

# Advocate



## 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PREVIEW



Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Linda S. Rhodes**  
VAUMC Director of  
Communications

**Annual  
Conference:  
it's who we  
are.**

## Everyone seems to have an opinion about Annual Conference.

Some people view it as a family reunion, an opportunity to see old friends – former pastors, clergy associates, seminary classmates and lay co-workers in the vineyards – that they haven't seen in a year, since the previous Annual Conference.

Many love Annual Conference for its inspiring, quality worship experiences and stirring music. There is almost nothing like the sound of thousands of United Methodists singing God's praises "lustily and with good courage," as John Wesley instructed.

I remember the first time I went to an Annual Conference session. I was awe-struck by the power of the worship services. And I wondered why we seldom have that same experience in our local churches.

Some love the opportunity to celebrate mission and ministry – to hear about the good we do together because of the prayers, resources, money and people power provided by more than 330,000 United Methodists and 1,183 local churches across the commonwealth.

Many love Annual Conference because it is where we ordain clergy members as deacons and elders in a historic service filled with pageantry, procession, liturgy, symbolism and music. Every clergy person I know remembers when and where they were ordained, the bishop who laid hands on his/her head and the feelings that were part of that experience.

Annual Conference is where our clergy hold their memberships, authorize their ministries and hold each other accountable.

Some people love the opportunity to take a stand on social justice issues by approving resolutions that speak truth to power and call for changes in our society that could help transform the world.

A few say they don't like Annual Conference. They think it's a waste of time and money. It has too many rules, and "holy conferring" is not possible because we use Robert's Rules of Order which limits discussion, constrains debate and most people can't figure out anyway.

Somehow, I think saying you don't like Annual Conference is almost like saying you don't like United Methodists. After all, we use the term "Annual Conference" to mean not only the meeting we hold once a year, but also the name of a group of churches in a specified geographic area headed by a bishop. Annual Conference is not only where we go, it's what we do and who we are! Annual Conference is part of our DNA.

This month, nearly 4,000 Virginia United Methodists will gather in Roanoke to see old friends, worship and sing together, celebrate mission and ministry, ordain clergy and transform the world. It's what we do. It's who we are. Count me in! 

*Linda S. Rhodes*



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## 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

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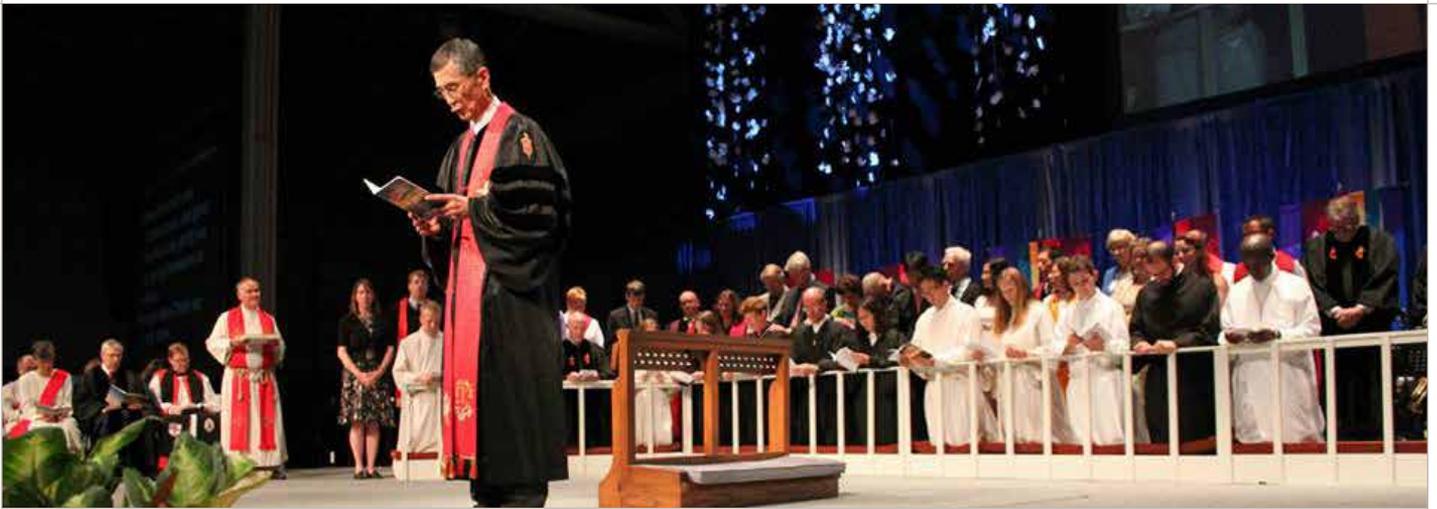
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# LETTERS

## Term 'mental retardation' is degrading

**A**fter reading the "Measles, mercury and Methodists" commentary piece in the April edition of the *Advocate*, we saw an opportunity for a teachable moment for both readers and the *Advocate*. Although the term "mental retardation" was not the point of the piece, we feel we must comment on its use as advocates for people with intellectual disabilities throughout the conference.

At one time, "mentally retarded" was viewed as the polite term for the people we now refer to as having intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, the term has come to be a pejorative, and is often thrown around as an insult. The term also is not person-centered; when someone is referred to as "retarded," they are being referred to by their disability first, which often leads to them being devalued as a human being. It's hurtful.

We firmly believe in the value of all human beings, including and especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We believe that the term intellectual disability is much more respectful, and individuals with intellectual disabilities agree. Through the tireless

campaigning of people with intellectual disabilities and their families and friends, the term "mental retardation" has been replaced with intellectual disability at all levels of government and in medical literature. In short, to use the term "mentally retarded" in 2015 is simply incorrect, and can be read as hurtful, since it ignores the wishes of those who are labeled as such.

As we all strive to be welcoming to our neighbors, both in our congregations and in our everyday lives, we hope that you will consider the terms by which you refer to other people. Are they empowering? Are they kind? Do they show you value the person's contributions? Take a moment to make sure that the words you use look beyond whatever labels someone might have. Isn't that what we're called to do as Christians? Remember, everyone has a place at the Table.

If you'd like to see first-hand some wonderful examples of people with intellectual disabilities living their lives as valued and empowered people, we encourage you to schedule a visit to your nearest Heart Havens home.

-Jennifer Boyden, MA, QIDP  
CEO, Heart Havens, Inc.

-Brenda Sasser  
COO, Heart Havens, Inc.

## "Progressives attack everything I hold sacred"

**I**am writing this in response to the letter by Rev. Carl Ennis in the April issue of the *Advocate*. As a conservative pastor, I would like to express my outrage at this so-called progressive thought or movement or whatever you want to call it. I would call it heresy, outrageous, ludicrous among some other things, but I am not laughing. I am mad.

I see the progressive movement as an attack on everything that I see as sacred and holy. I am getting tired of defending our doctrine and the Bible against what should be, but sadly is not, seen for the sadistic attack that it is. When people (Rev. Ennis) or anybody else supposedly speaks for God and in the same breath contradicts the written Word I cannot and will not go down that path. I am going to say this one more time: it is not about homosexuality, it is about the authority of the Holy Scriptures and the integrity and duty of the church in rightly interpreting them.

In his letter Rev. Ennis compares being against homosexual marriage to what Jesus says about marrying a divorced woman. This is wrong, wrong, wrong. In Matthew chapter 5 Jesus was talking about fulfilling the Law and not abolishing it. He declares that there is only one legal reason for



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divorce, and that reason being marital unfaithfulness. He says that if you marry a divorced woman then you have committed adultery. The "except for marital unfaithfulness" clause is the exclusive exception. You may not like that or may not agree, but it does not change it. If we have done this, and I am sure that many have, then what should we do now? Like any other sin we should confess our sin before a holy and just God who has promised to forgive and remember our sins no more. That would make us a forgiven sinner as opposed to an unrepentant sinner. For a homosexual couple to want to marry means that they are obviously not repentant. The law was given, according to Romans 3:20, to show us what sin is. The Law declares that homosexuality is sin. You can deny it, ignore it, or whatever you want, but you cannot change it.

Rev. Ennis says that he and God have moved on past Leviticus and Paul on the subject of homosexuality. I'm guessing that is because he knows better, and I'm betting that he never wrote a single word of Scripture. He can move on but I'm not going with him.

I see the progressive movement as an attempted hostile take-

over. The progressives are persistent and maybe even the majority in our conference, but we will not roll over without a fight. Some say that we should just agree to disagree and stay united. There is no integrity in a church that cannot even understand the most basic and simple doctrine or a church that has decided that God has moved away from His own word. I am not going there.

-Allan T. Murphy, Local Pastor  
Southall Memorial and New Hope  
UMCs, Farmville District

## Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors. ... really? Who are we kidding?

I must admit that I am embarrassed and disturbed by how the UMC (in particular, some of its clergy members) is responding to the homosexuality issue.

My personal story: In 1991, following a wonderful and very fulfilling career as an active duty U. S. Navy chaplain, my wife and I relocated to Virginia to be near her aging parents. At the time, I was a clergy member of the California-Nevada Annual Conference. In 1994, I was appointed to a small membership UMC on the then-Peninsula District. I was delighted and eager to go to work!

Early in my ministry there, a lesbian couple started to attend the church. Soon, they requested an appointment, and they came to the office

(Continued on pg. 6)



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(Continued from pg. 5)

to talk. We met. Immediately, they “put the cards on the table” and said, “This is who we are; are we still welcome?” I said, “Absolutely, and I hope to see you next Sunday!” One of the women was an active duty member of the military, and the other was unemployed.

Their attendance at Sunday worship became regular, and before long they were active in other ministries of the church.

Prior to their arrival in our area, I had begun to gather a team of church members to begin discussions about starting an after-school program. It seemed like a natural since the church was located next door to a middle school. The unemployed woman (a frustrated school teacher) offered to help with the planning. In fact, she later volunteered to lead the program. The program, which we called “Study Buddies,” began to develop and prosper under her leadership. “Study Buddies” drew a wide range of volunteers (also members of the church) who helped staff the program. Volunteers included retired school teachers and retired engineers, one of whom was the civil engineer in charge of the building of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (both tunnels). Volunteers – they were those who unconditionally loved children. The program attracted significant atten-

tion. The media became interested, and a television crew came and, soon thereafter, the TV station aired a brief segment on local evening news. In time, the school district recognized “Study Buddies” as the premier after-school program.

I mention this merely to say that had I not encouraged the participation of these two women, I would have weakened what was to become an outstanding outreach ministry to the community. But also, I would have robbed the people of our church the joy of getting to know and love these two women. They took a very active role in the wider program ministries of the church (for example, choir, performing arts, ushering, etc.). They became hugely popular and widely accepted. They organized and sparked bi-monthly, highly popular, themed dinners (Western night, luau, ‘50’s night, etc). In short, they made enormous contributions to the life of the church.

Moreover, I am particularly indebted to them for the way they opened my own eyes. They influenced me. They expanded my understanding of and sensitivity to this issue by simply allowing me to get to know and to love them. I hasten to add, that, when it came time for them to move, due to military transfer, the last place they stopped before leaving town was the church.

So, I ask: when will we get over our small minded-

ness?

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors... how I yearn for the day when these words may be more than a slogan, but may indeed characterize who we are!

-Andrew Robert Taylor  
Retired Elder

## Deacons are also called by God

The April edition of the *Advocate* focused on the theme of call, yet there were some voices missing. In The United Methodist Church, those who are called to ordained ministry may be called as an elder or as a deacon. Both ministries are vital to the Church. Deacon voices were missing from the April *Advocate*. Those of us in the Virginia Diaconate have been submitting their own call stories. You can read them at <http://jasoncstanley.com/category/diaconate/>.

-Jason C. Stanley

## “Intellectual impairment,” not “mental retardation”

We would like to commend the *Advocate* for the inclusion of the article, “Measles, mercury and Methodists” in the April issue. This is an ongoing and important issue that has largely gone unnoticed by many otherwise thoughtful, caring persons of faith and conscience. The author, the Rev. Lisa Sykes, is well known and

Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters may be e-mailed to [LindaRhodes@vaumc.org](mailto:LindaRhodes@vaumc.org) by the first of the month.

# LETTERS

respected for her past work and service on the Virginia Conference Commission on Disabilities (COD).

"Measles, mercury and Methodists" is an excellent article, clear and informative. The reader can feel her passion and deep commitment. The COD, however, would like to excerpt one sentence, not as a personal criticism, but as a general teaching point. Rev. Sykes states that, "Thimerosal can cause mental retardation and motor impairment in the unborn and children."

We of the COD reject the archaic terminol-

ogy, preferring the more acceptable "intellectual and developmental impairment." The older term is a label that, however well intended, has too often been misused for the purpose of ridicule.

As United Methodists, and as members of COD, we advocate the use of language that affirms the person and heals the wounds of those who have been ostracized, ignored and/or mistreated in the past. All of us need to examine the ways we speak of others in order to be sure that we are sensitive to and inclusive of all the beloved children

of God.

-Shaun Smith,  
incoming chairperson,  
Virginia Conference Commission  
on Disabilities

## Reply to broken covenant

This is in reply to the Rev. R. Carl Ennis, retired pastor's letter to the editor. The title is "Broken Covenant" printed in the April 2015 *Advocate*.

*The wise man adjusts himself to the Bible, but the fool adjusts the Bible to himself. (Daily Bread)*

-Wanda Wilson  
Market Street UMC, Onancock

# Advocate

The Virginia United Methodist

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# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



## Showing the way: historical marker dedicated for William Watters Gravesite

By Myra P. Lindsey

**O**n April 19, the Virginia Conference Historical Society and the William Watters Foundation dedicated a historical marker honoring William Watters, the first American-born Methodist itinerant preacher, near his gravesite on Linway Terrace in McLean.

Jean Balcom, president of the William Watters Foundation, was mistress of ceremonies. The Rev. James Sprouse, pastor of Trinity UMC in McLean, offered the invocation. The Rev. Dr. Jack Martin Jr., president of the Virginia Conference His-

The Rev. Jack Martin, president of the VAUMC Historical Society, gives closing remarks at the dedication of the William Watters historical marker. (Photo by Eryn Lindsey)



torical Society, spoke of the good works of the society's three foundations: William Watters, Old Brunswick Circuit and Old Stone Church. Sharon Bulova, chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, was an honored guest.

The Rev. Dr. Gary Ziegler, enacting William Watters, told the crowd about his life as he preached the gospel throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic region carrying his Bible, hardtack and hymnal in his saddlebag.

"William Watters would have been very humbled by all of this," Ziegler said before reading the marker's words aloud. "He was a very humble man, and many times, he spoke of his unworthiness to preach and share the gospel; that it was God who was speaking and doing these things through his ministry."

William "Billy" Watters was appointed to the traveling ministry by Thomas Rankin, John Wesley's general assistant and superintendent in America, at the first American Methodist conference held in Philadelphia in 1773. Watters began preaching on the Fairfax Circuit in late 1775, where William and Ann Adams hosted the local Methodist society in their home. He assumed the Fairfax Circuit again in 1778, and six weeks later married the Adams' daughter, Sarah.

After he located the first time in 1783 due to health issues, he and Sarah built a small house in present-day McLean on land purchased

from Sarah's father. The two lived there the rest of their lives. They had no children.

Watters continued to preach the Fairfax Circuit the year following that retirement, although he was not obliged to do so. He entered the itinerancy twice more before locating a third and final time in 1806. He remained an active member in Nelson's Chapel, the local Methodist church, for the rest of his life.

He died in 1827 and was laid to rest in a family cemetery on the farm of Sarah's nephew, Thomas Wren. Sarah was buried alongside her husband in 1845.

In 1892, the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church erected a stone obelisk memorial over the graves of William and Sarah Watters. On Oct. 14, 1939, the three reunited branches of American Methodism – Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South and Methodist Protestant Church – celebrated their new union as the Methodist Church with a ceremony at the gravesite, sponsored by the Virginia and Baltimore conferences.

In 1965, descendants of Thomas Wren deeded the cemetery to the Northern Virginia Board of Missions, which then gave ownership to the Virginia Methodist Historical Society, according to the Rev. Raymond Wrenn, conference historian and descendant of the brother of Sarah Watters'

(Continued on pg. 15, "Watters")

# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

## Madeline Pillow named *Advocate* editor

**M**adeline Pillow, 25, has been hired as editor of the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* and News Associate working in the conference Communications office. She will begin her duties June 1.

"I am delighted that Madeline is joining our Communications team," said Linda Rhodes, director of Communications. "I believe her writing and organizational skills will serve the conference well, and I am particularly excited to have another young adult joining our staff. I think she and Nick Ruxton, our new videographer, will offer a fresh, enthusiastic approach to our communications skills and can help us reach out in new ways to a younger generation of United Methodists."

Pillow comes to the conference from work as marketing coordinator at Moss Building & Design in Chantilly, Va., where she coordinated social media and wrote monthly blogs, press releases and print and online articles in addition to developing and implementing marketing strategies for the company.

She graduates May 9 from American University in Washington, D.C., with a Master's Degree in Creative Writing.

She received a BA in English from Bridgewater College where she served as Editor-in-Chief of *Veritas*, the Bridgewater College

newspaper, managing an editorial team, expanding the volunteer staff, implementing a brand campaign and helping develop new content for the re-brand.

"I love telling people's stories," Pillow said. "Whether large or small, the stories that surround us are so worthy of telling. It is through sharing that we see how Christ is working in ours and others' lives. Thank you for the opportunity to share these stories through *The Advocate*."

Pillow, who has been an active member of The United Methodist Church her entire life, is the granddaughter of the Rev. C. Douglas Pillow, Virginia Conference Elder who retired in 2013 after more than 55 years of active ministry. Her brother, Patrick Pillow, is a full-time local pastor serving the Bethany Charge in the Lynchburg District.

"I am United Methodist, frankly, because of my family," Pillow said. "My grandfather instilled in our family doing good works and giving of ourselves to show others to Christ. Church was also a place where my family was together. Whether at church events, concerts or meetings, the family found a way to share our gifts with others. My father shared his finance knowledge and leadership, my mother shared her nurturing spirit through teaching and organization, my brother shared his per-

sonality, biblical knowledge and gift of public speaking, and I shared through my love of music.

"This is why I have remained a part of the church," she added. "It is a reminder of family, those that are my blood, and also those that become a part of my larger family in Christ. It is a reminder that through community we can show others to Christ and better work in his name."

In her new job, Pillow will be responsible for production of the conference monthly magazine, *The Virginia United Methodist Advocate*, in both its printed and digital formats. She will also produce the weekly *Sunday Advocate* bulletin inserts for local churches, produce the annual *Book of Reports*, assume editorial responsibility and coordinate production of the annual *Conference Journal* and serve on the Annual Conference Minutes Committee. At Annual Conference she will produce *The Daily Advocate*, a daily print digest of news during Annual Conference sessions.

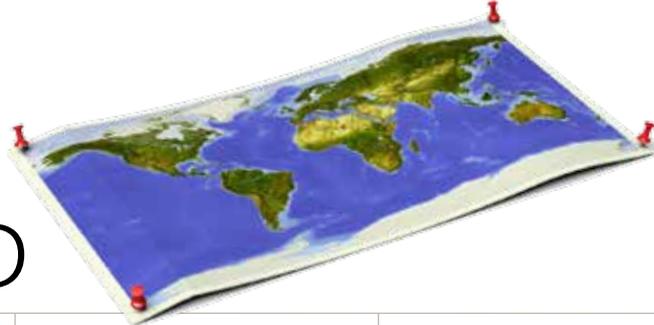
She will write news stories and take photos of mission, ministry, activities and events occurring in the Virginia Conference to be used in the *Advocate* magazine, on the conference website, in the *e-Advocate* weekly digital newsletter and on Social Media. 🍷



Madeline Pillow is the new *Advocate* editor.



# Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD



## Bishops call for United Methodists to work to end racism, welcome stranger

By Heather Hahn

United Methodist bishops are committing to work toward a church “that is anti-racist and pro-humanity.”

In a unanimously adopted pastoral letter, the Council of Bishops affirmed that “all lives are sacred and that a world free of racism and xenophobia is not only conceivable, but worthy of our pursuit.”

The active bishops approved the letter on the last day of the council’s weeklong spring meeting in Berlin, which happened to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the Holo-

Ohio West Area Bishop Gregory Palmer makes a motion urging the Council of Bishops to write a letter addressing racism during the council’s meeting May 1 in Berlin. The letter was completed on May 7, 2015. (Photo by Kay Panovec)



caust of Jews and others in Europe.

“The people of our world are hurting, as injustice, violence and racism abound,” the bishops’ letter said. “Our witness to the dignity of all human life and the reign of God is needed now more than ever.”

The letter came after San Francisco Area Bishop Warner H. Brown Jr., the council’s president and a Baltimore native, gave an emotional address about the racial tumult in his hometown.

Parts of Baltimore, including Brown’s childhood neighborhood, erupted in looting and violence after Freddie Gray died from injuries sustained in police custody. Gray’s death followed other multiple cases where unarmed African-Americans and other young men of color have died at the hands of police and others.

As Brown noted in his address, the United States is not the only place stained by racial strife and fear of the stranger.

“After the rich discussion and prayerful reflection in this meeting, I hope we will take home a serious commitment to join the work of breaking down the walls that divide our communities and move to build relationships,” Brown told United Methodist News Service.

He joined the letter’s call “to work against racism and abuses of privileges in all our contexts.”

### Racism’s global reach

The far-reaching statement draws attention to problems of racial and ethnic animosity in various regions of the world:

- ❖ Migrant people being attacked and burned in the streets of South Africa.
- ❖ Jews who are fleeing Europe after spikes in anti-Semitic violence.
- ❖ The plight of Mediterranean refugees who are fleeing war and poverty.
- ❖ Racially charged protests and riots in cities across the United States “that remind us that systems are broken and racism continues.”

Retired Bishop Linda Lee, who helped draft the bishops’ earlier 2010 pastoral letter on racism, said she felt “God had really moved” when bishops asked her to convene the team who wrote the current letter.

“I’d like to commend us for taking this step of publicly speaking out on the violence that has resulted from racism, xenophobia, tribalism and other abuses,” she said. “I am also grateful because often silence is understood to mean consent.”

She pointed out the Bible was a main resource in developing the letter. Specifically, the letter cites 1 John 4: 21: “This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their

# Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD

brother and sister also.”

Ohio West Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer made the motion for the bishops to speak out as a group on racism. He said he was pleased with the statement and the conversations it had already provoked among the bishops. He added that he hoped bishops would invite people to engage further.

## Called to do more

Charlotte (N.C.) Area Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster challenged his fellow bishops to “do more than simply publish the letter and walk away.” He suggested bishops could model for the church how to hold the difficult conversations around issues of racism.

Mozambique Area Bishop Joaquina Filipe Nhanala urged the bishops to report on the results of their commitment.

“What we are dealing with is something that is deep-rooted and long-standing and often not visible to people who are not people of color,” Lee said. “It’s not a quick fix.”

But the words of the Bible offer hope for the journey ahead.

“Scriptures tell us not to grow weary with well-doing,” she said citing Galatians 6:9. “Because if we continue, in due season, we will reap.”

—Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service



## United Methodist Council of Bishops pastoral letter on racism

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ!

We, the bishops of The United Methodist Church, are meeting in Berlin, Germany, 70 years after the end of World War II. As we gather, we renew our commitment to lead, as together we seek to become the beloved community of Christ.

We are a church that proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

On every continent, people called United Methodist are boldly living the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Yet, the people of our world are hurting, as injustice, violence and racism abound. Our witness to the dignity of all human life and the reign of God is needed now more than ever.

Our hearts break and our spirits cry out, as we see reports of migrant people being attacked and burned in the streets of South Africa, note the flight of Jews from Europe, watch the plight of Mediterranean refugees and see racially charged protests and riots in cities across the United States that remind us that systems are broken and racism continues. The evidence is overwhelming that race still matters, that racism is woven into institutional life and is problematic to communal health. This reality impacts every area of life – in the church and in the world.

Racism is prejudice plus intent to do harm or discriminate based on a belief that one is superior or has freedom to use power over another based on race. Xenophobia is an unreasonable fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers or of that which is foreign or strange. Racism and xenophobia, like other sins, keep us from being whole persons capable of living up to our full potential. They deny the profound theological truth that we are made in the image of God with the handprint of love and equality divinely implanted in every soul.

As bishops of the Church, we cast a vision for a world community where human worth and dignity defeat acts of xenophobia and racism. We acknowledge that silence in the face of systemic racism and community fears serves only to make matters worse.

We commit to lead, model and engage in honest dialogue and respectful conversation and invite people of faith everywhere to join us. Let us repent of our own racial bias and abuse of privilege. May we love God more deeply and, through that love, build relationships that honor the desire of people everywhere to be seen, valued, heard and safe. As we proclaim and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, may we lead the way in seeking justice for all, investing in and trusting God’s transforming power to create a world without hatred and racism.

As United Methodists, we affirm that all lives are sacred and that a world free of racism and xenophobia is not only conceivable, but worthy of our pursuit. We renew our commitment to work for a Church that is anti-racist and pro-humanity, believing that beloved community cannot be achieved by ignoring cultural, racial and ethnic differences, but by celebrating diversity and valuing all people.

“This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.” 1 John 4:21 (CEB)



# IMAGINE NO MALARIA

## Virginia United Methodists sell lemonade to help fight malaria

By Linda S. Rhodes

Despite torrents of rain, wind, hail and unseasonably cold weather, on Saturday, April 25, World Malaria Day, Virginia United Methodists all across the state rallied to put up lemonade stands and sell lemonade (and other goodies) to raise money to fight malaria.

Some were outside, some were indoors, and some started outside and moved inside when the weather became intolerable. They were in supermarket parking lots, at gas stations, next to fire departments, in Walmart parking lots, on busy street corners, on church building lawns, in church fellowship halls and in residential neighborhoods. They were



First Vietnamese-American United Methodist Church of Greater Washington in Arlington raised \$2,500 by selling lemonade, egg rolls, chicken wings, balloons and origami flowers and holding a car wash.

staffed by children, youths and adults.

Some churches decided not to try to fight the weather and rescheduled their stands for a later date.

Almost all of them figured out ways to turn lemons into lemonade on behalf of children in sub-Saharan Africa who are dying from malaria at the rate of one per minute.

Maria Maxwell, Imagine No Malaria field coordinator for the Virginia Conference, is still getting reports about how much money was raised, but said she is expecting the total to reach more than \$41,000. Because \$10 can save a life, these funds will save 4,100 lives.

**The Arlington and Alexandria Districts** will be matching funds raised by churches in their districts, up to \$7,000 for Arlington District churches and up to \$5,000 for Alexandria District churches.

In addition to dollars raised, the churches were also reporting their experiences reaching out into their communities and sharing witnesses.

Before catching a plane to Germany to attend the United Methodist Council of Bishops meeting, Bishop Young Jin Cho stopped by the lemonade stand in the parking lot of the Walmart store in Short Pump, in Henrico County west of Richmond. The stand was staffed by youths from **Asbury UMC on Church Hill** in Richmond, folks from

**Discovery UMC, Richmond**, and the Rev. James Daniely, campus minister at the **Pace Student Center at Virginia Commonwealth University**. They raised more than \$664.

"I was just struck by people's generosity," said the Rev. Derrick Parson, conference director of Ministries with Young People who attends Discovery UMC and helped staff the lemonade stand with his son, Joshua. "I was also struck by how many United Methodists stopped and said 'I'm a United Methodist' and gave us money. We even had a United Methodist pastor from Alabama who stopped and gave us a donation. It was a great opportunity to be a witness for The United Methodist Church."

The Rev. Marilyn Heckstall, pastor of Asbury UMC in Richmond, said she was particularly proud of the four teenage young men from her church, 14 to 16 years old, who traveled out to the Short Pump location and not only helped serve lemonade, but also worked the parking lot, sending people over to the stand to make donations.

"They did a lot of work," Heckstall said. "I am so proud of my boys I don't know what to do."

"We hear so much negative media about black urban males," Heckstall said, "that just to watch those young black men sharing information about the urgency, the need for



# IMAGINE NO MALARIA

'Imagine No Malaria' and asking for donations, it was simply a doubly gracious blessing for me."

She also said it was a blessing for her to see the generosity of those who were eager to give in spite of the inclement weather. "They gave generously," she said. "They gave us tens and twenties and fives and didn't mind stopping in the rain."

**Ginter Park UMC in Richmond** put up a lemonade stand in Liz Turner's front yard located on Laburnum Avenue and offered drive-up service for cars on the route to the Richmond Raceway on NASCAR weekend. "We had a built-in audience," Turner said.

**The six United Methodist churches in the city of Staunton** worked together all day Saturday staffing a lemonade stand at LTD7's outdoor Spring market, an invitation-only fair for vendors and artisans held across the street from the fire station.

Rev. Hieu Duc Phan, pastor of **First Vietnamese-American United Methodist Church of Greater Washington in Arlington**, reported that the congregation raised \$2,500 by selling lemonade, egg rolls, chicken wings, balloons and origami flowers. One member dressed up as a clown to entertain kids, and the youth held a car wash. "I also praise God that our church members were very excited and happy," Rev. Phan said.

"They are ready to do more events like this."

**Trinity UMC in Richmond** raised a little over \$1,000 by combining its lemonade sales with a paper shredding service. "One of our members owns a paper shredder," said the Rev. Larry Lenow, pastor. "So we let people come in and shred old documents and buy lemonade."

The children of **Main Street UMC in South Boston** raised \$160 at their lemonade stand in front of the Belk department store.

**Cherrydale UMC in Arlington** raised more than \$900 at a church-wide yard sale, bake sale and lemonade stand. Four-year-old Riley was so cold he had to wear mittens, but that didn't keep him from pushing the button on the beverage canister to serve lemonade. In between sales, he walked up and down the sidewalk banging his fly swatter on the ground saying he was "killing bugs to help the children in Africa."

"A little rain isn't going to slow us down," Megan Collins of **St. Luke's UMC in Yorktown**, posted on Facebook. The church's lemonade stand was part of its community carnival that included inflatables, carnival games, cotton candy, sno-cones, free hot dogs and live music.

The children at **Manor Memorial UMC in New Market** built a lemonade stand during their Sunday

*(Continued on pg. 14, "Lemonade")*



Mike Vanderwerf, Rebekah Vanderwerf and Jannette Clavez sell lemonade from the drive-up stand at Community UMC in Virginia Beach.



D.J. and Liz Turner, members of Ginter Park UMC in Richmond, prepare to sell lemonade from their front yard.



Bishop Young Jin Cho buys a cup of lemonade from Joshua Parson from Discovery UMC in Richmond at the lemonade stand in the Walmart parking lot in Short Pump, in Henrico County west of Richmond.

# IMAGINE NO MALARIA

*("Lemonade," continued from pg. 13)*

school time, then sold lemonade from it on April 25 at the Walmart in Woodstock.

"We closed a bit early due to the rain," said Meg Farmer, "but our kids did a great job. We received many donations, but our favorite one was when an older gentleman gave a donation with instructions for the kids to bless the next person to exit the store with a free cup of lemonade. This was really inspiring."

**Trinity UMC, Smithfield**, raised \$300 at a lemonade stand on Sunday, April 26. Linda Hollis, president of Trinity United Methodist Women, set up the stand and enlisted the help of some of the Trinity children to staff it. "It was a lot of fun for a good cause," Hollis said.

Youths from **Journey UMC, new church start in the Farmville District**, who were scheduled to work as servants at the

Amelia Thrift Store, Journey's community outreach in Jetersville, also set up a lemonade stand. "They raised awareness and donations for Imagine No Malaria," said Betsey Davis. "In addition to lemonade, they offered hot dogs and popcorn for donations."

The Harris Sunday school class at **Gum Spring UMC in Louisa County** sponsored a lemonade stand after church on April 26 and raised \$450 for Imagine No Malaria.

Bishop Young Jin Cho had asked all Virginia Conference churches to observe World Malaria Day by hosting lemonade stands in their communities to raise funds to eliminate malaria in Africa.

This is part of a year-long initiative, approved by church members and pastors at the 2014 Virginia Annual Conference session last June, to raise at least \$1 million and save at least 100,000 lives from the deadly disease of malaria before the 2015 Virginia Annual Conference which will be June 19-21 in Roanoke. Every church and every United Methodist in the Virginia Conference have been urged to take part.

All funds raised will go to "Imagine No Malaria," an initiative of The United Methodist Church, partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Alliance for Malaria Prevention, The Global Fund and the United Nations Foundation.



Unlike many other diseases that are awaiting a cure, malaria was eliminated in the U.S. in the 1950s. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, malaria continues to kill a person every 60 seconds.

The "Imagine No Malaria" goal is to raise \$75 million by the end of 2015 to eliminate the disease of malaria once and for all. Money raised will fund prevention (bed nets, environmental clean-up and basic sanitation), communication (United Methodist radio channels across the continent are used to share messages of malaria prevention), treatment (trained health workers, medications and more improved hospitals and health care facilities), and grassroots education (trained groups of people on health boards train community health workers in their communities to provide a constant source of treatment and education for those nearby and develop strategic plans and propose integrated solutions). For more information, go to [www.vaumc.org/imaginenomalaria](http://www.vaumc.org/imaginenomalaria).

— Linda Rhodes is Virginia Conference director of Communications.

The children at Manor Memorial UMC in New Market built a lemonade stand during their Sunday school time, then sold lemonade at the Walmart in Woodstock



# IMAGINE NO MALARIA

## Virginia Conference has saved 56,804 lives from malaria

As of May 1, Virginia Conference United Methodists have raised \$568,044.61 and saved more than 56,804 lives for Imagine No Malaria.

That number does not include at least \$41,565 raised at lemonade stands across the conference on World Malaria Day, according to Maria Maxwell, conference field coordinator for Imagine No Malaria.

"I've received reports from local churches about

how much money they raised in their lemonade stands," Maxwell said, "but we haven't received and processed those funds, so we are not yet including them in our totals. It will be exciting when we receive the lemonade stand funds and watch our totals rise."

The current total is more than halfway to the goal to save 100,000+ lives by 2015 Annual Conference which will be June 19-21. 🍋



Unlike many other diseases that are awaiting a cure, malaria was eliminated in the U.S. in the 1950s. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, malaria continues to kill a person every 60 seconds.

(“Watters,” continued from pg. 8)

father. The cemetery, a circular plot whose 45-foot radius was measured from the top center of Watters’ obelisk gravestone, was surrounded by property still owned by Wren descendants. The historical society had the monument repaired and in 1969, the General Commission of Archives and History of The United Methodist Church designated the gravesite as Historic Site No. 7.

The cemetery remained ignored and untended for almost 30 years, due to limited access. When the Wren descendants sold the surrounding property for development in 1994, the burial site became easier to enter. The conference established the William Watters Foundation in 1996 to interpret, protect and provide upkeep for the site. The foundation installed an iron fence along the property’s circumference in 2004.

In 2014, Bill Olson, trustee of the Virginia Conference Historical Society, worked with the Fairfax County History Commission to place a roadside historical marker near the gravesite. The marker enables people to locate the gravesite more easily, and to learn about the first American-born Methodist itinerant preacher.

The Rev. “Billy” Watters would have been most humbled. 🍋

-Myra Lindsey is editor of HERITAGE magazine



The Watters gravesite has been designated Historic Site No. 7 by the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History. (Photo by Myra Lindsey)



Left to right, William Olson, Sharon Bulova, Myra Lindsey, Jean Balcom, Jack Martin and Mary Lipsey pull the shroud away to uncover the historical marker. (Photo by Eryn Lindsey)

# DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ On Sunday, April 12, **Skipwith UMC** celebrated the lighter and brighter side of Easter with one very special combined service at 11 am.

During the third annual *Bright Sunday with Holy Humor*, Skipwith UMC continued the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. "The Lord is Risen, death did not have the last word, and we continued the Easter Festival with a worship service filled with laughter, joy and the light of Christ!" said Rev. Teresa McRoberts, pastor, who preached on Jesus as the Light of the world as part of Skipwith's sermon series on the "I AM" statements of Jesus.

People wore their brightest colors, silly hats, and even the pants they were told never to wear to church. Based on newsletter and bulletin announcements explaining the history of the intentional use of humor in church on the Sunday after Easter, the congregation came prepared to sing and dance at the joy of the Resurrection. And sing and dance and laugh they did. The congregation, mostly age 65 and better, shook their maracas when the service opened with Mercy Me's "Shake," and the combined choir and ConneXions praise team offered a Christian version of "Uptown Funk" written especially for the service by Cindy Carlson. One visitor to the

service posted a video of Skipwith's "Uptown Funk" on Facebook, with a shout out about the joy of the resurrected Lord.

History informs us that churches in 15th century Bavaria called the Sunday after Easter *Risus Paschalis* – which translates as the *Easter Laugh* or *God's Joke*. The *Bright Sunday with Holy Humor* worship service at Skipwith also included brightly-colored beach balls, kazoos, smiley face balls, pop-up jokes from the congregation and an edition of the Sunday Funnies for people to take home and share with friends and family. The Skipwith community is still celebrating and pondering why worship doesn't look and feel like that every Sunday.

If you would like a copy of the order of worship for *Bright Sunday at Skipwith*, e-mail [teresamcroberts@vaumc.org](mailto:teresamcroberts@vaumc.org). ▼



Each year during Lent the children of **Bethany UMC, in Forest on the Bellevue Charge, Lynchburg District**, raise money for Rwandan Hugs, a non-profit mission organization that began in Bedford County and was founded by Nancy Strachen. Each year Nancy goes to Rwanda, a country rebuilding after more than 800,000 citizens were killed in the 1995 genocide. One purpose of her visit is to help the many agricultural people obtain livestock. In the past four years, the children at Bethany have donated 668 goats, pigs, chickens and rabbits. This year, they raised enough money to purchase 53 more goats at a cost of \$50 per goat. The children, along with Pastor Tom Thomas, presented the check to Nancy Strachen for Rwandan Hugs at their annual Easter Party. ▼



In 2000, the Rev. Linwood Cook, current pastor of **Swansonville UMC in Dry Fork**, with his wife, Brenda, and son, Matt, founded The Friends of Barnabas Foundation (FOBF). FOBF's mission is to improve the lives of impoverished children in Honduras by providing high quality sustainable medical care and enabling communities to become self-sufficient through community health training and education. One of FOBF's largest programs is the Little Hearts Project which provides pediatric cardiac procedures for children with congenital heart defects.

While no longer an employee at FOBF, Rev. Cook is still a supporter of the organization and continues to believe in its mission. The last Sunday in January, Cook preached on the Parable



of the Talents from the Gospel of Matthew. At the conclusion of the service, he gave each member of the congregation a \$5 bill and challenged them to use it creatively over the next 30 days to raise enough money to fund an open-heart surgery (\$2,500) for one child in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. FOBF is able to provide these surgeries due to a sustainable pediatric cardiac center in Honduras created through equipment donations and generous service providers who are committed to helping the poor.

To date, through bake sales, baked potato lunches, firewood sales and some very generous donors, more than \$17,000 has been raised. These funds will provide life-giving, life-saving cardiac surgeries for seven children in September.



▲ Members of **Burke UMC, Alexandria District**, are finishing what they started three years ago in the Dominican Republic. A mission team from the church began working on a house for Pastor Jeremias, a clergyman in Sosúa. During construction, Jeremias died of complications from brain

cancer. Funds for the house went to help with the pastor's medical bills so the building was never completed. To raise funds for a return mission to the Dominican Republic to complete the house, members of Burke UMC hosted a pasta dinner and live performance titled "Novel Ideas." The family-friendly musical entertainment was written and performed by members of the church choir.



▲ Paraclete Press in Orleans, Mass., has just published two original works for organ solo composed by Rudy Shackelford, organist of **Bethany UMC, Gloucester Point**. Shackelford wrote "Trumpet Voluntary" in 1997 to celebrate Bethany's 110th anniversary. He composed "Charles Wesley Organbook" in 2007 to celebrate both Bethany's 120th anniversary and Charles Wesley's 300th birthday. The publications may be ordered directly from Paraclete Press by calling 1-800-451-5006 or going to the website [www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com).

It seemed an unlikely pairing: free shredding of paper documents and a lemonade stand for Imagine No Malaria, but the staff at **Trinity UMC, Richmond**, accepted the challenge and put the event together.

Trinity member Brian Ford secured sponsorship of a shredding truck through RBC Wealth Management.

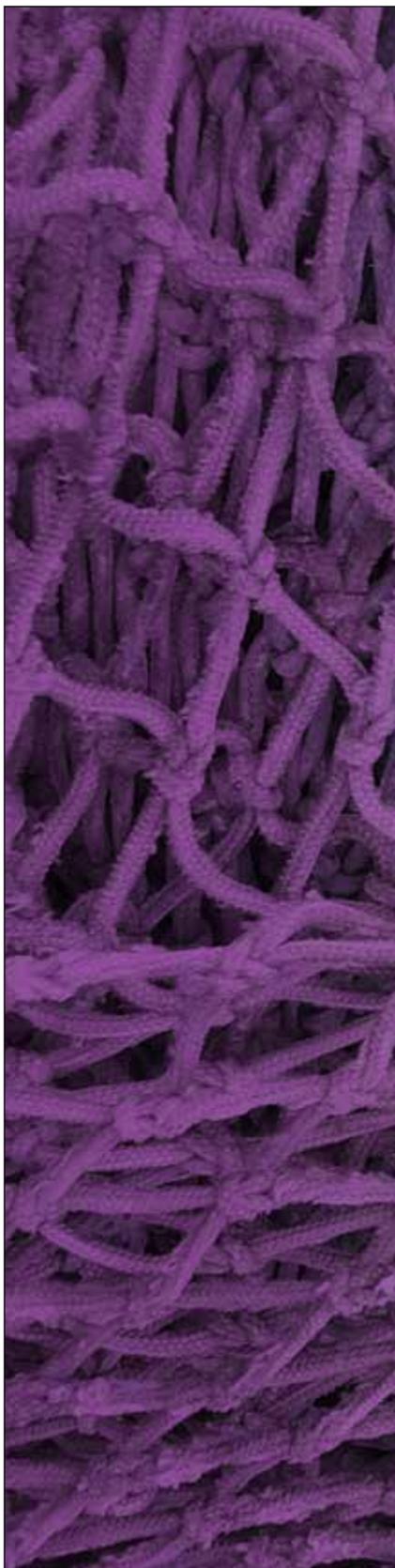


Entrust Document Management ▲ provided a mobile shredding truck, and Leila Denton, director of Children's Ministries, coordinated the lemonade stand based on information from the conference office. The Trinity staff handled internal and external communications with the congregation and community including a wonderful assist from Claire Mills at Faith In Richmond.

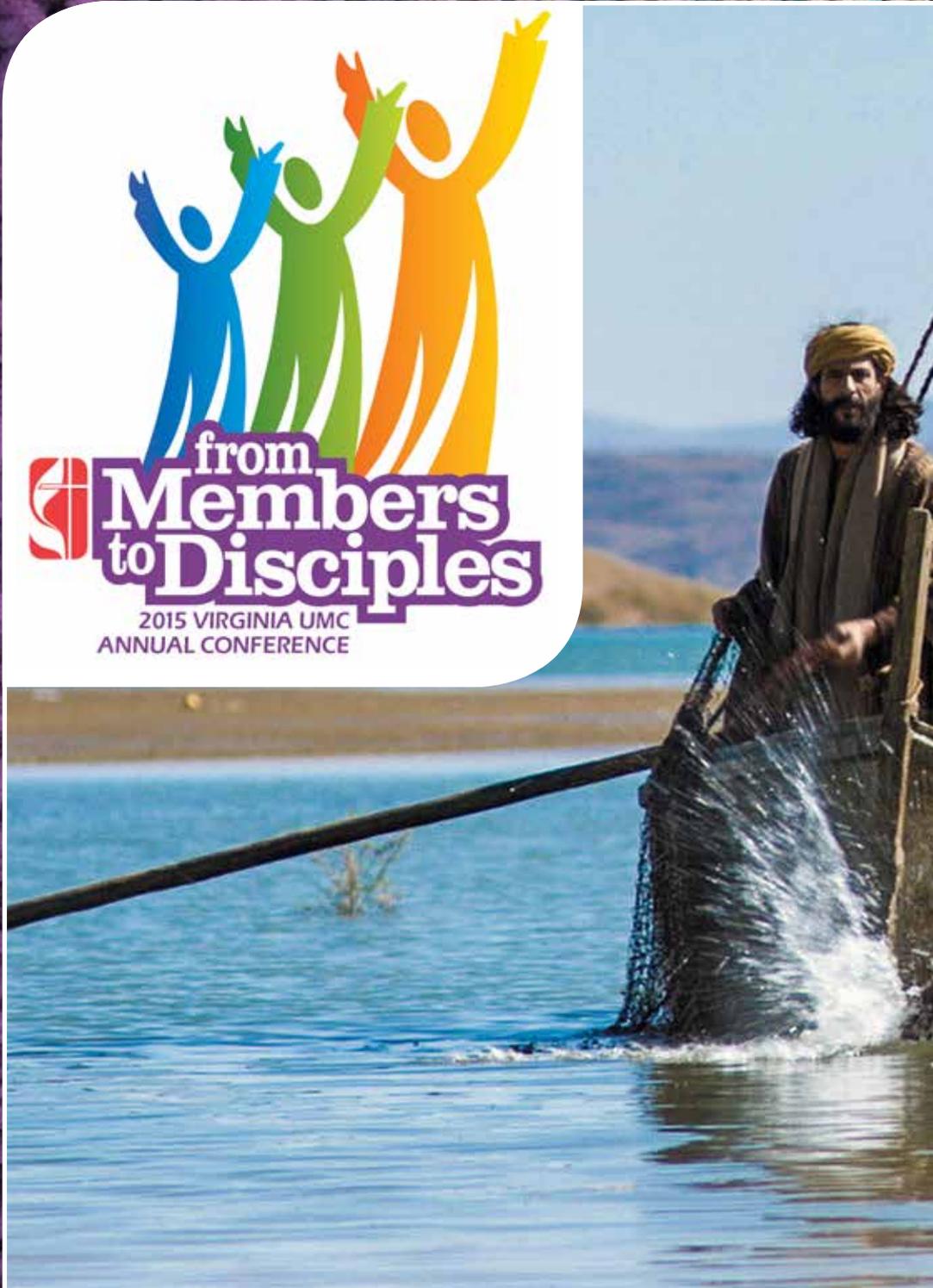
When Saturday, April 25, arrived, we were ready. The truck was in place, children and parents managed the lemonade stand, and an unseasonably cool, overcast day with the threat of rain showers greeted us. Despite the dreary gray, we received great support. More than 6,000 pounds of personal documents were shredded, and the energy of the children collected \$1,088.19 for Imagine No Malaria.

In reflecting about this event, the staff was excited and pleased, but also learned a valuable lesson: sometimes good results come from thinking a bit out of the box. 🍋

*To have your church or church organization featured in the "Disciples helping to transform the world" section, e-mail your story and photos to [LindaRhodes@vaumc.org](mailto:LindaRhodes@vaumc.org) by the first of the month. Stories should be approximately 100 words, and photos should be 300 dpi jpgs.*

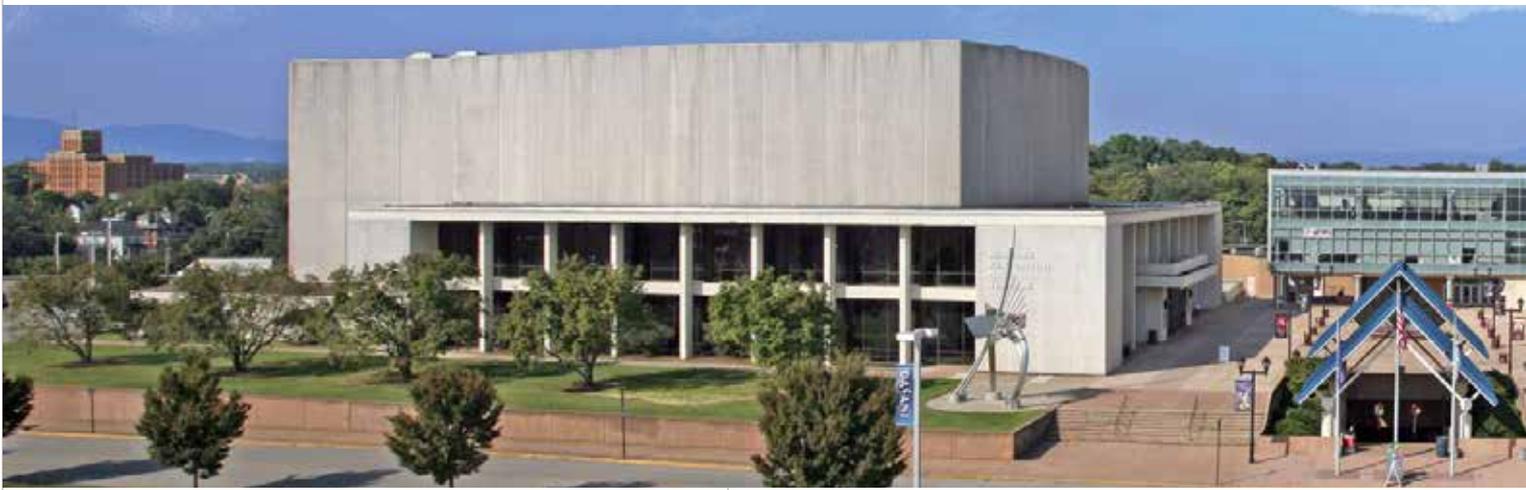


**from  
Members  
to Disciples**  
2015 VIRGINIA UMC  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The logo is centered in a white rounded rectangle. It features three stylized human figures in blue, green, and orange, each with arms raised in a gesture of praise or joy. Below the figures is the text 'from Members to Disciples' in a bold, purple, sans-serif font. Underneath that, in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, is '2015 VIRGINIA UMC ANNUAL CONFERENCE'. To the left of the main text is a small red and white icon of a cross within a square.



Nearly 4,000 clergy and laity representatives of United Methodist churches across Virginia will gather at The Berglund Center (formerly the Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke, VA, June 19-21 for the Annual Conference meeting of worship, mission projects, celebration of ministries and conducting the business of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. Theme of this year's Annual Conference is "From Members to Disciples."



An equal number of laity and clergy make up the voting members at the Virginia Annual Conference, which is composed of 1,183 local churches covering the entire state of Virginia – except the section west of Christiansburg, which is part of the Holston Conference.

Annual Conference will begin with separate meetings of the clergy and laity at 10 a.m. Friday, June 19. Annual Conference business sessions will begin at 2 p.m.

Bishop Young Jin Cho, the first Korean-American to lead the Virginia Conference and the first Korean-American elected bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church, will preside over conference sessions.

Bishop Cho will deliver an Episcopal Address at approximately 3 p.m. Friday, June 19.

This year Annual Conference will elect delegates to the 2016 General Conference and 2016 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. (See article on page 24 for more information about election of delegates.)

### Worship



Bishop Charlene Kammerer

Ordination of new clergy will be at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 20. **Bishop Charlene Kammerer**, retired bishop who served the Virginia Conference from 2004-2012, will preach. It is expected that 24 men and women will be ordained elders; one will be ordained deacon; 18 will be commissioned as provisional elders; three will be commissioned as provisional deacons; one will have

orders from another denomination recognized; and 46 will be licensed as local pastors.

A memorial service to remember those who died since the last Annual Conference session will be at 7:30 p.m.



Rev. Young Bong Kim

Friday, June 19. **The Rev. Young Bong Kim**, pastor of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, will preach.

A service recognizing pastors who are retiring this year will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 20.

**Bishop Cho** will preach for the closing worship service at 11 a.m. Sunday, June 21. The service will include announcements of pastor appointments to all the churches in the conference.

Study leader for Annual Conference will be **the Rev. Tim Bias**, General Secretary for Discipleship Ministries (formerly called the General Board of Discipleship).

### Helping others

During a mission worship service at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 20, a special offering will be taken to support three global mission projects designated by the bishop: Cambodia church construction and Christian education, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) global health projects and mission projects working with the poor in the Danville and Eastern Shore districts of our conference. (See page 23 for



Bishop Young Jin Cho



Rev. Tim Bias

more information about mission opportunities at Annual Conference.)

Bishop Charlene Kammerer will be preacher for the mission service.



## Business

In business sessions, members will consider eight resolutions that 1) call for Virginia legislation to ban questions about criminal history from initial job applications, 2) encourage the church to follow investment practices that mitigate the impacts of climate change, 3) call on each Virginia Conference congregation to establish a ministry to adolescents not reaching their full academic potential, 4) amend the conference policy on parsonage air conditioning costs, 5) condemn the practice of predatory lending, 6) respond to requests from Christians in the Holy Lands, 7) recognize the right of Israel to exist, and 8) promote leveling the playing ground for all U.S. taxpayers so everyone will pay their fair share.

Sixteen petitions to General Conference have been submitted. They deal with a variety of issues including petitioning The United Methodist Church to be more open to homosexuals, changing from an annual to biennial conference, preserving clergy pensions, making it easier for a local church to leave the denomination, calling on the church to divest from fossil fuel companies, limiting apportionments, establishing a mandatory minimum penalty for clergy violations of the *Discipline*, supporting peacemaking in Israel and Palestine, amending baptismal and membership covenants, and withdrawing from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Annual Conference is scheduled to end early afternoon on Sunday, June 21.

More information about this year's session, including live streaming of the entire event and the complete agenda for the conference, is available on the conference website at [www.vaumc.org/AC2015](http://www.vaumc.org/AC2015). 📧

## Pre-conference activities

This year, several activities will be available on Thursday and Friday prior to the official opening of Annual Conference, including a golf tournament to benefit Imagine No Malaria, a picnic at Bonsack UMC, a theological discussion at a downtown restaurant and an opportunity to bag potatoes for the hungry.

### Mulligans Against Malaria Golf Tournament

**Thursday, June 18, at 12:30 p.m.**

This golf tournament will be at **Blue Hills Golf Course, 2002 Blue Hills Drive NE, Roanoke, VA 24012 (off of 460/Orange Ave)**. Cost will be \$35 per golfer, including greens fees and dinner. Tee time is 12:30 p.m. for a shotgun start. Up to 124 golfers can participate. Pre-registration is required. Each golfer is asked to get sponsors from their church for birdies or eagles to raise money for Imagine No Malaria. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Prizes will be given for the best score, but the emphasis will be on the team that brings in the most money for Imagine No Malaria. For more information, **contact the Rev. B. Failes at [bfailes@vaumc.org](mailto:bfailes@vaumc.org)**.



### "Bring Your Own" Picnic at Bonsack

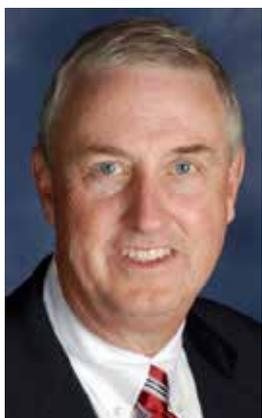
**Thursday, June 18, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Bring your own meal and come for a relaxing time of fellowship in the picnic shelter with a playground, corn hole

and time to unwind. No pre-registration required. **Bonsack UMC, 4493 Bonsack Rd., Roanoke, VA 24012 (540) 977-4212.**

(Continued on pg. 27, "Activities")

## How the Cabinet makes appointments



By Steve Jones

At Annual Conference in June, Bishop Cho will “appoint” clergy to places of service in local churches and other settings. This act of appointing is part of our tradition; the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, trained and sent preachers throughout the British Isles and to America to call people to a life of holiness. However, in my 12 years of being a superintendent, I have often been

asked, “But, how does the making of appointments actually happen?”

In the Virginia Conference in 2015, the process of appointing pastors began back in December and January. Pastors and Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees were asked to meet to prayerfully discern the needs for pastoral leadership in each church or charge (in the UMC, smaller congregations are often grouped together to share a pastor and to form a “charge”). After these meetings, each church or charge and pastor expressed their preferences for the coming conference year regarding their current appointment. These preferences were stated on a “Preference Form” as to whether continuity or a change would best serve the needs of the church.

At the same time that these forms were being completed, churches and pastors were also asked to complete an online written “profile” describing their church and community, or – for pastors – their ministry. Clergy were also invited to express any family needs, spouse employment, health issues, etc. However, they were cautioned – as clergy always are – that these personal needs are secondary: the needs of churches are primary in appointment-making. It should also be noted that both clergy and churches are reminded that the UMC seeks to practice “open itineracy” – meaning that age, race, gender, country of origin, etc. are not meant to be a factor in deciding where a pastor will serve.

By the end of January, preferences and profiles were received from each church/charge and pastor. These preferences and profiles were often supplemented by conversations between clergy, churches, superintendents and the Bishop. In addition, superintendents looked at statistical information available for each church. The hope is that every congregation will bear tangible, visible fruit. The result of all this conversation, information and consultation was that the Cabinet (the

Bishop and the 16 district superintendents) began to have a sense as to where change or continuity was needed for the health of churches and the Annual Conference.

The Bishop and Cabinet then met in February. During that month and in March and April, the Cabinet devoted a week for appointment-making (a final two-day meeting takes place in May). At this meeting and in March and April, the Bishop and superintendents began each day in worship and prayer together. Their earnest desire was that God will work through them to strengthen the witness of God’s church.

Appointments were then made through a “nominations” method. Churches/charges where there was an opening or where a change was being considered were discussed either singly or with two or three other churches or charges. In each instance, the superintendent who represented a church/charge described its unique needs for pastoral leadership. After these descriptions, the Bishop invited superintendents to nominate clergy for the church/charge. As the Cabinet together heard both the needs of a church/charge and the gifts of each clergyperson, a consensus emerged as to which nominated clergy would best meet the needs of the mission of the church/charge.

As is customary, once a pastor was projected for a church or charge, that person was called by their superintendent to consider whether he or she could faithfully serve the appointment. Sometimes there are unknown or unanticipated factors that might prevent a pastor from serving a particular church. In each case, if there was no reason that a pastor could not faithfully serve the projected appointment, then the Cabinet’s work continued. Each pastor who was projected to move needed to be replaced.

At the end of the week of working on appointments, the superintendents then scheduled “Meet Your Pastor” meetings for the projected new pastors to meet the Pastor/Staff Parish Committee of their projected appointment. These “Meet Your Pastor” meetings were not interviews. They were a chance for the leaders of a church/charge to know their new pastor (and possibly his or her spouse and family) beyond just their name. Often, pastors shared their faith journey, and committee members told of how God met or still meets them in their congregation. New friendships were made at these meetings, and a working relationship was established for a smooth transition over the coming months.

In summary, this process was followed over and over for approximately 150-200 new appointments in the Virginia Conference. Always, it was undergirded with prayer, conversation and much careful reflection. As a superintendent who was taking part for one last time, I was again impressed by both the worshipful and earnest spirit of the Cabinet in making these appointments. It is an act of ministry. 

*-The Rev. Steve Jones is Richmond District superintendent and serves as dean of the Cabinet*



# 2015 Annual Conference mission opportunities

## Annual Conference Special Offering

A special offering will be collected during worship on Saturday morning to support global mission projects designated by the bishop. Members of local churches are encouraged to help raise money for the offering, and the pastor or lay member of each church takes that money to Annual Conference to put it in the offering.

This year the Annual Conference special offering goal is \$150,000. Bishop Young Jin Cho is requesting contributions to support three different ministries.

"It is our calling and our response as disciples to prayerfully give," Bishop Cho wrote in a letter to all Virginia Conference United Methodists. "May our conference offering this year reflect that calling to wholeness and justice as we live out our discipleship through giving and loving in the name of the one who first loved us!"

Contributions are asked for the following ministries:



### ❖ Methodist Mission in Cambodia - \$50,000

We want to continue to strengthen our partnership with the Methodist Mission in Cambodia by offering support as they continue to purchase property to establish

new churches and expand their fast-growing mission.



### ❖ UMCOR Global Health Ministries - \$50,000

These funds will go to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Global Health ministries to aid the Ebola-ravaged countries

of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both of these countries have trained and equipped Health Boards in their United Methodist conferences that are working to meet priorities and needs of communities recovering from the Ebola outbreak as well as a holistic approach to health that empowers people to take charge of their own lives and develop positive health-seeking behavior in their communities.



### ❖ Children Out of Poverty in Virginia - \$50,000

This will provide financial support for mission projects working with the poor in the Danville and Eastern Shore districts of our conference.

Both of these districts are working in ministry in areas of Virginia that are well below the national and state poverty levels. Of particular concern and emphasis are children living in poverty.



## Collection of Relief Supply Kits

In response to natural disasters in the United States and abroad, local churches will bring kits of critically needed items to conference for distribution through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Health Kits, School Kits, Baby/Layette Kits, Birthing Kits, Bedding Kits, Sewing Kits and Cleaning Buckets will be collected at two tractor-trailers at the far end of the Berglund Center Parking Lot A, near the intersection of Williamson Road and Orange Ave. (across from the Sheetz gas station). **Kits will be received 12 to 2 p.m. Thursday, June 18; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, June 19; and 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 20.**

For kit assembly instructions, go to <http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies>

If you prefer to contribute cash to enable UMCOR to purchase relief kits, you can contribute \$50 for each bedding kit, \$8 for each birthing kit, \$55 for each cleaning bucket, \$12 for each health kit \$35 for each layette kit, \$11 for each school kit and \$18 for each sewing kit. In addition, UMCOR asks for \$1 per kit (\$1.50 for cleaning buckets) to cover processing and shipping and \$1 for toothpaste for each health kit.

Please do NOT bring checks to Annual Conference. All

(Continued on pg. 27, "Kits")

## Election of General Conference/Jurisdictional Conference delegates



The Virginia Conference will elect 22 delegates to the 2016 General Conference (11 clergy and 11 laity) and an additional 11 clergy and 11 laity to join the General Conference delegates for the 2016 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Elections will be conducted during the 2015 session of the Virginia Annual Conference to be held June 19-21 at the Berglund Center (formerly the Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke. For the first time, the Virginia Conference will use electronic voting devices.

The Virginia Conference and the North Georgia Conference each will send 22 delegates to General Conference, the most from any conferences in the United States. The only conferences with larger delegations are from Africa. North Katanga, Congo, will have 48 delegates, and Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa, will have 34.

### Election of clergy delegates

The Virginia Conference will follow new rules, adopted in 2013, to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences. All clergy desiring to run for election had to complete a clergy nomination form and submit it to the director of Connectional Ministries by March 1. A total of 110 clergy did so. Each of them will be assigned a four-digit candidate number, and they will be the nominees from which Annual Conference will elect clergy members of the General and jurisdictional conference delegations. A complete list of these candidates and their biographical nomination forms can be viewed on the conference website at [www.vaumc.org/2016GeneralConference](http://www.vaumc.org/2016GeneralConference).

### Election of laity delegates

As in the past, all laity nominees for delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences were elected by their district conferences or nominated by a conference board or agency. A total of 100 laity have been nominated and will be assigned a four-digit candidate number to be used at Annual Conference to elect the laity

members of the General and jurisdictional conference delegations. A complete list of these candidates and their biographical information can be viewed at [www.vaumc.org/2016GeneralConference](http://www.vaumc.org/2016GeneralConference).

The Board of Laity is sponsoring an opportunity for lay members of Annual Conference to meet the lay nominees for General and jurisdictional conferences at 11 a.m. Friday, June 19, following the Laity Session in the Berglund Center Coliseum.

### General Conference

General Conference, the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, meets once every four years to consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years. The next meeting will take place May 10-20, 2016, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Ore.



The site of the General Conference has traditionally rotated among the church's five geographic U.S. jurisdictions, with the 2016 event to be held in the Western jurisdiction.

Theme of the 2016 General Conference is "Therefore go," based on the Great Commission set forth in Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NIV)

Approximately 850 delegates (half laity and half clergy) from the U.S., Africa, Europe and Asia will attend the gathering, which is expected to attract up to 6,000 visitors. Thirty percent of delegates in 2016 will be from Africa, 58.3 percent from the U.S., 4.6 percent from Europe and 5.8 percent from the Philippines, with the remainder from the Concordat churches.

### Jurisdictional Conference

The 2016 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference will be July 13-16, 2016, at the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in western North Carolina. It will be held concurrently with conferences in the other four jurisdictions in the United States. The primary purpose of jurisdictional conferences is to elect and assign bishops and select members of general boards and agencies. 📌



## How to vote electronically

For the first time in history, members of the 2015 Virginia Annual Conference will use electronic handsets to vote for delegates to the General Conference and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Voting electronically is expected to reduce the amount of time involved in making these important selections and increase the accuracy of the balloting process.

The voting handsets look a bit like a TV remote control.

Members of Annual Conference will be assigned handsets when they arrive at the registration table in the Berglund Special Events Center and turn in their registration cards. Each member will be responsible for the handset until voting is completed on Saturday afternoon. At that time, they must return the handset to one of the designated tables located in the back of the coliseum and on the concourse.

Members will vote by entering the 4-digit candidate number of each candidate they wish to elect, one selection

at a time. They will have 30 seconds to enter the number for the candidate that they prefer on the voting handset and press the "Send" button. Each selection will be wirelessly transmitted to a computer that will record all votes and tabulate the results.

The Virginia Conference will elect 11 clergy delegates and 11 laity delegates to General Conference. Another 11 clergy and another 11 laity will be elected to join the General Conference delegates to attend Jurisdictional Conference. Finally, 10 clergy and 10 laity reserve delegates will be elected to serve if any of the previously elected delegates are unable to be part of the delegation.

Clergy will vote for clergy and laity will vote for laity.

On the first ballot members will vote for 11 candidates – one at a time – as follows:

1. **The bishop will call for the first vote.**
2. **Enter 4-digit number of first candidate to elect.**
3. **Press "Send."**
4. **Once 30 seconds are up, the bishop will indicate the conclusion of that vote and call for the second vote.**
5. **Enter the 4-digit number of the second candidate to elect.**
6. **Press "Send."**
7. **Once the 30 seconds are up, the bishop will indicate the conclusion of that vote and call for the third vote.**
8. **This will be repeated until 11 votes have been entered. The bishop will then declare the ballot closed.**

The results will be tabulated, verified by the Chief Laity Teller and Chief Clergy Teller after each ballot and then announced by the bishop. All votes will remain private.

Voting will continue until delegates are elected. As delegates are elected, the number of votes included in a single ballot will be reduced so that members are voting only for the number of delegates remaining to be elected.

After all General Conference delegates have been elected by clergy and laity, voting will begin for 11 clergy and 11 laity delegates to Jurisdictional Conference. The same procedures will be followed until all are elected.

Because it uses the same frequencies as Wi-Fi wireless internet access, everyone will be asked to turn off all mobile devices, including cell phones, during the voting periods.

Anyone with questions regarding the electronic voting systems or procedures, are asked to visit the Electronic Voting Help Desk in the rear of the coliseum. 📞



## Annual Conference Planning Committee makes this event happen



By Sung I. Yoo

The Annual Conference Planning Committee – you may wonder whether such a committee exists in our Annual Conference. Yes, it does. It was not until I began to serve on the committee that I realized how Annual Conference is made possible. Three years ago, upon request, I jumped into a new task of chairing the committee without knowing much about

what it does. I have since discovered that this committee works behind the scenes as the hands and feet of Christ to make Annual Conference happen.

What exactly does this committee do? One image that immediately comes to my mind is a wedding planner who is expected to think through, implement and review a special event from beginning to completion. Annual Conference is one huge event when clergy and laity gather to have holy conferencing. One main task of this committee is to make sure that everything goes smoothly and effectively without much interruption. The committee covers a wide scope of tasks from preparation to implementation, from providing oversight to executing specific tasks.

The committee basically consists of two bodies: the conference leadership team and host district extended team. Collaboration of these two teams is critical for successful orchestration of Annual Conference. Committee members are: Mark Brown (director of Connectional Ministries), Warren Harper (Conference Lay Leader), Kathleen Webster (Host District Superintendent), Brenda Brooks (Host District Lay Leader), Linda Rhodes and Bryan Compton (communications), Gary Heaton and Gary Morris (operations), Karen Albro (registration), Brian Siegle (platform), Cheryl Edley-Worford (accessibility), David Vaughan (worship), Joana Deitz (music), Christina Perkins (visuals), Beth Anderson and Dan Elmore (childcare), Tim Craft (housing), Mike Reaves and Debbie Brown (banquets), Kirk McNeill (Conference Planner), Joanna Paysour (exhibits and displays), Derrick Parson (youth) and Frances Craig (secretary). Our Annual Conference is blessed to have such



a group of dedicated individuals who are willing to go extra miles to make Annual Conference more successful and productive.

The committee meets every other month, working together year-round preparing for Annual Conference. Usually, in September, the committee gets together and begins to sort out what is expected and needed for Annual Conference. Committee members continue to engage in conversation with each other, as needed. As tasks for Annual Conference get clearer in Spring, the committee gets more active in preparation. In May, the entire committee, including the conference leadership team and host district extended team, meets on the site of Annual Conference to make sure everything is ready. In July, while our memories of what happened at Annual Conference are still fresh, the committee meets to evaluate what went well and what didn't, how to improve for the next Annual Conference and suggestions and comments from each other and others.

While trying to make sure that everything is well prepared for Annual Conference, the committee desires to bathe the whole preparation process with prayers, asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We, individually and collectively, pray for productive and meaningful Annual Conference throughout the year. On the first day of Annual Conference, the entire committee gathers at the site to pray together one more time for the powerful presence of our Lord throughout Annual Conference. We are honored to serve the Lord by serving our Annual Conference with praying hands. All for the glory of the Lord. 🍀

*-The Rev. Sung I. Yoo is chair of the Annual Conference Planning Committee*



("Kits," continued from pg. 23)

checks (for processing and shipping, for toothpaste and in lieu of providing kits) should be made payable to "Virginia Conference UMC," earmarked for "kits" and mailed to Treasurer, Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 5605, Glen Allen, VA 23058 any time prior to Annual Conference, and no later than Aug. 31.

More volunteers are needed for this year's "Kits for Conference" collection. You can help (1) write information on a clipboard, (2) sort kits, (3) seal boxes or (4) load boxes onto the tractor-trailers. If you can volunteer to help during kit collection times, **e-mail Virgil Decker at [vdecker@cox.net](mailto:vdecker@cox.net) or contact Jeff Wilson at Huntington Court UMC, (540) 366-3465**, to indicate what time you would be available. Also, you may register online at [www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0848abaf2ca0fc1-annual](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0848abaf2ca0fc1-annual).

### '4 Cans 4 Conference'

Those attending Annual Conference are encouraged to bring at least four cans of food or boxes of dry food to the session in Roanoke 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. All gifts will benefit the local ministries' services to those in need in the Berglund Center area. The 2015 Annual Conference goal is 10,000 pounds of canned and dry/staple foods. **Donations should be brought to the 24-foot U-Haul truck parked near the Kits Collection trucks at the far end of the Berglund Center Parking Lot A, near the intersection of Williamson Road and Orange Ave. (across from the Sheetz gas station).** Please do not deliver the canned goods inside the Berglund Center. 🍷



("Activities," continued from pg. 21)

### Pub Theology, Thursday, June 18, at 7 p.m.

Fellowship gathering to listen/discuss theology with Dr. Kendall Soulen from Wesley Seminary and the Rev. Jason Micheli from Aldersgate UMC in Alexandria (who started a Theology on Tap there) at **Corned Beef & Company, 107 Jefferson St. in downtown Roanoke**. No pre-registration required. For more information, **contact Ted Sutton at [pubtheologyroanoke@gmail.com](mailto:pubtheologyroanoke@gmail.com)**.

### Potato Drop, Friday, June 19, at 7 a.m.

More than 20 tons of potatoes will be dropped at **Southview UMC, 3539 Peters Creek Rd., Roanoke, VA 24019**. Volunteers will help bag and load more than 20 tons of donated potatoes to be picked up by regional food banks, church pantries, soup kitchens and other local feeding agencies. Co-sponsored by the Society of Saint Andrew, a national, nonprofit food salvage hunger-relief program, the potato drop will provide 120,000 to 135,000 servings of food to the region's poor and hungry. **For more information, contact Sarah Ramey, Society of St. Andrew, at [vaglean@endhunger.org](mailto:vaglean@endhunger.org)**. (To get to Southview UMC, take the south exit off of I-581 onto Peters Creek Rd. The church is ¼ mile on the left of Peters Creek Rd.) 🍷



## Annual Conference artwork to be auctioned to fight malaria

By Christina Perkins

As long as there has been the word of God, the people of God have used art to interpret and bring meaning to their faith. A new generation of Christians continue to use art in new and profound ways to make us think deeper about the truths we hold so dear. This year at Annual Conference, artists, lay and clergy, professional and hobbyist, of a variety of ages, have given their time, talents and resources to visually interpret for us the scriptures that will be used to frame our worship services.

As the Annual Conference Worship Planning Team began to think about our 2015 theme, "From Members to Disciples," and how to portray that visually, we realized that there are very talented people across our conference whose gifts could bless us all. Some of them are people of faith who became artists, some are artists who became people of faith. All of them have gifts to offer, not just to the Annual Conference but also to our local churches. It is our hope that out of this, local congregations will be inspired to find ways to invite local artists to be a part of their ministries if they have not already.

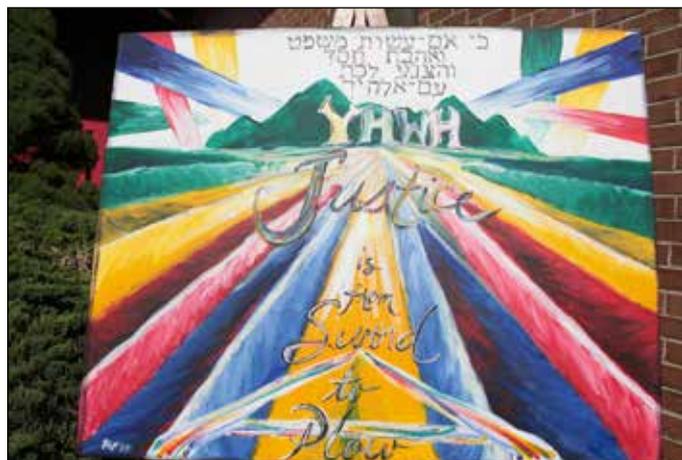
The artists did not just donate their works to our worship services. More importantly, they donated their works to Imagine No Malaria.

A website has been set up where these amazing works of art will be available to purchase at auction. If your Sunday school room needs a new, vibrant piece of art, or if you would like a special gift for a retiring pastor or a new ordinand, you might consider bidding on one of these original pieces. The auction will run from Monday, May 18, to 7 p.m. Saturday, June 20. One hundred percent of the proceeds from these pieces will go to Imagine No Malaria. Go to [www.artvaumc.org](http://www.artvaumc.org) to see the art and read about each piece and the artist who created it.

— The Rev. Christina Perkins is pastor of Crewe UMC, Crewe, and serves on the Annual Conference Worship Planning Team



Painting by Martha Mobley, Mt. Hermon UMC in Mount Jackson, is titled "The Great Commission."



Painting by Sarah Payne, pastor of Sherando UMC, is based on Micah 6:8.



(Top left) Artwork prepared for Annual Conference will be auctioned to raise money for Imagine No Malaria, including these pieces by Louis Caddell and Shawn Rowell.

Banner (left) by Nancy Wilburn, Bethany UMC in Gloucester Point, is titled "Go Ye Therefore."



# EVENTS

## June

### Annual Conference

**June 19-21, Berglund Center (formerly Roanoke Civic Center), Roanoke**

The 233rd session of the Virginia Annual Conference will be held at The Berglund Center (formerly the Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke June 19-21. Theme of this year's Annual Conference is "From Members to Disciples." For more information, go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Resources" and "Annual Conference 2015."

### Helping Hands

**June 29-30, Fairview UMC, Danville**

This event gives rising 4th-6th graders the opportunity to do hands-on missions in the Danville/Pittsylvania County area. Participants have the option of early-bird registration which includes three on-site mission opportunities or regular registration which includes two on-site mission opportunities. For more information, contact Katherine Lewis at (434) 792-3391 or [director.fumc@comcast.net](mailto:director.fumc@comcast.net) or go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

## July

### Helping Hands

**July 16-17, Christ UMC, Staunton**

This exciting two-day mission experience for rising 4th through 6th graders, parents and adult leaders of all member churches of the Virginia Conference. Come and learn about mission opportunities and the importance of being a caring Christian. Cost is \$36 per person which includes t-shirt, meals, snacks and overnight stay. Participants will sleep on the floor and will not have shower facilities. Registration deadline is June 10. For more information, contact Beth Christian at (540) 932-1055 or [bethchristian@vaumc.org](mailto:bethchristian@vaumc.org). Or go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

### LAUNCH: Explore Your Call to Ministry

**July 20-22, Shenandoah University, Winchester**

The office of Spiritual Life at Shenandoah University and the Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry invite rising high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to explore their calls to ministry while discovering their spiritual gifts from God. Participants live on the Shenandoah University campus and meals are provided. Cost is \$50. For more information, contact the Rev. Dr. Justin Allen, dean of Spiritual Life at Shenandoah University, at [jallen3@su.edu](mailto:jallen3@su.edu) or [spirituallife@su.edu](mailto:spirituallife@su.edu). Or go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

### Helping Hands

**July 23-24, Woodlake UMC, Midlothian**

This event gives rising 4th-6th graders the opportunity to do hands-on missions in the Richmond area. Participants have the option of early-bird registration which includes three on-site mission opportunities or regular registration which includes two on-site mission opportunities. For more information, contact MaryKaye Cochran at (804) 639-8872 or [mcochran@woodlakeumc.org](mailto:mcochran@woodlakeumc.org) or go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

### Mission Encounter

**July 24-26, Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center, Blackstone**

Mission Encounter is an opportunity for clergy and laity, including men, women and youths, to learn about being partners in God's global mission and to grow spiritually through study and worship. Participants may attend one of three workshops: Geographic study on "Latin America;" Spiritual Growth study on "Created for Happiness;" or Issue study on "The Church and People with Disabilities." For registration questions, call JoAnn Liskey at (540) 434-2997. For scholarship information, call Nancy Yarborough at (757) 877-2155. For more information, go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

## September

### School for Children's Ministries

**Sept. 12, Timberlake UMC, Lynchburg**

The School for Children's Ministries is on the road again featuring the same school at four different locations on four different dates. The second will be 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Timberlake UMC, 21649 Timberlake Rd., Lynchburg. Learn "Extraordinary Lessons from Ordinary Objects" plus three more workshops. A .5 CEU offered. Only \$20 per person. For more information and to register online, go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

### Goodson Preaching Academy

**Sept. 21-24, Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center, Blackstone**

The Bishops' Foundation will sponsor the 2015 Goodson Preaching Academy, "Craft and Creativity: Preaching in the Context of a Rapidly Evolving World," Sept. 21-24 at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center in Blackstone. Presenter will be Dr. Paul Scott Wilson, professor of Homiletics at Emmanuel College, Toronto, author of many books

(Continued on page 33, "Events")

# LIVING THE WORD



*Jill Gaynor is a member of Reville United Methodist Church in Richmond, where she has held a variety of leadership positions and currently serves as Outreach chair. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Virginia United Methodist Communications. Jill earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of William & Mary and an MBA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is Vice President of Marketing for Hamilton Beach Brands and lives in Richmond with her husband, Jim.*

## June 7, 2015

**You are rich  
Amos 2:4-8**

**A**s I opened my study Bible to the book of Amos to prepare for this lesson, I started by reading the introductory notes. This is how it describes the 8th century BC in Israel: “The wealthy people of Israel were enjoying peace and prosperity. They were quite complacent and were oppressing the poor.” While the situation may not be quite as dire, I think this description could also apply to modern day America. We are the richest country in the world, but we often forget that fact and take for granted the many blessings God has given us. I started to understand that better on my first mission trip to El Salvador in 1994. I was having a wonderful conversation with a member of the local church where we were working. At one point in the conversation she casually said, “You are rich.” The comment took me by surprise. By American standards I was definitely not rich. I had never thought of myself that way, but by El Salvadoran standards, she was right. Every American on our trip was indeed rich. Her comment stayed with me, and it forced me to re-evaluate my definitions of rich and poor. It also made me re-evaluate how I was using the riches God had given me.

God has blessed us far more than we often acknowledge, and asks us to share those blessings with others. God has a heart for the poor, and asks us to have a heart for the poor as well. It is very easy for us to take our modern American lifestyle for granted, and to forget those around the world and even in our own city who are poor and oppressed. It is easy for us to think that we are not that rich, and that someone else with more money should reach out and help instead.

I wonder what the 8th century BC Israelites thought of themselves. Did the people to whom Amos preached realize how far away from God they had wandered? Did they think what they were doing was normal? I fear that happens to us as well sometimes. It’s far too easy to get caught up in our everyday lives and become a product of our culture. Amos speaks to us across the centuries and challenges us to remember that God has a much higher standard.

## June 14, 2015

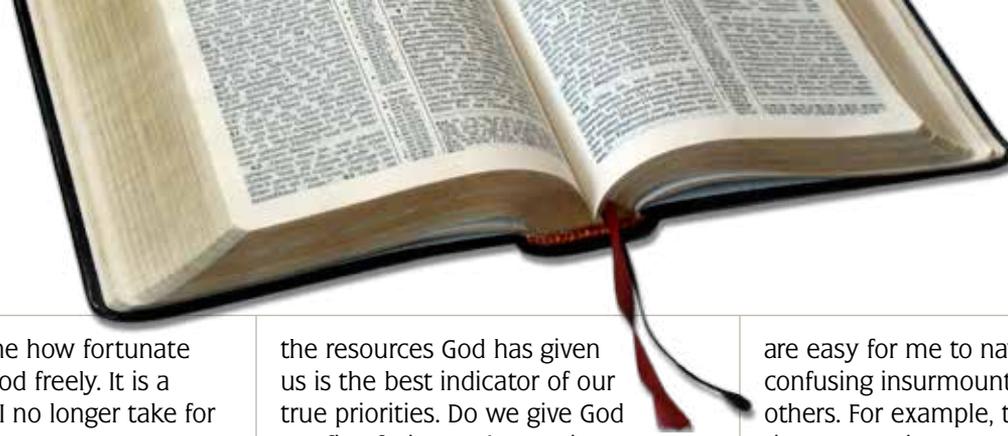
**True worship  
Amos 5:14-15, 18-27**

**W**hen I first read today’s message from Amos, it reminded me of some of my favorite passages in the book of James. I think the one that best summarizes Amos’ point is James 1:22 (NIV): “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” The Israelites were going through the motions. They attended worship. They brought the appropriate offerings. But once the worship service was over, they forgot God and went right back to doing evil things. They had deceived themselves, but they did not deceive God.

God had some frightening things to say to the Israelites in Amos 5:21 (NIV): “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.” That is a very strong wake-up call. Amos clearly challenges us to ensure that we are living out our faith in all aspects of our lives, and not just putting on a good show on Sunday morning.

This passage also encouraged me to reflect on the meaning and value of worship in my life. Worship can be a beautiful holy conversation between us and God, and there are many weeks when I approach worship this way. I have to admit, however, that I am sometimes guilty of being like the Israelites and just going through the motions. I show up on Sunday morning, but I am not always truly present.

During a business trip to China last year, I was reminded what a precious gift worship is for us. China has the largest population in the world, but only a tiny percentage of the Chinese are Christians. During my trip, that became very obvious to me and I had one particularly depressing conversation when a Chinese tour guide actually thought it was funny that I believe in God. By Sunday morning, I was physically and spiritually exhausted and I literally craved worship. I found a church not far from my hotel, and I went. The service was in Chinese (which I do not speak) but sitting there that morning surrounded by fellow believers, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit more powerfully than I ever had before. My Chinese brothers and sisters in Christ live in a communist country where they are laughed at for their beliefs. Worshiping with



them reminded me how fortunate I am to worship God freely. It is a precious gift that I no longer take for granted.

## June 21, 2015

### Treasure in heaven

#### Amos 6:4-8, 11-14

The wealthy Israelites were living a very lavish lifestyle, and they appear to have been quite pleased with themselves. Amos' message to the Israelites in chapter 6 reminded me of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV). "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The Israelites were clearly storing up treasures on earth. They put their faith in their treasure and valued their luxurious lifestyle. They thought they had earned it all themselves. They forgot that God is the source of all their gifts, and that is where their heart should have been focused.

I was an economics major in college. I have always had an affinity for analyzing numbers and understanding the meaning behind them. It's, therefore, not surprising that I enjoy personal finance, and as my faith matured I also developed a deep love of stewardship. I quickly learned that made me a bit of an oddity. Most people do not like talking about their finances, and they really don't like talking about stewardship. When I became the Stewardship chair at my church, I had to work hard to convince everyone to expand our stewardship program and the ways we talk about stewardship in church. Good stewardship is a crucial discipline for a Christian. The way we use

the resources God has given us is the best indicator of our true priorities. Do we give God our first fruits, or do we give God the small scraps left over at the end of the month? Is God really first in our lives?

It is clear from the description in Amos 6 that the Israelites did not put God first. They focused on their treasure. They spent their money acquiring it, and they spent their time enjoying it to excess. I pray that this passage helps us to reflect on where we have placed God on our own priority lists.

## June 28, 2015

### Champions for the needy

#### Amos 8:1-6, 9-10

God has decided to spare Israel no longer. They will be judged for their sins. Chief among those sins is that "they trample the needy" and "do away with the poor of the land" Amos 6:4 (NIV). When I read this, I had to reflect on our own guilt in this area in modern America.

Two years ago I worked with United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) to become a mentor for Sophia, a young woman who had been in foster care, but had aged out of the system. As her mentor, I help Sophia with the kind of general life issues that many people learn from their parents: how to handle problems with your boss at work, how to do a household budget, how to apply for a credit card. She is an amazing young woman, and I'm honored to help her. As with so many mission and service opportunities, I have found that I have learned just as much from Sophia as she has learned from me.

One of the things I have increasingly realized through my work with Sophia is that the systems and infrastructure that support me and

are easy for me to navigate can be confusing insurmountable barriers to others. For example, the transportation system in many of our cities and towns assumes that most of us have access to a car. In Richmond, where Sophia and I live, we do have a bus system but its routes and schedule are very limited. If you don't have enough money to buy a car or good enough credit to get a car loan, it severely limits your choices for housing and your options for where you can get a job. That in turn limits the amount of money you can earn to support your family.

I have learned that there are many things about our systems that are hard for the poor to navigate. There are many ways we "trample the needy" without realizing or intending to do so. Today's passage in Amos speaks to me. Our call as Christians is to open our ears to hear, open our eyes to see, and open our hearts to reach out to the least and the lost. United Methodists have a wonderful history of advocating for social justice, and I pray that we can continue to be God's champions for those in need. 📖

# CLERGY & DIACONAL

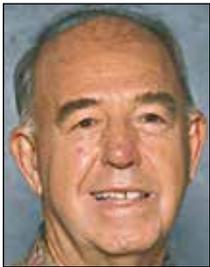


## DEATHS



**The Rev. G. Brown O'Quinn**, father of the Rev. Jim O'Quinn, died April 16, 2015. Brown was an affiliate member of the Virginia Conference. Jim

is pastor of the West Dinwiddie Charge, James River District, and also serves as the director of Congregational Excellence for the James River District.



**The Rev. William 'Bill' Osborne Webster** died May 6, 2015. A memorial service for the Rev. Webster was held at Christ UMC, Henrico.

He is survived by his widow, Katherine, of Richmond. He began his ministerial career in 1953 in the Holston Conference at the Keywood Circuit. He also served the Wytheville Circuit and West End in the Holston Conference. He joined the Virginia Conference in 1960 and served the Danville Circuit, as associate at Mount Vernon in the Danville District, Peakland, Chamberlayne Heights, Chester, Westhampton, Duncan Memorial in the former Ashland District, and Central in Clifton Forge. He retired in 1995.

**Dorothy L. Lock**, widow of **the Rev. B.L. Lock**, died Friday, May 1, 2015. Mrs. Lock is the mother of the Rev. John Lock, and mother-in-law of the Rev. Mary Lock. John serves the Fairview-Refuge Charge on the Winchester District.

**Mrs. Jerry Long**, wife of **the Rev. Don Long** (pastor of the McKinley Charge, Staunton District), died April 28, 2015. Jerry was an active part of Christ UMC (Staunton), and is also the mother of Mike Long who serves as the lay supply pastor of the Ebenezer-Marvin Charge.

**Mrs. Ethel Rose Schulhaus Klein**, mother of **the Rev. Marcia K. Huntsman**, associate pastor at Centreville UMC, Arlington District, died at home on April 16, 2015.

**Mrs. Dorothy Elizabeth Cable Wyand**, 83, died Monday, April 6, 2015, at Hock

Family Pavilion. She was preceded in death by her husband, **the Rev. Fred B. Wyand Jr.**

**Marianne Rooks**, surviving spouse of **the Rev. Robert Rooks**, died on March 31, 2015. She was living in Springfield, VA.



**The Rev. Charles Swadley**, retired Elder in the Virginia Conference, was named winner of the Faith in Action award by the Virginia Council of Churches. The award was presented Tuesday, May 12, at the College Lutheran Church in Salem, Va. Swadley is currently serving as interim chief executive officer for the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP). The award is a tribute to Swadley's work as chair of the Commission on Interfaith Relations for the Virginia Council of Churches, and his work to establish forums of faith leaders for VICPP throughout Virginia.



**Dot Ivey**, right, receives the Greensboro College 2015 Alumni Excellence Award from outgoing Alumni Association board president **Anne Jones Hurd**.

## Ivey honored with alumni award

On Saturday, April 11, Dorothy "Dot" Ivey was presented the Greensboro College 2015 Alumni Excellence Award which recognizes an alumnus or alumna for outstanding service and achievement as a humanitarian, professional or volunteer who has demonstrated commitment, integrity and success in his/her chosen endeavors.

Ivey, a member of Bon Air UMC in Richmond, was honored for her work establishing Christian Refugee Outreach in the Washington, D.C., area

in 1984 and later working for many years as Senior Resettlement Officer in the U.S. office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. She also did refugee resettlement and immigration policy work for United Methodist Committee on Relief and Church World Service. She has been a delegate to two United Methodist General Conferences and four Jurisdictional Conferences and is presently an active member of the General Board of Church and Society, which she represented at the 2013 meeting of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. A lay member of the Virginia Annual Conference, she served as president of the conference Board of Global Ministries, chair of Initiatives of Hope and chair of the Brazil Initiative. She has led Volunteers-In-Mission teams to Haiti, Mozambique, Mexico and Brazil; been an instructor at the School of Christian Mission; taught district officer training and mission study events; and held various district and local church offices. 📖

("Events," continued from pg. 29)

on preaching and past president of the Academy of Homiletics. This ministry venture for clergy seeking excellence in the craft of weekly preaching was modeled after the former Goodson Academy for Preaching and approved by the Bishops' Foundation which is assuming most of the costs of the event. The event is designed to energize your preaching and help you find creative ways to build disciples in your church. 1 CEU will be awarded. For more information and to register, go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

## October

### Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

**Oct. 4-9, Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond**

The Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation is a program of Upper Room Ministries, providing an opportunity for clergy and laity to deepen their relationship with God through a daily rhythm of prayer, worship, learning and reflection. Each day will include teaching by Dr. Robert Mulholland and Dr. Roberta Bondi. It will also include periods of silence, morning and evening prayer, Eucharist, covenant groups and community time. Focus of this academy is Sacred Journey: Shaped by the Spirit. A \$100 non-refundable registration fee is required to reserve your academy space by July 25. This amount will be applied to your total cost. Early registration is recommended as space is limited. For more information and to register, go to the conference website, [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org), click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

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# FROM THE BISHOP



Thy will  
be done

Friends,

*May the grace and peace of our Lord be with you.*

Soon we will gather at the Berglund Center (formerly known as the Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke, Virginia, for our 2015 Annual Conference. I am very excited and looking forward to meeting clergy and laity from all the churches in the Virginia Annual Conference.

This year we will have a very tight schedule filled with many tasks. We will elect 22 delegates (11 clergy and 11 laity) to General Conference (GC) and the same number of delegates to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference (SEJC). For the first time, we will use electronic keypad devices for balloting. It will save lots of our time, and I hope this process goes well.

I pray that the Virginia Annual Conference will send the best delegates to the 2016 GC and SEJC. Both

conferences are very important for the present and the future of our denomination. I think a fair representation reflecting our diversity will be very important, but my prayer is that those who are elected are persons who are radically open to God and humbly seek and obey the guidance of our Lord who is the head of our church.

As the 2016 GC approaches, we are struggling and dealing with many challenges for our future. I think the best way to respond to these challenges is to humbly open ourselves to God and to listen and follow the guidance of our Good Shepherd rather than pursuing one's own agenda. It is to go back to the basics of our faith. The time has come for us to truly let Jesus Christ be the Lord in our gathering and in our decision-making process.

This year more than 20 resolutions and petitions to the 2016 GC were submitted. I think this is the greatest number of resolutions and petitions in recent years. I know all of them are important and deserve our consideration, but we have very limited time. I am not sure we can consider all these petitions to GC and the resolutions. My prayer is "Thy will be done" in our discussion on these items.

My other prayer is for us not to forget the theme of our 2015 Annual Conference in the midst of holy conferring, From Members to Disciples. For many years we focused more on increasing the members of our churches than on making disciples of Jesus Christ. The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. But I wonder if we fully understand the meaning of following Jesus Christ as His disciples. Living as Jesus' disciples is more than becoming a better person. It is more than doing some good works. It challenges us to change our values and priorities. In this journey our goal in

life is to be born anew, and we are called to live a transformed life. The core of our discipleship is about the Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is His Lordship truly honored and respected in our daily lives and in our churches? Do we ask the Lord to be on our side or ask ourselves to be on our Lord's side? Are we willing to surrender ourselves to the Lord?

Another question related to our disciple-making mission is for the churches. We emphasize that our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. However, do we have road maps to making disciples of Jesus Christ? To make disciples of Jesus Christ what kind of plan or curriculum do we have? I still remember what I heard at a seminar: Most United Methodists are products of an unintentional disciple-making process.

I pray and hope that during our gathering we will visit our mission again and rededicate ourselves to the mission that our risen Christ entrusted to us. This is the reason we, The United Methodist Church, exist. This is the priority we need to set. This is the vision we need to rediscover in our gathering. So, I appeal to all of you to pray "Thy will be done" in our upcoming Annual Conference. If the Lord's will is done in our balloting, discussion, worship and teaching session, then our gathering will be a great success. Let us prepare ourselves for our upcoming Annual Conference with prayer, a fervent prayer: "Thy will be done in our Annual Conference as it is in heaven."

In our Lord,

Young Jin Cho

# ONE LAST WORD

## Book recounts a journey worth noting



Two years ago, Sharon French Harris was a long-term care patient in a health care facility. She had been diagnosed with irreversible dementia. Today she is at home with her husband, retired pastor Hugh Harris, and fully functioning. In fact, she and her husband have written a book about the journey and healing Sharon experienced.

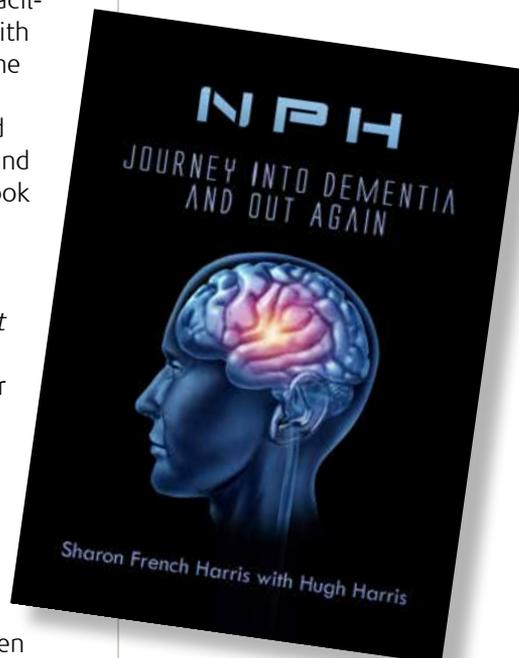
The book is titled *NPH: Journey into Dementia and Out Again*. It is published by Tate Publishing and is scheduled for release on June 16.

NPH stands for Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus, a condition that can mimic both Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease, yet its effects can often be reversed. Symptoms occur when cerebrospinal fluid that normally lu-

bricates and sustains the brain, begins to pack into its cavities because it is no longer being properly absorbed. It is estimated that five percent of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's may actually have NPH. That makes it worth writing about.

In her book, Sharon speaks from the perspective of the patient, and Hugh from the perspective of the caregiver/advocate. They recount their three-year struggle to gain an accurate diagnosis; the agony when symptoms worsened; the role of their faith and their church in sustaining them; and the ultimate neurosurgery that implanted a ventriculoperitoneal shunt in her brain.

Sharon and Hugh hope that by reading their book, people who are themselves experiencing neurological difficulties, or are caregivers with people who are, will find encouragement and hope. They welcome opportunities to share their story with local church groups. They will also be supporting NPH research through their book sales. 📖



## Tweets heard 'round the conference

**Drew McIntyre @DrewBMcIntyre**  
Crazy that @VAUMC publishes salaries, not just publicly but in DESCENDING ORDER. #NotHowJesusDidIt <http://www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/BishopCho/2015AppointmentWorkbook.pdf> ... #umc #dreamumc

**Amy @KitchenVixen**  
@DrewBMcIntyre @VAUMC did you see how far you get before a women's name??

**John Bryant @revjbryant**  
@DrewBMcIntyre @KitchenVixen @VAUMC I count 2 in top 50, before getting to DS, #38 & 47.

**Kathy Randall Bryant @KathyRandall @DrewBMcIntyre @KitchenVixen @VAUMC** perhaps this is why they posted it, to show how far they have to go before reaching gender salary parity

**Drew McIntyre @DrewBMcIntyre @KitchenVixen @VAUMC** Yeah, and how many of the top female earners are administrative, too, not pastors? Wow.

**Scott Bach-Hansen @sbachhansen**  
Great information in the @VAUMC Advocate for seniors with questions. Check it out: <http://www.vaumc.org/e-Advocate> #UMCdoingwork

**Alan Combs @thricemantis**  
Nerding out as I hit the chapter where the @vaumc conference youth retreat makes it into @rachelheldevans #SearchingForSunday.

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(Princeton Review, 2015)

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for "Best Professors"  
(CBSNews.com, 2013)

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"Best Colleges for  
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(Cappex, 2014)



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