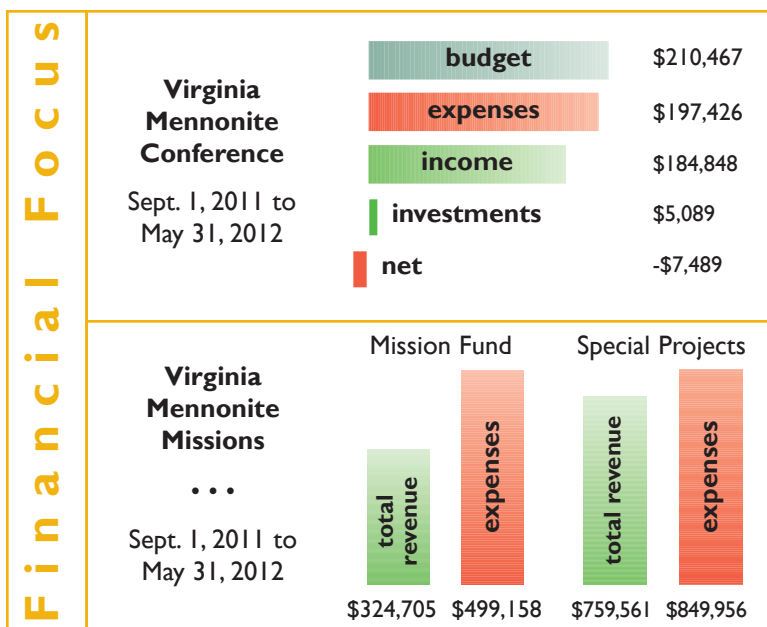
We are your children Lord,  
And our hearts are filled with  
thankfulness.

We give our lives to you,  
As a token of our love.

May we find our place in You, oh Lord,  
Always willing to be used.  
Do a work of grace in each of us,  
Set us free to share the news.

For Your Spirit gives the gifts to us,  
For our growth in unity.  
May our fellowship be sweet, oh Lord  
As we give ourselves to Thee.

(Visit [vmmissions.org/2012/06/we-are-your-children](http://vmmissions.org/2012/06/we-are-your-children) to listen to this song.)



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# Assembly evening events

Join the gathered body of Virginia Mennonite Conference for Assembly worship and celebration! Following the 7:00 p.m. worship at Mt. Pleasant Christian School in Chesapeake, Va., special events will be held each evening. Learn more at [vmconf.org/assembly](http://vmconf.org/assembly)



God's Girls

**Thursday, July 26**  
8:45pm in the Mt. Pleasant Christian School cafeteria  
"Formed for Mission"

Join us for a mission celebration featuring:

God's Girls worship movement team

Stories and music from mission workers and church planters

Lucas Creek Band bluegrass

Local homemade ice cream available for purchase



Lucas Creek Band

**Friday, July 27**  
9:00 p.m. at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church  
"Mennonites" choir performance



"Mennonites" choir at Mt. Pleasant

The "Mennonites" choir features 40+ voices singing a *capella* music. Members are from the Chesapeake area, and during Assembly, from throughout VMC.

The choir will be singing traditional hymns, modern inspirational music and Southern Gospel

## A trip to Albania: our availability as God's instruments in mission

By **LEE & PEG MARTIN**  
Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but actually being there is in a totally different category. For us, Albania was a distant place we'd hear about through faithful missionaries including Allen Umble and Norma Teles. Allen is a former member of our congregation, Mt. Clinton Mennonite, and Lee is on Norma Teles' Missionary Support Team. While we've eagerly welcomed visits from both to our congregation, the suggestion that we visit them in Albania took awhile to sink in. However, through the encouragement of VMM staff, that's what we did May 11-21.

In Lezhe, we were privileged to visit, walk, eat and pray with Norma. A highlight was joining her for a morning at the Joshua Center, experiencing the beautiful faces, unique personalities, energy, and great potential of the Roma children she teaches. Having coffee with Klementina and Dini Shahini and meeting their com-



Peg and Lee Martin (left) with Allen Umble (back right) and Fatmir and his family.  
Photo courtesy of authors

mitted staff at the Lezha Academic Center, we witnessed God's kingdom coming and will be done in the lives of high school students. Though understanding the language was beyond us, joining in Sunday worship with believers in Lezhe and in a village near Lushnje expanded our understanding of the Church worldwide, and our

own place in it. Visiting Fatmir and his family near Lushnje with Allen, and hearing Fatmir's amazing story of coming to faith in Jesus moved us to praise our God who still works miracles and transforms lives. Witnessing Norma and Allen relating to many people who clearly

love and respect them causes us to reflect on our own availability to be God's instruments in mission.

Being among many wonderful people in this beautiful country has transformed Albania from a distant place to a nation and people we hold in our hearts and prayers in a profound new way.

# African Pentecostalism, a recipe for global church growth

By JOHN KREIDER  
VMC Eastern District chair

On Saturday, May 19, 28 followers of Jesus from both Calvary and Eastern District congregations gathered in Williamsburg Mennonite Church to discuss what is a disciple and how do we make them? Two persons from international cultures and communities—Phil Detweiler who served with Mennonite Missions Network for 21 years in Africa and Skip Tobin who served in Asia for 20 years with Eastern Mennonite Missions and VMissions helped us struggle with this question.

Phil began as the African Church does its business - singing before proceeding. We sang a new song to the tune of “Were You There?” substituting “Wonder” for “Tremble” in the refrain. The verses pointed to the Kingdom: Were you there when the wind began to blow? When the sinners cried for grace? When the church was born again? When the soldiers found God’s peace? When the saints stood

strong and brave? When the hallelujahs rang?

Unlike Pentecostalism in North America, which is largely driven by nationalism (a departure from its early Christological beliefs and commitments), African Pentecostalism is driven by the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ as its energy, power and motivation for congregational, personal and evangelical life.

What does the combination of African Pentecostalism and Anabaptism or the post-Christendom kingdom look like?

Some descriptive identities of this strange but powerful kingdom of God in the world are: a singing kingdom in a variety of styles, with or without instrumental accompaniment; a praying kingdom; a joyful kingdom in worship and in daily living, even in suffering; a non-violent and peaceable (shalom) kingdom; a scripture committed kingdom; a reconciling kingdom; a Spirit-empowered kingdom; a generous

Kingdom; a Purposeful Planning kingdom; both a spiritual dynamic and social active kingdom; a kingdom that does not ask, “what *would* Jesus do?” but rather, “what *did* Jesus do?”

African Pentecostalism/Anabaptism is clear on this question. This is a kingdom-growing combination finding expression in Mennonite communities in North America and in some other-than-Mennonite faith communities as well, gaining strength in the continents of the world.

The world community is restless, we were told by both Phil and Skip. The Holy Spirit is saying to the church in the world, “Get on board.” Jesus is the solution for the restlessness in the church and for the restless world in which the kingdom of God is present. The question is no longer, *were we there?* But, rather, *are we there and filled with wonder?*

## Patchwork Pantry celebrates 20 years of service

By SHERI HARTZLER  
Executive Director, Patchwork Pantry

The Patchwork Food Pantry, which serves Harrisonburg and Rockingham County residents in need with a three-day supply of staple foods, opened May 27, 1992, out of the Community Mennonite Church building at 70 S. High Street.

Each Wednesday night from 7-8 p.m. 25 volunteers serve food to approximately 50 families. An additional three volunteers play with clients’ children during the wait for food. A survey in March 2012 showed that clients had come from 13 nations. Monthly incomes were \$500 or less for 42 percent of clients, \$501-\$1,000 for 36 percent.

In 2011, the pantry received and distributed 102,000 pounds of food from the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. Garden produce from local gardeners and the Weaver’s Mennonite Patchwork Garden is

a welcome commodity in the summer months.

Client comments such as “You make me feel like a person and not a bum who has to ask or beg for food for my family” and “If it was not for this pantry, then we would not make it through the month” are what have kept me working at the pantry all these years.



Pantry supporters celebrated the 20-year milestone with a dinner on May 17. Photo courtesy of author

You can participate in the work of Patchwork Pantry by donating food or time. Email [PatchworkPantry@gmail.com](mailto:PatchworkPantry@gmail.com) and follow weekly reports, photos and updates on Facebook at Patchwork Pantry.

# Introducing the new *tranSenders* beginning service in 2012



## Sarah N. Schoenhals

Sarah will serve and connect with youth and young adults in the Life Enrichment Church and possibly be involved in AIDS ministry in Det Udom, Thailand. She will join long-term mission workers Mark and Sarah Schoenhals in Det Udom after her first month of language study in Bangkok. Her gifts will be used in the church in whatever way God leads. She will also assist in the care of Mark and Sarah's children, Heidi and Hannah Schoenhals.



## David & Rebekka Stutzman Immanuel

David and Rebekka Stutzman and their son Immanuel will be serving a three-year term in Germany through a partnership with the Bammental Mennonite Church and the South German Mennonite Conference. They will provide part-time pastoral leadership at Bammental and work to promote mission vision and young adult leadership in the Conference. They are mission associates with Mennonite Mission Network.



## Steve Horst & Bethany Tobin Anjali

Steve Horst and Bethany Tobin, along with their daughter Anjali, will be serving a three-year term in Thailand in conjunction with the Bangkok Refugee Center and the Life Enrichment Church. The vision is to establish a team that will minister in practical ways to the refugees at the Center and form a missional community in which both refugees and young adults from the Life Enrichment Church might grow in discipleship. They will be associate missionaries with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

*tranSend* is the one-year mission internship program of Virginia Mennonite Missions



**'passing the torch'**  
share a meaningful time of worship and sending at a

## commissioning

of *tranSend* participants and long-term mission workers

**Thursday, July 19, 7 pm**  
Outdoor area between Weavers Church and Shady Oak  
2501 Rawley Pike, Harrisonburg, Va.

Welcome by Carol Tobin

Worship music by Ron & Regina Schultz and family

Passing the torch: a mission 'charge' by Aaron Kauffman

Special music by Sarah N. Schoenhals

Introduction of *tranSenders* by Kent Horst

Introduction of long-term workers by Loren Horst

A time of prayer at country/prayer stations

**taste of missions** to follow (see other side)

*tranSenders* commissioned:  
Sarah N. Schoenhals  
Stephen Horst & Bethany Tobin  
David & Rebekka Stutzman  
Lezha Academic Center teachers

Long-term workers commissioned:  
Allen Umble  
Steve & Laura Campbell  
Shawn & Laura Green  
Dini & Klementina Shahini

## taste of missions

thursday, july 19  
following the commissioning service for workers (see other side)



music by the fed



Virginia Mennonite Missions  
Called. Sent. Transformed.  
vmmissions.org

Enjoy delectable foods from around the world, such as:  
obstkluchen, baklava, chesses, margerilla pizza, cream puffs, watermelon, spring rolls, meatballs

# Jan Emswiler selected as EMS Science Alumni Honor Award recipient

By **JACQUE ZOOK**  
2012 Eastern Mennonite School graduate

Since the spring of 2006, the Eastern Mennonite High School Science Department has honored an alumnus each year who “exemplifies both a life of service to others consistent with God’s calling and a significant achievement in an area of science.” Past recipients have included doctors, educators, and even a robotics expert currently employed by Google, designing their robotics car. This year, on April 30, Eastern Mennonite High School celebrated the work of Jan Emswiler ‘92 for her work in fighting against HIV/AIDS in Tanzania.

After graduating from EMHS, Emswiler traveled to Tanzania for the first time when she volunteered for SALT (Serving And Learning Together), a program established by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). She graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 1998 with a nursing degree and returned to Tanzania for two years again working for MCC as a community health worker. Emswiler returned to Harrisonburg for one year and was a staff nurse at Oak Lea

Nursing Home before returning to Tanzania from 2004 to 2009 to teach advanced nursing at Aga Khan University and to administer a community health program focused on HIV/AIDS.

Emswiler returned in 2009 to Virginia as a Nurse Supervisor at Oak Lea Nursing Home, a Swahili instructor at James Madison University and as the Executive Director of the Valley AIDS Network. Emswiler is currently an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

During her acceptance speech at EMHS, Emswiler said the driving force behind her efforts was a feeling of uneasiness; she was uneasy with the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS, and the imbalance of

power surrounding the disease. “At first, one of my major struggles was working with HIV issues and facing the extreme levels of stigma and discrimination,” Emswiler said. Jan is married to Kajungu Mturi and they have a 5-year-old son, Luga. Jan’s parents are Dave and Ruthie Emswiler of Harrisonburg, Va.



Jan Emswiler (left) and her childhood friend and fellow EMS alumna, Carmen Heatwole Miller ‘92. Carmen spoke at the award ceremony about Jan’s courage and determination to empower others. Photo courtesy of author



**PENNY POWER**  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2012



Middle East crisis relief  
Syria & Lebanon



Tornado destruction relief  
West Liberty, Kentucky

a project of Mennonite Central Committee

a project of Virginia Mennonite Missions

# JULY 2012

## Connections Prayer Calendar

### Sunday

**1** In Southeast Asia, Grace Schrock-Hurst asks us to pray that more Christian young people will join her team in teaching the many children who come to her house to learn English, math and health facts.

**8** Today a work team from Lindale Mennonite Church is worshipping with the Ridge Mennonite Fellowship in rural Jamaica. Praise God that He is worshipped across cultures through word and song!

**15** What Scripture impacts your life today? Choose a verse and meditate on it throughout the day, and watch it come alive for you, then share it with others.

**22** VMM/EMM worker Marsha Kanagy returned to Kaiserslautern, Germany, last week after being on home leave for a few months. Ask God to give her insight and wisdom for her role in the church and with youth she serves.

**29** This week, Nancy Marshall holds VBS for the deaf school-age children. It is the highlight of the summer for many of them. Thank God for Nancy's dedication to teaching children the truth of God's love.

### Monday

**2** Pray for families who are traveling for vacations or family reunions this month. Safety while driving and good connections with others are gifts to be treasured. May God's grace be abundant in these settings.

**9** Conference Assembly is approaching. Ask God to guide the final preparations and prepare attendees to receive and respond to preaching, teaching, worship and conferring together.

**16** As speakers prepare to address participants at Assembly, invite God's Spirit to guide the hearts and minds of Moderator Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Bishop Leslie W. Francisco III, and Youth Minister Lesley Francisco.

**23** Harry & Kris Kraus are in the US for connecting with family and friends. Thank God for their service in Kenya and ask that He will restore them to return to their work there.

**30** Richard & Margaret Keeler leave Trinidad tomorrow for a month in Va. They are concluding many years of service with the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago. Thank God for their faithful service and consistent witness.

### Tuesday

**3** In Thailand, Mark & Sarah Schoenhals ask us to praise God for the youth of Life Enrichment Church who are coming to the church. Pray for lay leaders, Bpom and Oie who are assisting with leadership of the youth activities.

**10** In the summer, the Riddle family in Bari, Italy have a different schedule than during the school year. The more relaxed days make opportunities for interaction easy and frequent. Thank God for the Riddles' ease in relating to neighbors.

**17** VMM/EMM workers Mark & Sarah Schoenhals and family are on home leave for several months, connecting with family, friends and churches. See them at VMC assembly. Pray for their well-being during this time.

**24** Pray for God's guidance for the VMM board meetings in the next two days. Thank God for the vision and commitment of the board and committee members.

**31** Today Phil & Terry Witmer and sons, Destin and Luke return to Va. from Colombia where they served for 3 years with Colegio Americano Menno and the congregation in La Mesa. Ask for traveling mercies today.

### Wednesday

**4** On this US Independence Day when fireworks remind us of war, claim your allegiance to the Prince of Peace. We bear witness to Christ's love that ends cycles of violence and brings wholeness and hope.

**11** Pray for Rodney Knepp as he directs the work team serving this week at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Top Hill, Jamaica. Thank God for his skills and for his ability to work in a variety of situations.

**18** This evening might be just the perfect time to invite neighbors to your home for a snack or dessert, especially welcoming those who may be estranged in the community. Seek God's direction for this.

**25** Faith & Life Commission and Conference Council meet tomorrow. Ask for God's guidance as these representatives support church leaders, address issues, provide vision, and approve the VMC budget.

### Thursday

**5** Jacob & Hosanna are on home leave from their ministry in South Asia. Pray for them and their children, Elias and Maia as they visit family, friends and churches. May God's care rejuvenate them for the work they return to in September.

**12** Pray for Caleb Benner as he is seeking support for his second year as a teacher at the Lezhe Academic Center, Albania. He is connecting with family, friends and churches in Pa. during this time.

**19** The Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago is preparing for the Annual General Meeting, Aug. 10-12. Fraternal delegates from Jamaica will attend. Pray that all will be blessed as the plans move forward.

**26** VMC Assembly begins tonight! Invite God's presence to infuse the gathering of hundreds of VMC members as they celebrate being "Formed by the Risen Christ" and explore Christian formation.

### Friday

**6** Thank God for Kristina Reinhardt's service as teacher at the Lezhe Academic Center, Albania. She has returned to the US. May God lead her future decisions.

**13** Today is a good day to do something extra for God's creation and gift to us. Recycling, reducing fossil fuel use, cleaning up trash...these may be some ways for us to give nature a little "boost" as a way of saying "thanks."

**20** Today William George & Joan Broughton arrive in Va. to serve as fraternal delegates from Jamaica Mennonite Church to VMC Assembly. They lead the Temple Hall church in Kingston. May God bless them in their interactions.

**27** The junior youth camp is held today and tomorrow at the Calvary Mennonite Church in Retreat, Jamaica. Pray for the campers and staff as they have fun together and learn God's message through words and songs.

### Saturday

**7** Remember the Gifts Discernment Committee as they seek gifted persons to fill leadership roles within VMC. Pray for open hearts and persons willing to serve as the Spirit leads.

**14** As Willard & Eva Eberly wind down their missionary service in Bari, Italy, ask God to give them all that is needed for the transition. Thank God for their long, consistent service in Italy.

**21** VMM/EMM workers in South Asia are seeking God's direction as they plan to move from their current location into a larger city for prayer and witness. May God direct each step as they work toward this goal.

**28** Today is the final Assembly meeting before Assistant Moderator Mark Schloneger and Treasurer Sherwyn Smeltzer's terms end. Thank God for their faithful service and leadership within VMC.

**"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.**

**Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."**

**Psalms 90:1-2,4 (NIV)**



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 Virginia Mennonite Conference  
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## Announcements

**Come celebrate Marsha Kanagy's service in Germany!** Enjoy worship with Marsha, pictures and stories, along with German hors d'oeuvres, desserts and chocolate fondue on Thursday, July 12 at 6:30 p.m. at Shady Oak (Weavers Mennonite Church) 2501 Rawley Pike, Harrisonburg. An opportunity will be given to share in her financial support.

**The 2012 transSenders and long-term mission workers will be commissioned** on Thursday, July 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the open space between Weavers Mennonite Church and Shady Oak, 2501 Rawley Pike, Harrisonburg. Worship music, a mission charge for those being sent and prayer as they go is followed by the annual Taste of Missions. Come and add your blessing to these individuals and families. Enjoy international foods and good fellowship while encouraging these workers. Contact Gloria Lehman at gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727 or (800) 707-5535.

**Mark and Sarah Schoenhals**, with their daughters Heidi and Hannah, are currently on home leave here in Virginia. Come join them for a meal on Friday August 3, at 6 p.m. at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church to celebrate what God is doing in Thailand! Please contact Ellen Blosser with questions and/or to RSVP at (540) 383-0255 or ellen.blosser@hotmail.com

Register now for **Assembly 2012** at Mt. Pleasant Christian School in Chesapeake, Va. Do you enjoy a *cappella* singing? Come join the choir! The "Mennonites" chorus, based at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, invites singers from around the conference to join them in presenting a special

program of choral music at Assembly. For music and more details, contact Alan Keffer at akeffer@akeffer.com or (757) 482-0171. Details are also available in the Assembly registration brochure or at [vmconf.org](http://vmconf.org).

The **Mennonite Women of Virginia Fall Retreat** will be held Sept. 21-23. Be adventurous and bring a friend or two to a new location, the Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center in Lynchburg, Va. Watch for brochures in July for registration information! Click on the "Mennonite Women VA" tab at [vmconf.org](http://vmconf.org) for updates.

A **Women's Community Bible Study** at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church uses Beth Moore's study: *BREAKING FREE: The Journey, The Stories*. This updated edition features brand-new video/member book. Based on scripture from Isaiah, Beth explains "anything that hinders us from the benefits of knowing God is bondage." Study dates are Tuesdays, Aug. 28-Nov. 6.

Morning sessions are 9-11:00 and evening sessions are 6:30-8:15. Registration and \$20 fee are due by August 14. To register, contact Jeannie Smith at (540) 434-4361.

**Back to School Bash** is a free evening of



Sidewalk Prophets



Jamie Grace



KJ-52

Christian concerts sponsored by Eastside Church and Eastern Mennonite University. This second annual event will take place August 19 at 6 p.m. in the EMU University Commons and is limited to the first 3,000 people. Featured performers are Sidewalk Prophets, Jamie Grace, and KJ-52. Youth groups are especially encouraged to attend. For more information, visit [backtoschoolbash.us](http://backtoschoolbash.us)

**change your vision of the world.**

Harrisonburg Perspectives class  
 Tuesdays 7:00 - 9:45 pm  
 August 28 - December 4, 2012  
 Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Room 123

Contact: Carol Tabin  
 perspectives@vmmissions.org  
 (m) 540-435-9887 or (o) 540-434-9727

**WWW.PERSPECTIVES.ORG**