

Sister Care seminar in Trinidad “part of God’s master plan”

By RHODA KEENER

Forty-two women participated in a Sister Care seminar held in St. Helena, Trinidad October 31-November 2. Marsha Ragoonath coordinated the event attended by women from the five Mennonite churches in Trinidad with two women participating from the Jamaica Mennonite Church. Carolyn Heggen, psychotherapist specializing in trauma healing, and Rhoda Keener, Mennonite Women USA co-director, led the seminar.

Marsha Ragoonath said, “What joy to be part of God’s master plan! It was a blessing to see many Mennonite women in a common setting. As I met with Sisters Rhoda and Carolyn, I felt a great sense of accomplishment and joy to know that the Sister Care seminar is being materialized in Trinidad and Tobago. I first learned about Sister Care when I met Sister Ruth Lapp Guengerich, Mennonite Women USA co-director, at Mennonite World Conference in Switzerland in 2012.”

Marsha added, “The women were blessed by the Sister Care material. Some have shared they are encouraged in their ministry; others are motivated to be better listeners. I particularly enjoyed the break out session on Sunday morning when the women in my church shared what they had



(l to r) Rhoda Keener, Marsha Ragoonath, Carolyn Heggen, co-leaders of the seminar.

gleaned and how they would like to move forward. As a leader, I was inspired by the level of energy emanating from our discussion.”

The seminar has four themes:

- *Claiming our identity as God’s beloved daughters*
- *Caring for self and others*
- *Compassionate listening*
- *Transforming loss and grief*

The closing ritual invites women to anoint their own faces with water symbolizing compassion for one’s own tears, and then to anoint each other with “living water” as a blessing to go forth to find healing and offer healing.

At the close of the seminar, women wrote their responses: “By allowing me to look deeper into my life, to share my story and be anointed with healing waters, I realized I needed this special time away with God. I have been touched. I have more strength to move ahead with Jesus.”

Participants were encouraged to share the Sister Care material with others in their congregations and communities. Each woman received a sixty-four page Sister Care manual with additional copies given to leaders in Trinidad and Jamaica.

Marsha concluded, “I lead a small group at my church (of women only) and many of the group members attended the



Donna Bery-Holland anoints Sheron Walcott with “living water” during the closing ritual. They were Jamaican representatives at Sister Care in Trinidad. Photos courtesy of author

seminar. We met two weeks after the Sister Care seminar and the energy was still there. Members want to put into practice what they have learned, such as compassionate listening. We have formed prayer partners and the women are keen on embracing this. I look forward to ways in which we can now use the material shared to empower the women who did not attend.”

Virginia Mennonite Missions, Virginia Mennonite Women, and Latin American Women Theologians partnered with Mennonite Women USA to offer this seminar. Former VMissions staff person, Gloria Lehman, attended the seminar; she and Galen provided support and encouragement for this event.



Rhoda is co-director of Mennonite Women USA. She lives in Shippensburg, Pa.

In the beginning!

By CLYDE G. KRATZ



The biblical account of creation opens with the proclamation “*In the beginning God...*” (Genesis 1:1). The affirmation that God was present in the beginning, engaged in purposeful creation, bringing order out of chaos, is not lost on biblical commentators¹. When Jesus teaches his disciples and subsequently all disciples how to pray, “*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt. 6:10), God’s continuation of presence and re-creation of the world is affirmed. Equally important in both the Genesis account of creation and the Lord’s Prayer is the awareness that human beings exercising their freedom move and act in ways that engage and distance them from God. In Genesis, we discover the painful account of the first man and first woman ignoring the directions of the Creator. In the Lord’s prayer we pray to be forgiven, offer forgiveness to others, and acknowledge the temptations of our humanity.

As the people of God, we are participating in the reign of God, seeking to live out kingdom values in a broken world, and anticipating, perhaps seeking a fulfillment of God’s kingdom that has not yet been experienced. In a time in human history when the people of God do not speak with a single voice concerning the values and practices of God’s people, there is discouragement as we wrestle with clarifications of vision, values, beliefs, and practices. There are frustrations that long held beliefs are being abandoned in the name of progress. Even as others see hope in their renewed biblical vision of equality and justice for all people uncertainty remains about the best way to

move together as the people of God. These challenges are not just ecclesial institutional concerns, but impact the way in which the people of God move towards and away from their Creator in the exercise of their freedom.

As I begin this New Year, I confess that I resist New Year’s resolutions. But at the same time, the beginning of the year is a new beginning, a time to exercise my freedom to renew the foundational components of my commitment to Jesus as Lord. Here are a few areas for your consideration:

- Read the Bible in some type of deliberate schedule.
- Identify habits in your life that need to be strengthened in order to fulfill your expectations of being a follower of Jesus.
- Because the community of faith is valued, participate in various activities of your faith community that give you a sense that you are part of God’s unfolding drama of “God’s kingdom coming.”
- Because we believe that God is reconciling all things to God, commit to live as one that is seeking to engage in conversations with people in order to gain understanding rather than overpower the other to win.
- Recognizing that God created us to be in relationship with God, but also the freedom to move away from God, commit to making relationship and life choices that move you towards the fulfillment of God’s purposes.

As this New Year unfolds, I am reminded of the words of the apostle Paul writing to the Church of Rome: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Clyde G. Kratz
Executive Conference Minister
Virginia Mennonite Conference

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, John Knox Press, 1982. *Genesis*, Believers Church Bible Commentary, Herald Press, 1987. Bible quotations are from New International Version.

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STAFF TRANSITION

Dianna Lehman to join VMissions

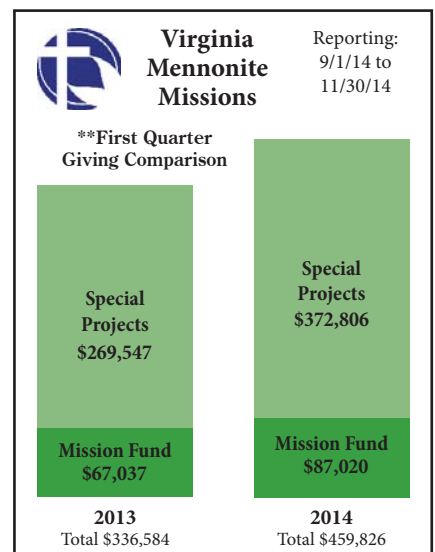
Beginning March 16, 2015, Dianna Lehman will join VMissions as Executive Assistant and Human Resources Manager. In this role she will provide administrative support to the President, including handling logistics for the Board of Directors and managing human resource functions for VMissions’ staff and mission workers.



Dianna has over 25 years of experience in executive-level administrative support and significant background in tasks related to human resources, such as hiring and payroll. She has served as Eastern Mennonite School’s administrative assistant since 2002 and is well-known for her valuable contributions in that role. She is a committed follower of Jesus and an active member of Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church.

Dianna will succeed Lois Maust, who is retiring after nearly 28 years of dedicated and high-quality service. Lois has served three Presidents of the organization, including Aaron Kauffman, who stated, “We have sensed God’s leading in this process. While I am sad to see Lois bring closure to her service here, she and I are both deeply grateful that someone as capable as Dianna will be picking up the mantle.”

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Mission Fund (general giving by households and churches)
Special Projects (giving toward specific mission workers or ministries)

Conference to host retreats for youth workers and pastors

The CHANGING FACE of YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Workers' Retreat • January 23-25, 2015
Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center

"The world is changed. I feel it in the water. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air." This classic line from *The Fellowship of the Ring* is also true about our time: the world around us has changed. Our youth are growing up in a society that in many ways looks, acts, and interacts differently than the ones we grew up in. But have our approaches to youth ministry adapted to this new generation?



Rachel S. Gerber, Mennonite Church USA Denominational Minister of Youth and Young Adults, will show how the youth of today approach faith and the church, and provide opportunities for sharing and reflection on approaches

for youth ministry with this new generation. Learn more and register at virginiaconference.org/ministries/youth-ministry/2015-youth-workers-retreat/

LEARNING FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Ministry Retreat • February 27-March 1, 2015
Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center

All VMC pastors and credentialed leaders are invited to the Ministry Retreat on "Learning from the Early Church." Speaker Alan Kreider invites us to discover the way forward in our post-Christian world by learning from the early Church. Having spent a lifetime living and thinking about mission in the post-Christendom West, Kreider worked with Mennonite Mission Network for nearly thirty years, mainly as a missionary in England. He taught at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and is Professor Emeritus of Church History and Mission. Learn more and register at virginiaconference.org/news/2015-vmc-ministry-retreat/



iHagámoslo juntos! Let's do this together!

Mennonite Hispanic Initiative hosts first retreat for leaders

By MARVIN LORENZANA

"*Hagámoslo juntos!*" or "Let's do this together!" was the first-ever Mennonite Hispanic Initiative (MHI) leaders retreat at Highland Retreat. Four Spanish-speaking churches from the Harrisonburg area were represented: Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista, El Camino Discipular, Enciende Una Luz and Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía. Twenty-six church leaders and 28 teens and children participated November 22-23.

Our goal for this retreat was to help our Hispanic leaders reflect a bit deeper on the discipling language that we've been learning together for the past nine months.

Participating leaders are regularly part of a leader's discipleship *huddle*, which takes place twice a week under my direction as MHI Director and Racial-Ethnic Coach with Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Leaders had plenty of time for rich conversation around smaller circles. They reflected together on the provoking questions being presented by myself and Skip Tobin, VMissions USA Ministries Director. The main topics were:

- What is the missional nature of God and his church?
- What does it mean to live tri-dimensionally—*up, in and out*?
- What is missional discipleship?

The event ended on Sunday morning with a special service and potluck at Iglesia Enciende Una Luz where people from the different congregations gathered for a time of Thanksgiving celebration together.

This event is part of MHI's leadership development strategy.



We would like to make this an annual event to develop Hispanic leaders with a heart for God's mission within our conference.

Most participants rated the content provided as "highly relevant" to their ministry context. "This event has showed me a bigger picture for God's mission," one participant said.

Another said, "Now I know the importance of being a family on mission together and not as two separate activities."



Marvin is Director of MHI and Racial-Ethnic Ministries Coach for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Making disciples through Life Transformation Groups Workshop will explore ways to create a discipling culture in congregations

By SKIP TOBIN

Are you interested in exploring a deep, reproducible yet simple way of making disciples within the congregation? Are you tired of talking about becoming missional and are eager to gain traction in the disciple-making task?

Join us on Saturday, January 31 (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.) at Park View Mennonite Church's Fellowship Hall.

This workshop is for Virginia Mennonite Conference congregational leaders who are interested in developing a discipling culture within their congregations.

Participants will also learn about the opportunity to join the Missional Discipleship Initiative, launched by Mennonite Mission Network and experience tools to grow disciples and leaders whose passion for the gospel is contagious.

Jesus' last word to his followers was the Great Commission, where he commanded



them to "make disciples." Not buildings. Not programs. *Disciples.* People who look and act like Jesus.

As Mennonites, we have long seen discipleship has as one of the distinctive features of the Anabaptist tradition. Harold Bender once described it as "the essence of Christianity."

So how are we doing at practicing the art of becoming like Jesus? Are we making disciples? Are those disciples, in turn, making other disciples? If not, how can we recover this lost art?

Those are the questions we will explore in this workshop as we look at key discipleship concepts from the life of Jesus



and a practical tool for being and making disciples today.

Skip Tobin and Marvin Lorenzana are the resource people for this event, sponsored by Virginia Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Mission Network.

Lunch is included in the registration cost of \$10. RSVP to Sarah Showalter at sarah.showalter@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727.



Skip is USA Ministries Director for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Learning to receive

By LAVONNE RAMELLA

God loves a cheerful giver. There is joy in giving. It is better to give than to receive. We have been taught the importance of giving, but what about those times when we find ourselves on the receiving end?

I was recently visiting a neighbor who lost her husband in a construction accident early this past year. She raises three children, ages 12, 10 and 4, without any income.

When we visit, our talks are very superficial due to insufficient language, but I know the company is good for both of us. Earlier in the week, our family stopped by to deliver some items for school and some groceries. I returned the following day for coffee. When I arrived the next afternoon, we visited a bit before she invited our family to eat dinner with them that evening.

I had so many thoughts racing through my mind. How could I explain that I didn't want to take what little she had? Every time I tried to provide an excuse, she asked

why. Looking into her eyes, I knew that to deny her would be a rejection of her gift.

I finally committed that Vince and I would join them for a little bit, knowing that we would go home and share a meal with our kids, without a concern of how to provide for them. As we were about to eat, she asked why our kids couldn't come. Knowing I was not fully receiving her precious gift, again I accepted with teeth clenched. We called the boys to come join us.

The eight of us sat around the coffee table while my friend served us. As I made room for her to sit beside me, I saw there was no food left in the pans. I insisted that she share my plate, which she refused. She took some bread added a piece of cheese and a few tomato slices, while the rest of us enjoyed the potatoes and chicken she had prepared. Her children scarfed down their food as if they hadn't eaten in two days while I could hardly take a bite for the lump in my throat. I secretly passed some of my

food to the four-year-old. This poor woman's gift to us was exorbitant.

I sat basking in such gratitude, praising God for the blessings that He has given us, for the ability to share with my friend, and for the very hard lesson of learning to receive.

Your generosity through prayer, financial gifts, loving words that offer emotional support is not unlike this situation—they enable us to be here in this community, to demonstrate Jesus' love to this widow and others like her. We receive your gifts with a gratitude that we cannot express. May God's blessings be poured out on you.



LaVonne serves in Kosovo with her husband Vince and three children, with Virginia Mennonite Missions.

A visit to Purok Pluto's coffee fields

By JONATHAN CRANSTON

We rose early on a Sunday morning and accompanied a group of Purok Pluto's farmers into the coffee fields to observe and participate in the harvest of the coffee cherries. As we hung the plastic collection buckets around our necks and followed the farmers down the slope into the rows of coffee trees, the chilly morning fog lifted to reveal a marvelous view of blue mountains surrounding the glinting water of the Gulf of Davao, Philippines. The PeaceBuilders and the farmers filled their buckets with red coffee cherries and trooped back up the slope to the shade of Lyn's store.

Sitting beneath the roof of an open-fronted shed attached to the store, Marivic, Pluto resident Joy John, and store proprietor Lynlyn Panolino removed green, damaged, and rotten cherries from a pile of reds heaped on a net.

In order for the owner of a coffee field to bring in a harvest, she usually needs three harvesters in addition to herself. These extra hands receive their pay in

coffee: one kilogram out of every five that each harvests.

As the women described their farming life, they expressed frustration at the broad reality of hard work for small returns. In America, they asserted, if you have a vineyard or a farm, you are the rich person. But not here. "Why is that?" demanded Marivic turning on me suddenly and gazing intently in my eyes. I told her that I have no idea.

The next morning, at the PeaceBuilders and Coffee for Peace offices in Davao, Marivic's brother-in-law Ariel Dubria and his wife Nening were in good spirits. They were collecting their check from CFP, and taking part in the wet-processing of the coffee cherries which they and their fellow farmers had just brought from Purok Pluto in the farmers' own truck.

Nening told me that the money from CFP helps them a lot. Coffee pays better than vegetables, and whereas vegetables can only be harvested once every three months, coffee harvests come every two weeks. Ariel says that, by participating in



The PeaceBuilders team that visited the coffee fields of Purok Pluto, a village in Mindanao, Philippines. Photo courtesy of author

the wet-processing, the earning power of these farmers, who today live in dirt-floored shacks and must haul their produce down to the passable sections of road on horses and overladen scooters, will increase enormously. With support and training from PeaceBuilders, and with assistance from the Department of Trade and Industry, they may one day be able to claim a just recompense for their labors.



Jonathan serves through tranSend with PeaceBuilders in Mindanao, Philippines.

Thanksgiving celebration in Italy introduces new traditions

By LAURA GREEN

Thanksgiving is the beginning of the American holiday season and can be a time of struggle for those of us living in another culture and missing family and friends back home. It is also an opportunity to create new traditions, to share a bit of our culture with our friends and contacts here, and to reach out in hospitality and fellowship over a shared meal.

At the beginning of November, we offered to prepare a traditional American Thanksgiving meal as an outreach. It was exciting to be able to do this for both our small group here in Termoli as well as the larger church in Vasto. The chance to share our culture, have the ability to use it as a tool for outreach, and stay busy to ease the homesickness that comes with the beginning of the holidays was a blessing.

Our dinner fed about sixteen people, and we still had plenty of leftovers. Shawn was able to give a little of the history behind the holiday, and then we had a time for



Guests enjoyed fellowship and food at one of the Thanksgiving meals hosted by Shawn and Laura Green. Photo courtesy of author

everyone to share what things they were grateful to God for in their lives. It was a good time of fellowship and sharing hospitality over a meal.

Our second meal, held in Vasto, was lunch Sunday afternoon before church and took quite a bit more planning as we were

going to be feeding at least fifty people. We had a crew of people helping with the cooking, babysitting our boys, and setting up and decorating the church.

We had many guests, who don't normally attend, come and participate. Again Shawn gave the history on why we celebrate Thanksgiving and what it means, especially for a Christian. Then the opportunity was given for anyone to share why they were thankful.

Many blessings were shared by both members and guests alike as we took time to remember and celebrate God's faithfulness over the past year. We also enjoyed an outreach service followed by a dessert bar. It was very busy and tiring, but we are excited to see what God will do with the seeds that were planted.



Laura serves in southern Italy with her husband Shawn and children, with Virginia Mennonite Missions.

A full fall for Eastern Mennonite School

By MARY GOLDEN HUGHES

Our year began with 381 students K-12, including the highest elementary enrollment to date of 92 students.

Eastern Mennonite School welcomed the following new employees:

- Lindsey Fast, K-9 Counselor and Health Coordinator
- Kim Miller, Reading & Study Skills
- Sheri Smucker, Librarian
- Wendy Stapleton, Ph.D., Biology
- Katrina Didot, Director of Food Services

Elementary highlights to date include the annual Peace Parade, a Fall Festival that entertained over 100 visitors, the annual Grandparent’s Day event which brought 200 special guests to campus, the annual International Thanksgiving lunch which honors students’ heritages and the heart-warming Christmas concert “Light” which included scripture, song, dance, instruments and culminated with a traditional nativity scene.

The entire student body gathered for a day of hands-on experiential learning during October’s “History Day,” which commemorated the sesquicentennial of the Burning of the Valley. Planned by the EMS History Department and a student committee, students were assigned in K-12 “family groups” to learn what life was like for early Valley settlers. Students used a cider press, cooked over an open flame, tried set



Eastern Mennonite Elementary School students and staff pose with their peace dove during their annual Peace Parade. Photos courtesy of author

dancing, made ice cream and candles, learned about old-fashioned tools, games and needlework and ended the day with a wagon ride north to re-enact Sheridan’s pardon of Valley pacifist settlers. A highlight was posing for old-time photos taken by digital photography teacher Andrew Gascho.

EMS celebrated the following faculty achievements this fall:

Physical Education teacher and former Boy’s Varsity Soccer Coach Kendal Bowman was recently honored at the VISAA State Soccer Championship for his vision for and service to the league. To recognize his contributions, the championship cup and plaque have been named in his honor.

Earth Science teacher Gretchen Cessna received a \$2,714 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund for a project that will educate students, faculty, staff and community members on the importance of storm water management and stewardship. Ms. Cessna will use the EMS campus as a

living laboratory for students to conduct research and engage in hands-on learning.

Art teacher Barbara Gautcher was named Secondary Art Educator of the Year for the State of Virginia and for the Blue Ridge region. The award seeks to “focus professional attention on exemplary art educators, quality art education and increases public awareness of the importance of quality art education.”

Although our elementary division is nearing capacity, openings remain in several middle and high school grades. Several admissions events will take place this winter through spring and we welcome our church families to consider the option of an EMS education.

To learn more about upcoming events, please contact Kate Bergery, Admissions Counselor, at (540) 236-6021 or bergeryk@emhs.net.



Mary is Director of Advancement for Eastern Mennonite School.



Students pose for 1860s “family” portraits during History Day.

JANUARY 2015

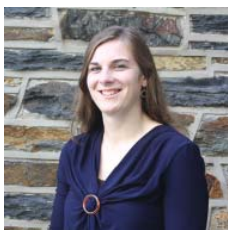
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Harold Kuhns in memory of his wife, Vera.</p>						
<p>4 Pray for Leslie Francisco, Bishop and pastor of Calvary Community Church, as he leads to build community, restore hope, and transform lives.</p>	<p>5 Pray that many hearts will be open to the gift of Christ as Steve and Laura Campbell's congregation in Montenegro gives out Samaritans Purse shoeboxes during the Orthodox Christmastime.</p>	<p>6 The Schoenhals family returns to Thailand today to continue their work with the Life Enrichment Church. Ask God to give them grace and peace as they transition back to life and work in Thailand.</p>	<p>7 Richard and Elsie Bowman returned to the States in December for Richard to have hip replacement surgery, scheduled for today. Pray for God's good healing as they hope to return to Albania at the end of February.</p>	<p>8 Pray for Sanford Yoder, pastor of Ashville Mennonite Church, as he guides the congregation to live the teachings of Jesus Christ and show God's love to all through faithful discipleship, service, evangelism and mission.</p>	<p>9 Ask God to be at work in many hearts raising up new workers for the Kingdom.</p>	<p>10 Pray for Giovanni Greco and the other leaders of the Mennonite Church in Bari, Italy. Ask God to give them vision and wisdom as they work at reorganizing church structure following the Riddle's departure.</p>
<p>11 Pray for Maren Hange, co-pastor of Charlottesville Mennonite Church, as she seeks to build the Kingdom of God by following Jesus in daily life, to worship him in both word and deed and to be a welcoming table for all to fellowship.</p>	<p>12 Justin Erb's assignment in Albania has shifted focus to building relationships in the community. Pray that his language abilities will grow quickly and that he will develop good relationships and opportunities to share the Good News.</p>	<p>13 Pray for the many tough challenges facing the refugees arriving in Quito, Ecuador. Pray that the kingdom of God will break through and bring lasting peace in Columbia.</p>	<p>14 Pray for Dale Wafer, pastor of Christian Conquest Word of God Church, as he provides leadership to build transformative relationships through Christ to overcome differences of race, economic level, and educational background.</p>	<p>15 Pray for the continued work of Mennonite Hispanic Initiative (MHI) in raising up Latino church leaders to engage in mission and discipleship.</p>	<p>16 Ask God's Spirit to rest on Jacob and Hosanna as they listen to the stories of brokenness and pain of many of their friends and neighbors in South Asia and seek to share the hope of Jesus.</p>	<p>17 Pray for Rafael Tartari's trips to Puka, another city in Albania, and the services held there every Saturday. Pray that many people will hear the Gospel through this outreach.</p>
<p>18 Pray for David Flowers, as he pastors Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship. This church seeks to grow as a community of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.</p>	<p>19 As Steve and Bethany Horst and Adam and Jeanette Strode juggle language school, homework, family, outside relationships and rest, pray that they will live in God's wholesome balance.</p>	<p>20 Pray for the Anabaptist mission agencies gathered this week to share with each other about their work, discuss areas of collaboration, explore new opportunities, and pray together.</p>	<p>21 Give thanks for the opportunity Norma Teles has to nurture and connect with the mothers of the children she teaches at the Joshua Center in Albania. Ask God to continue to bless these relationships.</p>	<p>22 Pray for David Gullman, pastor of Crossroads Mennonite Church, as he provides leadership to the congregation.</p>	<p>23 Give thanks for Katrina Schmidt's host family in Lezhë, Albania and ask God to continue growing and deepening her relationship with them.</p>	<p>24 Give thanks for the way Caleb and Roni Kiefer feel God is growing them as they lead the youth group Bible studies at Ridge Mennonite in Jamaica. Ask God to speak through them to the youth.</p>
<p>25 Pray for Peter Eberly, pastor of Eastside Church, as he provides leadership, calling people to be radically Christ centered, service-oriented, and mission-minded.</p>	<p>26 Celebrate the ministry of Rumah Harapan, the pre-school where Grace Prasetyo teaches in Indonesia. Ask God to bless the school and pour out His love on the children there.</p>	<p>27 Give thanks for the teaching ministry of Josh Kirkman in Albania. Pray that he will overflow in confident hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>28 VMissions' staff will be giving leadership to an Asia retreat and Mediterranean retreat in the spring. Pray that God will guide the staff as they prepare and plan for this time together.</p>	<p>29 Ask God to soften many hearts to the Good News as Shawn and Laura Green share the hope they have in Christ with the Italian people.</p>	<p>30 The church that Steve and Laura Campbell work with in Montenegro is looking for a larger meeting space. Pray for this place to be found and finances to be in place.</p>	<p>31 Praise God that He has placed a unique calling on each one of us. Spend time today asking God to reveal how He is calling you to serve in His Kingdom and share His love.</p>



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Virginia Mennonite Missions
Virginia Mennonite Conference
901 Parkwood Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2498

Announcements

The **13th annual Anabaptist Kennel Charles lecture** will be presented by Regina Wenger in the Eastern Mennonite School auditorium on Jan. 19, 7 p.m. Her lecture is on “Illumination in the West: A. D. Wenger’s Theology of Revival, Dispensationalism, and Mission.” Wenger will examine and discuss Amos D. (A.D.) Wenger’s writings and beliefs in three areas: revival/conversion, dispensational premillennialism, and missions, with an emphasis on how he popularized these ideas to an increasingly receptive Mennonite Church. She will also speak at the morning chapel, and all are welcome at 9:40 a.m.



Join the **WCRC Marriage Retreat**, February 20-22. We invite you to a weekend getaway with lots of time to really connect with your spouse. Jim and Rosemary Hess of Transformation Ministries Center will be speaking and leading our sessions. For more information or to register online, go to www.wcrc.info. Contact WCRC Program Director, Jenn Hill—programs@wrc.info or (866) 566-9272.

Join the **Shenandoah Valley MEDA chapter** to hear Lauren Good, a senior consultant/project manager for MEDA, speak about his work with the Tanzania Cassava Seed Champion project. The event will be January 22, 7 p.m., in Campus Center 105 Strite Conference Room at Eastern Mennonite University. A dessert bar will be provided with a small suggested donation. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Patty Eckard at eckardp@emu.edu.

Delegates: Winter Delegate Session for Virginia Mennonite Conference will be February 7 at Waynesboro Mennonite Church. It will start at 8:15 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m. Please bring \$10/person to cover the meal cost.

Pastors: If you live in the Harrisonburg area and are interested in attending the **VMC Ministry Retreat** at WCRC, there will be a van leaving from the Conference Center (901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg) at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27, and returning Sunday, March 1. Cost is \$15 round trip. Contact Skip Tobin at skip.tobin@vmmissions.org to make arrangements.

Big Spring Mennonite Church is seeking a half-time pastor to lead a small, vibrant congregation in Luray, Va., known for our generosity and love for children. Big Spring seeks a pastoral candidate with an Anabaptist perspective who will lead/partner with us in nurturing spiritual growth, providing pastoral care, and building connections in our community. If this opportunity interests you, please contact Ed Rissler at jerissler@comcast.net or (540) 833-2962.

UPCOMING TRIP

Middle East travel opportunity: Registration is now open for “Places, People, & Prayers”—April 30-May 23—an **Israel/Palestine study tour** sponsored through Eastern Mennonite Seminary and co-led by Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor of New Testament, and Kevin A. Clark, Campus Pastor. This tour is open to all interested travelers, with the potential of 3 study hours of seminary credit for those who desire it. Interested pastors may apply for \$500 travel grants through the “Come and See” program of MC USA. Registrations will be accepted on a “first come, first served” basis. For more information and a brochure, contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at (540) 432-4276 or at weaverdj@emu.edu