# BOLD LOVE: Embodying the Jesus Way

— Matthew 5

Virginia Mennonite Conference

2025 Annual Reports & Statistics



### Vision:

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

—adopted by VMC delegates, July 2017

### Mission:

Virginia Mennonite Conference equips pastors, lay leaders, and congregants for worship and service, and to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to neighbors near and far.

—adopted by VMC delegates, February 2018

### **Community of Faith Statement:**

As an Anabaptist community, we commit to one another with Jesus at the center of our lives, giving witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and making every effort to maintain the unity God has given us while seeking to trust each other as we minister in our local contexts.

We pledge to support and work together through these commitments:

- We will do our best to practice mutual trust and respect in thought, word and deed, giving each other
  the benefit of the doubt when we perceive there to be inconsistencies. We will move toward conflict with
  curiosity, expecting the Holy Spirit to illumine us.
- We will seek to **draw from each other's strengths and support each other** as we grow together, seeking to publicly and privately support and honor each other.
- We will seek to be in touch with our own feelings and to express them clearly and appropriately, while recognizing the validity of each other's feelings and experiences.
- We will attempt to **clearly communicate** our own needs and expectations and **listen carefully** to each other with ears, mind, and heart before speaking critically to an issue. (James 1:19)
- We will do our best to **provide a safe and brave place** to express differing opinions and ideas, and make space for everyone to contribute. (Ephesians 4:15)
- We will seek to represent the love, grace, and reconciliation of Jesus Christ in all we do.

—adopted by VMC delegates, July 2023

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### **VMC LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

### **Conference Ministry Team**

Maren Hange, Conference Minister of Conference Formation and Soul Care Juan Carlos Malvaez, Conference Minister of Congregational Vision and Mission Phil Kniss, Conference Minister of Leadership Development and Support

### From Maren Hange

This year we have been marking the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism, which began as a renewal movement in response to brokenness in the church. Issues have continued to mark this year in VMC, notably the resignations of June Miller and Jim Hershberger as well as the



death of Ervin Stutzman. It has been a challenging year to say the least, but I have been encouraged by the way people in leadership have engaged with all their heart and soul and mind.

A few years ago, a book *Reconciling all things* by Katongole & Rice changed my understanding of leadership. According to the authors, leadership is not so much about expertise, rather with stepping into that gap that opens up. Leadership begins with people who are disturbed by brokenness, respond to a gap, stay long enough to belong to it, suffer in its tension, and are sustained by hidden communion with God. These are the everyday leaders who make visible the hope of Christ.

I now view leadership as stepping up to challenges with humility and faithfulness, rather than relying solely on expertise. This year, I ensured all leadership bodies had equal information to foster collaboration. The conference leadership team, including Phil Kniss and Carlos Malvaez, worked effectively together. I also met regularly with Steve Pardini (Conference Council chair) and Ervin Stutzman (late Faith & Life Commission chair) to keep everyone on the same page.

I'm very grateful for Sarah Layman, our administrative assistant, whose support was essential and pleased that Fonda Weaver joined as office administrator. Much of this year's work focused on fostering connections within the new leadership team, between various committees, and across the larger conference. We held Winter and

Summer Assemblies, published *Pathways* magazine to share stories of God's work, *Insight* newsletter with CMT reflections and are developing a new website.

The MC USA conference ministers met in Puerto Rico, December 4-7, 2024, providing valuable networking for those in similar roles. The July 2025 convention in Greensboro offered further opportunities for connection, resources, and encouragement.

VMC is filled with gifted and faithful people. I pray that God will continue to make a way forward for healing and hope to flow through us.

### From Juan Carlos Malvaez

As I take a moment to reflect on my time serving with VMC on the conference ministry team, I am filled with profound gratitude for the incredible experiences and growth we have shared throughout this year. These moments serve as



a testament to God's unwavering faithfulness and the remarkable dedication of our pastors, church leaders, and congregations, all working in harmony to advance the mission of Christ.

Throughout the year, we have witnessed remarkable progress despite the numerous challenges we faced. The growth, transformation, and unity among our brothers and sisters have been genuinely inspiring. VMC's mission remains steadfast: to equip pastors, lay leaders, and congregants for worship and service, while actively bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to our neighbors, both near and far.

Highlights of the Year: One of the most significant highlights has been the strengthening of our unity through communal prayer, where we intentionally called upon all intercessors to uplift VMC, our pastors, leaders, and endorsed ministries. I deeply cherish the new

relationships formed through various engagements—whether through meetings, phone calls, or emails—each interaction has enriched our community.

This year, VMC's pastors have been encouraged to reimagine outreach ministry, leading with resilience and embracing all missional efforts within their respective contexts. I take immense pride in affirming the mission and vision of our VMC congregations. It is heartwarming to see individuals connecting with neighbors under a tree, providing lodging for hospitalized family members, preparing meals for local shelters, leading kids' clubs, and supporting recently arrived immigrant and refugee families. The mission of Christ continues to thrive among us, manifesting in acts of service and love.

Moving forward: The future of VMC holds promise and hope. There lies a significant opportunity to expand God's kingdom within our conference, addressing the pressing need for healing and hope in our communities. Launching new initiatives for church revitalization and planting will be essential in this endeavor. As we move forward, let us discern through prayer, strategize together, and implement creative ways to deepen our relationships and partnerships across VMC.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to each of you for your unwavering commitment and love for the Virginia Mennonite Conference. Together, let us continue to walk in faith, embracing the journey ahead with open hearts and minds. With gratitude and hope.

### From Phil Kniss

As I approach the end of my one-year term on the Conference Ministry Team, I am full of gratitude and anticipation. I'm grateful that my retirement from pastoring coincided with the need of VMC to have someone



serve in this ¼-time role for a year. The job was a good fit for me, and a good off-ramp from full-time ministry. Not everything went according to plan, as you may know. But I sensed God's leading through it all. When the need suddenly arose for one of us to step into more administrative and communication duties, I had the time and ability to do it, which could take some of the pressure off the other two members of CMT, who still carried half-time pastoral roles in a congregation.

Those weeks (months?) of semi-chaotic transition made me appreciate all the more how our conference runs on ordinary people, not on paid professionals. So many of you who love the church and love Virginia Conference, stepped forward, happy to help wherever you could. Thank you!! I am amazed at the countless hours freely given by those serving on Conference Council, FLC, Credentialing Committee, Personnel Committee and more. Those groups all had double or triple their usual agenda, to deal with the reality of church re-affiliation and vacant leadership and staff positions. People served with cheerful hearts and a clear-headed realism.

One of the special joys I had in my role, in addition to meaningful collaboration with CMT and other staff and volunteers, was getting out into some other VMC congregations and witnessing vibrant communities engaged in worship and mission. The VMC family of congregations is alive and well. There are fewer churches opting to travel together in this family right now, but we are still living in hope and answering God's call. The Gospel is still being proclaimed, people are still finding hope and healing and belonging. Thanks be to God!

I look forward to the next chapter in the life of VMC. Though I will no longer be employed by VMC, I will join the rest of you in gladly giving of my available time and gifts to help VMC thrive and join God's mission in this beautiful and broken world.

### **Conference Council**

Officers: Steve Pardini (interim chair), \_\_\_\_ (moderator-elect), Mary Jo Veurink (secretary), Ron Stoltzfus (treasurer); Non-voting staff: Maren Hange, Juan Carlos Malvaez (CMT); District Representatives: Craig Wilson (Eastern District), Vivian Stevens-Lyons (Calvary District), Dale Hartzler (Central District), Steve Pardini and Paula Stoltzfus (Harrisonburg District), David King (Northern District), \_\_\_\_ (Potomac), Gerald Shenk (Southern District), Vernon Moyer (TCK District); Other Representatives: \_\_\_\_ (MC USA CLC representative), Steve Pardini (Congregational Life Commission), H. Michael Shenk III (Faith & Life Commission)



Virginia Mennonite
Conference has
experienced a series of
significant events,
including the resignation
of the Executive
Conference Minister, the
Moderator, the
Moderator-Elect, and the
Director of Administration.
Numerous congregations

have closed or left for other conferences. In addition, the passing of the Faith and Life Commission Chairperson and the retirement of the Gifts Discernment Committee Chairperson have left key leadership positions vacant.

Recently, a new and capable Office Administrator has been hired, which has been a blessing. An interim Conference Council Chair has been approved by the Delegate Assembly. However, the current Conference Ministry Team, which has performed well and exceeded expectations during these challenging times, will soon be completing its term. The Conference Council has posted a job description and is currently accepting applications to form a new team of Conference Ministers.

Through these difficult times, the Conference has been working to get back on its feet. Numerous and significant accomplishments have been achieved. The Conference Council has worked closely with the Conference Ministry Team and the Faith and Life Commission, and the leaders of these groups have issued several joint statements. Task Teams have been formed to do

root-cause problem-solving and recommend corrective actions. A Fundraising Task Team has been formed and is fully operational. The budget has been brought under control, and Gifts Discernment is seeking people to fill positions on the Finance Committee. We have initiated work to form a Personnel Committee and develop a Human Resources Document. Conference Council meeting summaries are published for the delegates and credentialed leaders to keep them informed about progress.

I believe that though we are hurting, we are not without hope. God has a purpose for the Virginia Mennonite Conference. God is using these trials to build resilience and guide us into the work that has been prepared in advance for us to do.

While faith and hope continue, we must recognize that the Conference cannot function without a Moderator, Moderator Elect, Conference Ministry Team, Faith and Life Commission Chair, and Chair of the Gifts Discernment Committee. I am convinced that we have people in VMC—members in good standing, with servant hearts, humble attitudes, capable of working together on teams with a can-do, problem-solving spirit. We have an abundance of members possessing the necessary gifts and talents to do the work of the Conference. Do we have members willing to "stand in the gap" and help the Conference get back on its feet? Now is the time for people to step forward and give their time and energy to the work of VMC. Do you sense a call? Are you willing to serve?

—Steve Pardini, interim chair

### Faith And Life Commission

Officers: Ervin Stutzman (Chair, Nov. 2023-June 2025); Pearl Hartman (Acting Chair); H. Michael Shenk III (Secretary); Maren Tyedmers Hange (CMT staff); Members: James Åkerson (Central District), Leslie Francisco III (Calvary District), Ryan Ahlgrim (Eastern District), Roy Hange (Harrisonburg District), Kevin Gasser (Southern District), Pearl Hartman (Member-at-Large), Janet Blosser (Member-at-Large), Aldine Musser (Northern District), H. Michael Shenk III (Northern District), Luke Schrock-Hurst (Potomac District), Joe Hackman (Administrative Cluster), Steve Landis (Chaplains Cluster), MaryBeth Heatwole Moore (Teaching Cluster) [now vacant: TCK District Min., One Member-at-Large, permanent chair]

**Credentials Committee:** H. Michael Shenk, III (chair), James Åkerson, Luke Schrock-Hurst, Kathy Yoder, Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Ryan Ahlgrim



Just a little over a month ago the FLC and VMC community were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Ervin Stutzman, FLC chair. Just a short two years ago, Ervin accepted the call to chair the FLC as the call of God upon his life and we are deeply greatful for

his leadership and the depth of his commitment to the health of VMC congregations and pastors.

At the time of Ervin's death, the FLC was preparing to identify a successor so that Ervin could work with the new leader before ending his role in November of 2026. In accordance with VMC's bylaws, the FLC is engaged in identifying a new chair. As a major part of this work, the FLC is reflecting on the loss of Ervin and what it represents to the FLC and beyond, identifying the primary work of the FLC and discerning the gifts needed in a new chair.

Over the last year the FLC has continued to meet quarterly for a full day, in person, with an online option, in the belief that face-to-face discussions are more appropriate for the type of discernment that we are called to do on behalf of VMC.

The FLC Officers also meet on a monthly or as necessary basis with the Conference Council Chair and a member of the Conference Ministry Team (CMT). These meetings provide a wonderful opportunity for the

three leadership bodies to work collaboratively for the common good of VMC.

At the June meeting that Ervin chaired by Zoom just a few days before he died, the FLC heard from Steve Pardini, Conference Council Co-Ordinator, about the Council's efforts to improve relationships between men and women in VMC and engaged in rounds based on the following questions:

- At the times FLC was at its best, how did men and women interact with each other?
- Name a time when you felt dignity and respect from another member of FLC.
- To what extent do you believe VMC could improve in the way that women and men treat each other with dignity and respect? How might the FLC be a part of that improvement?

This meeting was especially meaningful because we were able to participate by an online link, in closing "Anabaptism at 500" worship service in Zurich, Switzerland.

Currently, in view of the declining number of VMC congregations, the FLC is working with the Conference Council and the CMT to explore reorganizing districts and the oversight ministries that support them.

We continue to seek God's grace, forgiveness, and renewal in the work that VMC has called us to do.

-Michael Shenk, III, FLC Secretary

### **DISTRICT AND CLUSTER REPORTS**

KEY: M=membership; A=Attendance (incl. est. online); pastors listed in bold font, other delegates in regular font

### **Calvary District**

Officer: Bishop Leslie Francisco, III, District Minister

Calvary Community Church (C3)

M:755, A:755

Rev. Dr. Lesley Francisco McClendon

Caleb McClendon Nicole Francisco Natalie Francisco

Vivian Stevens-Lyons

Chekesha White Ronnie Mack Alicia Manning Shawn Manning JoAnn Phoenix Donnell Spruill

C3 Hampton — This year has been marked as our "Year of Expansion," and by God's grace we are experiencing growth not only in numbers but also in depth, clarity, and calling. We are thrilled to share that we've officially released a new mission statement that captures the heart and rhythm of our congregation: "Love God. Build People. Leave Legacy." This language has re-centered us on what matters most and is shaping everything from our discipleship process to our facility strategy.

This year, we welcomed a new worship leader, bringing a fresh sound and renewed engagement in worship. Our intergenerational vision continues to flourish—most notably through a beautiful "Keenager Prom" that celebrated our elders and created meaningful cross-generational connections within our community.

We also had the joy of appointing a new Director of Student Ministries and expanding our volunteer base. This celebratory moment was not only a milestone for our church family, but also a reminder of the collective call to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Beyond the platform, we have continued to invest in tangible outreach and internal infrastructure. We launched a new teen ministry, and our hope in the near future is to deepen our care for neurodiverse individuals through Sensory Sundays. We have also initiated strategic facility renovations, all aimed at creating more room for people and purpose.

C3 remains a church rooted in love and committed to legacy. We are grateful to walk alongside you in kingdom collaboration and are excited about what lies ahead — not just for our church, but for the larger Body of Christ.

C3 South Africa — Pastor Flinn continues to provide strong leadership at C3 South Africa, which recently relocated to a much larger facility to accommodate its growth and expanding community impact.

Our Outreach Director, Lauren Francisco, has spent significant time on the ground with the local school and orphanage we support. Recently, the director of the orphanage and school visited our congregation here in the States, sharing a heartfelt update on the lives being transformed — especially among the most vulnerable children. There's still much more to do, and we remain committed to partnering with a purposeful plan that leads to sustainable outcomes.

Members of our Hampton congregation continue to play an active role in supporting these South African initiatives. We're excited to relaunch another opportunity for members to join a service trip soon. Our most recent trip, which included 15 members, was a meaningful success — allowing us to build connections not only with the children at the center and school, but also with the dedicated staff and volunteers who make it all possible.

C3 Atlanta — still remains a virtual community.

**C3 Rocky Mount** — We currently provide space for another congregation to hold in-person ministry in the physical building. We also continue to have virtual members from this area who worship weekly online.

**Chesapeake** — We continue to provide a space for a local church to hold services. While they are a smaller congregation, they maintain a meaningful presence in the community. Bishop Francisco remains in regular contact with their pastor to support and encourage their ministry.

—Bishop Leslie Francisco III, Calvary District Minister

### **Central District**

Officers: James Åkerson, District Minister; Dale Hartzler, Chair

**Beldor Mennonite Church** M:14, A:26 **James Åkerson** Emily Åkerson

Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship M:20, A:22 Kelli Moore Joseph Bontrager Mt Clinton Mennonite Church M:70, A:72 Jim Hershberger LeVon Smoker

From an earlier report: "Central District of Virginia Mennonite Conference finds great hope as it is touched by scripture and the Holy Spirit. The Lord points us to his powerful way of hope, peace, and joy." Those were true words written for the 2024 Summer Assembly booklet, yet we learn in life that hope truly lies in our ultimate relationship with Christ, and not always with good health and long life. The Holy Spirit knows how to pray for us; and sometimes we must remain quiet amid those Spirit prayers.

Weavers disassociated with VMC and the Central District in the Winter Assembly of March 1. Thus, we were left with three active congregations within the district, including Beldor, Christiansburg, and Mt. Clinton. Though we could have continued at that scale, we realized that grief prevailed after so many losses (down from nine in 2015), which robbed us of positive energy to move forward. We resolved on March 6 to disband as of September 1 and seek affiliation with other districts. To date, Beldor will be welcomed into fellowship at Northern District, while Christiansburg and Mt. Clinton continue to deliberate.

**Beldor** congregation reaches its broader community through visitation, online sermons, and monthly bluegrass gospel concerts (attracting people from a four-county area). Those methods are well received. They enjoy lively mountain bluegrass gospel tunes and traditional hymns in worship. The week includes adult Sunday school, men's Bible studies, and women's gatherings that encourage service and Bible study.

Christiansburg congregation was excited to call their new pastor, Kelli Moore, and looks forward to her leadership. They desire to welcome all people to worship, not wanting any to feel as outcasts in the emerging American culture that now seems hostile to people of color and other-gender orientations. They hope other congregations will also offer light and hope in this troubled time of our nation. There is gentle joy in worship together with music, scripture, children's

messages, and prayer. They hold monthly fellowship lunches in the church, fellowship picnics at members' homes, and summer worship/fellowship picnics. They also gather in fellowship groups. They continue to host a preschool program in their building.

Mt. Clinton congregation reaches out to its broader community and other churches through substance-abuse and prison recovery programs, pastoral care outreach, and disciple-making. The church is sponsoring a refugee family from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The congregation gathers in fellowship groups for discipleship and accountability. They hold fun events for kids called "Parents Night Out," about once a month. With the dissolving of the VMC's Central District and the four votes of VMC delegates in the 2024 VMC summer assembly, Mt. Clinton is examining new affinity relationships with the broader church.

—James Åkerson, VMC-Central District Minister



Mt. Clinton members prepare a pork and beans dinner for their community.

### **Eastern District**

Officers: Ryan Ahlgrim, District Minister; Craig Wilson, Chair; Betty Kurtz, Vice-Chair, Valerie Wermuth, Treasurer; Josh Brown, Secretary

First Mennonite Church

M:77, A:92

Ryan Ahlgrim

Grant Rissler

**Huntington Mennonite Church** 

M:65, A:32

Betty Kurtz

**Providence Mennonite Church** 

M:24, A:15

Mark Marvuglio

Evangeline Yoder

Warwick River Mennonite Church

M:32, A:35

Steve Weibe-Johnson

Sue Yoder

Williamsburg Mennonite Church

M:77, A:71

**Zachary Dey** 

Josh Brown

The Eastern District consists of five congregations, stretching from Richmond to Newport News. Their average Sunday attendance ranges from 20 to 95 (including online attendance). On a typical Sunday morning, their combined attendance is around 250. Two or three of the congregations are stable or growing modestly, and two are in decline due to an aging membership and lack of new attendees.

**Providence Mennonite Church** is served part-time by Mark Marvuglio who brings a strong emphasis on evangelism to his ministry.

Warwick River Mennonite Church is served by part-time interim pastor Steve Wiebe-Johnson. Last Easter the congregation moved its worship services back into its main building, using the fellowship hall while renovations to the sanctuary and other areas are being completed.

Howard Miller, pastor of **Huntington Mennonite Church**, retired at the end of June and the congregation hosted a celebration of his many decades of ministry in the Virginia Mennonite Conference. David Mishler, recently retired Conference minister for Alleghany Conference, will become part-time interim pastor in October while the congregation discerns the best way forward.

**Williamsburg Mennonite Church** recently hosted the ordination service for its pastor, Zach Dey.

**First Mennonite Church of Richmond** increased associate pastor Emily Nyce's position to halftime at the beginning of the year, and the congregation celebrated lead pastor Ryan Ahlgrim's 40th ordination anniversary. The church's 70th anniversary will be celebrated October 18-19.

Four of the Eastern District congregations participated in the planning of an ecumenical celebration of Anabaptism's 500th anniversary, hosted by First Baptist Church of Richmond. Greg Boyd was the keynote speaker (online), supplemented by panelists representing various denominations.

For the second year in a row, four of our congregations came together last fall on a Sunday morning at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center for a joint worship service and potluck meal. 130-150 attended an enthusiastic service of music and sharing from the four congregations. The next joint worship service will be held at WCRC on September 21st at 10:30am. All are welcome to join us!

—Ryan Ahlgrim, District Minister

First Mennonite of Richmond welcomes five new members and has a baptism in January.

### **Harrisonburg District**

Officers: Roy Hange, District Minister; Paula Stoltzfus and Steve Pardini, Co-Chairs; Jim Beachy, Treasurer

### Charlottesville Mennonite Church

M:47, A:33 Roy Hange

Maren Tyedmers Hange

Holly Scott

### Iglesia Esperanza DeVida

M:15, A:12

Phil and Terry Whitmer

### Family of Hope

M:7, A:9 Harvey Yoder

### Harrisonburg Mennonite Church

M:457, A:372 Jacob Lee

Craig Maven

Carmen Schrock-Hurst

Pete Burkholder Mark Harmon Les Helmuth

Deb Pardini

### **Immanuel Mennonite Church**

M:75, A:100 **Matthew Bucher** Tim Friesen

### Manantial de Vida

M:59, A:70 Juan Carlos Malvaez Wendy Malvaez

### Park View Mennonite Church

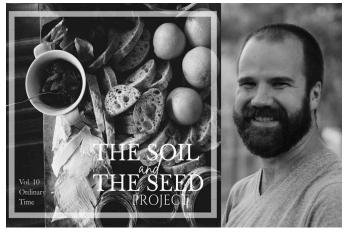
M:342, A:329
Steve Slagel
Paula Stoltzfus
John Stoltzfus
Shirley Hochstetler
Fred Kniss
Mamie Mellinger
Shirley Yoder Burbaker

### Ridgeway Mennonite Church

M:83, A:95 **Chad Miller** Glen Kauffman

### **Pastoral/Ministry Transitions:**

Phil Kniss' 28 years of ministry at Park View MC was celebrated on the occasion of his retirement, and later Steve Slagel was installed as transitional pastor at Park View MC.



Seth Crissman was ordained at Immanuel MC for his church wide Soil and Seed Ministry.

Harvey Yoder is completing 60 years of credentialed ministry in VMC in August 2025 most recently at Family of Hope.

### **Ministry Highlights:**

Harrisonburg MC continues it Wednesday evening outreach to neighborhood children. Two district churches

are exploring hosting new pre-school programs, Ridgeway MC is regularly incorporating Swahili into worship services for an immigrant population attending, Manantial De Vida's ongoing outreach to immigrant community is increasingly multiethnic, Immanuel MC's weekly Tuesday evening community meal outreach deepens relationships, Charlottesville MC's Crossroad Ministry hospitality house for families with patients at UVA Medical Center is being used steadily....

The pastors of the district meet monthly for lunch for mutual support and resourcing. The district works at providing formation resources for pastors as needed or requested, using retreat or small group sessions through Gestalt Pastoral Care or generational healing.

We as a circle of pastors also include and walk with Seth Crissman and his Soil and Seed Ministry and Nick Meyer who became Executive Director of Grace Inside prison ministry in Virginia.

Roberta Webb Early Education Center closed on June 28th after a multi decade hosting relationship with Immanuel MC. Immanuel MC is remodeling that space for church and community ministry needs.

Mt Vernon MC left the district and VMC.

—Roy Hange, Harrisonburg District Minister (photo by EMU)

### **Northern District**

Officers: Aldine Musser and Mike Shenk, III, District Ministers; David King, Chair

**Big Spring Mennonite Church** 

M:28, A:19 **Pearl Hartman**Kathy Yoder

Crest Hill Community Church

M:26, A:22

**Marian Buckwalter** 

CrossWay Mennonite Church

M:6, A:6

James Rhee

**Hebron Mennonite Church** 

M:54, A:29 Mark Conley

Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah

M:26, A:24

Alfonso Alvarado Ayala

Lindale Mennonite Church

M:272, A:186 **Arlen Vernava** Erin Kennedy Hess Gloria Lehman Randy Schweitzer

Mathias Mennonite Church

M:19, A:45 **Dean Williams** 

Stephens City Mennonite Church

M:19, A:22 **Les Horning** Linda Wenger

Valley View Mennonite Church

M:25, A:25 Mike Shenk, III

Woodland Mennonite Church

M:17, A:9

Zion Mennonite Church

M:142, A:104
Sarah Piper
Lori Friesen
Elwood Yoder
Joe Friesen

The Northern District consists of twelve congregations and engages in a wonderful variety of worship styles and special ministries. Except for Lindale MC and Zion MC, attendance at congregational worship services numbers less than fifty. Northern District anticipates the addition of Beldore MC following the disbanding of Central District.

The Northern District has quarterly Council meetings. This past year council members listened to stories of congregations in action in their community, such as Valley Interfaith and Mennonite Disaster Service. Duane Beck led a mission and vision process and explored a variety of kinds of leadership needed. He also encouraged the Northern District to reach across the table in love with congregations who are no longer associated with VMC. Steve Pardini came to a recent Council meeting to learn more about the Northern District and to report on Conference Council initiatives.

Aldine Musser and Mike Shenk share District Minister responsibilities and meet regularly with each pastor. They also organize a monthly breakfast for District Pastors with a question to reflect on or respond to. This being the 500<sup>th</sup> year of Anabaptism, much of the conversation centered on what Anabaptist congregations have in common globally and how the Anabaptist story is being told in the local congregation. Pastors also recounted how their congregation began, who they hope to become and how they are faithfully following Jesus.

Earlier this year, Arlen G. Vernava, Intentional Interim Pastor at Lindale MC, shared three core values that embrace the "Jesus Way" of navigating the challenges of pastoral ministry and congregational life:

- **Generous Hospitality:** Practice a generous spirit to all that seems strange, different, or wrong.
- Respectful Communality (Community):
   Encourage a respectful spirit and practice toward people and ideas.
- **Glad Collaboration:** encourage engagement with the past, the present, and the hoped for future.

**Iglesia Mennonita Monte Moriah:** Pastor Alfonso Alverado baptized 2 new believers in June of 2025.

Lindale MC: Lonnie Yoder served a short-term interim assignment after Andrew Buckwalter Fairfield was dismissed on September 8, 2024. Arlen G. Vernava was called as the Intentional Interim Pastor in January of 2025. Aldine Musser asked to be released from her responsibilities as Lindale's District Minister and Craig Maven took her place.

**Lindale/Zion Vacation Bible School:** Received a grant from the Northern District's Kingdom Building Fund.

Mathias MC: Received several new members last year. Stephens City Mennonite Church: Called Les Horning as pastor effective November 3, 2024.

—Aldine Musser and Mike Shenk III, District Ministers; Dave King, District Chair

### **Potomac District**

Officer: Luke Schrock-Hurst, District Minister

Daniels Run Peace Church

M:45, A:42

Stephen Intagliata

Karen Zehr

DC City Church

M:80. A:65

**Bruce Clark** 

Fourth St Community Fellowship

M:61, A:~

estimate

Sang-Jin Choi

Iglesia Alfa y Omega

M:70, A:90 estimate

Jose Borjas

Vietnamese Christian Fellowship

M:18. A:12

estimate

**Peter Nguyen** 

Washington Community Fellowship

M:64, A:79

**Andrew Cheung** 

Kristal Graber

The Potomac District consists of Washington Community Fellowship, Daniels Run Peace Church, DC City Church (formerly Christian Conquest Word of God), Vietnamese Christian Fellowship, Fourth Street Fellowship, La Iglesia del Evangelio Completo Alfa y Omega, and the DC Chaplaincy Ministry at Dulles Airport.

Potomac District continues to find it difficult to meet together, given the number of bi-vocational ministers, DC traffic nightmares in the large metro area, and difference of culture, language, and theology. However, the churches of Potomac District continue to seek to live out "Bold Love: Embodying the Way of Jesus."

Pastor Andrew Cheung shares: "At Washington Community Fellowship, we've sought to embody the Bold Love of Jesus by deepening our discipleship and extending compassion to our neighbors. In a time of political polarization, our Adult Nurture series on Christian Civics invited us to practice faithful, humble engagement across ideological divides—loving even those we disagree with, as Jesus calls us to in Matthew 5. We've also leaned into generosity as a spiritual practice, encouraging one another to reflect Christ's self-giving love in tangible ways. And through Kids Day Out events (hosted at our church in partnership with DC127, a local Christian ministry supporting foster and kinship families in DC), we've offered rest and support to caregivers who often feel unseen, living out Jesus' call to care for the vulnerable in our city.

Pastor "Tig" Intagliata muses on his congregation's sharing God's love with neighbors through gardening together: "Daniels Run Peace Church has a community garden on our property which provides gardening plots for members of our congregation and community. This year, there are four gardeners—Nyambura from our

congregation and Anibal, Antonio, and Young from the community—growing potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, green beans, and herbs. Mary, a master gardener in the community, shares her gardening wisdom with the gardeners, and Pastor Intagliata and member Cory Suter provide support to the gardeners in a variety of ways.



Pastor Peter Nguyen humbly states: "Vietnamese Christian Fellowship reached out to the community to help the less fortunate during the Christmas holiday season, and partnered with another local congregation to help with the homeless during the cold winter."

Pastor SangJin Choi of Fourth Street Community Fellowship, returned to Washington in 2024 after several years being primarily based in South Korea. SangJin shares this reflection on embodying the Way of Jesus: "During the COVID-19 pandemic, I continued homeless ministry in the U.S., but local government policies in Washington, D.C. halted gatherings of homeless individuals, citing concerns that they were primary carriers of the virus. Despite this setback, I've been prayerfully exploring new avenues for serving the homeless. While our Sunday homeless church ministry has been temporarily suspended, we are still actively engaged in outreach: the Korean church and youth continue providing meals and sharing the gospel with the homeless. We are also continuing our short-term mission efforts during summer and winter breaks. In late July, we hosted eight college students from Korea in Washington, D.C., to receive training in homeless ministry and leadership. In early August, 29 young adult professionals will visit Korea to receive training in the same areas. A longstanding challenge for me has been the issue of identity for our homeless church. Although our Fourth Street Community Fellowship is affiliated with the Virginia Mennonite Conference, our ministry model—a church of the homeless, for the homeless—doesn't easily fit within the traditional framework of Mennonite churches."

Chaplains Christina and Eugene Kraybill shared this example of being SALT and Light in their **Chaplaincy ministry at Washington Dulles International Airport**: Eugene received two requests this summer from airport/airline employees to perform their wedding ceremonies. These couples wanted to honor God & their families. They were thrilled when Eugene said he would be honored to marry them. Christina participated in one of the wedding ceremonies as well. These milestone events now make way for continued relationship-building with them at their workplaces at the Washington Dulles International Airport.

—Luke Schrock-Hurst, Potomac District Minister

### **Southern District**

Officers: Kevin Gasser, District Minister; Gerald Shenk, Chair; Ann Frank, Treasurer; Ranita Shenk, Secretary

Lynside Mennonite Church

M:50, A:47 **Phil Lehman** Keith Showalter

Rehoboth Mennonite Church

M:10, A:~ estimate Terri Jordan

Springdale Mennonite Church

M:74, A:50 Ann Frank Staunton Mennonite Church M:32. A:60

M:32, A:60 **Kevin Gasser**Glenn Zendt

Waynesboro Mennonite Church

M:36, A:51 Brian Law Joe Arbaugh Mike Lilley

The Southern District consists of five congregations and one congregation in formation. We are beginning to find our identity as a district again after another year of transitions. A unique aspect of our collective ministry is that there are currently no full-time pastors in our district, which provides challenges and opportunities as we seek to reflect the love of Christ in Augusta and Nelson Counties. Below are a few highlights from the last year.

Brian Law began as the pastor of **Waynesboro Mennonite Church** in March and quickly found ways to make the congregation more visible in the community.
WMC hosted a Community Spring Festival featuring local artists, crafters, vendors, musicians, food, and more. This event provided opportunity for the community to acquaint itself with the church and its members.

**Staunton Mennonite** continues to provide housing and support to recent Afghani refugees while supporting various other local ministries, such as the Valley Mission and the Staunton-Augusta Church Relief Association. Staunton's Bible Quizzing Team recently traveled to Illinois for a national guiz, building relationships and

biblical wisdom all while making memories that will last for years to come.

Springdale has been served well by an interim team from within the congregation for the last year. Ranita Shenk, Jim Goalder, and Gerald Shenk have been sharing various responsibilities as they minister to the congregation and broader community. The church hosts a number of support groups and is trying to build a network of support among local congregations. Springdale will celebrate their 200-year anniversary this fall and they are currently the oldest congregation in Virginia Mennonite Conference.

**Rehoboth** continues to meet, operating as a source of communal support for its members.

**Iglesia Shalom-Nuevo Comienzo** continues to be a blessing to the Waynesboro and Augusta County region. Armando and Veronica Sanchez have a unique skill set allowing them to combine work, ministry, and community building in a way that reflects the love of Christ for a hurting world. Iglesia Shalom meets Saturday evenings in the Waynesboro Mennonite sanctuary.

Phil Lehman (L) & Gordon Miller (R).



Phil Lehman was installed this summer as the next pastor of **Lynside Mennonite Church**, following Gordon Miller's twelve-year tenure. The church once again hosted a district-wide Vacation Bible School, which included workers from Springdale and Greenmonte. The Lynside congregation also provides a thriving children's ministry throughout the year.

-Kevin Gasser, Southern District Minister

### Tennessee, Carolina, Kentucky (TCK) District

Officers: Vernon Moyer (chair), Shaun Davis (vice-chair), Gail Hickok (secretary), David Hartzler (treasurer)

Concord Mennonite Church M:4, A:4 Jerry Hartness

**Durham Mennonite Church** M:12, A:20 Cheryl VanHorn

**Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship** M:22, A:34 Tami Nice John Storm Iglesia Cristiana Renuevo (CIF) M:33, A:23 Juan Jose Lagos

Mara Christian Church of America, NC M:90, A:90
Tial Thawng

Mountain View M:80, A:80 Joseph Bellone Gail Hickok

TCK District feels the loss of churches that have either dissolved or reaffiliated. District Minister Chuck Hostetter retired last year, leaving us with a leadership vacancy. We still gather for mutual sharing and encouragement, and look forward to some potential district realignment.

Concord Mennonite Church, Knoxville, TN: Though this group is only about three families, they continue to meet for worship and fellowship. They regularly welcome the homeless who take shelter on their doorsteps to join them for their Sunday fellowship meals.

Durham Mennonite Church, Durham, NC: This year, DMC has suffered the loss of its elder church planter. However, the church continues to meet regularly and seek ways to do ministry project for both their local community and the broader church agencies. Instead of a leadership team of elders, they all meet together to make decisions and plan. They have been without a pastor for some time, and contemplate not continuing to search for pastoral leadership. There are persons in the congregation who are managing to fill the various roles.

Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship, Greensboro, NC: GMF is excited as they realize that the MC USA gathering will be held just blocks away from their meeting facility. They will be hosting a quilting project alongside this event. GMF has a heart for helping marginalized persons in their community. They have introduced some innovative elements into their Sunday

Morning worship services that have attracted new people who get involved. They are blessed with multiple persons with leadership abilities that guide the ministry despite not having a pastor.

Iglesia Christian Renuevo. Winston Salem, NC: ICR is a Spanish-language Church in Formation led by Juan Jose Lagos. They meet on Friday and Sunday evenings to accommodate members' work schedules. They have suffered some membership loss and anxiety over recent immigration issues. While they are very enthusiastic, they continue to struggle with organizational challenges.

Mara
Christian
Church of
America,
Munroe, NC:
MCCA is a
church of
immigrants
from
Myanmar,
formerly
Burma. This
is a group of
mostly



younger families with lots of children. Last year, they welcomed Pastor Tial Thawng from Myanmar. He

provides dynamic leadership for the group. He immigrated alone, but hopes his family can join him soon. Civil unrest in Myanmar has made emigration difficult the last several years.

Mountain View Mennonite Church, Hickory NC:

MVMC has experienced growth with new families attending these last few years. They do community outreach by conducting food giveaways at Christmas, a Blessing Box with food available for the community, and a monthly open clothing closet along with Saturday lunch

for their community. This is a congregation established in the 1950s. There are many third and fourth-generation family groups involved. Pastor Joe Bellone continues to challenge the congregation.

**Outlet 10:27, Graham, NC:** Outlet is a house church in formation. While this is their official status, they currently meet only occasionally for fellowship events. Most of their people meet regularly with GMF or other churches.

-Vernon Moyer, District Chair

### **Teaching Cluster**

Cluster Minister: MaryBeth Heatwole Moore; Sarah Bixler, Brian Martin Burkholder (AMC), Kevin Clark, Kenton Derstine, Penny Driediger, Byron Peachey (AMC), Linford Stutzman, Dorothy Jean Weaver, Lonnie Yoder (AMC)

The Teaching Cluster of Virginia Mennonite Conference (VMC) and Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC) is a unique gathering space for those credentialed in Mennonite Church USA for teaching ministry. We meet monthly during the academic year to share updates, reflect on our callings, and hold one another in prayer.

Our time together is informal, but the connections are deep and sustaining. Each gathering includes personal updates that naturally open into shared reflection and prayer. We talk about our teaching, our writing, our ministry, and also the real-life joys and struggles that come with being part of families and faith communities. This year, some conversations have included transitions in our households—supporting children preparing to leave home for college or new jobs, or traveling across the United States, France, and Germany to visit adult children now living far from home.

Our vocational work is rich and varied. Several members are teaching full-time at Eastern Mennonite University in biblical studies, theology, Christian formation, and Clinical Pastoral Education. Cluster members are writing books and journal articles, directing initiatives that support parents in nurturing faith at home, and offering leadership in congregational life—including a member who served as an interim pastor for three months. Several members have presented at academic conferences. Another taught a course with the Mennonite Theological College of East Africa.

Travel has been a prominent theme in our conversations—some of it professional, some deeply personal, and much of it shaped by long-standing commitments to peace, justice, and the global church. Members attended the recent MC USA convention in Greensboro, NC, the Mennonite World Conference/Anabaptism at 500 celebration in Zurich, Switzerland, and a music and culture conference which included a seminar on sea shanties(!) in Tunis, Tunisia (ancient Carthage). Two members returned to Israel/Palestine to nurture long-standing relationships with Palestinian communities amid continued violence and occupation. Their witness and stories have deeply moved our group.

While many of our members are retired from full-time teaching roles, they remain actively engaged in academic and ministry work. Their ongoing contributions—including teaching, mentoring, research, writing, and spiritual direction—enrich our gatherings with continued insight and experience. Whether full-time or part-time, teaching or exploring other callings, each member brings a depth of commitment to theological reflection, pastoral attentiveness, and Anabaptist formation.

We are grateful for this circle of collegiality—a space to share, listen, and support one another in the unfolding work of teaching and ministry.

-MaryBeth Heatwole Moore, Cluster Minister

### **Chaplain Cluster**

Cluster Minister: Steve Landis; Dave Gullman, Steve Landis, Bruce Martin, Jewel Martin, Carmen Miller, Steve Swartzendruber, Derek Yoder (AMC)

This has been a year of transition, as Pearl Hartman stepped down from her role as Cluster Minister, after many years of dedicated ministry. We appreciate her faithful support to the chaplains and leadership of the cluster. Steve Landis was called and affirmed to serve as the new Cluster Minister.

Chaplains continue to provide spiritual ministry in a variety of settings. Some provide spiritual support and worship opportunities for persons with disabilities. Others serve in hospital settings, offering support and

spiritual care for those facing health concerns. Hospice patients receive spiritual ministry as they face serious health issues, often at the end of life. And, chaplains in retirement communities provide spiritual care, lead worship and Bible Studies, and prayer support to residents.

The chaplains touch many lives as they share the compassion and hope of Christ with many. We give thanks to God for these opportunities of ministry.

—Steve Landis, Chaplain Cluster Minister

### **Administrative Cluster**

Cluster Minister: Joe Hackman; Members: Aaron Kauffman, Joe Hackman, Beryl Jantzi

The Administrative Cluster meets quarterly, offering a space for shared reflection, prayer, and encouragement. Rooted in a spirit of mutual care, members support one another in the unique demands of nonprofit and church leadership. Joe Hackman has recently assumed

leadership of the cluster, and the group is grateful for the steady guidance of Beryl Jantzi, who served as interim leader. This time together continues to provide renewal, perspective, and connection for all who participate.

—Joe Hackman, Cluster Minister

# **OTHER CONFERENCE GROUPS**

### **Racial Justice Task Force**

Members: Vivian Stevens-Lyons (C3 Hampton, co-chair), Alfonso Alvarado (Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah), Andrew Fairfield (Lindale MC), Aldine Musser (Valley View MC), and Tami Nice (Greensboro MC). Three open positions.

The Racial Justice Task Force has experienced several changes this year. The staff connection has transitioned from Caleb Schrock-Hurst to Maren Tyedmers Hange. Additionally, there are currently three open positions on the task force.

October 11-13, 2024 we hosted a learning tour to Fort Monroe, a site deeply connected to the arrival of the first documented Africans in Virginia and later known as "Freedom Fortress" during the Civil War. The tour included reflections on the history of slavery, discussions with C3 Hampton leaders, and a sermon at Sunday worship emphasizing trust and faith in God's presence. Participants engaged with local leaders about their mission and personal experiences with racism, fostering meaningful dialogue on racial justice and inclusion.

In mid-July, we offered a 7-week book study on *A Just Mission* by Mekdes Haddis, which explores theology and scripture alongside experiences of people of color and diaspora communities. It seeks to address how American Christians can better embrace collaborative and inclusive practices in missions both locally and globally.

The commitment is for VMC to continue working towards becoming a racially inclusive organization, to support people of color and assisting congregations in their efforts to address racism. Feedback from churches and individuals about future initiatives is welcomed. We value prayers and ideas.

—Maren Tyedmers Hange, Conference Minister connected to the Racial Justice Taskforce

### Congregational Life Commission

Members: Steve Pardini (chair), Maren Hange (staff), Gwen Lantz, Sue Miller, Amanda Swartley (members at large), Sylvia Yoder (Mennonite Women of Virginia), Mark Harmon (Youth Council), Skip Tobin (VMMissions)

The Congregational Life Commission continues to sponsor activities for Virginia Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Women of Virginia, and Mennonite Youth Fellowship.

Congregational Life Commission supports the Mennonite Men's Breakfast and Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at Park View Mennonite Church.

Save the date: November 15, CLC will sponsor a Virginia Mennonite Conference workshop, "Anabaptism Today – Living in a Just, Joyful, and Sustainable Way." Presenters include Sam Funkhouser, Harvey Yoder, and a panel of experts on justice, stewardship, and sustainable living. Registration information will be available in September.

-Steve Pardini, chair

### **Historical Committee**

Members: Elwood Yoder, Chair; Simone Horst, VMC Archivist; James Rush, Mary Sprunger, and Ken Weaver

The chair of the Historical Committee met with the Conference Council in April 2025, and reported on the following four topics.

1. **Gameo.org:** We have updated the Virginia Mennonite Conference page on Global Anabaptist

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (gameo.org). Many VMC congregations should update their own gameo.org entries, since these are often at the top of a web search when people look for information about your congregation. Let Elwood Yoder know if

- you want assistance updating a page or contact Elizabeth Miller (<u>elizabethmm@goshen.edu</u>) to work directly with <u>gameo.org</u>.
- 2. Conference Minutes: The Historical Committee is working to produce a fifth volume of VMC Minutes. The four bound volumes were printed in 1950, 1967, 1983, and 2003. These include minutes from the minister's twice-a-year meetings from 1835 to 1911, though the minutes from 1836–1859 are lost. The minutes since 1912 are from once-a-year assemblies, with the 2024 Assembly being the 113th annual assembly. In 1993, the Conference added a second delegate session each year. We will produce a print volume for 2003–2024 that contains the minutes from annual assembly and the winter delegate session.
- 3. **History book**: *People of Peace: A History of the Virginia Mennonite Conference* is the name of our new history book. The book is published by Masthof Press in Morgantown, Pa., with co-authors Steven Nolt and Elwood Yoder. The book is sponsored by VMC Historical Committee and Shenandoah Mennonite Historians. The book will sell for \$25 from Elwood Yoder and for \$29 on <a href="mailto:Amazon.com">Amazon.com</a> or <a href="mailto:Masthof.com">Masthof.com</a>.
- VMC Archives: The Conference fee to EMU for storing our historical materials is \$7,428 in 2025. Our archival space is 600 square feet, located in the basement of Hartzler Library at EMU. The VMC Archives were established at EMU in 1955. Simone Horst is the VMC Archivist. Contact Simone Horst at archives@emu.edu, or call her at 540-432-4178. Stop by the EMU library, third floor in the Historical Library, on M, W, or F, 9 AM – 4 PM, to talk with Simone. Please continue to send your print or digitized files to Simone from your congregation or conference ministry. Conference staff should submit important papers, annual reports, minutes, staff reports, and newsletters. Congregational leaders should submit Annual Reports, minutes of leadership groups, documents on organizational structure, manuals, handbooks, Bylaws and Constitutions, newsletters, directories, church bulletins, financial records, programs, important photographs with dates, names, events, and activities, copies of real estate and building changes, and important correspondence.

—Elwood Yoder, chair

### Virginia Mennonite Women

Executive Committee: Sylvia Yoder, President; Deb Pardini, Vice President; Tami Nice, Treasurer; Keri Waltner, Recording Secretary; Edna Yoder, Publicity Secretary; (Mission Needs Sec'y and Hispanic Liaison vacant)

I recently found a poem with the line, "Faith is a beautiful thing when it's fully exercised." That can mean different things to each of us depending on where we are on our faith journey. Hebrews 11 is called the Faith chapter in the Bible, there are many names mentioned there by people who lived by faith. Would your name be listed there? The 500th Anabaptist celebration theme was "Courage to Love." How deep do you love?

This past year has been a year to exercise our faith as Mennonite Women of Virginia. From seeking committee members, to editing bylaws, to managing finances, it all requires much faith. By the grace of God we are moving forward, and I believe we will thrive. The Assembly Prayer Breakfast is a beautiful event, where we come together early on Saturday morning during the Summer Assembly of Virginia Mennonite Conference, and enjoy a good breakfast, fellowship, some worship, and sharing from a sister and then pray for each other. Last year, Bethany Tobin shared with us about her work overseas, how God transformed a sister's heart and life by the love and support of another sister who loved to do art and

crafts. Just as the picture on the canvas was being transformed into something beautiful and complete, so God was working in her life, and that life with Jesus was complete and beautiful. God is at work, by faith we step forward. This year we will hear from Mukarabe-Makinto, (a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, supported by Mennonite Women USA, International Women's Fund). I am looking forward to what God has for us through what our sister will share.

The 2024 fall Retreat was held in Richmond, VA. Lashonda Russell challenged us to be faithful in our calling, to stand firm and be called for moments of courage. We need to know who we are, and then by faith trust in our God and the sisters around us. At our fall business meeting, we said goodbye to Joy Kiser as Publicity Secretary and Lydia Musselman as Missions Needs Secretary, and thanked them for their service. We welcomed to the Executive Committee Tami Nice as Treasurer, Keri Waltner as Secretary, and Edna Yoder as Publicity Secretary. Plans for the upcoming retreat are well on their way. The event will be held at The Skelton

4-H Center in Wirtz, VA this fall. Oct.31–Nov 2, 2025. Be on the lookout for the brochures with the registration forms included, or follow instructions online for online registrations.

The Annual Missions Day was held in the Spring 2025 at Lindale Mennonite Church. Elena Buckwalter de Satalaya challenged us to see God's Faithfulness and how it transforms us when we believe in him. Her faith story is changing lives around her. This event was well attended, all the missionary needs were met; food and fellowship was a true blessing. At this event's business meeting we welcomed our retreat committee to serve for this year 2025, Deb Pardini (Chair), Tami Nice (Treasurer), Keri Waltner (Secretary), Edna Yoder (Publicity Secretary), Tammy Driver (Member at Large), and Susan Huyard (Member at Large). The position "Hispanic Liaison" and description of duties in the bylaws were voted on and approved by the larger group of women. Also, a new subaccount (Churches & programs) for the mission needs bank account was introduced to the larger group of women, after some discussion it was voted on and approved.

The summer picnic was held in early June 2025 in Harrisonburg, in the pavilion at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. It was a joint event with our Hispanic sisters. We enjoyed worship, teaching, food and fellowship. The message came very clear by Veronica Sanchez, that a cord of 3 strings is not easily broken. We need to stand with locked arms together as sisters so none of us fall. Hannah Shultz's term as Hispanic Liaison on the Executive Committee has come to an end, so we are looking for a replacement sister to serve in that position. If you are fluent in Spanish and English you qualify. Contact Sylvia Yoder, sylvia@crossroadsflooring.com.

A Prayer for my Sisters: "Dear God, give my sisters peace during this season of their lives. May they look to you to carry their burdens for they are trusting that you are capable of restoring them in every way. May their mind be fixed on you and may they embark this year only wanting what you want from them. Bless their mind, body and soul. Shift their mindset, increase their faith and let abundance be their mantra and reality. In Jesus name, Amen."

-Sylvia Yoder, President

### Virginia Mennonite Men

Organizer: Steve Pardini

The Virginia Mennonite Men (VMMen) organize and run the Men's Breakfast and Bible Study, which meets on Tuesday mornings at Park View Mennonite Church, from 6:45 to 7:00 AM for breakfast and 7:00 to 8:00 AM for Bible Study. The Bible study meets in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

The Bible Study brings men together for fellowship, heart-sharing, and spiritual growth, averaging 35 to 40 participants each week. The Bible study is intended to be transformative, not informative. The participants are asked to engage with the text and discern how it shapes us and informs our understanding of how we follow Christ in today's world. The Bible study is intended to foster relationships, not promote ideology. For those who cannot attend in person, the studies are live-streamed on YouTube. For those who cannot attend at the specified time, the YouTube recordings are posted on VMMen's channel.

Fall 2024 included presentations from Jim Hershberger, Pastor of Mt. Clinton Mennonite; David Gonzol, Professor Emeritus of Shepherd University; Ervin Stutzman, retired Pastor, Missionary, Seminary Dean, and MCUSA Church Leader; and Bible teacher at PVMC; and Gerald Shenk, former Professor at AMBS and EMS.

Winter 2025 presenters included Sam Funkhouser from the Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center; Roy Hange, Co-Pastor of Charlotteville Mennonite Church; and four men from VMMissions: Aaron Kauffman, David Gingerich, Skip Tobin, and Jason Rhodes Showalter.

Spring 2025 presenters included Curt Stutzman, Pastor of Weavers Mennonite; Craig Maven, Senior Pastor of Harrisonburg Mennonite; Carlos Malvaez, Pastor of Manantial de Vida; Paul Yoder, Professor at Eastern Mennonite University; Harold Miller, retired Pastor of Trissels Mennonite; and Steve Pardini, a Discipleship Community teacher at Harrisonburg Mennonite.

The Fall 2025 Men's Breakfast and Bible Study schedule will be released in August. Watch for announcements in the virginiaconference.org/bulletin-news-notes.

—Steve Pardini

# OTHER STATS & REPORTS

# VMC Membership in 2025

District	Congregations	Membership	Attendance	
Calvary	1 (plus ministries)	755	755	
Central	3	104	120	
Eastern	5	275	245	
Harrisonburg	7	1070	1008	
Northern	11	634	491	
Potomac	6	338	338	
Southern	6	202	216	
TCK	7	221	241	
Total VMC	46	3599	3414	

# CHANGES, by district, in the last two years (since 2023 report)

District	Churches left or closed	Members lost with those congs.	Total net member gains/losses in 2 yrs	Total percentage change in 2 yrs	
Calvary	0	0	+5	0.7%	
Central	1	-128	-146	-58.4%	
Eastern	1	-89	-152	-35.6%	
Harrisonburg	4	-225	-262	-19.7%	
Northern	3	-269	-304	-32.4%	
Potomac	0	0	-8	-2.3%	
Southern	2	-103	-154	-43.3%	
TCK	3	-68	-240	-52.1%	
Total VMC	14	-882	-1,261	-25.9%	

# **Financial Report**

The following report reflects the current fiscal year, to date (September 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)

# Statement of Activities with 9000 Class Budget June 30, 2025

		17200 AT	2000	anutation of the last
	Jun 25	Budget	Sep '24 - Jun 25	YTD Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
4000 · CONTRIBUTIONS				
4010 · INDIVIDUALS	450.00	5,833.33	46,702.07	58,333.30
4020 · CONGREGATIONS	11,639.25	8,333.33	71,628.98	83,333.30
4030 · ASSOC. MINISTRIES	0.00	416.67	0.00	4,166.70
4040 · TRANSFERS from				
4042 · Special Projects	0.00	8 85■	125.00	
Total 4040 · TRANSFERS from	0.00		125.00	
Total 4000 · CONTRIBUTIONS	12,089.25	14,583.33	118,456.05	145,833.30
4100 · Other Income				
4110 · Congregation Membership Fee	800.00	1,333.33	7,600.00	13,333.30
4120 · Associated Ministries Dues	0.00	333.33	0.00	3,333.30
4130 · Endowments				
4131 · Investment Income	0.00	250.00	1,135.21	2,500.00
4132 · Transfer Operating QE	2,250.00	2,250.00	22,500.00	22,500.00
4133 · Endowment Management	0.00	708.33	0.00	7,083.30
4134 · Transfer MCUSA QE	916.67	916.67	9,166.67	9,166.70
4135 · Transfer Bequests QE	166.67	166.67	1,666.67	1,666.70
4136 · Transfer Equipping Leaders QE	666.67	666.67	6,666.67	6,666.70
4137 · Transfer Church Workers Assista	100.00	100.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total 4130 · Endowments	4,100.01	5,058.34	42,135.22	50,583.40
4140 · Archive Reimbursement	0.00	104.17	125.00	1,041.70
4145 · Forwarding Fees	180.00	125.00	780.00	1,250.00
4150 · Miscellaneous Income	0.00		3,283.59	
4190 · Interest-Savings	0.00	20.83	109.46	208.30
4100 · Other Income - Other	0.00	275.00	74.61	2,750.00
Total 4100 · Other Income	5,080.01	7,250.00	54,107.88	72,500.00
Total Income	17,169.26	21,833.33	172,563.93	218,333.30
Gross Profit	17,169.26	21,833.33	172,563.93	218,333.30
Expense				
6000 · Salary and Related Expenses				
6010 · Salaries and Wages	11,228.84	13,042.99	112,702.07	130,429.90
6040 · Fringe Benefits				
6600 ⋅ Payroll taxes	153.67	997.80	3,593.86	9,978.00
6040 · Fringe Benefits - Other	694.76	1,172.53	8,293.37	11,725.30
Total 6040 · Fringe Benefits	848.43	2,170.33	11,887.23	21,703.30
Total 6000 · Salary and Related Expenses	12,077.27	15,213.32	124,589.30	152,133.20
6100 · General Administration				
6101 · PATHWAYS (Newsletter)	360.00	416.67	4,207.73	4,166.70
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	Jun 25	Budget	Sep '24 - Jun 25	YTD Budget
6103 · Faith & Life Commission	40.64	25.00	131.92	250.00
6105 · Conf. Council Meetings	0.00	125.00	7.35	1,250.00
6107 · Young Adult Ministries	0.00	8.33	0.00	83.30
6108 · Archives	0.00	600.00	7,428.00	6,000.00
6109 · Insurance	0.00	187.50	2,208.00	1,875.00
6110 · Office Facilities	1,410.00	1,410.00	14,100.00	14,100.00
6120 · Auto				
6120.1 · Repairs & Fuel	0.00		150.83	0.00
6120.3 · Insurance	0.00		82.00	0.00
6120 · Auto - Other	0.00	166.67	0.00	1,666.70
Total 6120 · Auto	0.00	166.67	232.83	1,666.70
6122 · Small Equip Purchase	0.00	25.00	0.00	250.00
6123 · Software Maintenance	0.00	333.33	0.00	3,333.30
Total 6100 · General Administration	1,810.64	3,297.50	28,315.83	32,975.00
6200 · Staff Directed Offices				
6202 · Travel/Consult	0.00	12.50	-592.52	125.00
6203 · Supplies & Expenses	0.00	166.67	3,329.13	1,666.70
6204 · Phone/fax/web	0.00	58.33	1,142.03	583.30
6205 · Postage	0.00	104.17	14.09	1,041.70
6206 · Continuing Ed	0.00		-600.00	
6210 · Accounting fees	2,250.00	907.50	12,830.59	9,075.00
Total 6200 · Staff Directed Offices	2,250.00	1,249.17	16,123.32	12,491.70
6300 · General Churchwide Expenses				
6301 Delegate fees expenses	0.00	983.33	0.00	9,833.30
6302 · Church-wide travel	0.00	125.00	0.00	1,250.00
6303 · MC USA	885.00	83.33	885.00	833.30
Total 6300 · General Churchwide Expenses	885.00	1,191.66	885.00	11,916.60
6400 · Conference Minister's Office				
6402 · Travel/Consult.Exp	-111.99	250.00	1,562.26	2,500.00
6403 Supplies/Expenses	0.00	83.33	385.09	833.30
6406 · Continuing Education	0.00	83.33	1,737.00	833.30
Total 6400 · Conference Minister's Office	-111.99	416.66	3,684.35	4,166.60
6500 · Racial Justice Staff				
6502 · Travel/Consulting Exp	0.00	41.67	0.00	416.70
6503 · Supplies/Expenses	0.00	8.33	0.00	83.30
Total 6500 · Racial Justice Staff	0.00	50.00	0.00	500.00
8000 · Special Project Expense				
8300 · Honorarium	0.00		50.00	
8400 · Other	0.00		0.00	
8700 · Travel	0.00		1,353.10	
Total 8000 · Special Project Expense	0.00	•	1,403.10	
8002 · Electronic Payment Fees Expense	0.00		278.01	
Total Expense		21,418.31	175,278.91	214,183.10
Net Ordinary Income	258.34	415.02	-2,714.98	4,150.20
not ordinary moonie	230.34	<del>4</del> 10.02	-2,1 14.30	7,130.20

### **Congregational Giving**

Virginia Mennonite Conference is grateful for the financial support from our member congregations. In addition to annual membership fees, VMC recommends a donation of \$35/member. Below is a list of congregations who contributed since our last annual report. Asterisks(\*) indicate giving at or above \$35/member. Thank you!

\*Big Spring Mennonite Church Calvary Community Church (C3) \*Charlottesville Mennonite Church Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship \*Concord Mennonite Church Daniels Run Peace Church Durham Mennonite Church \*Family of Hope

\*First Mennonite of Richmond Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship \*Harrisonburg Mennonite Church
\*Huntington Mennonite Church
Immanuel Mennonite Church
Lindale Mennonite Church
Lynside Mennonite Church
Manantial de Vida

Mountain View Mennonite Church Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church Park View Mennonite Church \*Ridgeway Mennonite Church \*Springdale Mennonite Church Staunton Mennonite Church \*Stephens City Mennonite Church Valley View Mennonite Church Washington Community Fellowship Waynesboro Mennonite Church \*Williamsburg Mennonite Church Zion Mennonite Church

### **Individual Donors**

Virginia Mennonite Conference is grateful for our contributors' generous financial support. Below is a list of voluntary financial contributors who gave since our last annual report. Thank you for your support of God's mission!

Anonymous
Ryan and Laurie Ahlgrim
James and Emily Akerson
Duane and Lois Beck
Floyd and Janet Blosser
Lawrence & Sylvia Bowman
George & Ruthann Brunk, III

Pete Burkholder

Steven & Christine Carpenter

Ann Frank

Kevin and Sonya Gasser

Roy and Maren Tyedmers Hange

Pearl Hartman

Dale and Barb Hartzler

Conrad and Mary Jane Heatwole

Les Helmuth

Vernon and Shirley Hochstetler Leslie and Crystal Horning Kenneth and Susie Horst Greg and Joyce Hutchinson

Joyce Hutchinson Rose Huyard

Tig and Karen Intagliata

Beryl and Margo Jantzi

Melvin Janzen Michael Johnson

Aaron and Laura Kauffman Glen and Sandy Kauffman Erin and Brian Kennedy Hess

David and Debra King

Fred Kniss

Phil and Irene Kniss

Joan Kulp Betty Kurtz

Wilmer and Mary Louise Lehman

Joseph Longacher

Mamie and Clair Mellinger Craig and Lois Blauch Miller

Eleanor Mininger Vernon Moyer

James and Aldine Musser

Gerald Nauman Ben Newcomer Steve Pardini

Sarah and Mike Piper

Joyce Pusel

Joel and Valerie Reinford

Grant Rissler Jean Rissler

Laurence & Evelyn Sauder Caleb Schrock-Hurst Carmen Schrock-Hurst

Holly Scott

Michael and Ramona Shenk Dennis and Edith Shenk Kuhns

Alan and Sharon Shenk

Mike Spory

Vivian Stevens Lyons
Paula and John Stoltzfus

Ron Stoltzfus

Ervin and Bonnie Stutzman

Janet Stutzman
SALT Sunday School
Carol Van Donk
Mary Jo Veurink
Linda Wenger
John Wesselhoeft
Craig Wilson

Elwood and Joy Yoder

### **Retired Credentialed Leaders**

Myron S. Augsburger David W. Bartow J. Harold Bergey, Jr Floyd G. Blosser Janet K. Blosser G Edwin Bontrager Joseph E. Bontrager Richard L. Bowman Clifford D. Brubaker George R. Brunk, III Owen E. Burkholder J. Daryl Byler Merle J. Christner Kevin A. Clark Randy Coblentz Justiniano Cruz James S. Delp **Russ Eanes** Richard K. Early Anna M. Engle

Del J. Glick Harley D. Good Roy F. Good Tim Green Lowell W. Haarer Bruce W. Hankee Phillip N. Helmuth Daniel A. Hoopert Ken R. Horst Loren E. Horst David S. Huyard Rose Huyard J Melvin Janzen Mark H. Keller Paul L. Kratz John T. Kreider Dennis R. Kuhns Mark N. Lehman Wilmer R. Lehman Catherine S. Longenecker

Carolyn J. Lyndaker Milford E. Lyndaker Floyd R. Matteson Arthur G. McPhee James B. Meador David F. Miller Frederic A. Miller Wendy J. Miller Donald P. Mishler James W. Musser John R. Petersheim Clifford S. Poirot Sr Ben Risser Elwood G. Schrock Dorothy J. Shank Rowland Shank Clayton O. Shenk Raymond W. Shenk H. Michael Shenk II Edith N. Shenk Kuhns

Hazel Shirk Omar V. Showalter Carl L. Smeltzer Edward B. Stoltzfus Bonita Stutzman Marvin Stutzman Loren Swartzendruber Samuel O. Weaver Linda K. Wenger Angie B. Williams Amos P. Witmer Daniel J. Yoder Don A. Yoder Lawrence M. Yoder Shirlee K. Yoder Kathy D. Yoder Shirley E. Yoder Brubaker

Gordon D. Zook

### **Ministerial Credential Transitions**

The following changes to ministerial credential status happened since the 2024 Annual Report.

- Duane Beck retired
- Harrigan Bowman license expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Andrew Buckwalter Fairfield ordination suspended. then reinstated under probation
- J. Harold Buckwalter (retired) deceased
- Marian Buckwalter ordained
- Kevin Clark retired
- Joshua Cox license expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Seth Crissman from licensed to ordained
- Justiniano Cruz retired
- Shaun Davis from licensed to ordained
- Zach Dey from licensed to ordained
- Peter Eberly ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Tim Heishman ordained
- Willis Hunsburger withdrawn
- Moriah Hurst ordination transferred to Central District Conference
- Marci Frederick (active) deceased
- Josh Fyffe license expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Del Glick retired

- Glen Guyton ordination transferred to VMC from Western District Conference
- Patrick McFarren ordination transferred to Central **District Conference**
- Carl Mericle (retired) deceased
- Mike Metzler ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Harold Miller ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Wendy Miller retired
- James Musser retired
- Chris Riddle withdrawn
- LaShonda Russell license expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Matthew Schwartz ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Jason Showalter license expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Glenn Steiner (retired) deceased
- Ervin Stutzman (active) deceased
- Mark Thiesen Nation ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Dorothy Jean Weaver retired
- Nan Williams (active) deceased



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# **HR Support for Small Businesses & Nonprofits**

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- Create Job Descriptions & Performance Standards
- ✓ Develop Team Management Skills

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Ост. 3-4, 2025

**Rockingham County Fairgrounds** 









Live & online auction, country breakfast, baked goods, antiques, farmers market, catfish lunch, 5k Race for Relief, & more!

FREE ADMISSION! Learn more: vareliefsale.com



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

THEARTS

### FAITH COMMUNITY

# With gratitude

for the 55 faith communities our students represent.

# Thank you

for helping us live out our mission:

"with home and church, we invite students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service."



easternmennonite.org/visit





**Mission:** VMMissions equips the church to share new life in Jesus Christ with neighbors near and far.

Vision: VMMissions envisions a Spirit-filled church of many cultures living out God's kingdom in every sphere of life.

# transend celebrates 20 years of ministry

Then VMMissions launched the tranSend program in 2005 as an intentional one-year to two-year internship program, it was already the result of longstanding dreams for a shorter and more accessible way to experience mission and discern God's calling.

It was also the beginning of a flagship program that has, to date, sent 157 people into often life-changing mission experiences, tranSend continues to increase in participation—nine participants make up the 2025 cohort.

### **PROGRAM STATISTICS** (SINCE 2005)

**157** Participants

- **25** Countries of service
- **62** Different ministries
- **11** U.S. States of origin
- **10** Countries of origin
- **54** Congregations represented

### Following their experiences in tranSend:

**34 (22%)** continued serving in ministry **23 (15%)** continue serving with VMMissions

Life as Adventure



LEARN **MORE** 

SLAQ is a discipleshipfocused program for young people that combines outdoor adventure, service, and crucial conversations.

### Another fun fact about tranSend!

**100%** of the graduates of the SLAQ (Servant Leader Quest) program in 2024 and 2025 went on to serve in mission as tranSend interns, and all of them served or are serving in international contexts alongside longterm mission workers.



### **LEGACY OF FAITH:**



### 20TH ANNIVERSARY **ALUMNI & FAMILY** CELEBRATION

**OCTOBER 4, 2025** 

Alumni of tranSend and families are warmly welcomed to attend a special gathering in celebration of 20 years of the program and its significant impact on so many lives.

The event program will include sharing from various alumni, current and former program directors Martin Rhodes and Ken Horst, and from program visionary and benefactor Sarah Ellen Histand. Join us for a special evening of food, fellowship, and stories.



**SCAN TO** LEARN MORE AND RSVP

# E<sup>3</sup> COLLECTIVE PROGRAM SENDS RECORD NUMBERS

ver the course of 2024 and 2025, our accredited short-term team-based program of VMMissions has sent 155 participants on trips to domestic and international locations (84 persons served in 2024, a VMMissions record for a single year). So far in 2025, 71 persons have served on six teams:

- **24** Puerto Rico (combined youth from Eastside Church and Enciende Una Luz, Harrisonburg, VA)
- **23** SLAQ Faith Adventure (Youth participating in SLAQ)
- 10 MCC Appalachia Build in eastern Kentucky (Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg, VA)
- 6 Nazareth/Bethlehem Learning and Service Tour
- **4** Childcare ministry at European Worker Retreat, Durres, Albania
- Vision trip to Agape Home, Chiang Mai, Thailand

# VMMISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

THANKS TO THE **1,238 DONORS** WHO GAVE TO THE MISSION FUND AND SPECIAL PROJECTS (9/1/2023 - 8/31 2024)

**REVENUE** 

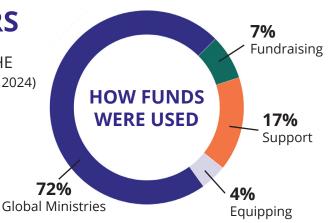
RIVI

CASH DONATIONS \$2.3M

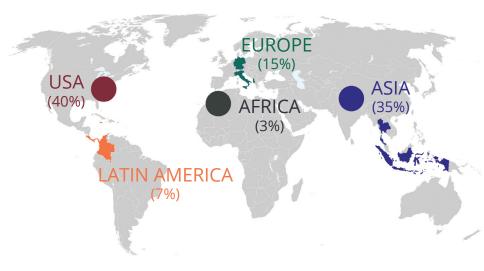
**\$1.9M** 

**EXPENSES** 

TOTAL EXPENSES \$2.9M



### **WORKERS BY REGION**



### MISSION WORKERS

### **68 TOTAL WORKERS**

- 29 SERVING 5+ YEARS (43%)
- 24 NON-U.S. BACKGROUND (34%)
- 29 SERVING UPGs\* (43%)

71 E<sup>3</sup> PARTICIPANTS (2025)

**12 COUNTRIES OF SERVICE** 

14 STAFF

**13 BOARD MEMBERS** 

\* Unreached People Groups, defined as less than or equal to 5% Christian AND less than or equal to 2% evangelical.

### **BOARD** (2024-2025 term)

**Paul Yoder** Central District Chair (2026)

**David Yutzy** Member at Large Secretary (2025)

**Yanely Ponce Correa** *Member at Large* 

**Hannah Guisewite** *Member at Large* 

Johnny Hsu Potomac District

**Michelle Steffen** *Member at Large* 

**Angie B. Williams** *Member at Large* 

Laura Yoder

Harrisonburg District Vice Chair (2026)

**Shelley Abline** *Member at Large Treasurer (2026)* 

Casey DeYoung
Eastern District

**Gail Hickok** 

Tenn./Car./Kentucky (TCK) District

**Ronnie Mack** *Calvary District* 

**Mike Weaver** *Northern District* 

### **STAFF**

David GingerichDirector of Partner Development

Lizzette Hernandez Latino Ministries Coach

Aaron Kauffman President
Kierston Kreider Mission N

Kierston Kreider Mission Mobilizer
Jan Liskey Director of Finance

Lydia Martin Human Resources Coordinator

Martin Rhodes Director of Training and Short-term

Missions

Melanie ShererExecutive AssistantJason ShowalterGlobal Ministries DirectorCindy de TablanEvents and Publicity Coordinator

**Skip Tobin** *Ministry Coach* 

**Jon Trotter** *Communications Manager* 

Karen Yoder Worker Care Coach
Tom Yoder Ministry Coach

# Join VMMissions for a COMMUNITY COOKOUT Saturday lunch following

VMC Assembly

VMC delegates are invited to join VMMissions board members and friends to enjoy free food and fellowship at the Mission Training Center (Barn) on Saturday, August 23, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Please join us!

(August 31 is also the end of our fiscal year; this is an opportunity to drop off donations to the Mission Fund and help us meet our goal of \$450,000.)

### Greetings friends,

It's a joy to write to you all from my new role as interim Executive Director of the **Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center!** For over 25 years BMHC has sought to live out our mission: **to** share and celebrate the story of Jesus Christ as reflected in the lives of the Brethren and Mennonites in the Shenandoah Valley. Each year we welcome over 2,000 school children on field trips, over 1,000 guests for a history tour, and over 1,000 people for special events, among other activities.



Stories of FAITH FROM THE Shenandoah Valley

Personally, after my three years with Virginia Conference, this role has been a great way to continue living into Jesus's mission. Hearing and sharing stories of families who lived through the thin years of frontier life and the tragedy of the Civil War inspires me daily to continue seeking Jesus's way of peace. BMHC is also a one-of-a-kind collaborative organization working with both Brethren and Mennonites; we are always learning from one another, and we Mennonites have much to learn from our Brethren siblings.

I'm happy to share that BMHC is growing! **We have just completed a new picnic pavilion,** complete with bathrooms, at the top of our hill; this space is available for use by local churches and makes our facility much more accessible and useful to the community.

We are excited to welcome delegates, family, and friends to our campus this year on August 23rd as part of the VMC's Summer Delegate Assembly! We won't be able to see everything in one morning, and I encourage you to consider stopping in for a tour another time; we're open each Wednesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm. The history tour is interactive and family-friendly; it covers over 250 years and visits more than five historic buildings.

Like with many organizations, we rely on volunteers and donations to carry out our mission – **thanks to many of you all who have supported BMHC over the years.** Don't hesitate to be in touch with questions about volunteering, rentals, or anything else. One final note – I am serving here in an interim capacity pending my cancer journey, and we are still searching for a permanent director. If you are passionate about Shenandoah Valley and Anabaptist history and have strong administrative skills, please consider applying.

Peace of Christ, Caleb Schrock-Hurst Interim Executive Director, BMHC Director@vbmhc.org BrethrenMennoniteHeritage.org





801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 Phone: 540-236-6000 • Fax: 540-236-6028

easternmennoniteschool.org

We are filled with gratitude as we look back on the impact of the 2024-25 school year. We had the privilege of educating **365 students**, which included **approximately 132 from the Virginia Mennonite Conference** and nearly **43 from other Mennonite congregations**. Alongside our mission and vision statements, faculty and staff embraced a strong commitment to fostering a sense of belonging. Our ongoing strategic visioning process will continue to explore these commitments as we aspire to be a learning community where every student can belong, thrive, and live God's call. These commitments were evidenced by...



*Inspiration*: EMS graduates, including the Class of 2025, possess a strong sense of identity and gratitude as they embark on their next phase of life.

**Excellence in Sports**: The Girls Varsity Soccer team won the VISAA Division III State Championship through teamwork and dedication -- a byproduct of their care for one another.



**Building Faith and Bridges**: A successful Faith Leaders Brunch fostered partnerships with the local religious communities where our students attend.

**Experiential Learning**: Middle and high school students participated in local field trips, e-terms, and we successfully piloted a new route for Discovery, exploring the Northeast.



**Beauty**: The completed Gathering Space is truly a family room for EMES -- enriching students' education and benefitting our K-12 community through hymn sings, music jams, and special events!

**Generosity**: Support for education in the tradition of Eastern Mennonite School exceeded fundraising goals, contributing \$663,972 to the Flames Fund, including gifts for financial aid.

Thank you for ongoing prayers, advocacy, student referrals, and financial gifts as we join home and church calling students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity and compassionate service in the world.

With Gratitude,

Paul Leaman Head of School





# Preparing mature leaders to minister together in a global context

### SPRING 2025

### VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

### SEMINARY ANNUAL REPORT

### **Shalom Collaboratory Equips Faith Leaders and Congregations**

EMS recently established the Shalom Collaboratory for pastors, lay leaders, nonprofit and community partners, parents and caregivers to learn and experiment with practices to build peace for restored relationships. The Shalom Collaboratory at EMS offers training in conflict transformation, trauma resilience, adaptive leadership, spiritual direction, and secure parenting.



Adam Russell Taylor, president of Sojourners, speaks at 2024 Shalom Academy (formerly SLT)

Learn more or request a custom training at emu.edu/seminary/shalom

### EMS Receives \$1.25 Million to Support Secure Parenting

EMU has established Conectere with a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. Each summer starting in 2024, cohorts of parents and caregivers will start meeting for free attachment-based training to grow in sharing faith and values with their children. Conectere is directed by Dr. Sarah Bixler, EMS associate dean, in collaboration with faculty in practical theology and counseling at Yale Divinity School and EMU. Parents and caregivers may apply for cohorts, and pastoral and lay leaders can register interest in Conectere resources at emu.edu/conectere

### New 36-Credit Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS)

EMS's new MATS is designed for leaders in non-pastoral settings to explore the intersection of theology and another field, to pursue further graduate study or study for personal enrichment. The MATS offers concentrations in theology and culture, biblical studies, or peacebuilding. As with all EMS degree programs, courses can be completed online or on campus, with up to 100% tuition scholarships. Inquire for further information or apply at emu.edu/seminary/admissions



Rev. Chidi Ihezuoh, MACL '24 speaks at May 5 commencement

### **EMS Celebrates 2024 Graduates**

"The relationships and what we have learned are a lifetime treasure," reflected Rev. Hilarion Chidi Ihezuoh, a 2024 Master of Arts in Christian Leadership graduate. Chidi, a pastor in Mosaic Mennonite Conference originally from Nigeria, was the featured graduate student speaker at EMU commencement. He testified to the power of relationships and knowledge he experienced while studying at EMS. On May 5, five graduates earned

master's degrees in Christian leadership and divinity; and certificates in Christian studies and faith-based peacebuilding. This small graduating class, following 19 EMS graduates in 2023, reflects extended time for degree completion resulting from the impact of the global pandemic.

### **EMS Mission**

Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares servants of Christ to minister together locally and globally. In response to God's gracious call, we invite students to embody and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God's Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators, and transformational leaders.

- Susan Schultz Huxman, president
- **▶ Daniel Ott**, *seminary* dean
- Sarah Ann Bixler, associate dean

emu.edu/seminary 540-432-4260

### Conflict Transformation and Trauma Resilience Workshops

Equipping pastors and lay leaders on campus, on location and online.

Custom-designed trainings available!

emu.edu/seminary/ training



### Family Life Resource Center Counseling for Hope, Health, and Healing

Family Life Resource Center (FLRC) is a faith-based, independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering professional counseling services to individuals, couples, and families in Harrisonburg and the surrounding community. Rooted in Christian compassion, our mission is to bring hope, health, and healing to those navigating life's challenges—regardless of faith background or financial means.

Now in our 37th year, we remain committed to creating a warm, welcoming space where every person feels valued, seen, and supported. Our experienced counselors walk alongside clients through depression, anxiety, trauma, relational conflict, and many other concerns—bringing clinical excellence and spiritual sensitivity to the heart of every session.

The need for mental health care is growing, and FLRC continues to respond. From January through June 2025, we provided more than 2,465 counseling sessions. Our sliding-scale fee structure and scholarship program—funded entirely by generous partners—help reduce financial barriers to care. In 2024 alone, FLRC provided over \$10,000 in counseling scholarships to those who could not otherwise afford care.

FLRC depends on the generosity of individuals, churches, and organizations who share our vision. Your support helps make it possible for people to receive life-giving care in their most vulnerable moments.

We are deeply grateful to the Virginia Mennonite Conference and its member congregations for your encouragement, prayers, and financial support. Your partnership helps us extend Christ's love in practical ways to those who are hurting. As we look ahead, your continued support is vital—especially in helping us grow our scholarship fund and sustain this important ministry to the community.

Thank you for standing with us in this sacred work.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Sutton - Executive Director

### The Ordinary Is Holy

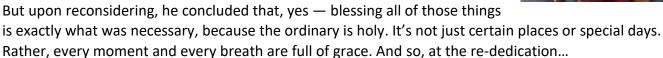
The gifts of the Pleasant View community to the Church are diverse; but among them is the reminder that the stuff of everyday life is sacred. We have the privilege of being able to reflect on this regularly, if we choose, and we recently had this opportunity at the re-dedication for one of our newly renovated homes, Gehman House. (Gehman House at Pleasant View is named in honor of Becky and Linford Gehman.)

Our pastor was asked to offer a prayer of blessing on the occasion, and he pondered, "What does one say at such events?" Thinking about all the inanimate hardware that was part of the recent remodel, he half-jokingly thought that maybe he should...

Bless the floors, the walls, the doors, and the ceiling!

Bless the outlets and switches, and the stove and refrigerator!

Bless the sinks, showers, and... toilets?!?!



We blessed the doors,

because that is where people are welcomed and offered hospitality.

We blessed the tables,

because that is a place where bodies and souls are nourished.

We blessed the beds,

because that's where we find rest and dream of the world that we hope for.

Yes—we blessed all of it,

because somewhere in that house, the image of God will find its home.

Psalm 90 begins, "Lord, you have been our home in all generations." We are grateful for the ways that God invites us into the work of providing homes, day services, supported employment, and other services to the people in our community. With the intention of continuing this work into future generations, renovations have been completed at two homes, are underway at a third, and are planned for all locations in the long term. Financially, we continue to work from a strong foundation.

But infrastructure and finances serve the greater purpose of nurturing community, relationships, and lives created in the image of God. For 54 years, Virginia Conference has supported this work, and we continue to welcome your support in various ways into the future. If you'd like more information, please

contact Derek Yoder (derek@pleasantviewinc.org) or Pam Miller (pmiller@pleasantviewinc.org).

Psalm 90 ends with these words: "Let the kindness of the Lord our God be over us. Make the work of our hands last. Make the work of our hands last!" That is our prayer for today.



### VMRC:

### **Growth, Service and Shared Purpose**

Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community is experiencing a year of meaningful progress and celebratory milestones reflecting how we are creating a vibrant future.



Earlier this year, we launched the *Mary Reitz Nursing Scholarship* to help build a strong pipeline of compassionate, skilled nurses from within VMRC and the Shenandoah Valley region. Of more than 40 impressive applicants, three individuals were selected as our inaugural scholarship recipients: VMRC team members Kashif Polous-Masih and Daniela Montero Ruiz, and Woodstock, Virginia native Faith Sisler. Their stories of calling and commitment to the nursing profession inspired not only our internal community but also received coverage in the local news media.

VMRC also achieved Gold Level Certification as a Montessori Inspired Lifestyle® Community, a nationally recognized distinction awarded by the Center for Applied Research in Dementia. Montessori is often associated with childhood education, but its core principles of respect, independence, meaningful engagement, freedom of choice and focusing on strengths are particularly empowering for older adults, including those living with cognitive changes. Our supportive living and wellness teams are embedding Montessori into daily life across the VMRC campus.

Thanks to continued growth and strong leadership, VMRC has moved from being Harrisonburg's 10th largest to 8th largest employer. We've welcomed more team members who share our commitment to care and community-building, including our new Chief Operating Officer Kristin Jackson who joined us from Ohio where she led a multi-site retirement community. Together with our CEO Jake Bell, they will continue building a strong future for our community.

Speaking of the future, Jake recently completed his first year at VMRC and is leading us through a strategic planning process. This collaborative effort is aimed at deepening our impact and setting a new and intentional course for the years ahead.

Finally, this year, Chief Philanthropy Officer and Pastor Joe Hackman began a Mission Integration Initiative to help VMRC staff members deepen their understanding of the Anabaptist tradition. The goal is to ensure that our work stays connected to the values and history that shape who we are. is grounded in our organization's roots and always guided by the Mennonite values of service, justice, collaboration and peacebuilding.

Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center By Bob Briscoe, Executive Director

Now in our 41<sup>st</sup> year of ministry, The Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center is thankful to be an Endorsed Ministry of the Virginia Mennonite Conference. WCRC has served churches and individuals in VMC by hosting events including:

- Church retreats
- Church-day-out events
- Eastern District Gatherings
- Summer Camp at WCRC

In these ways and others, WCRC continues our mission, "To provide a place for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of kids and adults through camping and retreats."

During the past year, one of the most significant impacts we have seen has come through our partnership with Lynside Mennonite Church. Between 2019 and 2025 the number of campers coming from Lynside has grown from 4 to 14. Lynside campers are now attending our Ministry Leadership Training program and some are beginning to work on our summer staff. Sue Miller of Lynside Mennonite remarked, "...it was like another arm for our ministry. We continue to thank God for the influence camp has spiritually on our kids!"

Financially, WCRC has seen significant growth from Guest Group revenue and fundraising. In 2024, the WCRC Golf Classic fundraiser had a record-breaking year with over \$40,000 raised. Funds were used to continue facility renewal projects including two new roofs and a new walk-in refrigerator/freezer.

In early 2025, WCRC hired Chris McCormick of Jamestown, VA to be Development Director. Chris brings structure, energy, and experience to the table as WCRC continues to grow.

Finally, in 2024, the WCRC Board welcomed two new members from Williamsburg: former Program Director, Jenn Mast and former Lifeguard / Camp Counselor Greg Mills of Williamsburg Mennonite Church. In addition, former Program Director Brooks "Rooster" Wadsworth joined the board in 2025.

As we continue to pursue our vision of "Every Life changed by Jesus, welcomed into His family and called to serve Him," our prayer for all in the Virginia Mennonite Conference is that, "... the God of hope (will) fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." *Romans 15:13.* 



## Mennonite Church USA







MC USA Staff

women in Leadership

As we reflect on 2024, we give thanks for God's abundant blessings and the ways we, as MC USA, continue to live out our Renewed

<u>Commitments</u> of following Jesus, witnessing to God's peace and experiencing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Together, we live into our mission as a denomination that equips, empowers and inspires.

#### Church Vitality: Equipping healthy congregations

In 2024, MC USA's Church Vitality team worked diligently to nurture thriving congregations and support pastors and leaders. From practical tools, such as <u>pastor salary guidelines</u> and <u>The Corinthian Plan</u> healthcare program, to initiatives such as our <u>Wellbeing in Ministry</u> resources, we continue to prioritize the health of our churches and the wellbeing of those who serve them.

Our <u>Safe Church Ministry</u> empowers faith communities to prioritize safety for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Engagement with our webinars and the updated Circle of Grace curriculum reached new heights, extending even beyond our denomination. Additionally, we introduced background checks for church employees and volunteers, demonstrating our commitment to safe spaces for worship and ministry.

Through our <u>Thrive church planting grants</u>, we provided financial support to five new missional peace churches, breaking down barriers for church plants to proclaim the gospel and engage their communities.

We also launched two new podcasts: <u>"Lead/Follow"</u> with Executive Director Glen Guyton, in which leaders explore how to follow Jesus boldly, and <u>"The Competent Pastor,"</u> hosted by Church Vitality's Michael Danner and Rachel Ringenberg Miller, which offers practical wisdom for pastors.

#### Peace and Justice: Living into our Anabaptist faith values

As a historic peace church, MC USA continues to lead the way in nonviolence and justice. Through our 2024 "Learn, Pray, Join" campaigns, we educated congregations on climate justice and conflict transformation, calling us to connect faith and action.

#### **Renewed Commitments**

- Follow Jesus
- Witness to God's peace
- Experience transformation

#### **Church Vitality**

MC USA's Church Vitality team empowers and equips the church every day through:

- Pastor salary guidelines
- Wellbeing in ministry resources
- The Corinthian Plan healthcare plan for church workers
- Ministerial Leadership Inquiry process

Learn more here.





<u>Subscribe</u> to MC USA's weekly email newsletter.









Glen Guyton's "Lead/Follow" podcast



2024 Hope for the Future attendees

This past year, the <u>Justice Fund</u> supported nine churches dismantling racism, addressing police brutality or combating poverty, while the <u>Bring the Peace</u> award recognized individuals who are bringing God's peace to their communities. The <u>Church Peace Tax Fund</u> rallied our collective voice against the destructive powers of militarism in our congregations by supporting education, grassroots activism and <u>Peaceful Options for Training and Careers</u>.

Additionally, the <u>Pam De Young Net Zero Energy Fund</u> helped several congregations take bold steps toward renewable energy. Youth-led innovation shined through the <u>Gen Z Energy and Spirit Challenge</u>, celebrating young leaders committed to climate justice.

Finally, <u>Women in Leadership</u> continued its work of dismantling patriarchal systems, laying the groundwork for the Women's Summit, "Beholding It Together," July 8, 2025, in Greensboro, North Carolina.

## Racial Ethnic Engagement: Fostering Solidarity and Transformation

Our 11th <u>Hope for the Future</u> conference in Dallas, Texas, Feb. 9-11, 2024, brought together 70 Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders under the theme, "Breaking Chains, Mending Walls." This sacred space for dialogue and solidarity inspires hope for systemic transformation in our church and communities.

Additionally, MC USA, in partnership with the <u>Racial Ethnic Council</u> and the <u>Historical Archives</u>, launched a groundbreaking initiative to preserve and amplify BIPOC stories within our denomination's history. This effort includes workshops, resource kits, and digitization projects, ensuring these voices are honored and heard for generations to come.

#### **Looking Ahead with Hope**

Together, we are building a church that embodies Jesus' radical love and justice. Thank you for your prayers, participation and support. We are stronger together, united by our call to follow Christ and transform the world.

#### **Our Mission**

To share with others the gift of God's love through our worship, witness and life together. We claim Jesus as the center of our faith, community as the center of our lives and reconciliation as the center of our w ork.

#### **Our Vision**

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.



Join us for Follow Jesus '25 Greensboro, North Carolina July 8-12, 2025. Scan for info:



## Mennonite Central Committee

## 2025 report for Virginia Mennonite Conference

**MCC East Coast** 

Toll Free: (888) 563.4676 - EastCoast@mcc.org - mcc.org

Connect with MCC staff in your community

Luke Schrock-Hurst, Donor Relations Associate - Ish@mcc.org





At left, Mary Nyashin Tsief, 70, who receives monthly food packages of sorghum, beans and oil through an MCC-supported project, leads visitors to her dwelling in a camp in Rubkona, South Sudan, for families displaced by conflict or flooding. (MCC photo/Mackenzie Schwarz)

#### **MCC and Virginia Mennonite Conference connections**

- MCC appreciates supporters of the Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale, which took place in October 2024 and raised \$393,167 for MCC. Of that total, \$106,017 was raised by the cash giving initiative, Share Our Surplus (SOS), which designated its cash giving for refugee concerns related to MCC's Palestine Israel response.
- An MCC Friends and Alumni
  Gathering also took place during
  the VA Mennonite Relief Sale.
  MCC East Coast Executive Director
  Hyacinth Stevens shared an update,
  and Lee and Peg Martin, members
  of Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church,
  spoke about their seven years of
  service with MCC Appalachia
  Build. The 2024–2025 International
  Volunteer Exchange Program
  (IVEP) participants were present and
  introduced themselves.
- MCC is grateful for the support of Gift & Thrift in Harrisonburg, VA, made possible by the many volunteers from VMC congregations. In 2024, Gift & Thrift contributed \$260,874 to MCC.
- MCC values the service of international workers, including Liz and David Driver, MCC representatives for Ukraine and members of Washington Community Fellowship, and Adam and Sarah Sensamaust, MCC area directors for Central and South Asia and members of Park View Mennonite Church.
- Many VMC congregations generously support MCC by donating material resource kits and comforters, helping to meet essential needs around the world.

#### MCC's 2025 guiding scripture

"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him.

John 1:39 (NIV)

#### Dear friends,

"Come and see" is Jesus' invitation as stated in this year's scripture card (John 1:39). As we go in the name of Christ, we desire to see neighbors near and far as Christ sees them, doing what Christ would have us do, spending time with Jesus and envisioning right relationships with God, one another and creation. May following Christ continue to give us the sight needed to see where Jesus is leading us to be, respond and go – taking the name of Christ as our exclamation point!

Thank you for your continued commitment and partnership through prayer, financial giving, service and advocacy. MCC continues to extend our reach of sharing God's love and compassion for all because of support like yours.

Thank you again for your gift of partnership,

Hyacinth Stevens, MCC East Coast Executive Director



MCC East Coast staff in Puerto Rico provided timely and essential relief in the wake of the devastating Hurricane Maria in 2017. MCC continues relief work in Puerto Rico - supporting solar projects that provide energy security to Puerto Rican families who are vulnerable to disaster because of disabilities or other realities. Through a collaborative project with Adjuntas-based nonprofit organization Casa Pueblo, called Cucubano, or firefly, MCC brings solar-powered relief to families in rural Puerto Rico.



Scan the QR code or visit mcc.org/solar-powered-relief to read the full story!

## Comité Central Menonita

## Informe 2025 para La Conferencia Menonita de Virginia

#### CCM Costa Este

Llamada gratuita: (888) 563.4676 - EastCoast@mcc.org - mcc.org

Conecta con el CCM en su comunidad

Luke Schrock-Hurst, Asociado de Relaciones con Donantes - Ish@mcc.org



países asociados

proyectos



A la izquierda, Mary Nyashin Tsief, de 70 años, que recibe paquetes mensuales de alimentos de sorgo, frijoles y aceite a través de un proyecto apoyado por el CCM, conduce a los visitantes a su vivienda en un campamento en Rubkona. Sudán del Sur, para familias desplazadas por conflictos o inundaciones. (Foto CCM/Mackenzie Schwarz)

#### Conexiones entre el CCM y la Conferencia Menonita de Virginia

- El CCM agradece a quienes apoyaron la Venta para Ayuda Humanitaria de Menonita de Virginia, que se llevó a cabo en octubre de 2024 y recaudó \$393,167 para el CCM. De ese total, \$106,017 fueron recaudados por la iniciativa de donaciones en efectivo, Share Our Surplus (SOS), que designó sus donaciones en efectivo para las preocupaciones de los refugiados relacionadas con la respuesta del CCM Palestina Israel.
- También tuvo lugar una Reunión de Amigos y Exalumnos del CCM durante la Venta para Ayuda Humanitaria de Menonita de VA. La Directora Ejecutiva del CCM Costa Este, Hyacinth Stevens, compartió una actualización, y Lee y Peg Martin, miembros de Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, hablaron sobre sus siete años de servicio con el CCM Appalachia Build. Los participantes del Programa Internacional de Intercambio de

- Voluntarios (IVEP) 2024-2025 estuvieron presentes y se presentaron.
- El CCM agradece el apoyo de Gift & Thrift en Harrisonburg, VA, posible gracias a los muchos voluntarios de las congregaciones de VMC. En 2024, Gift & Thrift contribuyó \$260,874 al CCM.
- El CCM valora el servicio de los trabajadores internacionales, incluyendo Liz y David Driver, representantes del CCM para Ucrania y miembros de Washington Community Fellowship, y Adam y Sarah Sensamaust, directores de área de CCM para Asia Central y del Sur y miembros de Park View Mennonite Church.
- Muchas congregaciones de VMC apoyan generosamente al CCM donando paquetes de recursos materiales y edredones, ayudando a cubrir necesidades esenciales en todo el mundo.

## Escritura guía del CCM para

-Vengan a ver - contestó Jesús.

Ellos fueron, pues, y vieron dónde se hospedaba. Ese mismo día se quedaron con él. Juan 1:39 (NVI)

Queridos amigos,

«Ven a ver» es la invitación de Jesús, como se afirma en la tarjeta de la Escritura de este año (Juan 1:39). Al ir en nombre de Cristo, deseamos ver a los vecinos cercanos y lejanos como Cristo los ve, haciendo lo que Cristo quiere que hagamos, pasando tiempo con Jesús e imaginando las relaciones correctas con Dios, con los demás y con la creación. Que seguir a Cristo nos siga dando la visión necesaria para ver hacia dónde nos está llevando Jesús, responder y seguir adelante, ¡tomando el nombre de Cristo como nuestro signo de exclamación! Gracias por tu compromiso y colaboración continuos a través de la oración, las donaciones económicas, el servicio y la incidencia. El CCM sigue ampliando nuestro alcance para compartir el amor y la compasión de Dios para todos gracias a apoyos como el tuyo.

Gracias de nuevo por tu regalo de colaboración,

Hyacinth Stevens, directora ejecutiva del CCM Costa Este



El personal del CCM de la Costa Este en Puerto Rico proporcionó ayuda oportuna y esencial tras el devastador huracán María en 2017. El CCM continúa su labor de ayuda en Puerto Rico, apoyando proyectos solares que proporcionan seguridad energética a las familias puertorriqueñas

vulnerables a los desastres debido a discapacidades u otras realidades. A través de un proyecto de colaboración con la organización Casa Pueblo, con sede Adjuntas, llamado Cucubano, el CCM lleva ayuda con energía solar a las familias de las zonas rurales de Puerto Rico.



Escanea el código QR o visita mcc.org/solar-powered-relief para leer la historia completa.



## 2 0 2 5

VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

# Be local. Be global. **Be the Gospel.**

## When the people of God take Jesus' call to live lives of peace seriously, there is hope.

In the midst of war and strife, God is still at work, and we are committed to joining in that work. Here are some ways you can join in, too:



Partner with workers across the street and around the world through financial support. Contact **KarenH@MennoniteMission.net** to support workers financially.





**Support** Mission network ministries and workers by becoming a prayer partner. Visit our website to join in:

MennoniteMission.net/Prayer.





**Explore** which service options might be the best fit for adults and youth in your congregation: **MennoniteMission.net/ Serve**.





**Learn** about social justice through a spiritual lens by participating in a Just Peace Pilgrimage: **MennoniteMission.net/ JustPeace**.



## Virginia Mennonite Conference partnership

**Note:** Underlined words indicate active links.

#### Worker support around the world



**Worker support** 

<u>Toni and Matthew Krabill</u>, serving in Accra, Ghana

» Ridgeway Mennonite Church

#### Caleb and Stephanie Schrock-

**Hurst**, serving in Hualien, Taiwan » Charlottesville Mennonite Church

- » First Mennonite Church of Richmond
- » Harrisonburg Mennonite Church
- » Zion Mennonite Church

#### **Service participants**



#### Service sites

#### **SOOP** sites

- » Highland Retreat
- » Unique World Gifts
- » Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center

#### SOOD

#### Gordon and Sue Miller,

Kykotsmovi, Arizona

#### **Just Peace Pilgrimage**

- » Elizabeth Eby
- » Duane Kauffman
- » Joan Kauffman
- » Wil LaVeist
- » Justin Odom
- » Isaac Witmer

Prayer partners

26

#### **Congregational giving to Mission Network**



From August 1, 2023, to July 31, 2024, Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations contributed **\$119,054** to Mission Network. **Thank you!** 



"I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds" (Psalm 9:1, NIV). We, at Mennonite Mission Network, are full of gratitude for the wonderful deeds of Virginia Mennonite Conference. We have been blessed by our continued partnership and your

active support through prayers, participation and financial gifts. We look forward to our continued journey together, as we respond to the call to be part of God's reconciling movement in the world.

Marisa Smucker Marisa Smucker, Executive Director



Thank you for the generous ways in which you have supported Mennonite Mission Network. Blessings to each congregation as you seek to join in God's mission.

Eric Frey Martin

**Eric Frey Martin**, Director of Constituent Engagement



## Report to Virginia Mennonite Conference

AMBS serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.

Our programs integrate academics, spiritual formation and practice. Join us — in person or at a distance, full time or part time — and deepen your understanding of Scripture, faith and Anabaptist theology!

#### **Degrees and programs** (\* = distance-friendly program)

- Master of Divinity\*
- Master of Arts in Christian Formation\*
- Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism\*
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership\*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction\*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies\* (choose your own courses)
- Mennonite Education Agency Hispanic Ministries –
   AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology\* (in Spanish)
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program\* (undergraduate-level certificate)

#### ambs.edu/degrees-and-programs

We offer generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and matching grants for both full- and part-time graduate students. You *can* afford seminary! ambs.edu/affordability

#### Leadership and enrichment

Grow your ministry skills and gain Anabaptist approaches to today's leadership challenges through our nondegree offerings. (\* = distance-friendly program)

#### **Short-term options**

- Practical Leadership Training modules\*
- Online Short Courses\*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS\*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference\*: Feb. 23–26, 2026

#### Offerings of one to two years

- Transition to Leadership\*: program for new pastors
- Ministry Reflection Circles\*: reflect on current ministry challenges with the support of a group
- Spiritual Direction Seminars\*

#### ambs.edu/leadership-and-enrichment



(*Above*) In May 2025, 15 women and 18 men from eight countries — Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand and the U.S. — graduated from AMBS. Nineteen completed part or all of their studies at a distance.

#### **Conference connections**

• Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction student: Lara Upton (Charlottesville)

#### **AMBS** statistics

• In 2024–25, 149 graduate students were enrolled at AMBS: 82 from the U.S., four from Canada and 63 international students. Ten students are pursuing the Spanish-language Graduate Certificate. The undergraduate-level Journey program has 41 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, Uganda and the U.S.

#### Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course:
  - Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible
  - Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology
  - Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture
  - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication
  - Challenging Christian Nationalism
  - Biblical Interpretation Across the Two Testaments ambs.edu/online-short-courses
- Take a graduate-level course online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first six credit hours! ambs.edu/upcoming-courses
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn about what AMBS has to offer! **ambs.edu/visit**
- Stay connected: facebook.com/followAMBS instagram.com/ambs\_seminary youtube.com/ambsedu ambs.edu/subscribe

"People plan their path, but the Lord secures their steps."

- Proverbs 16:9 (CEB)

## **Building strong stewardship** ministries

At Everence®, we believe Christian stewardship encompasses all we are and all we have, aligning our lives with God's purposes.

Through our Stewardship Partners program, we help churches build vibrant stewardship ministries that address both congregational and personal financial needs. With faith-driven resources, we equip stewardship leaders to help your church manage finances in alignment with Christian values, fostering both financial well-being and spiritual growth.

Let us help you build a strong stewardship ministry! Visit <u>everence</u>. <u>com/partners</u> to learn more.

## Churches supporting community through Sharing Funds



Faith communities can be a vital support in times of hardship – and the Everence Sharing Fund helps churches assist members in need.

Over the past six years, Everence has distributed nearly \$5 million in Sharing Fund grants, on top of additional matches from churches.

## Your Ministries. Your Finances.

Everence 2025 report

Virginia Mennonite Conference Annual Assembly August 21-23, 2025

to help thousands facing hardship. You can support this important work with a fully tax-deductible donation – 100% of your gift will go directly to those experiencing financial challenges. To donate or learn more, visit everence.com/sharing-fund.

## Boost your church's ministries with MyNeighbor



If your church is seeking an easy, low-cost way to boost financial support, consider the MyNeighbor credit card from Everence Federal Credit Union.

This program lets individuals contribute to your church or favorite nonprofits with every purchase. Whether for groceries, bills, or other everyday expenses, 1.50% of each purchase made using the MyNeighbor card goes directly to the charity of the cardholder's choice, such as your church. Then, in January, Everence sends checks to the selected 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, with no additional work required on your end.

Since 2017, we have donated \$2.8 million through the MyNeighbor program. It's an easy way to foster stewardship engagement and

create additional revenue for your church's ministries. Learn more at everence.com/myneighbor.

## Strengthening your church's endowment fund



As of 2021, over 40% of religious organizations reported challenges in managing their endowment funds, highlighting the need for sustainable financial planning (National Philanthropic Trust, 2021). While updated data is expected, this trend emphasizes the importance for churches to actively manage their endowments for long-term stability.

Your church can develop a strategy to grow and manage its endowment to create a reliable income stream to support ministries — especially in uncertain times. By engaging your congregation and implementing thoughtful giving practices, you can lay the groundwork for lasting financial growth. Talk to your Everence stewardship consultant or visit everence.com/churches for more information.





#### Report to Virginia Mennonite Conference - July 2025

Helping Mennonite Church USA fulfill its educational mission

#### INTERGRATION WITH MC USA

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and the MEA board of directors recently approved an integration plan to bring MEA under the governance and operational structure of MC USA. As of Aug. 1, MEA has become fully integrated part of the MC USA organizational structure. Read more here: <a href="https://www.mennoniteeducation.org/news-events/news/2025/04/08/mea-integration-plan-strengthens-anabaptist-education-in-mc-usa/">https://www.mennoniteeducation-in-mc-usa/</a>

#### **2025-26 BIPOC SCHOLARSHIPS**

The selection sub-committee for the MEA Scholarship for BIPOC Students is currently reviewing applications for the 2025-26 academic year and will soon announce the winners.

The deadline for scholarship applications is April 1 each year. Check MEA's website to see if this year's awardees have been announced! You can learn more about this scholarship at

http://www.Mennonite Education.org/schools/ mea-scholarship-for-bipoc-students.

#### **FAITH FORMATION AT HOME**



Prior to integrating into MC USA's organizational structure, MEA published the **Advent and Lent at Home** worship guides, available for free download in English and Spanish. This resource will continue to be available through the MC USA website. The At Home series is designed to be an accompaniment through the seasons of Advent and

Lent. These guides are intergenerational and can be used by individuals, families and congregations of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. With daily Scriptures, worship rituals, prayers, activities and background information, these resources enhance the experience of these

holy times. Advent at Home is expected to be available for download in early November.

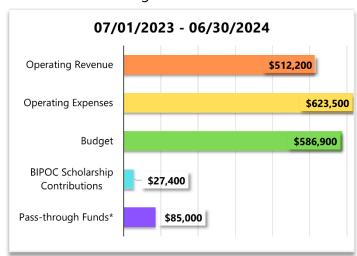
#### **2023-24 ENROLLMENT REPORT**

MEA produces an enrollment report annually, to identify enrollment trends across all its partner schools. The data includes the total number of students enrolled in the institutions, the number of Mennonite and non-Mennonite students enrolled, racial/ethnic diversity, and other demographics. Based on headcount in the fall of 2023, Mennonite schools are impacting the lives of 8,971 students. To view the 2023-24 report and previous reports, visit

http://www.mennoniteeducation.org/about-us/.

#### **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

The chart below shows the financial activity for MEA operations for the 2023-24 fiscal year. \*Pass-through Funds are donated for schools, colleges, and seminaries sent through MEA.



Thank you for supporting Anabaptist Mennonite education.

Grace & peace,

Michael Danner, Executive Director



#### Mennonite Central Committee (MCC),

a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation.



**Relief** \$29,606,000



Development \$37.322.000



**Peace** \$14,491,000

45 countries

353 partners

452 projects

#### MCC U.S. Board

Ed Diller, Treasurer, Member-at-large

Rosie Epp, MCC Central States

Daniel Grimes, MCC Great Lakes

Terry Hunt, Member-at-large

Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, Vice chair, Member-at-large

Chilobe Kalambo, Member-at-large

Sunoko Lin, Secretary, Member-at-large

Jonathan Lloyd, Brethren in Christ U.S.

Kevin Malamma, West Coast MCC

Alma Ovalle, MCC East Coast

Yvette Ngale, U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

Gilberto Pérez, Chair, Mennonite Church USA

Hugo Saucedo, Member-at-large

Jon Showalter, Rosedale Network of Churches

## Sponsoring denominations

MCC U.S. is grateful for the support of our sponsoring denominations and their congregations and members:

Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches
Brethren in Christ U.S.

LMC: a fellowship of anabaptist churches

Mennonite Church USA

**Rosedale Network of Churches** 

U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

#### MCC AT WORK IN THE U.S.

These are just a few of the ways MCC has made a difference in communities across the U.S. in the past year.



#### **POWERING PEACE OF MIND**

MCC and partner Casa Pueblo installed solar panels on the homes of residents in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, who need reliable energy for life-saving medical devices.



#### A MILESTONE YEAR

The Depot, an MCC Thrift shop in Goshen, Indiana, donated \$1 million to MCC in 2023 — the most the store has ever raised in a single calendar year.



#### **FOSTERING LEADERSHIP**

Through Summer Service, Jocelyn Montes (second from right) worked with both English- and Spanish-speaking youth at First Mennonite Church in Reedley, California.



#### **COMFORT BY DESIGN**

Children at Lindale Mennonite Church in Linville, Virginia, designed bright MCC comforters on coloring pages. Adults in the congregation then helped them sew the comforters.



#### **ADVOCATING FOR THE EARTH**

MCC staff accompanied a group from Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to advocate for climate action in Washington. D.C.



#### **WELCOMING NEWCOMERS**

With assistance from Mennonite Disaster Service and MCC partner Team Brownsville, 500 MCC hygiene kits were distributed to asylum seekers in Brownsville, Texas.

#### A LOOK AT MCC U.S. FINANCES

MCC U.S. and MCC Canada jointly operate MCC's work around the world and share financial responsibility for it. This chart represents the MCC U.S. portion of income and expenses for MCC's international programs and all MCC work in the U.S.

FY 23-24
\$53,708,000
14,481,000
17,886,000
7,681,000
6,169,000
3,300,000
49,517,000
86,098,000

