



Sarah Bixler introduces the program of celebration for Conference Minister Owen Burkholder and Ruth Ann. One hundred sixty-six friends and family attended.  
 Photo: Jon Trotter

## Celebration honors Owen and Ruth Ann Burkholder for decades of pastoral and conference ministry

By SARAH BIXLER

It could be said that Owen Burkholder put Bluesky, Alberta on the map. At least for many people in VMC, that is.

It was in the remote Canadian village of Bluesky where Owen's call to ministry was first affirmed through ordination over 40 years ago. God's call took Owen from Bluesky all the way to Harrisonburg, Va., where he served as pastor and VMC Conference Minister.

On March 15, 166 friends and family celebrated Owen and Ruth Ann's life-long call to ministry. VMC hosted this gathering at Park View Mennonite Church, in this final year of Owen's service as Conference Minister. Following a meal, attendees learned about the Burkholders' journey through four major seasons of ministry.

The Burkholder daughters Minnette, Marla and Michelle reflected on their parents' early years, tracing Owen's journey from Bluesky to Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute, where he met his wife Ruth Ann Augsburg, to Youngstown, Ohio,

and eventually Harrisonburg. The extended Augsburg family sang "We are your children," written by Paul Gingerich, Ruth Ann's late brother-in-law (listen to the original recording at [vmmissions.org/media/we-are-your-children](http://vmmissions.org/media/we-are-your-children)).

Jim Bishop described Owen's pastoral leadership of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg. The Burkholders'

ministry in this fledgling congregation was strongly affirmed, marked by their family's engagement in congregational life, offering a listening presence, facilitating vision, and focusing on mission in the community.

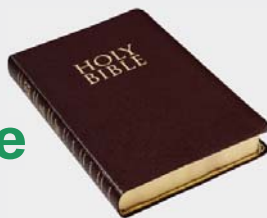
In 1981, Owen moved into a full-time pastoral role at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg. Gloria Diener led

**Celebration** continued on page 3



Owen Burkholder (center) with all past and present district overseers attending the celebration. Jon Trotter

# The biblical journey and our journey with the Bible



By OWEN BURKHOLDER

Conference Minister, Virginia Mennonite Conference



Which Bible verse or story has affected you deeply? Indulge me here—take a few minutes to actually think about what might be called a foundational text for your life. If you were a candidate for the ministry you would be required to write about three such texts. Invariably, there are stories – deeply personal – where persons encountered the living presence of God through some portion of the Biblical story.

Terry Shue, Director of Leadership Development for Mennonite Church USA, has been collecting these stories and he wants to hear from you. At the Joint Ministry Retreat (March 1-3 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center), participants learned about and engaged in exercises related to the *12 Scriptures Project* (see contact below).

Imagine the intensity as pastors and youth ministry persons shared stories about meaningful Scriptures! When the top three texts from everyone were posted on

*“At the core the Bible is the story of God’s good creation, then human rebellion or self-exaltation with sin’s results, then God’s amazing and persistent grace initiative to solve the problem resulting from sin. The Bible is the product and story of God’s dynamic interaction with the more and less faithful people of God—faithful and unfaithful to their ‘chosen-ness’ mission.”*

PARTICIPANT BOOKLET

## Connections May 2013 – Volume 23, Number 7

© 2013 by Virginia Mennonite Missions and Virginia Mennonite Conference. *Connections* (USPS 007-205) is published monthly to connect congregations and agencies with each other. Editor: Gloria Lehman Assistant Editor: Jon Trotter

*Connections* is distributed free to each household of supporting congregations. Subscription rates: \$8/year, 2 years/\$15. To subscribe, contact: *Connections* Circulation Manager, (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535 info@vmmissions.org

Websites: [www.vmmissions.org](http://www.vmmissions.org) [www.virginiacommunity.org](http://www.virginiacommunity.org)

POSTMASTER Send address changes to: 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Periodical postage paid at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

the wall, it reached from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22. The verses mentioned most often were Jeremiah 29:11 (“I know the plans I have for you...”) and John 3:16 (“For God so loved the world...”)

Hesston College has developed a Bible-teaching program titled, *Salvation History (Heilsgeschichte): the Bible as the story of the dynamic interaction between God and the People of God*. We invited the beloved teacher, Marion G. Bontrager, to lead us through a semester course in four short sessions!

When we use a word like *salvation*, it means that something has gone wrong somewhere and there needs to be some relief, change, redemption (salvation). So, with many anecdotes, Marion refreshed participants with the scope of God’s intention for the created world and the response of the created ones. A key dynamic then, becomes sorting out the “ultimate” will of God, and the “remedial” will of God.

At this joint ministry retreat, participants experienced the great scope of salvation history and they shared their own journey with the Bible. May that same dynamic live in all of our youth groups and congregations!

## 12 Scriptures Project

[mennoniteusa.org/2012/03/22/the-twelve-scriptures-project/](http://mennoniteusa.org/2012/03/22/the-twelve-scriptures-project/)  
Contact: [terrys@mennoniteusa.org](mailto:terrys@mennoniteusa.org)

Photos courtesy of author



Marion Bontrager leads the retreat through the “salvation history” of the Bible.



Terry Shue engages participants with the 12 Scriptures Project.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIRTH

### Juliet Irene born to Ben and Sarah Bixler

Join Conference Coordinator Sarah Bixler and her husband, Ben, in praising God for the birth of their daughter Juliet Irene. She was born April 4 and is joyously welcomed by brother Calvin (6) and sister Eve (2). The Bixlers give thanks for this blessing of a healthy child!



**MOTORCYCLE**  
**for missions**  
powhatan-roanoke-harrisonburg • july 24-25

**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 Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly. Riders are encouraged to find sponsors for their journey and all funds will benefit Virginia Mennonite Missions. Contact Tim Kennell at [timbev2@yahoo.com](mailto:timbev2@yahoo.com) or (804) 240-5657 for more information.

## Financial Focus

**Virginia Mennonite Conference** • • •  
Sept. 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

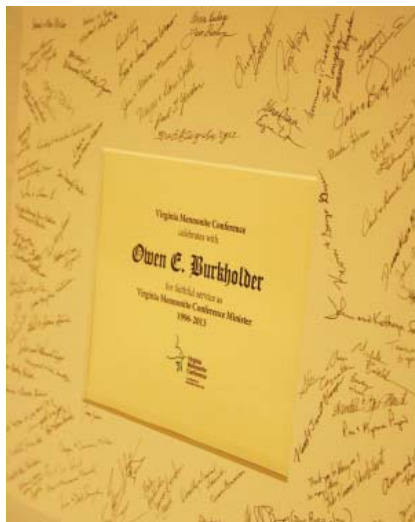
|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| <b>budget</b>      | \$160,158 |
| <b>expenses</b>    | \$153,078 |
| <b>income</b>      | \$131,260 |
| <b>investments</b> | \$4,319   |
| <b>net</b>         | -\$17,499 |

**Virginia Mennonite Missions** • • •  
Sept. 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Mission Fund      Special Projects

|                      |                 |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>total revenue</b> | <b>expenses</b> | <b>total revenue</b> | <b>expenses</b> |
| \$320,092            | \$385,643       | \$795,834            | \$670,637       |

celebration attendees back to a time of “fullness” for both Owen’s ministry and the congregation, as they sat in the very space where Owen once served as pastor, the former sanctuary repurposed as the fellowship hall. During these years Owen grew in his ministry gifts, eventually serving as moderator of both VMC and the Mennonite Church. Ruth Ann provided the support and wisdom Owen needed as a ministry partner.



Friends and family at the Conference Minister celebration signed a framed certificate recognizing Owen’s years of service as Conference Minister. Photo: Jon Trotter

On January 1, 1996, Owen began as VMC’s first Conference Minister. Joe Longacher affirmed

dance. Ruth Ann received lily bulbs as an affirmation of her partnership in ministry.

Owen’s 18 years of conference leadership, including his work with the Faith and Life Commission, connecting with Mennonite Church USA, maintaining strong relationships with the people of VMC, providing spiritual counsel, and calling persons to ministry.

Following these reflections, Owen was presented with a certificate of service signed by those in atten-

Attendees contributed \$12,334 to establish the Pastors’ Medical Expenses Grant Fund, an endowment in honor of Owen and Ruth Ann that will provide grants to current VMC pastors for personal medical expenses.

Owen’s journey from Bluesky, Alberta to significant ministry roles in Virginia Mennonite Conference and beyond is remarkable. In reflecting on his life-long call to ministry, Owen says, “All I ever wanted to be was a good pastor.” After August 31, when Owen leaves his position with VMC, he is considering a pastoral assignment. We give thanks for his leadership and rejoice in what God has done among us through his ministry!



Sarah Bixler is the Conference Coordinator of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

## 30 hours without food—a different kind of youth retreat!

By WENDY HOSTETTER DAVIS

On the first weekend in April, youth from three churches in North Carolina gathered together to take on World Vision’s *30 Hour Famine* challenge. Together, we committed to go without food for 30 hours while we learned about hunger, poverty and the global food crisis.

In place of the junk foods found at most retreats we paused often for juice breaks. And rather than watching some fun animated film before bed, we watched clips teaching us about the global food crisis and heard true stories of children and families facing malnutrition and poverty.

In between, we participated in World Vision’s learning game “TRIBE,” designed to get us thinking about what life is like for the many famine refugees in Africa. Teams worked together to find food, cross borders, and use their creativity to scavenge for

what they would need to survive as a refugee. Tribe provided lots of laughs, group bonding, and a chance to learn about the very real perils that thousands of refugees face each day.

On Saturday afternoon we put our learning to work as we volunteered at a nearby community garden. Through pulling weeds and getting the garden ready to plant, we were making it possible for a nearby soup kitchen to have fresh vegetables to serve at their daily meals. While physical labor after over 20 hours of fasting was not easy, we got a small taste of what thousands of people face daily as they struggle to work through their hunger and earn money for



Youth and youth leaders who participated in the 30 Hour Famine in N.C., with the pile of weeds they pulled. Image below left: Youth participate in a “food hunt” exercise. Photos courtesy of author

their evening meal – only to do it all again the very next day.

Our brief experience with hunger opened our eyes to the daily reality for millions around the world. It made us more grateful for what we had, and it challenged us to fight back and make a difference – no matter how small. We left changed, and our hope and prayer is that we may never go back to the way we were.



Wendy Hostetter Davis is Western Regional Conference Youth Minister



# God's mission celebrated at events in two VMC districts

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

On February 24, VMC Eastern District hosted a "Missions Sunday" throughout the eastern part of Virginia. In the Sunday morning worship services, VMM staff members and Reuben Horst, VMM board member, shared a mission sermon: Aaron Kauffman at *First Mennonite* of Richmond; Galen & Gloria Lehman at *Huntington*; Skip & Carol Tobin at *Mt. Pleasant*; Janet Blosser at *Powhatan*; Reuben Horst at *Providence*; Myron Augsburg at *Warwick River*; and Ken Horst at *Williamsburg*. These sermons provided clear input about God's work in the world, through God's people in various places.

In the afternoon, more than 60 people gathered in the Warwick River Mennonite Church for a Celebration of God's Mission. Lively music was provided by the WRMC

youth led by Jay Shenk. Myron Augsburg spoke on "Christian Witness: Lessons from the Past, Vision for the Future." He talked about persons from this community who pioneered outreach and mission endeavors both locally and abroad. Following this meeting, a light supper was enjoyed with good fellowship.

On Tuesday, March 19, VMC Southern District hosted a Celebration of God's Mission event in the Springdale Mennonite Church. Around 65 people gathered and enjoyed dinner and fellowship just prior to the meeting. An octet sang songs from the tent meeting era—1950s-60s. Myron Augsburg spoke on "Christian Witness," telling interesting stories from the past, and pointing out the best strategy for witnessing in the future. This will be done best by

Reconciled through Jesus  
*transformed to serve*

Celebrating God's mission in the world!



one-on-one conversations, sharing Christ's love and message of redemption and peace with a wide variety of people. Loren Horst concluded the meeting with points of how VMM is working locally and globally to extend Christ's Kingdom.

These celebrations inform and inspire us to continually pray, financially support and participate in God's mission wherever it may be. If your VMC district wants to host a celebration, please contact Gloria Lehman, [gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org](mailto:gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org) or (540) 434-9727.



Gloria Lehman is Director of Public Relations for Virginia Mennonite Missions.



## Conference Council processes Task Force report, future of conference youth ministry

By SARAH BIXLER

Last September, Conference Council commissioned the *Task Force for a Financially Sustainable VMC* to review conference revenue streams and staffing.

On March 16, the six-member group presented its findings to Conference Council emphasizing a need for vision and strategy, leadership improvement, and enhanced communications. Commission representatives Daryl Brubaker (VMM board), Matt Hunsberger (Congregational Life) and Joe Longacher (formerly of Faith & Life) worked with task force chair James Aker-son, Regina Schweitzer and Treasurer Glen Kauffman to gather feedback across VMC's districts, leadership groups and staff. The final report included both affirmations and recommendations.

After receiving the report and identifying recommendations for immediate action, Conference Council determined that a strategic plan will be helpful in moving the conference forward. Upcoming vacancies in August for the Conference

Minister and Conference Coordinator positions were addressed with a decision to blend these executive responsibilities into one Executive Conference Minister position, for which a search committee is currently receiving applications. The new Executive Conference Minister will be tasked with leading the development of a strategic plan.

In its May session and beyond, Conference Council will continue to consider additional recommendations as the task force's report provides a breadth of material for processing in the upcoming months.

Conference Council has approved a term renewal for Shaun and Wendy Davis, Western Regional Conference Youth Ministers, through March 31, 2014. The half-time Conference Youth Minister position will remain vacant no later than this date. In the meantime, Conference Youth Minister tasks will be met with project-specific interim arrangements until Conference Council discerns the future shape of

conference youth ministry. Several VMC youth ministers are available to field youth ministry questions coming into the conference office, and plans are underway for upcoming youth ministry events.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

for these upcoming VMC youth events!

#### Middle School Retreat

September 20-21, at Smith Mountain Lake

#### Youth Workers Retreat

January 24-26, at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center featuring Dr. Almeda Wright

#### Senior High Retreat

February 7-9, at Highland Retreat



Sarah Bixler is the Conference Coordinator of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

# Math, games and photography for the glory of God

By LOIS KING

“Ms. King, our homework is done. Can we please play that math game now?” Several freshmen boys looked up eagerly as I entered the after-school study hall at Lezha Academic Center, Albania. I was in Albania on a two-month VMM assignment: to tutor students, support the principal and young teaching staff, and provide enrichment for students. As I packed that game, I didn’t imagine how well-used it would become. I am reminded that God uses even little things like old games to teach others.



A math game became a well-used way of enriching students at LAC.

Could God use my love of photography for His glory? Always looking for enrichment opportunities for her students, Principal Klementina Shanini suggested I teach an introduction to photography. So “Photography Club” (pronounced *pho-to-graph-y*)



Students loved learning about photography.

was born. The wind and rain of a typical February day in Lezhe did not dampen our spirits. We studied



Lois King tutors a student. Photos by author

composition and the elements of a picture, took lots of photos, edited our work in the computer lab, and enjoyed seeing our “masterpieces” displayed on a hall bulletin board.

There are many ways to serve in the LAC family. I enjoyed working with eight seniors as they prepared to take the TOEFL test, a necessary prerequisite for studying in English abroad. Individual and small group tutoring provided a setting for reinforcing both content and English, but more importantly, for mentoring values. I took hundreds of informal photos of students and staff, including individual student school pictures. Relating to the Albanian staff was a blessing, and I was encouraged to see their support of LAC’s mission.

Back home in Virginia as I reread student goodbye notes, I realize again what a special place LAC is. “This school is a blessing for us, and your presence was a blessing, too.” “You taught us the beauty of photography.” “God blessed us with your presence and I am so thankful for that!” “I am glad that you are a part of our family.” “I hope that you will come again in Albania.” “I am sure you will visit us soon...I feel this.”



Lois King is a veteran educator who attends Morning View Mennonite Church, Singers Glen, Va.



A group of young men from the Temple Hall Mennonite Church singing a special song at Conference session. Photos courtesy of author

## Jamaica conference held in Kingston

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

It’s the highlight of the church year—the JMC conference in Kingston! This 55th annual gathering centered on the theme “Godly Fellowship—United in Spirit, United in Purpose.”

The conference opened on Friday, March 1 at the Waterloo Mennonite Church with worship songs and a devotional meditation given by Sis. Elaine Baker. Sis. Baker shared about the transformation of her heart from deeply sad after the passing of Bro. Morris Baker last year to the present where she can say “thank you, God, for another day.” Maureen Bodington, member of Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago brought greetings from her church to the conference delegates.



Maureen Bodington, Trinidadian delegate

On Saturday, Pastor Dameon Hines led a workshop on “Encourage One Another through Fellowship.” Group discussion and a fun activity with a hula hoop engaged everyone in the pursuit of Godly fellowship.

Sunday morning, 450-500 JMC members gathered from all parts of the island for worship in the Campion College auditorium. Douglas Senior, Associate Pastor of Good Tidings Mennonite Church, presented the devotional meditation. Lloyd Moore, Pastor Counselor, led the commissioning for the Council of Management, pastors and deacons. Dr. Henley Morgan preached a lively sermon. After lunch, the afternoon session gave the audience a wealth of dramas and special music, all with a special message of living for Christ. JMC president Linda Campbell gave a charge to the church inviting them to go deeper into Kingdom living.

JMC enthusiastically anticipates the new church year, seeking God’s direction in all parts of church life.



Gloria Lehman is VMM Caribbean Regional Assistant

# FLRC event ‘faces giants’

By MARK SENSABAUGH

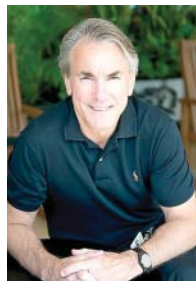
Family Life Resource Center counselor James Glanzer, who was diagnosed with colon cancer last fall, will be the main speaker at FLRC’s 6 p.m. fundraising banquet Saturday, June 8, in the EMHS dining hall. The theme of the event will be “A Reason for Hope: Growing Courage to Face Our Giants,” and it is a part of the Center’s 2013 goal to provide increased training opportunities for churches leaders and congregations.



James Glanzer

Glanzer, whose first wife died of leukemia June 10, 1994, is well known for his work with grief issues, and is now dealing with his own struggle with cancer and extensive treatments associated with it.

Dr. Michael Barry, director of Pastoral Care at Philadelphia’s Cancer Treatment Centers of America, will also make a brief presentation, introducing a free four-hour “Our Journey of Hope” seminar that FLRC will sponsor Saturday, September, 28, to help those ministering to cancer patients and their families.



Dr. Michael Barry



The Walking Roots Band Photos courtesy of author

Music at the dinner will be provided by the Walking Roots Band, a Harrisonburg-based music group. A free-will offering will be taken to support the Center’s compassion fund.

Please RSVP by Thursday, May 30 at 540-434-8450 or at [services@flrc.org](mailto:services@flrc.org)



Mark Sensabaugh is director of Family Life Resource Center.

# Not too busy to nurture community

By PAM DE YOUNG

As president of Mennonite Women of Virginia, I ask women how their congregations function as communities and as part of the larger community of Mennonite women.

I fear that we may be “too busy” to nurture community. We must discover how to strengthen Christian unity in a world that encourages us to embrace less important priorities.

By the time this is read, the Annual Missions Day may be over. Historically, this event brought together women to share



Dawn Ruth Nelson Beth Yoder

monetary resources with missionaries in an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation.

In recent years, however, participation has dwindled. As I write, I pray that the Annual Missions Day on May 4th will demonstrate a revived interest in supporting our sisters, many of whom have young families,

who are called to “go into all the world” for Jesus. We must not be too busy for this.

Preserving Mennonite traditions in a changing world will be explored at our Mennonite Women of Virginia retreat September 27-29 at Eagle Eyrie Campground near Lynchburg, Va.

## Mennonite Women of Virginia

Empowered women creatively building Christ-centered relationships through fellowship, leadership, mission and service.

Speaker and Mennonite pastor Dawn Ruth Nelson has chosen “Familiar Blessings, Blowing Spirit” as her topic. Brochures will be distributed in the summer.

The Mennonite Women of Virginia board needs more members. Please call Pam De Young at (757) 930-0002 to help.

Pam De Young is president of Mennonite Women of Virginia.



Participants at the 2012 retreat enjoyed time together in worship, conversation, and service projects. File photos

# MAY 2013

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday   |  |  |   |  |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by<br/><b>Galen and Gloria Lehman</b><br/><b>in honor of Rodney &amp; Eve Knepp's ministry in Jamaica.</b><br/>They are expecting their third child at the end of June, and will be on home leave in July and August.<br/><i>Plan on greeting them and encouraging them in their work.</i></p> | <p>1<br/>The search committee continues to process applications for Executive Conference Minister. Ask God's Spirit to guide their discernment of the candidate God is calling to lead VMC into the future.</p> | <p>2<br/>Pray for the pastors of Cheisa Evangelica Mennonita Italiana who are attending a pastors' seminar in Rome this week.</p> | <p>3<br/>Andrea and Sheila Croci-vera have moved <i>My Space</i> (adolescent outreach) to the Centro Agape, Palermo, social hall. This makes outreach to the local community more feasible. Pray for the leaders and the youth as they learn together.</p> | <p>4<br/>Today women across VMC gather for the Mennonite Women of Virginia Annual Missions Day. Invite God to be present in their gathering and inspire each participant to deeper faith and service.</p> | <p>5<br/>Today the Children's Convention in Jamaica Mennonite Church is held—a full day of children presenting special items, engaging in competitions, and learning to know each other. Pray that those involved will be richly blessed and encouraged.</p> | <p>6<br/>Remember West Liberty Mennonite Church, now a year after tornadoes ravaged their Kentucky community. Ask God to empower their witness as they facilitate healing and hope through Christ following this natural disaster.</p> | <p>7<br/>Shawn &amp; Laura Green look forward to serving in Italy; as they prepare they ask us to pray for God's provision in every way, particularly for complete funding, which they need prior to arrival in Italy.</p> | <p>8<br/>Invite God's Spirit to continue shaping the ministries of the Crossroads and Trissels Mennonite churches near Broadway, Va. As they respond to needs in their congregations and communities, may Christ be glorified.</p> | <p>9<br/>Pray for Caleb Benner as he teaches at Lezha Academic Center, Albania today. May he have deep insight into what the students need to know both academically and morally.</p> | <p>10<br/>Pray for Francesco &amp; Martha Picoone who are gathering this month with their sons and family members in Palermo, Italy. Their family times are limited and this is a special time of bonding.</p> | <p>11<br/>Tomorrow evening there is a music and dessert event at the Community Mennonite Church to raise funds for Jay &amp; Sheri Hartzler's service in Romania, beginning in August. Come and enjoy the program and help to support this unique ministry.</p> | <p>12<br/>Who are the mothers in the Bible and your life who show you God's nurturing presence? Which have given you an example to follow in faith and practice? Give thanks for these women.</p> | <p>13<br/>Eve Knepp challenges her students at the Maranatha School for the Deaf with math lessons, and also calls them to high standards of behavior; following the loving way Jesus calls us to treat each other. Pray for her continued energy for this task.</p> | <p>14<br/>In Bammmental, Germany, David &amp; Rebekka Stutzman meet with young adults over coffee and 'kuchen' and converse about where God is leading them and the church at this time and in the future.</p> | <p>15<br/>Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va identifies itself as "a local church with a global vision." Ask God to guide them through an upcoming pastoral leadership transition as this diverse congregation engages God's mission.</p> | <p>16<br/>Galen &amp; Gloria Lehman are visiting Nancy Marshall in Orange Walk, Belize, this weekend, interacting with the members of Jesus' Deaf Church and conversing with Nancy and others. Pray that this will be a good time of sharing and encouragement.</p> | <p>17<br/>Conference Council meets this weekend. As they consider the task force's recommendations and envision a new season in conference life, ask God to direct their thoughts and discussion.</p> | <p>18<br/>Today is Women's Day in the Jamaica Mennonite Conference. Pray for the women who gather for input, worship and fellowship and then return to their homes; may they share the joy they experienced with family and friends around them.</p> | <p>19<br/>Waynesboro Mennonite Church, VA, participates in many local ministries by offering hospitality to community persons. Ask God to continue invigorating this congregation for mission as they represent Christ in the Waynesboro area and beyond.</p> | <p>20<br/>In Det Udom, Thailand, Sarah Schoenhals works with persons who are learning financial management skills, producing income for their families. Ask God to enable her as she encourages these endeavors.</p> | <p>21<br/>In Lezhe, Albania, Norma Teles directs the pre-school Roma children in learning activities—how they have grown during this past year! Thank God for Norma's dedication to this age group and ask Him to bless the children and their families.</p> | <p>22<br/>The Mennonite churches in Palermo, Italy, are facing many challenges due to the economic crisis. Loss of jobs and lack of job opportunities for youth nudge the congregations to look to God for guidance. Join them in prayer for these situations.</p> | <p>23<br/>Lift up Fellowship of Christ in prayer, a VMC congregation in Rocky Mount, NC. May members experience the Spirit moving in radical ways as they walk with community persons and see lives changed.</p> | <p>24<br/>Pray for Jacob in South Asia as he balances a variety of responsibilities—work, family life, Bible study groups, and whatever comes into his days. May the presence of Christ in his life guide him in all areas.</p> | <p>25<br/>Tomorrow Michael &amp; Ruth and family arrive in Virginia from their place of ministry in South Asia. Ask God to help the children rest on the long flight, and for His rest and peace as they make the transition to life in the US for two months.</p> | <p>26<br/>Today Steve &amp; Laura Campbell and daughters meet with believers in the small, yet lively, congregation in Podgorica, Montenegro. We join them in prayer for the opening of people's hearts and minds to the joy and peace of Jesus.</p> | <p>27<br/>Let us commit to peacemaking in every aspect of life, demonstrating the nature of Jesus in our relationships, in our churches, homes and workplaces.</p> | <p>28<br/>Remember our conference's grade school ministries, Eastern Mennonite and Warwick River Christian Schools, as the school year draws to a close. Give thanks for these formative environments that emphasize faith throughout the curriculum.</p> | <p>29<br/>If you have reserved your place, be sure to attend the Indian meal served this evening at the Lindale MC fellowship hall, 6:30 p.m. Hear about Michael &amp; Ruth ministry and be inspired to support them in various ways. [see back page]</p> | <p>30<br/>May God's wisdom and direction be with the Italian Ministerial Council as they plan the annual fall conference for Cheisa Evangelica Mennonita Italiana. This is a highlight of the church year.</p> | <p>31<br/>Has your congregation selected the most important biblical passages for the <i>12 Scriptures Project</i>? These ancient words, ever new, can mold and shape us for the next generation. See information at <a href="http://mennoniteusa.org">mennoniteusa.org</a></p> |
| <p><b>"Therefore, as it is written:<br/>"Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."</b></p> <p>1 Corinthians 1:31 (NIV)</p>   |   |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |   |  |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |



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

## Announcements

Register now for the 2013 **Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly** at: [virginiaconference.org/assembly](http://virginiaconference.org/assembly)

You're invited to an evening of special music, desserts, videos, and more as **Jay and Sheri Hartzler share about their upcoming service year in Romania** on Sunday, May 12, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Community Mennonite Church, 70 S. High St. in Harrisonburg. An offering for the Hartzlers' support will be taken.

**Experience the exotic flavors of South Asian food** at Lindale Mennonite Church, 6255 Jesse Bennett Way, Linville, Va., on Wednesday, May 29, 6:30 p.m. Michael & Ruth and their children will be present and will share about life, work and ministry. Support for their ministry will be received. For more information, contact Tracy Clark at (540) 820-5372 / [family@funclarks.com](mailto:family@funclarks.com) by May 23.

Hope Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas, Trinidad, have requested **teachers to assist with their VBS programs** in July. If you are available to serve these energetic congregations as they reach out to their communities, contact Martin Rhodes, (540) 434-9727 / (800) 707-5535 or [martin.rhodes@vmmissions.org](mailto:martin.rhodes@vmmissions.org).

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. Look for more information soon.

### POSITIONS AVAILABLE

A VMC search committee is currently receiving and reviewing applications for **Executive Conference Minister**. Visit [virginiaconference.org/jobopenings](http://virginiaconference.org/jobopenings) for information about the position and application process. The search committee will recommend a candidate to Conference Council, who is responsible to hire for this position.

**Harrisonburg Mennonite Church** is seeking a full-time **youth and young adult director**. A Master of Divinity degree and ministry experience preferred. We are looking for a candidate with a passion for God and young people. Interested persons may contact lead pastor, Craig Maven, (540) 434-4463 ex. 104 or [cmaven@hmcchurch.org](mailto:cmaven@hmcchurch.org)

### UPCOMING TOURS

**Enjoy Ireland with England, Scotland and Wales.** *TourMagination* added a pre-tour of Ireland to the tour of the British Isles. The dates for Ireland are Sept. 8-14; for England, Scotland and Wales, Sept. 14-25. Enjoy the beauty of Irish countryside. In England, visit sites connected with the lives of C. S. Lewis, John Newton, Charles Spurgeon and John Bunyan. Visit London, Liverpool, Edinburg and Glasgow. For full details, call (800) 565-0451 or go to [TourMagination.com](http://TourMagination.com)

Join a **WCRC Tour—"Across the River,"** October 14-17. Using Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center for an idyllic anchor and lodging, ride a motor coach through the Denbigh Mennonite community on the way to the Norfolk Botanical Garden, and enjoy a lunch cruise on the "Spirit of Norfolk." Also spend a day at Colonial Williamsburg, and visit the Yorktown Victory Center. Contact Jenn Hill, WCRC program director, at [programs@wcrc.info](mailto:programs@wcrc.info) or call (866) 566-4875 for a brochure, or tour coordinators Ed and Edie Bontrager at (540) 438-8304 or [eebontrager@comcast.net](mailto:eebontrager@comcast.net)

### Lezha Academic Center

LEZHË, ALBANIA

seeks licensed secondary education teachers for extendable one-year terms beginning August 2013.

All courses taught in English.  
Teaching experience preferred. English, social studies, math and science are needed. TESOL experience desired but not required.

Interested persons should contact  
Martin Rhodes at  
[tranSend@vmmissions.org](mailto:tranSend@vmmissions.org)  
(800) 707-5535 / (540) 434-9727  
Application is at  
[vmmissions.org/serve/tranSend](http://vmmissions.org/serve/tranSend)

*Lezha Academic Center offers rigorous academics in English with a biblical worldview to prepare Albanian students to become leaders who apply Christian faith to life. Discover more at [albanianchristianschool.org](http://albanianchristianschool.org)*

