2012 DIRECTORY OF Mennonites, AmISH and ANABAPTIST GROUPS IN VIRGINIA

It's time for another directory of the Mennonites, Amish and Anabaptist churches in Virginia. Every two years we try to update it in SMH. There are always changes and emphases on what may stand out.

One might say, "the more changes there are, the more they stay the same," or put it the other way around, "They more they stay the same, the more they change." Neither is quite true because life keeps changing. On the other hand many things do stay similar.

We began this directory in the summer of 2004, but we soon changed to an every-two-year pattern of doing it in the winter issue of a new year. If you save back issues of SMH you will find that each time something stands out in terms of changes that grab our attention.

We always find something else to include, so the issue is more than a DIRECTORY. SMH tries to publish items of interest to the Shenandoah Valley, but we range farther and wider geographically and topically. Perhaps we can entice more people to subscribe to SMH for the extremely low price of $6.00 per year for a quarterly. Can you find a bigger bargain while catching a good bit of Virginia Mennonite history inexpensively?
BURKES GARDEN

At an elevation of just over 3,000 feet Burkes Garden is the highest valley in Virginia. Except for a narrow water gap the valley it is surrounded by ridges from 500 to 1500 feet high.

From the air it looks like a crater carved out by an asteroid impact or volcanic explosion. Actually, it is a product of erosion sometimes nicknamed “God’s Thumbprint.”

The only paved road into the “Garden” is state route 623, which leaves state road 61 heading south from Gratton. It involves a winding climb of Rich Mountain. Then there’s a short descent into Little Creek Valley and through “The Gap” into Burke’s Garden. The valley suddenly spreads out beyond the Gose Mill Pond, beside which a historical marker provides a brief introduction to the history of the valley.

For the hiker the Appalachian Trail follows the ridge of Garden Mountain for over seven miles. And if an Appalachian Trail hiker comes along, one can usually have interesting conversation regarding the kinds of things the hiker experiences on this famous trail.

Sunsets are spectacular and shadows crawl across the valley. Star gazing is as good as it gets in the eastern U. S. Clear days and nights in spring, summer or fall are best.

Because of the elevation it has been described as having a Canadian climate, considerably cooler than elsewhere in the area. If one enjoys high places it is described as a “must see” kind of place. Views are described as extending well into Tennessee and North Carolina. (Burkes Garden can be “Googled” for information and photo shots). It sounds like a great place to visit on a summer day!

BOOK REVIEW

THE TOUCH OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE


This book tries to elucidate the astounding fact that most of the observable universe has not yet been observed, much less understood.

They continue to discover the wonders of the universe and the mysteries God built into it (Genesis 1:8, 16; Psalm 8:3). For many centuries people have curiously studied stars. In the 1990s Vera Rubin reported that everything moves in our galaxy and all the other galaxies are in motion.

The earth rotates every day, and every two minutes we travel 2500 miles in orbiting the sun. Meanwhile, the sun keeps moving 20,000 miles as it orbits the distant center of our galaxy. In 70 years the sun has moved 300 billion miles. Furthermore, they say it takes the sun 200 million years to orbit once around our galaxy (p. 36). Plus the fact that all the galaxies are in motion as our universe keeps expanding rapidly away from other galaxies.

They claim that the universe is nearly 14 billion years old and it contains hundreds of billions of galaxies (pp. 242-43). Now they study dark energy and dark matter between the stars. But they never reflect on WHO created the stars. The Christian simply says, Look what God did when he created the universe, whether we call it the beginning (or “the big bang”). Scripture simply says God created it.

Mankind has stars and planets to study until kingdom come! Are there more planets that contain life, like humans? Only God knows!

James O. Lehman
AMISH, ANABAPTISTS AND Mennonites in Virginia,

A DIRECTORY OF GROUPS, CONFERENCES AND CONGREGATIONS

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Our approach this time is to give average attendance of
adults, rather than each church's membership
alphabetical order by group

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Beachy Amish Churches

Dinwiddie Mennonite Church, Dinwiddie County [9] Timothy Miller, Jay Yoder

Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett [50] Bishop Simon Schrock, Ministers Nathan Beachy, David Nisle, Ivan Dale Schrock

Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union [170] Bishop Ivan Beachy, Deacon Merle Beachy Ministers Nathan Yoder, Ralph Miller, Timothy Weaver

Farmville Christian Fellowship, Dillwyn [25] Bishop Bennie Byler, Ministers Albert Miller, Eli Troyer


Kempsville Amish Mennonite, VA Beach [50] Bishop Donnie Brenneman, Ministers Raymond and Marcus Kauffman, Deacon Daniel Brenneman

Light of Hope Christian Fellowship, Wytheville [50] Bishop John Beiler, Ministers Ray Miller, Jacob Bender, Deacon Sanford Wayne Yoder

Oak Grove Church, Aroda [115] Ministers David and Lamar Hochstetler, Deacons Mark Webb, Enos Schrock

Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft [115] Bishop Simon Schrock, Minister John D. Beiler, Deacon Duane Weaver

Set Free Mennonite Church, Bolar [20] Mike Puffenbarger

Berea Amish Mennonite Fellowship

Mount Zion Amish Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft [10] Bishop Eli Yoder, Minister Alvin Schrock

Biblical Mennonite Alliance

Believers' Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA [20] Leadership: Thomas Kinsinger, Paul Emerson

Blue Ridge Christian Fellowship, Radiant [15] No pastor; Contact person, Tim Kinsley

Calvary Mennonite Fellowship, Mt. Clinton [237] Ministers Paul Emerson, Linford Berry Stephen Byler, James Groff, Deacons Jerry Bentz, Jason Beachy, Larry Wilkins
**Oak Hill Mennonite Church**, Cumberland
[45] Pastor John Eicher, Deacon Ben Schrock

**CHARITY MINISTRIES**

**Dayspring Christian Fellowship**, Amherst
[60] Minister Freeman R. Miller, Deacon Mark Rhodes

**CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, MENNONITE, (Holdeman)**
[27]

Shenandoah Valley Congregation of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (Holdeman). A long time ago a few families were established in the Garbers Church Rd. area, but the last one of that group died in 2010. Meanwhile, a new group began forming in 2008 in the general area of Elkton and McGeaheysville. They now meet in the basement of a home on Mt. Olivet Church Road, a house occupied by a short-term minister, John Boese.

**CONSERVATIVE MENNONITE CONFERENCE**

**Dayspring Mennonite**, Midland
[102]

**Providence Mennonite**, Virginia Beach
[30] Ministers Dale Keffer, Robin Hershberger, Jason Miller, Deacon Mose Mast

Trinity Mennonite, Prospect
[40]

**CORNERSTONE CHURCH AND MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL—UNITED STATES**

**Cornerstone Church of Albemarle**, Crozet, Chris Winans

**Cornerstone Church of Augusta**, Staunton, Greg Mayo

**Cornerstone Church of Broadway**, Broadway
[200] Sam Wenger, Jim Hess

**Cornerstone Church at the Lake**, Harrisonburg
[165]

Riverbank
Brian Mininger

**MARANATHA AMISH MENNONITE CHURCH**

Maranatha Bible Fellowship, Rose Hill, Va
[40] Bishop James Eicher, Minister Floyd Graber

**MOUNTAIN VALLEY MENNONITE**

Bethel Mennonite Church, Broadway
[35] Stephen Estep, pastor; Millard N. Sonifrank Assoc. Pastor

**Dayton Mennonite**, Dayton
[180] Daryl Driver Pastor, Dennis Rhodes, Deacon

**Faith Mennonite**, South Boston
[25] Pastors Larry E. Martin, and David Slabaugh

**Morning View Mennonite**, Singers Glen
[85] Richard Gullman and Raleigh Rhodes, co-pastors, Deacons Philip Borntrager and Steve Slabaugh

**NATIONWIDE FELLOWSHIP CHURCHES**

**Pilgrim Mennonite**, Amelia
[30] Bishop Vernon Mast, Minister Fred Mast

**Pleasant Valley Mennonite Fellowship**, Mt. Crawford
[135] Bishop Orville Witmer, Minister David M. Fisher, Deacon David J. Fisher

**Southside Mennonite**, Kenbridge
[45] Minister Stephen Mast, Deacon J. Sherman Yoder

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OLD ORDER AMISH

Since the early 1990’s Amish families have been moving into Virginia from several places, seeking land, a milder climate and leaving urbanization pressures. They are found in the counties of Giles, near Pearisbug, and Charlotte, Halifax and Lee counties. Giles County people came primarily from Wisconsin, the Charlotte County group from Maryland south of Washington, D. C., the Halifax County group from Dover, Delaware, and the small group in Lee County from Kentucky and elsewhere.

At Pearisburg, a mountainous area, but with some good farmland, a number of small businesses have developed in the Walker Mountain community. There now experience a fair number of families moving in and out in the last few years. Church services are held in schoolhouses of which they have two. There is one district with about 20 families and about 55 adult attendees on Sunday morning. Sam Chupp serves as bishop, Owen Hershberger and Danny Kauffman serve as deacons.

At Charlotte County (and a few in Prince Edward County), they have expanded recently and are now two districts and have 44 families. Many are dairymen; three families raise tobacco.

Halifax County Amish began settling in northern Halifax from November 2006 until October 2010. They divided into two districts late in 2011, with 23 families in the East district and 14 in the West, a total of close to 100 adult members. Leadership includes Bishop Daniel Coblentz, ministers Danny Byler, David Troyer, Alvin Hershberger, and Deacon Jesse Gingerich. They alternate services. Each district has a school.

Lee County has an emerging Amish community that began in 2008. It is located in the tip of the geographic “spear” of southwestern VA. To the south is Tennessee and Kentucky to the north, between Rose Hill and Jonesville. There are seven households and one minister, Devon Schrock and family. Three families are from Montana, two from Kentucky and one from Michigan.

OLD ORDER MENNONITE

This group developed after years of discussion over Sunday school, and a more active church life, or whether to retain the older pattern of church life. A separation occurred in 1900-01 in the Middle District of VA Mennonite Conference. When the automobile came, Old Order Mennonites retained horse and buggy transportation.

There are now three groups of Old Order “horse and buggy” Mennonites. All three groups take turns having worship services in the historic 1903 Pleasant View meetinghouse built after the first separation occurred from VA Mennonite Conference. In a pleasant historic setting the meetinghouse has nice green shutters closed during the week and row after row of hitching posts. All three groups use the historic meetinghouse for funerals and the cemetery. The groups also have worship buildings at Oak Grove and Riverdale and use several schools. They use English, having done so already at the separation from Virginia Mennonite Conference. These days pressures of modern digital equipment and gadgetry such as cell phones and word processors create problems on questions of worldliness.

The smallest and most recent group developed in 2006-07 with Lloyd Wenger as bishop. Gabe Wenger, and Christian Beery, were ordained in 2007. Deacon John E. Jr. Wenger was ordained March 16, 2010. As do all Old Order Mennonite and Old Order Amish, their leadership is chosen by lot. Many from this group separated from what was known for years as the Cline-Showalter group, when many were no longer comfortable with the direction the bishop was leading.

The group often called the Cline-Showalter group, now sometimes uses the name Riverdale Old Order Mennonite, after the Riverdale meetinghouse west of Dry River. They published

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a directory with the title Directory of the Virginia Conference (Old Order) Mennonite Families.

Several years ago, after the formation of the new smaller group, a lot ceremony was held for a new bishop. Included in the lot were Lewis Martin, Wilson Rhodes and Dale Beery. The lot “fell” on Beery, who now serves as the bishop of this group. Other ministers include William Knicely and Lamar Rhodes. Deacons include Joseph Beery, John Rhodes and Aaron Beery. Lewis Martin says that the average Sunday morning adult attendance of this group is in the 450-475 range, which makes a full house in the historic Pleasant View building and the Riverdale building which this group built.

A satellite church has developed in recent years as nine families located at Greenfield Ohio, where they in 2011 ordained leadership with minister Ross Rhodes and deacon Dwight Rhodes. Attendance there ranges around 35-40. They are occupied with farming and dairying.

The other large Old Order Mennonite group that began in 1952, when a separation occurred, has produced a directory with the title, Directory of the Original Virginia Conference of Old Order Mennonite Families. Robert Knicely, deacon, upon being asked why the word “Original” in the name. He said they were told by an attorney to designate a name for their group to distinguish themselves from the other group, the Cline-Showalter group. So they chose a name that included the word “original.” This group does not relate to the Pennsylvania Groffdale Conference of Mennonites, in the same way as does the Cline-Showalter group.

Leadership includes bishops Marion Wenger and Justus Horst, ministers Richard Martin and Galen Horst and deacons Robert Knicely and Adin Horst, all with either a Harrisonburg or Dayton address. Attendance, including children, is 570. Adult members number about 327.

This group also sought another location for a satellite church. Three families recently moved to Flemingsburg, Kentucky, where they are going into dairying. They have no ordained leadership there yet. As growing pressures continue, they tend to keep enlarging the boundaries in Rockingham County.

WEAVERLAND CONFERENCE (OLD ORDER (OO Mennonites who drive vehicles)

Mt. Pleasant Mennonite, Dayton [200]
Ministers Elvin Shank, Timothy Showalter, Chad McMurray and Deacon Everette Showalter

PILGRIM MENNONITE CONFERENCE

Piedmont Mennonite Church, Amelia Court House [70] Ministers Jerry Yoder, Jr. and David J. Hooley, Deacons Joseph W. Shank and A. Clair Auker.

SHALOM MENNONITE (CENTRAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE) Harrisonburg [65]
Emily North

SOUTHEASTERN MENNONITE CONFERENCE

Bank Mennonite, Hinton [100]
Ministers Philip Wenger, John Hartzler, and Charles Heatwole, Bishop Nathan Horst; Deacon Linden Rhodes

Bethany Mennonite, Dayton [55]
Ministers David F. Showalter and Jonathan Burkholder, Bishop Clair J. Heatwole, Deacon Allen Good

Bethesda Mennonite, Broadway [31]
Minister Jonathan Good, Bishop Nathan Good and Deacon Arthur Martin

Ebenezer Mennonite, South Boston [60]
Bishop Nathan Good, Ministers Kelvin Good, Joshua Good, Deacon Nelson Rodes

They are working on opening another church to begin in April, 2012

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McDowell Mennonite, McDowell [30]
Minister Stephen Good, Bishop Clair Heatwole and Deacon Bradley Heatwole

Mount Hermon Mennonite, Stanardsville [55]
Minister Vernon Peachey, Deacon Mervin Glick

Peake Mennonite, Hinton [80]
Bishop Nathan Horst, Ministers Elam Heatwole, John D. Risser, and Deacon Samuel Goering

Pike Mennonite, Harrisonburg [75]
Bishop Keith Crider, Ministers Ellis Beery and Nelson R. Showalter, Deacon Wade Knicely

Rawley Springs Mennonite, Hinton [50]
Ministers Robert Mallow, Ivan Nolt, Bishop Keith Crider, and Deacon Peter Hartzler

Strasburg Mennonite, Strasburg [34]
Minister John P. Campbell, Bishop Keith Crider, and Deacon Mark N. Heatwole

Beldor Mennonite, Elkton [29]
James Akerson

Big Spring Mennonite, Luray [25]
Kathy Hochstedler

Calvary Community Church, Hampton [575]
Leslie Francisco III, Natalie Francisco, co-pastors

Charlottesville Mennonite, Charlottesville [62]
Roy Hange, Maren Tyedmers Hange, co-pastors

Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship [30]
Les Horning

Community Mennonite, Harrisonburg [250]
Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Steven Schumm, Jason Gerlach

Crossroads Mennonite [22]
Pastors: David Gullman, Marian Buckwalter

Early Church
Pastor: Ron Copeland (See article on back cover) [70]

Eastside Church (see article on page 9) [178]
Peter Eberly, Matt Schwartz

Family of Hope [14]
Harvey Yoder, James Stauffer

First Mennonite Church, Richmond, VA [75]
No pastor currently

Gospel Hill Mennonite, Fulks Run [30]
J. Mark and Emma Frederick

Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Harrisonburg [200]
Richard Early, Mark Landis

Greenmonte Mennonite, Stuarts Draft [120]
Bruce and Seth Hankee

Harrisonburg Mennonite, Harrisonburg [270]
Craig Maven, Luke Weaver, Lenora Gunderson, Steve Horst, Mark Keller, Frederic Miller, Josh Tyson, Kara Yoder

UNAFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS

Bethel Mennonite and Parrows Chapel,
Two meetinghouses, Gladys VA [90]
Bishop Leon Yoder, Ministers Jerrill Schrock, Sam and Ernest Yoder, Deacon Rich Bowman

Broad Street Mennonite, Harrisonburg [10]
Lourene Bender, Benda Witmer

Island Creek Mennonite, Hillsville [50]
Rollin Miller

Olive Branch Christian Church, Staunton [4]
Calvin Troyer

Timberville Mennonite, Timberville [40]
Harold B. Emswiler, Fred Rodes

Wills Ridge Mennonite, Floyd [50]
Steve Yoder, Eli Yoder, Michael Yoder

VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE
(MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MC-USA)

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Hebron Mennonite, Fulks Run  [30]
Mark and Daryl Conley, co-pastors

Huntington Mennonite, Newport News  [90]
Eric Musser, Jim Thornton

Iglesia Discipular Anabaptista, Harrisonburg  [45]
Byron Pellecer
Representing 10 different Hispanic countries

Immanuel Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [40]
Luke and Carmen Schrock

Lindale Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [275]
Duane Yoder, Peg Engle, Cindy Voth, Dawn Monger

Lynside Mennonite, Lyndhurst  [50]
Dennis Kuhns

Manantial de Vida, Harrisonburg  [90]
Carlos Malvaez

Mt. Clinton Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [100]
Lee Martin

Mt. Pleasant Mennonite, Chesapeake  [125]
Co-pastors I. Keith Miller and Sam Scaggs

Mt. Vernon Mennonite, Grottoes  [75]
Al and Rose Huyard

Mt. View Mennonite, Lyndhurst  [140]
Earl Monroe, Mark Hodge, Stanlee Kauffman

New Beginnings Church, Harrisonburg  [235]
Reuben Horst, Chris Swortzel, Tim McAvoy

New Song Anabaptist Fellowship, Harrisonburg  [30]
Basil Marin

Northern VA Mennonite, Fairfax  [30]
Karl McKinney

Park View Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [245]
Philip Kniss, Ross Erb, Barbara Moyer Lehman

Park View Korean Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [25]
James Rhee

Powhatan Mennonite, Powhatan  [113]
Timothy Kenned

Providence Mennonite, Newport News  [20]
Carl Mericle

Ridgeway Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [105]
Ben Risser

Springdale Mennonite, Waynesboro  [120]
Mark Schleigheger

Staunton Mennonite, Staunton  [40]
Kevin Gasser

Stephens City Mennonite, Stephens City  [35]
James & Aldine Musser, co-pastors

Stephens City Korean Mennonite, Stephens City  [15]
James Rhee

Stuarts Draft Mennonite, Stuarts Draft  [55]
Brett Perrett, Allen Swarey

The Table, Harrisonburg  [25]
Laura Amstutz, Leadership Team Facilitator

Trissels Mennonite, Broadway  [85]
Harold Miller

Valley View Mennonite, Crider  [50]
H. Michael Shenk III, Paul Beiler

Vietnamese Christian Fellowship, Falls Church  [25]
Peter Simon Nguyen

Warwick River Mennonite, Newport News  [80]
John Dey

Waynesboro Mennonite, Waynesboro  [92]
Howard Miller, Joe Arbaugh

Weavers Mennonite, Harrisonburg  [190]
Phil Kanagy, Janet Blosser, Michael Harnish

Williamsburg Mennonite, Williamsburg  [45]
David Lehman

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percent of receipts go to Virginia Mennonite missions. They help at Mercy House, both with funding and work.

Eastside Church is not the only new and enthusiastic church group. The last several years has seen a considerable sprouting of new groups. The Spirit of God is on the move! The Directory also indicates growth among Amish and Old Order groups.

PHENOMENAL GROWTH

In doing a Virginia statewide directory, one learns a good bit about congregations. One example of rapid and outstanding growth is the Eastside Church, which meets at the new Skyline Middle and Smithland Elementary School in Harrisonburg.

Peter Eberly, pastor, informs us that the church began in March 2010. “God’s been good,” says Peter. He and his assistant pastor, Matt Schwartz, both serve one-fourth time. When school is in session they attract a large number of JMU students and a few from EMU. Sometimes they might have over 200 in attendance. Their average runs somewhere around 178.

The do not have Sunday school but have a number of small groups that meet for supper and Bible study, including both women and men. Official membership numbers are not emphasized. Most attendees are in the early 20s to 35 ages and represent considerable diversity, perhaps primarily Caucasian, but also with Hispanic and Asian persons.

Contemporary worship with singing and power point presentations describes their approach. Eberly says their mission is “Seeking Christ,” “Serving the Community,” “Teaching Others,” and “Joining Together in Worship.”

They engage in many activities and support local Young Life groups (high school). They have done MCC kits and school kits. Ten

SOURCES CONSULTED FOR THIS ISSUE


Due to the nature of the information needed, numerous phone calls were needed to get up-to-date statistics on current adult attendance figures, as well as ordained leadership—bishop, minister, deacon.

Particularly helpful to get leads were the three publications noted above. The first two contain very helpful indexes of ministers, phone numbers and email addresses.

By far the largest source of information was phone calls, or sometimes several calls to obtain complete information. These were done in January 2012. The advantage is having very up-to-date statistics.

Numerous congregations do not routinely keep weekly attendance figures. That called for careful estimation of current adult attendance by leadership people or their spouses. The editor appreciates all the good cooperation from so many people.

James O. Lehman

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OUR COMMUNITY PLACE (OCP)

Ron Copeland, chairman of the board of directors, reports that it has been a strange and wonderful year at OCP, unlike anything expected or even hoped for. They evaluated the first three years, which has led to “radical changes,” a reduction of daily hours of operation, and now enjoying “a more balanced, safer, calmer, more joyful, more inviting, more healing place” where exciting new vision is unfolding.

It has been a social experiment that had its roots in the “free food for all soup kitchen” held at the Little Grill for 16 years. It was wonderful to serve 3,000 plates of food per month for the poorest folks in town. But they finally became overwhelmed and needed to re-evaluate.

Ken, the farm director is developing a vision of a “Christian discipleship program. He is interweaving the Beatitudes, the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the rhythm of the growing season,” which is now a nine-month liturgical, Biblical, recovery-centered program. Jason and Jenny Wenger live in a property adjacent to the farm. They bring new vision to the program.

People get valuable work training “in a loving and caring work environment.” Phillip Fisher Rhodes became the new executive director and Sharon Kniss took over the direction of the community center. Ron serves as pastor of the Early Church and part of the dynamic team.

We want to be a place that is a Godsend to social services and a place for marginalized people. With the help of volunteers we want to do it well, “trusting that God, the community, and creative work will support us as we grow, blossom, and bear fruit.”

We need continued support, says Ron, helping people struggling with poverty and difficult life circumstances. With a separate organization from the church, a place called OCP, they want to know Christ and the fellowship sharing in His sufferings. They want to live “by the Spirit and walk in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

Summarized from Ron Copeland’s statements of their activities.