

**VMC News**

       **Pastors and church leaders, join us for a workshop on special tax considerations for clergy**, Tuesday, Jan. 24 at The Gathering Place (behind the Everence office), 841 Mount Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg. Join us for a provided lunch beginning at 11:45 a.m., workshop is at 12:30 p.m. Presented by: Edward T. Yoder, CPA, the workshop will cover: *Who is considered a minister for tax purposes? Ministers’ employment tax issues, Are love offerings and gifts taxable? Parsonage and housing allowances (limitations, and allowable expenses), and recent court cases concerning the housing allowance exclusion.* Please RSVP to Teresa Boshart Yoder at (540) 437-7422 or teresa.boshartyoder@everence.com by Jan. 17. Space is limited, but a video conference link will be available for those who are unable to join us in person. Hosted by: Beryl M. Jantzi, D.Min., Everence Director of Stewardship Education, and Teresa Boshart Yoder, Everence Stewardship Consultant.

       Everyone is invited to a **Thai meal and update from the Mark & Sarah Schoenhals family** on what God is doing in Northeast Thailand.  Enjoy food, music, dance, pictures and stories from Thailand, Friday, February 3, 2017, 6:00 p.m. at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.  Please RSVP to Loretta Hawkins at 540-433-2223 or lzh7@comcast.net by January 27.

       The **School for Leadership Training**, January 16-18, 2017 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary will explore why it’s so hard to get along with those who aren’t like us as we learn more about how we can live into Jesus’ teaching to love our neighbor. Learn more and register at [www.emu.edu/slt](http://www.emu.edu/slt).

       **Mary Baldwin University professor Dr. Sarah Kennedy** will read from and comment on her work as part of the **Writers Read** series at Eastern Mennonite University, Feb. 2  at 6:30 pm in Common Grounds. Kennedy has won the Cleveland State University Press Open Competition, the Elixir Press Prize in Poetry, and grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She teaches creative writing, Renaissance literature and Shakespeare at Mary Baldwin. Free and open to the public. Learn more at http://www.emu.edu/language-and-literature/writers-read/

       The **Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center** (VBMHC) invites you to join us for our Annual Meeting at 6 PM on February 3, 2017 at Park View Mennonite Church. The Annual Meeting is a celebration of the work done at VBMHC in 2016 and an invitation to support and join in the work of carrying out the mission and vision of the center in 2017 and beyond. The guest speaker for the evening, Dr. Dale Stoffer, Professor of Historical Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary (Ohio), is described as a walking encyclopedia of church history.  Guests at the annual meeting are invited to enjoy the complimentary (and compliment-worthy!) meal prepared by Marjorie Rohrer Shank free of charge. Please RSVP by January 27 to reserve your seat. To RSVP, call 540-438-1275, email info@vbmhc.org, or fill out the form [here](https://www.vbmhc.org/annual-meeting/), and please be sure to indicate how many are in your party.

       **Virginia Mennonite Conference Winter Delegate Session** will be February 4 at Waynesboro Mennonite Church from 8:00 - 3:00. The church is located at 1801 Monroe St, Waynesboro, VA. Register at virginiaconference.org/2016/11/register-winter-delegate-session/

       Are you interested in learning more about conflict transformation, facilitation and gaining peace-building tools for working and organizing in the community? The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding invites you to attend **SPI Community Day** on February 17, 2017. Cost is $50 and includes a full day of presentations, workshops and lunch. For more details and registration visit <http://www.emu.edu/cjp/spi/spicommunityday/>.

       **Join Highland Retreat for our annual Benefit Auction** on Saturday, February 18, at Eastern Mennonite High School. The Auction is designed to subsidize camp tuition for all camper families and provide scholarships for families with greater need. See [www.highlandretreat.org](http://www.highlandretreat.org/) for more information. Contact info@highlandretreat.org if you have a new item, service, collectible, or baked good you would like to contribute.

       **Virginia Mennonite Conference Ministers Retreat** will be February 24-26, 2017 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, Williamsburg, Va. Presenters Sheryl Shenk and Ted Swartz will do dramatic interpretation of scriptures, with the theme "Life is a Pilgrimage." Learn more and register at virginiaconference.org/news/ministry-retreat-to-look-at-life-as-a-pilgrimage/

       **Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center** is very pleased to announce that Greg Yoder has been named Executive Director and began his tenure on January 1, 2017. Greg is probably best known as a member of the Walking Roots Band--singer, player of many instruments, composer, and even rapper. He will be not quite full time at VBMHC while he finishes this semester teaching music at Redeemer Classical School in Keezletown, VA. Prior to this he taught five years in the Rockingham County Public Schools where in 2014 he was named Teacher of the Year at Peak View Elementary School. He also operated a farm and CSA for the past two years. Greg graduated from Goshen College with a degree in Music and Education. Greg is a creative, visionary high-energy person who brings not only many of the skills we are looking for in a director but in his own words has a passion for "connecting contemporary followers of Jesus with their spiritual forbears to deepen and enrich their faith." In making music, he has had opportunities to connect with people of many different ages and backgrounds, experience he wants to expand upon at VBMHC. These opportunities have included relating to Mennonites and Brethren, as well as other Christian denominations. Greg, his wife Kristina and their young son attend Community Mennonite Church.

 **Courses and learning tours:**

       **Registration is now open for “Places, People, & Prayers, A Cross-Cultural Encounter with the Holy Land,”** an Israel/Palestine study tour offered May 4-27, 2017, through Eastern Mennonite Seminary.  Trip leaders are Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor of New Testament, and Kevin A. Clark, EMS Campus Pastor.  “Places, People, & Prayers” is open to all interested travelers, with or without seminary credit.  NOTE: All MCUSA pastors are eligible to apply to the MCUSA “Come and See” program for a $500 scholarship to assist with trip costs.  If interested, please contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at (540) 432-4276 or at weaverdj@emu.edu at your earliest.