

# Who Is My Neighbor



**Virginia Mennonite Conference**  
**2026 Annual Reports & Statistics**

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## Vision

*adopted by VMC delegates, July 2017*

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.

## Mission

*adopted by VMC delegates, February 2018*

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.

## Community of Faith Statement

*adopted by VMC delegates, July 2023*

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.

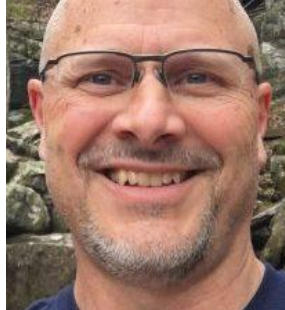
# VMC LEADERSHIP REPORTS

## Conference Ministry Team

Conference Minister: Kevin Goertzen; Minister of Equipping: Juan Carlos Malvaez

### From Kevin Goertzen

*Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Eph. 4:15-16)*



These two verses capture for me a large part of what I, as conference minister—and we as a conference—are called to do.

**“Promoting the body’s growth.”** Everything I do is towards this end... promoting the growth of individual leaders, specific congregations, and of the larger body that is Virginia Mennonite Conference.

**“Joined and knit together by every ligament.”** This is a key metaphor for my ministry. Just as ligaments hold our physical bodies together, I believe that a conference minister’s job is to be a connector within the body that is Virginia Mennonite Conference. The connections I have made are first of all with congregations, District Councils, and pastors...but also included seminary professors and students, retired pastors, and many previous VMC leaders. In addition to these connections within VMC, I also help to strengthen the connections between VMC and Mennonite Church USA through regular online meetings with other conference ministers and by being a part of the Constituency Leaders Council.

### **“Each part working properly.”**

- **Credentialing:** I believe that granting and monitoring ministerial credentials is an important element in helping each part of the church to work properly. Tending to credentials plays an important role in providing an avenue towards healthy women and men serving in ministry. And the systems we have in place provide clear guidance and direction in cases where discipline is needed.
- **Finding & Developing Leaders:** VMC has gone through significant leadership transitions over the

past 5 years, as we have experienced substantial and often sudden changes in both staff and volunteer leadership roles. We now have our staff positions filled, and I trust that by Summer Assembly we will also have key volunteer roles filled, and although this has not primarily been my responsibility, I have played a large role in filling some of these positions.

- **Meetings:** An important part of my role is processing key questions with other leaders, including Conference Council, FLC, Credentials Committee, Seeding Pastors Funding Committee, Assembly Planning Committee, and the Fundraising Committee. In light of the excellent leaders I get to work with, it is not surprising that these conversations are typically filled with wisdom, depth, and creativity.
- **Adjusting to our current size, composition, and other realities:** We are not the same conference we were 5 or 10 years ago. We are smaller, our theological leanings have shifted, our communities have changed, and I believe we have a higher level of trust of one another. In order for “each part to be working properly”, we will have to consider carefully how these changes impact our staffing, our communications, our structure, our giving, and all the ways we work together.

**“Speaking the truth in love.”** Both “speaking the truth in love” and “listening to the truth with love” are crucial to re-establishing trust. In every area of my work with VMC, my goal has been to make space for honest and open communication, inviting feedback, listening carefully, and seeking out opportunities for dialog with those who may feel like they are on the fringes of the conference in one way or another. Please feel free to give me a call or set up a time to talk, especially if you feel that your voice has not been heard.

As individuals, as congregations, and as a conference... may we speak the truth in love, be joined and knit together, keep each part working properly, and grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ. AMEN.

—Kevin Goertzen, Conference Minister

### **From Juan Carlos Malvaez**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2026 marks the beginning of my second year serving at VMC, now as Minister of Equipping. First and foremost, it is an honor to serve the body of Christ through a conference that has been my home for 24 years.



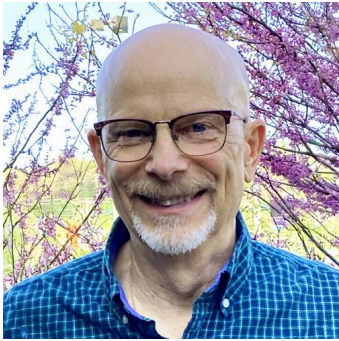
VMC is a special conference. It is a place where many have received a call to serve, have been equipped, and have been sent out to serve for nearly 200 years. I respond to this calling with great humility and a deep sense of responsibility to contribute positively to the vision of those who came before me. I am glad to report that the mission of VMC continues: to equip and to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to neighbors near and far.

—Juan Carlos Malvaez, Minister of Equipping

## **Conference Council**

**Officers:** Steve Pardini (interim chair), \_\_\_\_ (moderator-elect), Mary Jo Veurink (secretary), Ron Stoltzfus (treasurer);

**Non-voting staff:** Kevin Geortzen, Juan Carlos Malvaez (CMT); **District Representatives:** Betty Kurtz (Eastern District), Vivian Stevens-Lyons (Calvary District), Steve Pardini and Paula Stoltzfus (Harrisonburg District), David King (Northern District), \_\_\_\_ (Potomac), Vernon Moyer (TCK District/Southern); Steve Pardini (Congregational Life Commission), Pearl Hartman, H. Michael Shenk III (Faith & Life Commission)



I am grateful to God for the many gifts and talents given to members of the Virginia Mennonite Conference. God blesses us with gifts and talents so the faithful can do the work God has prepared for us. During my time in office, I have sensed the Holy Spirit working in,

through, and among us as we do the work that pleases and glorifies God and advances the cause of Christ.

My term in office began after a series of events created a vacuum in conference leadership. I was asked to serve as the interim Conference Council Chair. I agreed to serve for two years. That term of service will come to a close at the Summer Delegate Assembly. Over the past two years, the Conference Council has identified needs and problem areas and has become task-focused to address them.

The work of many committed, capable, and Spirit-led people has produced vital accomplishments. VMC is in a better place today than it was a couple of years ago, and the Conference can now focus more of its energy on its mission to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to neighbors near and far. It can also continue to advance equity and diversity and welcome fresh, young minds with hearts of service and a commitment to the Conference's goals.

It is evident that many people believe that God has endowed the conference with numerous talents, that God intends those talents to serve a purpose, and that people have come together to undertake the necessary work to restore the conference and move forward from a stronger position.

I pray for God's blessing on the Conference, its members, pastors, leaders, and youth. May we, as a faith community, be resilient and gentle at heart. May we remain faithful to our calling to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, leading others to faith in Christ and advancing God's righteous and just kingdom.

—Steve Pardini, interim chair



## Faith And Life Commission

**Officers:** Pearl Hartman, *chair*, Michael (Mike) Shenk, III, *secretary*; **Staff:** Kevin Goertzen and Juan Carlos Malvaez;

**Members:** Ryan Ahlgrim (Eastern District), Janet Blosser (Member-at-Large), Bishop Leslie Francisco III (Calvary District), Kevin Gasser (Southern District and TCK), Roy Hange (Harrisonburg District), Joe Hackman (Administrative Cluster), Pearl Hartman (Member-at-Large), Steve Landis (Chaplain Cluster), MaryBeth Heatwole-Moore (Teaching Cluster), Aldine Musser (Northern District), Michael Shenk III (Northern District), Luke Schrock-Hurst (Potomac District)

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



The Faith and Life Commission conducts its work in day-long quarterly meetings attended by District Ministers, Cluster Leaders, At-large Members, the Conference Ministers, and the Chair of Conference Council.

Meetings begin with an engaging time of worship followed by a “round” where each member has an opportunity to share a challenge or blessing with the group as a way of cultivating an atmosphere of humility, trust and transparency.

According to VMC Bylaws, FLC chooses its own chair, and we are grateful for Pearl Hartman, at-large member, who has provided leadership for the last couple of years.

As a deliberative body with formal authority only in credentialing matters, much of FLC’s meeting time is spent in reflecting on the ways that Districts and Clusters are living out their faith in Jesus. The scope of the commission’s leadership is often compared to the work that Elders do in the life of a congregation.

Currently, the FLC, in consultation with VMC Pastors, is in the process of reviewing the 2013 statement related to same-gender relationships.

At the recent May 14 meeting, members approved a recommendation to Conference Council that the Cultivating Pastors Fund be used to help cover the costs of a ministry assessment for Credentialed Leaders that MC USA is now requiring prior to ordination.

Another element of the May meeting was an informative and engaging presentation by Joe Hackman, Administrative Cluster Leader, about the incredible power of AI and its potential to help or to harm.

Pearl Hartman and Fonda Weaver have been diligently reformatting the FLC Handbook and Leadership Guidelines for digital efficiency and the work should be ready for FLC review soon.

The commission is deeply grateful for the staff support our Conference Ministers have provided and look forward to discerning with Conference Council and the entire VMC community how best to equip pastors and congregations to share the good news to neighbors, near and far.

—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:800, A:800

**Dr. Lesley Francisco McClendon**

**Pastor Caleb McClendon**

**Dr. Natalie Francisco**

**Bishop Leslie Francisco, III**

Vivian Stevens-Lyons

Chekesha White

Ronnie Mack

Alicia Manning

Shawn Manning

JoAnn Phoenix

At C3 Hampton, 2026 has been our **Year of Manifestation**, guided by the declaration, “We Will See What We Say.” Throughout the year, we have witnessed God faithfully bringing vision into reality—not simply through numerical growth, but through deeper discipleship, stronger leadership, and greater alignment around our mission.

Our mission continues to shape every ministry and every decision we make: **Love God. Build People. Leave Legacy.** This year, we intentionally focused on helping people move beyond attendance into active discipleship and ownership of the life and mission of the church.

One of our most significant developments has been the launch of **Legacy Track**, our unified pathway for new guests and members. Legacy Track provides a clear introduction to the mission, vision, values, and culture of C3 Hampton while inviting people to discover their gifts, connect in community, and become active Legacy Makers. Alongside this, we developed a new Leadership Pathway designed to intentionally identify, equip, and develop emerging leaders for ministry within the church.



*C3 team leading worship recently*

This summer marked the beginning of **Formation Nights**, a six-week, in-person discipleship experience

centered on helping believers establish sustainable rhythms with God through Scripture, prayer, and spiritual formation. Designed for both new and seasoned believers, these gatherings reflect our growing commitment to biblical literacy, practical discipleship, and lifelong spiritual growth.

We have also continued strengthening the culture of our church through intentional community-building initiatives, including Legacy Maker Mixers for new attendees, expanded volunteer development, business dedications celebrating marketplace ministry, and ongoing opportunities for leadership development. These efforts reflect our desire to disciple people not only for Sunday worship but also for faithful Kingdom living throughout the week.

Our worship, children’s, student, and care ministries continue to serve faithfully as we pursue a multigenerational vision for the church. We remain committed to creating environments where every generation can encounter the love of God, grow in their faith, and discover their purpose.

Behind the scenes, we have continued investing in our campus and organizational infrastructure to prepare for future growth. Facility improvements, expanded technology, and strategic planning have positioned us to better serve our congregation and the surrounding Hampton Roads community while faithfully stewarding the resources God has entrusted to us.

As we look ahead, we sense the Lord continuing to lead us into greater alignment, faithful stewardship, and healthy growth. We remain committed to being a church that not only gathers people but also forms disciples, develops leaders, and leaves a lasting legacy for generations to come.

We are grateful for God’s faithfulness throughout this year and for our partnership with Virginia Mennonite

Conference as we continue to participate in Christ's work of building His Church.

## Ministry Updates

**C3 South Africa** — Pastor Flinn continues to provide strong leadership at C3 South Africa. The ministry continues to grow and make a meaningful impact throughout the city of Pietermaritzburg. I plan to visit in October to spend two weeks preaching, teaching, and conducting leadership development workshops.

Our Outreach Director, Lauren Francisco, has also spent significant time serving on the ground with the local school and orphanage we support in South Africa. This year, one of our primary initiatives focused on nutrition for the orphanage. Through a "Fill the Pantry Day" campaign, our congregation generously provided enough food and supplies to fill the pantry to overflowing. While much remains to be done, we are committed to partnering with local leaders through a

purposeful strategy that produces sustainable, long-term impact.

**C3 Atlanta** — C3 Atlanta continues to function as a virtual ministry community, providing ongoing connection, discipleship, and pastoral support.

**C3 Rocky Mount** — We currently provide our facility for another congregation to conduct in-person ministry. In addition, we continue to minister to virtual members in the Rocky Mount area who faithfully worship with us online each week.

**Chesapeake** — We continue to provide meeting space for a local congregation. Though smaller in size, they maintain a meaningful presence within their community. I remain in regular contact with their pastor to provide encouragement, counsel, and ongoing ministry support.

—Bishop Leslie W. Francisco III, Calvary District Minister

## Central District SPECIAL REPORT

**Delegates of Central District voted to dissolve the district as of September 1, 2025.** We had dwindled down to three congregations from our peak of nine, and felt it more positive to allow the remaining three to realign with a district of their choice. As of this writing, Beldor and Christiansburg aligned with Northern District of the Conference. They have been warmly received, feel affinity with the other congregations, and feel well supported by ND ministers and fellow pastors and delegates. Mt. Clinton decided to seek membership with Blue Ridge district of LMC—their departure from VMC will be made final at the Winter Delegate Assembly in 2027.

In its time Central District was quite involved in missional outreach. They successfully began and fledged

Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship, originally as a campus outreach to Virginia Tech and Radford universities in the area. They owned property near Harman WV, called Harman Mountain Farm, which was a Christian retreat and camping facility. They supported outreach into the Harrisonburg Hispanic population with El Camino Discipular. And they supported missional outreach into Charleston, WV.

We learn in life that hope truly lies in our relationship with Christ and not necessarily with good health and long life for individuals and organizations. The Holy Spirit knows how to pray for us. We must rely on those Spirit prayers and then respond in faith to the Holy Spirit's leading.

—James Åkerson, former VMC Central District Minister

## Eastern District

Officers: Ryan Ahlgrim, District Minister; Betty Kurtz, Chair; Russell De Young, Vice-Chair, Valerie Wermuth, Treasurer; Josh Brown, Secretary

### **First Mennonite Church**

M:81, A:96

**Ryan Ahlgrim**

Grant Rissler

### **Huntington Mennonite Church**

M:65, A:33

**David Whitten** (interim)

Russell DeYoung

### **Providence Mennonite Church**

M:24, A:15 (2025 data, estimate)

**Mark Marvuglio**

Evangeline Yoder

### **Warwick River Mennonite Church**

M:30, A:30

**Steve Wiebe-Johnson** (interim)

### **Williamsburg Mennonite Church**

M:79, A:69

**Zachary Dey**

Josh Brown

The Eastern District consists of five congregations, stretching from Richmond to Newport News. Some of the congregations are stable or growing modestly, and others are in decline due to deaths in an aging membership.

**Providence Mennonite Church** is served by part-time pastor Mark Marvuglio who brings an emphasis on community outreach to his ministry.



*Food pantry operated by Providence Menn. Church*

**Warwick River Mennonite Church** is served by part-time interim pastor Steve Wiebe-Johnson, whose annual contract was recently renewed. Last year the congregation moved its worship services back into its main building, using the fellowship hall while renovations in other areas are nearing completion.

**Huntington Mennonite Church** is currently served by part-time interim pastor David Whitten who is ordained in the Church of the Brethren. A search is in process for an ongoing pastor.

**Williamsburg Mennonite Church** is served by full-time pastor Zach Dey who recently became a father for the second time. (Congratulations!)

**First Mennonite Church of Richmond** is served by full-time pastor Ryan Ahlgrim who is on sabbatical this summer creating a series of short videos on "Lessons in Ministry." Associate pastor Emily Nyce ended her service last fall to take a position as co-pastor at Community Mennonite Church. FMC is now seeking a part-time Pastor to Families. The congregation celebrated its 70th anniversary last October.

For the third 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 20th at 10:30am. All are welcome to join us! —Ryan Ahlgrim, District Minister



## Harrisonburg District

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

### **Charlottesville Mennonite Church**

M:47, A:36

**Roy Hange**

**Maren Tyedmers Hange**

Holly Scott

### **Iglesia Esperanza DeVida**

M:15, A:12

Phil and Terry Whitmer

### **Harrisonburg Mennonite Church**

M:473, A:363

**Jacob Lee**

**Craig Maven**

**Sarah Layman**

**Amanda Swartley**

Pete Burkholder

Mark Harmon

Les Helmuth

### **Immanuel Mennonite Church**

M:83, A:90

**Matthew Bucher**

Tim Friesen

### **Manantial de Vida**

M:59, A:70

**Juan Carlos Malvaez**

**Wendy Malvaez**

### **Park View Mennonite Church**

M:331, A:328

**Paula Stoltzfus**

**John Stoltzfus**

Cliff Brubaker

Shirley Yoder Brubaker

Fred Kniss

Mamie Mellinger

### **Ridgeway Mennonite Church**

M:84, A:92

**Chad Miller**

Marcia Weaver

These are just snapshots in the kaleidoscope of hope generated by the Spirit through the faithfulness of Harrisonburg District churches.

**Harrisonburg Mennonite** last year involved many staff transitions: Lenora Bell and Carmen Schrock Hurst retired at the end of December 2025; Craig Maven announced his retirement as of the end of August 2026 concluding a ministry journey that began 50 years ago. Sarah Layman has been hired as Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Worship and Amanda Swartley Associate Pastor of Children's Ministry. Sarah and Amanda were licensed for ministry on May 31. A new group for young adults has been created through Lead Pastor Jake Lee's efforts. Two of HMC's young adult members came to the church through its Wednesday eve children's program ended up becoming HMC members and are now leaders with the junior youth!

**Park View Mennonite's** transitional process as led by transitional minister Steve Slagel is moving toward a leadership team model having affirmed Paula Stoltzfus, John Stoltzfus and Carissa Gredler as part of the continuing team to be joined by a fourth pastor yet to be determined. Park View built a pavilion for use in part by its neighborhood outreach program.

**Ridgeway Mennonite** continues to have a significant Congolese presence in their church services and is integrating Swahili into their worship services. Last fall, along with Manantial De Vida, they hosted a large,

multicultural community worship service on their parking lot.

**Manantial De Vida** has developed a powerful music team ministry composed mostly of youth and young adults that leads its services. MDV celebrated their 22nd anniversary last November. Co-pastor Juan Carlos has joined the VMC staff and begun a Doctor of Ministry program and Co-pastor Wendy has left school system employment to become a therapist. They both continue to lead men's and women's inner healing ministry retreats which are lifegiving in their community.

**Immanuel Mennonite** continues its outreach in the neighborhood with a Tuesday evening community meal that has reached up to 80 and is in a leadership restructuring process because of growth in attendance. They completed a renovation of lower floor stairs space.



*Immanuel takes an annual congregational photo*

**Charlottesville Mennonite** continues its hospitality ministry through its Crossroads house beside the church

that hosts families and patients at the UVA Medical Center from out of town.

**Family of Hope** dissolved as a church in September of 2025 after Harvey Yoder’s retirement following 60 years of ministry. **Iglesia Esperanza de Vida** folded into Weavers Mennonite Church and left the district.

The pastors of the district meet monthly for lunch for mutual support and resourcing and also work alongside a Mission Advisory Council that generates new ideas for ministry yearly. We as a circle of pastors also include and walk with Seth Crissman and his Soil and Seed Ministry and Nick Meyer who continues as Executive Director of Grace Inside’s statewide prison ministry in Virginia. —Roy Hange, Harrisonburg District Minister

| Northern District                                                                                         |                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Officers: Aldine Musser and Mike Shenk, III, District Ministers; David King, Chair                        |                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Beldor Mennonite Church</b><br>M:16, A:62<br><b>James Åkerson</b><br>Emily Åkerson                     | <b>Lindale Mennonite Church</b><br>M:263, A:165<br><b>Arlen Vernava</b><br>Erin Kennedy Hess<br>Gloria Lehman            |
| <b>Big Spring Mennonite Church</b><br>M:21, A:27<br><b>Pearl Hartman</b><br>Kathy Yoder                   | <b>Mathias Mennonite Church</b><br>M:19, A:45 (2025 data, estimate)<br><b>Dean Williams</b>                              |
| <b>Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship</b><br>M:40, A:30<br><b>Kelli Moore</b><br>Joseph Bontrager        | <b>Stephens City Mennonite Church</b><br>M:17, A:21<br><b>Les Horning</b><br>Linda Wenger                                |
| <b>Crest Hill Community Church</b><br>M:20, A:20<br><b>Marian Buckwalter</b>                              | <b>Valley View Mennonite Church</b><br>M:23, A:22<br><b>Mike Shenk, III</b>                                              |
| <b>CrossWay Mennonite Church</b><br>M:6, A:6<br><b>James Rhee</b>                                         | <b>Woodland Mennonite Church</b><br>M:17, A:9 (2025 data, estimate)                                                      |
| <b>Hebron Mennonite Church</b><br>M:54, A:30<br><b>Mark Conley</b>                                        | <b>Zion Mennonite Church</b><br>M:142, A:104<br><b>Sarah Piper</b><br><b>Lori Friesen</b><br>Elwood Yoder<br>Joe Friesen |
| <b>Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah</b><br>M:26, A:24 (2025 data, estimate)<br><b>Alfonso Alvarado Ayala</b> |                                                                                                                          |

Northern District consists of 13 congregations. Every congregation has their unique way of loving and caring for their neighbor.

Aldine Musser will retire as District Minister at the end of August and Mike Shenk III will become the single DM. Consolidating leadership will allow for a more sustainable support while ensuring continuity for the congregations. We are delighted to welcome Beldor Mennonite and Christiansburg Mennonite into the Northern District. Pastors James Akerson and Kelli Moore have already added to our meaningful Pastor Fellowship meetings.

This past year we invited Lars Akerson to speak to us about ways we can care for our immigrant neighbors.

We watched a film by Dr. Jemar Tisby entitled, *Jesus was a Migrant*, followed by table discussions.

We tend to pay attention to the rhythms of the church calendar such as Advent/Christmas/Epiphany and Lent and Easter. We wrestled with how our congregations are representing Christ as peacemakers. Personal stories were shared of how we address mental health for ourselves and how we teach and care for mental health issues in our congregations.

The Kingdom Building recipients this past year are: Lindale/ Zion VBS, Beldor Mennonite Church community monthly meals/Bluegrass concerts, and Christiansburg Mennonite Church who is assisting an asylum seeker.

—Aldine Musser and Mike Shenk III, District Ministers

## Potomac District

Officer: Luke Schrock-Hurst, District Minister

### **Daniels Run Peace Church**

M:50, A:43

**Stephen Intagliata**

Karen Zehr

### **Advance Church** (formerly DC City Church)

M:80, A:65 (2025 data, estimate)

**Bruce Clark**

### **Fourth St Community Fellowship**

M:61, A:~ (2025 data, estimate)

**Sang-Jin Choi**

### **Iglesia Alfa y Omega**

M:70, A:90 (2025 data, estimate)

**Jose Borjas**

### **Vietnamese Christian Fellowship**

M:14, A:12

**Peter Nguyen**

### **Washington Community Fellowship**

M:59, A:85

**Andrew Cheung**

Phil Wenger

The Potomac District consists of Washington Community Fellowship, Daniels Run Peace Church, Advance Church (formerly called DC City Church and Christian Conquest Word of God), Vietnamese Christian Fellowship, Fourth Street Fellowship, and La Iglesia del Evangelio Completo Alfa y Omega. The DC Chaplaincy Ministry at Dulles Airport led by Eugene and Christina Kraybill is no longer part of VMC, now that Eugene and Christina have moved their credentials to LMC.

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 answering the question “Who is my neighbor?”



Pastor Andrew Cheung shares: “At **Washington Community Fellowship**, our neighbors are the people God has placed right outside our doors in Capitol Hill. This summer we hosted a free neighborhood ice cream social,

inviting our congregation, nearby residents, passers-by, new interns moving into the neighborhood, and friends from a local L’Arche community to gather together. Providing free ice cream from a local truck gave people a reason to stop, linger, and strike up conversations they might not otherwise have had. It reminded us that the few steps leading into our church can be both the smallest and the biggest barrier—we easily forget that many neighbors will never walk inside unless we first

meet them where they are. Even when a summer downpour interrupted the evening, people simply gathered under tents, children played in the puddles, and conversations continued. Our hope is that our patio increasingly becomes a place where strangers become neighbors, neighbors become friends, and people encounter the welcoming love of Christ.

Pastor “Tig” Intagliata describes **Daniel’s Run Peace Church’s** reaching out to immigrant neighbors:

In-response to the fear and cruelty experienced by immigrants due to the activity of ICE, our congregation felt compelled to connect our congregation more directly to the Spanish-speaking congregation that rents space in our building, *Iglesia Pentecostal Tabernáculo de Restauración* (Iglesia). In early 2026, we re-oriented our Immigrant Support Task Force (ISTF) to focus on our relationship with *Iglesia*. As we met with their leadership, we found that one area of need is food insecurity, partly caused by reduced income as a result of fear of going to work or fear of going shopping. We developed a plan to support the efforts congregants of *Iglesia* already had underway. Now, every week a different member of our congregation prepares a grocery list of fresh foods, purchases these items from our local grocer, and stocks the shared pantry. The congregants of *Iglesia* distribute these items to immigrants in need, both in their congregation and in their circles of contacts.

Pastor Peter Nguyen humbly states: “**Vietnamese Christian Fellowship** reached out our neighbors 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 (APPA)**, returned to Washington in 2024 after several years being primarily based in South Korea. SangJin shares this reflection on Fourth Street Fellowship reaching out to homeless neighbors: “Under

God’s abundant grace, on Sunday, March 1st, we successfully carried out our homeless feeding and outreach ministry at the New York Avenue Shelter in Washington, D.C. In faithful partnership with the English Ministry (EM) young adults from Washington Shining Star Community Church, 35 volunteers dedicated their time to serve and share fellowship with approximately 100 homeless neighbors, bringing this ministry to a deeply blessed conclusion. Marking the milestone 30th anniversary of the APPA Homeless and Youth Global Leadership Ministry, we recently gathered with long-serving APPA missionaries to share a meal, reflect on our journey, and discuss future visions and strategies. A profoundly moving highlight of the gathering was the testimony of our founding Board Chair, Elder Jae-gul Kim. Now 102 years old, Elder Kim has dedicated 30 years of his life to homeless ministry. Demonstrating remarkable vitality, he drove himself to the meeting and

safely back home after dark. He testified: ‘Engaging in homeless ministry through APPA has been the most rewarding journey of my life. To be blessed with the health to drive at this age is entirely by God’s absolute grace.’ 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.”

Potomac District now faces the challenge of deciding how to (or whether to) continue as a district of VMC, now that district minister, Luke Schrock-Hurst, is retiring from the role after serving from 2011 until July, 2026

—Luke Schrock-Hurst, Potomac District Minister

**Southern District**

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

***Lynside Mennonite Church***

M:52, A:53  
**Phil Lehman**

***Rehoboth Mennonite Church***

M:10, A:~ (2025 data, estimate)  
 Terri Jordan

***Springdale Mennonite Church***

M:60, A:54  
**Beryl Jantzi**  
 Ranita Shenk

***Staunton Mennonite Church***

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

The Southern District has lost a number of congregations over the last few years, but that hasn’t kept us from continuing to share in various ministry opportunities across our perceived divisions. A community Vacation Bible School and the support of a Spanish-speaking congregation in Waynesboro continues to bring us together in fulfilling ways.

With the reduced number of congregations in the Southern District, we have entered into conversations and an exploratory arrangement for a potential merger with the TCK District. While we still have many unanswered questions, the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship appears to be emerging.

**Lynside Mennonite** continues to host a thriving children’s ministry that meets on weeknights. This ministry extends into the weekend, meeting for Sunday school classes. Additionally, some of the older children have helped lead music and even preach on Sundays. Phil Lehman is completing his first year at Lynside,

providing a consistent presence with his background in mission work, congregational ministry, music, and more.



*Pastor Phil Lehman leads a baptism service at Lynside*

**Rehoboth Mennonite** continues to meet and operate with leadership from within. This congregation is made up of a few families committed to minister to one another and within their community.

**Springdale Mennonite** celebrated their 200-year anniversary last November. Springdale is the oldest active church in Virginia Mennonite Conference. During their anniversary week, members and visitors explored



their history through storytelling, tours, public displays, and much singing. Beryl Jantzi has been serving as an interim pastor at Springdale since September 1 and is joined by Kristi Stoltzfus and Jim Goalder on their pastoral team. Springdale is active in various ministries, like WARM and multiple support groups.

**Staunton Mennonite** continues to host a refugee family from Afghanistan and support our Bible Quizzing team,

Queen City United. Members are active with MCC, the Valley Mission, and the Staunton Augusta Church Relief Association. Staunton Mennonite continues to provide an Anabaptist witness in the western part of Augusta County, discipling families and individuals to be salt and light to the world.

—Kevin Gasser, Southern District Minister

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

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

**Concord Mennonite Church**

M:4, A:4 (2025 data, estimate)  
Paul Bergen

**Durham Mennonite Church**

M:12, A:10  
Cheryl VanHorn

**Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship**

M:22, A:34  
Tami Nice, Solomon Billilign and David Kindy (leadership team)  
John Storm

**Iglesia Cristiana Renuevo (CIF)**

M:33, A:23 (2025 data, estimate)  
Juan Jose Lagos

**Mara Christian Church of America, NC**

M:90, A:90 (2025 data, estimate)  
Tial Thawng

**Mountain View**

M:80, A:80 (2025 data, estimate)  
Joseph Bellone  
Gail Hickok

TCK District may span many miles, but the churches are united in a shared love for God and God’s people. Geographical distance makes meeting, worshipping, and serving together a challenge. However, the sharing of resources, ideas, and best practices knits this district together in a common ministry for the Kingdom of God.

**Concord Mennonite Church** is our only congregation outside of North Carolina, meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee in a sanctuary built in 1887. Pastor Paul Bergen provides leadership to this congregation, offering teaching and preaching in various ways.

**Durham Mennonite Church** provides an Anabaptist witness within the growing “Research Triangle” of North Carolina. This church is actively involved in local and international ministries, such as MCC. Durham Mennonite receives leadership from multiple lay leaders, many of whom preach on a regular basis.

**Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship** is guided by a three-person leadership team: Tami Nice, Solomon Billilign, and Dave Kindy. These team members bring a broad collection of gifts and experiences, which is greatly appreciated as this congregation seeks to minister to a diverse community. GMF provides a unique presence through activities such as lessons for “English Speakers of Other Languages.”

**Iglesia Cristiana Renuevo** meets in Winston Salem and ministers to the growing Spanish-speaking population of

that community. Pastor Juan Jose Lagos has a thriving prayer ministry and works unique hours to accommodate the people for whom he provides care.

**Mountain View Mennonite** reflects the idea that “sharing is caring” as this congregation frequently experiences table fellowship around shared meals, intergenerational crocheting classes, provides for their community through a “blessing box” in their parking lot, and opening their doors for their free “clothing closet.” Pastor Joe Bellone is a gifted communicator who connects with people across boundaries.



Pastor Tial Thawng leads a baby dedication at Mara Christian

**Mara Christian Church of America** is largely made up of first-generation immigrant families from Myanmar. Pastor Tial Thawng regularly leads worship times which

are filled with lively music and dance. MCCA recently held a series of worship services spanning from Thursday through Saturday focusing on teaching and worship for area youth.

**Outlet 10:27** is a congregation in formation that is no longer meeting on their own, though many of the former participants have found homes in other local congregations. These brothers and sisters continue to be a blessing throughout the region.

—Kevin Gasser, District Minister

## Teaching Cluster

Cluster Minister: MaryBeth Heatwole Moore; 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) continues to meet monthly during the academic year, offering a space for collegial support, shared reflection, and prayer for those engaged in teaching and educational chaplaincy ministries. Our gatherings remain informal but meaningful, holding together both vocational work and the personal realities that shape our lives.

A notable feature of our group is that many members are retired from full-time teaching roles, yet remain deeply engaged in ongoing vocations of teaching, writing, mentoring, and ministry. This continued participation brings both depth of experience and active engagement to our shared life.

This year, cluster members have been active in a wide range of teaching, writing, and leadership efforts. These include directing the Clinical Pastoral Education program, organizing a conference on family systems theory, publishing new books, various speaking engagements, preaching opportunities, and podcast

conversations. Members have also led service and learning trips and participated in international travel related to biblical study and long-standing relationships in the global church, even as some plans sadly had to be reshaped due to ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Alongside these professional commitments, our life together continues to be marked by care in our congregations and for family members. Several members have made repeated trips to support aging parents and siblings, while others navigate the ongoing balance between the sustaining and demanding aspects of their work. Looking ahead, members are preparing for upcoming teaching opportunities, including international lectures, spiritual formation initiatives, and continued writing projects.

We remain grateful for this community of shared vocation and mutual encouragement as we seek to be faithful in the work of teaching and ministry.

—MaryBeth Heatwole Moore, Cluster Minister

## Chaplain Cluster

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



*Chaplain Carmen Miller shares a moment with Doris North, a VMRC resident and spouse of former VMC pastor Wayne North, who passed away in 2016.*

We welcome Carl Stauffer, who began serving as Independent Living Chaplain at Virginia Mennonite

Retirement Community! Steve Landis retired from this position in January 2026.

These chaplains provide spiritual ministry in a variety of settings and communities - Faith & Light Community, Legacy Hospice, Pleasant View, University of Virginia Hospital, and Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

Chaplains serve many in the church and broader community - persons with disabilities, those who are dealing with serious health issues, persons nearing the end of life, and those going through transitions in their elderly years. Through their ministries, they provide care, emotional and spiritual support, encouragement, and companionship in times of challenge and vulnerability. They also offer prayer, worship and Bible study opportunities in a variety of settings.

The chaplains touch many lives as they share the compassion and hope of Christ. We give thanks to God for these sisters and brothers who are serving the Lord in significant ministries!

—Steve Landis, Chaplain Cluster Minister

## Administrative Cluster

Cluster: Sarah Bixler, Kevin Goertzen, Joe Hackman, Tim Heishman, Aaron Kauffman, Nick Meyer

The Administrative Cluster meets quarterly and brings together leaders serving in various nonprofit and educational settings. These gatherings provide space for shared reflection, prayer, encouragement, and conversation about the responsibilities and challenges of

leadership. Through mutual care and support, the cluster offers renewal, perspective, and connection for those serving in administrative and organizational roles. —Joe Hackman, Cluster Minister

## Racial Justice Task Force

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

Due to several transitions and extenuating circumstances, the Racial Justice Task Force has come to a temporary halt this year. The staff connection had transitioned from Caleb Schrock-Hurst to Maren Tyedmers Hange who finished in that role in October 2025. Additionally, there are currently three open positions on the task force.

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, ideas and additional members.

—Maren Tyedmers Hange  
Racial Justice Taskforce co-chair

## Congregational Life Commission

Members: Steve Pardini (chair), Carlos Malvaez (staff), Sue Miller, Amanda Swartley (members at large), Skip Tobin (VMMissions)

Last Fall, more than 80 people attended the CLC-sponsored workshop, “Rebirth of Anabaptism: Just, Joyful, and Sustainable Living.”

The aim of the workshop was to learn how to live out our Anabaptist faith with greater joy as we practice just and sustainable living. This workshop examined what it means to be an Anabaptist today and asked what challenges us to resist conforming to the world.

We identified issues in our culture and society, analyzing how the church's response has been inadequate, and explored how cultural norms influence our finances. We looked at scripture to better understand what it means to live justly. A panel of speakers suggested new ways of living that are both just and sustainable. We engaged in discussion groups at tables and shared ideas on how to turn new insights about cultural issues and the call of scripture into new ways of living justly, joyfully, and sustainably.

The keynote speaker, Sam Funkhouser, gave a presentation titled “Trapped in a Globalized Consumer Economy: The Christian Imperative for Nonconformity

Today.” Harvey Yoder led a Bible study titled: “The Bible from Cover to Cover Insists on Just Living.” Amada Swartley led a panel discussion that included Pat Hostetter Martin speaking on “Simple Living,” Steve Pardini speaking on “Responsible Dominion and Sustainable Living,” Glen Kauffman speaking on “Reflecting Anabaptist Values in our Investing,” and Daryl Byler speaking on “Giving Like Zacchaeus.” Maren Hange led a table-group discussion, asking the question, “What Does Just, Joyful, and Sustainable Living Look Like?”

We enjoyed a delicious potluck lunch of “stone soup” – a vegetable stew and home-baked bread.

Our theme song was created especially for this event, written by our own Seth Crissman (*The Soil and The Seed Project*). Makinto led the music and worship times. Sue Miller led the gathering in prayer.

Participants’ donations totaling \$2,100 were used to support Mennonite Central Committee as a means of restitution and renewal.

—Steve Pardini, chair

## Historical Committee

Members: Elwood Yoder, chair; Simone Horst, VMC archivist; James Rush; Mary Sprunger; Ken Weaver

It was during COVID-19 that I began my role as chair of the VMC Historical Committee, in September 2020. Since then, the Historical Committee met 15 times, approximately 3 times annually. What has the Historical Committee worked on?

1. Produced *People of Peace: A History of the Virginia Mennonite Conference*, released at VMC summer assembly, August 2026. We’ve sold or donated over 450 copies of our 525-page history book. Masthof Press is our publisher. Copies can be purchased at Amazon, Masthof.com, or from Elwood Yoder.
2. Updated the Virginia Mennonite Conference page on [gameo.org](http://gameo.org) to match 2025 realities. Over the decades, our Conference page has been written by Harry Brunk, Paul Kratz, and Elwood Yoder.
3. Managed 600 square feet of VMC archives, located in the first floor of the Hartzler Library at EMU.

Congregations and institutions are encouraged to contribute important files to the VMC archives. The VMC cost to store historical materials for 2026 is \$7651. Simone Horst is the VMC Archivist. Contact Simone at [archives@emu.edu](mailto:archives@emu.edu), or call her at 540-432-4178. Stop by the EMU library on M, W, or F, 9 AM – 4 PM, to talk with Simone.

4. Worked on a fifth volume of VMC Minutes. 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 2026 Assembly being the 115th annual assembly. In 1993, the Conference added a second delegate session each year. We will produce a print volume



for 2003–2025 that contains the minutes from annual assembly and the winter delegate sessions.

5. Received a \$2500 Harry A. Brunk Scholar's Award from the Menno Simons Historical Library at EMU for

research, work, and Elwood Yoder's expenses toward the "Five Centuries, Five Lectures" work in 2025, recognizing the 500 years of Anabaptism.

—*Elwood Yoder, chair*

## Virginia Mennonite Women

Executive Committee: Deb Pardini, President; Vice President (vacant); Tami Nice, Treasurer; Keri Waltner, Secretary; Publicity Secretary (vacant); Sharon Shenk, Mission Needs Secretary.

Our Annual Missions Day was held on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. We began our day with food and fellowship, songs and worship. Our guest speaker, Denise Goertzen, talked with us about "Embodied Witness through Seasons of Transition." She shared personal stories of vulnerability, pain, and the tender joy that comes when we experience God walking with us and strengthening us through difficult times.

Notes were read aloud that were received from mission workers who had shared about their work and ways in which we can support them. Time was then allotted for prayer and writing notes of encouragement to each woman on the mission field; these notes were later mailed to them.

We then proceeded with our Mission Auction, where women made selections from a list of mission workers to support financially, raising \$3200 in a few short minutes. These funds were then given to VMM for deposit into individual accounts for their support.

Something new we introduced this year: the "Sowing Seeds" project. Each person in attendance received \$25 cash, to inspire each of us to look for ways to sow seeds of hope, joy and peace in our own communities, our own mission field, to those people we encounter every day. Several women are already planning to combine their money and provide a fund-raising meal for a family on the mission field. Someone else is using it to purchase

items for MCC school kits. We look forward to hearing more of the creative ways that people "gave away God's money" to bless others and will share them at our next gathering. Check our FB page for stories as we receive them. We continue to look for ways to get younger women excited to participate, as they grow in their faith and experience the need for strong and mature relationships with other women.

We are eagerly looking forward to the 2026 Fall Women's Retreat! This will be held at the Skelton 4-H Center near Smith Mountain Lake, in a beautiful setting with lovely meeting space and accommodations. We are proud to announce that our featured speaker this year is EMU Interim President, Shannon Dycus. She is a gifted speaker, thoughtful and humorous, and we know she will bring us a message that will both challenge and inspire. If you haven't already, mark your calendar for Oct. 30-Nov. 1 to join us for a retreat of relaxation and inspiration.

As we acknowledge the many changes that have occurred in VMC over the recent years, we continue to work at relationships and connection with each other. We are designed for relationship, for community, to encourage one another by our presence together and our care for one another. We hope that you will participate in our events as you hear about them, and build or strengthen relationships with other women as you share your stories with each other in various settings.

—*Deb Pardini, President*

## Virginia Mennonite Men

Organizer: Steve Pardini

During the Fall, Winter, and Spring seasons, men of all ages are invited to attend the weekly Men's Breakfast and Bible Study, held on Tuesday mornings at Park View Mennonite Church. It is sponsored by Virginia Mennonite Men, a group within the Virginia Mennonite Conference, but this is an inter-church Bible study that includes men from many area Mennonite churches, as well as other denominations.



The Bible Study gathers men for fellowship, heart-sharing, and spiritual growth, with 35-40 participants each week. It

aims to be transformative, not just informative. Participants are encouraged to engage with the text and reflect on how it shapes us and guides our understanding of what it means to follow Christ today. The Bible study seeks to build relationships rather than promote ideology. For those unable to attend in person, sessions are live-streamed on YouTube, and recordings are posted for later viewing.

All are welcome! It begins at 6:45 am with breakfast and fellowship around the tables. The hour-long Bible study begins at 7:00, with teaching, followed by small-group conversation around the tables.

- **WHEN:** Tuesday mornings, breakfast starts at 6:45 am, followed by Bible study from 7:00-8:00 a.m.
- **WHERE:** Park View Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall, 1600 College Ave, Harrisonburg, VA.

**You may sign up** for a weekly email with all the information you need about upcoming sessions, plus links to handouts, recordings, and more. If you wish to be added to the weekly email list, send an email request to [virginia.mennonite.men@gmail.com](mailto:virginia.mennonite.men@gmail.com)

### Participant comments:

- I appreciate getting to know those who attend and the wisdom of those who present.
- I grow by hearing others' perspectives on scripture from diverse backgrounds.
- The fellowship and encouragement I have received have helped deepen my faith.
- I have been challenged to live faithfully through an in-depth study of scripture.
- This is a place where I get to know other men who love the Lord and share their journey.
- This Bible study has been inspiring, challenging, and a way to make new friends.

**The Fall 2026 Men's Breakfast and Bible Study schedule** will be released in August. Watch for announcements in your weekly bulletin. —*Steve Pardini*



## OTHER STATS & REPORTS

### VMC Membership a Year Ago (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         |
| <b>Total VMC</b> | <b>46</b>           | <b>3599</b> | <b>3414</b> |

### VMC Membership Today (2026)

| District         | Congregations       | Membership  | Attendance  |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Calvary          | 1 (plus ministries) | 800         | 800         |
| Eastern          | 5                   | 279         | 243         |
| Harrisonburg     | 7                   | 1,092       | 991         |
| Northern         | 13                  | 664         | 565         |
| Potomac          | 6                   | 334         | 356         |
| Southern         | 4                   | 154         | 177         |
| TCK              | 6                   | 241         | 241         |
| <b>Total VMC</b> | <b>42</b>           | <b>3564</b> | <b>3373</b> |

### Financial Report

(The year-to-date financial report was unavailable at press time. You may wish to insert the printed report here, when made available at VMC Delegate Assembly)

## 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  
Concord Mennonite Church  
Crest Hill Community Church  
\*CrossWay Mennonite Church  
Daniels Run Peace Church  
Durham Mennonite Church  
First Mennonite of Richmond

Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship  
Harrisonburg 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  
\*Vietnamese Christian Fellowship  
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 Donors  
Abram & Ruth Rittenhouse  
Alice Hostetter  
Alma Coffman  
Andrew and Julia Cheung  
Ann Frank  
Barbara Frank  
Betty Kurtz  
Bonita Stutzman  
Brian Law  
Caleb Schrock-Hurst  
Can N Le  
Carlos and Wendy Malvaez  
Carol Van Donk  
Charles Pellman  
Conrad and Mary Jane Heatwole  
Craig Miller and Lois Blauch Miller  
David & Kathleen Hartzler  
David and Debra King  
Dean Williams  
Dorothy Shank  
Duane and Joanna Swartley  
Duane and Lois Beck  
Dennis and Edith Shenk Kuhns  
Edwin & Edie Bontrager  
Edwin and Charlotte Swope  
Edwin Saravia  
Eleanor Mininger  
Elwood and Joy Yoder  
Eugene & Gloria Diener  
Evangeline Yoder  
Everence  
Floyd & Janet Blosser

Fred Kniss  
George & Ruthann Brunk, III  
Gerald and Jeanette Hershey  
Gerald and Sara Wenger Shenk  
Gerald Nauman  
Glen and Sandy Kauffman  
Glennys Shouey  
Gloria and Galen Lehman  
Gordon & Bonnetta Zook  
Grant Rissler  
Holly Scott  
Irvin M & Anna J Heishman  
J. Robert and Rosalie Eschleman  
James and Aldine Musser  
James and Emily Akerson  
Jan and Sam Showalter  
Jean Rissler  
Joan Kulp  
Joel and Valerie Reinford  
John and Kathryn Stoltzfus Fairfield  
Joseph Longacher  
Joyce Hutchinson  
Kathy Yoder  
Kenton & Shirley Brubaker  
Kevin and Denise Goertzen  
Kevin and Sonya Gasser  
Kevin King  
Les Helmuth  
Leslie and Crystal Horning  
Linda Wenger  
Lois Miller  
Loren & Earlene Horst  
Loren & Pat Swartzendruber

Lowell & Janet Wenger  
Lynae Maust  
Marge Maust  
Marian and Steven Buckwalter  
Matthew & Greta Bucher  
Melvin Janzen  
Michael and Peggy Shenk  
Michael and Ramona Shenk  
Millard Showalter  
Monique Jay  
Nelson Driver  
Paul & Mary Leaman  
Paul and Pam Groff  
Pearl Hartman  
Pearl Lantz  
Phil & Irene Kniss  
Raymond & Naomi Ressler  
Ron Piper  
Ron Stoltzfus  
Rosemary King  
Ruth Burkholder  
Ruth Martin  
Ryan Silver  
Sam and Viola Miller  
Sheldon Burkholder  
Steve and Katie Swartzendruber  
Steve Pardini  
Tami Nice  
Tim Friesen  
Twila Brunk  
Violet and Elmer Metzler  
Wendell & Lois Maust  
Wilmer and Mary Louise Lehman



## Retired Credentialed Leaders

|                      |                          |                       |                           |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Myron S. Augsburg    | Roy F. Good              | Carolyn J. Lyndaker   | Edith N. Shenk Kuhns      |
| David W. Bartow      | Tim Green                | Milford E. Lyndaker   | Hazel Shirk               |
| J. Harold Bergey, Jr | Lowell W. Haarer         | Floyd R. Matteson     | Omar V. Showalter         |
| Floyd G. Blosser     | Phillip N. Helmuth       | Arthur G. McPhee      | Carl L. Smeltzer          |
| Janet K. Blosser     | Daniel A. Hoopert        | James B. Meador       | Edward B. Stoltzfus       |
| G Edwin Bontrager    | Ken R. Horst             | David F. Miller       | Bonita Stutzman           |
| Joseph E. Bontrager  | Loren E. Horst           | Frederic A. Miller    | Marvin Stutzman           |
| Richard L. Bowman    | Chuck Hostetter          | Donald P. Mishler     | Loren Swartzendruber      |
| Clifford D. Brubaker | David S. Huyard          | James W. Musser       | Linda K. Wenger           |
| George R. Brunk, III | Rose Huyard              | John R. Petersheim    | Angie B. Williams         |
| Owen E. Burkholder   | J Melvin Janzen          | Clifford S. Poirot Sr | Amos P. Witmer            |
| J. Daryl Byler       | Mark H. Keller           | Ben Risser            | Daniel J. Yoder           |
| Merle J. Christner   | Phil Kniss               | Elwood G. Schrock     | Don A. Yoder              |
| Kevin A. Clark       | Paul L. Kratz            | Carmen Schrock-Hurst  | Harvey Yoder              |
| Randy Coblentz       | John T. Kreider          | Dorothy J. Shank      | Lawrence M. Yoder         |
| Justiniano Cruz      | Dennis R. Kuhns          | Rowland Shank         | Shirlee K. Yoder          |
| Russ Eanes           | Mark N. Lehman           | Clayton O. Shenk      | Kathy D. Yoder            |
| Anna M. Engle        | Wilmer R. Lehman         | Raymond W. Shenk      | Shirley E. Yoder Brubaker |
| Del J. Glick         | Catherine S. Longenecker | H. Michael Shenk II   | Gordon D. Zook            |

## Ministerial Credential Transitions

The following changes to ministerial credential status happened since the 2025 Annual Report.

- Joe Arbaugh - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Mauricio Chenlo - ordination reactivated
- James Delp - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Richard Early - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Harley Good - (ordained) deceased
- Chuck Hostetter - (ordained) retired
- Phil Kniss - (ordained) retired
- Christina Kraybill - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Eugene Kraybill - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Sarah Layman - licensed toward ordination, Harrisonburg Menn.
- Wendy Miller - (ordained) deceased
- Kelli Moore - licensed toward ordination, Christiansburg Menn.
- Ronald Pierantoni - (ordained) deceased
- Armando Sanchez - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Veronica Sanchez - ordination expired, congregation reaffiliated outside MC USA
- Caleb Schrock-Hurst - ordination, overseas mission
- Carmen Schrock-Hurst - (ordained) retired
- Carl Stauffer - ordination moved to Special Ministry, VMRC chaplain
- Amanda Swartley - licensed toward ordination, Harrisonburg Menn.
- Rebecca Tyson - licensed for Special Ministry at Trinity UCC, Timberville
- Sam Weaver - (ordained) deceased
- Harvey Yoder - (ordained) retired

## ENDORSED MINISTRIES REPORTS



107 YEARS OF  
SHARING NEW LIFE  
IN JESUS CHRIST

**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.

### LIVING OUT OUR ANABAPTIST VISION

Our staff recently spent time reflecting on what it means to be an Anabaptist mission agency. We resonate with the booklet, *What Is an Anabaptist Christian?*, in which Palmer Becker names three defining qualities of the Anabaptist movement:

1. **Jesus is the center of our faith.**
2. **Community is the center of our lives.**
3. **Reconciliation is the center of our work.**

At its heart, Anabaptism is about a return to the original Jesus movement described in the New Testament. As one staff member put it, "Jesus meant what he said, and he was talking to us!" We worship the risen Christ and seek to follow Him in life, with the help of the Holy Spirit. We give our allegiance to God's kingdom community, the church, over and above any other loyalty. And through our words and actions we point people to Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who reconciles us to God and one another.

Our mission workers live out this Anabaptist vision everyday:

- Modeling the way of Jesus in their walk with God, love for neighbors, incarnational living, and perseverance through trials and difficulties.
- Building countercultural community with believers from other backgrounds and generations, even when that means hard conversations.
- Bearing witness to Jesus in the classroom, on the street, in the marketplace, at the coffee shop, on the hiking trail, and even from the pulpit.

Anabaptism remains a central part of who we are, even as we change our name. This is the last update you will see from "Virginia Mennonite Missions." After 15 months of work, which included a lot of listening to you, our Board of Directors selected a new name in April. We are busy preparing to announce the new name on Thursday, July 23, at the opening worship service of VMC Summer Assembly. In the meantime, you can read more about the process at [vmmissions.org/name-change](http://vmmissions.org/name-change).

In a time of considerable change, we continue "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Thank you for your ongoing partnership in mission.



VMMissions is providing lunch on Saturday following Assembly on July 25 from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. at Lindale Mennonite Church. All are invited.

### BOARD

**Paul Yoder**  
Member at Large  
Chair (2026)

**David Yutzy**  
Member at Large  
Secretary (2027)

**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 Gingerich**  
Director of Partner  
Development

**Lizzette Hernandez**  
Latino Ministries Coach

**Aaron Kauffman**  
President

**Jan Liskey**  
Director of Finance

**Lydia Martin**  
Human Resources  
Coordinator

**Risha Metzler**  
Mission Mobilizer

**Martin Rhodes**  
Director of Training  
and Short-term  
Missions

**Melanie Sherer**  
Executive Assistant

**Jason Showalter**  
Global Ministries  
Director

**Cindy de Tablan**  
Events and Publicity  
Coordinator

**Jon Trotter**  
Communications  
Manager

**Karen Yoder**  
Worker Care Coach

**Tom Yoder**  
Ministry Coach

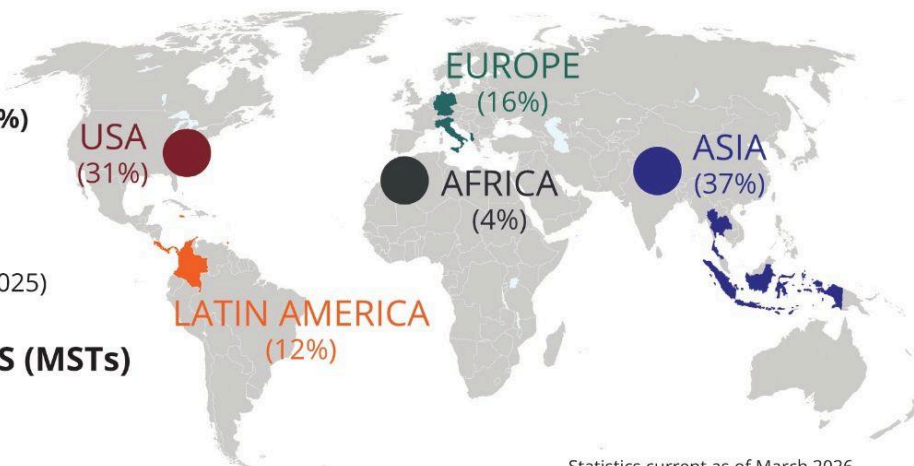


# VMMISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

## CURRENT STATISTICS

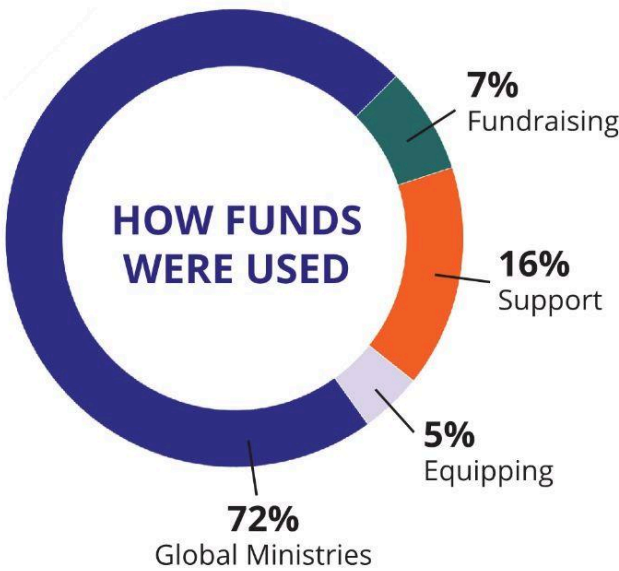
- 68 TOTAL WORKERS
  - 28 SERVING 5+ YEARS (38%)
  - 24 NON-U.S. BACKGROUND (35%)
  - 32 SERVING UPGs\* (47%)
- 15 NEW WORKERS (2025-2026)
- 15 TRANSEND INTERNS
- 90 E<sup>3</sup> PARTICIPANTS (SINCE 01/2025)
- 14 COUNTRIES OF SERVICE
- 17 MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAMS (MSTs)
- 103 MST MEMBERS
- 13 STAFF
- 13 BOARD MEMBERS

## WORKERS BY REGION



Statistics current as of March 2026  
\* Unreached People Groups, defined as less than or equal to 5% Christian AND less than or equal to 2% evangelical.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW IN FISCAL YEAR 2025 (SEPT. 1, 2024 - AUG. 31, 2025)



|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| REVENUE        |        |
| CASH DONATIONS | \$2.4M |
| OTHER          | \$1M   |
| EXPENSES       |        |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$2.9M |

## TWO-YEAR COMPARISON

| CATEGORY       | 2024         | 2025         |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| CASH DONATIONS | \$2,347,761  | \$2,399,588  |
| OTHER REVENUE  | \$1,991,688  | \$1,031,839  |
| TOTAL REVENUE  | \$4,339,449  | \$3,431,427  |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$2,949,505  | \$2,942,327  |
| TOTAL ASSETS   | \$11,886,982 | \$12,376,082 |

Workers and staff at the VMissions worker retreat in July 2025 at Highland Retreat, Bergton, Virginia.







*Meet Jesus, Explore Nature,  
Build Relationships*

### Serving guests

God is faithfully using Highland Retreat to bless churches, Christian organizations, families, staff, and campers. This past year we served more than 9,500 people, a 15-year high! We were honored to host about 165 groups: church-wide retreats, family reunions, men's groups, women's groups, youth groups, college groups, etc. We also served 10 Christian schools midweek, many of which requested food service and outdoor programming.

*"Our ropes coordinator was outstanding, and we had a great experience. He helped the kids through the ropes course and pushed them out of their comfort zones in the best way possible -- and took the time to process the experience. I've recommended it to my colleagues and can't wait to be back next year."*  
—Christian schoolteacher



### Summer Camps

Last year, for the sake of our staff, we made the important decision to end summer camp with a Thursday evening dinner for families after pick-up, rather than rushing to dismiss Friday afternoon. After campers depart, staff now enjoy an extended time of worship and sharing.

*"Staying up late for the staff firesides at 12:00 a.m. [was] definitely good for my soul. When no one wants to go to bed and we're worshipping as a big group, I felt close to God."*  
—2025 summer staff member

This summer's theme is about inviting campers to experience life as an adventure guided by God. Our theme verse is Isaiah 30:21 - "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" We have more than 370 campers registered and a full staff team! After several years when staff recruitment was a real struggle, entering the summer fully staffed is a real answer to prayer!

### Capital Campaign

After conducting a feasibility study, the Highland Board approved a two-year, \$635,000 capital campaign to address some of Highland's greatest opportunities and challenges:

- Addressing important infrastructure needs: water, septic, electric, and pool.
- Purchasing the Gehman home and renovating Green Valley House to serve guests.
- Adding four air-conditioned cabins (two for each campground) built by students at MTC. [pictured]



This list represents our highest priorities; there are many more important projects should we exceed the goal. The great news is that Highland supporters are responding generously and the initial goal is in sight!

We praise God for His faithfulness, the engaged community of volunteers and donors, and the partnership we have with churches within the Virginia Mennonite Conference.





# Williamsburg

## CHRISTIAN RETREAT CENTER

Now in our 42nd 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.”

In May of this year, WCRC held its first ever “Celebrate WCRC Gala”. With a western attire theme, the event featured a barbecue dinner, live music, line dancing, square dancing, axe throwing,

and a silent and live auction. It was held at WCRC under our large event tent. Since it was our first gala, there was uncertainty over how the event would be received by our donors. But, the outcome was a big win for WCRC. With just over 80 in attendance, the event raised over \$60,000. Funds will go towards summer staff salaries and a high ropes course upgrade.

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.

—Bob Briscoe, Executive Director





Report to Virginia Mennonite Conference  
From Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center  
June 16, 2026



Our mission at the Heritage Center is to share and celebrate the story of Jesus Christ as reflected in the lives of the Brethren and Mennonites in the Shenandoah Valley. We do this through 14 annual day-long field trips with first graders from most schools in the Shenandoah Valley, including public, private, and homeschool groups. We carry out our mission to share the story of Jesus with many tourists who stop by to learn about the Brethren and Mennonites. It is surprising how many guests come to the Center from the Massanutten Resort.



Another way we carry out our mission is by hosting five annual concerts by The Soil and The Seed Project. Many folks, from all walks of life, come for these glorious times of music and worship. Each year, the Heritage Center hosts Sunday evening events called Worship in the Woods, featuring Brethren and Mennonite speakers and musicians. The Huffman Pavilion, a recent addition to our campus, is useful for these and other large events, and can be rented by calling the Heritage Center.

Our buildings and artifacts are another way we celebrate the story of Jesus Christ as reflected in the lives of Anabaptists in the Valley. Since opening in 1999, the Center has been given and built several buildings that represent the faith and heritage of our people. Our artifacts come from Brethren and Mennonites who support the Center's ministry.

We at the Center have joined the community in recognizing the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. We developed a temporary exhibit on Brethren and Mennonites during the Revolutionary War.

Current staff at the Center includes Jonathan Brumbaugh Scarr, Hannah Hendricks and Elwood Yoder. Jonathan Brumbaugh Scarr (left) works as Associate Director. Jonathan attends the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. Events Manager Hannah Hendricks (center) graduated from the University of Mary Washington in 2026 with a degree in Historic Preservation and a focus in Museum Studies. Elwood Yoder (right) began serving as Interim Executive Director at the Heritage Center in January 2026. Our search for a director continues, and the position is advertised on our website.



Please pray for us in this important work of sharing stories of faith and history with people from all over the United States. It was the vision of an earlier generation to begin the Heritage Center, and we continue to believe our Kingdom work is vital and needed in this community.

Elwood Yoder, Interim Executive Director

*Elwood Yoder*

## Embracing Hope and Resilience in Education

As we reflect on the 2025-26 school year, we are filled with gratitude for our community. We had the privilege of educating 361 students, including 159 from Mennonite congregations. Our mission and vision continue to guide us, with renewed focus on belonging and resilience.



### Learning to Be Brave

Elementary's theme this year, "Hope in the Wilderness: Learning to Be Brave" underscores our commitment to teaching students. Our goal is for students to learn how to navigate challenges with courage and hope, ensuring they are equipped to thrive despite setbacks.



### Teaching as Mentoring

At EMS, genuine care for students' well-being and growth is the cornerstone of an EMS education. Jodi Nisly '91 Hertzler, English teacher, senior class sponsor, and college counselor since 2014, embodies this philosophy. She guides students through their academic and personal growth with individualized care and dedication.



### Transitions and Gratitude

We express our deepest gratitude to Larry Martin (MS), Patsy Seitz (HS), and Susan Stoltzfus (ES), who are moving on after teaching across three divisions. Their collective service of **67 years** has laid a strong foundation for future growth.

As we live into our mission, we remain committed to cultivating resilience and hope within our community. We look forward to building on this firm foundation, ensuring every student feels a sense of belonging and is empowered to flourish in our ever-changing world.

With gratitude for our shared hope,



Paul Leaman  
Head of School





*EMU prepares students to serve  
and lead in a global context*

SPRING 2026

VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

EMU ANNUAL REPORT

### Greetings and blessings to our Mennonite congregations and churches!

We have been working hard to position ourselves to better serve our students and fulfill our mission. Within our academic divisions, we are doing this by reconfiguring our academic structure from three schools to two divisions. The new leadership structure will help the university work more efficiently and encourage greater integration and collaboration across academic programs.

Two deans have been appointed to lead the academic divisions, with both officially beginning their roles on July 1, 2025. The **Rev. Dr. Sarah Ann Bixler**, serves as dean for the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences division. **Dr. Michael Horst**, serves as dean for the Behavioral, Health and Natural Sciences division. The two divisional deans work closely with **Dr. Tara Kishbaugh**, inaugural dean of faculty and student success, and **Jonathan Swartz**, dean of students, while reporting to the provost.

In our reimagining this past year, another development to emerge is the new pathway curriculum projected to roll out during the Fall 2026 semester. This framework repackages EMU's general education/core curriculum into four focused pathways, each aligned with university values. The pathway curriculum will help students develop in-demand soft skills that enhance their career readiness in a competitive job market. Students will likely select a pathway in the second semester of their first year, with guidance provided to help them choose the option that best fits their goals.

#### A few celebrations:

- EMU has been recognized and included on the 'Best Colleges in America' list from Money.com. [EMU earned a 3.5-star rating \(out of five stars\) on the list](#), outperforming several of our neighboring schools. See the [full](#) news story here.
- Total giving for fiscal year 2025 was our second best in EMU's history - surpassing \$7 million. Financial aid is among our highest priority, and \$4.1 million has been raised this year towards new scholarships.

While we work toward these successes, the political landscape continues to be at the forefront of our attention. Reduction of Department of Education staff and potential impacts to student loans, Pell and other need-based grants are the primary areas where we are gathering information and data. For our current and incoming students, EMU has provided 100% of our students with financial aid and 1:1 financial counseling from our staff. We remain committed to supporting access for students and communication about how we continue to navigate these changes.

EMU is boldly preparing to continue our rich commitments and shape leaders who carry hope into a changing landscape. Thank you for your partnership in prayer and support in our mission together.

In gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Shannon W. Dycus  
Interim President

### How can EMU serve you?

Contact the church relations office to schedule the president or a faculty guest speaker:  
540-432-4200 or  
[ChurchRelations@emu.edu](mailto:ChurchRelations@emu.edu)

### Virginia Conference Connections to EMU

#### Students

Spring semester 2026 has 26 undergraduates, seven seminary and five graduate students enrolled from the Virginia Mennonite Conference.

#### Giving

The Virginia Mennonite Conference churches gave over \$45,500 in matching church grants to their students during the year ending June 2025.

- ▶ **Rev. Dr. Shannon Dycus**,  
*interim president*
- ▶ **Kirk Shisler**, *vice president for advancement*
- ▶ **Troy Martin**, *director of financial aid*
- ▶ **Braydon Hoover**, *vice president for enrollment and marketing*
- ▶ **Luke Litwiller**, *director of undergrad admissions*

### Our Vision

*We will open new pathways of access and achievement for all students who aspire to grow as unifying leaders equipped with intercultural competence, oriented toward peace and justice, and rooted in an active faith modeled on the life and teachings of Jesus.*



## EMS Launches Doctor of Ministry in Peacemaking and Social Change

The new Doctor of Ministry (DMin) at EMS, launching in August 2025, is distinctive in many ways. It is the only Anabaptist-focused DMin that is both regionally and nationally accredited. As a matter of justice and educational integrity, EMS's DMin invests in personnel and students as courses are taught exclusively by continuing-contract, full-time EMS faculty and admitted students can receive up to 50% tuition scholarships. The asynchronous online format is designed for engaged ministry leaders who wish to learn about the theology and praxis of peace in order to ignite change toward justice in congregational or non-profit settings. Doctoral students will gain tools for trauma-informed care, biblical interpretation, liberative theologies, and analysis of religions, persons and systems while pursuing a research and writing project that matters for their ministry context. Learn more about this innovative program or apply to join our next cohort at [emu.edu/seminary/degree-programs/dmin](https://emu.edu/seminary/degree-programs/dmin)



EMS's small CPE cohorts, like this spring 2025 hybrid unit offered by Director Penny Driediger, receive personalized formation

## CPE: EMS's Hidden Gem

EMS stands out among U.S. seminaries as one of only four theological schools with its own accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program. By partnering with clinical sites across the U.S., EMS's expert certified educators offer hybrid CPE units so students can hone their chaplaincy skills in their local contexts. CPE at EMS is open to current students for graduate credit and non-seminarians who wish to study chaplaincy. Learn more at [emu.edu/seminary/cpe](https://emu.edu/seminary/cpe)

## Graduates Value EMS's Warm Community, On Campus and Online

Rev. Graciella Odelia, a 2025 Master of Arts in Christian Leadership graduate and youth minister in Mosaic Mennonite Conference, says she appreciates the warm community at EMS. "I know everyone, the professors know my name, they know my story, they know where I come from, they know my intercultural context," Graciella reflects. "I feel seen and heard." At EMS, Graciella studied theology, gained tools for deeper Bible study and valued the opportunity to study online with students from around the world. She explored youth ministry practices supporting faith and well-being through her senior capstone project, "Home Away from Home: Embracing Young Asian Immigrants in Church." Graciella is one of five graduates who earned master's degrees in Christian leadership and divinity and general theological certificates on May 4. Apply now at [emu.edu/seminary/admissions](https://emu.edu/seminary/admissions)



Rev. Graciella Odelia, MACL '25 at May 4 commencement

## EMS Mission

*Eastern Mennonite Seminary nurtures agents of justice and peace by opening spaces for theological learning and practice rooted in Jesus' radical ministry of beloved community.*

- **Rev. Dr. Shannon W. Dycus**, interim president
- **Rev. Dr. Sarah Bixler**, seminary dean
- **Dr. David Evans**, associate dean
- **Adam King**, graduate recruitment specialist

[emu.edu/seminary](https://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](https://emu.edu/seminary/training)





# Mennonite Disaster Service

*Virginia Unit*

The Virginia Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) unit has had a busy and rewarding year of serving our neighbors in need.

One of our major projects was replacing a private automobile bridge for two elderly women whose home had been isolated after flooding. For more than a year, their car was stranded on the house side of the river, making it impossible for them to drive to medical appointments or the grocery store. Their home, located in Albemarle County, is believed to have experienced some of the northernmost damage caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024.

This year, we have also been involved in assessing and cleaning up the aftermath of three house fires—two in Augusta County and one in Amherst County. We are hopeful that rebuilding on two of these homes will begin this fall.

More recently, nearly 20 volunteers spent a day serving in Page County after straight-line winds caused significant damage to a local farmer's chicken houses. Volunteers cleaned out an older chicken house that was being used for equipment storage, while a group of young people walked the farmer's fields, collecting roofing debris that had been scattered by the storm. Their hard work made a meaningful difference in helping the farm begin the recovery process.

MDS continues its valued partnership with Eastern Mennonite School through both the construction class and the E-Term program. Once again this year, construction students built a complete set of wall panels for an MDS home. The walls were shipped to the Asheville, North Carolina, area, where they are being used to build a new home for a family who lost theirs during Hurricane Helene. In addition to framing, students gained hands-on experience with basic electrical wiring and plumbing. A group of students, teachers, and parents also traveled to Elk, Washington, during E-Term, where they spent a week helping rebuild homes destroyed by wildfires. This marked the fifth consecutive year of the MDS E-Term service trip. Each year, participants return sharing stories of lives changed—not only the homeowners they served, but their own as well. Thank you to everyone who volunteers, prays, and supports the ministry of Mennonite Disaster Service. Your generosity and willingness to serve make this work possible and bring hope to families as they rebuild their homes and their lives.

## **Woody Driver**

Chair, Shenandoah Valley MDS Unit



Dear siblings in Virginia Mennonite Conference,

We give thanks for the love and support that we receive from you and have received for the last 55 years, from our founding in 1971 until now. And we are glad for the opportunity to share how we have seen God at work in our community over the last year!

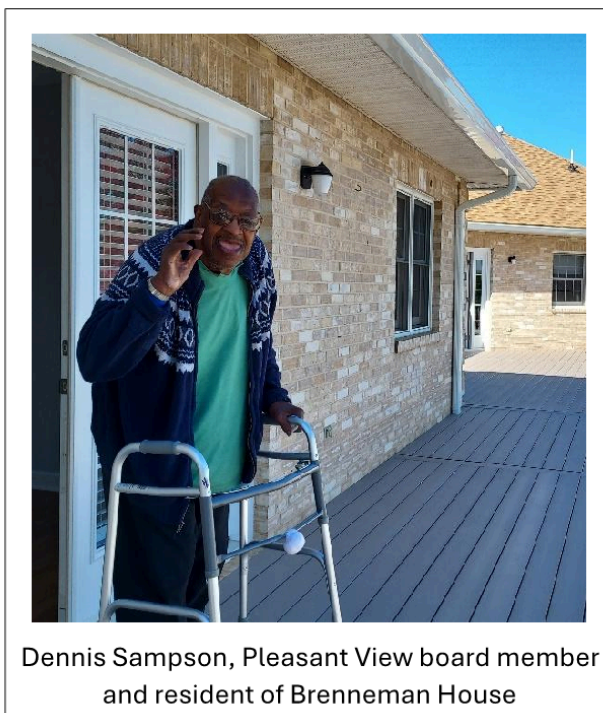
We'd like to start by thinking back to our annual banquet last fall. The theme of the that banquet was "Pursuing Life to the Fullest". We remembered that Jesus described his mission as "[coming] so that [we] could have life—indeed, so that [we] could live life to the fullest" (John 10:10, CEB). A full and abundant life is lived within God's beloved community, formed by those relationships, and shaped by God's calling for each person. We took some time to reflect on how Pleasant View is able to participate in this work and promote life to the fullest. Our mission statement reflects our best hopes: "Pleasant View supports individuals with disabilities in living out their goals for meaningful work, relationships, and spiritual development."

As an organization, Pleasant View understands that offering shelter is an essential part of the work that we do. Ultimately, it is our residents who will take a house and make it into a home—a place of warmth and love. However, the organization is glad when the residents are able to regard Pleasant View houses as places where they can live life to the fullest. Accordingly, this past year has been one of renovation. Nearly every house at Pleasant View was involved! (In fact, our only house not involved is in line to be renovated in the near future.) And our residents were on the move: some moves were temporary while renovations were underway, and others were longer term.

Throughout this year of renovations, there have been many reasons for gratitude. We gave thanks for excitement as people anticipated or moved into their new spaces. We recognized the amazing work of our Direct Support Professionals, as they kept life moving smoothly in the midst of transitions. But perhaps the most rewarding thing has been to see how existing relationships are maintained and new ones formed among our residents in the midst of these changes. We truly are a community of compassion, and our residents are our best example of how to do the joyous work of caring for one another.

When Pleasant View rededicated Brenneman House a few months ago, we noted that a number of the returning residents were avid gardeners. Tomatoes and flowers were popular choices for the deck boxes on the back porch of their house. Making the connection between plants and people, we recommitted ourselves to planting and nurturing, tending and pruning. And we anticipate the harvest with hope and joy, giving thanks to God in all things.

Thank you for the ways that you support us: offering your time, finances, prayers, and friendship. If you wish to connect further, please contact Pam Miller, Director of Development ([pmiller@pleasantviewinc.org](mailto:pmiller@pleasantviewinc.org)), or Pastor Derek Yoder ([derek@pleasantviewinc.org](mailto:derek@pleasantviewinc.org)).



Dennis Sampson, Pleasant View board member and resident of Brenneman House







## ***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 38th 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.*** *In the last 12 months, we provided more than **4,638** counseling sessions. Our sliding-scale fee structure and scholarship program—funded entirely by generous partners—help reduce financial barriers to care. In the last 12 month, FLRC provided about \$9,000 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*



## HISTORY

NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center first opened its doors in 2000 when a group of local Mennonite churches recognized and responded to a changing demographic in the Shenandoah Valley.

In an effort to support these newcomers, the board chose to focus our mission on human services. For its first fifteen years, the agency was located in Community Mennonite Church. In August 2015, the agency moved to West Water Street in Harrisonburg. In 2023, NewBridges expanded to our current location at 41-B Court Square in downtown Harrisonburg. The agency also added a full-time immigration attorney to our staff. NewBridges provides immigration legal services from Frederick County to Rockbridge County. Our supporters include private donors, houses of worship, local municipalities, and Community Foundations.

We are 100% locally funded.

## PROGRAMS

Immigration  
Legal  
Processes

Resource  
Navigation  
& Document  
Services

2025

25

Years of  
Service to our  
Community



42

Countries of Origin



181 Miles

Service Area

Harrisonburg

Rockingham

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro

Shenandoah-Winchester-Timberville-Stephen City



642

Immigration Legal Program Inquiries



337

Immigration Legal Program Services Rendered



Resource Navigation Program Inquiries

282

Resource Navigation Program Services Rendered

394



Referrals Made 118

NEW

### Agency Voucher Program

We are collaborating with local agencies who are addressing poverty, homelessness and domestic violence to provide vouchers for our low-bono services so that no one falls through the gaps.

***"NewBridges gave me hope during times of policy change.  
One of the benefits of having a green card is being able to travel to El Salvador  
to see my mother after 31 years."***

**-Maria L.**

41 B Court Square Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
(540) 438-8295  
[www.newbridgesirc.org](http://www.newbridgesirc.org)

Learn More



# DENOMINATIONAL AGENCY REPORTS



# 2026

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](mailto: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](https://MennoniteMission.net/Prayer).



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



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



## Virginia Mennonite Conference partnership

*Note: Underlined words indicate active links.*

### Worker support around the world



#### Toni and Matthew Krabill

Accra, Ghana

» [Ridgeway Mennonite Church](#)

#### Caleb and Stephanie Schrock-

Hurst, Hualien, Taiwan

» [Charlottesville Mennonite Church](#)  
» [First Mennonite Church of Richmond](#)  
» [Harrisonburg Mennonite Church](#)  
» [Zion Mennonite Church](#)

### Service participants



#### **Your service locations need help**

The Virginia Mennonite Conference supports three life-changing service opportunities which need your volunteers. Who in your congregation is waiting for you to tap their shoulder, encouraging them to share their gifts?

#### **SOOP**

» [Highland Retreat](#)  
» [Unique World Gifts](#)  
» [Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center](#)

#### **SOOP**

[Gordon and Sue Miller](#), Macon, MS  
[Gloria and Jack Rutt](#), Glendale/Phoenix, AZ

### Prayer partners

25

### Congregational giving to Mission Network



From August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025, Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations contributed **\$73,996** to Mission Network. **Thank you!**



"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10, NIV). It is a joy for us to partner with you in doing the good works we were created to do. Your gifts of prayer, engagement and financial contributions are essential for supporting our workers, service programs, participants, educational training and materials, and our global partnerships. It is a blessing for us to continue walking with you in this shared ministry work.

*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 Learning and Engagement

Thank you for your continued partnership in God's mission!

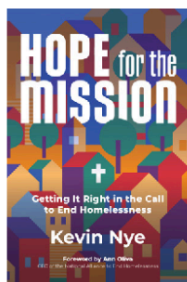
[www.MennoniteMission.net](https://www.MennoniteMission.net) Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872

## Report to **Virginia Mennonite Conference**

Summer 2026

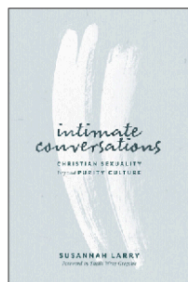
At MennoMedia, we publish curricula and books that call readers to follow Jesus in word and deed. We publish resources that are Jesus-centered, justice-oriented, and peace-seeking from an Anabaptist perspective. Our books, curricula, periodicals, and hymnals reach a broad spectrum of evangelical, mainline, and Anabaptist readers and congregations, cultivating passion for faith formation and an active life of discipleship.

### THOUGHTFUL, PROBING, INSPIRING—NEW BOOKS FROM HERALD PRESS



#### Hope for the Mission

**Getting It Right in the Call to End Homelessness**  
Kevin Nye highlights faith-based models that align with best practices, showing how churches and ministries can truly help end homelessness. Alongside critical evaluation of what groups have tended to get wrong, Nye shares hopeful stories about what's going right. These exemplar organizations and churches illustrate how groups can embody effective, evidence-based practices.



#### Intimate Conversations

**Christian Sexuality beyond Purity Culture**  
For many of us, sex education often lacks clear information and honest dialogue. Discussing sexuality can be confusing. These concerns can be especially acute for parents seeking to have conversations with their kids. Susannah Larry considers how the Great Commandment to love God, neighbor, and self shapes our sexuality and the ideas we pass on to our kids.



#### Mending Sunday

**Embracing Differences in a Church Torn by Division**  
Diversity is God's idea—and unity is how we honor God. Skot Welch offers a pathway for putting on the mind of Christ when it comes to diversity and division. God's unity doesn't mean giving up our unique identities. Rather, when we put Jesus at the center of our lives and communities, we experience a grace and power we've never before known.



#### Grace Over Guns

**Pursuing Peace in a Militarized World**  
North American Christians often don't feel equipped to talk about war. *Grace over Guns* challenges readers to think through common justifications for military violence and to consider how those justifications might not measure up to the teachings of Jesus. Ben Daniel offers a prophetic call to reject the sin of military violence and embrace the grace of Christian pacifism.

### RESOURCES FOR EVERY AGE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BRETHERN PRESS

#### Families and churches need flexibility—and Shine is responding.

Beginning this fall, Shine introduces a new curriculum with six-week units (Fall A and Fall B), available in print and digital formats.

#### This means:

- Churches can order both units for the full season or only the unit they need
- Less pressure to complete 13 weeks at once and more freedom to adapt to your church's schedule
- Families stay connected through bundled at-home devotional resources

Learn more at  
[ShineCurriculum.com](http://ShineCurriculum.com).



#### New curriculum for youth

*Reach* is an interactive faith formation curriculum designed specifically for high school youth. With a flexible format of six-week units, *Reach* offers both biblical and topical explorations that invite young people to engage deeply with God, Scripture, their peers, and the faith community.

Whether diving into a Bible story, exploring themes like peacemaking or creation care, or wrestling with real-life questions, *Reach* equips youth leaders with thoughtful guidance and interactive activities that encourage honest and engaging conversations.

This all-digital curriculum is a collaborative project of MennoMedia and Brethren Press.

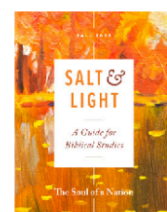


#### Quarterly Bible study for adults

Jointly published from MennoMedia and Brethren Press, this new study invites adults into deeper engagement with the Bible through thoughtful study and spiritual practice.

*Salt & Light: A Guide for Biblical Studies* is a quarterly Bible study curriculum for adult Sunday school classes and small groups, designed to help participants encounter God more deeply through Scripture.

Written by Mennonite and Brethren scholars, pastors, and educators, *Salt & Light: A Guide for Biblical Studies* follows the Committee on Uniform Series Bible outlines, making it easy to integrate into existing church education programs.





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

– Proverbs 16:9 (CEB)

# Your stewardship ministry journey. Let's go.

## Everence 2026 report

Virginia Mennonite Conference  
Annual Assembly  
July 23-25, 2026

### 80 years of stewardship ministry

Last year marked a milestone for Everence® – 80 years of mutual aid, stewardship, and a commitment to the belief that all that we are and all that we have belong to God.

Throughout 2025, we reflected on our origins. In 1945, our organization was created to help church members carry out the historic Anabaptist tradition of sharing financial hardships with one another through mutual support.

This year, we look to the journey ahead, ready to continue our work of supporting churches and their members as they find effective ways to be more generous and develop meaningful stewardship ministries with faith-driven resources and expertise.

Let's chart your stewardship ministry, together. Learn more at [everence.com/churches](https://everence.com/churches).



### A lasting impact through Sharing Funds

The Everence Sharing Fund is a long-standing part of our commitment to helping our clients and members through difficult times.

Each year, the Sharing Fund helps churches provide their members with financial assistance during personal hardships through matching grants. Since 2019, Everence has distributed nearly \$6 million in Sharing Fund grants, with churches making additional matches, multiplying our collective impact.

To learn more about how your church can qualify for Sharing Fund grants or to donate, visit [everence.com/sharing-fund](https://everence.com/sharing-fund).

### MyNeighbor card is generous faith in action



It's easy to make a difference with the MyNeighbor credit card from Everence Federal Credit Union.

The program offers a unique opportunity for individuals – like your church staff or members – to contribute to their church or favorite nonprofit each time they use their card. For every grocery, gas or other purchase you make with your MyNeighbor card, Everence will donate 1.5% of the transaction total to your selected Neighbor the following year.

Since 2017, Everence Federal Credit Union has donated \$3.3 million through the MyNeighbor program.

Learn more at [everence.com/myneighbor](https://everence.com/myneighbor).

### Charitable services for congregations

Wherever your church is headed, Everence Charitable Services is ready to join you on your journey. There are many generous ways your members can financially support your church's ministries, and Everence can partner with you to inspire and encourage a wide variety of unique gifts.

With help from our stewardship consultants, you can develop a meaningful stewardship plan of education events and tools to support your church's future and your members over the long term. We can also work with your church to establish, grow and manage its endowment fund. To learn more, talk to your Everence stewardship consultant or visit [everence.com/churches](https://everence.com/churches).



## 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 Ecotheology\*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction\*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies\*  
(choose your own courses)
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies (Spanish)\*
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program\*  
(undergraduate-level certificate)

[ambs.edu/degrees-and-programs](https://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](https://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\*: four to six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS\*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference\*: Feb. 22–25, 2027

#### 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](https://ambs.edu/leadership-and-enrichment)



(Above) In May 2026, 15 men and 11 women from nine countries — Brazil, Chad, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico and the U.S. — graduated from AMBS. Twenty-one completed part or all of their studies at a distance. Two students were the first to earn a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership, and 10 were the first to complete the Spanish-language Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies.

### Virginia Mennonite Conference connections

- **Doctor of Ministry student:** Carlos Malvaez (Manantial de Vida)
- **Master of Divinity student:** Kelli Moore (Christiansburg)
- **Master of Arts students:** Tim Friesen (Immanuel), Lara Upton (Charlottesville)

### AMBS statistics

- In 2025–26, 162 graduate students were enrolled at AMBS: 86 from the U.S., seven from Canada and 69 international students. The undergraduate-level Journey program has 38 participants in Canada, Nigeria, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, 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

[ambs.edu/online-short-courses](https://ambs.edu/online-short-courses)

- Take a graduate-level course — online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first two courses! [ambs.edu/upcoming-courses](https://ambs.edu/upcoming-courses)
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn about what AMBS has to offer! [ambs.edu/visit](https://ambs.edu/visit)
- Stay connected: [ambs.edu/subscribe](https://ambs.edu/subscribe) • Facebook: [followAMBS](https://www.facebook.com/followAMBS) • Instagram: [ambs\\_seminary](https://www.instagram.com/ambs_seminary) • YouTube: [ambsedu](https://www.youtube.com/ambsedu) • TikTok: [@anabaptistseminary](https://www.tiktok.com/@anabaptistseminary)



# 2026 report for Virginia Mennonite Conference

**MCC East Coast**  
(215) 535-3624 • [EastCoast@mcc.org](mailto:EastCoast@mcc.org) • [mcc.org](http://mcc.org)



Rocio Valencia Islas and her husband Victor Lampón Leon are pastors at La Mano de Dios en Apoyo al Migrante (Hand of God in Support of Migrants), a church ministry and MCC partner providing care, relief and support to migrants moving through Ecatepec, Mexico. (MCC photo/Meghan Mast)

Read more about Rocio and Victor's story at [mcc.org/i-was-hungry](http://mcc.org/i-was-hungry).

## MCC and Virginia Mennonite Conference connections

- Thank you to shoppers, volunteers and donors at the Gift & Thrift in Harrisonburg, VA which supports MCC. In 2025, the MCC Thrift shop contributed \$306,615 to MCC!
- MCC is grateful for the meat canning committee at the Hinton Mennonite Relief Center, who hosted their annual chicken canning days in February 2026.
- The 59th Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale was held the first weekend of October 2025 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. The 2025 sale donated \$393,552 to MCC!
- MCC values the service of international workers, including Liz and David Driver (Washington Community Fellowship) and Adam and Sarah Sensamaust (Park View Mennonite).
- Thank you to Maria Martin for serving on the MCC East Coast board of directors representing VMC.

## MCC's 2026 guiding scripture

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves...

**Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)**

Dear friends,

This year's scripture verses begin with an invitation to deep connection with Christ. Flowing from that connection is an invitation to humility, which shows up in how we value others.

MCC's work in the name of Christ is one way we live out that posture: honoring others, seeing their dignity and responding with compassion.

Thank you for the many ways your conference partners with MCC. Be encouraged to continue sharing God's love and compassion with all. Together, we are connecting with neighbors locally and globally—creating networks of care that reflect Christ's love for every person.

Hyacinth Stevens, *MCC East Coast Executive Director*

Maria Martin, *MCC East Coast board member*

Scan the QR code or visit [mcc.org/home-heals](http://mcc.org/home-heals) to read the full story!



When people return from incarceration, stability is often a missing piece. MCC East Coast partners with Redemption Housing, a Philadelphia nonprofit that fills that gap with housing, community and the courage to imagine a different future. Redemption Housing walks alongside men as they rebuild their lives. Through this partnership, reconciliation creates a chain reaction of healing and restoration.





## OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS! THANK YOU!



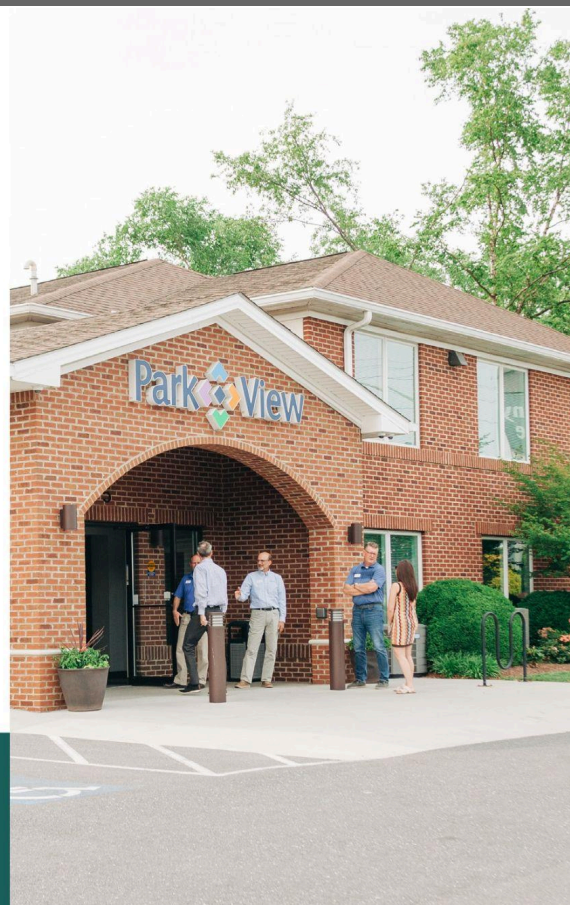
### Rooted in Community. Driven by Purpose.

At Park View, we're here for people—not profits.

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**Better banking starts at [pvfcu.org](http://pvfcu.org)**

Membership required. Insured by NCUA.



**VIRGINIA  
Mennonite  
Relief Sale**

**OCT. 2-3, 2026**

Rockingham County Fairgrounds



**JOIN  
US!**

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

**FREE ADMISSION!** Learn more: [vareliefsale.com](http://vareliefsale.com)



1010 Virginia Avenue  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

[xtremepaintingva@gmail.com](mailto:xtremepaintingva@gmail.com)



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