

VMC Assembly to explore *Holistic Christian Witness*

By SARAH BIXLER

What is God doing within each of us, among our churches and around the world? This summer's conference assembly will engage the third priority of Mennonite Church USA's *Purposeful Plan*, "Holistic Christian Witness." Together we will explore *Look What God is Doing! Signs of Christ's Kingdom Among Us*.

Worship speakers Loren Horst and Nelson Okanya, along with Bible study leaders Carmen Schrock-Hurst and Phil Kniss, have extensive personal experience with holistic Christian witness. Their experiences include international service with Mennonite mission agencies, pastoring in diverse urban settings, and missional church initiatives. Speakers for the Mennonite Women's and Men's Breakfasts, Grace Prasetyo and Chris Riddle, will travel across continents to share their current mission experiences.

Each congregation is asked to bring a poster, in the shape of a road sign, that depicts how it is pointing to Christ's kingdom. These will be posted throughout the meeting facility so attendees can browse the visual representations of God at work throughout VMC.

Delegate sessions will feature stories of how congregations, VMC, and Mennonite Church USA are pointing to Christ's kingdom. Delegates will learn about the recommendations from the *Task Force for a Financially Sustainable VMC*, and through table discussion reflect on what God is doing among us and offer input for the conference. Workshops have been chosen to reflect this theme as well.

But Assembly is not only for delegates. All are welcome to register and participate in the entire weekend's activities, and those not registered are invited to join in Thursday and Friday evening worship and events immediately following.



Has your congregation created its Assembly poster yet? This poster is an example of how VMC is "pointing to Christ's kingdom."

Design: Jon Trotter Photo: Sarah Bixler

For evening entertainment and continuing fellowship, the Walking Roots Band will perform Thursday following worship while listeners enjoy free homemade ice cream. Virginia Mennonite Missions will host its popular Taste of Missions on Friday night.

This year, children's programming is significantly enhanced. Nursery and preschool care are provided during worship, delegate sessions and Bible studies. Preschoolers will enjoy a variety of activities, including visits to a children's museum and playground. Children having completed grades K-6 will be enriched with the *Finding Treasure art camp* taught by

Eastern Mennonite School art instructor Barbara Gautcher. The weekend fee for children's programming is only \$10 per child with a parent/guardian who is registered Assembly participant. Non-participants may register their children for the art camp for \$40 per child. Children's registration is required, except for evening worship childcare, which is offered free of charge to infants through preschoolers.

Don't miss this memorable gathering of the body of Christ within our conference! Come to share your stories of holistic Christian witness and be inspired by what God is doing among us. **Register by July 8.**

Worship at Assembly

Gathering music begins at 6:45 p.m.

Thursday, July 25

- Music by members of the Walking Roots Band
- Testimony from Rebekka Stutzman (serving with VMM in Germany)



"Imagine God's power at work in us!"
by Loren Horst

Friday, July 26

- Music by members of the Walking Roots Band
- Commissioning of ministers and mission workers



"Participating in the vision of God" by Nelson Okanya

Register online:

virginiacommunity.org/assembly

or ask your church office for a printed registration form. Contact Diane Bowman with any questions at (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535

Being and making disciples

By AARON KAUFFMAN



Discipleship is a popular word in mission circles these days.

In fact, it was this year's theme at the *Exponential* church planting conference,

an annual event in Orlando, Florida, that draws thousands of church leaders from across the country.

At *Exponential*, I heard bestselling authors and big name speakers passionately describe what it means not only to be Christian in name, but to be disciples of Jesus, and to help others do the same.

As a "cradle Mennonite," I almost feel like I grew up with discipleship in my DNA. After all, Harold Bender, author of *The Anabaptist Vision*, called it "the essence of Christianity." For as long as I can remember, I've understood that being a Christian means following Jesus in daily life.

So you can imagine my excitement at seeing mainstream North American Christians embrace the concept of discipleship. But it's not simply because an Anabaptist "distinctive" is now gaining a bigger audience. I'm excited because I'm learning new ways to practice the art of becoming like Jesus.

One of those new ways is a tool called "Life Transformation Groups." My colleague, Skip Tobin, introduced me to them last year, and at *Exponential*, I attended a workshop on them with their originator, Neil Cole. For nine months now, I've been in one. And I'm hooked.

A Life Transformation Group involves three things:

1. *Reading 20-25 chapters of Scripture a week.*
2. *Meeting weekly with one or two people to ask a series of accountability questions.*
3. *Praying daily for others, especially those who do not yet follow Jesus.*

The idea is that through engaging these practices with others, we can grow in our upward relationship with God, our inward relationship with the community of faith, and our outward relationship with the world God loves. In time, we begin to resemble our Master.

For me, this experience has been both chastening and liberating. I've had to face my habitual sins and the fact that I often isolate myself from people outside the church. But I've also found renewed spiritual vitality and perhaps even some signs of progress in my apprenticeship with Jesus.

How are we being disciples ourselves? How are we making disciples? How are those disciples, in turn, making other disciples?

Those are the basic questions we have been asking ourselves here at Virginia Mennonite Missions over the past year. And we invite you to do the same.

Aaron Kauffman
Global Ministries Director
Virginia Mennonite Missions

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY

Search announced for VMM President/CEO

A search committee is accepting applications for the position of President/CEO. Please submit a current resume, as well as a cover letter expressing your interest in applying for this full-time position by email to lois.maust@vmmissions.org. To see a candidate profile, visit vmmissions.org



Calling all motorcycle enthusiasts! *Motorcycle for Missions 2013* will be held July 24-25, with a tour planned from Powhatan to Roanoke to Harrisonburg, with a welcome at VMC Assembly. Riders are encouraged to find sponsors for their journey and all funds will benefit Virginia Mennonite Missions. Learn more: vmmissions.org/support/motorcycle-for-missions.

Financial Focus

Virginia Mennonite Conference		Sept. 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013
budget		\$183,038
expenses		\$171,231
income		\$155,702
investments		\$5,586
net		\$-9,943

Virginia Mennonite Missions		Sept. 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013	
Mission Fund		Special Projects	
total revenue	expenses	total revenue	expenses
\$370,604	\$437,960	\$983,262	\$741,470

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Learning to listen to the quiet and unexpected voices

By KATIE MISZ

Although I have sensed a call to ministry since a young age, I have never felt qualified. I saw myself as too quiet, too slow to respond to crisis, too unsure of myself, and not authoritative enough in decision-making. How could God possibly use someone like me?

Last summer, I had the privilege of interning with the Eastern Carolina District of Virginia Mennonite Conference as part of my field training for Duke Divinity School. This internship gave me the opportunity to explore a calling into pastoral ministry by following the lead of four very humble and gifted pastors. In addition, because my husband and I only recently joined the Mennonite Church, this internship provided me the space to learn how Mennonites practice church leadership. On the first day of the internship, two of the pastors sat me down for my first lesson: what it means to be a pastoral leader. They explained that a

good leader is one who lays down his/her power. They recognized that power is given to anyone in a position of authority, but for these pastors, they did not see power as something to be grasped. They explained that in the midst of any congregational conflict, the pastor's voice can sometimes be one that silences the dissenting voice and thus inhibits true consensus. As a result, the pastor often leads behind the scenes, laying down his/her voice in congregational meetings and important matters.

To hear these pastors speak of their roles in such a way sparked my imagination to dream of how God might use the unexpected people of this world. This set the tone for the summer, and as I practiced various pastoral roles like teaching, preaching, and pastoral visitation, I learned to listen to the quiet voices. I read the Bible with a woman I met during a worship service with Durham Mennonite Church at a

nursing home. She and I sat and read the verses for the upcoming Sunday, and she helped me prepare for my sermons as she reminded me to listen to the unexpected voices in Scripture.

This summer, I was looking to find my voice. What I discovered in the search was the gift of listening. In the voices of the often overlooked people in our churches, our Scripture, and our society, we encounter the quiet voice of the Lord. This lesson was an incredible gift that I received from the Eastern Carolina District churches this summer. Thank you for sharing your voices with me.



Katie Johnson Misz is a student at Duke Divinity School who just finished her second year in the Masters of Divinity program with a concentration in Christian Education. She interned with Eastern Carolina District in the summer of 2012.

Missio Alliance brings leaders together to witness to the power of the Gospel



Missio Alliance

By MARTIN RHODES and CAROL TOBIN

The greatest explanation of the Gospel is a community of believers who live as though the gospel is true.

This paraphrase of missional theologian Lesslie Newbigin's words echoed through the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., at the premier 2013 Missio Alliance conference in April. These words also resonated with me and the van full of church planters, pastors, and VMM staff who traveled to Alexandria to be part of this event.

Upon arrival we became part of an exuberant gathering of folks from a variety of church backgrounds, all eager to share in a vision of hope that God's time is now and that the gospel is Good News in the context of the today's cultural challenges and questions.

Throughout our two days together, I was impressed in the way that a robust theology of mission was fleshed out by church planters, worship leaders and pastors— young, old, male, female, black and white—

who encouraged us with their stories of living into "God's Kingdom come."

Scot McKnight, a theologian from Northern Seminary, reminded us in the first plenary session that we have been created by God to be iconic representations of God's self. People will see us, and seeing God through us, be drawn into the wonderful story of grace and salvation. The alternative to being iconic, Scot shared, is to be "idol factories," making ourselves and others into our own likeness.

There was a consistent thread of insistence on the importance of figuring out what it means to be "human," that is, to realize that God cares about bodies (and what we do with them) as much as he does "souls." It was refreshing to see difficult topics brought courageously to the table: sexual identity, speaking in tongues, stewardship of the environment, and even what it means to not kill and to love our enemies—all held together under the giant umbrella of God's



Virginia Mennonite Conference church planters, pastors and VMM staff meet to discuss the conference. Carol Tobin

ongoing care for His creation. As another presenter reminded us, eternal life is not just the life to come, but rather "life, life and more life!" How could we come away without being energized?



Martin Rhodes is VMM's Short-term Coach and MST Coach



Carol Tobin is VMM's Asia Regional Director

‘Green grass emerging from the ashes’ at European Missionary Retreat

By JANET BLOSSER and CHRIS RIDDLE

Our missionary band boarded the bus. Our trek through the countryside of Montenegro was a sight to behold. It looked as if God had poured out buckets of rocks on this land. It struck me as the spiritual condition in all of Europe. This land of Europe that has been the seat of Christendom for centuries is now spiritually so desolate and in ashes. It was in this land that we held our European Missionary Retreat (EMR) on April 5-9, 2013.

Thirty-four VMM mission workers and staff who originate from seven different countries in the world and serve in four of the most spiritually challenging countries in Europe, came together in Bar, Montenegro for rest, fellowship with one another and encouragement. Our theme was “Learning the Rhythms of Grace” taken from Matthew 11:28-30 in The Message. Skip and Carol Tobin from VMM encouraged the mission workers to work from a place of rest and to care for themselves so that they can better care for the church. “Work from our rest, not rest from our work” was a theme commonly repeated.



Skip Tobin encourages mission workers to “work from [their] rest” and care for themselves, so they can better care for the church.



Participants at the retreat sing a song during a worship time. Photos courtesy of Janet Blosser

It was not only the rest, but also connecting with the other missionaries in Europe that was helpful. “It was refreshing to be able to take time for our family, to get away, visit a new place,

and spend time sharing with other church and mission workers about the experiences, challenges, and hopes that we have in ministry,” said David Stutzman from Barmmental, Germany. Caleb Benner from LAC in Lezha, Albania, commented that for him the retreat was a time of rest where he could devote his time to reflection and conversation that built a sense of camaraderie among the missionaries and their contexts.

In Europe today, the terrain of people’s hearts is hardened because of centuries of

Christendom. To plant a church requires cultivating the terrain of relationships and presenting Jesus as separate from politics and religion, a struggle that our Anabaptist forefathers were familiar with. Statistics show that almost one half of the 53 European countries have less than 1% evangelicals (from ECM). But there are those willing to carry the Gospel of Christ to the next generation. Kaitlyn Bontrager, LAC teacher commented how blessed she felt to be a part of the celebration of God’s movement and to see how God is working in so many lives throughout Europe.

It was exciting to be a part of that small group



Participants at the European Missionary Retreat prayed for teachers at Lezha Academic Center. Seated are Jessica Hedrick (left) and Kaitlyn Bontrager, as Janet Blosser, Rebekka Stutzman and Norma Teles pray for them.

committed to bearing witness to the Gospel on a continent that has turned from it.

Amidst the spiritual dearth and drought, we find hope in green grass that is beginning to emerge from the ashes. We came away energized and ready to face the challenges.



Janet Blosser is Italy Field Director and Ministry Teams Coordinator for Virginia Mennonite Missions.



Chris Riddle is a VMM worker in Bari, Italy, with his wife Melody and sons Micah, Adam and Isaiah.



Solange Tartari, mission worker in Albania, takes the communion bread as Ken Horst, VMM Balkans Regional Director, offers a blessing. Her husband Rafael Tartari and son Paulo are right.

A delight to see mission workers in their place of service

By SUZY KANODE

Having just returned from my first trip to visit mission workers Chris and Melody Riddle and their boys, Micah, Adam and Isaiah, I appreciate them taking me into their home and sharing their lives and ministry with me.

We started out in Bar, Montenegro, at the Virginia Mennonite Missions European Missionary Retreat. While Chris and Melody were in the adult sessions, I worked with the three boys for two days, teaching them about “third culture kid” issues.

Janet Blosser, Italy Field Director, developed a curriculum based on two biblical “TCKs,” Moses and Joseph, and the story of *Mr. Roundhead in the Land of Squareheads*. I also learned more about the evangelical church and orthodox church in Montenegro from missionaries Steve and Laura Campbell.

Next we headed to Bari, Italy, where I experienced what life is like for the Riddle family. Days are spent doing ordinary things like taking the kids to school, shopping, and participating in church life. But unlike

me, Chris and Mel use these everyday experiences to build the kingdom of God.

As they go from shop to shop to buy food and sundries, they share the love of God and boldly invite others to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are on friendly terms with their regular vendors who are now trusting them and willing to listen to and consider what Chris and Mel share with them about evangelical faith. This is difficult in a country where the evangelical church is not given favorable political/legal status and the pope has declared intentions to take back territory lost to the evangelicals.



Suzy Kanode worked with Micah, Isaiah and Adam Riddle on “third culture kid” issues during adult sessions of the European Missionary Retreat. Courtesy of Janet Blosser

Centro Koinonia Church baptized two adults the Sunday I was there and it was moving to hear how faith in Jesus has filled the hearts of this man and woman with what they were searching for. I’m so excited about how God is answering prayers and building His church in Bari.



Suzy Kanode is a member of the Riddle family MST and was a participant at the European Missionary Retreat.

Exponential conference reignites fire for God and mission

By HAROLD MILLER

One of my responsibilities as pastor is to do things that fuel my passion for Jesus—so I’m “not lacking in zeal, but keep my spiritual fervor, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11).

Two weeks ago I joined 5,300 church planters and pastors for the *Exponential* conference in Orlando. Virginia Mennonite Missions encouraged and facilitated more than 20 of us in going.

It was as I hoped: an experience that helped reignite a passion for the Lord as well as fill me with a sense of what God can do in and through our congregation.

Conversations with fellow attendees and passing comments made by speakers/workshop leaders may have been what personally impacted me the most. Am I willing to take risks, to follow the Spirit and do things that will appear foolish if God doesn’t show up? Do I follow Jesus in offering both “invitation” and “challenge” to the broken and lost, or am I an “accidental

Pharisee” who has more in common with the moralizing religious teachers of Jesus’ day? And then there were the host of exhibitors giving things away (I got a very valuable coupon for Trissels) and bookstores with discounts.

Some overall impressions of *Exponential 2013*

- A large stream of the American church is becoming more Anabaptist! The conference theme was “DiscipleShift”—churches transitioning their ministry to focus on making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), apprenticing people in the ways of Jesus. In generations past, mainly only the Mennonites would talk about “the essence of Christianity as discipleship.” (Harold S. Bender in *The Anabaptist Vision*)
- There are a lot of 20- and 30-somethings who are passionate about the Lord and advancing his Kingdom. The convention was full of them!
- A good swathe of American churches (our speakers included well-known names in the evangelical church) are trying to move away from having Sunday morning attendance and offerings as the primary scorecard. Instead these churches want to measure and celebrate how many disciples are making disciples and how many small groups have a missional cause. The new scorecard is not how many a church attracts but how many it deploys.



Harold Miller is pastor of Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

MDS rebuilds homes damaged and hearts rended

By **KEN KURTZ**

Nine homes in Louisa County that had been rebuilt after the earthquake were trimmed out by Virginia Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) units during the second week of December. Also in December, Virginia MDS was asked to respond to a call from the town of Crisfield in Summer-set County, Maryland, the poorest county in that state. Many of the people lived in homes that their parents or grandparents had built. Three hundred plus homes were damaged from Hurricane Sandy. Some 100 homes need to be torn down and rebuilt.

James Lane, a town resident, tells how he braved a five-foot wall of water to evacuate his sister. Charlie Adams cried when his two-story home had to be demolished

by an MDS team recently. However, MDS expects to start rebuilding his house in June.

This project will probably be ongoing for two years. Can your church, small group or Sunday school class put a team together to work in Crisfield? At present Jay Rohrer is the contact person to schedule groups: (804) 310-9142 or jayrohrer@verizon.com

Ken Kurtz is chair of MDS Eastern Virginia unit.



Ken Wermuth, first project director, with Hazel Cooper in her repaired home. Hazel was a championship winner of the National Crab Picking Contest for 14 years. Courtesy of author

Mennowood encourages 'abundant living' in retirement

By **KATHLEEN DONOGHUE**

Located near one of the busiest and fastest growing corridor of Newport News, Va., Mennowood Retirement Community continues to be "An Oasis of Peace in Today's Busy World." This ongoing theme plays out each day in the purposeful and spiritual lives of residents who have moved from nearby homes or who may have come from far away to be near family.

"Good food and great activities make the place," reports Executive Director, Kathleen Donoghue. Carefully planned



Karen Todero and Judy Piggot-Davis, Activities Coordinators. Photos courtesy of author

Piggot-Davis, by involving residents, families and volunteers provide a full selection of group and individual activities for independent and assisted living residents of Mennowood.

Governance and oversight of Mennowood Retirement Community, continues under the leadership of its Board of Directors. In January 2013 the Board of Directors reelected its officers: Patrick McDermott, President; Mary Anne Leonard, Vice President; John Hart, Treasurer; and Nelson Baer, Secretary, pictured at lower left with new board members Nicole Francisco and Judy Hutchinson.

Mennowood continues to be recognized as "a community serving the larger community" providing high quality independent and assisted living services in a purposeful, mission driven Mennonite faith based environment.

Kathleen Donoghue is Executive Director of Mennowood Retirement Community.

meals and dining events are arranged by contract that Mennowood has established with Unidine, a fresh foods concept which brings to Mennowood a team of experts in nutrition, menu planning, purchasing techniques that promotes resident satisfaction.

Mennowood Life Enrichment activities programs are comprehensive and led by a team of Activities Coordinators, Karen Todero and Judy



(left) The Mennowood Retirement Community Board of Directors.

JUNE 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
31	<p>This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Irv Hershey in honor of Michael & Ruth's ministry in South Asia. Along with their three children, they are on home leave for June and July. <i>Meet and greet them at Virginia Conference Assembly.</i></p>					<p>Williamsburg Mennonite Church seeks "to share life in Christ with others" in eastern VA. Ask God's Spirit to ignite their hearts with Christ's love so that persons around them will learn to know Christ.</p>	1	<p>June is frequently filled with weddings, celebrations of marriages where Christ is the center of love and commitment. Pray for these new 'households of faith' as they begin life's journey.</p>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
<p>Invite God's abiding presence to strengthen the ministry of Charlottesville (Va.) Mennonite Church. Roy and Maren Hange pastor this congregation seeking to "be a blessing to the world."</p>	<p>This month Sam Kraus graduates from Rift Valley Academy in Kenya. We join his parents, Harry & Kris Kraus, in applauding this achievement! May God guide him as he pursues further education this coming year.</p>	<p>Last week, Rodney & Eve Knepp and children returned to Virginia for home leave and the birth of their baby. Pray for continued health and strength for Eve, and a smooth transition for all.</p>	<p>Shawn & Laura Green, appointed workers for Italy, are expecting their second child this month. Join them in prayer for a safe delivery, and for smooth transitions for all, including big brother Lucas.</p>	<p>Ask God's blessing on the church family of Mt. Vernon Mennonite in Grottoes, Va. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead them to "grow toward maturity in Christ, share with each other and serve our world."</p>	<p>Mark & Sarah Schoenhals ask us to pray for them as they are teaching Bible studies and walking with Life Enrichment Church leaders in various ways. Thank God for this vibrant group of believers in Thailand!</p>	<p>Today is the annual Sicilian women's conference where Christian women gather for inspiration and fellowship. Pray for safety in travel and spiritual enrichment for the ladies from Palermo who attend.</p>		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
<p>Lindale Mennonite Church in Linville, Va., is being "re-leased" by Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, sent to share God's love." The congregation is in their retreat this weekend and baptisms will take place in the stream.</p>	<p>Grace Prasetyo asks us to pray for the new staff person, Lukey, who has joined their ministry in the urban slum in Southeast Asia. May God grant him health, strength and insight for the many important relationships there.</p>	<p>VMC's Finance Committee meets tomorrow. May God grant wisdom to this group as they develop budget recommendations and consider how the conference's mission, staffing and new initiatives can be funded.</p>	<p>Ina Arena, Palermo, is a pastor's wife, mother, grandmother, and teacher in the Centro Agape church. She also attends a course for Christian counselors several times a year. Pray that God will bless and use her.</p>	<p>Pray for Vacation Bible Schools held throughout the summer months—for the students and leaders and all who participate. May the stories of Jesus settle deeply into hearts and minds.</p>	<p>It's graduation day at Lezha Academic Center! Ask God to bless and guide the 10 graduates, as well as the teachers and principal. They are dedicated to providing a solid education with Christian values.</p>	<p>Nancy Marshall, pastor of Jesus' Deaf Church in Belize, asks us to pray that God will give her wisdom to deal with unexpected circumstances from time to time. Thank God for her love and commitment to the Deaf community.</p>		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
<p>Pray that God will empower members of Greensboro Mennonite Church, an ethnically diverse congregation near UNC Greensboro. Members engage in many forms of local outreach.</p>	<p>Pray for Giovanni and Fiorella Greco, in Termoli, Italy, as they travel today with Elias, a believer in their church, to his home in Uzbekistan. Pray for open doors for the Gospel in this closed country.</p>	<p>VMC is mailing a letter this week inviting supporters to contribute to VMC. In these last three months of the fiscal year, pray that God will provide for our conference's financial needs through generous members.</p>	<p>A missions team from Signs of Life Fellowship, Staunton, is in Jamaica providing Vacation Bible School for students at Maranatha School for the Deaf. Pray that this will be an uplifting time for all.</p>	<p>Join Steve & Laura Campbell, workers in Montenegro, in prayer for sensitivity in how things are said, listening to the Holy Spirit, which will increase unity and peace in the church and in the community.</p>	<p>What will Jacob & Hosanna encounter today in South Asia? Many interactions with people around them occur in daily living. Pray for them and their two young children in this setting.</p>	<p>Joshua Center in Lezhe, Albania, has closed for the summer months. Pray for the children as they are in less structured settings—may they be safe and healthy. Ask God to also bless their parents and families.</p>		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
<p>Ridgeway Mennonite Church has a heart for their local community in Harrisonburg, Va. As they seek to "love God and all people," pray that God would infuse their outreach with the Holy Spirit's transforming power.</p>	<p>David & Rebekka Stutzman are coming to the US this summer. (Look for them at VMC Assembly.) Pray that the total funding they need for their ministry will be achieved. They expect their second child this fall.</p>	<p>Sarah N. Schoenhals, VMM transSender, interacts with young adults in the Life Enrichment Church, and participates in activities that promote fellowship and faith. Pray for her during these busy months.</p>	<p>Pray for David Shenk today as he helps many refugees as they settle in Ecuador from Colombia. Put coins and bills in jugs for <i>Penny Power</i> which supports assistance to displaced persons around the world.</p>	<p>Today is graduation day at Maranatha School for the Deaf in rural Jamaica. May God guide the three graduates and bless the teachers and staff for their investment in these lives.</p>	<p>Participants in the MC USA Convention are preparing to travel to Phoenix this weekend. Pray for their safe arrival so they can engage one another as "Citizens of God's Kingdom: Healed in Hope."</p>	<p>Pray for MC USA Moderator-elect Elizabeth Soto Albrecht as she joins a VMC Spanish-language workshop service in Harrisonburg this evening. She will arrive at Phoenix at the end of the week.</p>		



Connections (USPS 007-205)
 Virginia Mennonite Missions
 Virginia Mennonite Conference
 901 Parkwood Drive
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Announcements

Celebrate Recovery! meets weekly on Tuesdays, at 6:30-8:15 p.m. at Our Community Place, Harrisonburg. Child-care is provided. This Christ-centered, 12-step recovery ministry deals with hurts, habits and hangups (including but not limited to alcoholism, workaholism, drug addiction, sex addiction, co-dependency, depression, anger, etc.) Worship and teaching are followed by sharing groups, with coffee and desserts. Volunteers are needed. If you are interested or have questions, please call Ben Yutzy at (540) 271-6421.

Highland Retreat's annual Steak BBQ and summer staff commissioning service will be held at Highland on Saturday, June 22, with activities starting at 1:30 and going all afternoon. Cornhole and many other activities will be open. The BBQ begins at 5:00 with live bluegrass. Highland will provide main dishes; please bring a salad or dessert and a donation to support Highland Retreat. To reserve a campsite or A-frame cottage for the weekend, contact the office at (540) 852-3226 or info@highlandretreat.org

You're invited to a **Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser** on Saturday, June 29 from 8:30-10 a.m. at Community Mennonite Church. Donations support Dave and Rebekka Stutzman, VMM/MMN mission workers serving in Germany. They will share briefly about their assignment with the Mennonite church in Germany. An activity corner will be available for children. Contact Megan Rosenwink at mrosenwink@gmail.com



Mennonite Church USA Moderator-elect, Elizabeth Soto

Albrecht begins her extended journey to Phoenix with a stop in

Harrisonburg June 29-30. Elizabeth will be preaching at Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista at 7 p.m. (Harrisonburg Mennonite Church) on Sat., June 29. Following will be opportunity for interaction with her. She will be preaching at Lindale Mennonite Church on Sunday, June 30, at 10:30 a.m. At 7 p.m. the same day, she meets with Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Peace House is seeking mature, young adults willing to commit to a year of mis-



sional discipleship as part of Harrisonburg District's Peace House. Located near the JMU campus at 264 Old High Street, H'burg, Peace House seeks to live out and proclaim the good news to university students and young adults by giving such seekers a place to engage their questions. The possibility of partially-funded internships through VMM can be explored. For more info, contact Deitrich and Abigail Ewing (2013-14 PH leaders) at abigaildietrich@gmail.com

Mark the dates for **Ladies Community Bible Study** at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church this fall, Tuesday mornings and evenings, Sept. 3-November 12. Study material will be "John—Beloved Disciple" by Beth Moore.

UPCOMING TOUR

TourMagination invites you to join Wilmer & Janet Martin, Dave & Joyce Eshleman on their next tour to **Australia & New Zealand**, January 30 to February 19, 2015. This outstanding three-week tour to "Down Under" will include: Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, the Great Barrier Reef and much more in Australia. The trip will end with six days on the South Island of New Zealand with visits to Christ Church, Dunedin, Queenstown. a cruise on Milford Sound and much more. Sign up by 9/15/13 and save \$500 per person. For a brochure with details, call: (800) 565-0451.

