

Egypt's big role in God's story

By **FATHER JOE GOLDSMITH**
and **ANGIE ATEF**

Angie, a delightful Coptic Christian and myself, a young Catholic priest, were brought together by a two-week VMM learning tour in Egypt called “Walking the Nile.”

While questions of the president, the economy, and the upcoming demonstrations loomed in the foreground, Angie and I often shared the backseat of our microbus and turned our conversation to Christian history.

The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church divided in the year 451 AD over an argument about the nature of Christ. In spite of this split, which itself has been theologically reconciled, we share the same treasury of our Christian roots and the more I think

about it, I realize that Christianity itself is stamped with the mark of Egypt.

From Egypt, we have theologians like Athanasius who presided over the early



An old Coptic custom is to have a cross tattooed on one's forearm. Angie received hers when she was a little girl, which is typical.

councils and whose hand gave us the Nicene Creed. From Egypt, we have the desert

mothers and fathers like Anthony who lived their faith in radical devotion to God. From Egypt we have the most significant school of Scripture study in the early Church and its founding is credited to St. Mark.

When I asked Angie what she thought about St. Mark, she responded, “To me personally, I owe him my life. Without him I would never know anything about Jesus Christ.” The selfsame Gospel writer Mark went to Egypt to bring the Good News. He was martyred in Alexandria and the legacy of his leadership continues to this day. The chair of the Coptic Pope is called the Throne of St. Mark.

Although the Bible only tells us that Joseph was instructed in a dream to pack up and go, the Egyptian stories and customs abound of where the holy family visited and stayed. This includes

six months in Angie's hometown, called Il-Qosseyia. As a child she used to ask her parents, “Did they stay at our grandparents house?”

Our group spent time reflecting on the holy irony that Jesus himself went back to Egypt. His own people could never forget Egypt not only because of the Exodus but also because God commanded the celebration of the event with a sacred meal, the Passover.

Indeed their memory was stamped with the adventures of Moses and the incredible story of Joseph and the great

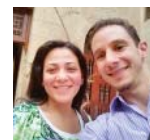


“Holy family window”—This is a typical stained-glass representation of the holy family traveling through Egypt. One tradition holds that Salome accompanied them. It comes from the Church of St. Mina in Beni Suef. Photos courtesy of Joe Goldsmith

father figure, Israel. Trace all the way back to the book of Genesis and we see that Abraham and Sarah too spent time in Egypt—in search of food.

To know the story of Egypt is to know the whole Christian story at once—a story of personal calling, of provision, and of the promise of salvation.

Although Christians number only ten percent of the population in Egypt, Angie has a deep sense of pride. Her roots touch St. Mark, they touch Jesus and his faithful parents, and they touch the great figures of the Old Testament. Knowing all of these things, Angie said to me with a twinkle of hope in her eyes, “Egypt still has some role in God's work of salvation.”



Father Joe is a Catholic priest at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Angie Atef is an Egyptian Coptic Christian from Cairo.

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Recognizing God in the big and the small

By SARAH BIXLER



This month, I begin Master of Divinity studies at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS). My husband, Ben, and our three children have moved to New Jersey to embark on a new adventure in following God's call. Prayer has given us the courage to take this leap of faith, with God's reassurance of being in both the big decisions and little steps along the way.

My four-year seminary discernment process was interrupted by a crisis. Our daughter was born prematurely and we prayed for her to be healed physically. She wasn't. This disappointment caused me to put up my guard with God, reducing my personal prayers to generalities. *If I don't ask God to do anything in particular, I can't be let down again.*

While discerning where to apply, I scheduled a visit to PTS. I emailed their professor of youth, church, and culture requesting a face-to-face conversation. Well-known in youth ministry circles, Kenda Creasy Dean is a dynamic speaker and insightful author. "I realize your time is in high demand from a variety of people," I wrote apologetically, not expecting a reply. Furthest from my mind was the idea that God would have a hand in this little step. *God, do whatever you want with that email. If you even care about it, that is.*

Within 30 minutes, Kenda responded, "Hi, Sarah! I would love to meet with you." She explained that she was inviting her Mennonite Ph.D. student, Nate Stucky, to join us for coffee. I couldn't believe it. *Are you here, God?*

The next week I was working outside and laid my keys on the truck bumper so I wouldn't drop them. Five hours too late I remembered them, long after Ben had driven the truck to his seminary classes. I searched the driveway and our quarter-mile of road in vain. Keys to my house, vehicle and Virginia Mennonite Conference Center were on that ring! *God, I really doubt whether you care about this. But it would really mean a lot if you would help me find my keys.*



To my surprise, Ben noticed on EMU's website that a set of keys had been found. My keys rode five miles on our truck's bumper, over rolling hills and railroad tracks, finally falling off in the library parking lot. *Okay God, are you trying to prove something?*

Through these surprises, I recovered a deep sense of God's desire to be present in the small steps along the way, as well as the big decisions. I discovered that God can do immeasurably more than I can ask or imagine, especially when God is working within me.

I pray that Virginia Mennonite Conference will sense God at work in both the big decisions and small steps to come. To God be the glory!

Sarah Bixler concluded her role as Conference Coordinator on August 22. She now attends Princeton Theological Seminary where she is studying for her Master of Divinity with a focus on Christian education.

YOU ARE INVITED

**Executive Conference
Minister commissioning**

All are invited to a service commissioning Clyde G. Kratz as VMC's Executive Conference Minister on September 15 at 4 p.m. The service will be held in the sanctuary at Weavers Mennonite Church, 2501 Rawley Pike, Harrisonburg, Va.

FRATERNAL CONFERENCE NEWS

Pastor of Capaci, Italy, congregation dies at 61

Virginia Mennonite Missions is deeply grieved over the sudden death of Pastor Francesco Sapienza, age 61, pastor of the Capaci, Italy, congregation, our VMM partners. Francesco became the pastor of the Capaci Mennonite Church (planted by VMM missionaries Floyd and Janet Blosser) after the Blossers left Italy to return to the US. Please pray for his wife Helen (formerly from England), the Capaci church family, and the Italian Mennonite Church as they grieve this tragic loss. Pray for the Italian Mennonite Church leaders as they discern steps forward for leadership at Capaci.

Financial Focus			
Virginia Mennonite Conference		• • • Sept. 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013	
budget		\$250,943	
expenses		\$234,626	
income		\$199,951	
investments		\$8,390	
net		\$-26,285	
Virginia Mennonite Missions		• • • Sept. 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013	
Mission Fund	Special Projects		
total revenue	expenses	total revenue	expenses
\$504,453	\$619,936	\$1,348,481	\$1,109,148

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First graduation at Lezha Academic Center, Bible camp and summer school follow

By CARLA ZOOK

The constant rains of winter are over. The occasional downpours and showers are a pleasant respite from the heat. The plants are growing and thriving in the school yard. An electric mower cuts the grass nicely, using several huge extension cords. The power outages are less than in winter, giving the generator a rest.

Principal Klementina Shahini conducted interviews for next year's teaching staff, both American and Albanian. For the past two years, she wore the hat of the guidance counselor too, helping the college



Carla Zook and two of her English language students. Welcome, Cindy Moyers!

bound seniors, especially those wanting to attend schools in the US. A new counselor is starting who will bless both staff and students in many ways.



Seniors enjoyed the American custom of caps and gowns for graduation. Sam Scaggs, pastor in Eastern District of VMC, was the commencement speaker. Photos courtesy of author

LAC's first graduation went off without a hitch. Caps, gowns, and lots of decorations arrived from the US, generously donated. Sam Scaggs was our main speaker and additional comments were given by board member Elaine Moyer, Principal Klementina, and senior class president Xhild.

As I was preparing to leave in June, many things were still happening. LAC began a week long Bible/English camp. Approximately 50 students were divided

into camps. Activities included memory verses, games, singing, and lunch. When camp was completed, three teachers returned to their families. Even though we have all left the school, it will not be quiet there. The building will be readied for a larger student body. Summer classes will be offered. Then before long, new and returning staff will arrive. There is never a dull

moment at LAC!

In thinking back over my time at LAC it was truly amazing. Even as an experienced teacher I was stretched in innumerable ways. I'm sure I learned as much as any of the students. I hope I was able to contribute as much as I gained in my six months there. I will always be grateful for my experience.



Carla taught English classes at Lezha Academic Center from January to June 2013.

Calling all bicycle enthusiasts, small and tall! You are invited to the 16th annual Bike Shenandoah on Saturday, September 21 at Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg, Va. Enjoy rides of 5, 15, 30, 62 or 100 miles in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley.

16th annual
bike shenandoah
 century, metric century, 30 mile, 15 mile, and 5 mile rides for all ages and abilities
september 21, 2013
 ride for relief & development
 supporting: bridge of hope • virginia mennonite missions
 mennomedia • mennonite central committee
bikeshenandoah.org
 901 parkwood drive, harrisonburg, va
 bikeshen@vmmissions.org (540) 434-9727
 bikeshenandoah thanks our 2013 diamond sponsor: **Everence**

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.

PARTNERS OPPORTUNITY

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“It didn’t feel like a gathering of older people...”

Reflections on Conference Assembly, July 25-27, 2013 at Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Va.

By OWEN BURKHOLDER

That second-hand quote from a younger adult who attended VMC Assembly as a first-time delegate indicates that indeed, participation in God’s kingdom is timeless. The speakers, workshop leaders, and testifiers engaged us with the wonder that God has been, is, and will be at work through us.

Twenty-four congregations accepted the invitation to make sign-posters about how they point to Christ’s kingdom. And the hallways at Eastern Mennonite School

were filled

with display tables from many agencies doing the work of the church beyond the congregation.

We chose to illustrate the Mennonite Church USA Purposeful Plan “Holistic Christian Witness” priority with stories from

Delegates enjoyed a time of table discussion and fellowship. Pictured are James Akerson (left) and Ben Risser. Photo: Jon Trotter

congregations, testimonies from young adults, and workshops featuring ways we are attempting to be signs of the presence of Jesus in our world.

So, did participants “get it?” Here’s a note from Harold Miller, pastor, Trissels Mennonite Church:



(left) Lawrence Yoder led a workshop on “Jesus’ Healing Ministry and Ours,” a focus on healing prayer and action using Jesus’ example. Photo: Jon Trotter



Rebekka Stutzman, VMM/Mission Network worker in Germany, gave a moving testimony of God at work in their context, particularly with young people. Photo: Galen Lehman

means that our delegate sessions were permeated with the atmosphere of a missions festival!

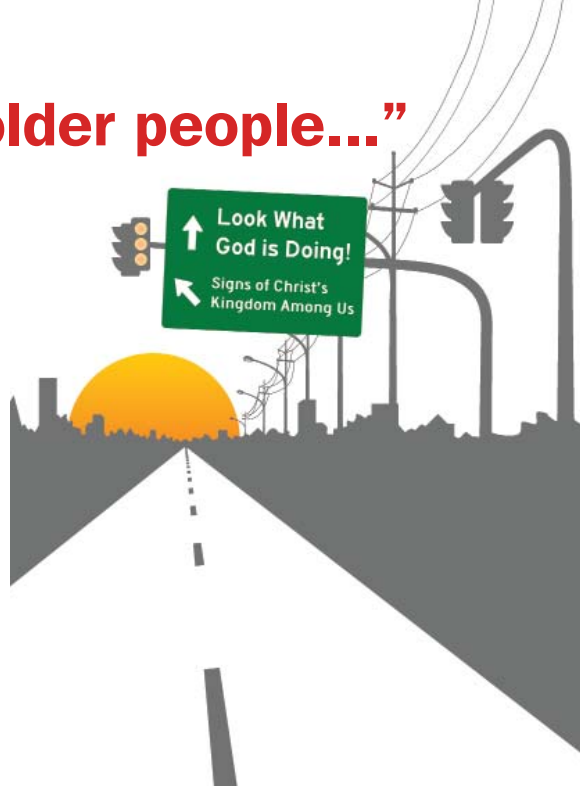
Interspersed throughout our sessions devoted to the business of the church were testimonies of missions workers. One sensed a focus on God throughout the whole Assembly: God in the center; almost an awe at what “God is doing.”

I was particularly struck by the stories that young adults told of mission around the world (in Delhi, India; in Lezhe, Albania) as they listened to God’s dreams and then joined in, as they grew to know God more (not more about God) and had their mission activity flow out of a relationship. And I was struck by the young adults who told their story of mission across the street (at Early Church and Ridgeway Mennonite Church).

“My wife and I had the privilege of serving as delegates to the Virginia Mennonite Assembly 2013. Both Virginia Mennonite Conference (VMC) and Virginia Mennonite Missions (VMM) sponsored the Assembly which



Loren Horst, president, Virginia Mennonite Missions, brought the message Thursday. Photo: Galen Lehman



The evening worship services were glorious! Our song leaders were a group of amazingly-gifted young adults: The Walking Roots Band. Loren Horst preached on Thursday evening, noting that “when God gets excited about something, he always involves us.”

On Friday evening, God spoke a word to us through Nelson Okanya, someone born “in a good Mennonite family”—an African Mennonite family!

The worship service concluded with the dramatic picture of commissioned workers

for VMM and VMC standing in our midst holding candles and the congregation stretching out arms of blessing and prayer. The moment was capped with a spontaneous “Praise God from Whom!” Then God smiled and topped even that with a perfect summer evening



Chris Riddle, VMM worker in Italy, shared at the Mennonite Men’s breakfast Saturday morning. Photo: Galen Lehman



Outgoing Conference Minister Owen and his wife RuthAnn Burkholder were recognized by the leadership of Conference. Serving in his role since 1996, Owen completed his service August 31. Photo: Jon Trotter



Outgoing Conference Coordinator Sarah Bixler was recognized for her role. She ended her service with VMC on August 22. Photo: Jon Trotter



Nelson Okanya, president, Eastern Mennonite Missions, spoke Friday evening on "Participating in the vision of God." Photo: Galen Lehman

on the front lawn of Eastern Mennonite School as we enjoyed a *Taste of Missions*, sampling foods from the countries where VMM workers are serving.

Both of the groups who sponsored the Assembly: our area conference and our missions organization, are very healthy. Not perfect! But nonetheless, Signs of Christ's Kingdom Among Us."



Barbra Gautcher (center) led "Finding Treasure" art camp for children. Photo: Jon Trotter

To Harold's note, I add a word of gratitude: to Barbara Gautcher for the *Finding Treasure art camp* that captivated the interest of children; to Carmen Schrock-Hurst and Phil Kniss for their evocative Bible studies; to each of the workshop leaders for highlighting an aspect of how we may partner in God's work; to everyone who contributed \$4,668.50 in the offerings; and finally, to the VMC/VMM staff who made it work from the background.



Michael and Ruth, VMM/EMM workers in South Asia, gave a testimony of prayerful vision and God's work among Muslim people. Photo: Jon Trotter



Fraternal delegates Navin and Sunita Benny, of MCTT, brought greetings and a prayer Thursday evening. Photo: Jon Trotter



The Walking Roots Band led worship music both evenings. Photo: Galen Lehman

A DAILY PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

*God, I pray that, according to the riches of your glory,
you may grant that the church be strengthened
in its inner being with power through your Spirit,
and that Christ may dwell in its heart through faith,
as it is being rooted and grounded in love.*

*I pray that the church may have the power to comprehend,
with all the saints,
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
so that it may be filled with all your fullness, O God.*

Amen.

From Ephesians 3:16-19, adapted by Phil Kniss



Owen is the outgoing Virginia Mennonite Conference Minister (August 31, 2013).



Participants reach out in a prayer of blessing for those commissioned for service Friday evening. Photo: Jon Trotter

Uncovering history

By JOAN DAGGETT

When you start digging, you never know what you might uncover. To volunteers restoring the Breneman-Turner Mill, that is an understatement! The historic grist mill, an off-site property of the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, is located two miles north of Harrisonburg, off Route 42.

In 2009, a portion of the old Breneman Church gravel road gave way over the mill's tail race allowing dirt and gravel to fill and block the race. Our deed requires the roadway to remain open for agricultural traffic, so the adventure began!



The historic stone bridge at the mill.

During the initial excavation of the roadbed and race, a unique log and stone bridge structure was uncovered. Intrigued by this find, our volunteers stopped their work. Historians from James Madison University were consulted and deemed the structure a historic site that needed to be preserved. With a preservation plan in place, work resumed and the six by eight foot 6,300 pound stone slab was lifted from the tail race to allow for excavation and construction of bridge abutments.

This spring, the stone slab was carefully lowered back into its original position and a vehicle bridge constructed above and beyond the stone bridge. A walking bridge allows visitors to see the historic stone bridge.



A worker guides the lifting of a stone slab weighing over three tons to allow for more excavation. Photos courtesy of author

The Mill was built circa 1800 by Mennonite farmer, Abraham Breneman, and last operated by J. Howard Turner, a member of the Church of the Brethren. Visit the mill during our open house tours, Sept. 21 and Oct. 19, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit ybmhc.org/btmill to learn more about this historic jewel in the Valley.

Joan is Executive Director of Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center.

Woodland Park homes dedicated

By MAUREEN PEARSON

The three homes collectively known as Woodland Park on the campus of VMRC were dedicated and named in May. VMRC opened Woodland Park in January to offer complete living care in a home environment.

Showalter House is named in honor of the HDH and MC Showalter families. "These two families have contributed innumerable hours of time and financial resources over the years to make VMRC a leader in aging services," said Les Helmuth, executive director of the VMRC Foundation.

Yoder House is named in honor of Ronald E. and Shirley B. Yoder for their commitment to build homes which provide privacy, offer dignity and restore hope. Ron's leadership and vision as VMRC President and CEO made the first phase of Woodland Park possible.

Warsack House is named in honor of Elsie Warsack for her generous estate donation to VMRC.

The names of the homes were announced at three separate dedications held in the respective homes. Memory albums containing photos and short biographies of residents, shahbazim and major donors were unveiled and given to major donors along with albums to be in each house.

"These homes could not have been built had it not been for the vision, leadership and financial commitments of the persons for whom they are named and the donors who shared so generously," said Les Helmuth. "The legacies of these honorees will be compassionate, loving care in a home environment to persons who never thought they could return home."

Each Woodland Park home houses up to 10 persons. Designed as culturally normal homes, Woodland Park offers private rooms and baths, a hearth, den, courtyard and open kitchen for family-style meals.




Les Helmuth, executive director of the VMRC Foundation announces the name of a Woodland Park home as Lisa Hajdasz, Woodland Park guide, (center) and Melissa Fortner, Woodland Park project director, unveil the house sign.

Each house is approximately 6,500 square feet in size.

The homes are fully licensed as nursing homes and are staffed by certified nursing assistants who have additional training in CPR, first aid, house operations, culinary skills and safe food handling. People living in Woodland Park will receive support from a clinical support team made up of nurses, social workers, activities coordinators, therapists, nutritionists and a physician.

Maureen is Director of Communications for Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

SEPTEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Rodney & Eve, Maya, Micah and Jayden Knepp, returned to Jamaica this past week for their third year of service at the Maranatha School for the Deaf. Thank God for their commitment to this unique ministry and ask Him to bless them.	2 Clyde Kratz begins the position of Executive Conference Minister this week. Pray for a smooth transition from Owen Burkholder's tenure as Clyde listens, learns, and discovers his calling to serve in conference ministry.	3 Today Chris & Melody, Micah, Adam and Isaiah Riddle return to Italy for their next term of service with the Centro Koinonia congregation. Join them in thanking God for this opportunity to nurture new believers in Christ.	4 Pray for VMC students attending both Mennonite and public schools as they begin the new school year. May they work with integrity, develop their God-given gifts, and be beacons of Christ's light among their peers.	5 Last week Vince & LaVonne, Sid, Bradie, and Justin Ramella arrived for a term of service in Kosovo for language learning and acculturation, while building relationships. Pray that these first months of transition go smoothly.	6 VMM tranSender Cindy Moyer arrived at LAC, Lezha, Albania to serve as school counselor this year. Ask God to show her how to meet the needs of the students and others she meets.	7 VMM tranSenders Robert & Jessica Russo began their work in Asheville, N.C. the beginning of Sept. Pray for them as they cultivate discipleship-based missional communities in this area. They are connected with the Asheville Mennonite Church.
8 September often brings increased church attendance after attendees return to their regular routines. Pray that congregations provide Spirit-led ministries to meet needs among them and call persons to radical Christian discipleship.	9 This is the second week of the first term at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Pray for the teachers, staff and students that they will learn, work and worship together harmoniously this year.	10 <i>Partners in Mission</i> participant Sandra Cardinal has arrived at LAC, Lezha, Albania to teach English and interact with the students and staff members. May she have a double portion of God's grace during this transition period.	11 VMM tranSender Valentina Pastorella began working at LAC, Lezha, Albania teaching the Italian and French languages. Thank God that she was available to go from Centro Koinonia to this place of service.	12 VMM tranSender Joel Dol-larhite serves as a recovery mentor with Our Community Farm, New Market, Va. Pray for him as he relates to participants in the program; may God give him insight for each situation.	13 A couples retreat with all the evangelical churches of Lezha, Albania is planned for Sept. 13-15. Pray that lives are impacted and transformed through this activity.	14 Tomorrow afternoon at Weavers Mennonite Church, VMC will commission Clyde Kratz as Executive Conference Minister. Ask the Holy Spirit to anoint and equip Clyde for this important ministry. [see page 2]
15 Join in praising God that the senior youth camp of Jamaica Mennonite Church was very successful with 77 campers and lots of staff and helpers. May the spiritual renewal experienced there bring lasting transformation to the youth and the Church.	16 VMM/EMM workers Mark & Sarah Schoenhals have daily opportunities to interact with both believers and unbelievers in various settings. Ask God to give them deep compassion for each encounter; may Christ shine through them.	17 Several new persons begin volunteer roles with VMC this month. Pray for all who have been called to serve the Conference in faith and life, congregational life, missions, history, finance and other areas of ministry.	18 Congregations that provide supper and programming for children and adults on Wednesday evenings enlarge Christian community. Be sure to participate in building relationships and learning opportunities.	19 Norma Teles has opened Joshua Center, a preschool for Roma children near the Roma section of Lezha, Albania. The children attend eagerly, and learn quickly! Ask God for stamina for Norma and the helpers each day.	20 VMM tranSender Jonathan Cannone serves as a recovery mentor with Our Community Farm, New Market, Va. Ask God to bless and guide him each day as he works with both hands and heart in this setting.	21 Joel Dewald teaches English at a university in Hangzhou, China. Pray for him as he begins the new school term and relates with a variety of students, faculty, and persons in the community. May his love for Christ be evident to all.
22 Today the Jesus' Deaf Church meets in Orange Walk, Belize, with Nancy Marshall, pastor. Pray for the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit as the members sing, pray and listen to the sermon. Thank God that Nancy brings Bible stories to life for this group.	23 David Shenk receives many calls for assistance from persons who need to find refuge in Ecuador when they face extreme difficulties in Colombia. Pray for his daily strength and wisdom; may God work miracles for these displaced persons.	24 Jacob & Hosanna serve in South Asia both in business and with the local fellowship where they engage in outreach, Bible teaching and literature development. Ask God to give them energy for their parenting tasks and their leadership roles each day.	25 <i>Partners in Mission</i> participant Michaela Mast is serving in Sighisoara, Romania, living with a host family, and working with Roma children. Pray for her as she relates to a variety of people daily.	26 In Montenegro, Laura Campbell visits with women along with her daughters, Ruth and Esther. Pray that Laura finds open hearts and minds to hear and accept the Good News that transforms lives.	27 Invite God's presence during the worship and fellowship of Mennonite Women of Virginia in the annual retreat this weekend. Thank God for those among us who provide examples of Godly women who are committed to following Christ.	28 This weekend at the Middle School Retreat, Lesley Francisco speaks about "The Me I Was Meant to Be." Pray that young people gain a deep sense of identity as God's children and rise to that calling.
29 This morning, representatives from VMC-related ministries speak about their work at Warwick River Mennonite Church. Invite the Spirit to connect persons in that congregation with those who work on behalf of churches in specific ministries.	30 Don't forget to bring your <i>Penny Power</i> jug to the Va. Relief Sale on Friday evening or Saturday morning! Pray for the many volunteers that are working hard all week to put everything in place for the event this weekend.			<p><i>Prayer calendar sponsored by:</i></p> <p>LD&B</p> <p>Insurance and Financial Services</p>		
<p>“By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.”</p> <p>Psalms 42:8 (NIV)</p>						



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

Announcements

Attention VMC delegates: Minutes from the July 26-27 delegate sessions are now available. Go to virginiacommunity.org and click on the “delegates” tab to find minutes and other documents from the sessions.



Steven Nolt will speak at the 12th annual **Kennel Charles Anabaptist History lecture** in the Eastern Mennonite School auditorium, Mon., Sept. 23,

at 7 p.m. In this free public lecture, Nolt will address the topic “Virginia’s Unique Place in the North American Mennonite Mosaic.” Learn about his plan for writing a new history book about Mennonites in Virginia and surrounding states. The EMHS history department will conduct a photo scan before the lecture, from 5:30-7 p.m. in the auditorium lobby. You are invited to bring your unique photos to be scanned and added to www.mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net

Register for “Familiar Blessings, Blowing Spirit,” a Mennonite Women of Virginia weekend retreat by Sept. 16. The retreat will be Sept. 27-29 at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center in Lynchburg, Va. Through the story of her grandmother’s life and her own life growing up in suburban America and then spending 12 years in peace work in Ireland, Dawn Ruth Nelson will encourage sisters to explore the spiritual resources of their own of their own traditions and come to terms with their own images of God. Brochures are online at virginiacommunity.org/partners/mennonite-women-of-virginia/

Ecclesia Network is hosting their fall Mid-Atlantic & Northeast regional gathering with David Fitch in Carlisle, Pa., September 24 at the Susquehanna Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. Please register by Sept. 17 at ecclesianet.org. \$10 cost is for lunch. A ride will be departing from the Conference Center in Harrisonburg at 6:30 a.m. Contact Skip Tobin: skip.tobin@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727 if you are interested in a ride.

A dinner and concert in support of Nazareth Village will be held at 6:30 pm on September 26 at Park View Mennonite Church. An authentic first century Nazareth Village meal will be served. The program will include updates from Sharon Swarr, Nazareth Village Executive Director, and Bader Mansour, Chair of the Board, and feature a concert by internationally acclaimed tenor, Tim Bentsch. There is no charge for this event. There will be an opportunity to contribute to the educational children’s program at Nazareth Village through a special Virginia Mennonite Missions fund. Reservations required. **RSVP by Sept. 19** to janet.stutzman@vmmissions.org or call (540) 519-1063.

A movie night fundraiser to benefit the Green family missions to Termoli, Italy will be held at New Beginnings Church on Friday, September 27 at 7 p.m. Admission is by donation and refreshments including: drinks, hot dogs, and candy will be available for purchase. Child-care will be available, but please **RSVP the names and ages of the children** to Laura Green: mapsmission@gmail.com, with subject: “Movie Night.” Email, or call (540) 271-0401 for more information.

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: virginiacommunity.org/ministries/youth-ministry/middle-school-retreat

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: cmaven@hmcchurch.org or (540) 434-4463, ext. 104

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.