


Christmas gift ideas to give joy, hope, light and health

Consider these mission alternatives to 'Christmas as usual' that will bless people around the world

Give joy

<p>\$7 Christmas dinner for LAC students celebrating the true meaning of Christmas at their event</p> 	<p>\$10 books and toys for children's church in Lezhë, Albania</p> 
<p>\$12 sign language books for parents of deaf children at St. Peter's Anglican School in Belize</p> 	<p>\$25 recreational equipment for the church youth group in Bari, Italy</p> 

Give hope

<p>\$1 baby chick to provide food and income for Maranatha School for the Deaf in Jamaica</p> 	<p>\$5 laying hen to provide food and income for Maranatha School for the Deaf in Jamaica</p> 
<p>\$10 starter plants and seeds for St Peter's Anglican School garden managed by students</p> 	<p>\$5 craft materials for the students at Maranatha School to make crafts to sell in their store</p>

Please contact: Gloria Lehman (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535 • gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org • vmmissions.org

Give light

<p>\$5 host a child at the annual Christmas program in Podgorica, Montenegro</p> 	<p>\$10 Bible for youth at Ridge Mennonite Church in Jamaica</p> 
<p>\$25 church van assists the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas in purchasing a van for bringing people to church</p> 	<p>\$10 Italian Bible to share with neighbors during the Christmas season</p> 

Give health

<p>\$3 materials for dental health kits for members of the Jesus' Deaf Church in Belize</p>	<p>\$5 kaffee & kuchen for workers in Germany to extend hospitality to their neighbors</p> 
<p>\$4 light meal for each boy attending a Bible Study in Belize</p> 	<p>\$10 food ration for a hungry Colombian Refugee family in Ecuador</p>

VMC meets expenses, thanks to congregations



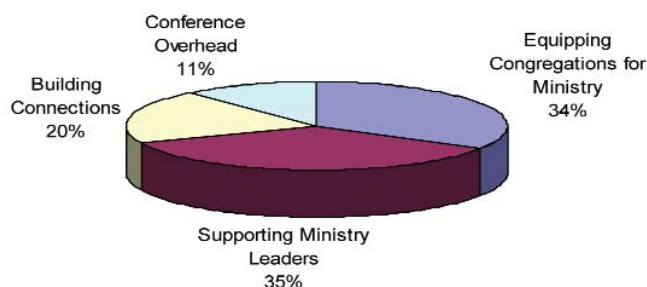
Sarah Bixler
Conference Coordinator

For the first time in six years, VMC reports a year-end surplus instead of a deficit. We are overjoyed and grateful for God's goodness and your generosity! This exciting news is largely due to an increase in giving from congregations. From September 1, 2011, through August 31, 2012, congregational giving accounted for over half of VMC's income and reached its highest-ever level of \$130,772 (see below).

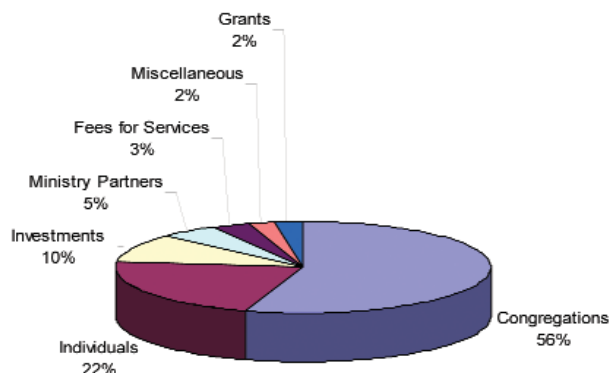
In a publication surveying VMC history from 1835-2003, *In Search of Faithfulness*, Glendon L. Blosser writes, "Conference is to serve the congregations rather than congregations to serve the Conference. When this concept is totally understood, then the financial quotas expected from congregations to support the conference budget will be more adequately met" (p. 17). Because this "servant stance" is an integral part of both our history and current practice, VMC seeks to use congregational funds

responsibly and operate within our financial means, with the priority of serving congregations always at the forefront of our minds. If VMC exists to serve the congregations, our financial mission should reflect that. Our new narrative budget model for reporting (above right) helps to visually illustrate this philosophy. In 2011-

2011-12 Virginia Mennonite Conference Expenses



2011-12 Virginia Mennonite Conference Income



responsibly and operate within our financial means, with the priority of serving congregations always at the forefront of our minds.

So after closing our fiscal year on August 31, VMC is deeply grateful to congregations for funding the ministries and services we offer. We also recognize that we could not operate as we do without the additional support of individuals, agencies and other funding sources. It seems to indicate that our organization is functioning well when we are primarily funded by those we exist to serve!

Sarah Ann Bixler

Financial Focus

Virginia Mennonite Conference ...	budget	\$22,880		
	expenses	\$20,240		
	income	\$17,153		
	investments	\$0		
	net	-\$3,087		
Sept. 1, 2012 to Sept. 30, 2012				
Virginia Mennonite Missions ...	Mission Fund		Special Projects	
	total revenue	\$38,501	total revenue	\$84,066
	expenses	\$49,869	expenses	\$87,131
	Sept. 1, 2012 to Sept. 30, 2012			

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Bike Shenandoah sees a 55% increase in riders this year

By **STEVE CARPENTER**
Director of Development, MennoMedia

One hundred and seven riders, a 55% increase from last year, enjoyed a trek through the Shenandoah Valley on a beautiful fall day as they “cycled for service” in Bike Shenandoah, now in its 15th year.

Bikers choose between a challenging 100-mile journey and an easy five mile jaunt, or something in between, as they traversed Harrisonburg’s back roads on September 22. Participants paid \$5,330 in fees while raising about \$6,466 from individual sponsorships with an additional \$5,936 coming from corporate sponsors, totaling approximately \$17,732.

Donations benefit four agencies: Virginia Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Central Committee, MennoMedia and the Northend Greenway.

Kevin Hegg completed the century ride (100 miles) but stopped to assist another rider who crashed 96 miles into the course when strong winds caught and

twisted his front wheel as he reached for his water bottle. Although taken to the hospital for x-rays, the other rider’s injuries were minor.

Through the ordeal, these two men forged a bond. Kevin commented, “The best part of the ride was meeting new people and making friends.”

A bicycle technician, six HAM radio operators, three support vehicle personnel, rest area hosts and the coordinating committee provided assistance throughout the day to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants.

The fun and camaraderie were palpable as individual riders, couples and families gathered at the start or returned after their ride to enjoy a hot burrito meal provided by Heather Cribb and her team. Many commented on the excellent snacks



Eric Trinka (center) gets Bike Shenandoah riders ready for the five-mile family ride. There were five rides: 100 miles, 62, 30, 15, and 5 miles.

Photo by Mary Eicholtz / Your Thousand Words Photography

available at the three rest areas: Mole Hill Bikes, Lindale and Mt. Clinton Mennonite churches. Others noted Jay Leaman’s untiring efforts to improve the routes.

Bike Shen is an event you won’t want to miss. Mark your calendars for next year’s ride on Saturday, September 21.

Middle School Retreat about finding God—even in the dining hall

By **WENDY HOSTETTER DAVIS**
Western Regional Conference Youth Minister

Would you believe that on the weekend of September 22-23 a group of nearly 100 middle school students sat in complete silence for a whole minute? Or that a roomful of sixth-eighth graders would be able to use playdough, crayons, and photos to connect with God? Worship happened in all kinds of new and unexpected ways at this year’s conference middle school retreat.

Micah Hurst came prepared to step back from the traditional expectations of a retreat speaker and focused on allowing middle school students to experience God for themselves. Rather than “talking at” the audience, he guided them through a variety of exercises that encouraged youth to discover how they personally connect with God. Participants learned how to quiet themselves and focus on God, they wrote a lament, and on Saturday evening



Worship through art participants found ways to connect with God and express their prayers using crayons and paper. Photo courtesy of author

they broke into groups of their choosing for a gifts and interest focused worship experience. Sponsors stepped up and led students through one of four sessions: *worship through art*, *worship through nature*, *worship through song and dance*, and *worship through story*.

Aided by worship leaders Seth Crissman, Mitch and Lauren Yoder, and Greg and Kristina Yoder, praise and worship showed up just about everywhere throughout the weekend. While the

leaders skillfully led the more traditional singing during the sessions and around the campfire, they will probably be most remembered for breaking out in a praise cheer in the middle of the dining hall. The catchy chant was picked up and carried home by many students and has probably found its way into some of their congregations!

Worship also found its way to the Saturday evening campfire, a first for the middle school retreat. The combination of silly songs, praise music, and, thanks to Myron and Regina Brubaker, kettle corn, created a lasting memory.

But the most important memory that we hope participants took home with them is a memory of a connection with God, whether through a still small voice or the voice of a friend. We also hope that they discovered their own worship style and learned that God can be experienced in many ways. Whether dancing, sitting, hiking, or drawing—God is there. In fact, God can even be found in the dining hall.

Centro Koinonia celebrates historic milestone with ordination

By **EVA EBERLY**
VMM worker in Italy

One of the greatest satisfaction cross-cultural missionaries can experience is leaving the churches they've planted in the hands of qualified national indigenous leaders. To reach this goal however, missionaries must intentionally focus on a careful strategy of involving local believers in everything they do and dedicate much time, prayer, and energy to discipling/mentoring. This is vital in cultural contexts where the process of training and choosing leaders is extremely delicate. There probably aren't many vocations in which one is expected to work oneself out of a job!

In Bari, after years of disappointments, derailments, and detours God has brought us to this significant day! On September 9, following months of preparation, teaching, and seeking the Lord, Centro Koinonia congregation gathered in one accord to witness the official ordina-



Ordination ceremony led by Willard Eberly (left) Lia Semilia, Nicola and Francesca Cippone. (Francesca leads children's S.S. program and was chosen by the women to coordinate their fellowship.) Photo courtesy of author

tion of Nicola Cippone, as minister and Lia Semilia as deaconess. For several years already both Nicola and Lia have been blessing the church as they humbly exercised their spiritual gifts in these capacities. Both are known for their faithful service of love and highly esteemed for their example of faith. They will serve on the leadership team along with Chris and Melody Riddle.

Interestingly, Nicola and his wife Francesca were discipled more than 20

years ago by church planters Giovanni and Fiorella Greco (our colleagues in central Italy). Even then he recognized Nicola's gifts and encouraged their development. One highlight of the ordination service was the presence of the Grecos and the warm-hearted tribute to Nicola that Giovanni shared.

In recent years the Cippones came to Centro Koinonia from other settings where Nicola had had opportunities to assist in teaching youth and preaching. Lia has demonstrated a growing, transforming

faith in the face of many personal trials and identifies strongly with her spiritual family in the Mennonite church since her conversion during the ministry of Tim and Karen Green, VMM workers.

"What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"—an important key for church growth and multiplication, given by the Apostle Paul. Centro Koinonia truly has reason to celebrate a significant milestone!

Zooks teach English for three weeks at Lezha Academic Center

By **GORDON & BONNIE ZOOK**
Short-term teachers in Lezhe, Albania

Albania had never been on our to-do list. But it was a sense of adventure that took us there this past August, and a sense of accomplishment that accompanied us home. Our mission was to teach in the three-week summer English session at the new Lezha Academic Center (LAC), administered by Klementina Shahini under VMM. Although not a setting for overt verbalizing of faith, we contributed to the cumulative Christian presence in Lezhë embodied by the school. The experience was reminiscent of our previous short-term English teaching in China in 1998 and Ukraine in 2007.

Our task was to enhance language preparation for incoming 9th and 10th graders who will need to pursue all of



Students at Lezha Academic Center with Bonnie Zook. Photo courtesy of author

their LAC studies in English. The younger generation of Albanians already handles English well. Often when we needed help in talking to shop keepers in Lezhë, they called their teen or young-adult offspring to translate.

While we worked on some foundational grammar and vocabulary, most of our class activities emphasized conversa-

tional communication. So we practiced things like reading a menu and ordering in an English-speaking restaurant. Blindfolded students learned to follow movement instructions from other English-speaking students.

EMHS English teacher Mary Cranston led an advanced class of continuing LAC 11th and 12th graders. She found them eager and alert, very much on par with her EMHS students. Most of Mary's students had a quick refresher course in chemistry taught by the incoming science teacher Ermal Zylaj. Among other things, Gordon coached the remainder in drafting a constitution for the "Room 11 English Society."

Our other team member was Linda Miller from Chesapeake who has been a frequent participant in VMM outreach activities in Lezhë.



SailingActs at anchor near Myra. Photo courtesy of author

Ports of Paul blog:

emu.edu/now/ports-of-paul/2012/08/25/with-paul-in-port/

To learn more and join May 2013 EMS sea-based seminar:

emu.edu/seminary/cross-cultural/christian-movement/

Mission and the “Ports of Paul”

By **LINFORD STUTZMAN**

EMU Bible professor, author of *Sailing Acts*

While Genesis 1 to Acts 12 is a story written by and about people who lived in hills, mountains, deserts, and land empires, almost all of the New Testament from Acts to Revelation was written to, by, and about people who lived in Mediterranean seaports. Paul spent most of his life in seaports. The early church west of Palestine thrived primarily in port cities of the Mediterranean.

Dr. Mark Wilson, a biblical geographer working in Turkey, became aware that biblical studies focused on the unique physical and cultural environment of the Mediterranean Sea and Roman seaports are extremely rare, even though this environment is where most of the mission drama occurs and the majority of Christians in the Roman Empire lived.

So when Dr. Wilson invited me to join his “Ports of Paul” project by continuing to

explore the sea perspective on the Christian movement in the Mediterranean which began in 2004 while “sailing Acts,” I was delighted to propose this as my sabbatical project this fall. I was even more delighted when EMU approved the proposal.

I’ve been aboard *SailingActs* since August where, with some excellent assistance from EMS student, Eric Trinkka, I’m researching the historical, literary, and archeological records on first century seaports, and exploring several key harbors where archeological work is currently being conducted. The more I learn about the cultural environment of the seaports of Paul, the more convinced I am of the relevance that the mission movement in the Mediterranean has for mission in globalization. Port cities in the Roman Empire, as in the USA, were and are places of power and promiscuity, wealth and waste, pagans and Paul. And even Christians.

Kosovo prayer team: preparing the soil for a future church plant

By **ERIC MUSSER**

Kosovo prayer team leader

In September, Virginia Mennonite Missions and Eastern Mennonite Missions partnered together to sponsor a prayer team to pray on-site in Kosovo.

The team was an international mix of individuals, some meeting for the first time in person at the airport in Pristina, Kosovo. Members were Eric Musser, *team leader* (Virginia); Sara Hess, Pa.; Stacy Nofziger, *EMM Eastern European Director*, Czech Republic; Dini Shahini, Albania; and Luca Muscianese, Italy, came together from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Under the banner of Jesus Christ they prayed and discerned potential strategies God has for the next phase of work in Istog, Kosovo and to identify and pray about the barriers to that eventual work.

We experienced the Kosovo people as very warm and hospitable, working hard to move beyond the devastations and dep-

rivations experienced in the Kosovo war of the late 1990s. Some physical scars remain, but they are fast disappearing. The scars of the heart, and the ethnic, religious, and spiritual roots of the conflict between the Serbians, largely Orthodox heritage, and the Albanians, largely Muslim heritage, continues to fester beneath the surface. The great mission challenge is how to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the source of hope and healing, to a people who associate “Christianity” and the cross with their “enemies.” The evangelical church is very small in Kosovo. One church in Peja, population 80-100,000, has 30 people in attendance. In Istog there are two known, identified believers and no evangelical church presence. Pray for workers for the harvest (John 4).

The essence of the battle was captured as we prayed at the Burimi (“the spring”) on the mountain overlooking Istog. We prayed for the living water of Jesus Christ (John 4:14; 7:37-39) to be released over



The Burimi spring overlooking Istog. Photo: Ken Horst

and in the people of Istog. Meanwhile in the background a municipal worker was listening to his radio blaring a song honoring the fallen “martyrs” of the Kosovo war and celebrating revenge against their enemies. As we neared the end of our time there, we had a communion service, which was a prophetic embodiment of what God will bring to pass in Istog. We held a vision of the church gathered of multiple ethnicities coming together around the body and blood of Jesus and celebrating the wholeness and healing found in Jesus, our Savior.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary couple do ministry at Dulles

By CHRIS EDWARDS
Eastern Mennonite University

Preaching from a pulpit on Sundays is not the aspiration of seminary students Eugene and Christina Kraybill.

Eugene, in fact, is often in the sky Sunday mornings, piloting his United Airlines CRJ-700 from Dulles International Airport—a job he enjoys and plans to continue indefinitely. Ministry, for him, is “not ‘a calling’; it’s life.”

“We really feel called to be workplace ministers,” adds Christina, who often accompanies her husband on flights, along with serving on the ground at Dulles, where both are volunteer chaplains.

They enrolled in Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) in Harrisonburg, Va., in

the fall of 2010. In a Sept. 22, 2012, service at the airport, they were licensed, a step toward ordination in Virginia Mennonite Conference, which they hope will occur in 2014. Balancing study with work, they anticipate earning master of divinity degrees in perhaps 15 years.

Eugene has flown for 25 years, the past 12 with United and affiliates. The couple have been chaplains at Dulles for four years since relocating to Virginia from Pennsylvania.



Eugene and Christina Kraybill began their studies at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in the fall of 2010. The couple have been chaplains at Dulles for four years since relocating to Virginia from Pennsylvania. Photo provided by Eugene and Christina Kraybill.

Read the full story at: www.emu.edu/now/news/2012/10/seminary-couple-do-ministry-at-dulles/

Pleasant View is equipping to serve with extensive training

By STEPHANIE BILLER
Pleasant View, Inc.

Pleasant View Inc. was opened in 1971 by the Virginia Mennonite Conference to serve adults with intellectual disabilities who were moving from their parents' homes or from large institutions. Today, PVI provides support for adults from our community and around the state who have additional disabilities such as challenging mental or physical health issues.

Pleasant View has been providing training for our employees about specific concerns including diabetes, cerebral palsy, Alzheimer's, autism, Asperger's syndrome, mental health disorders, and aging with disabilities. We learn how to



Pleasant View staff attend an in-service training. Photo courtesy of author

tailor our support for persons facing those situations. We have enlisted the expertise of psychologists, medical personnel, spiritual leaders, and schools in our effort to better equip our employees to provide the best training, interactions, meal prepara-

tion and delivery, physical environments and medical oversight for the people we serve. During a recent training on bipolar disorder, the employees learned about the symptoms of the disorder, medications used to treat the disorder, and what side-effects those medications can cause.

By better equipping our employees and providing opportunities for our employees to talk with and receive training from health and mental health professionals, we continue to provide high quality, attentive care for the individuals we serve at Pleasant View Inc.

Join Myron & Esther Augsburg for **Footsteps of Paul's Journeys**, May 25 - June 7, 2013. This trip of a lifetime will include eight days in Greece with visits to Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea and Dephi. The trip will conclude with a four-day Aegean cruise with stops in Mykonos, Ephesus, Patmos, Rhodes, Crete and Santorini. For full details, contact Travel Counsellors at (540) 434-1796 or (800) 572-4049.

The British Isles, a trip to England, Scotland and Wales is planned for Sept. 13-25, 2013, with hosts Dave & Joyce Eshleman. This trip planned by TourMagination will include points of interest in the lives of Charles Spurgeon, C. S. Lewis, John Bunyan and John Newton. Other points of interest will include: Snowdonia National Park in Wales, the Lake District of England, the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh in Scotland and much more. For details go to: TourMagination.com or call (800) 565-0451.

A Middle East Tour: Registration is open for “Places, People, & Prayers, 2013,” a study tour to Israel/Palestine from May 2-25, 2013. The tour will be co-led by EMS professors, Dorothy Jean Weaver and Kevin Clark. For more information contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at weaverdj@emu.edu or (540) 432-4276.

NOVEMBER 2012

Connections

Prayer Calendar

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



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4 Come and worship with a cappella harmony at the *Festival of Praise*, at the EMHS auditorium this afternoon at 4 p.m. Listen to Norma Teles' intriguing stories of marvelous change in Roma children's lives.

5 Tomorrow churches across the US are observing Election Day Communion with the desire to be true to Christ's Kingdom and not to follow the kingdoms of the world. Pray that God will direct us as we ponder and pray.

6 This evening in the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class, Skip Tobin teaches "Building Bridges of Love" where mission workers form relationships of trust and respect, communicating with credibility. You are invited to visit this class.

7 In September a prayer team of different nationalities went to Albania and Montenegro and spent time in prayer, intercession, and relationships. Ask God to bring strong results from this commitment to prayer.

8 At the end of a week of teaching at the Lezha Academic School, pray that Jessica Hedrick will be able to relax over the weekend and connect with the community and church in various ways.

9 Nancy Marshall tutors a young deaf boy to prepare him for going to school with other deaf students in Orange Walk, Belize. She is a blessing to him and his mother as she teaches language skills to both. Pray for all.

10 Every Saturday, Rafael Tartari travels from Lezhe to Puka, an unreached rural community in Albania to share the Gospel with the villagers. Thank God for his persistence and pray for open hearts and minds.

11 Chris & Melody Riddle now lead the leadership team at Centro Koinonia, Bari, Italy. Pray for Spirit wisdom and guidance as they add this new responsibility to their busy lives.

12 During a sabbatical leave from service in Albania, Norma Teles is studying English for several months at EMU. May this be a profitable time of learning as well as relating to her supporters.

13 This evening in *Perspectives* (H'burg) class, Carl Stauffer teaches "Christian Community Development" exploring the dynamic balance of evangelism and social action. Pray that all will benefit from Carl's insights.

14 Wednesday afternoons Rodney Knepp teaches woodworking skills to the boys at the Maranatha School for the Deaf. Thank God for his patience, insight and energy for this task.

15 Thank God that Ruth and Esther, daughters of Steve and Laura Campbell, have adjusted well to living in Podgorica, Montenegro. Ask for continued mercies in this way.

16 Congregational workshop planners are preparing for Advent. Ask God's Spirit to spark their creativity as they lead us in reflecting on Christ's coming and all that this good news means for us today.

17 Pray for Dino & Mara at Centro Koinonia in Bari, Italy as they give leadership to the "Tribe's Impact" youth meeting. Pray especially for the youth that are coming from the community that are not members of the church.

18 As First Mennonite Church of Richmond ministers in Virginia's capital city, pray that God's Spirit guides them in discerning how to reflect the light of Jesus in their urban setting.

19 Pray for students from other countries who come to US universities, learning about our culture in addition to academic studies. Ask God to open doors for them to meet genuine believers in Jesus and to learn about Him.

20 This evening in *Perspectives* (H'burg) class, Ed Grudier teaches "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches" viewing churches as organic living things resulting in rapidly multiplying movements, bearing fruit of social transformation.

21 Lift up VMC congregations in West Virginia: Crest Hill Community, Lambert, Mathias, and Riverside Mennonite churches. Pray for growth in their ministries of hospitality and outreach in these rural settings.

22 *O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!*
Psalm 107:1-2
And let's say it frequently, especially today!

23 This American "shopping day of the year" can be used to benefit others by shopping at fair-trade stores where the gift gives twice—to the artisans and to the receiver.

24 Conference Council Task Force for a financially sustainable VMC. Pray for the seven persons who are discovering the ways VMC serves our congregations and the financial implications.

25 Pray for Francesca as she gives leadership to the women's meetings at Centro Koinonia in Bari, Italy; may this ministry continue to touch the lives of women at Centro Koinonia and others in the community.

26 A week of prayer for the country of India is being held by persons committed to God's Kingdom being enlarged in this country. Join them in earnest supplication for this vision.

27 This evening in *Perspectives* (H'burg) class, Karen M. teaches "Pioneer Church Planting," how the breakthrough of the Gospel in an unreached people requires that the Gospel be 'de-Westernized.' Pray for open minds and hearts in the students.

28 Do you know a parent and/or grandparent of a missionary? Pray for them as they miss close contact with family members in other countries. May God be their source of joy and strength.

29 Thank God for the successful Penny Power drive this year! The West Liberty (Ky.) church will use funds from VMM's portion to rebuild a gazebo at the local elementary school. This is a gesture of care to the community.

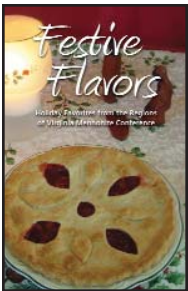
30 During Assembly in July, we were blessed by the preaching, teaching and music ministries of Calvary Community Church. Ask God to anoint their leaders with courage, truth and grace as they lead the congregation.

To sponsor the prayer calendar
please contact
Gloria Lehman:
(540) 434-9727
(800) 707-5535
gloria.lehman@vmissions.org



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

Announcements



Festive Flavors: Holiday Favorites from the Regions of Virginia Mennonite Conference

is again available for holiday gift-giving. Fifty-six attractive pages featuring

recipes, photos and stories, this unique cookbook is a wonderful way to experience the diverse geographical and cultural flavors throughout VMC. Order online for \$10 each at virginiacommunity.org or call the VMC offices at (540) 434-9727.

Join MHI's special "Sending Service" on Friday, Nov. 2, 7 p.m. at EMS Martin Chapel. Church-planters will be commissioned to plant a new Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista (IDA) at Community Mennonite Church, the second Latino missional community strategically planted around Harrisonburg, Va. Guilio Garner will perform on the piano. Contact Marvin Lorenzana with questions at (540) 432-4458 or marvin.lorenzana@emu.edu

A **Sons of the Day Reunion Concert** to benefit Steve and Bethany Horst's upcoming service in Bangkok, Thailand, will be Saturday, Nov. 3, 7 p.m. at Lindale Mennonite Church, 6255 Jesse Bennet Way, Linville, Va. Admission \$10; kids 12 and under are free. A freewill offering for the Horsts and a light reception featuring Thai finger foods will follow the concert. For more info contact (540) 560-5867 or steve.bethany@generalmail.com

Hear men's harmonies in the 11th annual **Festival of Praise**, Sunday, Nov. 4, at 4 p.m. at Eastern Mennonite School auditorium,

801 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg. Men's groups perform and then join in a mass choir directed by Jay Hartzler. Offering project supports Norma Teles, who will share about her work with the Joshua Center, serving Roma children in Albania.

God is present at **Lezha Academic Center**, a new Christian high school in partnership with VMM in its second year in Albania! Enjoy a **light evening meal** at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Sunday, Nov. 11, 5:30 p.m. to learn how you can support this growing mission venture. Meet principal Klementina Shahini, and hear from others who have recently visited the school. To reserve, contact Diane Bowman by Nov. 8 at (540) 434-9727 or diane.bowman@vmmissions.org

MennoMedia's **Annual Christmas Gala** will be Friday, November 30 from noon to 7 p.m. at the 1251 Virginia Avenue office. Stop in for some great Christmas gift ideas, discounts on many items, lots of new books, CDs, DVDs, and refreshments.

A **Celebration of Ministry for Willard & Eva Eberly's** long service in Italy will be held Thursday, Dec. 27, at Dayton Mennonite Church's fellowship hall at 6:30 p.m. Join them for a program followed with a dessert bar. To reserve, contact Janet Blosser, (540) 434-9727 / (800) 707-5535 or janet.blosser@vmmissions.org

College students are invited to **Urbana 2012**, a student missions conference in St. Louis, Mo., December 27-31, 2012. Transportation from Harrisonburg will be available. Contact Skip Tobin at skip.tobin@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727 to learn more.

MennoMedia's documentary **Fierce Goodbye** will be airing on ABC-TV stations from Nov. 18 through Jan. 13. The program features Harrisonburg residents Fred and Gail Fox, and Jonas and Barbara Borntrager. See fiercegoodbye.com for more information and check interfaithbroadcasting.com/vv.aspx for stations and airing times. DVDs available from mennomedia.org/fiercegoodbye.

Enjoy an evening of music and mission at Eastern Mennonite Seminary Martin Chapel, Sat., Jan. 5, 7 p.m. Dr. Jonathan Keener will give a piano recital to benefit Steve and Bethany Horst's upcoming service in Bangkok, Thailand. Admission \$10; children ages 12 and under are free. A dessert reception follows the recital. A silent auction featuring Bethany's artwork will conclude the evening. Donations will be received.

"**The Christian Movement in the Mediterranean**" offers an opportunity to study with Linford Stutzman exploring the context of Acts in Turkey and Greece, May 16-June 1, 2013. For registration, visit emu.edu/seminary/cross-cultural/christian-movement/

Visit the Balkans (Albania & Montenegro) on a Mission Fellowship Tour, May 6-16, 2013. Led by Ed Bontrager, and with Virginia Mennonite Missions President Loren & Earlene Horst, the tour will visit mission workers, the new Lezha Academic Center, Shkodra, Tirana, Berrat Village, old castles, stunning Adriatic coastlines, ancient monasteries, Lushnje, Durres, and much more! Price (incl. taxes and fuel surcharge) only \$2498 from D.C. Contact Ed at (540) 438-8304 or eebontrager@comcast.net for a brochure.