

Conference Assembly: 'Formed by the Risen Christ'

By SARAH BIXLER
VMC Conference Coordinator

We gather at Virginia Mennonite Conference's annual Assembly for worship, fellowship, cooperative learning, sharing our experiences and insights, and group discernment. Delegate sessions, workshops, special events, and evening worship will fill our time together. Assembly participants will explore the theme "Formed by the Risen Christ," which builds on the Mennonite Church USA *Purposeful Plan* priority of Christian formation.

Delegate sessions are designed for congregational delegates to interact, hear input about Christian formation, and conduct the business of the conference. While these sessions are specifically for delegates, all Assembly registrants are welcome to attend. Participants will learn how VMC congregations are engaging in Christian formation. George R. Brunk III will lead two Bible studies and Virginia Mennonite Missions' guests will share testimonies. Saturday morning's session will occur in a special format where small groups will reflect on the discernment journey.

Workshops to resource congregations for Christian formation include: forming Christ in our children, peace and vows of nonviolence, habits of life and worship, Christian formation with young adults, mission in the 21st century, practicing disciple-making, Biblically focused worship planning, and Christian funeral practices. All Assembly registrants may attend workshops.

Congregational peace advocates will be invited to gather over Friday lunch, and young adults over Friday dinner. Everence is sponsoring a complimentary breakfast for active pastors and spouses on Friday

Christian Formation

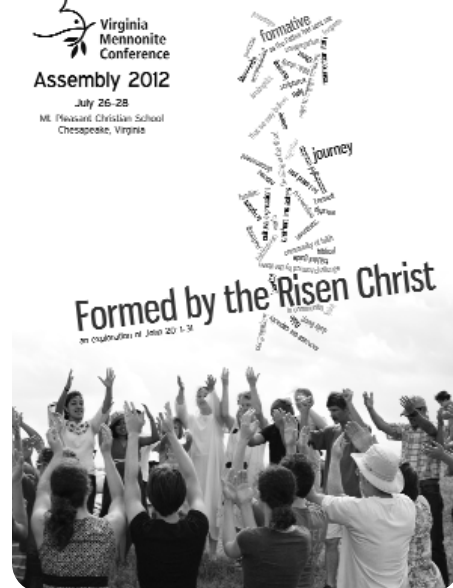
This priority reflects the various ways that Jesus is the center of our faith. Missional churches read scripture in such a way that it helps form them into the image of Jesus Christ.

morning. For Saturday morning breakfast, Mennonite Men has scheduled speaker Merlin Miller, and Inga Mast will address the Mennonite Women.

All are welcome, regardless of Assembly registration, to participate in evening worship and the special events following. Childcare during worship is provided for infants through those who have completed kindergarten. After Thursday evening worship, attendees may either practice with the "Mennonites" chorus or enjoy "Formed for Mission," featuring stories from Virginia Mennonite Missions workers, bluegrass by the Lucas Creek Band, worship movement by God's Girls, and local homemade ice cream for sale. The "Mennonites" chorus will perform on Friday after worship.

Special activities for youth attending with families or youth groups include sessions with speaker Lesley Francisco, a peace workshop, worship with the gathered Assembly, and an afternoon at Virginia Beach. Youth registration is required.

Registration and payment are required for attendance at all events prior to 7 p.m. each day. Register and pay online at vmconf.org or check with your congregation for a printed form. **Register by July 9.** You are responsible for reserving lodging. Make your reservation **by June 25** at hotels listed to receive a discount.



Formed by the Risen Christ
an observance of John 20:1-31

Worship at Assembly

Prelude starts each evening at 6:45

Thursday worship, 7:00 p.m.

Music by Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church worship team

Music by the Shenk family

Performance by God's Girls worship movement team

Children's lesson by Wendy Miller

"That We May Believe" with Moderator Shirley Yoder Brubaker on John 20:1-18, 24-31

Friday worship, 7:00 p.m.

Music by Calvary Community Church worship team

Music by Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church worship team

Puppet lesson by Nevin Mast

Testimony by Pastor Sam Scaggs

"Receive the Holy Spirit" with Bishop Leslie W. Francisco III on John 20:22

Exponential: accelerating multiplication



Loren Horst
VMM President

Exponential Conference has become a significant conference of leaders and practitioners engaged in God's work of planting churches.

Held annually in Orlando, Florida, this

year's conference included 5,000 people—with 24 persons attending through Virginia Mennonite Missions. It has become one tool that VM Missions has used to foster church planting vision, provide access to ideas and practices, and create settings where church planters can mutually encourage one another. With nearly 60 Mennonites in attendance from six MCUSA conferences it continues to be a place where we come together to engage with the broader movement of God's mission in our North American context. I was particularly struck by the vitality and youthfulness of the Exponential movement. The "aging of the church" does not seem to apply at Exponential!

Exponential's vision is to see an expanding number of healthy reproducing faith communities. Its mission is "equipping movement makers with actionable principles, ideas and solutions for the

accelerated multiplication of healthy, reproducing faith communities." Exponential draws on the wealth of missiological reflection and mission church resources by bringing them to bear on our own "mission field" of North America. Application can readily be made more broadly as well and this year three leaders from our partner churches in Trinidad were in attendance.

Exponential is less about church growth as addition, than fostering movements that multiply. It is less about the salvation of individuals than about calling disciples who instinctively multiply. It is less about great programs than calling persons into relationships, with God and with others. Repeatedly we were reminded that "living things reproduce what they are, and cannot reproduce what they are not." This year's theme "Sifted" reminded us of this reality through the stories of brokenness, testing, failure, and also redemption and wholeness.

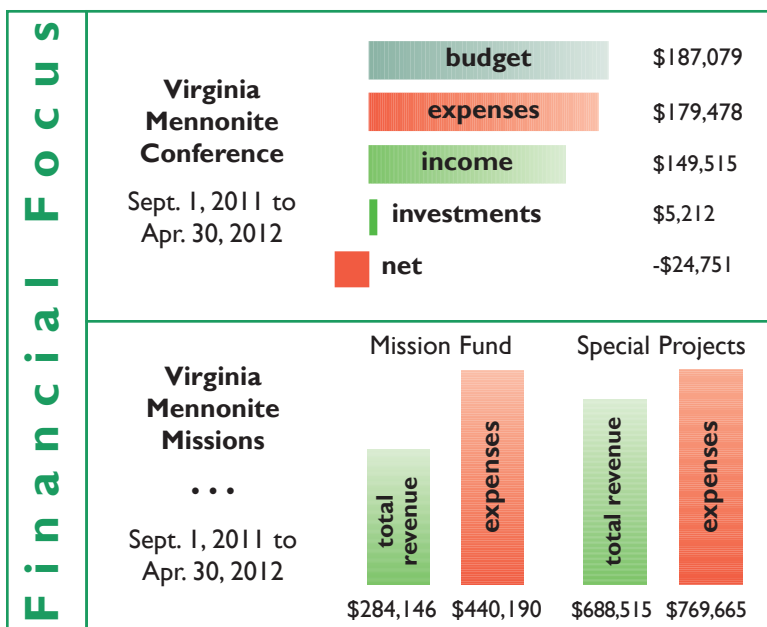
Exponential fits well with the



Photo: Skip Tobin

Purposeful Plan of the Mennonite Church, specifically the priorities of *Holistic Witness*, *Leadership Development*, and *Church to Church Relationships*. Next years Exponential theme will be especially relevant to Mennonites as it focuses on five major shifts in discipleship. The conference theme, DiscipleShift, names these as, "from reaching to making, from educating to modeling, from program to purpose, from activity to relationship, and from accumulating to deploying."

Skip Tobin, USA Ministries Director for VM Missions, is already planning for a group to again attend from VM Missions and Virginia Mennonite Conference. With the availability of significant discounts if registering through Skip, a theme may also be "from costly to economical." We Mennonites like that theme too!



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

Editor
Gloria Lehman
Assistant Editor
Jon Trotter

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

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.

“White flour”

By DAVID LAMOTTE

On May 26, 2007, a group of white supremacists traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee, mostly from out of state, to stage a rally. As is usually the case, the counter-protestors far outnumbered the klansmen and neo-Nazis. On this particular day, though, the counter-protestors were creative. Rather than meeting hatred with hatred and aggression with aggression, the group dressed as clowns—the Coup Clutz Clowns, to be precise, and met hatred with humor.

When the cries of “white power” began, the clowns seemed to have a hard time understanding what was being shouted. Then they figured it out and joined right in, shouting “white flour!” and pulling out bags of flour to have a flour fight. A little while later, though, they decided they had been wrong, and that these strange marchers were actually shouting “white flowers!” After white flowers were broadly distributed, they reconsidered again, and began chanting “tight showers!” and crowding beneath



A scene from “White Flour.” Courtesy of David LaMotte

camp showers they had brought with them. For the finale, they enthusiastically chanted “wife power!” pulling on wedding dresses, dancing and lifting each other up triumphantly.

The Klansmen were utterly baffled as to how to respond, and they left an hour and a half early.

By challenging the usual script of escalation, by meeting hatred with humor, by refusing to feed the white supremacists their usual diet of fear, the clowns won. Their action was not only creative and funny, it was effective.

I heard this story a few weeks after it happened, and I was so inspired and amused by it that I wrote it into a poem, which I have performed frequently since then. An illustrated book, *White Flour*, released on the five-year anniversary of

the event. The point of the book is not to encourage clowning, per se, but to encourage creative responses to aggression and bigotry, and to encourage some important conversations with young people about not only what we need to stand for (and against), but how we go about doing so.

The main point, I suppose, is found in the last four lines of the poem:

*And what would be the lesson of this shiny
Southern day?*

*Can we understand the message that the
clowns sought to convey?*

*Seems that when you're fighting hatred,
hatred's not the thing to use*

*So here's to those who march on... in their
big red floppy shoes.*



*David LaMotte is a
singer/songwriter,
speaker and peace
activist living in Chapel
Hill, NC. More on the
book at:*

www.davidlamotte.com/white-flour

Come and rest awhile in West Virginia

By RICHARD GOOD

Volunteer at Harman Mountain Farm

A little known and under-utilized vacation spot in West Virginia is the Harman Mountain Farm Campground, 3 miles north of Harman, West Virginia. Located 80 miles west of Harrisonburg, just off of US 33, this peaceful, quiet location is a perfect place to spend a few days or to use as a launching place to visit other scenic places nearby—Canaan Valley State Park, Blackwater Falls State Park, Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, and Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area.

The 100-acre mountain farm was originally purchased by the Middle District churches of Virginia Mennonite Conference as a residence and means of support for a missionary pastor. After it was no longer feasible to expect the farm to support a family, the farm was rented to

an area farmer and the house was used as the parsonage for the pastor of the Riverside Mennonite Church. In the 1970s about 10 acres of the farm was developed as a campground.

The campground now has ten RV sites with water and electric hookups, plus other spots where tents can be pitched. Three cabins that sleep from 6 to 8 persons are available. A bathhouse with showers and a large pavilion with limited kitchen facilities are available for all campers. The camp boasts an 18-hole miniature golf course with a biblical theme. Two shuffleboard courts, a basketball hoop, volley ball and corn hole games are other recreational options, along with hiking.



Harman Mountain farm house, which is available for retreats. Photo courtesy of Richard Good

Recently the farm house has been equipped as a mini-retreat center which is available year-round. Four bedrooms will sleep eight people with more on the floor or couches. There is a bath and a half and the kitchen is well equipped.

For more information, check the website: harmanmountainfarm.com

For reservations call 304-227-9959.

Meet these people at Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly, July 26-28

Workers



Steve & Laura Campbell,
Ruth, Esther
Will serve in Montenegro



Randy & Lea Ann Coblentz,
Claire, Uri, Rachel
Serving as church planters in Hampton Roads, Va.



Shawn & Laura Green
Will serve in Bari, Italy



Mark & Sarah Schoenhals,
Heidi, Hannah
Serving in Thailand



Chris & Heather Scott
Ruth, Esther
Serving the Exchange in Winchester, Va.



Allen Umble
Serving in Albania

Guests



William George & Joan Broughton
Fraternal delegates serving with Jamaica Mennonite Church

Our annual “church family reunion” is held this summer in Chesapeake, Va., in the Mt. Pleasant Mennonite School and Mennonite Church. Come and meet the people you see in the photos, listen to their stories, share in their faith journeys, and be inspired to a deeper faith in Christ. Participate and be blessed! Register at vmconf.org/assembly.

Assembly speakers



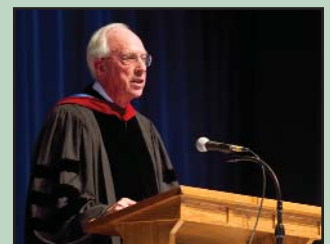
Shirley Yoder Brubaker
Thursday worship speaker
“That we may believe”



Leslie W. Francisco III
Friday worship speaker
“Receive the Holy Spirit”



Lesley Francisco
Youth speaker



George R. Brunk III
Bible study leader

Workshops and leaders

The Stewardship of Forming Christ in Our Children
Dr. Natalie A. Francisco, *Co-Pastor*, Calvary Community Church;
Founder/Executive Director, Women of Worth & Worship, LLC

Keeping Peace and Keeping Promises: Spiritual Growth and Vows of Nonviolence
Spencer Bradford, *Chair*, VMC Peace Committee; *Pastor*, Durham Mennonite Church

Holy Habits for Life and Worship

Isaac Villegas, *Pastor*, Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, and Alexis Smith, *Chaplain*, Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship

Christian Formation with Young Adults

Sarah Bixler, *Conference Coordinator*, and Inga Mast, *Missions Elder*, Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church

Is Jesus Still Good News Today? Problems and Prospects of Mission in the 21st Century

Aaron Kauffman, *Global Ministries Director*, Virginia Mennonite Missions; Anabaptist Missional Project

Practicing Jesus’ Model of Disciplemaking

Skip & Carol Tobin, *Global Ministry Associates*, Virginia Mennonite Missions

Homegrown Worship and Preaching: Biblically Focused Ideas to Energize and Equip Your Worship Planning

Jennifer Davis Sensenig, *Pastor*, Community Mennonite Church

Funeral Practices in the Faith Community

Congregational Life Commission (to be confirmed)

Churches in Trinidad celebrate Palm Sunday with procession

By **DEOLAL RAMDIAL**

Lay leader, Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago

“Jesus triumphs over death to bring life!” were the words proclaimed as members of the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas held its first Palm Sunday procession to commemorate the final entry of Jesus into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. This day traditionally opens Holy Week.

Church members sang songs of praise, led by Sheriza Sookharry in adoration to Jesus as King to re-enact what took place two thousand years ago. They also waved palm branches to the tune of “Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest” as they journeyed through the streets of the community of New Settlement on Caroni Savannah Road. Indeed, this was a blessed opportunity to bring alive a very significant event as prophesied by Zechariah and fulfilled as recorded in the Bible.

Various prayers were said for the nation including the prevention of child abuse so that God can restore this land into His hand. “This entry caused Jesus to triumph sacrificially to bring forgiveness and salvation to the world. We need to triumph over all negative influences and let good prevail in all circumstances. Taking Jesus example, Christians are reminded to dispel the gloom in our lives and let God take control. Our society needs to come



Some children joyfully waved palm branches at the Palm Sunday Procession of the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas. Photo courtesy of author

together and allow righteousness to triumph at all times. Like the crowd honored and welcomed Jesus, He is to be welcomed in our hearts. We must never give up on the hope that God can intervene and take precedent if we are to truly triumph. Let go and let God!” said Deolal Ramdial, the narrator of the procession.

In keeping with our local Mennonite saying, “when we meet, we shall eat!” the event culminated with a wonderful fellowship meal. Another procession was held by the Charleville Mennonite Church, the first congregation to start this celebration event in 2007. Praise God for such an evangelistic tool to witness the love of Jesus in both communities!

Brazilian couple returns to Albania for second service term

By **EVA EBERLY**

VMM worker in Bari, Italy

Rafael and Solange Tartari along with infant son, Paolino, recently returned to Lezhe, Albania, following a busy three-month “home assignment,” visiting family and churches in Brazil. They were commissioned by their sending agency, Junta Menonita de Missões Internacionais (JMMI), and seconded to work collaboratively with VMM missionary team in Albania for a second term.

Their first term of service was dedicated to learning the Albanian culture and

language and finding their place in the Albanian church. They serve on the leadership council of the Lezhe church and assist in its ministries of teaching, preaching, worship, and friendship evangelism. Rafael also serves on the AMMF (Albanian Mennonite Mission Foundation) board. Solange gives leadership to the women’s fellowship. They have been well received and greatly appreciated as they befriend and minister to the Albanian people.



Rafael and Solange Tartari, with their son Paolino, are commissioned to return to Albania by their sending agency, Junta Menonita de Missões Internacionais, in Brazil this spring. Photo courtesy of author

Mennonite Disaster Service units in VA responding to spring storms

By **JOE BLUMBER**
Chairman of the MDS Eastern Virginia Unit

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) of Virginia is composed of the Eastern Virginia Unit and the Shenandoah Unit with the divide being roughly US Route 15.

The Eastern Virginia Unit has responded to three disasters since April of 2011.

1. In April 2011, we cleaned up at one home for a partially disabled couple and former client after the Gloucester tornado.

2. In July, we repaired a home that had a tree crush through the roof during a thunderstorm in Colonial Beach. The husband had late stage cancer.

3. In September and October, we responded to Hurricane Irene cleanup in Chesterfield, Hampton, Newport News and Petersburg. Petersburg also involved some repair. In Chesapeake, there was response to a deferred maintenance need

that was only worsened by Hurricane Irene. There is likely to be a new home project in Newport News in the near future.

The Shenandoah Unit responded to the tornados in Pulaski, Va., and recently to West Liberty, Ky.

MDS is working and coordinating with government and other voluntary organizations to make the best use of our talents and resources while striving to be the faithful hands and feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Resulting from that coordination, the Eastern VA unit is expecting to build a wheelchair ramp for a fire victim as well as the new home mentioned above, and the Shenandoah unit is expected to build one



Volunteers putting up siding at a storm-damaged home. Photo courtesy of Richard Rhodes.

or more homes damaged in the Pulaski area and the Louisa earthquake area.

A key challenge in Eastern Virginia is how to effectively recruit and deploy volunteers from communities where the people are tied to jobs with inflexible work hours. Few have the flexibility or resources to be able to take time away from work at the time there is a need.

Mennowood Retirement Community recognized as one of best in area

By **KATHLEEN DONOGHUE**
Executive Director, Mennowood

In 2011, Hampton Roads Magazine awarded Mennowood Retirement Community the “Best Retirement Community” *Silver Award* for the Hampton Roads region.

Also last year, a Mennowood resident, Anita McKinley, received the *Lifelong Citizenship Award* from the City of Newport News and Mayor McKinley Price. These awards and other recognitions received by Mennowood, are reflective of the abundant living of residents in a faith-based Christian environment.

In addition, a new pastor, Carl Mericle, joined Mennowood Retirement Community and shares his Mennonite training and values with residents, families and staff by leading weekly Bible study and guiding the retirement community in keeping with its mission and Mennonite values.

Recent leadership changes have

included: Patrick McDermott, a local Elder Care attorney and businessman, who was elected to the board of directors and began serving as president of the board in May 2011, following Janice Porter, a member of Huntington Mennonite Church, who completed 13 years serving on the Mennowood board. Other new board members elected in 2011 were: John Hart, J.T. Cutler, Judy Hutchinson and Richard Jackson.

After serving five years as Executive Director, Marion Shackford left Mennowood to accept a leadership position with a retirement community in Richmond. Kathleen Donoghue was hired as new Mennowood Executive Director at the end of December 2010.

Following a Strategic Planning retreat in May 2011 with board representatives and staff, new board president Patrick McDermott’s personal call to action was to visit and meet with each of the pastors



Board members of Mennowood: (L to R) J.T. Cutler, Judy Hutchinson, John Hart, Patrick McDermott, Nicole Francisco, Grete Johnson. Photo courtesy of author

of all Mennonite churches on the Peninsula, to reconnect Mennowood with the churches. As a result new board members were recruited, additional staff hired from church connections, and new residents from the Mennonite community are moving to Mennowood Retirement Community. The resident census has increased 7% in 2011 and continues to grow as the organization remains financially positive.

Connections JUNE 2012 Prayer Calendar

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by:

Irv Hershey

in honor of Michael and Ruth's ministry in South Asia, serving with their three children in a bustling city through business, relationship building and prayer.

"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."
Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

3 Pray for the Jesus' Deaf Church led by Nancy Marshall in Orange Walk, Belize. Thank God for Manuel's growth as a leader in this small but lively group. May each one be committed to live for Christ daily.

4 Ten people just returned from a work group trip to Nazareth and Bethlehem. Thank our Lord of justice for the growth and challenge they experienced in conflicted Israel/Palestine.

5 Today VMM *travSelder* Peyton Erb returns to Va. after serving in Guatemala for a year. Thank God for her service in a school and with CASAS. May God direct her next steps.

6 During the summer months, VMM/MMN workers Steve & Betsy Dintaman, at LCC Int'l University, have a different schedule and various opportunities for connecting with people. Ask God to bless them in these settings.

7 Pray for several young adults in Giovanni Greco's ministry in Italy who were recently baptized, one who is a professional soccer player. May their testimony of faith influence un-churched relatives and friends for Christ.

1 This evening after a delicious Asian meal, Jacob & Hosanna will share about their ministry in South Asia. If you have reserved your space, come, hear and respond with your encouragement and support.

2 Graduation season is here. Thank God for the wisdom our VMC high-schoolers have gleaned. Pray for open ears and courageous responses to God's clear calling for their next life steps.

10 A group of church planters with VMM/VMC is meeting for a 24-hour retreat at Highland Retreat today and tomorrow. Pray for Skip Tobin, VMM Director of USA Ministries, as he encourages these leaders in church growth.

11 A work team is in Haiti working on restoring a pastor's house and exploring the possibility of building a church. Pray for the team and for the many Haitian brothers and sisters that are still displaced after the earthquake 2 years ago.

12 Thank God for the service of the four VMM *travSelders* who taught high school at the Lezhe Academic Center this past school year. Ask God to bless their efforts in and out of the classroom.

13 Franco & Ina Arena from the Mennonite Church in Sicily make fraternal visits to "sister" churches in Bari and Termoli in south/central Italy this week. May their sharing strengthen bonds of fellowship.

14 Pray for Norma Teles in Albania today as she makes plans to return to her home in Brazil for a few months and then to visit in Va. for several months. The Roma community will miss her while she's gone from them!

15 Make prayers of thanksgiving for the younger VMC adults preparing for summer camp season with children and youth. Ask for their growth and endurance for the summer ahead.

16 The EMHS Touring Choir is being hosted by the Lezhe Academic Center students today in Albania. Pray that the fun interactions and good fellowship will enhance friendships across borders.

17 Richard Keeler is a spiritual father to a wide variety of people, both in Trinidad and in other places. Thank God for his deep commitment to the Word and to living a life of integrity daily.

18 Today and tomorrow the EMHS Touring Choir is in Bari, Italy. Pray that people will be drawn to their concert tomorrow and receive spiritual inspiration and encouragement. May the blessings go both ways!

19 The youngest campers head for Highland Retreat tomorrow. Intercede for their new discoveries of God and God's people while in God's creation.

20 Maurita Eberly, who traveled with the EMHS Touring Choir as translator, remains in Italy to serve the Italian church in a summer music ministry, especially among children. Pray God's blessing over this ministry.

21 VMM worker Allen Umble has arrived in Pa. from Albania, for interaction with family, friends and churches. Ask God to give him true refreshment as he has a change of schedule and responsibilities.

22 Each day, Grace Schrock-Hurst finds challenges and joys waiting for her as she works with the urban poor in Southeast Asia. Ask for God to enable her daily.

23 Tomorrow 8-10 year-olds begin camp at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center themed, "The Sower and the Seed." Offer your prayers as these youth cultivate growing relationships with Christ and one another.

24 Pray for Rodney & Eve Knepp and their two children as they worship today with Jamaican brothers and sisters. Thank God for their dedication and commitment to serving where God has called them.

25 Pray for the annual "Happy Week" for kids at Centro Koinonia, Bari, Italy, and especially pray for those planning, organizing, and staffing this event. May it have eternal impact on their lives for Jesus.

26 In one month Conference delegates, & Life Commission and the VMM board will gather for meetings at Assembly in Chesapeake, Va. Pray for wise preparation centered in Christ.

27 This is the last week of school for the year at the Maranatha School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Pray that the students and teachers will be safe during the 2-month holiday and be ready to return in September.

28 VMM/EMM workers Mark & Sarah Schoenhals and 2 daughters are in the US for rest, refreshment, and fundraising to serve another term in Thailand. Ask God to keep them healthy and to meet their needs while traveling and speaking.

29 Today in Spanish Town, Jamaica, the Faith church hosts "5th Friday Fire" for the Good Tidings, Temple Hall and Waterloo congregations. Fun-filled spiritual experiences provide a place for greater bonds between youth to be formed.

30 Various VMC congregations are seeking new pastoral leaders the Spirit is calling for them. Ask that the congregations and their future leaders respond well to the Spirit's invitation.



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

Announcements

The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center is pleased to present a new production of the Civil War play, *Jordan's Stormy Banks*. The play tells the vivid story of one Shenandoah Valley family's struggles during the Civil War and how they reconcile loyalty to family, to country, and to their Lord. Evening and matinee performances of the play will be held in the Main Stage Theater at EMU on June 1-3, 8-10, 15-17. Tickets—\$15 adults, \$12 seniors/students and \$6 children 7-12 years—are now available online at www.vbmhc.org or by calling (540) 438-1275.

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.

Please join us for Highland Retreat's annual **Steak BBQ and summer staff commissioning** to be held at Highland on Saturday, June 23. The commissioning service begins at 1:30 p.m. followed by Zip Line, children's activities, swimming, and other activities starting at 3 p.m. The BBQ begins at 5 p.m. with live bluegrass music during and after the meal. Highland provides steak, drink, and potatoes. Please bring a side salad or dessert, and donation of any amount to support the ministries of Highland Retreat. To reserve a free campsite or A-frame cottage (to BBQ participants only), contact info@highlandretreat.org or (540) 852-3226.

Do you enjoy *a cappella* singing? Come to **Assembly 2012** and join the choir! The "Mennonites" chorus, based at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, invites singers from around the conference to join



PENNY POWER SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2012



Middle East crisis relief
 Syria & Lebanon



Tornado destruction relief
 West Liberty, Kentucky

a project of Mennonite Central Conference

a project of Virginia Mennonite Missions

15th annual
bike shenandoah
century, metric century, 30 mile, 15 mile, and 5 mile rides for all ages and abilities
september 22
 ride for relief & development
 supporting:
 the northend greenway
 virginia mennonite missions
 mennomedia
 mennonite central committee
bikeshenandoah.org

801 parkwood drive harrisonburg 22802
 (540) 434-9727

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.

Virginia Conference women of all ages! **Mennonite Women of Virginia Fall Retreat** will be Sept. 21-23 at the Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center in Lynchburg, Va., a beautiful mountain setting. Our guest speakers are Rhoda Keener & Carolyn Heggen. Enjoy fellowship and fun as you connect with sisters in Christ from far and near and refresh your spirit. More information may be found at vmconf.org. Contact Kathy Zehr Rhodes at (540) 843-0763.