

## 'Answered prayers' for Hickory Hmong Mennonites

By CHI ADABEL LEE and  
JOYCE HOSTETTER

Jonah and Memee Yang moved to North Carolina in August to lead Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church, founded in 2004 by Chiaya Hadtasunsern. The Yangs left social work jobs in California with no promise of employment in Hickory.

Jonah is the President of Hmong Mennonite Church Missions in the US and Memee is president of the Women's Division. Jonah and Memee have six children, three who are college-aged. In a joyful welcome service, Pai Moua (an elder's wife) shared this tearful story:

Three years ago Pastor Chiaya left our congregation. I still cannot believe he and his family left us to be lost sheep, but I know God called him elsewhere.

We enjoyed seven years of joy and worshipping with Pastor Chiaya. We learned so much about the Mennonites and how to love others before ourselves. Very soon the love of Christ gave us fourteen families.

We thought we could find a new pastor in an instant, but soon learned, it wasn't easy. After many months people started to lose faith in finding a pastor. I couldn't believe our successful church was losing so many families and friends. I prayed every day for a shepherd to guide us. One night I couldn't sleep, so I got up at 3 a.m. I held my Bible with my fingers between the pages and prayed.

"Lord... Father of Heaven and Earth. What have I done to deserve this pain and suffering? Our



Memee and Jonah Yang, new leaders of Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church. Photos: Susan Myer

congregation needs you the most right now and it seems you have deserted your sheep. Now there are only three families. Even when the devil is trying to deceive us and tries to make us weak, I will not move but stand firm in your love and presence. Please answer my prayer."

Then, I opened my Bible and came to Isaiah 54:1-8—*Sing and shout, even though you have never had children! The Lord has promised that you will have more children than someone married for a long time.*



Members of the Hickory Hmong church, as well as district and conference representatives, pray for Jonah and Memee and their family and ministry.

*Make your tents larger! Spread out the tent pegs; fasten them firmly.*

*You and your descendants will take over the land of other nations. You will settle in towns that are now in ruins.*

*Don't be afraid or ashamed and don't be discouraged. You won't be disappointed. Forget how sinful you were when you were young; stop feeling ashamed for being left a widow.*

*The Lord All-Powerful, the Holy God of Israel, rules all the earth. He is your Creator and husband, and he will rescue you.*

*You were like a young wife, brokenhearted and crying because her husband had divorced her. But the Lord your God says, "I am taking you back!"*

*I rejected you for a while, but with love and tenderness I will embrace you again.*

*For a while, I turned away in furious anger. Now I will have mercy and love you forever! I, your protector and Lord, make this promise."*

Since I read this, Pastor Jonah finally decided to come. Then I prayed for the Lord to help Pastor Jonah sell his house in California, so he wouldn't be burdened by bills. Within a few weeks, Pastor Jonah's house sold. Now he is here. I feel our church can grow again.

Mai concluded with these words. "God answered my prayer. He can answer your prayers, too. She was right. Within two weeks, Memee Yang found a job and the church is filled with anticipation.

Chi Adabel Lee is a member of Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church.

Joyce Hostetter is a member of Mountain View Mennonite Church, Hickory, N.C.

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# Start here

By LOREN HORST



I like the tagline of Hesston College in Kansas, “Start Here, Go Everywhere.” I wish I’d thought of it. It makes a bold statement about Christian college education as a launching point from which people go virtually anywhere in the world. It implies that a college can broaden horizons, deepen perspectives and add to the ability of persons to make a difference in the world.

Seven years ago VMissions became intentional in providing a “doorway into missions.” We made a special offer to our own Virginia Mennonite Conference that we would help send persons into missions through other Mennonite mission agencies as well as directly through VMissions. We offered to help with funding, MST support, and providing general supportiveness from our churches back home. People could start with VMissions and go virtually anywhere that Mennonite missions has been involved, and beyond.

VMC adopted that offer as the preferred way of sending persons into missions. In the last seven years, our horizons have included nearly 30 countries of the world. Special partnerships have included Mennonite Mission Network and Eastern Mennonite Missions, but we have partnered with others as well. One can indeed start here and go virtually anywhere God is calling!

These 30 nations include our own USA. Increasing attention is being given to work and ministry across the street as well as around the world. A recent dinner in support of Mennonite Hispanic Initiative highlighted the fact that there are now 5 Hispanic congregations in our conference

with active vision and plans to begin more. I have no doubt they will, prompting me to anticipate that more and more Virginia Mennonite Conference will look like the Kingdom. The old mission “field” language is obsolete when referring only to some remote exotic far-off location. Everywhere is the location of God’s mission and we should expect that every congregation should look like it. We should expect God’s intervention into our lives here as much as anywhere else in the world.

My interest in mission here at home has deepened in recent years as I have become increasingly aware of how desperately our own culture and people are in need of the truly transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ. We would have been the “ends of the earth” to the first century church.

We have always been needy people too, and no more so than now. When considering the growing spiritual poverty of the Western church, some have even wondered how long it can presume to have the spiritual depth to be missionary at all! “Quit travelling the world, and mind your own store,” some might suggest. I would reply, “As people become engaged in God’s mission here, their eyes are lifted to encompass the entire world! Nowhere is beyond the purview of God’s love!”

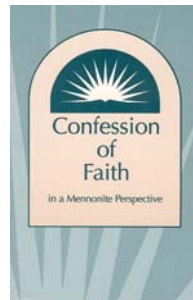
Whether we are called around the world or across the street we can expect to witness God’s hand at work in the midst of the complexities of this world. And too, while VMissions need not and cannot participate in everything that God is doing in the world, we are certainly willing to watch, and listen, and cooperate when we can.

Loren Horst  
President  
Virginia Mennonite Missions

## CONFESSION CONSULTATION EVENT

Credentialed leaders of VMC are invited to a consultation on the *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective*. Hosted by Waynesboro Mennonite Church, the consultation will be Friday, November 8, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the church (1801 Monroe St., Waynesboro, Va.)

Hear an overview of how the *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* was essential for the health



of the church. George R. Brunk III and Owen Burkholder will be our two resource speakers.

Anticipate discernment on the role of a confession in our 21st century context. Learn about leaders reflections on the role and purpose of a confession in ministry.

Join us for a time of worship, listening, learning, invigorating conversations, and discernment. Credentialed leaders, active and retired, are welcome! More information will follow.

### Financial Focus

Virginia Mennonite Conference	Sept. 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013
<b>budget</b>	\$274,557
<b>expenses</b>	\$256,384
<b>income</b>	\$244,458
<b>investments</b>	\$9,482
<b>net</b>	\$-2,444

Virginia Mennonite Missions	Sept. 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013
<b>Mission Fund</b>	<b>Special Projects</b>
<b>total revenue</b>	<b>total revenue</b>
<b>expenses</b>	<b>expenses</b>
\$549,080	\$1,518,330
\$678,873	\$1,216,462

Figures are preliminary, pre-audit.

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# Park View's blitz packs more than 1,500 school kits

By GORDON ZOOK and DOROTHY LOGAN

A lot of congregations put school kits together for distribution by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). But how many produce more than 1,500? That was a recent experience on Sunday, August 18, when nearly a hundred assembly-line volunteers packed a total of 1,562 kits at the Park View Mennonite Church (PVMC), Harrisonburg.

Along with Park View families, the event became an international gathering including adults and children from the Islamic Association of the Shenandoah Valley, from the Center for Interfaith Engagement at Eastern Mennonite University, and from *Hilos en Común* (Common Threads). The latter group gathers Hispanic women from the Harrisonburg community who meet weekly to work with fabrics and share life. On blitz day, they displayed their stories through individual wall hangings mounted in the fellowship room.

The church foyer was transformed into a production room for adults and the library for children. The shared task was filling col-



The blitz was a time of fellowship between Park View Mennonites and members of the Islamic Center of Shenandoah Valley. Photo courtesy of authors

orful drawstring bags with classroom tools for students in any of 15 designated countries where children cannot afford the basics for school. Kit bags were constructed from donated fabrics by members of Mennonite Women. Special offerings in June garnered funds for quantity purchases.

The Blitz began with a litany led by Pastor Barbara Moyer Lehman, along with Naveera Rashid, representative of

the Islamic Association, and Sylvia Whitney Beitzel, from Blue Ridge Area Health Education Program. Cindy Byler, who with her husband, Daryl, recently located in Harrisonburg after six years as MCC country representatives for Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, spoke for children who will be receiving the kits. Dr. Amir A. Krami, visiting Muslim Scholar at the EMU Center for Interfaith Engagement, offered a prayer of dedication for the day's project. With work completed soon after 4 p.m., Park View's Community Life Commission served ice cream and peaches.

The school kit blitz idea emerged from a PVMC small group in 2008, believing that with more visibility the number of school kits donated by Park View could be significantly increased. That year, the total number of kits reached 1,001. This year's goal was 1,500. Since school kits are the most requested MCC item from many countries, Park View members pray that their experience may encourage other congregations to brighten more children's days in school by filling a few more bags.

Gordon Zook and Dorothy Logan attend Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

## Learning through 'faith'

By LAURA CAMPBELL

Having just recently passed the one year "anniversary" of our arrival here in Montenegro it feels like a good time to reflect on our journey so far. We have been present at celebrations of birthdays, baptisms, and holidays as well as being privileged to share in the grief of a passing church member. Steve has faithfully attended the weekly "brothers' meeting" which serves as a church council, as well as doing some teaching, preaching and discipling. I have been blessed to attend the "sisters' meetings" which are more informal, and take place about twice a month.

Our main goal during our current term is language learning. We have a language tutor, Vera (which means 'faith'), who comes to our home twice a week and teaches us for approximately an hour each while the other parent watches the girls. Vera is a dear sister from church so it is

an added benefit to be able to talk with her about spiritual things. During the transition time between Steve's lessons and my own, Ruth and Esther love to visit with Vera. In addition to the lessons themselves we have homework assignments to complete between classes.

Other ways we learn about the language and culture include grocery shopping and watching TV or movies, either in English with Serbian subtitles or in Serbian—shows aimed at the girls age level are perfect for our language comprehension. Perhaps one of the greatest tools is attending church where we hear Serbian in both the songs and the teaching time, as well as in communicating with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Having the girls with us brings both challenges and opportunities. Sometimes the girls' schedule conflicts with an important church event, but on the flip side, some



Laura Campbell (left) with Ruth, language tutor Vera with Esther Campbell. Photo courtesy of author

people are more open to us because of our energetic and outgoing children.

Please pray that we will be fluent in the language by the end of this term and ready to fully engage in God's work here.



Laura serves in Montenegro with her husband Steve and daughters Ruth and Esther.

## Signs of Life team visits Maranatha School for the Deaf

By **CHRIS HEATWOLE MOORE**

**E**ight members of Signs of Life Fellowship (SLF) visited Maranatha School for the Deaf (MSD) and the Deaf Bible Church in Top Hill, Jamaica, June 14-26.



MaryBeth Moore (center) with students at Maranatha. The *Partners* team from Signs of Life conducted a seven-day Bible school there. Photo courtesy of author

A congregation in formation in the Southern District of Virginia Mennonite Conference, Signs of Life conducts worship and teaching in American Sign Language (ASL). All eight members of our team can communicate in ASL, a first for a short-term mission team to Maranatha.

Our team conducted a seven-day Bible school on the book of James with the Maranatha students. We focused on life application of the scripture.

In the evenings, we spent time getting to know the dorm students and some people from the local Deaf community.

On Sundays, we were blessed to see the Gospel presented in both Jamaican Sign Language and in “country signs.” We were warmly welcomed into the fellowship of the Deaf Bible Church.

Our team was pleased to be shown around the Ridge community where MSD is located and surprised to see how the hearing people in Ridge integrate the deaf members into community life. MSD is a gathering place for deaf and hearing alike.

This cross-cultural fellowship gave the Spirit the opportunity to encourage three ministries:

The students and staff of MSD met American believers who could communicate with them directly and brought some new ways to approach the scriptures.

The church leaders were affirmed in the faithfulness and beauty of their inter-generational worship and teaching.

Our SLF team was refreshed by the enthusiasm of our Jamaican counterparts and by seeing the Gospel spread among the Deaf community in another country.

We were all reminded that the Spirit still blesses mustard seed ministries. We hope and pray that this will be the beginning of a long-term relationship of cross-cultural Kingdom building and encouragement.



Chris serves in church leadership at Signs of Life Fellowship, Staunton, Va.

## Family returns to Belize on long-awaited mission trip

By **BASIL, DIANE and RACHEL MARIN** as told to **GLORIA L. LEHMAN**

**T**he Marin family traveled to Belize in June on a long-awaited missions trip, connecting with churches and visiting family members.

It had been ten years since they were in Belize, so Rachel, 16, was both excited and nervous about seeing family and about going out of the US. However, when she arrived, all her concerns left her. She belonged!

Basil, Diane and Rachel connected with the Ladyville Baptist Church in several ways, especially ministering to the church on Sunday morning and evening in song and with preaching the Word. They also attended a Bible study and helped to celebrate Pastor Westby’s birthday.

As they visited with friends in the community, they led a young woman to the Lord. Later, they also led one of Diane’s

nieces to the Lord while visiting with Diane’s family. A granddaughter of a long-time friend also gave her heart to the Lord. Basil and Diane were instrumental in helping to resolve a longstanding division between a friend and the church.

The second weekend, Basil, Diane, and Rachel were in Orange Walk Town, worshipping with the Jesus’ Deaf Church, with VMM worker Nancy Marshall as pastor.

Diane describes it this way: “We felt God in a simple service with no sound but the voice of the interpreter and the occasional laughter of our own voices. All the songs were in sign language; the young people chose a song and led it. We were able to sing some of the songs as they signed.

Nancy gave a powerful message in power point about faith and trusting God. Nancy invited us to her home; we had a



The Jesus’ Deaf Church members, after Sunday worship service. Photo: Nancy Marshall

wonderful meal and fellowship with her and some of the church members.

Pastor Chon, a local Belizean pastor, joined us for dessert. Basil knew him in earlier years.”

Basil concludes, “Thank you for partnering with us to make this Belize mission trip possible. People’s lives and our lives are fuller and richer for it.”



# LAC library project helps students 'starving to read'

By LOIS KING

What does it take to build a library? In the weeks following my return from an eight-week VMM assignment at Lezha Academic Center last winter, I soon began to find out. While in Albania, as I tutored students and supported the teachers and staff, I noticed that very few students were reading or carrying around library books. Forty years in public education had made me come to expect the presence of books. The availability of good books is so basic to learning. I shared my concern with LAC Board members Don and Rita Steiner at my "debriefing" in March, and the library project was born.



Lois King (second from right) tutors students in English literature in the new library.

Books are so available here that we take them for granted. Personal shelves, Booksavers, thrift shops, libraries of retired teachers, caring friends who purchased new books - all contributed to our supply. LAC English teacher Kaitlyn Bontrager was thrilled about the project and promised to donate books she had brought with her to Albania. "The kids are starving to read!" she added.

EMHS librarian, Julianne Ross, helped by going to online network of librarians and obtaining thousands of donated library cards and pockets, no longer needed in computerized libraries.

Books, cards and pockets are weighty. Members of the Balkan tour group in May and others who attended LAC's first graduation in June volunteered to take along extra luggage packed with books and supplies. Other books were mailed, postage funded by church and family friends.

Arriving in Lezhe in early July to teach summer school, Eunice Showalter, a



Lois King, Linda Miller, and Eunice Showalter organize the new library materials at Lezha Academic Center. Photos courtesy of Lois King

fellow VMM worker, and I found a corner of LAC's main floor all-purpose room newly equipped with bookshelves and arranged for the library. With the help of Linda Miller, another summer school volunteer from Chesapeake, we spent many after school hours organizing, carding and cataloging the hundreds of books gathered there. It was a joy to see interested students gathering around and requesting books. LAC's library had become a reality!

If you want to contribute books or delivery money for LAC's library, please contact VMM. As the school grows, it is our wish to see the library and its "hungry" readers continue to grow as well.



Lois taught summer school and tutored students at LAC along with her work on the new school library.

## Preparing hearts, completing projects

By EUNICE SHOWALTER

Where in the world is Lezhe, Albania, I asked? Now I know. Many air miles later I have found an active, growing, changing country. Living on the fifth floor of a building gives a bird's view of activities and city noises. Deserted half-finished buildings mark a project begun, but never completed. Palm trees, tasseling rows of corn, tomato plants heavy with red fruit, and a cow pastured nearby make a quilt of life unique to this country.

Next door a tumbled block pattern of red, gray, and white pavers is laid by a hardworking family. The cement mixer begins turning at sun rise and the whole family carries, trowels, shovels cement and

spreads a gravel grout over it all. Before the first load of cement was mixed, a drainage ditch was dug by hand with pick and shovel along the driveway. Women and children loaded chunks of old road cement, dirt, and rock into a wheelbarrow, working together to make a home of which they can be proud.

This is similar to what is happening at the church in Albania. It is hard labor to prepare the hearts of people to receive the Gospel. Many daily life contacts sow seeds and prepare the listener. A solid consistent foundation of preparation is needed or the structure may fall apart and have no lasting strength. But a well-prepared heart becomes a part of the final growing pattern of believers who spread across the world.



Eunice Showalter teaches English during summer school at LAC. Photo: Lois King

I came here to add my small piece of the pattern to the quilt being created in the community of Lezhe, Albania.



Eunice Showalter taught summer school and worked on the new library project. She attends Trisels Mennonite Church.

## “Go and play some more!”

By KENT KAUFFMAN

I remember when there was nothing more important than play. When school was out, our favorite game was block tag and we would play for hours on a Saturday afternoon. As an adult, I find it easy to exchange most of my leisure time for additional working hours, children’s athletics, and self induced projects. But to what end?

There is a quote from Thomas Merton that I have appreciated, “What is serious to men is often trivial in the sight of God. What in God might appear to us as play is

perhaps what he takes most seriously.”

Highland Retreat and Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center may be considered trivial to some. Nice places with a swimming pool, courts and fields, camping, lodges, and hiking trails. They would be trivial if people met all of their relational and spiritual needs in the context of everyday settings. But we do not.

When walking the grounds of Highland I observe laughter, worship, story-telling, meditation, friendly competition, and deep



Dennis Brubaker swims with granddaughter Lydia during the Lindale Mennonite Church campout. Courtesy of author

conversations. Perhaps it sounds different if we say that we are in the business of church formation, relationship building, discipleship and Christian evangelism.

We are, and it sure looks like play. Go play some more!

Kent is Executive Director of Highland Retreat.



A camper at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center enjoys the zip line. Courtesy of author

## Mennonite camps make an impact

By BOB BRISCOE

Why does camp have such a big impact on kids? There are a lot of answers to that question. Some say that when kids are out of their normal routine, they become more teachable. Others point out that the “temporary community” of camp breaks down barriers and allows kids to ask questions they would otherwise hold inside.

There are many reasons that camp is special; however, there are four things about the camp environment that make it especially powerful in a spiritual sense: God’s creation, God’s Word, God’s people, and God’s Spirit.

God’s creation draws our attention to the Creator, God’s Word penetrates our hearts and minds, God’s people offer encouragement

and support, and God’s Holy Spirit moves us to a point of decision and action.

Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center’s Kaleidoscope Camp and Highland Retreat are places where the Holy Spirit is at work. They are places where God’s Word is taught and caught, and places where God’s creation and God’s people are proclaiming the wonders and works of God. As a result, camps are places where young and old alike give their hearts to the Lord.

We think that is why camp has such a big impact! When was the last time you came to camp?

Bob is Executive Director of WCRC.

## Congregational Resource Center

### RESOURCES FOR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/WINTER

The Congregational Resource Center, located in the Eastern Mennonite Seminary building on Smith Avenue, Harrisonburg, is open to ALL congregations of Virginia Mennonite Conference and their members at no cost! Library cards for the Center are free. Simply request one. You will find several thousand resources for your child, youth, and adult ministries, worship planning and special events.

### SEASONAL OPTIONS INCLUDE:

**Come All Ye Faithful: Three Christmas Plays** by Frank Ramirez

**The Advent Instructor: Reflections on Christmas Symbolism** by Kenneth A. Mortonson

**Counting the Days: Twenty-Five Ways** by Wezeman & Fournier (arts, foods, games, reflections)

**Celebrating the Advent/Christmas Season** by Anne Neufeld Rupp (sections for teachers, superintendents, families, pastors & worship committees)

**Christmas Ideas for Families** by Phyllis Pellman Good & Merle Good

**Joy to the World! A variety collection of six Christmas programs for the church family** by L.G. & Annie Enscoe

**Christmas on Stage: An Anthology of Royalty-Free Christmas Plays for All Ages** edited by Theodore Zapel

**Two bookcases** full of group study options as well!

These and many other useful resources are available for browsing Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Linda Alley, Director of the Center, is often present to assist you and suggest options. Or you may call with questions or specific needs at 540.432.4219. Resources will be mailed to any VMC church. Email: [crc@emu.edu](mailto:crc@emu.edu).

Hope to see you soon!



# OCTOBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.</p>	<p>1 Rafael Tartari asks us to pray for the awakening and maturation of the people of God in Lezhe, Albania, that the Lord will increasingly use the church to make a difference in lives. The congregation is seeking a larger worship space.</p>	<p>2 Please pray for Vince &amp; LaVonne Ramella in Istog, Kosovo. They are diving into learning the language and customs of their new surroundings, and helping their sons to adjust. Ask God to give them peace during this time.</p>	<p>3 Today on EMU’s campus, there is an emphasis on Mission &amp; Service with mission agency representatives, round table discussions at lunch and mission stories in the coffeehouse this evening. Pray that God’s call will be heard loud and clear.</p>	<p>4 The Virginia Relief Sale opens this evening. Pray that it will be successful as funds are raised to meet human need around the world while providing an opportunity for fellowship and fun.</p>	<p>5 Watch the VMM website for Penny Power totals by congregation. Thank you to all congregations and groups that emphasized Penny Power and contributed coins and paper bills along with matching gifts so that the goal is achieved.</p>	
<p>6 Today Grace &amp; Yugo Prasetyo return to Southeast Asia where they serve in a slum community, reaching children and adults in a variety of ways. Pray for their safe travel and for their renewed strength for the work to which God has called them.</p>	<p>7 Pray for Earl Monroe, pastor of Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, as he equips members and friends from all walks of life to learn, to worship, and to work together for the glory of God.</p>	<p>8 In Lushnje, Albania, Allen Umble relates warmly with the villagers, sharing the Gospel through love and care and Bible studies. Pray for him in the various roles that he fills including team leader of the Albanian Mennonite Mission Team.</p>	<p>9 Pray for wisdom for Isaac Villegas and the Chapel Hill (N.C.) congregation as they engage in ministry to all people including the homeless and prisoners.</p>	<p>10 This evening, <i>Parents of Missionaries</i> gather for fellowship, sharing about their missionary children and praying for them. Thank God that parents support their children in their call to serve Christ in another country; may He bless them richly.</p>	<p>11 Thank God for the new life of Liane Sarai, born to David &amp; Rebekka Stutzman on September 4 in Bammental, Germany. Pray for Liane, for big brother Immanuel and for David &amp; Rebekka as they grow as a family.</p>	<p>12 In northern India, Michael &amp; Ruth have a ministry of prayer for the people they encounter as they walk to the market or to the prayer house. Ask God to enable them for every situation as they are faithful witnesses.</p>
<p>13 Pray for Willis Hunsberger, pastor of Concord Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Tenn., as he provides leadership to a community bound by faith in Jesus Christ and provides care to the underserved while remaining true to our beliefs.</p>	<p>14 Micah Riddle is in the first year of high school in Carbonara, Italy, facing lots of challenges and rewards as he relates to fellow students and teachers. Ask God to give him courage to face any situation with peace.</p>	<p>15 On Tuesdays and Fridays, Jay &amp; Sheri Hartzler assist with the children’s activities in the Roma village, Tigmandru, Romania. The children are learning to sing and to make music in a variety of ways. Ask God to bless everyone as they work together.</p>	<p>16 Pray for Milford &amp; Carolyn Lyndaker, Crest Hill, (Wardensville, W.Va.), as they provide leadership to a 5th Quarter supper, hosting players from both teams following the local high school football game.</p>	<p>17 Steve &amp; Bethany Horst with daughter Anjali have full days in the bustling city of Bangkok. Ask God to give them insight for the young adults they disciple. May all draw near to Christ.</p>	<p>18 This evening the committees of Virginia Mennonite Missions meet for processing decisions and tomorrow the Board meets in their quarterly meeting. May the guiding Spirit be very present in all that is said and done.</p>	<p>19 The Men’s Convention of Jamaica is held today. Pray that the men of the Jamaica Mennonite Church will be strong role models and consistent leaders in their homes, community and congregations.</p>
<p>20 This month, Partners in Mission participant, Lisa Mast arrived in Lezhe, Albania to serve as music teacher and director at LAC. Thank God for her availability for this role, and ask for His continued insight and strength for Lisa each day.</p>	<p>21 Dini Shahini serves in the leadership of the Mennonite church in Lezhe, Albania, and makes connections between the church and the students at Lezha Academic Center. May God give him the wisdom and patience that is needed for any situation.</p>	<p>22 When Justin Rittenhouse enters the classroom at Lezha Academic Center, he is ready for the adventures of teaching high schoolers—problems to solve, directions for academic and life decisions and holding Truth before them every day. Pray for him.</p>	<p>23 Pray for Del Glick, pastor of Washington Community Fellowship, as he provides spirit-led leadership to a multi-denominational evangelical congregation in Washington DC.</p>	<p>24 Pray for congregations as they plan for the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons. These can bring renewal to hearts and minds, expressing our faith with Scriptures and songs.</p>	<p>25 Pray for Byron Pellecer, church planter of Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista, as he and his family anticipates relocation to Kansas to plant a church.</p>	<p>26 Pray for Nancy Hopkins-Garriss, Executive Director of Pleasant View Homes as she provides compassionate leadership to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>27 Pray for Ron Copeland, pastor of Early Church, Harrisonburg as he provides Christ-like care for the least and lowly—those who are sick, hungry, naked, homeless, oppressed, the stranger, the widow, and the orphan.</p>	<p>28 In Carbonara, Italy, Isaiah Riddle attends school, plays with his friends, and participates in activities at Centro Koinonia in Bari. Pray for him as he interacts with both classmates and teachers.</p>	<p>29 Pray for Harold Bergey, overseer of Eastern District, as he provides missional leadership.</p>	<p>30 Pray for Owen &amp; Ruth Ann Burkholder as they experience a time of refreshment and joy after completing 18 years of leadership in Virginia Mennonite Conference with compassion, distinction, and selflessness.</p>	<p>31 Thank God for the saints who have ‘gone before’ and who have given us our legacy of faith—in our families and in our churches.</p>	<p><b>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”</b> 1 John 1:1-2 (NIV)</p>	



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

## Announcements

**Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center Music Weekend** will be held Oct. 25-27. This is a retreat for adults who like to sing choral music. Participants will rehearse and prepare several choral selections within the theme *Giving Glory to God in Song* and perform them in a concert at Warwick River Mennonite Church. It's a great weekend of music, fellowship, and renewal. Marvin Miller will be our director for this fun event. For more information, call (757) 566-2256 or visit our website at [www.wcrc.info](http://www.wcrc.info)

**Middle school youth** in grades 6-8 and adult sponsors are invited from all VMC churches to the **Middle School Retreat** at Smith Mountain Lake, September 28-29. The theme is "The Me I Was Meant to Be," presented by speaker Lesley Francisco. Join us for a weekend of worship, faith stories, energetic activities and friendship-building! Learn more and register at: [virginiaconference.org/ministries/youth-ministry/middle-school-retreat](http://virginiaconference.org/ministries/youth-ministry/middle-school-retreat)

Come join friends of **Highland Retreat** at the **Annual Banquet** on Tuesday, October 29, from 6:15-8 p.m. in the main campus dining hall of Eastern Mennonite School. Enjoy a delicious meal followed by an engaging and informative program. Child care (ages 4-12) including pizza dinner is provided. A freewill offering will be taken to support Highland Retreat. For more information and reservations, visit [highlandretreat.org](http://highlandretreat.org), call (540) 705-0554, or e-mail [info@highlandretreat.org](mailto:info@highlandretreat.org) by October 18.

**Don't miss the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Praise** with men's voices in a *cappella* harmony held on Sunday, November 3, at 4 p.m., Eastern Mennonite School auditorium, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg. Each ensemble will sing and a mass chorus will be directed by Jared Stutzman, EMHS music director. Offering will benefit Deaf ministries in Belize. For more information, send to [gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org](mailto:gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org) or call (540) 434-9727 or (800) 707-5535.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

**Park View Mennonite Church** seeks a half-time Office Manager who will focus on general management of the church office. Hours are 9-12, Monday-Friday. Looking for someone with significant office experience, with a high level of organizational and relational skills. Good pay scale. No fringe benefits. Interested? Contact pastor Phil Kniss at (540) 560-1800 or [phil@pvmchurch.org](mailto:phil@pvmchurch.org). Full job description: <https://app.box.com/pvmc-office-manager>



**Perspectives™**  
 on the World Christian Movement

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45 p.m.  
 January 7 to April 22, 2014  
 Grace Covenant Church, Harrisonburg, Va.  
 Contact Carol Tobin:  
[perspectives@vmmissions.org](mailto:perspectives@vmmissions.org)

### UPCOMING TOURS

Registration is now open for the upcoming **Nazareth/Bethlehem Work Group**, May 2-19, 2014, sponsored by VMM as part of the *Partners* program.

The work group will engage in work projects at Nazareth Village and at Diyar Consortium, a ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem. The group will be co-led by Dorothy Jean Weaver, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and Harold N. Miller, pastor, Trissels Mennonite Church.

Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Dorothy Jean Weaver: (540) 432-4276 or [weaverdj@emu.edu](mailto:weaverdj@emu.edu).

## Walk Where Jesus Walked



12 day trip to Israel  
 March 18 - 29, 2014

Israel - *Caesarea, Nazareth Village, Sea of Galilee, Jericho, Qumran, Masada, Bethlehem, Jerusalem*

Optional 3 day Jordan extension - *Jerash, Mt. Nebo, Petra*

Contact: Dave & Joyce Eshleman  
 540-421-1651  
[DEshleman1@comcast.net](mailto:DEshleman1@comcast.net)