

Connections

Virginia Mennonite
Conference &
Board of Missions

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Virginians gather with larger church in Charlotte



Delegates seated at round tables during an MC USA session on Friday.

Charlotte was an exciting, inspiring time for those who had the opportunity to gather with members of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. Each day, 747 persons from Virginia Conference gathered with thousands for worship services on the theme "Can't Keep Quiet," based on Acts 4:20, "We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard." This theme challenges the Mennonite Church to speak the good news, to pray for boldness and believe that God will act through us.

Thousands of youth also gathered from across the church for worship services, reflection, seminars, and servant projects. Many youth groups spent an afternoon in service to others in Charlotte, not just to paint a wall or clean a yard, but to become servants to others in imitation of Christ.

Delegates convened for two sessions per day, reflecting, conversing, and making decisions about the work of the church. Young adults enjoyed some activities of their own and children and junior high youth had their respective conventions as well.

Attendees of the adult worship service on Friday morning were brought greetings from Virginia

Mennonite Conference from Bishop Leslie and Natalie Francisco of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., who gave the message about speaking in boldness, living in grace and working toward unity.

Also on Friday, the worship offering was designated for the work and outreach of the Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church, Hickory, NC. Pastor Chaiya Hadasunsern spoke about ministry among the Hmong, and attendees watched a short video produced by VMBM.



Virginians Gov Amin and Rachel Clemmens peruse the VMBM booth in the Exhibit Hall.



Ray and Naomi Ressler, members of Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, stand in front of a fence highlighting the different conferences of MC USA.



Recent EMU graduate Derek King volunteered at the youth recreation area.

Godshall ministry celebrated in Hickory, NC

Steve Carpenter, Conference Coordinator



The children of Clayton and Edna Godshall: (l-r) Evelyn Nice, Ed Godshall, Esther Bishop, Ernest Godshall, and Elizabeth Landis hold a picture of their parents and family circa 1948.

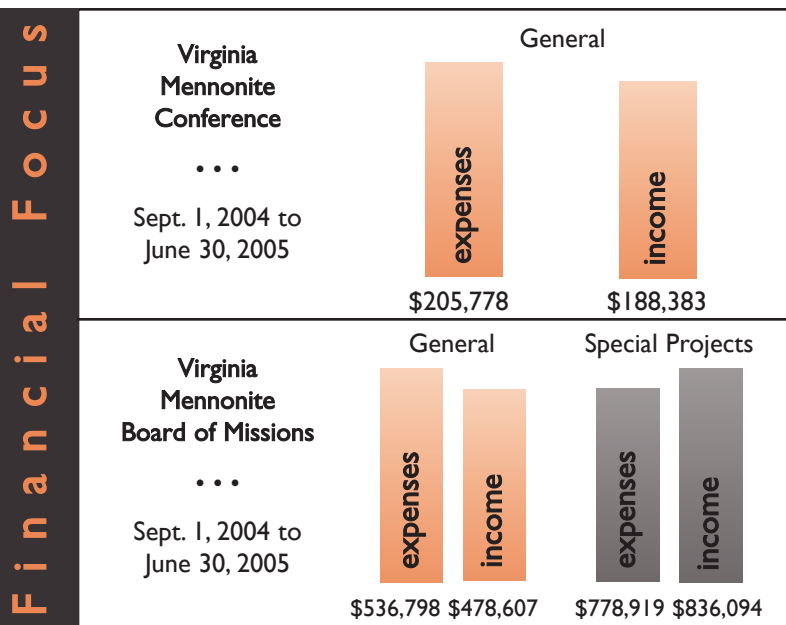
The legacy of church planters Clayton and Edna Godshall was both remembered and honored on June 4 as 112 guests joined in a banquet at Mountain View Mennonite Church in Hickory, NC. The Godshalls began that church with the help of Wellington and Evangeline Moyer in the early 1950s. The event

included a catered meal and was a memorable evening of song and tribute, organized by Virginia Mennonite Conference (VMC) in cooperation with the Godshall's five children.

Growing up in eastern PA during the Great Depression with no wealth and little education, Clayton and Edna had a passion for the gospel. He gained a reputation as a church planter after starting a church in Spring Mount, PA in 1934 and another in Perkiomenville. In 1952 Clayton had a vision which caused him to travel in search of another church planting location. Accompanied by three men they traveled and witnessed throughout the South. In Tennessee they met an alcoholic man who accepted Christ but had difficulty battling his addiction. When he moved to Hickory, NC, Clayton visited and encouraged him there. Eventually, Clayton moved his family to Hickory where, through home prayer meetings, he established the Mt. View Mennonite Church. Four years later his vision birthed a second Hickory Mennonite congregation.

Remarkably, all five of Clayton and Edna's children, and their spouses, were instrumental in church development. The Godshalls began Mt. View Mennonite Church, then left it in the capable hands of their son Ed and his wife Pauline. After getting another church started in Hickory, they gave its principal leadership to their son-in-law Mark and Liz Landis, who had assisted in its early development. At about the same time their daughter Evelyn and son-in-law Frank Nice were pastoring Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church in Ohio and later planting the Durham Mennonite Church. Son-in-law Earl and Esther Bishop began a church in Andover, Vt., while son Ernest and his wife Martha helped Nelson Burkholder and others establish a church among African Americans in Newport News. That work became Calvary Community Church. Many of these congregations have gone on to start other churches.

The banquet was generously sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Seminary's Church Partnership program and the Tennessee/Carolina/Kentucky District. Those gathered, along with many who sent gifts in Clayton and Edna's honor, contributed nearly \$4,000 for VMC's ministries.



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EMU's Kniss strives to engage other viewpoints

Sharon E. Kniss of Harrisonburg takes seriously the mission statement of Eastern Mennonite University: "to experience Christ and follow His call to witness faithfully, serve compassionately and walk boldly in the way of nonviolence and peace."

Ms. Kniss, a rising senior justice, peace and conflict studies major, lives out this aspiration at EMU several ways.

In mid-March this year, she took first place in the C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest held on campus with her address, "Engaging the Terrorists: A Discourse on Living with the Other." She received a cash award.

In her presentation, Kniss asked what needs to happen to purposely engage "the other" —to begin to communicate with those of differing persuasions and viewpoints, noting that applying handy labels like "conservative" or "liberal" aren't helpful in that process.

She used Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 to support her points, arguing that "how we learn to live with each other forms the basis of peacebuilding in society."

Immediately after second semester, Kniss plunged into a whirl of responsibilities as lodging coordinator and community advisor (CA) in Parkwoods Apartments for the annual Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) held May 9-June 21. The event brought some 200 persons from more than 50 countries to campus for intensive training in peacebuilding skills, restorative justice and trauma healing.

"I loved doing it," she said of the SPI experience. "The staff was easy to work with, and I got to meet and interact with everyone who came through the program." She also took an SPI class, "Indigenous Peacemaking Processes."

No sooner did this assignment end than Kniss was off to Harlan, Ky., to spend the rest of the summer working with a Mennonite Central Committee program there. She serves as site coordinator for groups coming to do home repair and rebuilding projects in that Appalachian community.

Being an honors student and a dean's list regular hasn't kept Kniss from a host of extracurricular pursuits. She's a member of the EMU Chamber Singers and the varsity tennis team and helped form a student lecture committee to bring noted speakers to campus.

She was co-president of the Young People's Christian Association (YPCA) her freshman and sophomore years and presently coordinates the Y-church program, which she cites as "one of the highlights of my time at EMU." She is deeply involved at Crossroads Mennonite Church near Timberville, leading music and worship and playing piano there.

After EMU? Kniss isn't sure yet, but she's considering a service assignment - Colombia, South America is a first choice - or "some form of church work."



Sharon Kniss, rising senior justice, peace and conflict studies major, is involved in a whirl of responsibilities at EMU and elsewhere, and hopes to be involved in "some form of church work" in the future.

• Jim Bishop

EMU Public Information Officer

Weekly Prayers

July 31-Aug. 6

Let us walk prayerfully alongside brothers and sisters in Christ who are being jailed, threatened, and oppressed for their Anabaptist Christian faith.

Aug. 7-Aug. 13

Pray for the Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago. This week the Annual General Meeting is being held with delegate business sessions and worship services. William and Joan Broughton will represent the Jamaica Mennonite Church as fraternal delegates.

Aug. 14-Aug. 20

Ask God to clearly call persons for international and local ministry, naming some congregations and outreach locations that need leadership. While you are praying, perhaps God will lead you to "tap the shoulder" of someone who will serve in this way. Be sure to follow through!

Aug. 21-27

This week pray for Phil, Marcia, Crystal and Christopher Lehman every day. They are nearing the end of their home leave. Pray that God will help them take care of the details and that they will be prepared in every way to return to their place of ministry in Bari, Italy.

Aug. 28-Sept. 3

Ask God to help you put this verse into action: "We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:40). Tell someone each day this week about what God has done for you.

Announcements

There will be an **Ice Cream Social and Send-off** for Phil and Marcia Lehman, and their children Crystal and Christopher, as they go back to Bari, Italy for another term of ministry. It will be held **Friday, Sept. 2, at 6:30 p.m.** at the Harrisonburg Mennonite Church pavilion. Come and hear about the great things happening at the Centro Koinonia Church and enjoy varied flavors of homemade ice cream produced by an antique hit-or-miss gas-powered John Deere engine. All are invited! Contact VMBM at (540) 434-9727 with any questions.

The Virginia Mennonite Conference **Junior High Youth Retreat** will be held at Smith Mtn. Lake 4-H Center, September 17-18. Carol Duerksen, editor of *With*

magazine will speak about **The Radicals: Adventures with the Anabaptists**. Registration is due September 1. Call (540) 434-9727 or kimberlee.greenawalt@vmconf.org.



Experience the beautiful Shenandoah Valley and ride in the eighth annual **Bike Shenandoah 2005 Cycle for Service**, September 24. The proceeds will benefit four organizations:

Mennonite Media, Mennonite Central Committee, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and the Harrisonburg Pregnancy Center. Register now: call Laura Moyers at (540) 434-9727 or visit www.bikeshenandoah.org.

Picnic fundraiser at Stuarts Draft supports Lehmans' work in Italy through Penny Power



Boundless energy...eager to help...loves to play with balloons... average height is 36 inches... age is 3 to 8 years old. Is this your image of a missionary? Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church's young children held a picnic fundraiser after the morning service on June 26 with all proceeds going to the Penny Power project. With half of the Penny Power money going to the Phil and

Marcia Lehman family's ministry to children in Bari, Italy, it was a special treat to have the children meet the family they are helping to support with their collected coins. Under the direction of Becky and Paul Grove and Cindy Ramsey, hot dogs, baked beans, salad bar and dessert were served and enjoyed by all. The results of this project added a total of \$357.00 to the Penny Power jug.

These young "missionaries" in Stuarts Draft have been busy with other service projects as well. They raised \$92 selling lemonade at a church yard sale and contributed the money to Penny Power. Following the tsunami disaster, they held a fundraiser lunch after the church service and raised over \$500! Praise the Lord for the examples of the children in what it means to be a missional church.

• Wanda Cullen
Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church

