



To ARMS!

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Newsletter of the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses



2018 Virginia Annual Conference

Service was the focus of this year's Virginia Conference session in Hampton, June 15-17, as Bishop Sharma Lewis encouraged members to "intentionally develop disciples of Jesus Christ" who would influence others to serve. More than 1,000 members joined in a "Great Day of Sharing" to benefit the surrounding community, and others produced 3,000 UMCOR kits, all supporting the conference theme: "Servant Leaders Making a Difference."

In addition, nearly 45,000 UMCOR disaster kits and 9,000 pounds of food were brought to conference by member congregations. An offering of \$111,000 was also received benefiting the church's work in Cambodia, Brazil, Mozambique, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and work among Native Americans and at the seminary in Moscow. Clearly, conference members had taken to heart the vision of servant-hood Bishop Lewis had introduced at last year's conference session.

An evening "Service of Remembrance" recalled the lives of 63 conference clergy and laity who died since last year; and in an "Ordering of Ministry" service nineteen persons were ordained elders, two deacons, and thirty-two licensed as local pastors. Forty-four retiring clergy were also honored earlier that day. Regrettably, 8 conference churches were discontinued; 2 new faith communities were begun, and 1 church was chartered.

Of eight resolutions sent to conference, only three were discussed. One was ruled out of order since it unconstitutionally allowed portions of the *Discipline* to be ignored by local congregations, particularly in relation to LGBTQ issues. Another was approved encouraging "compassionate support" for armed forces members and families suffering from "Post-Traumatic Stress and Moral Injury." An additional resolution passed that calls for General Conference to "resist schism and express openness to diverse perspectives" in matters of sexuality. Near close, a motion was adopted that condemned the use of Scripture to justify separating children from their parents on the country's southern border. Another motion was tabled that encouraged establishing an "exit path" for congregations disagreeing with the denomination.

A report of the "Commission on a Way Forward," presented prior to conference, outlined three options regarding the denomination's possible response to homosexuality issues: 1) The One Church Plan allows conferences, churches, and pastors freedom to make their own decisions regarding homosexuality, 2) The Connectional Conference Plan creates three "values-based connectional conferences" replacing the current geographically-based conference system, and 3) The Traditionalist Plan strengthens the prohibitive language of the current *Discipline* regarding homosexuality issues. (continued on page 6)

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NOTEWORTHY

- Retreat coming, Oct. 10–11. Check out details and registration on page 4.
- Donations are due! \$10 per person for 2016.
Send to
John & Ann Shappell,
Co-Treasurers
221 Delaney Drive
Suffolk, VA 23434
- To ARMS! Is published on March 15, August 15, and November 15.
- Send news to
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Movie Reviews: *The Zookeeper's Wife* (2017)



This inspiring story is based on real life events of a family named Jabinska operating a zoo outside of Warsaw, Poland, beginning in the late 1930's (from the non-fiction book of the same name by Diane Ackeman). Their lives and the zoo were turned upside down when the Germans bombed and took over Poland in 1939. Animals were destroyed or confiscated by the Nazis, and the family struggled to survive. They began to hide and transport Polish Jews to safer places. The story is full of suspense, danger, courage and love. At the end, the children of the family tell of the zoo's renewal after the war and the 300 endangered people saved by this remarkable zookeeper and wife.

***Hidden Figures* (2018)**

This is a must see film! Set in 1961, it tells the true story of African American women who are employed by NASA, the space agency, as they work on and successfully launch the first U.S. astronauts. The interplay of their math skills and the emergence of the IBM computer is fascinating to watch. The brilliance, bravery and patience of these women takes place at the same time of the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. Discrimination, shame, and yet victory are all part of the story. There is also woven into the plot the love life of one of these exceptional women. This is certainly one of my all time favorites.

***All Saints* (2017)**

At a time of national debate, often heated, about immigration, refugees, and migrants, this important film offers a different perspective from partisan politics. It considers what is the Christian response to people fleeing from genocide and interment. This true story tells of an Episcopal priest assigned to a dwindling congregation, All Saints Church, with a heavy mortgage and a mandate from diocese leaders to sell. Rev. Michael Spurlock in his first parish, is further confronted with dozens of refugees from Myanmar (Burma) who have come to this suburb of Nashville. The resulting story of trust in God, severe disappointment, and church renewal is told with deep feeling and honesty. Don't miss it!



Book Review: *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (2015)
by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

This is a highly relevant work of non-fiction by the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth. It deals with the relationship of violence to religious fervor among many groups, and the 'us versus them' mentality so prevalent today. The author examines the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—to discover the similarities today with the Genesis accounts of the beginnings of these religions. New insights about scriptural stories are quite enlightening, with help from Jewish sources beyond the Old Testament. Sacks concludes with advice about letting go of hate and moving toward the will to life as opposed to the will to power. Although I believe he is soft on injustices in the state of Israel, the whole of the work provides much for thoughtful discussion of the troubling issues of our day.

— Reviews by Dick Faris

To Our Pastor: Good and Bad News

1. Good News: we finally found a music director who does things your way.
Bad News: everyone in the choir quit.
2. Good News: church attendance rose dramatically the last two weeks.
Bad News: you were on vacation the last two weeks.
3. Good News: The Administrative Council voted to send you a get well card.
Bad News: the vote passed 16 to 15.



NEW RETIREES

CLASS OF 2018

Welcome New Members of ARMS

<i>Names</i>	<i>Years of Service</i>
Kay A. Barstow-Gentry	20.75
Brenda J. Biler	30
Jeffery L. Cannon	28.75
Robin L. Colwell	34
Michael D. Copeland	30
Larry E. Davies	32
William A. Davis	37
David R. Drinkard	40
Lawrence A. Erbin	27
Dwala J. Ferrell	26
David T. Forrest	45
Pamela J. Gable	15
Joseph E. Hammond	31
Ernest T. Herndon	45
Alvin J. Horton	43
Barbara M. Jacobs	13.50
Robert L. Jennings	11.50
Karla M. Kincannon	38
David C. Lagerveld	24
Bruce N. Lugn	8
Larry F. Mann	49

Clergy who retire in the Virginia Conference automatically become members of The Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses



Drema M. McAllister-Wilson	20.75
Gordon K. Meriwether III	6
Ronald K. Morris	40
Jeffrey C. Pugh	42
Charles F. Reynolds	24
Janice R. Rivero	37.25
Gary L. Robbins	42
Brenda L. Rose	14.25
Terry A. Ross	14
Vickie R. Seibert	25
Robert W. Sharp	41
Thomas W. Sherrod	41
Waverly C. Smith	16
Robert L. Stroud	38
Lawrence R. Thompson Jr	42
Barry R. Throckmorton	26
Pat B. Tony	37
Charles W. Townsend	22.50
Patrick Michael Watts	26.50
Paula P. Werner	19
Valerie L. White	8
David J. Zuchelli	32.50

ARMS Board of Directors 2018

Co-Presidents	Paul and Martha Phillips
Vice Presidents	John Price
Past Presidents	Harry and Gale Kennon
Secretary	Marian and Ed Garrett
Treasurers	John and Ann Shappell
Sunshine Correspondent	Jean Balcom
To ARMS! Editors	Pat and Dick Faris
Archivists	Linda and Glen Cannon

At Large Members

Richard & Diane Galbreath	Becky Cloud
Steve & Susan Hassmer	Tom Keithley
Bill & Bobby Kay Wash	Jim & Carolyn Noland
Keith & Linda Mottley	Tim Gerde

The Mission of ARMS

The purpose of the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS) (including elders, widows, widowers, deacons in full connection, diaconal ministers and local pastors) in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church is to provide a voice and fellowship while maintaining a vital connection with the Conference. It is formed to maintain a sense of continued value for those in retired relationships by providing opportunities to utilize time, talents and abilities to pursue common interests.

We seek to enhance the quality of fellowship among clergy, spouses, widows and widowers of pastors in their more mature years. As growing disciples of Jesus Christ, we are supportive of one another, offering encouragement, learning, and sharing experiences.

The Annual ARMS Retreat

A Time of Renewal for All Retired Clergy and Their Spouses



October 10-11, 2018

Eagle Eyrie Retreat Center
Lynchburg, Virginia

\$60.00 per person (plus \$20 for single room) Registration deadline: October 1, 2018

First time registrants: \$30 per person

Contact: Gale Kennon, galegram@aol.com (434) 296-2954

Registrations with payment should be mailed to 2696 Southern Hills Court North Garden VA 22959

Theme: "The Gift of Uncertainty"

Our Leaders



Rev. Tom Berlin is lead pastor of Floris UMC in Herndon, VA. The author of several books, Tom is a member of the Commission on the Way Forward. This group will report to the special session of General Conference in February, 2019, to deal with issues regarding homosexuality and the Book of Discipline. He is a graduate of Virginia Tech and Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Tom is married to Karen Loughry and father of three girls. His topic at retreat is

The Way Forward -Challenges Facing the 21st Century Church.



Dr. Roberta Damon holds a doctorate in marriage and family counseling, and her career includes missionary service in South America, counselor at First Baptist Church, Richmond, and staff of the Southern Baptist Mission Board. She has published works in English and Portuguese, including *Relationship Skills, A Measure of Success, A Voice Beyond Weeping, and Theirs is the Kingdom.*

Wife of one, mother of two, and grandmother of three, at Retreat Dr. Damon will speak about

The Gift of Uncertainty in Retirement



Rev. Jim Lavender is a retired member of the Virginia Conference after 40 years of service. He's been captivating people with his homespun stories for over four decades. Jim now tours nationwide and was selected as a 2017 National Showcase Storyteller by the National Storytelling Network. Jim and Avis Lavender share their Bear Creek Hollow Farm in the Virginia countryside with their beloved animals. His talk on Wednesday is on

Tales of "Swamp Mischief" and Such



John W. Fuller serves as the Executive Director of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. with an extensive background in medical care and retirement plans. He will bring us up to date on hospitalization and pension issues. His topic on Thursday is

The (Uncertain) Future of Health Care



MUSIC!... on Wednesday night will be led by CHOoS E (Christian Hoos Exalt), an Acapella group of University of Virginia students.



The Rhythm of Retirement - by Larry Buxton

In the last two years my experience of *time* has changed. The rhythm of passing days has become rather different. For most of my pastoral life, my work week had certain obligations that occurred on a regular basis. Monday was planning, reading and correspondence. Tuesday was staff meeting. Wednesday prepare-the-bulletin, Thursday write-the-weekly-email. Interspersed were meetings, writing, visits, calls – our mainstays.

Everything pointed to Sunday. All week I nurtured a worship theme that guided my focus. My study, my prayers, and my pondering lay beneath the week's relentless tempo. Often by Saturday I'd be "lagging and dragging." Then Sunday. Sunday was what James Brown called "The One." It's the moment of maximum impact, where the band hits that first beat hard and establishes the groove. Sunday is "the One" for pastors and staff as well as parishioners. Hit it hard, and the rhythm stays solid for the week that follows.

For almost 40 years of ministry, that was the steady rhythm of my work life. Over and over again. As I moved deeper into my 60's, I slowly began to tire of the repetition. I loved the work I was called to do. But I caught myself facing each day with "Oh, it's *that* day again. Today I have to do (whatever)." The tempo of my life had become an unrelenting 4/4 – persistent and unchanging.

I began hungering for something different – for *syncopation*. In music, syncopation is a matter of different accents and off-beats. It's rhythm that lands in the time and space between the usual meter. Syncopation brings little jolts and disruptions to the music. Sometimes syncopation leads into different time signatures altogether. The beat begins to land in different places or come in different clusters. All this makes the rhythm less predictable and more interesting. I wanted to change my life's rhythm.

Retirement has certainly done that. I have three or four regular commitments – mostly visiting, teaching and coaching – but none of them happens on the same day, every week. The fixed rhythm has gone, and some of that disappearance was difficult. I miss "The One." Another pastor sets the tempo, and it rarely hits as hard with me. My "One" might fall now on a Tuesday morning, with a hospital visit or coffee with a friend. Another day it's an afternoon appointment, a seminary class, or time to exercise. Accents shift. The tempo varies. My time is more fluid.



But within this new fluidity is a lot more freedom. The rhythm of my week has more variety. The predictable 4/4 has been replaced by fresh accents and shifting beats. Life is less stable, more irregular, a little riskier. Fresher.

It's as if I've swapped funk for jazz. It's not as familiar or as mechanical, but the new rhythm makes me pay more attention. It calls for more improvisation. It's more interesting – and, like good jazz, it swings, too.

Larry Buxton retired in 2016. He and Beverly live in Ashburn.



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ARMS

Board of Pensions
Virginia Annual Conference
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Glen Allen, Virginia 23058

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Next Issue: November 15
Deadline: October 15

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To ARMS! Is published on line to all retirees
and mailed to paying members by request.

IN MEMORIAM — We grieve for our Colleagues & Friends:

(as of 8/1/2018)

Retired Clergy

Philbert Doherty (07/14/38) RL	March 19, 2018
William L. Ayres (02/07/30) RE	March 22, 2018
Warren D. Trumbo (01/01/27) RE	April 17, 2018
Charles M. Johnson (12/22/29) RE	July 12, 2018

Spouses of Retired Clergy

Jean Lynch (Rev. Herschel Jack Lynch)	April 16, 2018
Bonnie Bender (Rev. Harley R. Bender)	April 20, 2018
Sara Dawson (Rev. Richard Dawson)	July 28, 2018
Sarah L. Boice (Rev. James Boice)	May 20, 2018*
Charles H. Caldwell (Rev. Rita Callis)	June 21, 2018

Clergy Widows/Widowers

Elinor M. Willis (Rev. David Willis)	March 3, 2018
Edith F. Durrett (Rev. James H. Durrett)	March 11, 2018
Patricia K. Wilson (Rev. Dale Wilson)	May 06, 2018*
Elsie L. Winfree (Rev. William Winfree)	May 06, 2018*
Gwendolyn Ruckman (Rev. Lee Van Ruckman)	May 20, 2018*
Elizabeth W. Boggs (Rev. Thomas Boggs)	June 19, 2018*

“Into your hands I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O faithful God.”

Psalm 31:5

(Annual Conference continued from Page 1)

The General Conference will consider these options at a special session next February.

Although uniformity of opinion continues to elude the denomination, the Virginia Conference found common ground in the arena of service. Throughout the weekend, a “Glory Sightings” video series highlighted the missional work of people across the conference, featuring an afterschool program, food pantry, medical supplies ministry, among others. Bishop Lewis’ parting words captured both the work and challenge of the Virginia Conference: “Just think about it, when someone gives you a gift, what do they expect you to do with it? They expect you to use it.”



— Reported by
Al Horton, 2018
new ARMS
member