

## Aaron Kauffman takes on role of president of VMM

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN



Phyllis Miller, chair of the board, presents a framed scripture to Loren and Earlene Horst as a recognition and thanks for his leadership.

Photo: Galen Lehman

On January 11, 85 people gathered to recognize Loren & Earlene Horst for their years of service with Virginia Mennonite Missions. After dinner, Lois Maust recognized Earlene and thanked her for her involvement with VMM in various ways and gave her a gift of locally made items; Phyllis Miller, VMM Board chair, recognized Loren and thanked him for giving presidential leadership to VMM since 2001. He received a framed calligraphy of Lamentations 3:22-23, his favorite scripture verse. Loren expressed his appreciation for the Board, staff and supporters of VMM during his tenure.

Then he honored incoming president, Aaron Kauffman and his wife, Laura, by



Loren Horst presents the gift of a lantern to Aaron, "to spread the light of Christ." Photo: Galen Lehman

passing the gift of a lantern to him, encouraging him to spread the light of Christ as he serves in this role.

The next evening, January 12, the commissioning service for Aaron Kauffman as president of VMMissions was held in his home congregation, Zion Mennonite Church near Broadway, Va. Congregational singing led by Celah Pence, a children's time with Pastor Mike Metzler and Aaron, and special music by Sons of the Day enhanced the program and prepared hearts and minds to hear Mary Thiessen Nation speak on "Commissioned to Reveal Mysteries." A commissioning litany written by Carol Tobin and led by Phyllis Miller preceded the commissioning prayer led by Clyde Kratz, VMC executive conference minister. Many gathered around Aaron and Laura and prayed for God's blessing and direction on them as they enter into this responsibility.

Aaron reflected on this time in a written communication to the VMM Board, staff and workers during the next week. He stated, "I experienced [the commissioning service] as a joyous celebration and affirmation of God's



Mary Thiessen Nation speaks on "Commissioned to Reveal Mysteries." Photo: Jon Trotter



Aaron Kauffman reflects on his journey and his vision. Photo: Jon Trotter

call not only on my life, but on all of us as disciples of Jesus." In that message, he also said, "I long to see people come to know, love and serve the God revealed in Jesus Christ,

and have their entire lives and communities transformed to reflect God's kingdom of joy, justice and peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will devote my gifts and energies to pursuing that task as President of Virginia Mennonite Missions. I ask all of you to join us through your counsel, your contributions,



Many gather around Aaron and Laura Kauffman in a prayer of blessing. Photo: Galen Lehman

your participation and your prayers. And may the good news that God reigns be known in all the earth. Amen."

Attendees enjoyed refreshments in the Zion fellowship hall, provided by the congregation.

Gloria is Director of Public Relations for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

# People-fishing, Jesus-style

By AARON KAUFFMAN



As a mission agency, what are we supposed to do? Evangelize? Plant churches? Train leaders? Provide education? Work at relief and development? Care for refugees?

“Yes, but...” to all of the above. These activities do not define our core mission. Our mission is “to invite people to faithful living in Jesus Christ.” We seek to be and call forth apprentices of Jesus, not simply start one more program or project.

Last summer the Board of Virginia Mennonite Missions approved seven strategic priorities to guide our work over the next 3-5 years. The first one reads:

## Sharpening Our

**Focus:** *Create and implement criteria for beginning new ministries and evaluating ongoing work that reflect the priority of VMMissions to make disciples in the way of Christ.*

Starting with ourselves, we want all people to know, love and serve the God revealed in Jesus Christ, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their entire lives and communities into a reflection of God’s kingdom of joy, justice, righteousness and peace.

The meaning of the phrase, “**in the way of Christ,**” is twofold. We want people to hear the gospel way of Jesus and live it. And as we make disciples, we want to do it the way Jesus did it. Jesus is both the message and the model.

How did Jesus make disciples? He started with a vision for the transformation of the whole world: “The kingdom of God has come near” (Mk 1:14). The real King of the world is not Caesar or Herod or you or me. It’s God, and it’s time to start living out that truth. How? “Repent and believe the good news!” Turn away from sin and false allegiances and believe the good news that in Jesus, we are forgiven children of the King!



Pastor Joi models how to share the gospel with seekers. Photo by Aaron Kauffman

That’s a huge vision. How did Jesus implement it? Did He march on Jerusalem or Rome and take over? Did He win friends among the movers and shakers of society? No, He went to Galilee and called a bunch of illiterate fisherman to leave everything and follow Him.

I witnessed this same approach to disciple-making on a recent trip to Southeast Asia. Mark and Sarah Schoenhals partner with the Life Enrichment Church in Thailand. They introduced me to Ging, a man who only six months prior was an alcoholic living on the street. He met Jesus at a city-wide gathering and was healed from his addiction. His healing continues in the Life Enrichment Church. We met in December at a training session on sharing the gospel in a Buddhist context, led by Pastor Joi of the Life Enrichment Church.

*Formed by Christ, transforming others:* Ging is becoming a people-fisher, Jesus style. Let’s follow his example.

Aaron Kauffman  
President  
Virginia Mennonite Missions



Pastors Armando Sanchez, Luis Martínez and Marvin Lorenzana join in prayer at the service. Photo and text by Marvin Lorenzana

## Hispanic churches celebrate together

Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista, Enciende Una Luz and El Camino Discipular, held a joint service they called “En Comunción y Agradecidos” (In fellowship and with gratefulness) together on November 23.

Worship was led on that night by a band made of musicians and singers from the different participating churches. The heart of their time together was a pledge to working together as sister churches whose agenda and shared vision is to provoke a missional movement among Latinos in the Harrisonburg area and vicinities.

After a great time of worship and preaching of the Word the pastors of the three churches broke bread together as they prayed for unity of purpose in their mission. At the end everyone else was invited to partake. This is the first of a number of public, rather large gatherings that these churches are planning on doing together.

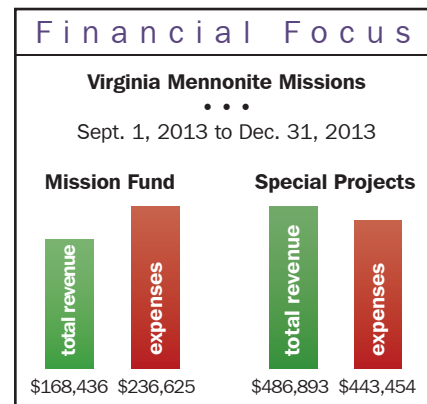
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# Mennonite Church USA conference ministers gather to discuss ‘ministerial competency for credentialing’

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

At a recently gathering of conference ministers from Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, a conversation occurred on ministerial competencies for preparing persons for pastoral leadership in the 21st century.

Our educational ministries: Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Anabaptist Mennonite Seminary, (Hesston) Pastoral Ministries Program, Instituto Biblico Anabautista (IBA)—had representatives participating in this conversation.

Currently, core competencies for preparing persons for ministry include:

1. *Biblical story*
2. *Anabaptist/Mennonite story, theology, and convictions*
3. *Christian spirituality/discipleship*
4. *Self-understanding and self awareness, emotional intelligence*
5. *Contextual awareness*
6. *Leadership\**

Each of these areas was affirmed as essential for preparing persons for pastoral leadership. The cutting edge of the conversation was not the knowledge bases essential for pastoral formation, but where and how formation occurs. There remains a desire for pastoral formation to occur in academic settings due to the availability of centralized resources.

At the same time, there is a longing to provide formative educational opportunities to persons interested in pastoral ministry that included congregational settings and immigrant communities. The passionate conversation emerged with the awareness that the core competencies for ministerial formation did not include a focus on making disciples or missional leadership. The group concurred that some significant work needs to continue in the area of discipleship making as an essential part of formation for persons considering pastoral ministry.

In today’s educational market, persons are not only seeking preparation for

pastoral ministry in Mennonite seminaries, but also in other Protestant seminaries that provide quality education.

Mennonite seminaries are seeking to provide access to core Anabaptist theology and Mennonite polity courses through online education in order to prepare these individuals to engage in pastoral leadership in a Mennonite congregation.

As Mennonite Church USA and Virginia Mennonite Conference seek to equip persons for pastoral leadership for today and tomorrow, it remains my commitment to ensure that our Mennonite seminaries have a key role in this formation ministry of the Church.

\* Find more detail at: [www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/CredentialingGrid.pdf](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/CredentialingGrid.pdf).



Clyde is Executive Conference Minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

## Chaplain service develops relationships with prisoners

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

Virginia Mennonite Conference has numerous pastors and individuals that engage in ministry to incarcerated persons within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Titus Bender, a retired professor from Eastern Mennonite University, has engaged in prison reform movements for a large part

of his career. Recently, he and his wife Ann invited me to attend the Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia’s Annual Meeting in Richmond, Va. Titus is a trustee in this organization, but is reaching a point in his career where reducing responsibilities seems to be the next phase of his life.

During the activity of the day, I learned in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there are no designated chaplains for the juvenile detention centers.

I heard first hand stories of individuals being transformed by the relationships that chaplains develop with incarcerated individuals and the challenges these persons face as they anticipate returning to society.

I learned that the Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia hires a chaplain for each detention center.

The agencies financial resources come from both the Commonwealth of Virginia and religious organizations that include charitable gifts from denominations, congregations, and grant programs.

As Titus imaged his movement towards a reduction of involvement, Murray Ellison, a member of First Mennonite in Richmond, Va., has begun to serve on various committees within the organization.

I am grateful for Titus and Ann Bender’s dedication to prison reform and their involvement in the Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia. It is my hope that Murray and other people will continue to provide a Mennonite connection to this ministry of meeting the needs of people who are incarcerated.



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Titus Bender, a trustee of Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia, has engaged in prison reform movements throughout his career.

Photo: Lindsey Kolb/EMU

# Jonah Yang, Hmong pastor in Hickory, N.C., tells his story

As told to GLORIA L. LEHMAN

*Editor's note: Jonah & Memee Yang lead the Hickory (N.C.) Hmong Mennonite Church. Here is an abridged version of their story—an introduction to them.*

Memee and I are Hmong from the small country of Laos. In June 1975, my family fled to Thailand, hundreds of miles through the jungle. Some parents used opium to calm the children. An overdose killed them, causing deep sadness. God protected my family, keeping me from harm and persecution. We arrived in Thailand, but we were hungry. Every three days, a truck loaded with limited food arrived and gave a gram of meat and a cup of rice for three days. By God's love, my family made it through the refugee camp.

In September 1979, my family was called for an interview to migrate to the US. Prior to the interview, my family asked God to open the door for us, if He wants us to witness to others. Our petition was granted and we had a chance to gain a better life. I believe this happened not because my father was involved with the CIA, but through the grace of God.

Memee and I got married in 1985. In



Memee and Jonah Yang. Courtesy photo

the 1980s, I wanted to enroll in a class to learn more about the Bible. Somehow I couldn't accomplish my goal. Later, I decided to connect with a Mennonite pastor in Fresno, California, to learn more about the Mennonite beliefs. We decided to be part of the Mennonites establishing a new congregation.

I received a warm welcome to be part of the congregation's families. The conference staff members and my mentor were

always there for me. I have found the real meaning of Mennonite—I have the heart to go to a person who wronged me and tell him I am sorry.

In July 2012, Memee and I visited the Hickory Hmong, even though Memee said there's no way that we will move to Hickory. But after we visited, she came and said, "I think we need to go there." We made a quick decision to move, putting a burden on Virginia conference, TCK district and other supportive churches. We both left our jobs with the county Department of Social Services where we had worked for 12 years; Memee got a job in the Catawba County DSS.

Our future commitment is to care for the needy, feed the hungry, and visit the sick. Each has a responsibility to contribute toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Your prayers and support make an impact on my life and ministry. Thank you to all who have prayed for my family, the Hmong ministry in Hickory and the other Hmong churches in the US and the world.



Gloria is Director of Public Relations for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

## Mennonites and Lutherans in process of reconciliation

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

Bishop James Mauney, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, inquired about the possibility of a reconciliation event between the Lutherans and Mennonites in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Bishop Mauney and I held this conversation at a meeting of the Virginia Council of Churches in Richmond. My initial response to Bishop Mauney was very positive, but with an inquiry about the way in which this might occur. Neither of us have a lot of experience in helping two cultures work at a meaningful reconciliation event. We decided to do some research and engage the conversation at a later date.

Lutheran-Mennonite reconciliation is not a new idea. The first event of this kind occurred with Bishop Mark S.

Hanson, President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) participating in a service of forgiveness and reconciliation in July 22, 2010, with representatives of Mennonite World Conference being present in Stuttgart, Germany.

The primary purpose of this event was to acknowledge the persecution that Anabaptists received at the hands of Lutherans during the time of the Reformation and subsequent years. The event occurred after historians from both Lutherans and Mennonites reviewed the historic offenses in history that contributed to the separation, and also recognized that Mennonites carry within them a martyrdom complex that contributes to their own worldview. The reconciliation events have been a meaningful way for both Lutherans and Mennonites

to understand their past in new ways and build a richer and fuller future together.

I am inviting persons in Virginia Mennonite Conference to offer thoughts, suggestions, and concerns about a reconciliation process between Lutherans and Mennonites in Virginia. I am open to ways in which this would be meaningful to you and your congregation, but also to the Mennonite culture. Conference Council will be considering ways that this might occur at a future meeting.

Please send me your suggestions and concerns to [clyde@virginiainconference.org](mailto:clyde@virginiainconference.org).



Clyde is Executive Conference Minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference.



# Maranatha students celebrate Christmas Jamaica-style

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

While the northeastern US shivered with winter weather, the warm sun and breeze from the Caribbean Sea created a comfortable atmosphere for the annual Christmas celebration at the Maranatha School for the Deaf in rural Jamaica.

Twenty-one students, ages 4-17, arrived at the school on Sunday afternoon, December 15, dressed in their best, and ready to present the Christmas program for family and community members. Excitement ran high!

Rodney and Eve Knepp, VMM workers at the school, prepared the stage for the Christmas play. Eve directed the students in songs and poems, with assistance from the school teachers. The youngest students signed the song “Angel Band” and counted the angels with their fingers—ten of them! The oldest students signed “Ja-



maican Noel” with a lot of expression and movement—a real audience pleaser!

Then all the students participated in acting out the Christmas story, complete with costumes and props. And they wished everyone a “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” with loud voices and upraised hands at the end.

Maranatha School Board chairman William George Broughton recognized Pauline Bent for 27 years of teaching at the school

and presented a retirement gift. Pauline has been well-loved through the years, and she has met the challenges of teaching deaf students while being deaf herself with strength and grace. She will be missed. A new teacher was hired to teach the youngest classes.

Sponsors sent Christmas gifts for their students and the gifts were received with happiness and gratitude. Thank you, sponsors, for sending these tokens of love and care. Four students still need sponsors—can you reach out in this way? Contact me at [gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org](mailto:gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org) if you want to sponsor a student.

Gloria is Director of Public Relations for Virginia Mennonite Missions.



## Singing and sharing at Patchwork Pantry

By LENORA BELL

On Wednesday evening December 4, thirty Harrisonburg Mennonite Church children ages kindergarten through grade six, packed into cars along with carpool parents. We made our way to Patchwork Pantry to give a Christmas musical and sing Christmas carols. We were armed with 80 dozen homemade cookies generously made by many women in our congregation for pantry clients.

For the past several years, we have been able to sing in the church sanctuary at the pantry site in Community Mennonite Church, so persons waiting to sign in for food can sit down inside on comfortable seats to listen from 6:15-7:15 p.m. While the children sang, our Sunday school superintendents busily set up a table with cookies packaged by the dozen. Families were happy to choose from the array of cookies after they received food from the pantry and took groceries to their cars.

The children joyfully sang songs and acted out drama scenes as people came and then were called to their interviews. Patchwork Pantry does an outstanding job of making their clients feel welcome and providing needed assistance. Seeing the faces of persons who received cookies and song at Patchwork Pantry was the best part, especially for those who do not speak English fluently. Music, smiles and sharing help to cross the language barrier, and we praise God for allowing us to share in the ministry of Patchwork Pantry for one evening.

Lenora is Director of Children’s Ministries, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

## Alternative Christmas gifts project a big success

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

In the November issue of *Connections*, one whole page was filled with gift requests from VMM workers—what a wonderful response from the readers! Phone calls, checks, and lists with cash flowed in from individuals, families and interested readers. The Waynesboro Mennonite Church, Warwick River Christian School, and Williamsburg Mennonite Church used creative methods of spreading the enthusiasm for these gifts with great results!

The most popular alternative gift was the baby chicks for the poultry project in Jamaica—674 chicks were purchased. The need for mattresses for Colombian refugees in Ecuador resulted in 162 being purchased. Food for hungry children resulted in 250 soup and bread meals for the Kid’s Club in Romania, and 237 hot breakfasts for the children in the Joshua Center in Albania. Rodney Knepp can use the 47 piglets that were purchased; some will benefit local farmers in rural Jamaica.

The total amount given for the alternative Christmas gifts is \$9,151.25. The VMM workers will receive the funds for their requests, and human need in various forms will be met with food, comfort and Christ-like love.

In our country where we have less desperate need, it is a gesture of compassion to contribute to those who have less. Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2013 Alternative Christmas gift projects! Look for the list again next year!

## Gift & Thrift helps ‘neighbors’ around the world

By DEB KING

The story of the Good Samaritan is well known in Christian circles, but do I live by the lessons that can be gleaned from Jesus’ parable? When Jesus asks what the law requires for inheriting eternal life, a lawyer replies with, among other things, to “love my neighbor as myself.”

This text has been used to examine the importance of self-love and to consider the responsibility we have to help our neighbor when he or she is in trouble. But I continue to struggle with questions arising from these Scriptures: Who is my neighbor? How do I love my neighbor?

Recently, a customer performed a random act of kindness by anonymously giving our cashier money to pay for the next person’s purchase.



Gift & Thrift, Inc., located at 731 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, Va. Courtesy photo

At the service that celebrated the life of June Marie Weaver, we heard of her letters of encouragement to scores of people living far away from home.

This year we received a large monetary donation from a young person who chose to give tithing money to Gift & Thrift, supporting Mennonite Central Committee’s

mission of relief, development and peace throughout the world.

These people know who their neighbors are—and their selfless acts shine as examples for all. May we go and do likewise.

Deb is the General Manager of Harrisonburg Gift & Thrift, Inc.

## Pleasant View, Inc. opens new Susan Louk House

By STEPHANIE BILLER

**The Vision of Pleasant View, Inc.:** *All individuals will have the opportunity to live in and enrich their communities.*

In line with our vision, Pleasant View, Inc., opened a new house in June 2013 to serve individuals with intellectual disabilities. Located in Broadway, Virginia, The Susan Louk House has four bedrooms including a walkout basement in addition to a few common rooms. A new van was provided for the home through a grant provided by Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.



The Louk House (at right) is named after Susan (Suzi) Louk. Suzi lived at Harrison Residence from 1984 until she passed away. She was loved by all and enjoyed a close relationship with her parents, Ralph and Wanda Louk. Mr. Louk served on Pleasant View’s Board of Directors blessing us with his wisdom and legal knowledge for 12 years. Suzi liked to laugh and tease with staff and housemates. “Suzi would look at us sideways and point to her cheeks with a big grin,” remembers Vickie, care provider at Harrison House.

The Louk House provides supervised living for one married couple and two community members. The Louk House also provides community placement for two



individuals relocated from a state institution. Everyone gets along great and any time we can make it a “family” dining experience, the married couple is invited upstairs to join everyone else—but from time to time they enjoy their own privacy and peace.

The Louk House held a Dedication and Open House in October 2013.

Stephanie is the Communications Coordinator for Pleasant View, Inc.

Susan (Suzi) Louk. Photo courtesy of author



# FEBRUARY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Prayer calendar sponsored by:</i>  <b>Richard &amp; Wanda Good</b>            as an expression of appreciation for God's benevolence throughout and into the 8th decade of their lives.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)</p>						
<p>2 Pray for Roy Hange, Harrisonburg District Overseer, as he provides inspirational leadership, thoughtful counsel, and steadfast presence for the work of Virginia Mennonite Conference.</p>	<p>3 On December 6, Adam &amp; Jeanette Strode had a baby girl, Lucille Emma. The Strode family is preparing to serve in Thailand, joining Steve &amp; Bethany Horst. Thank God for baby Lucille, and ask Him to bless this family.</p>	<p>4 This evening, Charles Powell teaches Lesson 4 in the <i>Perspectives</i> class: <i>Mandate to the Nations</i>. Jesus' mandate to us is "as the Father has sent me, so I send you." Pray for the 41 students to receive new insights into 'being sent' to the world.</p>	<p>5 Pray for Tim McAvoxy, pastor of New Beginnings Church, Harrisonburg, Va., as he provides leadership in knowing Christ and making Christ known.</p>	<p>6 Pray for Carl Mericle, pastor of Providence Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va., as he guides the congregation to serve others for Christ through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>7 Hold Dini Shahini up in prayer today as he serves the church in Lezhe, Albania, and also assists at Lezha Academic Center. He carries heavy responsibility in these roles. Ask God to bless him with health and strength.</p>	<p>1 Join Steve &amp; Laura Campbell in giving thanks that their visas have been approved, and they can continue serving in Podgorica, Montenegro. They interact with children, youth and adults in various ways connected with the Brethren Assembly Church.</p>
<p>9 Pray for J. Mark &amp; Emma Frederick as they bring their pastoral role to a conclusion at Gospel Hill Mennonite Church, Fults Run, Va. Give God thanks for their ministry there.</p>	<p>10 Jay &amp; Sheri Hartzler, Sighisoara, Romania, ask for us to pray for wisdom as they give leadership in ways that are new there, and teach others to take charge in a variety of settings.</p>	<p>11 This evening, Aaron Kauffman teaches Lesson 5 in the <i>Perspectives</i> class: <i>Unleashing the Gospel</i>. This concentration on spreading the Gospel in the past, present and future gives students a dynamic insight into Christ's Kingdom.</p>	<p>12 Pray for Jonah Yang, pastor of the Hickory (N.C.) Hmong congregation, as he seeks to bring people to maturity in Christ. [see article on page 4]</p>	<p>13 Rebekka Stutzman leads a monthly afternoon Bible program for kids who come to <i>Studio Kralltite</i>, a local asylum seeker advocacy group. Pray that she will have wisdom, and that other church members will become involved in this program.</p>	<p>14 God's love abounds to all! Sometimes we don't feel it, but it is still there, and ever present. Share it with someone today.</p>	<p>15 On Saturdays, Rodney &amp; Eve Knepp and children often have an opportunity to get away from the routine and go to a beach for relaxation. Pray for them as they live, work, and rejuvenate in rural Jamaica; may God give them energy and creativity.</p>
<p>16 Pray for Tim Kennel, pastor of Powhatan (Va.) Mennonite Church, as he leads the congregation to be disciples of Christ that invite, build, and equip for life in the world.</p>	<p>17 Vince &amp; Lavonne Ramella interact with neighbors in Istog, Kosovo, building relationships and opening doors for spreading the Good News. Ask God to bless them and their family each day.</p>	<p>18 This evening, Andrew Fuller teaches Lesson 6 in the <i>Perspectives</i> class: <i>Expansion of the World Christian Movement</i>, showing how the Gospel surged through peoples and countries in the past with insights for today.</p>	<p>19 Richard &amp; Elsie Bowman are serving three months in the Lezha Academic Center in Albania. Ask God to meet their needs and to give them insight for teaching and relating to the staff and students at LAC.</p>	<p>20 Pray for Jennifer Sensenig Davis as she leads Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, in their mission to strive actively to follow the God of peace through worship, fellowship, and service locally and globally.</p>	<p>21 Kathy Miller arrived in Orange Walk, Belize at the end of December and serves as an interpreter for Sulmi, a beginning high school deaf student in a hearing school. Thank God for Kathy's availability to serve in this way.</p>	<p>22 VMM/Network worker, David Shenk is excited to receive many mattresses for Colombian refugees in Ecuador who are desperate for household items. May God give David wisdom and insight as he works with many families.</p>
<p>23 Pray for Richard Early, pastor of Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring, Va., as he provides leadership to invite others to faith in Jesus and seeks God's peace in their homes, in their work, with neighbors, and in the world.</p>	<p>24 What will happen in Joel Dewald's day as he serves in China? Ask God to protect him in all settings and to open doors for conversations that are significant for God's Kingdom.</p>	<p>25 This evening, Nancy Heisey teaches Lesson 7 in the <i>Perspectives</i> class: <i>Eras of Mission</i>, showing how ordinary people have done extraordinary things through Christ, for Christ.</p>	<p>26 Pray for <i>Partners</i> participant Lisa Mast as she develops the music program at Lezha Academic Center in Albania. Thank God for her gifts and talents and ask for His deep insight as Lisa directs this new program.</p>	<p>27 Pray for Judith Trumbo, President/CEO of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va., as she provides leadership to enrich the retirement living for senior citizens in this community.</p>	<p>28 Pray for Nancy Marshall, pastor of Jesus' Deaf Church in Orange Walk, Belize as she anticipates ordination on Sunday, March 2. Thank God for her commitment to this unique group of people and her determination to lead many to Christ.</p>	



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## Announcements



The **2014 VMC Ministry Retreat** will be Feb. 28-March 2 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center with speaker Mary Thiesen Nation. Those in ministry often care for ones whose lives and assumptions are shattered by traumatic experiences. This weekend retreat on “Trauma, Hope and Healing” will help us to respond rightly with an honest, textured theology and authentic, robust hope. Registration deadline: Feb. 7. Learn more at [virginiaconference.org/news/2014-ministry-retreat/](http://virginiaconference.org/news/2014-ministry-retreat/).

VMRC hosts **Advance Care Planning**, Feb. 18, 3 p.m., featuring Amanda Becker of Sentara Healthcare. Mrs. Becker has worked extensively on the Advance Care Planning initiative on behalf of Sentara. The free program will be in Detwiler Auditorium on VMRC’s campus, 1501 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg.

The annual **Turkey Canning Project** is scheduled for February 24-28 at the Mennonite Relief Center, Hinton, Va. VMC is responsible to help provide help on Tuesday, Feb. 25. (5 a.m. until 11 p.m.) Funds are also needed to purchase turkey for processing and for Relief Center operations. Contact Leon Rhodes at (540) 867-9751.

**MCC East Coast Celebration:** Join friends, board members and staff of MCC

East Coast for an evening of worship and fellowship on Friday, Feb. 28, at Dayton Mennonite Church, 4887 John Wayland Hwy, Dayton, Va. Visit [eastcoast.mcc.org](http://eastcoast.mcc.org)

A **Women’s Community Bible Study** is offered at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church: *Faithful, Abundant, True* with Kay Arthur, Priscilla Shirer and Beth Moore. Sessions are Tuesdays, March 4 to April 8, 9-11 a.m., and 6:30-8:15 p.m. Registration form (with \$20 fee) due by Feb. 18. Contact Jeannie Smith at (540) 434-4361 with questions.

Join us for the **Highland Retreat Auction** at the Eastern Mennonite School main campus dining hall, Sat., March 8. A pancake breakfast is served from 8-9 a.m., the silent auction opens at 8 a.m. and the live auction at 9:15 a.m. Tasty food will be available. Visit [www.highlandretreat.org](http://www.highlandretreat.org) for details and to see a list of items to be auctioned.

**Attention Men:** Register now for the Men’s Retreat at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, March 21-23. Our speakers are Duane Yoder and Luke Hartman who will speak on spiritual mentoring. For more information or to register online go to [www.wcrc.info](http://www.wcrc.info).

**8th annual Taste of the World:** Revel in the exotic aromas, colors and sounds of Southeast Asia and food from around the globe, with all proceeds going to support the wonderful work of NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center, Harrisonburg. \$60/plate; \$420 for a table of 8. To RSVP, email [rsvp@newbridgesirc.org](mailto:rsvp@newbridgesirc.org) or call (540) 438-8295 or by March 14. For more info on NewBridges, visit [newbridgesirc.org/](http://newbridgesirc.org/)

### POSITION AVAILABLE



Virginia Conference seeks a full-time **Administrative Services Manager**.

This position will assist the Executive Conference Minister in variety of tasks as requested, serve as VMC events coordinator, manage documents and files, and other tasks as needed.

Qualifications include good relational skills, managerial and leadership skills that include a focus on detail and accuracy. Position includes salary and benefits commensurate with experience. Possible start date: March 1. Submit resume by Feb. 21. Position description and contact information at [virginiaconference.org/jobopenings/](http://virginiaconference.org/jobopenings/)

### UPCOMING TRIPS

For the trip of a lifetime, make plans to join the next TourMagination trip to **Australia and New Zealand**, January 30 to February 19, 2015. This outstanding three week tour will include: Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, the Great Barrier Reef and much more in Australia. The trip will conclude with six days on the South Island of New Zealand with visits to Christchurch, Dunedin, Queenstown, a lunch cruise on Milford Sound and much more. Wilmer and Janet Martin will lead the trip with co-hosts Dave & Joyce Eshleman. For full details phone (800) 565-0451 or email: [office@tourmagination.com](mailto:office@tourmagination.com)