

Advocate



Kip and Nancy
Robinson's
Sierra Leone Diary



FROM THE EDITOR



Neill Caldwell
Editor

Get up
and go



Looking through Nancy and Kip Robinson's photos from their first six months in Sierra Leone got me a little excited. What's more motivating than the church sending missionaries to Africa? Or Cambodia, or Honduras, or Alaska? That's what the church is all about!

We learn about missionaries early on, and, as a child, that idea sounds very exciting. I hear my wife talk about how as a child she wanted to be Lottie Moon, the Baptist missionary (born in Scottsville) who spent 40 years in China. I believe the Southern Baptist Church still collects money for the "Lottie Moon Fund" to pay for the work of missionaries around the globe.

I have a great deal of respect for all our missionaries. It takes a special kind of person to do that, and I am not sure I could spend months or years in a foreign country. I love to travel and see places I've read about all my life. But at the same time I'm a homebody who misses the comforts of a firm mattress and a hot shower when those things are not available. As I love to tell people, my idea of "roughing it" is having to settle for Basic Cable.

I have done a couple of overseas mission trips, and they were great. But on those I was back home after a week or two.

On both trips I met people from foreign countries who are missionaries to other foreign countries. Being an American, we tend to think that missionaries must also be Americans who are willing to go to faraway places. But the spirit of spreading God's word is not limited to national boundaries. Anyone who hears that unique kind of call from God can serve the church in this way.

Last year in Cambodia, I spent time with a missionary from Kenya and a missionary from the Philippines who have both been part of the growth of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia for several years. It was interesting to hear their different perspectives, not only on how things work in Cambodia, but also on the church and the way we all strive to live a Christian life.

As I mention in a couple of workshops that I lead, Christ's marching orders to all of us – what we call "The Great Commission," – "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19) contains a very strong action verb, as we say in the grammar game. It's "GO," not "Wait around for someone to ask you about God," or "stay home and study the scriptures," but GO! Get out there into the world where stuff happens and people are living their lives and spread the good news about our Lord and Savior.

The Virginia Conference has a great track record of supporting missionaries, but also in developing missionaries from within our ranks. We commissioned Kip and Nancy at Annual Conference last summer, and we will commission missionaries again this year. All of our missionaries deserve words of thanks and praise. 🙌

Neill Caldwell

Connecting with the

VirginiaAdvocate

The official magazine of
the Virginia Conference of
The United Methodist Church



P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058

Phone: 1-800-768-6040 or
804-521-1100

Fax: 804-521-1173

E-mail: advocate@vaumc.org

Website: www.vaumc.org

Detailed guidelines for the following
available upon request.

Subscriptions

Print subscriptions are \$15/one year; \$25/two years; \$36/three years. Special bulk rate for five or more copies going to a single address is \$12 each for one year. Subscriptions are \$20/year for both printed copy and online access. For online only, cost is \$10/year. Subscribe online at www.vaumc.org, under "Resources>Publications."

Deadlines

The Advocate is published once a month. The deadline to submit news and ad copy for the May 2014 issue is April 1. For more information on future deadlines, contact the Advocate office or visit the website.

Advertising/Tributes

Rates for advertising and tributes are available upon request.

Local Church News

Items should be typed (preferably sent via e-mail) or printed legibly, no more than 100 words, and of conference-wide interest. Complete names of individuals, churches and districts should be included. Because of space limitations, the Local Church section prohibits news items related to church members' birthdays (of less than 100 years), wedding anniversaries, receptions for moving and/or retiring pastors, photos of traditional Christmas trees or Easter trees/crosses, and any item over two months old. Color photos are encouraged. Photos returned only if submitted with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Photos included on a space available basis. The editor reserves the right to edit all copy or refuse publication.

Letters

Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters should be limited to 150 words for space reasons. The Advocate will not print letters addressing a topic beyond two months of the publication of that issue. The Advocate editor reserves the right to edit all letters.

©2014 Virginia Advocate

USPS 660-740 ISSN 0891-5598
Published monthly by Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc., an agency of the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Periodical postage paid at Glen Allen, Va., and at additional mailing offices. The Virginia United Methodist Advocate is owned by Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.

POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to Virginia United Methodist Advocate, P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058. Editorial and business offices are located at 10330 Staples Mill Rd., Glen Allen, Va. Office hours are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



SECTIONS

- 4-5 Commentary
- 6-10 Annual Conference
- 11-19 Virginia
- 27-29 Nation & World
- 30-31 Equipping for Ministry
- 32 Local Church News
- 33 Events
- 34-35 Living the Word
- 36 Clergy & Diaconal
- 38 From the Bishop
- 39 One Last Word



Get the free mobile app at
<http://gettag.mobi>

FEATURE

- 20-24 Kip and Nancy Robinson's Sierra Leone Diary
- 25 Katelyn Davis reports on advocacy in Hong Kong
- 26 Chris Steppe is US2 in Alaska
- 26 Steve Claris works with Chocktaws in Mississippi

NEWS

- 11 Bishop adds two more superintendents to Cabinet
- 12 5 Talent Academy speaker challenges church on giving
- 15 SU students build relationships in the Bahamas
- 16 Wichester District partnership with Haiti is underway
- 17 Conference to provide uniform e-mail addresses to clergy
- 18 Wesley Community Center remains a place of refuge
- 27 Hope and dismay follow same-sex wedding rulings
- 28 Rev. Marg Kutz reports on her time in the South Sudan
- 29 New chaplain starts long journey on Appalachian Trail

The Virginia Advocate Staff

Linda S. Rhodes | Virginia Conference Director of Communications

Neill M. Caldwell | Editor

Cathryn Huff Wooton | Graphic Designer

Pam Culler | Administrative Secretary

Board of Directors of Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.: Bill McClung, chair. The Virginia United Methodist Advocate uses the services of United Methodist Communications and United Methodist News Service. The reporting of news regarding any person or event, or the placement of any advertisement within these pages, does not constitute endorsement by the Virginia Advocate or any entity of The United Methodist Church. Opinions of writers are solely those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.

Mama, I just got arrested

By Jan Snider

As you can see in the photo, I'm smiling at the police officer (that's me, below, wearing bright red), as if I am delighted to be arrested. But the truth is, like any proper "southern lady," I was simply being polite. I've long held that good manners are as important as the right color of lipstick. Even when you're wearing handcuffs. Okay, I admit that visiting the Obamas without an invitation is rather scandalous, but sometimes even a good girl has to raise a ruckus to be heard. That's why on President's Day I flew to Washington, D.C.,

to stand with people of faith in front of the White House to protest the big ol' mess we call our immigration system. My mama taught me never to discuss religion and politics, and I don't mean to be unpleasant, but there are things I just have to say. I chose to stand with my brothers and sisters of The United Methodist Church and other persons of faith in demanding immediate change toward a more actively humane, just and compassionate approach to immigration. Christians often wish for clarity from the Scriptures on important social issues. Nowhere is Jesus more clear than on the issue of immigration: In Matthew 25 he provides not only his command to us

but his judgment if we do not comply. So, together we prayed, sang hymns, and called for the end to unjust deportations, and for passage of comprehensive immigration reform. When police asked politely for us to leave, we refused. In response, they gave us a lovely lights-and-siren escort to jail. Thirty-two of us were arrested. My mama was shocked by my very public and unladylike display! But, I'm a mama, too. That's why I felt compelled to protest current policy that separates mamas from their children. Our messed-up laws have resulted in nearly two million deportations since 2007, many of them of non-violent offenders who simply do not and cannot acquire documentation to be here.

That's millions of mamas and daddies being separated from their children because our great nation can't get its act together when it comes to immigration policy. I know this is the point where a whole posse of patriots will say, "Illegal is illegal." But, it's not that simple. And, I can throw a big ol' hissie fit about that argument, but I know ya'll won't listen. Fact is, when our nation targets non-violent, productive, salt-of-the-earth, hard-working families for not having the right papers, well, that just ain't right. So not only did we

prayerfully consider our public witness, we also chose to be "undocumented." Acting in solidarity with some of our immigrant brothers and sisters with us, we did not bring identification that would have resulted in short processing and a minor fine. Bless their hearts, this really threw the police for a loop. We did this because our laws do not provide a legal means for way too many immigrants to be here "the right way" – even though our nation needs nearly half a million low-skilled, immigrant workers a year, and our system only provides about 5,000 visas. It comes down to real people, and real lives.

When a parent is deported, it is often done swiftly without any provision for the tragedy that befalls the family. If undocumented parents have any choice at all, it is to bring their children with them to live in poverty and uncertainty, or leave them behind in the United States with the potential to thrive. I once met a 16-year-old born in the United States whose parents had been deported. It was like a tornado suddenly swooped down and destroyed everything the family ever knew. Though her 12-year-old sister didn't speak the native language and had never been outside the United States, she went with her

parents. But the family decided that the teenager had a better future living in the United States alone than what she risked by living an impoverished existence in a crime-ridden country. Certainly I believe we should deport criminals, but not possessing the correct documents is a federal civil offense; deportation for simply being undocumented is akin to shooting a fly with a cannon. We need to re-work our laws to better reflect the economic realities of our labor needs and the biblical values we so vehemently profess. - Jan Snider is Special Projects Producer at United Methodist Productions in Nashville.

Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters should be limited to 150 words for space reasons. Letters may be e-mailed to NeillCaldwell@vaumc.org by the first of the month.



Do you know the facts?

- One out of 80 children will be diagnosed with autism
- Boys are five times more likely to have autism than girls
- Autism is the fastest growing disability in the U.S.
- **UMFS is one of the best programs in Virginia serving children and youth on the autism spectrum**

At United Methodist Family Services, we know the emotional pain and social isolation experienced by children with autism. Our residential and day program for these youth brings new hope to their development and positive achievements. Join us in supporting National Autism Awareness Month!

UMFS
Unwavering Champions for Children and Families
3900 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230
804-254-9450
www.umfs.org



2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 20-22 IN HAMPTON



SCHEDULE

This year's Annual Conference session will again have a compacted schedule built to start and finish within a 48-hour period:

Friday

Clergy and Laity sessions will start at 1 p.m. Afternoon session will begin at 3 p.m., conclude at 5 p.m. Evening worship will begin at 7:30 p.m. and conclude at approximately 9 p.m.

Saturday

Morning session will begin at 8:15 a.m. with "Singing Our Faith" and will conclude at noon. Afternoon session will begin at 2 p.m. and conclude at 5 p.m. Evening session will begin at 7:30 and conclude at approximately 9 p.m.

Sunday

The final session will begin at 8:15 a.m. with "Singing Our Faith" and conclude at noon at the close of worship.

- ❖ Registration will be offered from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. Those who need to register on Saturday can do so at the "Trouble Shooting" desk.
- ❖ The Society of St. Andrew Potato Drop will start at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday.
- ❖ The display area will again be located next to the plenary hall.
- ❖ Cokesbury will have a store in the display area.
- ❖ The city of Hampton will staff a help desk at the Convention Center.
- ❖ If you want or need to use a shuttle, speak to the person at the Hampton welcome desk in the Center or call (757) 315-1789.

PACKETS

In an effort to be good stewards of the environment and financial re-

sources of the conference, the 2012 Annual Conference "promo packets" will again be virtual. Electronic copies of materials previously submitted in hard copy for the tote bag will be accepted – at no cost to the organizations submitting them – for inclusion in the Virtual Promo Packet, which will be posted on the conference website, www.vaumc.org, under **Resources>2014 Annual Conference Information**. The Virtual Packet will be available for viewing on the conference website on June 1. Information for the Virtual Promo Packet needs to be submitted in pdf format to the office of Connectional Ministries via e-mail to BevMyers@vaumc.org for approval by May 3.

CONFERENCE OFFERING

Each year members of local churches are encouraged to help raise money for global mission projects designated by the bishop. The pastor or lay representative of each church will take that money to Annual Conference where it will be collected during a special time of the session.

Checks may be made payable to "Virginia Conference of the UMC" with "Conference Offering" in the memo line.

This year the Annual Conference special offering goal is \$200,000. Bishop Young Jin Cho is requesting contributions to support eight different ministries. "With renewed

confidence and commitment our offering will be broad in its scope," Bishop Cho wrote in a letter to all Virginia Conference United Methodists, "as we reach out across Virginia and around the world to renew and strengthen our commitment to those with whom we partner in God's mission."

Contributions are asked for the following ministries:

Imagine No Malaria - \$50,000:

Every 60 seconds, malaria claims a life in Africa. Millions of lives, needlessly lost each year. Entire nations...slipping away. Imagine No Malaria is an extraordinary effort of the people of The United Methodist Church, putting our faith into action to end preventable deaths by malaria in Africa. Achieving this goal requires an integrated strategy against the disease, including prevention, treatment, improving infrastructure, education and communications.

Initiatives of Hope - \$90,000:

\$50,000 for **Cambodia**. We want to continue to strengthen our partnership with Cambodia by offering support for church construction, Christian education materials and scholarships for youths and young adults.

\$25,000 for **Mozambique**. These funds will help strengthen lay leadership training and provide needed improvements in the Mozambique Confer-

ence Communications department.

\$15,000 for **Brazil**. These funds will help grow and expand the Brazil Methodist Church's Shade and Fresh Water program for at-risk street children.

Engaging/Connecting God's Mission Funds - \$10,000:

This ministry will promote mission engagement of Virginia Conference small membership churches by offering grants to individuals and churches desiring to begin or strengthen participation in short-term United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) trips.

Children Out of Poverty in Virginia - \$30,000:

This will provide financial support for two United Methodist ministries serving at-risk children in Virginia:

The Community Outreach Program of Roanoke works to improve the quality of life of inner city children by providing tutoring, school supplies and programs such as You Feed Others weekend meals, Clothing Closet, Christmas Angels and Camp.

The Agape Christian Children's Community Center in the small rural ethnic minority community of Horntown on the Eastern Shore strives to provide a healthy nurturing environment for at-risk children. The center operates a preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds that is open 11 hours daily, Monday through Friday; after-school

program for kindergarten through second grade; and Vacation Bible School during the summer months.

Haiti - Connecting Hope - \$20,000:

Funds will help connect and coordinate the mission work of Virginia Conference churches that have a long-term commitment to the ministry of the Methodist Church in Haiti.

DENMAN AWARDS

The conference Center for Congregational Excellence is now accepting nominations for the 2014 Denman Awards for clergy, laity and youth. Deadline for submissions is April 30. For nomination forms and more information, go to the Virginia Conference website at www.vaumc.org/Denman.

BANQUETS

If you are planning a banquet for this year's Annual Conference and would like to have your event listed in the conference Banquet Schedule, forward

the following information to the banquet coordinator Michael Reaves at reaves.michael.b@gmail.com: name of your group or gathering; date and time; location and contact information for those who want details.

DISPLAYS

Display Request Forms and Guidelines are now available on the Virginia Conference website at www.vaumc.org/AC2014. (Note: If you have already sent a display request to the Rev. Larry Brayton, and sent it to l.brayton@hotmail.com; be advised that e-mail is no longer active. You must resend application to pastor@tumfc.org.)

HOUSING

The housing letter for 2014 Annual Conference has been mailed and is available on the conference website at www.vaumc.org. Enclosed with the letter is a list of area hotels and motels that have special rates for the conference. The City of Hampton

is providing free shuttle service from area motels and hotels to the Convention Center. Also enclosed with the letter are maps of both planned shuttle routes.

The Hampton Embassy Suites is the headquarters hotel and is adjacent to the Convention Center. Note that this hotel alone requires two nights minimum stay to get the special rates. (Identify yourself as a member of Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to receive the designated group rate.) Make your reservations by **May 8** in order to secure these rates.

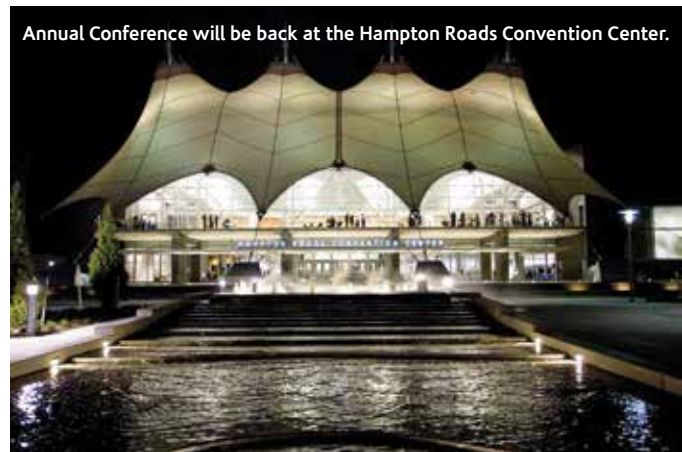
The Convention Center has limited RV parking (no water, dumping or electricity). There are, however, a number of area campgrounds to choose from. (www.hampton.gov/parks/)

For more information, contact the **Rev. Ed Merry** at (757) 871-4696 or EdH-Merry@verizon.net.

'4 CANS 4 CONFERENCE'

Members of Annual Conference are encouraged to bring at least four cans of food or boxes of dry food to the session in Hampton for "4 Cans 4 Conference." Requested are: one can of vegetables or fruit, one can of meat or fish, one can of soup or stew and one can with a pop-top.

For more information, contact the **Rev. Jim Earley** at pastor@walkerchapel.org or (703) 538-5200.



Annual Conference will be back at the Hampton Roads Convention Center.

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 20-22 IN HAMPTON

KITS FOR CONFERENCE

The Rev. Eric Vaught, kits coordinator for 2014 Annual Conference in Hampton, recently sent out this instructional message: Many of you have already been diligently working on the UMCOR kits for some months now, and we are grateful for this wonderful outpouring of love that helps those in need in so many ways and in so many places. As your church works on kits, your 2014 Annual Conference team that handles the collection of the kits asks that you review this short list of Relief Kit "Do's" and "Don'ts"

- 1. **DO** read, and follow, all instructions as published.
- 2. **DO NOT** bring money to kit collection site. It will be refused. Instead, DO mail kit money to the Virginia Conference Treasurer.
- 3. **DO NOT** over pack boxes. Heavy boxes can lead to volunteer injuries.
- 4. **DO NOT** deliver unboxed/incomplete kits.
- 5. **DO NOT** leave kits inside the Hampton Roads Convention Center. **DO** take them to the appointed drop-off location in the parking lot.

For more information about kits collection, contact the **Rev. Eric Vaudt** at (804) 815-0350; or the **Rev. David Magruder** at (804) 384-7798.

BEDDING KIT

- ❖ 2 flat sheets double size flat only, no fitted
- ❖ 2 pillow cases
- ❖ 2 pillows

Notes:
All items must be new. Do not wash any of the items as they will then be considered used. Linens may be of different colors. Items may be removed from packaging.
All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.

BIRTHING KIT

- ❖ 1 small bar soap 1 oz. to 2 oz. size; do not remove from original packaging; small bars such as those found in hotels are acceptable
- ❖ 1 pair thin gloves surgical, latex or thin rubber gloves are acceptable
- ❖ 1 square yard of clear plastic sheeting must be 4 millimeters thick; plastic trash bags and shower curtains are not acceptable
- ❖ 3 12-inch long pieces of cotton string, must be clean; secure the pieces

of string by bundling and tying them together; no yarn

- ❖ 1 single edge razor blade, must be covered in paper or cardboard to keep it from causing injury; regular shaving razors are not acceptable
- ❖ 2 receiving blankets, sizes may range from 28" x 28" to 32" x 32"; no thermal or fleece blankets
- ❖ 1 plastic bag, one gallon size sealable bags only

Assembly Directions:
Fold the plastic sheeting and blankets so they will fit easily into the plastic bag. Lay the loose items on top of the blankets and plastic sheeting. Slide all items into the plastic bag.

Squeeze as much air out of the bag and then seal it.

Notes:
All items must be new. Do not wash any of the items as they will be considered used.
All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.



CLEANING BUCKET

- ❖ 5-gallon bucket with resealable lid; buckets from fast food restaurants or bakeries can be used if washed and cleaned; do not use buckets that have stored chemicals such as paint or pool cleaner; advertisements on the outside are acceptable.
- ❖ liquid laundry detergent, two 25 oz. or one 50 oz. bottles only
- ❖ liquid household cleaner, 12-16 oz. liquid cleaner that can be mixed with water; no spray cleaners
- ❖ dish soap, 16-28 oz bottle any brand
- ❖ 1 can air freshener, aerosol or pump
- ❖ 1 insect repellent spray, 6-14 oz. aerosol or spray pump with protective cover
- ❖ 1 scrub brush, plastic or wooden handle
- ❖ 18 cleaning wipes, Handi-Wipes or reusable wipes; no terry cleaning towels; remove from packaging
- ❖ 7 sponges, no cellulose sponges due to mold issues; remove from wrapper
- ❖ 5 scouring pads, remove from wrapper; no stainless steel, Brillo pads or SOS pads (nothing with soap built in)
- ❖ 50 clothespins, remove from packaging
- ❖ clothes line, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft. cotton or plastic
- ❖ 24 roll heavy duty trash bags 33-45 gallon sizes; remove from the box

- ❖ 5 dust masks
- ❖ 2 pair kitchen dish washing gloves, should be durable enough for multiple uses; remove from packaging
- ❖ 1 pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather

Assembling Directions:
Place all liquid items in the bucket first. Place remaining items in the bucket fitting them around and between the liquid items. Sponges, scouring pads, clothespins and trash bags can be separated in order to fit all of the items in the bucket. Ensure the lid is closed securely.

Notes:
All items must be new except for the actual bucket and lid. All cleaning agents must be liquid and in plastic containers. No powders please. If you cannot find the requested size of a liquid item, use a smaller size. Including larger sizes of any item will prevent the lid from sealing. If all of the items on the list are not included, please put a label on the bucket indicating what has been omitted.

Cleaning buckets are only used within the United States. They are not opened to verify the contents unless there is indication some items have been omitted.

HEALTH KIT

- ❖ 1 hand towel 15" x 25" to 17" x 27" kitchen; cleaning and microfiber towels not acceptable
- ❖ 1 washcloth
- ❖ 1 comb needs to be sturdy and at least 8"

long; no pocket combs or picks; rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable

- ❖ 1 metal nail file or clipper no emery boards or toenail clippers
- ❖ 1 bath size soap 3 oz. and larger sizes only; no Ivory soap due to moisture content; do not remove from original packaging
- ❖ 1 toothbrush adult size only; do not remove from original packaging
- ❖ 6 adhesive bandages ¾" to 1" size; common household Band-Aids
- ❖ 1 plastic bag one gallon size sealable bags only
- ❖ *\$2 to purchase and ship.

Assembly Directions:
Lay the washcloth flat in the center of the hand towel. Place all remaining items on top of the wash cloth. Fold over the sides of the hand towel to cover all of the items. Fold over one end of the hand towel so that it covers all of the items. Grasp the bundle of items tightly and roll over the remainder of the hand towel tightly. Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag. Remove as much air as possible and seal the bag.

Notes:
All items must be new. Do not wash any of the items as they will be considered used. Please remove all packaging.
All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into

international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.

**UMCOR is now purchasing toothpaste in bulk to be added to health kits before shipping to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent. Do not put single dollar bills in each kit. Collect money for toothpaste and shipping place it in a separate envelope and send to Virginia Conference treasurer.*

LAYETTE KIT

- ❖ 6 cloth diapers pre-folded or plain diapers only; no disposable diapers
- ❖ 2 shirts undershirts or onesies
- ❖ 2 wash cloths, infant size only; no adult wash cloths
- ❖ 2 gowns or sleepers; 2 diaper pins, must have protective plastic closures, no regular safety pins
- ❖ 1 sweater or jacket; must open from the front, may be hand knitted, crocheted or sewn; hooded sweatshirts are acceptable
- ❖ 2 receiving blankets, sizes may range from 28" x 28" to 32" x 32"; no crib blankets

Assembling Directions:
Lay one of the receiving blankets flat on a table. Set

(Continued on next page: "Kits")

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

(“Kits” continued from page 9)

aside the diaper pins and place all remaining items on top of the blanket. Fold the blanket around the items and secure the bundle with the diaper pins.

Notes:
All items must be new. Do not wash any of the items as they will be considered used. Please remove all packaging.

All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.

SEWING KIT

- ❖ 3 continuous yards of fabric cotton or cotton blend only; no heavy duty, corduroy, knit, etc. no patriotic, religious, holiday, camouflage, or military patterned fabric
- ❖ 1 pair scissors, fabric scissors only
- ❖ 1 package needles, hand needles in original packaging only
- ❖ 1 spool thread, medium to large spool; no travel kit thread
- ❖ 5-8 buttons 5/8 inch size or larger; no loose buttons; leave buttons in original packaging or fasten all together
- ❖ 1 plastic bag, one gallon

size sealable bags only
Assembling Directions:
Place kit in the plastic bag and seal.

Notes:
All items must be new. Do not wash the fabric as it will then be considered used. All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.

SCHOOL KIT

- ❖ 1 pair blunt scissors, rounded tip only; no plastic scissors
- ❖ 3 pads of paper, spiral- or top-bound pads, 150 sheets or less of loose leaf can be substituted for 1 pad combinations of spiral, top bound, side bound or loose leaf is acceptable
- ❖ 1 hand-held pencil sharpener, must be at least one inch long; remove from packaging
- ❖ 1 30-centimeter ruler, hard or flexible; cartoon characters are acceptable; no advertisements
- ❖ 6 unsharpened pencils, no advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage; cartoon characters are acceptable
- ❖ 1 2-inch or larger

size eraser, no advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage; cartoon characters are acceptable

- ❖ 1 24-count box of crayons, only 24 count boxes
- ❖ 1 14"x16" cloth bag, homemade or purchased bags are both acceptable; heavy-duty fabric only-denim, corduroy, drapery fabric, etc.; no advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage; closures are optional but must be buttons, snaps or Velcro sewn in middle of opening if used

Assembling Directions:
Place all loose items on top of paper. Turn items sideways and slide into the cloth bag. Fold over the top of the bag so loose items

don't fall out.
Notes:
A pattern for the bag can be found on the internet at www.umcor.org. Go to "How To Give" at the top of the page and scroll down to "Relief Supplies." Click on "Relief Supplies" and scroll down until you find the "School Kit" section. Click on "sewing patterns." All items must be new.

All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment. 📌



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Virginia Conference Bishop Young Jin Cho has announced two additional appointments to his Cabinet. The Rev. Jeff Mickle, who is serving St. Stephen's UMC in Burke, will become the new Alexandria District superintendent, and the Rev. Seonyoung Kim, who serves the Northumberland Charge, will become the new York River District Superintendent.

The appointments will take effect July 1. "These pastors have demonstrated faithful ministries for many years in serving local churches and conference boards and agencies," wrote Bishop Cho in announcing the appointments. "I discerned they have gifts and graces to serve their respective districts effectively and to reflect the diversity of our conference at the Cabinet table."

Bishop Cho also thanked the Rev. Joe Carson, current York River District superintendent, who will return to a local parish this year, and to the Rev. Ken Jackson, the Alexandria District superintendent who died March 10, losing a long battle with cancer. (See *obituary*, pg. 36) "Their service and ministries have helped their districts to face their challenges, and they have contributed to enabling the conference to move toward a better future. Your prayers for their smooth transitions will be deeply appreciated."

Mickle is a former chair of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. He has served St. Stephen's since June 2007, having served previously in Shenandoah, an associate at Aldersgate in Alexandria, at Resurrection in Virginia Beach and Belmont in Richmond.

He is married to the Rev. Deborah Austin, who is also a United Methodist elder. They have two adult sons: Jon in Atlanta and Ben in Seattle. They are expecting their first grandchild in April.

Mickle grew up in Pennsylvania and was baptized in the Evangelical United Brethren Church, coming into The United Methodist Church at the 1968 merger, just after he was confirmed. Jeff and Deborah met at Duke and both transferred to the Virginia Conference in 1981.

Mickle is a graduate of the Divinity School at Duke University (M. Div. and Th.M.) after earning his undergraduate degree in History at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

In addition to his service chairing the Board of Ordained Ministry, he has served on other conference boards including the Board of Laity, Board of Discipleship, Commission on Disabilities and the old Council on Ministries.

Kim was appointed to the Northumberland Charge, which consists of Fairfields and Afton UMCs, in 2012. She is a native of South Korea and graduated from Sookmyung Wom-

Bishop Cho adds two more new faces to the Cabinet

en's University in Seoul, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Physics. She came to the United States in 1987 to study Computer Science at the University of Iowa. During her study toward a Ph.D., she was called into Christian ministry and moved to Washington, D.C., for seminary education at Wesley Theological Seminary, where she received a Master of Divinity. She was ordained Deacon in 1999 and Elder in 2003, the first Korean woman ordained in the Virginia Conference.

She now becomes the first Korean woman on the Cabinet.

Prior to being appointed to Northumberland, Kim served the Buchanan Charge (Andrew Chapel UMC, Lithia UMC, Trinity UMC) in the Roanoke District, Zion Grace UMC in the Norfolk District, and Lawrenceville UMC in the Farmville District.

In addition to her ministry at local churches, she has served on several committees, including the conference Board of Discipleship, Board of Church and Society and Board of Ordained Ministry.

She and her husband, Namsub Lee, have two adult children, a son and a daughter. 📌



Rev. Jeff Mickle



Rev. Seonyoung Kim

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



'We have to do a better job in showing impact on investment,' says speaker

The Rev. Mark Miller and Lindsay Baynham of the 5 Talent Academy welcome participants to the March 8 teaching session.



Throughout the day, Christopher drew a clear distinction between “rich” and “poor” churches, a difference that has nothing to do with the size of the church budget or how much money is in the bank. He defines a rich church, Christopher said, as one “that fully spends its time on mission and ministry,” while a poor church is one that “spends its time seeking more money.”

“We have not learned how to convince people that they need to give to the church,” he said. “The question is not ‘why give?’ but ‘why give to us?’ People want their money to change other people’s lives and they want to see evidence of the outcomes.”

We must do a better job, Christopher said in his Arkansas twang, communicating how that is happening.

“I see websites and

newsletters with announcements about bazaars. Where is the testimony about people’s lives being changed? How do people have a clue what we’re doing?”

Christopher cited several examples of people giving more of their money to non-profit groups or universities than to their church. Giving to non-profits expands by about 5 percent each year, while church giving is on the decrease.

“The pie is the same size,” Christopher said, “but someone is not getting any pie! It’s the church, and (people) are not choosing us anymore because they’re not convinced the church is still changing lives.”

Stories of how the church is constantly losing membership are not helping, he said.

“If that’s your track record, why should I want to invest in you? ‘Because your grandfather did’ doesn’t work anymore. Wake up! The church does stupid stuff like saying how broke we are. You think people are saying ‘Halleluiah, I’ve found a bankrupt church to join!’ ... If we’re not broke we pretend like we are. ... Givers back winners, not losers.”

Some churches refuse to talk about money, or if they do, treat it as an evil thing. “The church believes money is evil so they keep all that evil stuff with the lay people. They won’t ‘taint’ clergy with that stuff. It’s the dumbest thing on the planet that your pastor

doesn’t know what the people are giving. That is mind-boggling, and 180-degrees wrong.”

Christopher said “impact” is the biggest word to remember. “Our ‘product’ is a changed human being. Tell people ‘here is the impact of what we’re doing right now,’ how the world is being made better. We need to spend more time with that rather than on how we’re going to trim the

“The church won’t be truly vital until the Finance Committee says ‘let’s do something crazy!’”

-Tom Berlin

budget this year.”

“If people see evidence that people’s lives are being changed, they’ll keep shopping at your store,” Christopher added. “If not, they won’t come back. It’s as simple as that. If a shoe store says they don’t carry your size, you won’t go back.”

It used to be that two-thirds of Americans gave to their religious institution. Today it’s down to 32%. Among United Methodists, 30% give nothing to

their church, and among those who do give, it’s only an average of 1% of their total income. (Compared to Mormons, who give 4.7% of their income, the highest rate of giving.)

The reason, Christopher said, is lack of commitment. An Army tank veteran of the 1991 Gulf War, he described Iraqi troops surrendering en masse as soon as they saw American forces. “They quit because they had no real commitment to stay and fight,” he said. “I’m afraid what we’ve done in The United Methodist Church is recruit the Iraqi Army. We must rise to the cause of the Savior. But people say ‘no, I joined for the potlucks, I don’t want to be in the fight.’ We must tell people what is expected of them is to be a disciple. Nothing in the Bible says ‘go forth and make members...’ We have to require classes that will tell people exactly what is expected of them.”

In the opening sermon for the day, Floris UMC senior pastor the Rev. Tom Berlin said that most churches and church members say that “one day” they will be generous. “If you’re waiting for generos-



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



The Rev. Clif Christopher led morning and afternoon sessions based on his three books on stewardship.

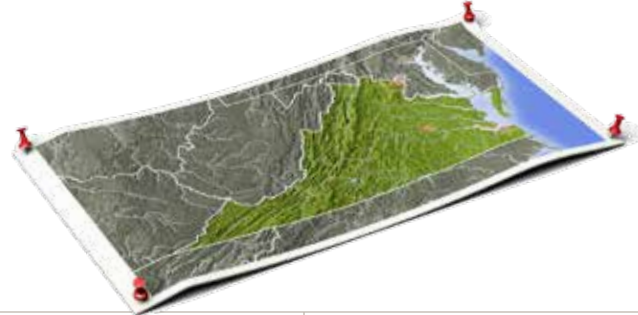
ity to ‘break out,’ it’s not going to happen,” Berlin said. “Generosity happens by design. You have to want it. You have to plan it. Your ‘rich uncle’ is not going to die. ... This is the day the Lord has made.”

Berlin said that Floris is a church of generosity not because its members are wealthy – “The second-largest free lunch program in the region is at a school one mile from us, and we’ve had a relationship with that elementary school for years,” he said – but because the members think the best thing they can do is to invest in the things that will advance God’s kingdom.

“You want your church to be vital?” Berlin asked. “Then address generosity. Build someone a home. Lift up the poor. The church won’t be truly vital until the Finance Committee says ‘let’s do something crazy!’ and people can look at that and say they’re excited about going to church. 🍌

-Neill Caldwell

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Three United Methodist churches team up to make mission trip to Haiti

By Pam Jones



In January, a team from Annandale, Asbury Memorial and Wesley Chapel United Methodist churches and Christ Episcopal Church in Luray traveled to Haiti to share God's love with our Haitian sisters and brothers.

Our work location was the Methodist church in Olivier, a town about 20 minutes from Petit Goave and 2.5 hours west of Port-Au-Prince. Olivier is a rural community near the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake which caused extensive structural damage to the walls, foundation and floor of the church. Seven of our nine team members worked at this same site in April 2013.

We were warmly welcomed at the home of Pastor Jacob Presume, his wife Philona and Eli, their 3-year-old son. Pastor Jacob is the superintendent of the Miragoane

Circuit, which includes Olivier and seven other Methodist churches.

When our 2013 mission team left Olivier, the church floor remained rubble, the cinderblock walls were built to just above the top of the windows and there was no roof. Upon arriving in January we were thrilled to see the progress that had been made! The church walls were completed, the concrete floor was poured and the church had a roof. The cinder block walls of the kitchen, a small two-room building with a dirt floor, had been repaired. In this kitchen, lunch for the Haitian workers was prepared daily by women of the church over a charcoal fire in one large cast-iron pot.

The work of our mission team included the application of the exterior and interior coatings of the cement skim coat on the walls of the church. In preparation for this work, we built scaffolding, sifted sand, mixed concrete and helped with bucket brigades. Other work included demolition and moving gravel and rubble with wheelbarrows. One team member had the opportunity to work in the clinic housed in the church for people in the community.

The children are always excited to participate in Vacation Bible School (VBS) and they are enthusiastic learners. On the first day of our two-day VBS we hosted approximately 250 children, and the following day we were excited to have 340 in

attendance. The VBS theme was "God Made You Special and He Loves You Very Much." "Jezi renmen ou!" This means "Jesus loves you" in Haitian Creole. We wanted every child in attendance to hear this message and to experience God's love through us, no matter their race, cultural background, social standing or economic level.

At VBS we taught scripture and memory verses, read Bible stories, performed skits, sang and danced and completed activities. Play time was a wonderful, chaotic, energetic and fun time for all. We played soccer, jumped rope, sang and danced and played with parachutes. What a delight it was to teach, dance, sing, play, love, laugh and share the word of God and good news of Jesus Christ with so many beautiful children and adults.

We were excited to attend Sunday worship at Olivier Methodist Church with 350 people in the congregation. Following the earthquake the church pews were moved outside the church and that is where the congregation has worshiped ever since. Tarps are tied to trees overhead to cover the outdoor sanctuary. We worshiped together on Jan. 12, the fourth anniversary of the earthquake that caused unspeakable destruction and the loss of so many lives. Pastor Jacob asked for a moment of silence to remember those whose lives were lost. It was moving to worship alongside Haitians on the anniversary

of the earthquake knowing that many had lost family members.

Pastor Michelle Lindsey, pastor at Wesley Chapel UMC, delivered the sermon while Pastor Jacob provided an animated translation. The pastors together served Communion. The service lasted more than three hours, but we didn't notice the time.

The experiences in Haiti stretched, challenged and amazed us as we saw God working in, through and among the Haitian people. We experienced limited water, electricity and missed the comforts of home. We saw and smelled poverty first hand: piles of garbage and raw sewage along some streets; children who were hungry, homeless, unable to go to school and sometimes without clothes to wear; ladies preparing meals on an open fire and washing clothes in a stream and hanging them on bushes to dry. We witnessed people living under tarps, in one-room homes with dirt floors or in tent cities and yet who were grateful to have anything other than just the sky covering them at night. Many of these sights caused our hearts to break, but we experienced God's presence among many Haitian people in shared smiles, worship, hospitality, hugs, love, joy and hope. We worked, sweated, learned and shared God's love with our Haitian neighbors and were richly blessed. ☺

-Pam Jones is a member at Annandale UMC.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Shenandoah students build relationships with people of the Bahamas

by Nicholas Ruxton

A group of 13 students, faculty and staff from Shenandoah University recently traveled together for a mission trip in partnership with Bahamas Methodist Habitat (BMH). Two students led this trip: Emily Howdyshell, from New Hope UMC, Harrisonburg District, and Nicholas Ruxton, from Trinity UMC in Chesterfield, James River District.

The trip included students from many different majors and mission trip experience levels, including two that had never flown on a plane before.

A year ago, Ruxton and Howdyshell traveled with the Rev. Derrick Parson, Virginia Conference director of Ministries with Young People, with a group to the Bahamas on a mission trip. Upon returning, both Ruxton and Howdyshell had a passion for the island and its people. Within the next few months the two began to plan a return trip to the Bahamas. This time the two wanted to lead a trip through the Department of Spiritual Life at Shenandoah University.

Shenandoah has three specific criteria that the organization and mission

trip must meet: the trip must be mutual, relational and sustainable. These criteria make sure that mission teams are truly representing Christ and serving the church.

To prepare for this trip Shenandoah University sent the leaders and some members to leadership training through United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM). Forrest White, who has worked with the BMH, taught this training.

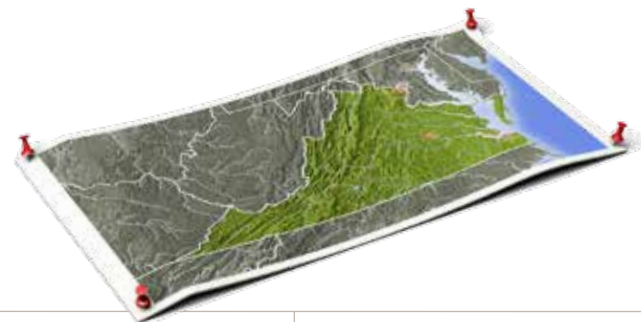
On the first day we worked on Pit Road. This was an area that is very poverty stricken and often overlooked. The BMH works with the government to go into these areas, and the government has a program that helps give areas like this better housing. Members of the team were in shock at the living conditions and how close together the houses were.

The team repaired, scraped and painted houses. Throughout the day members of the community stopped by to talk to the group and thank them for the work that was being completed. Some members of the team were even lucky enough to hold a newborn baby. Just as the group

(Continued on page 31: "Bahamas")



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Winchester District-Haiti partnership is well underway

By Jack Martin

A significant mission covenant made by the Haitian Methodist Church and the Winchester District, along with Grace UMC in Manassas and a number of other Virginia Conference churches, is bearing beautiful fruit in the community of Source-Philippe on the island of La Gonave.

Establishing a four-year commitment, the mission got off to a superb start with the sending of four successive United Method-

ist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) teams (nearly 50 people) in early 2013 with project funding from the Winchester District and Grace UMC, matched by funds from United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

La Gonave is a large island just off the coast of Haiti with a population estimated upwards of 80,000, who subsist on fishing, gardening and making charcoal. Recent studies by the Inter-American Development Bank show that this undeveloped island, lacking in roads, transportation, electricity and access to the most basic amenities, has been highly neglected for many years.

A map of NGO (non-governmental organization) activity shows clearly that this is the most underserved part of Haiti.

In this beautiful, desert-like, yet diverse region, surrounded by the beautiful Caribbean Sea, there is high unemployment; medical care is at a minimum; schooling for children is available in the early grades, but only for the families who can pay the small tuition; secondary education is limited and higher education is available only on the mainland of Haiti. There are deep social problems, due in part to family fragmentation, fathers working on the mainland, away for weeks or months at a time (if they can find work at all), leaving wives with all the household responsibili-

ties and many children and youth with too much time on their hands and little to do in terms of sports and the kinds of activities we would take for granted in the U.S. A big problem, many Haitians will admit, is what they term “babies making babies”; i.e., teenage pregnancy and sometimes sexually transmitted diseases.

The Haitian Church, according to La Gonave Circuit Superintendent Rev. Jacki Sincere, was given the island of La Gonave during the reign of “Papa Doc” Duvalier, the ruthless Haitian president who remained in power for many years through terror and political manipulation.

The EMH (Eglise Methodiste d’Haiti) found this “gift” to be overwhelming for their modest means, yet have tried to keep faith with the people to what extent was possible. There are a number of Methodist churches on the island, served by lay pastors who receive no salary, and a number of schools run by the church with committed teachers who work for modest (subsistence) pay.

Sincere’s dream is to strengthen the communities through a revitalized church, providing regular medical care for the people and training opportunities for pastors and teachers. He was the first person born in the clinic at Source-Philippe and still has family in the community, including his parents.

Pastor Jacki is the

youngest Superintendent in Haiti with a vision that he holds with a passion.

Those from Virginia who have been working with Pastor Jacki over the past two years have caught his vision from listening to him share Haitian hopes and dreams, especially for their children, while making sure these developing plans fit within the larger framework of the Haiti Response Plan that began in September, following three years of Disaster Response to the devastating earthquake of 2010.

The HRP is a new beginning, worked out between Haitian leaders, the General Board of Global Ministries, and mission partners from many places, working together to develop a “normalized” approach to ministry and mission, following that awful season of brokenness and sorrow, when all the emphasis was on disaster relief and recovery.

Now the effort is to establish new priorities, seeking the ways and means toward leadership development, sustainable projects and mutual accountability.

Medical care is the first priority and, happily, the clinic at SAP is now open and functioning well, staffed by Haitian nurses whose salaries are supported by Virginia Churches. UMVIM teams have multiple tasks, including provision of specialized medical care, seminars for pastors and teachers, construction projects to

improve buildings and water systems, and the establishment of a solar-powered computer lab. Micro-credit projects are being considered to help the fishing industry, sewing projects, agriculture and animal husbandry.

Within this covenant there is great sensitivity to the Haitian spirit and culture. The emphasis is on long-term relationships and mutual respect. Shared worship is focused on what God is doing in the midst of the people and through this partnership. It is believed that this effort will serve as a model for other parts of the island and even the mainland of Haiti. In the early months of 2014, five teams will be traveling, one a month, to build for the future within the covenant of love that has been established. There is room for more partners because so much has yet to be done.

This is an exciting time as we see clear evidence of the Holy Spirit moving within and beyond our combined prayers and efforts to bring a better day for the beautiful people of Haiti.

For more information, contact the Virginia/Haiti Partners Steering Committee via e-mail at: rvjtm@aol.com.

-The Rev. Dr. Jack Martin is chair of the Haiti Partnership Steering Committee.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Conference to provide uniform e-mail addresses to clergy

The Virginia Conference will soon begin providing e-mail addresses ending in @vaumc.org to every active clergy, an address which will remain with the clergy person throughout his or her ministry within the conference.

The conference Information Technology (IT) office will begin rolling out the project in early April by groups of three or four districts at a time. The projected completion date is May 30.

The project will involve exporting information from the conference database into Google Apps, a cloud-based system that the conference began using several months ago.

Conference staff members and superintendents already have e-mail addresses ending in vaumc.org. The plan is to add all clergy under appointment, including those in extension appointments, district staff and conference and district lay leaders. (Inactive retired clergy who want to opt in to the system can request the addresses as well.)

The protocol for names will be first and last names without a space or a period in between. If clergy use a middle name or initials, they can request a change. No nicknames, like “PreacherJoe” for example, will be allowed.

“This will be a ‘corporate’ or ‘business’ e-mail address,” said Bryan Compton conference Manager of Technology. “It’s important to keep business and personal e-mail separate.”

Clergy can have all e-mail forwarded to one address, which makes it easier to check e-mail without having to go to multiple sites. Detailed instructions will be provided by the IT office.

The move will help the Treasurer’s office save postage dollars and improve communication from the conference to clergy. The recent letter that just went out about housing for 2014 Annual Conference cost about \$1,000 in postage costs just on the clergy side, Compton said.

District offices will be the main contact point for many routine items, such as a password change, and can point anyone needing assistance to a video library covering e-mail self-help topics. More advanced concerns will be passed on to the conference IT staff for assistance.

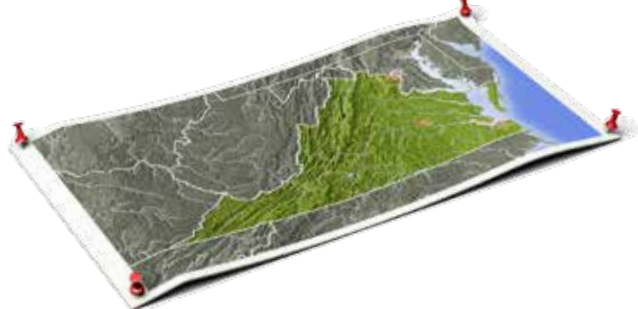
The conference IT office plans to make a variety of resources available, including webinars.

Setting up e-mail reception on a variety of mobile devices is also a simple procedure, said Compton.

Google Apps also offers more than e-mail, Compton added, including “Hangouts,” Google’s video conference call feature document sharing and other features.



The United Methodist connection in
VIRGINIA



The United Methodist connection in
VIRGINIA

Wesley Center remains
a place of refuge

By Steven G. Vegh

PORTSMOUTH – In the tough ghetto neighborhood where Timothy Lamb grew up, the Wesley Community Service Center was the only place that offered encouragement to a despairing, poor boy. The Center, a United Methodist Church-sponsored nonprofit, has

John Hatcher Jr. (bottom) has been with the Wesley Community Center for four decades.



been helping residents of Portsmouth's Southside for generations.

Now located at 1701 Elm Ave., the Center provides food aid for 100 people a month, as well as GED preparation classes, hot lunch delivery to the sick and housebound, and other social services.

But that simple description belies the striking difference Wesley has been making in residents' lives since its founding in 1937.

"The Wesley Center was our place of refuge; it was where we went to laugh, where we went to play," said Lamb, who just retired as a U.S. Army colonel. "The Lamb family and I are just some of the hundreds of families and thousands of youth touched by the Wesley Center."

Wesley is unique as the only mission of the national United Methodist Women Inc. in the Virginia Conference. That support, along with funding from the United Way of South Hampton Roads and local congregations, keeps the Center's anti-poverty services flowing for low-income households especially stressed by the weak economy.

In 2013, outreach included:

- ❖ Distribution under the auspices of the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia of free groceries to 165 separate individuals. Donors of the food included Food Lion and Kroger.

- ❖ A total of 1,920 meals prepared and delivered weekly to 48 home-bound residents.
- ❖ Free income tax return preparation for 66 people.
- ❖ Thanksgiving food baskets provided to 57 households.
- ❖ Emergency food or financial assistance to 163 households.
- ❖ Notary public service for 21 individuals.
- ❖ Christmas toys distributed to 122 children.
- ❖ GED exam readiness tutoring for 18 adults.
- ❖ Representative payee services for 12 individuals.
- ❖ A weekly line-dance exercise class with 35 participants.

The Center's long history of unconditional help brings a steady flow of clients including Clarissa Toler, 57, who responded to Wesley's creation in 2012 of GED preparation tutoring.

"I've been out of school almost 30 years, but I'm doing good. I've come up a lot, and the people here are very nice," she said during a study break at the Center. "I try to let everybody know what's going on here; I've been going here almost a year, just trying to get my GED and do something with my life, instead of sitting home."

Connie McCook, a tutor and former public school math teacher, volunteered after learning about Wesley

at her church, Monumental United Methodist Church in Portsmouth.

"Their sense is they're getting some help," said McCook of her pupils. "It will help them as far as getting a job that they feel will be a move up in what they're qualified to do."

Wesley is based in the former Martin Luther King Jr. UMC. The beautifully restored church includes a kitchen where the weekly mobile lunches are prepared, and an airy multipurpose room for programs including the weekly free food distribution.

On a recent freezing morning, a couple dozen men and women arrived, awaiting the delivery of fresh food organized under the auspices of the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and donated by Food Lion and Kroger.

The surplus breads may have been past their sell-by date, and some of the vegetables were bruised, but all were gratefully accepted by the clients, young and old. The local need for food aid exceeds the supplies Wesley receives, obliging the Center to limit clients to one turn at the food bank each month.

"Unemployment is a big issue within our community, people who are living at and below the poverty level," said Executive Director John Hatcher Jr., who's worked at Wesley for 43 years. "Many of the people we see just don't have the resources, the financial resources, to pay their bills,

much less take on costs for educational advancement."

Wesley does what it can to help within its limited budget. In family emergencies, for example, the Center can assist in paying rent or utility bills. But, "for every one call that we're able to provide financial assistance to, there may be three people we can't help. It's a question of resources versus need," Hatcher said.

Nonetheless, Wesley's staff, board of directors and volunteers express everlasting gratitude for the faithful aid from United Methodist Women and the church community.

"Women from across this conference, in various ways, have supported us and continue to support us," Hatcher said.

In turn, Wesley has kept faith for generations with Portsmouth's least advantaged.

"I think people actually trust us," Hatcher said. "We treat people as individuals and families and not as Social Security numbers or case files – they are real people to us."

Lamb witnessed that in his own life. He said crime, poverty, low education and hopelessness were rampant in his neighborhood in the 1970s.

"My one prayer used to be, if I can live to be 25, thank you, God; if I can grow up to be somebody, thank God," Lamb said.

He called his mother and the Wesley Center the two beacons that kept him

safe and nurtured his belief in a better future.

"It put the seed in our community, brought us together, and we were made whole again, time and again, when we found ourselves broken," Lamb said of the Center. "It was also where we went to learn and grow basic fundamental values that would carry us through life," he said.

To contribute to the Center or learn more about it, go online at <http://wesleycenterportsmouth.org/>. Wesley is also on Twitter and Facebook. For more information, call (757) 399-0541.

-Steve Vegh is a freelance writer in the Hampton Roads area.



Kip and Nancy Robinson: Sierra Leone Scrapbook

Greetings from Sierra Leone ... we are part of a great big family all over the world. Missionaries are from everywhere to everywhere! Thank you all for your support as we start this new chapter in our lives, commissioned as United Methodist missionaries to Sierra Leone by the 2103 Virginia Annual Conference, sent out by the General Board of Global Ministries.

It rains a lot here, so much so that everything stops and it seems that water continually pours from the sky in buckets. Those we have met knew we were coming and have warmly welcomed us, drawing us into their circle.

There are no traffic lights in the country of Sierra Leone, driving rules seem to be zero, travel at your own risk; people mingle with cars and animals and pedestrians. It is wise to be aware. Vendors, women and men and some children carry a myriad of items in huge colorful baskets on their heads, rested on a coil of fabric: containers of food, notebooks and pens, towels, sheets, cleaning product, Bibles, fabric, fish, bananas, bags of water, watches, fresh cut vegetables ... just about everything you can imagine including a pot of live crabs I saw, from which some were escaping. One man walked onto the ferry with a generator on his head. Our first purchase was boiled peanuts.

The potholes in the streets make it look like the town has been under an air attack, but they are actually due to washout from the heavy rain; part of a street and a bridge collapsed and six people were killed. There is no chance of getting a speeding ticket, streets are so jammed.

(Continued on next page, "Robinsons")

Nancy talks with two young boys soon at the Mabolah UMC primary school. Her colorful dress was made by a local seamstress who is also a district UMW president.

Kip was invited to sit in on the meeting of the tribal elders on a trip to the home village of their house-helper, Musa.

Nancy sits with Musa's mother and beautiful child.



Nancy accepts a blanket from a local weaver. African blankets are gift often given to those in leadership.

("Robinsons" continued from previous page)

People are very friendly, gracious and talk with emphasis, which takes some getting used to. English is spoken everywhere, a great help. We attended church fresh off the one-hour ride by boat from the airport, recognized the familiar UMC service and hymns and managed to stay awake for the three hours it lasted after which we crashed at the hotel and slept for 14 hours straight.

The next morning we were happy to discover a UVMIM team from Virginia in the hotel dining room, on their way home. Using the UMC House as home base we are getting to know our co-workers. Bishop Yambasu prepared his staff well ... they are eager to share their vision and responsibilities and have us on the team. There are five missionaries here in Salone. Nancy will be the conference coordinator of continuing education for pastors and lay leaders. Kip will coordinate mission teams and the repair of some of the 335 United Methodist schools damaged during the war. Together we will do all we can to help the Sierra Leone Conference to further the cause of Christ.

We have cell phones to receive calls and text messages, access email and can check Facebook off and on. Today we discovered a supermarket for items needed for everyday living; still to come is learning the language, Krio. We are depending on our community here to guide and help us get settled.

District Conferences

District Conferences run September to November and there are nine districts. The entire conference staff is expected to attend, which includes both of us. District Conferences are apparently different from District Conferences in the U.S. (though both are covered in the same Book of Discipline). Here they last four days: a day for travel, a day of meetings and reports, a day for worship, and a day of travel. We wonder how that would be accepted in the U.S. Because communication and travel are such a huge deal here, District Conferences are one of the few times that all the UMC pastors and the conference leadership actually communicate with each other, due to lack of travel funds, lack of Internet, poor and expensive cell phone service for much of the country, and lack of computers. As with any successful enterprise, communication is the key, and Dis-

trict Conferences are where much of the United Methodist communication happens for the year.

Driving in Freetown

The conference has assigned us a driver...Abdulai. Our vehicle is a Honda Pilot that is not built for Freetown's "roads" and Abdul lets us know it. He is very frustrated – in the space of two days the battery went dead, the right rear tire went flat, the horn didn't work (not good, as the horn is the principal means of traffic control in the city), the sliding door is very difficult to shut and the windshield wiper scrapes the windshield on the driver side every time it rains (which is most of the time) creating an awful screech that can make your teeth hurt. Abdulai fusses at the car often but is constantly looking out for us, a much appreciated gesture for these missionary rookies. He has been a driver for the Sierra Leone Conference for 26 years. He is Muslim, but reminded Nancy (in a conversation while waiting for Kip to complete a transaction at the bank for two hours) that "the important thing is to have a clear conscience before God. Our hearts are one."



Priorities

Pastors are not paid much by U.S. standards but at least they are paid. This was one of Bishop Yambasu's first priorities as bishop, to help all of the pastors to receive a salary every month, on time, a huge relief to so many faithful and dedicated pastors who are eager (and called) to do God's work, but who were shut out of the ministry in the past because of a lack of salary support... no longer! We are in awe of these church leaders and they inspire our spirits as we learn to live here. Good friends and a good sense of humor keep us going.

A song we sing often here goes "When I come into your presence I'm so happy, When I come into your presence I'm so glad, In Your presence is anointing, Holy Spirit all around me, In Your presence the anointing breaks the

yoke." This invitation to prayer and worship sings what we are experiencing, God breaking the bonds that separate us from fullness of life, drawing us close to His heart and to each other in the midst of challenge.

Early in February we visited our house-helper Musa's family for three days, sharing hard-to-find items from Freetown such as cocoa, sugar and salt, milk powder and zinc roofing materials. The car returned home full of pineapples, plantains, yams and coconuts.

Projects and programs

Kip is involved with renovations and building projects all over the conference for schools, churches and hospitals. He coordinates with the many teams that come to be in partnership here. In Baoma, construction of the Assembly Hall is underway at the secondary school. We look forward to meeting the team coming to work on that in June.

We participated in the ground-breaking ceremony for a new United Methodist Church outside of Freetown – Milton Margia Memorial UMC – and met with the leadership of another church community already 100 members strong in Pujehun.

Seeds planted in former years are sprouting again. The former staff house in Rotifunk is being renovated. Once home for staff of an active medical community, it will again offer sanctuary to the new doctor for Rotifunk Hospital, Dr. Gmanga. What was undone by war is being rebuilt by dedication and commitment to serve. Two young girls from Rotifunk were recent guests in our home; they came to Freetown for medical treatments and stayed for several days, traveling by okada and taxi...local transportation.

Nancy is traveling in the provinces meeting with and getting to know the pastors, primarily to provide encouragement and connection, and to coordinate continuing education. A great need exists for funding for pastor and evangelist training.

The beginnings of a small group ministry/ class meeting format, focused on spiritual support and encouragement for pastors, is taking shape as Nancy travels and meets with district superintendents. So many don't even have enough rice to feed their families, never mind transportation money, and keep going on faith when physical needs are unmet. Malnutrition seen in the swollen bellies of children in rural villages is a painful reminder of the imbalances that exist in our world and a call to prayer and ministry with these friends.

Thank you Williamsburg UMC for your Advent Offering, which will make a difference by

providing funds for the April training. These formal District Trainings begin April 2 and continue each month through July. Those more advanced are carefully selected and provided a scholarship for a Bachelors or Masters of Theology, either in Zimbabwe, England or the USA. Ultimately, completion of the new West Africa United Methodist University on the Pa Loko property will provide extensive education opportunities right here for more pastors. Plans are well underway.

Youth and Young Adults of Sierra Leone gathered in late December. Delegates were sent by many of the churches and youth groups from the Susquehanna Conference supported their registrations.

The very first Wesley Foundation Campus Ministry for youth and young adults on college campuses in the south and west parts of Sierra Leone has started. Kip and I attended the 'kickoff' worship service February 9 and were carried away by the joy, the music and enthusiasm and passion of more than 60 students who inspired all of us. This new Wesley Foundation has connected with the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech.

We are making connections as we travel and work, from former times to now, from young to old, moving along and across seemingly impassible paths and rivers. If the bridge falls, build a ferry. We are limited only by our imagination and willingness to show up and offer all we have.

Some additional heading

Much of the land in Sierra Leone is being deforested, as trees are cut to make charcoal, which is sold alongside roadways, a primary source of cooking fuel, after firewood. Jungles have been cleared and there is very little animal life left.

The hospital at Rotifunk, completely destroyed by rebels during the war, is changing face from a poorly staffed minimal clinic in one of the most deprived areas of Sierra Leone, to functionality through the support of UMCOR, Norway and friends in North Carolina. It was once a beautiful fully operational hospital with well-groomed homes. Seeds planted in former years are beginning to sprout again.

One of the women prisoners (part of a recent and growing outreach of the UMC in Freetown) commented on the effectiveness of the United Methodist presence in the prisons. "The UMC is making a difference in our lives, transforming us by skill building, not only offering religion." We are surrounded by those preaching a prosperity gospel, but know



A parade kicks off 2014 Annual Conference in Sierra Leone.



The sky in the evening is a light red color due to the wind blowing off the Sahara (the *Hamattan*) which occurs every year at this time. Windows are open and the breeze is a welcome relief to the heat. The chickens are laying,

and we are looking forward to new chicks in by the end of the month.

Conference staff went without salary in January waiting for churches here to pay their apportionments (we are paid by GBGM and were not affected, but were aware of the great challenge this imposed on all concerned). We may be close to retrieving our household goods that were shipped last July.

This is the dry season and water is scarce. The need for water is felt all over the country. Some rural homes are fortunate to have their own well. This one is over 75 feet deep, with water drawn by a bucket. We sometimes go several days with no water other than drinking water, which we buy in five-gallon containers.

Last month we had electricity for a whole day once. The power authority is called National Power Authority or NPA, which we now know may stand for "No Power at All."

We are very proud of Musa, our live-in helper, who has memorized the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23 and John 3:16 and is reading basic words now. We all continue to learn and enjoy many Spirit choruses and have devotions together daily working our way through the Gospel of Mark.

There are 245 United Methodist churches in the Sierra Leone Conference and 450 primary and secondary schools. Valentine's Day is celebrated here like in the U.S. We celebrated at the Pastors' Wives Association's dinner/dance. Kip was the only clergy husband in attendance and was asked to give a toast on behalf of the Annual Conference. 🌸

Virginia Conference Missionaries:

Cambodia, Clara Biswas
Cambodia, Esther Karimi Gitobu
Chile, John Elmore
Congo, Jacques Akasa Umembudi
Congo, Poto Valentine Shutsha
In Transition, Elma Jocson
Mozambique, Jeremias Franca
Mozambique, Dieduonne Karihano
Sierra Leone, Kip Robinson
Sierra Leone, Nancy Robinson
Southeast Asia, Charles Tran
US, Florida, Kim King Torres
US, Mississippi, Steve Claris
US, Virginia, Don Edwards
US, Virginia, Lisa Nichols
US, Virginia, Rebecca Parsons
US, Virginia, Linda Stransky
US, Virginia, Mark Stransky
US, Virginia, Pat Watkins

Virginia US2s/Mission Interns:

Katelyn 'Katie' Davis
Zachary Ferguson
Hannah Hanson
Christopher Steppe

There are four Church and Community Workers now assigned within the Virginia Conference: Rebecca Parsons to the Roanoke Community Outreach Program, Lisa Nichols to Henry Fork Center in Rocky Mount, Pat Watkins to Caretakers of God's Creation; and Don Edwards to Shalom Zone: Grace Ministries Project in Roanoke.

The Conference Committee on Mission Personnel (CCMP) is a committee of local clergy and laity that is committed to mission service and whose members guide and mentor interested persons through the application and discernment process for mission service and assist them in identifying, within the Virginia Conference, congregations for missionary financial support. The contact for missionary application information is Rev. Joanne Maughlin, Virginia CCMP Chair: joannemaughlin@gmail.com or (703) 536-4153.



Katelyn Davis (center) with Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong.

Katelyn Davis: 'Non-traditional' mission in Hong Kong

By Katelyn Davis

Empowerment. Community organizing. Lobbying. Movement building. Grassroots protests. These are large concepts that groups frequently use when discussing development and social justice, but generally most people do not understand their meaning.

When I received my placement in Hong Kong as a mission intern with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), I also did not know – truly know – what "advocacy" or advocacy work meant. I also understood "mission work" within a fairly small and defined context, and this placement with the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) did not seem to contain any "mission" as I understood it. After spending 18 months working with APMM, I learned about the concrete meaning of these concepts, and I discovered the role of the church in grassroots movements.

The Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants works with migrant communities throughout Asia in both sending and receiving countries to find ways to empower these communities to fight for their rights. Unlike immigration in the

United States, migration in Asia usually involves men and women leaving their home countries to find employment abroad for a temporary amount of time, usually several years. The sending countries are generally developing countries with few employment opportunities and extremely low wages. These countries include the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The receiving countries are those with rapidly developing economies, including Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.

Upon arrival, many find abusive and dangerous working conditions with a lack of protection from the state. The most common abuses for all migrant workers are nonpayment or underpayment of wages, denial of rest days or sick leave, long working hours, and excessive recruitment fees. The response of the state depends on the receiving country, but generally the mechanisms fail to adequately protect migrant workers from these and other abuses.

At this point, APMM comes into the picture. APMM researches and publishes a large volume of educational material for the

migrant community to use to understand their rights, the laws in the destination country and the situation for other migrant workers in the Asia Pacific. My work in the office involved a significant amount of research, writing and editing for these publications. APMM also distributes publications to educate locals about the situation of migrant workers.

APMM supports campaigns of migrant workers when calling for improvement in their condition. The community of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong frequently calls for an increase in their wage and an end to the "no-live out" rule, for example. APMM supports these campaigns through concrete means such as designing flyers/pamphlets, providing space to hold events and attending protests. APMM also tries to connect migrant workers across the Asia Pacific and find ways for them to learn from and work with each other.

So, what do these terms mean? I learned that all of these concepts mean either developing relationships between two groups of people to reduce hatred and misunderstanding or asking an underprivileged community to identify its limitations and ways to address them.

How is this mission? The goal of mission is to enable all of us to live out God's kingdom on earth, so any project that attempts to realize this goal is mission. To me, God's kingdom means an end to poverty, discrimination and injustice. It means a world where everyone has equity and access to resources.

Jesus came to uproot broken and unjust systems, so we as followers of Jesus must also fight to overturn our broken systems. Mission is literally feeding the poor, but it also must address why they are hungry in the first place. 🌸

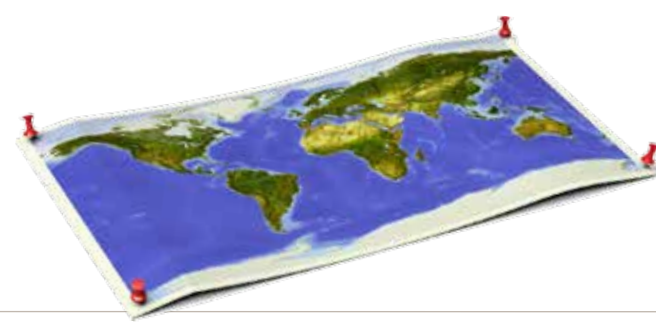
-Katelyn Davis just arrived in her next placement site, Dallas, Texas. Originally from Arlington, she is a member of Mount Olivet UMC.

Annual Conference

The 134th session of The Sierra Leone Annual Conference was Feb. 26-March 2, with the theme "Blessed to Be a Blessing." Guests from around the world – Norway, Germany, Liberia and the U.S. – joined clergy and delegates from the churches here. The Robinson home was host to representatives from Operation Classroom, missionaries from Indiana who have been working here for many years. Conference was at King Memorial in Freetown and always starts with a long and colorful parade of participants.

Contact information for
Nancy and Kip Robinson:

Nancy (#3021816)
+232 76 926876
nrobinson@umcmmission.org
Kip (#33021815)
+232 76 926875
crobinson@umcmmission.org
www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/How-to-Give



Religious news from around the

NATION & WORLD



Chris Steppe: US2 Missionary in Nome, Alaska

Chris Steppe is a US2 young adult mission worker assigned to Nome, Alaska, where he works with the Nome Community Center. Chris works with the XYZ Senior Center, the Boys & Girls Club and the Nome Youth Court. He was commis-

sioned by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) in 2011.

US2 missionaries are young adults who serve two-year terms in the United States. Their work, often with the poor, integrates faith and justice as they learn from and walk with communities in their struggles to address systematic injustice and human suffering.

The Nome Community Center is a national mission institution related to the Women's Division of GBGM. It provides a wide range of services to senior adults, children and young adults, families and the hungry. A new program is the Nome Children's Home, a temporary 90-day emergency shelter for displaced children.

Steppe works with both seniors and youths as Boys and Girls Club director.

He's a native of Burke and is a member of St. Stephen's UMC in Fairfax. He attended Northern Virginia

Community College before transferring to George Mason University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious studies.

His early faith journey had its ups and downs, but from junior high school on he was strongly involved in youth ministries, especially through the Jeremiah Project of the Virginia Conference. This project introduces junior high students to mission, and Chris served as staff for two years while in college. He was also part of a mission trip to Sierra Leone in the winter of 2009. He made a commitment to God when he was in the 11th grade. "I asked God to use me, in whatever way it was," Steppe recalls.

"In Sierra Leone, it truly hit me just how much need there is worldwide," he says. "I feel I am called to be an advocate of hope, for success, and believe that we as one people under God can achieve success within ourselves, and within our communities."

Steve Claris: With the Choctaws in Mississippi

"Christian faith is the only hope for the future of the Choctaw nation," says one member of the tribal council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. For more than 180 years, the United Methodist Choctaw Mission near Philadelphia, Miss., has sought to listen to, learn from, and love the Choctaw Indians.

"Today is a critical time in the history of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians," states Steve Claris, a United Methodist missionary from Virginia serving as a Church and Community Worker with the Choctaw Mission. "The culture is at a tipping point between thriving... [and] sliding back into old dependent ways."

During the Trail of Tears in the

1830s, only a few thousand of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians remained on their land, hiding in the swamps to avoid persecution. Those who stayed faced racism, harassment and intimidation, despite having given up close to 11 million acres of land. Today nearly 10,000 Choctaws live in the east-central part of Mississippi

Many obstacles stand in the way of the Choctaw reaching their full potential. Alcoholism, domestic violence, addiction, a 50 percent high school dropout rate and teen pregnancy are constant threats to the everyday lives of many Choctaw families.

But the United Methodist Choctaw Mission is fighting back, reinventing itself to serve the community by rehabilitating the homes of disabled or elderly Choctaw, presenting health fairs in several communities, holding multiple weeks of Vacation Bible School in three different communities,



having open gym and kids' craft nights at the Mission and giving away baby blankets and stuffed animals to children in crisis.

"With all the callings in international mission settings, I was surprised that GBGM wanted me to go to Mississippi," he says. "But God was preparing me for a cross-cultural ministry. The United Methodist Church has had a presence with the Choctaw Tribe since 1827. For a mission to persevere, it must continually evaluate the needs of the community, and find the most effective ways to be Christ to a changing world."

Hope and dismay follow same-sex wedding issue

By Linda Bloom

Could a decision by New York United Methodists to promote conversation over consequence offer a model to a denomination divide over issues of same-sex marriage and gay clergy?

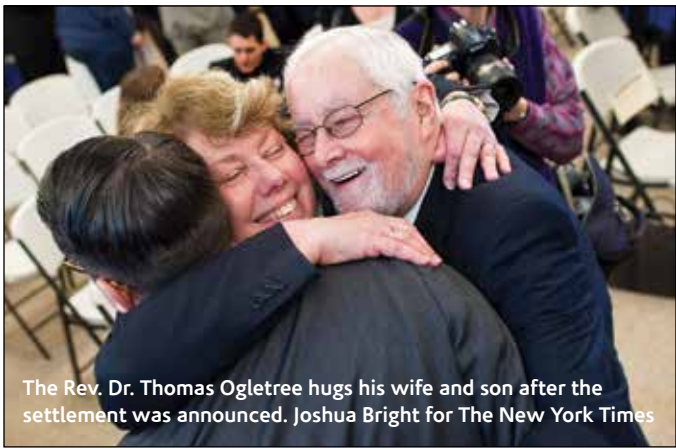
Some attending the March 10 news conference announcing a settlement in the dismissal of a complaint against the Rev. Thomas Ogletree, 80, who presided over the wedding of his son, think so, including Ogletree himself.

"I'm really committed to this idea of encouraging dialogue among people who have sharp disagreements," he said after the announcement of a "Just Resolution Agreement" by the New York Conference. "I think it's going to add to the momentum for change within the church."

The Rev. Randall Paige and the Rev. Roy Jacobsen, the original complainants against Ogletree, released a statement expressing dismay at the settlement.

"It makes no acknowledgement of the breaking of our clergy covenant, the clear teaching of Scripture and our agreed upon way of discipleship expressed in our *Book of Discipline*," they said.

The two clergy were not involved in the agreement discussions. "The comments of the complainants were received and con-



The Rev. Dr. Thomas Ogletree hugs his wife and son after the settlement was announced. Joshua Bright for The New York Times

sidered as part of the just resolution process," said the Rev. William Shillady, secretary of the court, "but they are not signers of the just resolution agreement."

New York Bishop Martin McLee gave the agreement some of its weight by calling for "a cessation of church trials" for those who conduct same-gender wedding or union ceremonies. In a statement, he pointed to the harm, expense and distraction of trials.

Instead, the bishop will convene a public forum, with Ogletree as one of the participants, "to contribute to the healing within the body and greater understanding" among those in the conference. He expects the forum to be in April or May, before the 2014 New York Annual Conference meeting in June.

Rob Renfroe, president of Good News, an evangelical church caucus group, sounded an ominous tone in his response to the decision. "The truth is we

may not be able to live together as one church. If our bishops do not act swiftly and decisively to uphold our process of holy conferencing and enforce our *Book of Discipline*, The

United Methodist Church will be lost."

Frank Schaefer, who was defrocked as a pastor after his own trial in November, thanked McLee. "This shows the advances we are making."

Meanwhile on March 13, formal complaints were filed against retired Bishop Melvin G. Talbert alleging "he has violated the sacred trust of his office." The United Methodist Council of Bishops had requested a complaint be filed against Talbert after he officiated at the union of two men on Oct. 25, 2013, in Birmingham, Ala.

-Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service reporter.



We Want To Donate To Your Church

When clergy and church members finance your next vehicle purchase with us or refinance a vehicle loan that you currently have with another lender,



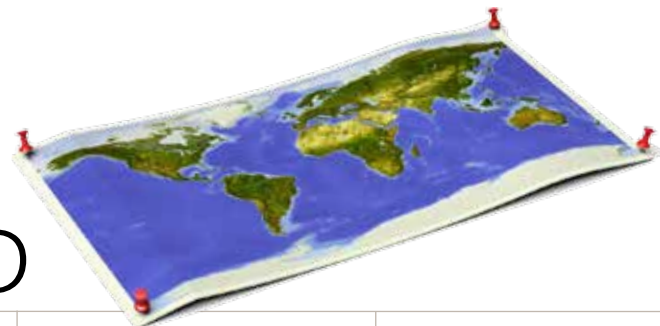
We'll Donate \$25 To Your Church*

Our vehicle loan rates start as low as 1.93% APR** and 100% financing is available. Call 866-657-0004 to apply.

*For Virginia Conference clergy, church members and their churches.
**Loans are subject to approval, credit restrictions apply & rates are subject to change. Not applicable to the refinance of current VUMCU vehicle loans.



Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD



South Sudan trip was well worth the effort

By Marg Kutz

Here we were at age 65 and 70 heading to South Sudan, both of us faintly remembering a childhood call to teach in Africa. This trip would have been a bit easier 40 years ago, at least physically. But Beverly Nelan and I were traveling halfway around the world on behalf of a mom and pop organization called Abukloi (Dinka for “we can”) to start a secondary school in Rumbek, South Sudan.

Marg Kutz and Bev Nelan in South Sudan



Our husbands, children, grandchildren and friends were proud of us but secretly thought we were crazy. Both of us had recently retired from professional ministry as United Methodist pastors. It was time to relax and travel in luxury, not to a third world country where we would have no running water, no electricity and only one meal a day.

But finding strength in each other, we kissed our husbands goodbye and boarded the plane, suitcases full of school and medical supplies.

Now that we are back home and enjoying hot showers and three meals a day, people ask us about the trip. It is impossible to sum up in a few words. We were successful in starting a secondary school, and we even taught 40 students for five weeks.

In a country where nothing happens quickly, we were amazed that all of this could happen in the two months we were in South Sudan.

Many of our experiences were shared ones because we were together 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but our responses were often quite different. I got pitifully homesick, especially when my youngest brother died. And Bev’s sugar levels seemed to fluctuate with one meal a day.

The heat got to both of us, drawing us to bed for a late-afternoon nap even with sweat pouring off us



as we slept.

For me, the relentlessness of the heat, dust and poverty was often overwhelming.

For Bev, the nearly daily change of students because of illness, home responsibilities and other poverty-related absences was a challenge.

We don’t miss the heat and cold sponge baths, but we do miss the people, especially the students. In addition to calling us “Teacher Margaret” or “Teacher Beverly,” they called us “Grandmum.”

Every once in a while one of our students will gain access to a computer and the Internet and send us a short email – it’s a precious gift.

The people of South Sudan are a happy, hopeful people and very grateful for the help of the international community. We are grateful to be able to make a difference in this youngest nation in the world, especially at our age.

And we plan to go back. 🇸🇸

-The Rev. Marg Kutz retired last summer. She lives in Chester.

Appalachian Trail chaplain launches into long journey

By Annette Spence

When David Smith picked March 5 as the day to start his 2,160-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail, he didn’t realize it was the first day of Lent.

It just worked out that Smith began his epic journey on the same day many Christians begin their own spiritual journeys toward Easter. The difference is, Smith hopes to keep journeying past Easter, and he’s giving up a lot more than chocolate.

Smith, age 69, is serving as the second United Methodist chaplain to “thru hike” the Appalachian Trail. He departed in early March from Springer Mountain, Ga. His destination is Mount Katahdin, Maine, sometime before October.

Before retirement, Smith was in the Virginia Conference and a member of St. Stephen’s UMC in Burke. He expects to be on

the Virginia portion of the trail in early May.

“I’m anxious about this body that is supporting my mind, and I’m anticipating the people that I’m going to run into along the way,” Smith said at the outset of his journey. “That’s what makes hiking the trail so special.”

Smith and his wife, Lala, are members at Cokesbury UMC in Knoxville, Tenn., where they retired in 2006.

Smith wasn’t a hiker until his grandson, four-year-old Walker, died of cancer in 2008. Smith discovered that walking was the best way to grieve. People who decide to hike the Appalachian Trail are often in the midst of their own transitions, he notes.

The purpose of the Appalachian Trail chaplain is to provide a spiritual presence for the community of seekers who hike the trail between spring and fall each year.

“We’re not out there

to make those transitions for them,” Smith said. “But we’re out there to share and be a listening post as someone who cares, to be a connection to the church.”

At 69, Smith is older than most of the hikers he will encounter. Each year, about 3,000 attempt to “thru hike” the Appalachian Trail from end to end across 14 states. One in four will be successful. More than half of hikers who complete the trail are in their 20s.

With the encouragement of his pastor and friends, Smith says he’s learned to accept that God has called him for the unique experience he can offer on the trail.

His trail name is “Short Stop” because when he first started hiking, “I wasn’t in the best physical condition. I had to make a lot of stops along the way.”

Today, “Short Stop” is able to hike 10 to 20 rugged miles in one day, carrying a 30-pound pack while watching for snakes and bears.

“There are not many things I will encounter out there that I can fix,” Smith says, “but I can be a sounding board and a listener, and I can be a friend.”

You can follow Smith’s progress at <http://Trail-Journals.com/shortstop> or on the “Appalachian Trail Chaplain” page on Facebook. 🇺🇸

-Annette Spence is editor of The Call, the Holston Conference newspaper.



David Smith, 69, starts his six-month hike from Springer Mountain, Ga.

Your house...



Celebrating 80 years of service

...can become a very special home for retired United Methodist pastors and their spouses in the years to come.

The Retired Clergy Housing Corporation of the Virginia Conference maintains a program to provide retirement homes for eligible United Methodist pastors who need them.

This program has been made possible by the gift of homes and funds willed to the Corporation for this purpose. Other contributions come through the Covenant of Gratitude whose members contribute \$1.00 a year for each person ordained a commissioned probationer at the Virginia Annual Conference.

If you would like to consider willing your home to the Retired Clergy Housing Corporation of the Virginia Conference or if you would like to share through the Covenant of Gratitude, please mail in the coupon below with your name and address.

c/o Thomas L. Coffman,
President
4837 Village Lake Dr.,
Richmond, VA 23234
Retired Clergy Housing Corp.

Phone: (804) 271-7219; Fax: (804) 271-4558
E-mail: nlctlc@comcast.net

Please send me information on:

☐ The Covenant of Gratitude.
☐ Including the Retired Clergy Housing Corporation in my will.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

EQUIPPING FOR MINISTRY



How to ask for volunteers

By Larry Davies

As a pastor, when our church needs volunteers, I usually respond in two ways: Send an e mail describing the need and hope someone will respond, or I make an announcement from the pulpit and hope someone will respond.

How are these two approaches working for you? They don't usually work for me either. Why?

Sue Brage with *Volunteer Central* wrote there are five assumptions that go through the mind of anyone asked to volunteer:

- ❖ The church doesn't need my help.
- ❖ I have nothing of value to offer.
- ❖ There are other people more qualified to serve.
- ❖ Serving will require time or skills I don't possess.

- ❖ I will be asked to serve in an area I don't enjoy.

Sound familiar?

But if you give me a chance, I can respond to every one of those questions:

- ❖ The church needs you. Most churches are desperately seeking the expertise and gifts you offer. God brought you here because of who you are. The question is where are your gifts and talents uniquely suited to the needs of the congregation or community?
- ❖ You have tremendous value to offer God and to the church. God gives everyone unique gifts and talents. The question is where those gifts and talents can be utilized.
- ❖ Those other people are already volunteering in another area. The church needs you and is fortunate to have you.

- ❖ Yes, serving the church requires a donation of your time and you may need training, but if God is calling you to be in this church, there is a reason.

- ❖ What I love about serving God in a local church are the infinite opportunities available. If you don't like one area we can help you move to another more suited to your gifts.

Good answers, but here is another problem: If I ask for volunteers by sending an e-mail, or announcing from the pulpit, I don't get the chance to answer any of those questions.

So, is there a better way to ask for volunteers? Yes. Here are a few different ways to think about asking someone to volunteer.

Ask personally:

Whether it is you or another church leader, sit down and talk to the potential volunteer both to answer questions as well as learn

about their particular gifts and how much time they are able donate to the ministry.

Share the vision:

How will the particular work of the volunteer contribute to the overall vision and ministry of the church? This helps the volunteer feel appreciated and valued.

Set limits:

How much time will you need and for how long will they serve? Churches have a reputation for committing the poor volunteer for life. If they are to devote one hour per week and serve for six months, they should know in advance.

Everyone is expected to volunteer:

The question should only be how and where they serve. This expectation could be stressed to new members and continuously reemphasized from the pulpit.

Offer training and follow up:

General training to emphasize the vision and policies of your church and specialized training for expectations of the particular job.

Appreciate and celebrate the work of your volunteers:

Whether you send a thank you card, a gift or hold an annual dinner, continually look to show your appreciation.

Jesus offers an example. Passing along the beach of the Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and his brother,

Andrew, net-fishing. Fishing was their regular work. Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women." They didn't ask questions. They dropped their nets and followed. A dozen yards or so down the beach, he saw the brothers James and John, Zebedee's sons. They were in the boat, mending their nets. He made the same offer. Immediately, they left their father Zebedee, the boat, and the hired hands, and followed. (Mark 1:16-20)

"Come with me." Jesus asked each disciple personally.

"Catch men and women." Jesus shared a vision.

"Make a new kind of fisherman." Jesus warned there would be no limits.

"They didn't ask questions." They were expected to volunteer.

"I'll show you how." Jesus would do the training.

"Come with me." They were honored and chosen by Jesus.

So, now that you've read these ideas... what will you do next? Here is a suggestion: Copy this article and share these ideas at your next meeting. Talk about what you can do to make volunteering a more fulfilling experience. God continually provides opportunities to be in ministry. How can each of us do our part? 📌

-The Rev. Larry Davies is superintendent of the Lynchburg District.

("Bahamas," continued from page 15)



was packing up for the day, the children from the community came home from school.

The next three days were rainy, so the team could not complete the work at Pit Road. Instead they assisted at a Salvation Army, The Persis Rodgers Home for the Aging, and traveled to the All Saints Camp. At the Salvation Army the group split up. Some painted all-purpose rooms while others assisted in the Thrift Shop.

December was the record month for donations and because of this, the employees could not sort fast enough and the room was over flowing with donations. At The Persis Rodgers Home the group helped change bedding, painted, and built community with the residents. This home was understaffed and did not have enough hands to complete certain projects. Because of the high energy and positive attitudes the crew had, many projects were completed relieving the staff to direct their attention to the residents.

Ruxton and Howdysshell were very excited when they returned with the group to the All Saints Camp, a place where those with AIDS and other illnesses live. Others stay here because they cannot afford any other housing. While here the students were able to spread out and spend time with the residents.

The students elected to give up half of their free day to spend time with the Bilney Lanes Children home. The team prepared lunch and served the children and workers at the home. After lunch they played games, sang and danced with the children and workers. The person in charge of the house, Momma Kim, made sure all of us felt welcome and comfortable. She introduced the Shenandoah University team as the children's "aunties and uncles." When entering the home she told the group, "Welcome home babies! I am glad that you decided to come back." For some, this was the highlight of the week.

Something that was discussed with the whole group was how friendly and welcoming the people of the Bahamas were. Members of the team also talked about how happy people were. It didn't matter if they had everything they wanted or had nothing. They were all making the best of the situation and said that they were "blessed."

There are already talks of another team from Shenandoah University traveling back to the Bahamas next winter break as we seek to continue to be mutual, relational, and sustain the relationships as we become Christ to each other. 📌

-Nicholas Ruxton is a student at Shenandoah University and works with Shenandoah Media Productions.

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS



EVENTS



▲ In February, **Main Street UMC in Suffolk** celebrated Scout Sunday. Scouts and leaders from Cub Scout Pack 1 and Boy Scout Troop 1 participated in the service. Scouts served as acolytes, greeters and ushers. Scouts led prayers and presented a dramatic reading for the scripture. Troop 1 was founded in 1923, the first Troop in the Old Dominion Area Council, which merged with the Peninsula Council to form the Colonial Virginia Council. Over the course of its 90-year history with Main Street UMC, Troop 1 has had 146 Scouts achieve the rank of Eagle. Cub Scout Pack 1 was founded in 1951.



▲ Under the leadership of United Methodist Women President Betsy Creamer, **Leesburg UMC in Winchester**, UMW members took Valentine baskets laden with fruit, cookies and beverages to the Heart and Vascular and Oncology staffs at INOVA Loudoun Hospital. This annual "Sweet Day" event underscores appreciation and encouragement to different hospital departments for their devotion to the health and welfare of the community. Hospital Chaplain Virginia Moore co-ordinates the event and selects the department to be recognized.

Three members of **First UMC in Pembroke** were among many pastors and congregation leaders at a Stephen Leader's training in February in Anaheim, Calif. Pastor Dan Elmore, Shannon Kitchens and Pamela Williams attended the one-week training event hosted by the St. Louis-based Stephen Ministries organization. Participants came from across the U.S. and Canada to learn how to implement and direct Stephen Ministry, a system of Christian caregiving, in their congregations. One of their next steps will be to recruit, select and train members of the church to be Stephen Ministers, who provide one-to-one care, as each Stephen Minister is paired with an individual in need of care. ▼



As an Eagle Scout project, Skylar Zunk organized and built a new Outdoor Worship Location at **Bethia UMC, James River District**, with amphitheater-style seating. The area includes seating for about 45 worshippers, a fire pit, a 12-foot wooden cross and a flat stone patio area that serves as the chancel. It was consecrated as the "OWL in the Julie Fuss Memorial

Garden." The project was dedicated to Bruce Copal, while the cross was dedicated in honor of Charles Aardema (Skylar's grandfather and long-time member of Bethia). Pictured: Skylar with the Rev. Jay Carey and the Rev. Jason Elmore. ▼



On March 2, the **Wesley Community Service Center** held a "Gospel Jubilee" in honor of Women's History Month and as a fundraiser for the agency's homeless prevention services. The program took place in the sanctuary of the former Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial UMC and featured the Virginia Wesleyan Gospel Choir, Soloist Cheryl Smith and local gospel recording artist Peggy Britt. Spearheaded by Diana Chappell-Lewis of the Wesley staff, the event brought together Wesley board members, Virginian Wesleyan students, neighbors from Wesley's Southside community, members of Wesley's grandparenting and GED programs, district United Methodist Women and area clergy. Pictured: Peggy Britt, former Ambassador to South Africa Bismark Myrick and Chappell-Lewis. ▼



APRIL

Look Who's Calling
April 5, Pace Center/Wesley Foundation at VCU

High school students who may be experiencing a call to ministry are invited to attend this free gathering. For more information, contact Derrick Parson in the Office of Ministries with Young People, **1-800-768-6040, ext. 135** or **(804) 521-1135; e-mail DerrickParson@vaumc.org**

School for Children's Ministry
April 5, Farmville UMC
The School for Children's Ministry is on the road this year. The next training event will be 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on April 5 at Farmville UMC. Registration deadline is the Wednesday before the event. Workshop presenters are children's ministry professionals, representing all sizes of churches. You can register on the conference website, **www.vaumc.org** under "Events" and the date.

UMVIM Team Leader Training
April 5, Trinity UMC, Richmond
May 3, Virginia Beach UMC
The training session is from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with registration beginning at 8:45 a.m. Team Leader Training is required for all first-time team leaders, but all interested persons are welcome to attend whether leading a team or not. All participants must pre-register by noon on the Monday preceding the training. Register on the conference website, **www.vaumc.org** under "Events" and the date.

"Following Jesus, Overcoming Discrimination"
April 12, Duncan Memorial UMC, Ashland
Conversations on the intersections of heterosexism, racism and religion with the Rev. Dr. Gil Caldwell as guest speaker. Event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$35, \$15 for students. Sponsored by the Virginia Chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, Virginia Chapter of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Virginia Reconciling United Methodists. Register on-line at **www.123signup.com/register?id=dbzgv** or by mail to **Rev. Pat Shipley, 3031 Grayland Ave., Richmond, VA. 23221-3525**.

MAY

Cambodia Consultation
May 1-3, Aldersgate UMC, Alexandria

The Virginia Conference will host the Cambodia Consultation, which brings together people interested in our Methodist Mission in Cambodia as it moves toward its goal of

becoming an independent Methodist Church in 2016. There will be participants from Cambodia as well as from around the U.S. This is the event that will provide information and inspiration as The United Methodist Church re-commits its support of this mission initiative. For more information contact **Juanita Csontos at juanita@csontos.net or (703) 780-5851; or Ann Stingle at astingle1@verizon.net or (571) 218- 5230**.

"Holiness & the Renewal of Ministry"
May 3, River Road UMC, Richmond
The Evangelical Fellowship of Virginia's gathering will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. with special guest the Rev. Dr. Jason Vickers, professor of Theology and Wesleyan Studies at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, and president of the Wesleyan Theological Society. The cost (through April 23) is \$35, which includes lunch. (After April 23, that cost does not include lunch.) For more information, contact the **Rev. Keith Boyette at pastor@wildernesschurch.org or (540) 972- 8808**

Large Church Lead Pastor Just-In-Time Training
May 8-9, Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond
This retreat is for pastors who are moving this year to churches with an average worship attendance of 350 or more, as recorded by the Cabinet. Registration is open only to those lead pastors who have received an invitation; contact **Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org** if you have questions about your eligibility to register for this event.

Local Pastors and Associate Members Fellowship
May 8, River Road UMC, Richmond
This continuing education event and time of fellowship will focus on preaching: reducing the fillers that can cloud sermons; improving public proclamation generally, including non-verbal messaging in the pulpit; and creating fresh ways to craft the ancient message. The event will last from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and it costs \$30. Register on the conference website, **www.vaumc.org**, under "Events" and the date.

Mid-Size Church Lead Pastor Just-In-Time Training
May 15-16, Richmond Hill
This retreat is for pastors who are moving this year to churches with an average worship attendance of 150 to 350, as recorded by the Cabinet. Registration is open only to those lead pastors who have received an invitation; contact **Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org** if you have questions about your eligibility to register for this event.

Devotions from International Lesson Series

LIVING THE WORD



Dr. Ralph K. Hawkins is an associate professor of Religious Studies at Averett University in Danville and pastor of the Calvary-Kerns Memorial UMC Cooperative Parish. He completed a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1999 at the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., and a Ph.D. in Old Testament Archaeology in 2007. He recently published *The Iron Age I Structure on Mount Ebal: Excavation and Interpretation* (2012) and *How Israel became a People: From Exodus to Conquest* (2013). As an ordained pastor, Hawkins has also written *While I Was Praying: Finding Insights about God in Old Testament Prayers* (2006), and *Leadership Lessons: Avoiding the Pitfalls of King Saul* (2013). He and his wife, Cathy, have four children: Hannah, Sarah, Mary and Adam.

April 6, 2014
“An International House of Prayer”
Isaiah 56:6-7; Jeremiah 7:9-11; Mark 11:15-19

Jesus entered the Temple during Passover and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and drove out those who were buying and selling there. The thousands of people who came to Jerusalem for Passover needed an unblemished animal to sacrifice and, since many traveled great distances, it seemed to make sense to provide them in a market on the Temple precincts. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that, in A.D. 66, worshipers in Jerusalem required about 255,600 lambs. The practice of selling them in the Temple courts dates back to at least the 6th century B.C. (Zech.14:21).

But this was a problem. The Temple was intended to be an international house of prayer where people from all nations would be welcome (Isaiah 56:6-8). Non-Jews could pray in the “Court of the Gentiles,” but this was the area that had been turned into a market. This meant there was nowhere for Gentiles to worship. And so Jesus quotes Jeremiah to accuse the Jewish leadership of having let the Temple be turned into a “den of robbers” (Jer. 7:11), which prevented it from serving its true purpose.

Jeremiah’s “den of robbers” phrase comes from his great “Temple Sermon,” in which he warned that the Babylonians would invade and destroy Judah. Many Israelites thought that this was impossible as long as the Temple was still standing, but he said that the Temple could not protect them because they had turned it into a “den of robbers.” It, too, would be destroyed (Jer. 7:12-14). In Mark 11:15-19, Jesus was pronouncing judgment on the Temple, just as Jeremiah had done.

These texts have a number of lessons for today’s Church. First, the Temple had been turned into a profit machine that obscured and sometimes even prevented it from accomplishing its true purpose, which was to facilitate the worship of God. This passage challenges us to evaluate our congregations and ask whether they are facilitating or obstructing the worship of God. Second, the Temple had failed to be inclusive and had become become exclusive. Similarly, the Church is meant to be a place where dividing walls are torn down (Eph. 2:14) and where there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave

nor free, male nor female, “for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). How can we make the Church an international house of prayer?

April 13, 2014
“The King of the Jews”
Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 6:9-15; John 19:1-5

This passage is full of irony, which is a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens. In other words, it is an unexpected twist in the story, where you expect one thing and something entirely different happens.

The Sanhedrin saw Jesus as a false messiah. They brought him to Pilate with the charge that he claimed to be the “King of the Jews,” in the hopes that Pilate would see this claim as a threat to Caesar. They knew that, if he was found guilty of this charge, he would be crucified, since this was the punishment for anyone found guilty of treason who was not a Roman citizen. There are many examples of such punishment in Judea and the surrounding area, such as when Alexander Jannaeus, an earlier Roman prefect, crucified 800 rebels.

But Pilate found Jesus innocent (John 18:38). In what appears to have been an effort to meet the Jews’ demand that he be punished, he ordered that Jesus be flogged. He may have thought that the flogging would evoke some sympathy for Jesus. Luke reports that Pilate told the Jewish officials, Jesus “has done nothing to deserve death,” “therefore, I will punish him and then release him” (Luke 23:22).

The Romans had three kinds of floggings. The first was the fustigatio, which was a lighter beating for lesser offenses. The second was the flogellatio, a brutal flogging for more serious crimes. The third was the verberatio, which was the most terrible of all, and was carried out as a preliminary to crucifixion. Pilate had probably prescribed the fustigatio, since he had already found Jesus innocent. Jesus may have also received the verberatio later, just before his crucifixion (John 19:16), which would explain why he was too weak to carry his own cross very far.

Once the soldiers had administered the first flogging, they dressed Jesus in a crown of thorns and a purple robe. They slapped him and mockingly called out, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Pilate then presented him to the people and

announced, “Here is the man!” Our text concludes in a powerfully ironic scene. The long-awaited King of the Jews stood before his people, but they did not recognize him. On this Passion/Palm Sunday, Jesus stands before us again. May we recognize him. And may we help others to see him for who he truly is. The King of us all.

April 20, 2014
“The Third Day”
Hosea 6:1-3; Luke 24:1-12

Luke’s story of Jesus’ resurrection is full of surprise and wonder. The resurrection completely catches the disciples off guard, and they have a difficult time accepting the idea that Jesus could be alive again. After the women went to the grave and found that the stone had been rolled away, two men appeared to them and asked them why they were looking for the living among the dead. They explain that “he is not here, but has risen” (v. 5), and they go on to explain that his resurrection is a fulfillment of what Jesus had repeatedly promised would happen (see Luke 9:22, 44; 13:3; 17:25; 18:32-33; 22:37).

Jesus had told them that these things “must” happen (v. 7), a word used many times in Luke’s Gospel to show that the events transpiring in Jesus’ ministry were God’s plan. His betrayal, death and resurrection were no accident, but were part of a plan promised in Scripture and worked out in Jesus’ life.

But the resurrection still surprised and shocked the disciples. Luke’s account shows that they had to overcome a strong sense of doubt about these events. When the numerous female witnesses reported what had happened, their male counterparts refused to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They dismissed the women’s account as “nonsense” or “idle talk.”

Their skeptical reaction makes them look as modern and sophisticated in their thinking as any contemporary person. It would take repeated appearances to convince the disciples that Jesus had been raised.

This passage provides at least three lessons for believers this Easter. First, the skepticism of the disciples about the resurrection makes this passage a great starting point for conversations about the resurrection with unbelievers. We usually identify Thomas as “the doubter,” but none of the disciples believed the testimony of the women. The resurrection is a key hope of the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15), but the Church did not come to believe in it easily. Second, God had a plan and was bringing it to pass in the resurrection of Jesus. Third, the reality of Jesus’ resurrection forms the basis of our hope in the future resurrection. Because of his resurrection, we believe that death is not the end and that we will one day also be raised to new life (see 1 Cor. 15:20-28, 47-53).

April 27, 2014
“The Joy of Christ with Us”
Isaiah 53:5-8; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47

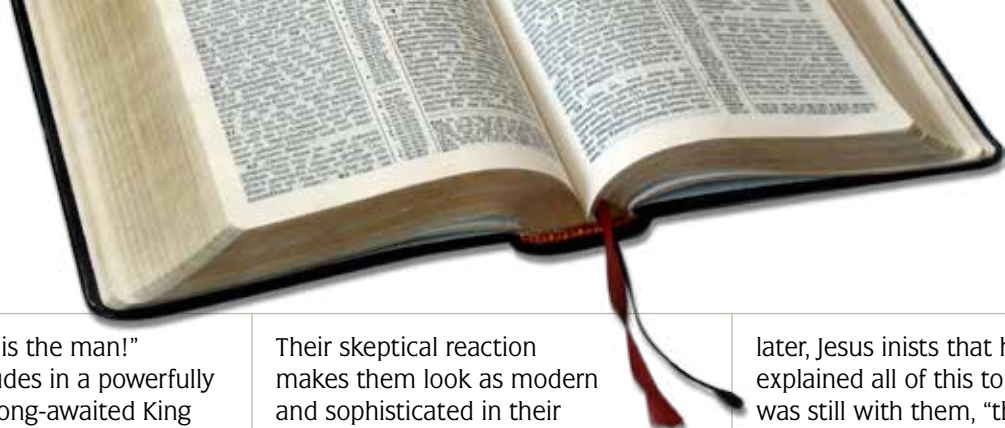
The story of Jesus’ appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus is a masterpiece. They were returning from Jerusalem after Passover, when Jesus came alongside them, though unrecognized by them. He asked what they were talking about, and they sadly explained that Jesus of Nazareth, a man whom they had hoped would “redeem Israel,” had been arrested, tried, condemned and crucified. Their hopes had been dashed.

Without revealing his identity, Jesus accuses them of being foolish for not having recognized that the prophets had declared long ago that it was “necessary” for the Messiah to suffer before being glorified. A little

later, Jesus insists that he had already explained all of this to them while he was still with them, “that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” He “opened their minds to understand the scriptures,” and explained to them again that the Old Testament predicted that “the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day.” There were many passages in the “Books of Moses” that Jews understood to predict the Messiah (e.g., Genesis 3:15; 22:18; 26:4; 49:10; Numbers 24:17) and others that anticipated his suffering, death, and even his resurrection (e.g., Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Daniel 9:26; Zech. 12:10; 13:7-9).

The risen Lord is finally made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke recounts the event in Eucharistic language: “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.” Jesus’ appearances to the disciples after the resurrection were often in the context of a meal (e.g., Acts 1:4; 10:41). Oscar Cullman, in his classic book on *Early Christian Worship* (1959), argued that this should alter the way that we think about Holy Communion. The traditional Communion service is based on the Last Supper, which emphasizes Jesus’ death. Cullman noticed that Jesus’ appearances after the resurrection took place in the context of meals, and that afterward the early disciples took their food with “joy” (Acts 2:46). Instead of focusing only on the death of Jesus, Cullman proposed that Holy Communion should also have a joyous focus on his resurrection.

During this Easter season, we can be assured that Jesus was raised and is alive, and we can commit to bringing the joyful experience of his presence into the way we celebrate Holy Communion. 🍷





CLERGY & DIACONAL

Deaths



The Rev. Thomas Robert Boggs, 89, of Lynchburg died March 8, 2014. A native of Maryland, he was an Army veteran of World War II, where he received two Purple Hearts. Boggs began his ministry with the Virginia Conference in 1966 at Prince Edward. He went on to serve Cumberland, Nelson, Mount Pleasant in Amherst, East Franklin, Pleasant Grove, Pamplin, Callaghan, Forest Road in the Lynchburg District, Hopewell in the Danville District, and Sharon-Mount Carmel. He retired in 1994 and then served Union and Payneton-Siloam. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca Elizabeth Boggs, four sons and a daughter



The Rev. Kenneth Jackson, Alexandria District superintendent, died March 10, 2014. Jackson began serving churches in 1982 at Asbury UMC in the former Peninsula District. He went on to serve Highland Park and Franconia. He was appointed as superintendent of the Lynchburg District in 1994 then served as senior pastor at Saint Matthew's UMC in Alexandria beginning in 2001. He became superintendent of the Alexandria District in 2010. Jackson is survived by his wife, Gail, children and grandchildren. His Celebration of Life service was held March 22 at St. Matthew's.

Dr. William F. Quillian Jr., 100, of Richmond, died on March 4, 2014. Born in Nashville, his father was a Methodist minister. He was the fifth president of Randolph-Macon



Woman's College, now Randolph College, and the institution's longest-serving president. In celebration of his 100th birthday last April, alumnae and alumni also voted to name Quillian as the first male honorary alumnus. Quillian graduated from Emory University and Yale University, and spent a year in study at Edinburgh University in Scotland and at the University of Basel in Switzerland. He was awarded honorary degrees from Ohio Wesleyan University, Hampden-Sydney College, Randolph-Macon College, Emory University and Randolph-Macon Woman's College. He is survived by his wife of 74 years, Margaret Weigle Quillian, and four children. An ordained United Methodist minister, Dr. Quillian's career was mostly in education, first at Gettysburg College, then at Ohio Wesleyan University. In 1952 he became President of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. Following retirement in 1978, he accepted employment as senior vice president in Central Fidelity Bank (now Wells Fargo), a position which he held for 10 years. Immediately upon retiring from the bank position, he was appointed the first Executive Director of the Greater Lynchburg Community Trust. He served in that position for 10 years, retiring again in 1998. Throughout his career he was active in civic and philanthropic endeavors and won numerous awards. A memorial service was held at Court Street UMC.

Dr. Raymond H. Herbek, 89, of Richmond, died March 2, 2014. He was Minister of Music at Chamberlayne Heights UMC for 17 years. Prior to that he served at First Baptist Church for 27 years, and also served churches in Petersburg, Norfolk and Selma,



Ala., a total of 44 years. A native of New York City, he came to Virginia when he was drafted into the Army during World War II and assigned to Fort Lee. He was a graduate of the College of William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University and was adjunct faculty at VCU. His choirs performed around the world and at the White House for five U.S. presidents.



Thomas Lavin-der Walthall, 91, of Lynchburg, died February 6, 2014. Walthall was born in Campbell County. He was a U.S. Army veteran of WWII. He served the Virginia Conference as a local pastor at Prospect UMC from 1988-1993. A funeral service was held at Sharon UMC.

Vic Canody, father of **Rev. Jim Canody**, pastor at Friendship UMC, Arlington District, died Monday, March 10, 2014.

Paul James Cory, father of **the Rev. Birt Cory** and father-in-law of **Rev. Penny Cory**, died Feb. 28, 2014.

Dr. Harold Dumas, 71, father of **the Rev. Sarah Locke**, associate at Calvary UMC, Staunton District, died Feb. 14, 2014.

Kenneth W. Newman died March 2, 2014. He was the father of **the Rev. Craig Newman**, pastor of Rockingham Court UMC, Roanoke District.

Mildred Caldwell Palmer, 92, of Radford, died March 3, 2014. She was the

mother-in-law of **the Rev. Rita Callis**, Lakeside UMC, Richmond District, and mother of Rita's husband, Charles Caldwell.

Limited Edition Art Prints



"Assembly Center at Blackstone in the snow at twilight"

11" X 14", \$35.00 at the Acorn Shop at VUMAC, or call Dave Lewis, 804-432-6350



Are you interested in missions?
Prayerfully consider becoming an ICM Chaplain.

Contact Joe Leake

ICM—"A caring presence"
57 S. Main St, Suite, 612
Harrisonburg, Va 22801
540-432-1919
www.icmamerica.org

Pew Upholstering & Refinishing
Reversible Pew Cushions
New Pews • Carpeting
Complete Renovations
www.churchinteriors.com
1-800-289-7397
Church Interiors Inc.
The Nation's Leading Church Renovation Specialists.
High Point, North Carolina

Births

Patrick Edward Benton was born Feb. 22, 2014, the first child of the **Rev. Matt and Emily Benton**. Matt is associate pastor of Trinity UMC, Alexandria District

For Your Printing Needs
Benj. Franklin Printing Co.
John R. Overbey, III (Jay)
Ellen A. Overbey
1528 High Street
Richmond, Va. 23220
(804) 648-6361
FAX (804) 643-7114

FOR RENT

HOME IN CAPE COD — Fully furnished 3-bedroom/2-bath home with newly-renovated basement family room in Harwich, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. \$800/week, high season (July 4-Labor Day); \$500/week, May-October; For information, e-mail Dave & Nancy Forrest at mrpk15@aol.com.

Lewis & Hitchcock, Inc.
Pipe Organ Builders Since 1915
10153 Bacon Dr., Beltsville, MD 20705
Phone: 1-800-952-PIPE (7473)
Fax: (301) 931-2378

VIRGINIA'S BUS COMPANY

Safe and Sound!
For safety's sake, your church needs a bus, not a van

Let us show you how easy it can be for your church to own a safe new bus. Tell us the size bus you're thinking about. (We offer over a dozen different models and sizes.) We can bring the right bus to you for key church members to test drive. We'll quickly give you a price and excellent terms. We'll even take your old bus or van as a trade.

Sonny Merryman Inc.
(800) 533-1006
Central Virginia • Hampton Roads • NOVA

FROM THE BISHOP



Really good news!

Grace, peace and joy from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Spring has come! Day by day nature is becoming greener and greener. Flowers are beginning to bloom and we are experiencing the beauty of creation once again. We cannot but praise our God who has done a great, great job in creating the seasons. Thanks be to God!

This month we will celebrate Easter. God raised Jesus from the dead. We proclaim that Jesus Christ is risen indeed! This is really good news. The power of sin and death seemed to win the battle. Jesus died on the cross without any significant resistance or fight against evil power. Jesus looked like a powerless loser. Unjust and sinful power seemed to be dominant in the world, and hope for the kingdom of God seemed to have faded away.

However, the victory of sinful power did not last long. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead.

Resurrection is God's act. Humans said "no" to Jesus, but God said "yes" by raising Jesus from the tomb. And in that act, love and truth won the battle. The resurrection of Jesus sent us the message that God still reigns and justice and love will prevail in the end. So, the resurrection of Jesus gives us great hope for our lives.

As we seek to live following the truth of God, we may sometimes face challenges and difficulties. We may be isolated and unwelcomed by those who live according to the values of the world. We may be criticized by those who are compromising and ignoring the voices of their consciences. We may lose battles and suffer many disadvantages. However, there is really good news! The victory of the power of darkness does not last forever. In the end, honesty and justice will win. Love and truth will prevail.

God sent us a powerful message of this hope by raising Jesus from the dead. Our risen Lord is still alive. This is the Easter story. We are Easter people, believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are people of hope in our risen Lord.

In this season of Easter, I pray for the resurrection of our churches. Bill Easum, a well-known church consultant, wrote a book entitled *A Second Resurrection*. In this book, he strongly emphasizes the need of the resurrection of our churches. If the church is spiritually dead, a renewal or revitalization plan will not work. These churches need resurrection. Easum explains spiritually dead churches as follows:

- ❖ Have lost their sense of mission to those who have not heard about Jesus Christ and do not pant after the Great Commission
- ❖ Expect their pastors to focus primarily on ministering to their members' personal and spiritual needs

- ❖ Design ministry to meet the needs of their members
 - ❖ Have no idea about the needs of the "stranger outside the gates"
 - ❖ Are focused more on the past than the future
 - ❖ Often experience major forms of conflict
 - ❖ Watch the bottom line of the financial statement more than the number of Confessions of Faith
- I invite our churches to reflect upon this list. Easum says that for the resurrection of the church we need to diagnose our reality honestly, and leaders must die to themselves and trust God to resurrect it. I agree with what he says. If we do not die, there will be no resurrection. It is only when churches die to themselves that God can resurrect them. I recommend that you read this book for a new future for our churches. You may not agree with him 100 percent, but here is a message we need to hear.
- April is truly a beautiful month. In it we can see the vitality of nature and the truth that life is stronger than death. In this season of Easter, my hope is that all of us will experience anew the reality of life overcoming the power of death. May we not only proclaim the really good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also experience the presence of the risen Christ in our lives. I pray that we will truly shout with great joy: Christ is risen! Yes, Christ is risen, indeed, in our lives, in our families and in our churches! 🍷

In our risen Lord,

Young A. Cho

ONE LAST WORD



Tweets heard 'round the conference

- Jacob Sahms @Spider_Raven**
Best TV line of 2014: "Once, there was only dark. If you ask me, the light is winning." #truedetective @HBO #McConaughy
- Floris UMC @FlorisUMC**
Oops! We are so excited about the Costa Rica Dinner, we tweeted about it a week early!
- Jason C. Stanley @jasoncstanley**
#Lent reminds us that when we confess, we go to God, our Island Hideaway
- Alan Combs @thricemantis @Carly_Horse12**
we are excited to have you at @LaneMemorialUMC this summer! #calling21
- Scott Bach-Hansen @sbachhansen @VAUMC**
I am a better person for having Rev. Ken Jackson in my life. We will miss his passion for life and love for others. #lovethatman
- Alan Combs @thricemantis**
Can the #Duke players all get a piece of McAdoo's beard like when teams cut down the nets?
- Kristin Holbrook @HolbrookRev**
Shout out to the Arkansas Methodists from the #5Talent academy in VA!



Fundraiser at Shenandoah raises money to serve homeless neighbors

By Amanda M. Shenk

Imagine a cold winter's night with no food and no warm place to sleep. This is exactly the scenario that Shenandoah University senior religion and psychology major Alex Woody observed that prompted her to do more for her community.

Woody began volunteering with the non-profit organization, Winchester-Area Temporary Thermal Shelter (WATTS). WATTS was initially organized to provide food and shelter to Winchester area residents experiencing homelessness during the coldest winter months. Area churches agree to host guests for one week. The endeavor takes enormous volunteer power for churches, which agree to house guests from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. while providing three meals.

Through the Spiritual Life Office, students partner with each host church to provide meals and fellowship every Sunday. When classes are not in session, graduate students, faculty and staff run the program.

Woody realized additional funds would be needed to cover these additional Sundays. She recalled a Teens Opposing Poverty fundraiser where youth volunteered to sleep outside in a box to raise awareness and money. She decided there was not a better way to draw attention to homelessness.

The event, "I'm Sleeping in a Box...for One Night on Campus" – shortened to the 'WATTS Box' fundraiser – involves anyone willing to sleep outside for 12 hours. They are allowed a t-shirt, pants, socks, shoes and a water bottle. In order to gain additional items that make sleeping outside in the cold more bearable, supporters can "purchase" items for a participant to utilize. A tent, for example, costs \$20, while a blanket costs \$5, and a jacket costs \$15.

Little did we know the energy would be enough to keep us all warm. Sounds of laughter and music filled the air as participants were served dinner from a soup line, while coffee and hot cocoa were available to warm our insides.

The event was never intended to replicate what it is like to not have a home — a warm, safe and dry place to live. Our intention, for one night, was to take time to remember all the things we often take for granted. The event was a way to raise awareness about the very real needs in our community, while raising money to support a worthy cause.

The goal was to raise enough money to cover the cost of the food provided each Sunday, and the final total raised was more than \$6,000! 🍷

-Amanda Shenk is Spiritual Life coordinator at Shenandoah University

Bring a spark.
Light a fire.



*Whether on campus
or on board the
Ocean Explorer
marine research
vessel, VWC's
hands-on curriculum
takes learning
beyond the book.*



www.vwc.edu | 757.455.3200