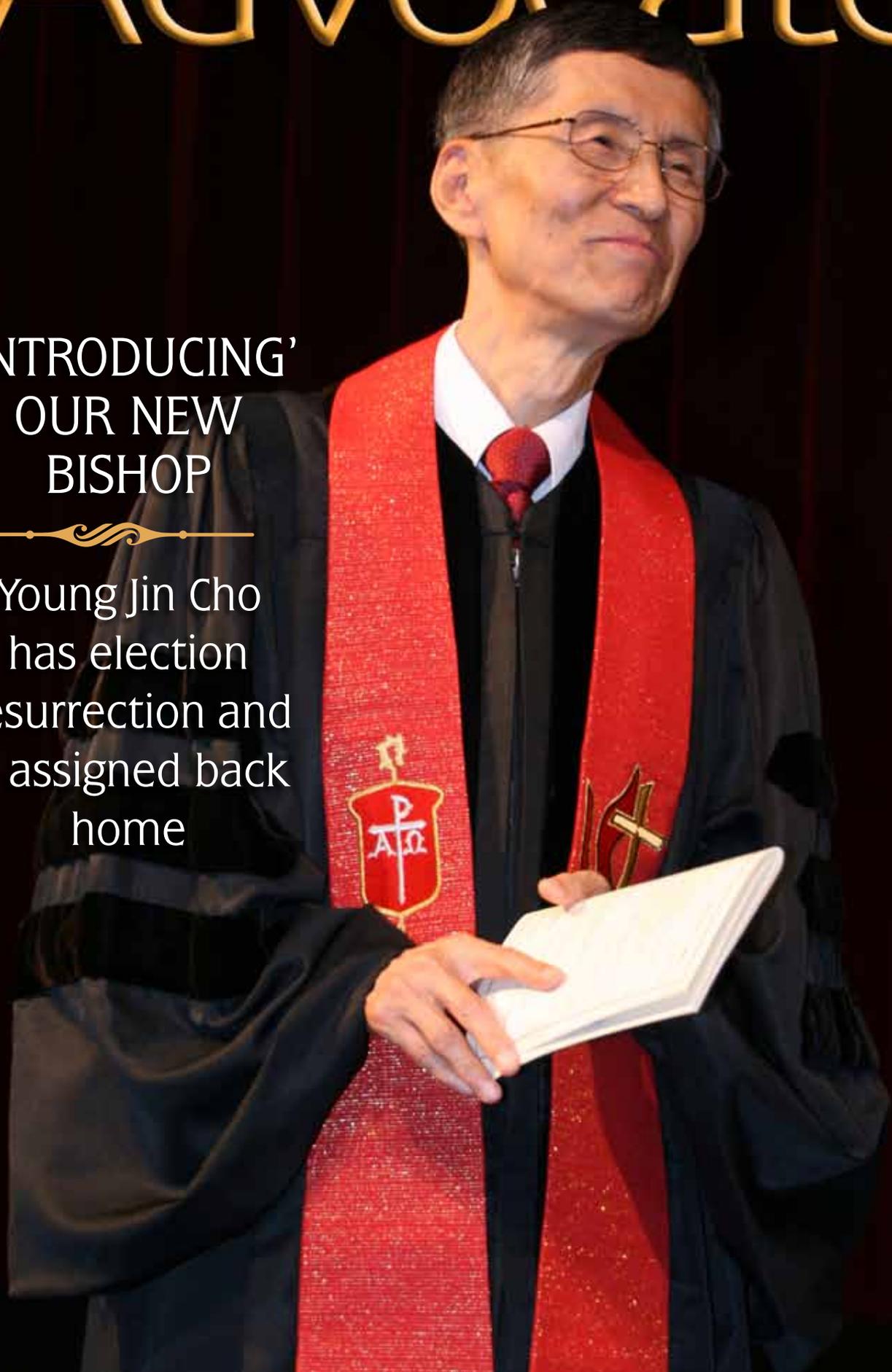


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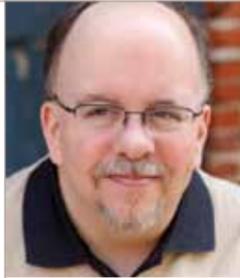
'INTRODUCING' OUR NEW BISHOP



Young Jin Cho
has election
resurrection and
is assigned back
home



FROM THE EDITOR



Neill Caldwell
Editor

A Cinderella story



Bishop-elect Young Jin Cho called it a “resurrection” moment. Being more of a sports fan, I called it a “Cinderella story.” To quote the late Howard Cosell, “He came out of nowhere!” (Actually he came out of Section 2, Row G, Seat 1 at Lake Junaluska’s Stuart Auditorium. But I digress...)

The election of our own Dr. Cho as an episcopal leader in the Southeastern Jurisdiction had all the drama and thrill of an Olympic moment. When the Virginia delegation nominated him months ago, we knew that his election might face long odds. He was the oldest of the candidates and can only serve one term – two traditional strikes against anyone considered for the office. He is Korean, and no Asian had ever been elected in the SEJ. Plus, those not used to hearing Young Jin Cho sometimes struggle to understand him, both because of his accent and his gentle speaking voice.

But there were the positive things...his deep spirituality, his prayerful character. When Cho was taken around to speak to every delegation, almost everyone was impressed by his directness, his presence, his faith.

At the end of the day Wednesday, however, things looked grim. Four had been elected, and Cho’s vote totals moved steadily downward. The delegation’s ice cream reception that evening broke up early, as no one was in the mood to party. The next morning, things didn’t look much better. I sensed he was about to rise and make a withdrawal speech.

[Let me say here, with all honesty and humility, that I voted for Young Jin on every ballot. Just call us the “Faithful 15.”]

Sitting two rows behind him, I watched as he sat quietly through the entire voting process, showing either an expression of calm that said “God’s will be done” or that huge smile that makes him such a pleasure to be around.

When it became apparent that Rev. Tim McClendon from South Carolina was not going to get the support that would put him over the top, delegates began looking for an alternative. And was there anyone more alternative than the Korean man from Virginia? The tide began to rise as Dr. Cho’s vote total began to climb by around 40 votes with each ballot. Then McClendon did an amazing thing: he stood and asked people to vote for Young Jin! That’s often done when candidates have 10 votes, but never when they have 180!

Then Cho’s name was being called, and Bishop Kammerer – tears flowing – and Bishop Pannel were escorting him to the podium.

Later that night came the cherry on the sundae when we learned that Cho would be coming home to Virginia. We gathered under a tent outside the auditorium and hugged and cried as other delegates filed out and stared at the Virginians. Now get that party started!

Wow. What an honor and privilege it was to be a part of all that. ☺

Neill Caldwell

Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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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

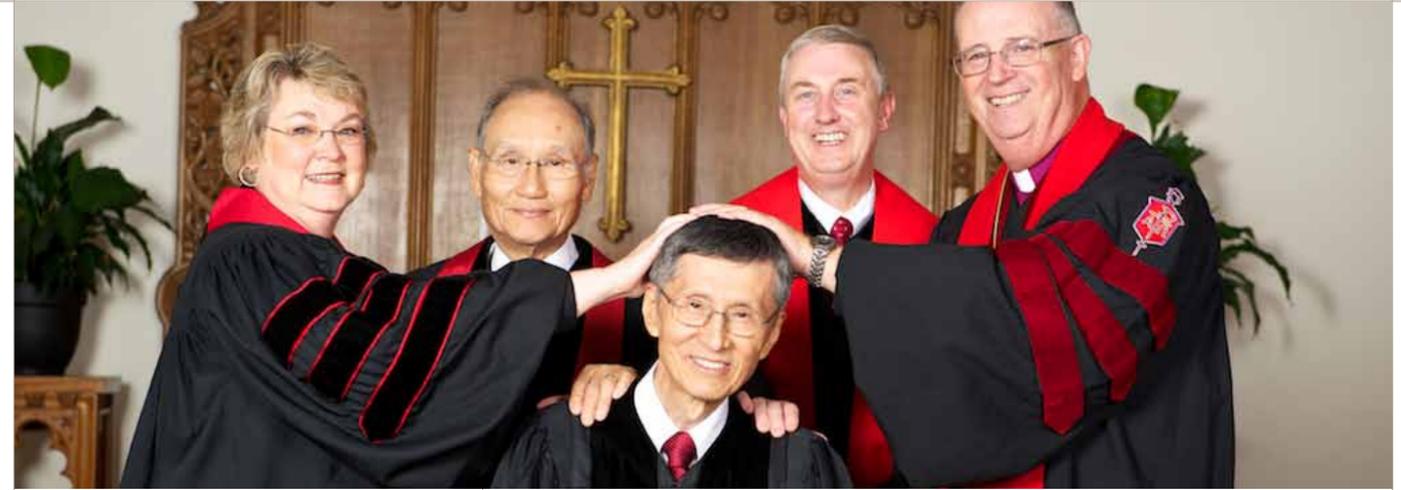
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On the Cover: Bishop Young Jin Cho is consecrated on July 20. Photo by Linda Rhodes. Above: Bishop Kammerer, the Rev. M.J. Kim, the Rev. Steve Jones and Bishop Lindsey Davis lay hands on Bishop Cho before the Consecration service. Photo by Matt Brodie.

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Service for Bishop Kelly

An event to celebrate the life of Bishop Leontine Kelly will be held at Asbury United Methodist Church in Richmond on Sunday, Sept. 16, at 4 p.m. This event is being planned by a group of Virginia Conference clergywomen and members of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Those in attendance are asked to bring any memorabilia, stories, scripture, and songs with them to this informal gathering so we can all share and thank God for the gift Bishop Kelly was.

Virginia United Methodists well remember 'Teenie' Kelly

By Sam and Brenda NeSmith

Bishop Leontine Kelly, retired bishop of the California-Nevada Conference and a former clergy member of the Virginia Conference, died June 28 at age 92. Bishop Kelly was the second woman and the first African American woman elected bishop in The United Methodist Church, and the first African American woman bishop of any major religious denomination in the world.

The Virginia Conference will always be linked to Bishop Leontine Kelly's faith journey. Richmond was home to the Rev. Kelly and her family from 1958 until 1966, during which time she became a certified lay speaker and, in 1960, completed her undergraduate education while her husband, the Rev. David Kelly, was pastor of Leigh Street Methodist Church. In 1966, she and her husband settled in Northumberland County for retirement, and David Kelly served as pastor of Galilee UMC in Edwardsville. Following his death in 1969, Leontine Kelly accepted the invitation of the members of Galilee to become their pastor. While teaching a study course at the Virginia Conference School of Christian Mission in 1969, Kelly received God's call on her life to the ordained ministry. Subsequently, she completed her theological education

at the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond and was ordained an elder in June 1977 at age 57.

Known as "Teenie" by her colleagues in the Virginia Conference, Leontine was a dynamic, spirit-filled preacher of the gospel who was passionate about her work and the people she served. A powerhouse of spiritual energy, Kelly positively uplifted the spirits of persons in her presence. Leontine served as pastor of two African American congregations: Galilee UMC in Edwardsville (1969-1975) and Asbury UMC on Church Hill in Richmond (1977-1983). She also served as associate Program Council Director for the Virginia Conference (1975-77) and in 1983 served as the Assistant General Secretary in the Evangelism Section of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn.

Mary Wilson, a member of Galilee UMC, remembers Leontine Kelly as a strong pastor and teacher. She intentionally exposed the membership to the program ministries of the Virginia Conference and taught them how to function within the connective structure of the church. Rev. Kelly "taught them well," laying a foundation that later resulted in two of Galilee's youth becoming presidents

of the Virginia Conference Youth Council. Wilson's son was one of those young people.

Kelly was "an outstanding leader, a charismatic pastor, a people-person who listened with intensity. People of all races were so drawn to her powerful sermons until the church was packed every Sunday and many were later drawn to Jesus Christ." This is how the Rev. Jean Page, a retired pastor, recalls Kelly's ministry at Asbury UMC. Page and Karen Morrow, who became ordained elders in the Virginia Conference, were among eight persons in the congregation called to the ministry during Kelly's pastorate.

While serving appointments in Virginia, Kelly gained recognition within and outside the denomination for her gifts and graces as an outstanding preacher and prophetic voice. Her rise in prominence paralleled a movement in the denomination during the '70s and '80s led by women who called for increased inclusivity of women in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels of the church. The 1980 election of Marjorie Matthews, the first woman elected bishop, was a major breakthrough and clergywomen began to strategize for the election of additional women bishops. Kelly

caught the vision of what might be possible for her and for the church. She believed herself to be a worthy candidate and decided to present herself as a candidate for election. That the Rev. Leontine Kelly, a black woman with limited clergy experience, would seek election to the episcopacy at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference was regarded as ridiculous! Opposition, based on the double factors of racism and sexism, made her chances nearly impossible.

However, the winds of change blew across the denomination. Clergywomen began to organize themselves on a

People of all races were so drawn to her powerful sermons until the church was packed every Sunday and many were later drawn to Jesus Christ.

national scale and Kelly became a part of this movement. In February, 1983, Leontine received the endorsement of 700 clergywomen at a national Clergywomen's Consultation. A strategy was devised in which names of the aspiring candidates would be placed in nomination at all five jurisdictional conferences that would meet simultaneously in July 1984. Dr. Deidra Kriewald, a clergy member of the Virginia Conference and a delegate to the Jurisdictional Conference, became Kelly's "campaign manager." Dr. Kriewald recalls the fantastic way that the majority of the Virginia Conference clergywomen held together to support Kelly, pledging their support to bring Leontine before the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, even if her own Virginia Conference did not endorse her.

The 1984 Jurisdictional Conference is one not soon to be forgotten by those in attendance. According to records, the delegation included the following African Americans: Leontine Kelly, Godfrey Tate, John Barr, Willard Douglas, Sam NeSmith and Nathaniel Bishop (alternate). Kelly sought election as an independent candidate since the Virginia Conference had not endorsed her nomination. She withdrew on the 6th ballot after receiving only 43 votes. In looking back, Kelly recalled, "There was a sense in which I was never really considered a candidate in my own jurisdiction, except by the clergywomen."

On Tuesday of the conference, Kelly received a call from her supporters in the Western Jurisdiction advising her to come to Boise, Idaho, immediately! Clergywomen of the California-Nevada Conference had been successful in getting Kelly's name placed legitimately on the ballot. Emboldened with the vision of a new possibility, Leontine said, "I've got to go. If God wants me to be a bishop, nothing can stop me." Judge Douglas and Sam NeSmith joined with Virginia Conference clergywomen and other well-wishers at the cross atop

the hill at Lake Junaluska to share in prayer with her. Even among the well wishers, there were those who doubted and lacked faith that she would be successful.

On Wednesday, July 18, Kelly, accompanied by Kriewald, left for Idaho, arriving at their destination Thursday, July 19, at 2 a.m. By 9:30 a.m. Thursday, she began interviews with annual conference caucuses. Observers noted how Kelly's presence was felt immediately in the conference. "Her vision and spirit were electrifying," Kriewald said. Women and ethnic minorities worked together and on the 17th ballot, Kelly was elected a bishop. Kriewald recalls it as "miraculous. We were there. It was over."

Often heard in African American churches is the saying, "God can make a way out of no way." Yes, God had "made a way out of no way." Kelly, an African-American, was elected outside of the Southeastern Jurisdiction by a jurisdiction to which she did not belong. But, God wasn't through yet! The Western Jurisdiction also elected Roy Sano,

the first Japanese bishop, and Elias Galvan, the first Hispanic bishop. What a glorious rainbow for the church! Additionally, a third woman bishop, Judith Craig, was elected by the North Central Jurisdiction on the following day.

As an episcopal leader, Bishop Kelly is remembered for her extraordinary life as a trailblazer, social activist and as a founding member and supporter of Africa University in Zimbabwe. Clergywomen throughout the denomination remember and cherish Kelly as their mentor and spiritual mother. The Rev. Myrtle Hatcher, pastor of Main Street UMC in Suffolk, recalls Leontine's words of encouragement. "She said that she would always be there for me."

Rita Callis, pastor of Lakeside UMC in Richmond, became inspired to enter the ministry after hearing Kelly preach during a youth group visit to Galilee UMC. This was Callis's first time to hear a woman preacher. Seeing Bishop Kelly in this role helped her to visualize that she could become a preacher too. Callis says she is grateful for Kelly's mentoring. "Leontine took me under her wing. She was a powerful role model, very proactive and very intentional in personally encouraging us." Many other Virginia Conference clergywomen say they consider it a privilege to have known Bishop Kelly personally.

Bishop Kelly's memorial service was held at Jones Memorial UMC in San Francisco. Printed on the program was the scripture that Leontine adopted for her episcopal candidacy: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time." (Habakkuk 2:2-3a) We in the Virginia Conference who had the honor of knowing Bishop Kelly and sharing in part of her faith journey thank God for this faithful servant of the church, who embraced the vision of new possibilities and ran the race of the Christian life very, very well. 🍀

-The Rev. Sam and Brenda NeSmith are "retired" and live in Richmond



Recent shootings show our need to minister to mental illness

By Larry Jent

God's people called Methodists were watching a movement of the Holy Spirit at Lake Junaluska, N.C. The Rev. Dr. Young Jin Cho was elected to the episcopacy on the 29th ballot. That evening, the mood of the Virginia delegation turned absolutely giddy when the episcopal appointments were read. In an unprecedented move, the Committee on Episcopacy

assigned Bishop-Elect Cho to the Richmond area. Our own was coming home!

On Friday, the mood turned to holy contemplation as Dr. Cho knelt to receive the mantle of the episcopacy. Hundreds of people who had been touched by his ministry were there, weeping for joy and worshipping God.

How could we have known that 1,400 miles away someone was planning a rampage that would unleash a river of blood and tears? Perhaps he was kneeling over his tear gas and rifle as we were kneeling in prayer. Before the night was over, we would recoil in grief and horror.

Which event was more powerful? Was Friday a day of Pentecostal power, or horror and despair? The answer is up to you. If we do nothing, the demons win.

But we serve a Lord who came casting out demons and serving notice that the kingdom of darkness was at an end. It is time for us to act like we believe it.

Not sure how to start? Here are some suggestions:

1. Name mental illness openly from the pulpit and pray for those afflicted: In my 54 years as a United Methodist I have heard people praying for every organ and orifice of the body openly in church... But not the brain. Mental illness should be no more stigmatized than diabetes or heart disease.

2. Reach out to those who are grieving: Grief is like an underground river. Those who seem to have healed may have deep currents of pain just below

the surface. Those who lost loved ones at Virginia Tech, who have seen horrors of war, who have lost loved ones to senseless violence or suicide and many others who thought their grief was long gone may find that these events bring feelings they cannot understand. Use the local newspaper, Facebook or other social media to reach out.

3. Reach out to parents and children: This sort of horror is mind boggling to healthy adults. For children bombarded with these scenes of terror, the fear can be overwhelming. Tell parents to be pro-active. Do not wait for children to share their fears – they may not be able to articulate them. Young children (2-5) may need parents to simply reassure them that they are doing everything they can to keep them safe. Children from 5-9 begin to recognize the reality and unpredictable nature of death. Parents may need to say that these images disturb them too, but we trust God to provide peace and safety. Children this age can learn to pray for comfort for those that mourn, and safety for those who need protection.

Older children (10+) are becoming aware that parents and loved ones are going to die one day. They are beginning to realize that they, too, are mortal and must face death one day. For children of this age it may be important to have a response to death. Hold a candlelight prayer vigil at home. Send cards of comfort to the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora.

Teens are even more prone to feel that life makes no sense and hope is pointless. They can understand more symbolic ways to shine light in the darkness. Take sandwiches to the park and give them away. Get involved with Habitat or Rebuilding America to strike a hammer blow for Christ.

4. Start a local support group: Suicide is a taboo topic in most churches and communities. Do you know the warning signs? Do you know how to care for survivors of suicide? Enlist the help of mental health professionals. Break the silence.

Reach out to families of mental patients, too. There is no guide book on how to live with a loved one who is severely disturbed. (I know... I have had to deal with this in my own family.) Families become exhausted, individuals become isolated, and then the bullets fly. Reach out before the headlines are made.

5. Believe: The world cannot give a healthy mind, a wealthy soul, or a satisfied spirit. God can. In a world gone mad, we are locked in a life-and-death battle – and we are for life. Believe that you are called to offer that message of life to the world. Believe that your church is called to be a beacon of life in the midst of death. Believe that Jesus was right – the kingdom of darkness is done, and we are the evidence.

Then go and be the proof: God's gonna win! 🍀

-The Rev. Larry Jent is pastor at Fishersville UMC and former editor of the Advocate.



▲ A recent ministry of Jackson Street UMC addresses the lawn care needs of the local community and of two of the Lynchburg District missions/ministries. The Community Revitalization Ministry provides lawn care assistance to Beulah Spiritual Retreat, Parkview Mission and to the residents in and around the community of Jackson Street church. Church members, community service youth, community members, led by church members, go throughout the community daily providing lawn care for the elderly and sick and shut-in. They are out in the community daily cutting grass, trimming trees, hauling discarded items, talking with and praying with people of the community. In addition, this ministry cares for a six-block segment of Jackson Street where the church is located.



▲ Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Freeman, U.S. Marine Corps, stands vigil on the Sunday before Memorial Day at the memorial garden at Shady Grove UMC in Short Pump.

Haygood UMC, Virginia Beach, was nominated by Jody Ullman for Haygood Outreach Program's "HARK" (Haygood's Random Acts of Kindness). The church sponsors a Children's Clothing Exchange, where people bring in clean, gently-used clothing their children have outgrown and exchange them for larger-sized clothes; and the Backpack program, where backpacks are packed with food for children who have no food to eat over the weekend. Haygood received the award in the Faith-based category.



▲ United Methodist Women at Macedonia UMC in Frederick County sponsored a Red Wagon Diaper Drive to aid the Winchester area's non-profit organization, Congregational Community Action Project (CCAP), in helping families with babies and young children. Working with Jody Stephenson, founder of The Red Wagon Ministry, a red wagon was filled with 2,225 disposable diapers of various sizes, and many baby wipes. This was the second time that Macedonia UMC had collected diapers for this ministry. Both events were run in conjunction with honoring mothers and fathers during the months of May and June.

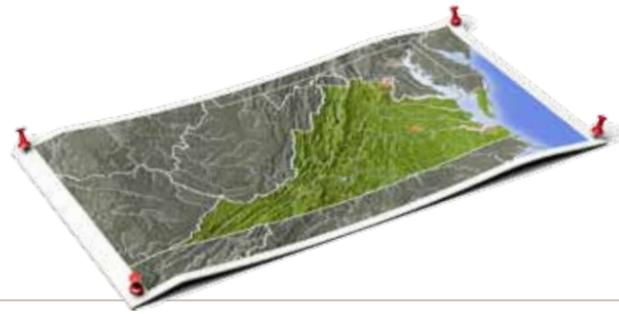


▲ Ten First UMC Hampton and two Fox Hill Central UMC United Methodist Women members recently visited the Virginia Peninsula Food Bank. Led on a tour by the Food Sourcing Manager and fellow First UMC member, they learned the 52,000 sq. ft. facility serves residents of four cities and five counties in the Peninsula area, primarily supporting 240 agencies which can shop there. The facility also provides hot meals on Fridays to children who can take home backpacks of food for the weekend.

▼ For the fifth time, Main Street UMC in Suffolk hosted several Russian children and their chaperone, Nellie Dolzhikova. As a part of the conference's Initiatives of Hope partnership with Russia, which began back in the 1990s, the children enjoy a brief respite from the polluted environment of Russia. Their favorite things to do are swim in the ocean or a pool and go to Busch Gardens. They stayed for three weeks this year and the hosts and church family enjoyed their time with our new friends.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Eastern Shore pastor answered two callings



The Rev. David Chew and his son, David Jr.

By Carol Vaughn

To volunteer firefighter and United Methodist local pastor David Raymond Chew Jr., responding to emergency calls was as much a part of his ministry as preaching.

Chew, 30, died July 16 when the Bloxom Volunteer Fire Company engine in which he was a passenger ran off Nelsonia Road and crashed into trees while responding to a car accident. Chew was ejected from the firetruck and died on impact, according to the Virginia State Police.

The firetruck's driver, James Richard Lambirth, suffered injuries in the crash and was taken to Peninsula Regional Medical Center, where he was later released.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia community participated in an outpouring of sympathy for Chew's family, flooding his Facebook page and a funeral home memorial website with

expressions of sympathy and memories about his contributions to many different aspects of community life.

"Part of his call to serve Jesus Christ was always to serve other people, so part of his ministry – to him – was to be with people in times of dire trouble, whether it be on an ambulance call or on a fire call or to just be with his fellow firefighters," said the Rev. Tammy Estep, district superintendent of the Eastern Shore District of The United Methodist Church.

Estep said she had spent a lot of time with Chew at church. "He was at a really good place in his life. ... He was very committed to his family; he loved being a dad, and he loved being married," she said.

Chew was married to Becky Chew and was the father of a 3-year-old son, his namesake.

Chew, a third-generation firefighter, served as chaplain of the Bloxom Fire Company, where he was a member for 12 years.

He became pastor at Hallwood United Methodist Church on July 1. "Hallwood (church) loved him. He was young and he was from the community – he knew them and they knew him – so they are devastated," Estep said.

He previously served as pastor of Union UMC in Greenbackville.

Chew also was a chaplain at Camp Occohannock on the Bay, was involved in the Emmaus community and volunteered with the Cub Scouts, including helping with Cub Scout Pack 300, which meets at the Parksley firehouse, and working at Henson Scout Reservation, a camp near Sharptown.

"He was a very giving individual, always willing to help anybody who needed help," said Northampton EMS Coordinator Hollye Carpenter. "He was very spiritual, level-headed – he was just a good guy. I can't say enough good," said Carpenter.

Carpenter said Chew's death "is a struggle for everybody." "Everybody who met him he touched in one way or another." ❧

-Carol Vaughn is a reporter for Delmarva Now

Heart Havens closes home in Goochland County

Heart Havens has closed its Perkins Home in Goochland County.

On July 18, the operation of the Perkins Home was transferred to Good Neighbor Homes (GNH), a local for-profit agency providing housing and support to adults with intellectual disabilities. In spite of numerous attempts, the site remained a challenge to adequately staff in a manner consistent with the quality and standards of other Heart Havens programs.

"Our fervent hope was that the men and women living in the Perkins home would have every opportunity to stay together as a family unit," said Jennifer Boyden-Barrett, CEO

of Heart Havens, a conference-related agency that provides group home care for adults with disabilities.

During the transition time leading up to the closing date, the individuals and their families worked to identify the best supportive housing solution for each person. Heart Havens met with all providers that expressed interest to offer information in the process. After much discussion, the families chose GNH.



(Continued on Page 28, "Heart Havens")

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

October 5 Talent Academy event to focus on ministry with the poor

The upcoming session of the 5 Talent Academy will focus on ministry with the poor. The leader will be the Rev. Dr. Alan Rice, director of Rural Ministry and Community Development in the Western North Carolina Conference and executive director of Rural Faith Development Community Development Corp. (RFD CDC).

The teaching event will be offered on Oct. 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"Dr. Rice is a passionate, effective, influential leader in the area of ministry with the poor and with Circles National Campaign, an innovative community-based model to end poverty," said the Rev. Mark Ogren, conference director of Congregational Excellence. "He will give insight to participants on how to move our mission's work to intentional, holistic, and relational ministry with those who are struggling at the edges of our society."

The event is the start of the second cycle of the 5 Talent Academy, part of the conference's "All Things New" strategy to energize existing congregations. The first cycle had about 110 churches participating. This is a "taste and see" event, open to all interested churches.

Another new element is that the presentation will

be simulcast to several different locations around the conference:

Eastern Shore: Market Street UMC, Gary Miller, garycmiller@verizon.net

Northern Virginia: Floris UMC, Tom Berlin, tberlin@florismc.org

Richmond: Virginia United Methodist Center, Mark Ogren, MarkOgren@vaumc.org

Roanoke: Thrasher Memorial UMC, B. Failes, Revwbj@thrasherumc.org

Tidewater: Aldersgate UMC, David Drinkard, daviddrinkard@ncum.org

Shenandoah Valley: Asbury UMC, Kathleen Overby Webster, koverbywebster@asburyumc.cc

Dr. Rice works as a consultant for churches, districts and conferences in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan. His largest current project is the renovation of Gulfside Assembly in Mississippi.

He also works with the national "Circles" program, which works for the elimination of poverty by using a spiritual emphasis.

In addition to his community development work, Rice also services

the pastor of Cross Fire United Methodist Church in North Wilkesboro, N.C. His association with this ministry began when he was the district superintendent who led the effort to charter a United Methodist ministry for bikers and friends who wanted a non-traditional place to worship.

CrossFire reaches beyond the typical educated upper-middle class demographic of the denomination. "Many of our members live at or below the poverty line," says Rice. "There's a generous spirit among members, who believe in helping and do it because they've been there themselves." Ministries include a weekly food pantry that serves between 40-50 families, and a recent mission trip to Nicaragua.

Rice also serves on the denomination's General Board of Global Ministries Town & Country Implementation Team, which focuses on rural and small church issues.

Before entering the ministry, Rice was an executive in a multi-million dollar general contracting firm. His undergraduate degree is from North Carolina State in Civil Engineering. He has a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from Asbury Theological Seminary and a Theology Masters Degree from Duke Divinity. ❧



The Rev. Dr. Alan Rice will lead the October 5 Talent Academy event.

5 Talent Academy
Oct. 2
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Six locations



The United Methodist connection in **VIRGINIA**

Churches host graduation party for homeless high school seniors

By Natalie May

There are approximately 2,000 homeless students in Richmond Public Schools. Earlier this year, Bon Air UMC and Westover Hills UMC independently began working with Alia Butler, the school social worker designated to address the complex needs of these students. Bon Air began by stocking a hygiene pantry at Huguenot High School, and both churches have members who mentor individual students. Bon Air members have even opened their homes to students in need of a temporary or long-term place to live.

The two churches and Butler came together to host a celebratory luncheon for 22 students about to graduate from three city high schools: George Wythe, Armstrong, and Huguenot. For many of these students, this would be the only party and the only gifts to mark their remarkable achievement. Butler wrote "And they are not only high school graduates, but they are children who figured out how to get to school and do their school work when they didn't always have a place to sleep at night."

At the beginning of the party, sponsors introduced each student and applauded and cheered their success. The majority of the students have plans to attend college in the fall.

Once the word got out that members of the two churches had an opportunity to make a powerful impact

on the lives of these young people, the response from church members was overwhelming. Each graduate was "adopted" by a church member, who was asked to buy a graduation card, write a personal note of encouragement, enclose a \$25 VISA gift card and a \$10 GRTC bus pass. Some adults enclosed a poem, additional money, or a small gift. Each student received additional gifts as well. One community member decorated empty paint cans with pretty papers, ribbons, and inspirational quotes. The cans were filled with home-baked cookies and brownies. Other church members baked cookies, made lasagnas, baked bread, and made financial contributions to pay for gifts.

Members served homemade lasagna, tossed salad, homemade bread and graduation cake. Westover Hills UMC members decorated the fellowship hall with linen tablecloths and fresh flowers, and several additional hostesses from Bon Air sat with the students and chatted about the students' plans for the future. Church members also provided transportation to and from the event.

There were many highlights of the day. The partnership between the two churches was fun and effective. Westover Hills has an excellent location for these students; it is near George Wythe High School and on the Forest Hill Avenue bus line. Bon Air has many resources and individuals interested in helping these students, but its suburban location makes this challenging. Sponsors are planning future ministries together, including a summer "College Prep" course for these same students. Several students and adults exchanged phone numbers and e-mails, with the hope that strong relationships will develop. One adult drove two of the students to orientation at Virginia Union University the following week. Donna and Natalie attended the George Wythe High School graduation together as well as mentored students who graduated.

Church members receive regular "wish list" e-mails from Butler, and now can put faces to names and needs. Just in the past week, church members have built a ramp to a student's mother's front door. Another student's air mattress broke and her beloved nail polish was stolen, so she received a new mattress and an early birthday gift – a box filled with nail polishes, donated by Bon Air youth.

A highlight of the party was when one of the graduates, Troy Valentine, agreed to read one of his beautiful and powerful poems to the group. He said it was the first time he had ever read his poetry aloud. He was befriended by Larry and Nancy Tingle, who will continue to encourage him to read and write his poetry. ♡

-Natalie May is a member at Bon Air UMC.

Caption: Sophia Harper (right) wears the dress she picked out at the Target store in Richmond. Heidi Abbott was there to help her with her shopping. Photo by Alexa Welch Edlund/Richmond Times-Dispatch



Voices of Youth: 'Winds of Change' continue to awaken The United Methodist Church to mission

By DeLyn Celec

What a joy and honor to be the piano accompanist on "Voices of Youth 2012: Winds of Change." I learned that awakening The United Methodist Church to mission in this way is rewarding, fun and a lot of hard work. I am grateful to have worked alongside these young people as each discerns his or her call to future mission.

The song "In Remembrance" by Ragan Courtney and Buryl Red is a Voices of Youth tradition. Chad Hrbek, team coordinator, called attention to its insightful message in our final devotional as we prepared for the final worship celebration. Hrbek pointed to our responsibility as Christians to honor the example of Jesus' life by acting in ways that emulate Christ's actions: provide for people who are in need and extend hospitality to all neighbors. When we commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus in Holy Communion, we honor his gracious life, too. I am proud to have been a part of "Winds of Change 2012," as these young people set a living example of honoring Jesus' life!

We sang "Care for Creation" by Pepper Choplin in each of our worship celebrations. Its refrain is a powerful theological statement: "I will sing and I will praise, but the measure of my days is how I care for the creation of the Lord." This song played over and again in my head as we worked.

The mission part of the tour this year was a work week in Joplin, Mo., which was so devastated by a tornado last year. The family renting the first house on which we worked had moved four times in the year since the tornado claimed their former home. Along with pulling seemingly one million weeds, we cleared debris such as several feet of chain link fence, a toilet tank, railroad ties and countless roofing tiles. These tasks had been deemed second priority in the hierarchy of urgent cleanup. As we worked, a lovely yard emerged where the two small children and medium-sized dog could safely play. The sorting

of living trees from rusty fence illustrated our commission to honor our Creator in responsible stewardship and care for the creatures residing there.

Many participants' testimonies cited their initial, and short-lived, disappointment because they were not demolishing or building anything. Over time, it came clear that our outdoor weeding, sorting and clearing was secondary to the relationships we were building along the way. Young people who had met only days before removed stumps that took no less than four people, various garden tools and several hours to complete. The truly inspiring part was the celebration that took place afterward as the stump was held over their heads and cheers went up all over the yard.



Ryan P. Shaw was our blogger on this trip, and more information and photos can be seen at <http://windsofchange2012.wordpress.com>. Ryan estimates that we spent approximately 60 hours on the bus. Needless to say, we got to know one another well. By Ryan's calculations, considering the number of participants and hours spent, we put in

1,057 hours of mission work in Missouri and Virginia. Add that to 338 hours of leading worship and you will conclude that this group was busy!

But numbers cannot tell the stories of community built on this trip. Alongside the intensive "togetherness" of the choir and staff were the relationships built with the people with whom we were in mission. I am humbled by the joy and gratitude of those who live in the homes we served,

(Continued on Page 28 "Voices of Youth")

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Regester Chapel members return to Kentucky, keep building relationships

By Jordan Biscardo

At first glance, the poverty-stricken community of Frakes, Kentucky, may not seem very inviting. Wracked by high unemployment and saddled with a stark average household income of around \$14,000, it is one of America's most economically depressed rural regions.

Yet, 13 members of Regester Chapel UMC in Stafford found Frakes an appealing place to spend part of their summer, because it offered the chance to help others. Church members recently completed a mission trip to Henderson Settlement in Frakes. It marked the second straight year the mission team served at Henderson, and a return

Participants from Regester Chapel included, front row, from left: Larry Towne, Bob Waugh, Pat Moyer, Dave Broadhurst, Donna Courtney, Louise Hackman; second row: Jeff Hackman, Jack Sprunger; third row: Tally Moore, Bobbye Wardlow.



trip for 2013 already has been set.

The settlement was established 87 years ago with strong ties to the Methodist Church, and offers community outreach to help improve the lives of area residents through ministry and services. The need in that region is great; more than a third of Frakes-area residents live below the poverty line, and Bell County (which includes Frakes) is one of the nation's 100 poorest counties.

In 2011 the Regester Chapel team did all of its work on the settlement grounds. This year participants also performed tasks in the surrounding community. Their efforts included lots of construction and repairs, teaching an art class for elementary school children, working in a library, organizing a craft area and more. Construction work was accomplished despite temperatures that exceeded 100 degrees.

Team leader Jeff Hackman, of Fredericksburg, was struck by the locals' friendliness.

"Universally, we hear from people how grateful they are for the work we do around that community," he said. "They know who we are and why we're there, along with many other mission teams. They honk their horns and wave to us. It's an amazing environment.... There's a local café, and it's just such a different atmosphere. People will look at you and start talking, invite you to sit

down and join them. You don't see that kind of thing around here."

The rest of the Regester Chapel group included Larry Towne, Bob Waugh, Pat Moyer, Dave Broadhurst, Donna Courtney, Louise Hackman, Jack Sprunger, Tally Moore, Bobbye Wardlow, Debbie Todd, Jim Atkinson and Eleanor Brown.

Undeterred by the eight-hour drive each way, the soaring temperatures or the financial cost, Towne said he signed up "because I enjoy helping others and am trying to use the gifts God shared with me.... I was surprised by the low-key, friendly and genuine nature of the people in the area. Last year, we worked on a project but didn't meet anyone. Next time I go back, it will be because of the friends we've made."

He added, "It's a rewarding experience for us as much as them."

Sprunger said the best parts of the trip were "helping people in need in the Henderson area, and working with good Christian friends. I was happy to see firsthand what the Henderson Settlement is all about. I was a little surprised what a huge, positive Christian impact the settlement has on the local area, and the amount of work and support it gives year-round to the local people."

Moore, one of the youngest members of the group, said she especially enjoyed working with kids.

"I loved having conversations with them and under-



Mission team member Donna Courtney leads an art class for local children in Frakes, Ky.

standing their perceptions of the world," she recalled.

Hackman, the trip organizer, admitted feeling at least a little reluctant when first traveling into the community around the settlement and seeing the distasteful conditions. But then he remembered "that these were the people who really needed the help. That was a wake-up call to me on how the little things can make a difference for others."

-Jordan Biscardo attends Regester Chapel UMC.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Pensions office searching for new executive director

The Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. (VUMPI) is conducting a search for an executive director.

Don Rogers resigned as executive director of VUMPI on July 2 and the Board is conducting a search to fill that position. The position description is posted on the conference website at www.vaumc.org/jobs. Anyone interested in the position should send a resume with cover letter to bettyforbes@vaumc.org.

The Search Committee will be reviewing resumes the week of Sept. 17.

The Rev. Clarence Brown, now serving as the president of the VUMPI board, has asked Betty Forbes to serve as interim executive director. She can be reached at (804) 521-1128 Tuesday through Thursday at the United Methodist Center.

Remember the Orphanage?



For over 112 years, United Methodist Family Services has been caring for children and families throughout Virginia.

Although we are no longer an "orphanage," UMFS continues to be one of the premier providers of residential, educational, vocational, and counseling services for children, teens and families.

Helping nearly 10,000 children and families annually requires a lot of support. We need your help to continue our mission. Please use the enclosed envelope to send your donation today.



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Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD



Two young women from Virginia among those commissioned for mission work

Tara Lynn Miller is commissioned as a US-2 at Aldersgate UMC in Arlington.



By Julia Kayser

On Aug. 3, the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) commissioned its 61st class of US-2s and its 35th class of Mission Interns at Aldersgate UMC in Arlington. Bishop Minerva Carcaño officiated as 34 Young Adults in Mission – the largest group in several years – were sent forth into the world.

The class of 2012 includes US-2 Tara Lynn Miller of Williamsburg, who will serve as a Volunteer Coordinator and Program Assistant at Mary's Place and Church of Mary Magdalene in Seattle, Wash.; and New Mission Intern Katelyn Davis from Mount Olivet UMC in Arlington, who will do Research and Advocacy for the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants in Hong Kong.

More than 200 people gathered for the event. The ceremony was part of the *Living Stones for Transformation* conference. This year's Young Adults in Mission, age 20-30, are a more diverse group than ever. Missionar-

ies hailed from all over the United States, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, South Korea, Peru, Ukraine and Liberia.

The Rev. Denise Honeycutt, pastor at St. Matthews UMC in Annandale and a member of the General Board of Global Ministries, participated in the service, as did GBGM General Secretary Thomas Kemper.

US-2s commit to two years of service in the United States. Mission Interns spend 18 months serving abroad and 18 months in their home countries, for a total of three years of service. Global Ministries provides financial, logistical, educational and emotional support for these young people as they respond to God's call. In addition, the Young Adult Mission Services office helps place all of these missionaries with organizations that will be able to use their gifts and talents.

This year's placements are varied. From a Wesley Foundation Campus

Community Liaison in Tampa, Fla., to a Women's Shelter Advocate at the Navajo United Methodist Center in New Mexico, our US-2s will be engaged in jobs that build community. They have built a covenant together, and here is one excerpt: "We advocate for a humanity of equality, mercy, compassion, and love. We pursue things that do not seem humanly possible, knowing through faith in God that all things are possible."

Mission Interns will travel far and wide. For example, three of them will travel to Brazil to work as Social Educators for the Shade and Fresh Water project. Two more are bound for Geneva, Switzerland, where they will act as Advocacy and Solidarity Officers with the World Student Christian Federation. Kelly Schaefer hopes to "get really muddy" while farming in an intentional community at Japan's Asian Rural Institute. "We remember that many of God's people are oppressed," says part of the covenant that this group wrote together. "Our task is to become co-creators of God's work of liberation, justice, and faith... We will be genuine, authentic, and present with each other in offering solidarity."

Keep our newest class of US-2s and Mission Interns in your prayers this month as they take the gospel into the world. You can support our Young Adult Mission Services office by donating to Advance #13105Z (Mission Interns) and #982874 (US-2s).



Katelyn Davis will serve in Hong Kong. Photos by Cassandra Zampini/GBGM

Five South Central conferences to become two

United Methodist conferences in the denomination's South Central Jurisdiction will have some very different boundaries within the next four years.

On July 20, delegates at the jurisdictional conference unanimously approved the merger of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande annual (regional) conferences into "a bold new conference" and the consolidation of the Kansas East, Kansas West and Nebraska conferences into the Great Plains Conference. Delegates celebrated both decisions with standing ovations.

Earlier this year, the overwhelming majority of members of all five conferences approved the mergers.

Both mergers are among efforts across the denomination to save costs and realign resources to better fulfill The United Methodist Church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The formation of the Great Plains Conference is to be complete by Jan. 1, 2014, and the unification of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences is scheduled to be done before the next South Central Jurisdictional Conference in the summer of 2016. The name of this new conference is yet to be determined.

The Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences already share a bishop as part of the San Antonio Episcopal Area. The jurisdictional conference assigned Bishop James E. Dorff to continue overseeing the area through 2016.

The Kansas and Nebraska conferences will share a bishop starting Sept. 1, 2012. Bishop Scott J. Jones, who now leads the two Kansas conferences, is to oversee the newly joined Great Plains Episcopal Area.

"Is there nervousness? Yes," said Jones, who presided over the jurisdictional conference session that approved the mergers.

"I think the people of the Kansas East, Kansas West and Nebraska conferences are incredibly privileged to have the opportunity to rethink how to be the best kind of connectional church for the mission of Jesus Christ in the 21st century."

The Great Plains transition process is farther along, but the combining of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences is just as critical.

The Rio Grande Conference serves burgeoning Hispanic congregations stretching across Texas and into New Mexico. But, most of its more than 80 congregations are within the current boundaries of the largely Anglo South-

Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD

west Texas Conference.

A Financial Advisory Consulting Team invited to examine a possible merger found that the small Rio Grande Conference, which relies more on general church funds than most United Methodist conferences, is financially unsustainable. The same team found the Southwest Texas Conference's demographics, mostly non-Hispanic white and aging, threatens that conference's sustainability – particularly as it continues to struggle to appeal to Texas' fast-growing Hispanic population.

"We have for too long lived in communities down the street and across the street from one another and not known each other," the Rev. Laura Merrill, a district superintendent in the Southwest Texas Conference, told delegates.

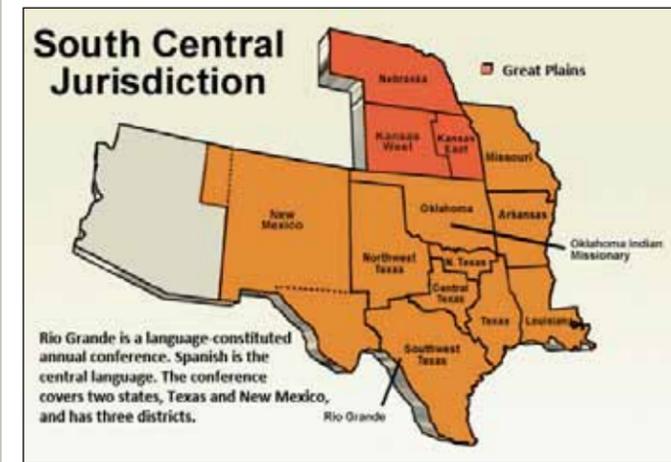
"We have for too long lived in communities down the street and across the street from one another and not known each other."

While perhaps not as dramatic as crossing the language gap, the joining of Nebraska and Kansas United Methodists will bring together two states and three different ways of doing conference business.

It also will create the U.S. conference with the largest contiguous land mass, said the Rev. Adam Hamilton, senior pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan.

"To travel from the southeast corner of Kansas to northwest corner of Nebraska is a huge distance, so for our bishop it is going to create a lot of driving," said Hamilton, whose congregation is one of the denomination's two largest in the United States.

-Heather Hahn, United Methodist News Service





'Introducing' our new Bishop



Bishop Young Jin Cho and Richmond District Superintendent Steve Jones share their joy over Bishop Cho's election and assignment to the Virginia Conference.
Photo by Neill Caldwell.

Young Jin Cho needs no introduction to Virginia Conference

By Linda Rhodes

In the beginning, voting at Jurisdictional Conference was not encouraging for Virginia's candidate, the Rev. Young Jin Cho. He started 11th down from the top vote getter. Only five would be elected.

Four bishops were elected, rather quickly, actually. It took only 11 ballots, all completed on the first day. And then ... ballot 12, and 13, and 14, and 15, and 16 and 17. Evening and morning of the second day. At that point Cho received only 15 votes and considered withdrawing his name. Other members of the Virginia delegation persuaded him to wait.

And then something miraculous happened. Votes for Young Jin Cho began to increase. By the 22nd ballot, he was in second place. On the 26th ballot, he was in first place but didn't have the 60% needed for election. After the 28th ballot, the Rev. Tim McClendon from South Carolina withdrew asking delegates to vote for Cho.

Cho was elected the first Korean-American bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction on the 29th ballot, receiving 287 votes out of 432 valid ballots cast.

"There are all kinds of resurrection," he laughed when addressing the conference following his election.

And then ... another miracle. The jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy assigned Bishop Cho to return to the Virginia Conference. The Southeastern Jurisdiction had never done that before.

While it is uncommon for a newly-elected bishop to be returned to his or her home conference, it is allowed in paragraph 406 of The Book of Discipline, as long as the jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy recommends it by a two-thirds vote and the jurisdictional conference approves by a majority vote.

The Rev. Tom Berlin, pastor of Floris UMC in Herndon and Virginia Conference clergy representative to the jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee, said many bishops told him that it takes at least two years for a new bishop to learn about and understand a conference.

"Young Jin will be way ahead of that," Berlin said. "He will be able to begin right away."

Cho joked that the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) "will save some moving costs."

Members of the Virginia Conference delegation and oth-

(Continued on next page, "Introducing")

“Dear God, Your will. Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else.”

—prayer by Bobby Richardson

(“Introducing”, Continued from previous page)

ers from Virginia attending the conference gathered in a tent erected near Stuart Auditorium beside Lake Junaluska to greet their new bishop. They sang the lyrics of the hymn “Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling”: “Come home, come home ...” and applauded wildly as Cho entered the tent.

“I promise to do my best,” Cho said, “but I ask you to pray for me.”

Cho has called for more emphasis on prayer and spiritual disciplines in the conference.

“This is a great conference,” Cho said. “If we strengthen our spiritual foundation, it can be even greater.”

He said that throughout the process, he has been guided by a prayer by Bobby Richardson: “Dear God, Your will. Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else.”

“I’m deeply humbled and honored by this opportunity,” he said. “I want to dedicate my best to the church and to the Kingdom of God.”

Cho is known for his deep spirituality and his commitment to church growth and planting new churches.

“No other DS has had the vision that he has about starting new churches,” said the Rev. Mark Ogren, former district superintendent and currently conference director of Congregational Excellence.

Cho was senior pastor of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington (KUMCGW) in McLean for 22 years before being appointed superintendent of the Arlington District. During his tenure at KUMCGW, church worship attendance grew from about 100 to more than 1,000, 276 adults and youths were baptized and three building projects completed. 

— Linda Rhodes is Virginia Conference director of Communications




The Committee on the Episcopacy
invites you to attend A

Service of Celebration

on the assignment of

YOUNG JIN CHO

as RESIDENT Bishop of the Richmond Area
The United Methodist Church



Saturday the 22nd of September, 2012
10:30 in the morning

Reveille United Methodist Church
4200 Cary Street Road
Richmond, Virginia

Reception to follow • Reveille Fellowship Hall

Young Jin Cho was born in South Korea and graduated from the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul, Korea, where he received a Th.B. and a Th.M. He came to the United States in 1979 and continued his studies at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. (M. Div. and D. Min.). He was ordained in the East Annual Conference of the Korean Methodist Church in 1977 and transferred to the Virginia Conference in 1983. He was the senior pastor of the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington (KUMCGW) in McLean for 22 years and was serving as District Superintendent of the Arlington District when he was elected Bishop.

During his tenure at KUMCGW, the church went through three building projects and developed and implemented the Five-Year Long Range Plan four times. This church has grown to be one of the most vital congregations in the Virginia Conference. KUMCGW also has started two Korean United Methodist churches in cooperation with the Virginia Conference and organized and hosted three conferences for Korean United Methodist churches as a teaching church: “Root and Wing” Conference for the ministry for second generation (1991), “Vision Conference” for young pastors (2002) and Korean UMC Leaders’ Conference for laity (2005). Throughout his ministry, Rev. Cho has envisioned the church led by the vision of Christ.

In his ministry as District Superintendent Rev. Cho con-

tinued to focus on Christ’s vision for the Arlington District. After prayerful discernment, his ministry has been concentrated on three areas: developing new faith communities, revitalizing existing churches by transforming clergy leadership and strengthening connectionalism. For the past seven years the Arlington District has started more than 10 new faith communities and introduced many training events for the clergy and laity to strengthen spiritual foundation of ministry. He always emphasizes that Christ should be the Lord in our mission and ministries, and prayer should go first.

In addition to his ministry at KUMCGW and Arlington District, he has served the church and the community in various capacities: president of the Korean Wesley Foundation, president of Partner’s Church Association for the renewal of the Korean United Methodist Church, president of Board of Directors of Durihana, Inc. (mission organization helping North Korean refugees), the Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Discipleship, the Commission on Ethnic Minority Local Church Concerns, 250 Task Force which developed “All Things New” plan, and a General Conference Delegate (2008 and 2012). Rev. Cho received the Denman Evangelism Award in 1991.

He and his wife, Kiok, (Deacon in Full Connection – far left) have three children, Grace (also her husband Tony, and their newborn son, Luke), Sophia (in Korea), and son, Chris.

Welcome Bishop Cho and his family at the Service of Celebration at 10:30 on Sept. 22 at Reveille UMC in Richmond.



'But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain.'

Corinthians 15:10

Election of Bishop Cho is extra special to the Korean community

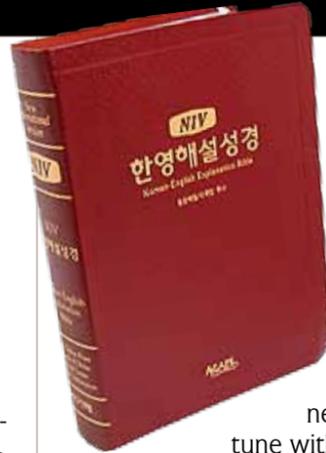
By M.J. Kim

I have attended the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska several times in the past. However the experience I just recently had at the 2012 gathering was particularly special. Definitely one could sense and feel "The spirit of the living God" watching over all of us at the conference. It was felt as the delegates were discerning the will of God as to who should be elected the next episcopal leaders of the church.

From the beginning, the method of selecting a nominee for the episcopacy from the Virginia Conference was different from any other that I had known. It was truly a spiritual and insightful process seeking God's guidance.

The election of Bishop Young Jin Cho is a clear indication of the work of the Holy Spirit. After endless ballots, a lesser-known person of the Southeastern Jurisdiction was elected to the highest office in United Methodism.

In my conversation with Bishop Cho at the Jurisdictional Conference, he said: "whether I am elected or not, I will accept it as the will of God and celebrate it." Upon his election, the news spread like a wild fire in the Korean faith communities all around the globe praising God. I received several e-mails from Korea, and other believers in America thanking God for United Methodism. Many of them finally



understood the meaning of the connec-tional ministry that we all are sisters and brothers in Christ without regards to race or color.

A man of God and prayer, Cho has submerged his entire life to the will and purpose of God. I have known and observed Bishop Cho for decades as a person who has kept his focus on the Lord and has

never once departed from being in tune with the Lord even in times of discouragements and challenges. I am especially grateful

that the Episcopacy Committee of the Southeastern Jurisdiction has appointed Bishop Cho to the Virginia Conference at this particular time.

Years ago Methodist missionaries took the gospel message to Korea. Because of their ministry I, like thousands more, became a Christian. In 1957, one of the churches in the Virginia Conference provided the opportunity for me to attend Ferrum College. After finishing seminary, the Virginia Conference accepted me (in 1963) even though there were no Korean pastors serving in the entire Southeast. Today there are 40 Korean pastors serving in our conference. And it is our desire to serve faithfully as those early missionaries did in our homeland, Korea. Thank you for your generous hospitality and continuing opportunity to serve.

I am confident that the Virginia Conference will experience a spiritual renaissance under the leadership of our new Bishop and we undergird him and his wife, the Rev. Kiok Cho, with our prayers and love. ☺

-The Rev. M. J. Kim is retired and lives in Fredericksburg



Young Jin Cho, pictured in front of the Korean UMC of Greater Washington in McLean, where he was the senior pastor for 22 years.

“I have many shortcomings. I am a first generation immigrant from South Korea. My English is still in the process of ‘sanctification’ towards perfection. And I am not young though my first name is Young. I will serve only one term. Knowing these shortcomings, I had only one reason why I made myself available for this possibility. It was because wherever the Lord leads me, I have to follow.”



“Let me read from Paul’s first letter to Corinthians 15:10: ‘But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them - though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.’ I love this lesson. Paul says, ‘By the grace of God, I am what I am.’ Then, he says, ‘God’s grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them.’ Paul worked harder than any other apostle. God’s grace toward Paul was very fruitful. But he continues saying, ‘It was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.’ If there is any accomplishment or fruit in my mission, says Paul,

it is not because of me, but on account of the grace of God. From the bottom of my heart I agree with Paul – ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’ I was born in a Methodist family. My mother was a devoted Methodist. I thank God that I was ‘predestined’ to be a Methodist.”

“I want to be a praying Bishop. I want to spread a culture of prayer to clergy and laity. I strongly believe that if we rediscover our praying knees, if we humbly rely on our Lord, the UMC will be changed. We will become more faithful and fruitful. But most of all, I think this is the way that scripture teaches us.”

“I love The United Methodist Church. The issue we face today is more than a restructuring or a lack of skills or programs. It is a spiritual one. It is a faith issue. Without addressing this fundamental issue, I don’t think we can turn around the decline of our churches. I strongly believe that No spiritual vitality, No vital congregations. My passion is in helping the pastors and the churches to rediscover the spiritual vitality by truly honoring the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our mission and ministries. But spiritual vitality cannot be created by our own plan or efforts. Spiritual vitality is God’s gift for the church. Here we find the importance of prayer. What John Wesley said still challenges us: ‘Perhaps no sin of omission more frequently occasions this than the neglect of prayer.’”

“A boy was playing in the garden. His father came to him and said, ‘Son, could you move the rock in the backyard?’ ‘Yes, Dad,’ he replied. The son tried many times, but he could not move the rock. It was too heavy. The boy said, ‘Dad, I cannot move the rock.’ ‘Son, try one more time. Do your best.’ The boy tried one more time, but again he could not move the rock. ‘Dad, I did my best. I tried hard, but I cannot move it.’ The father said with a knowing smile, ‘Son, you did not do your best, because you did not ask me to help you.’ Our best must always include asking God to help us.”

CHO IN HIS OWN WORDS



“By participating in the covenant, we can make the change of an episcopal leader into something more than just a ‘church hierarchy’ event”

—the Rev. Steve Jones, Richmond District Superintendent



All conference members asked to join Bishop Cho, delegation in spiritual renewal covenant

Spiritual renewal was a topic of much conversation at the 2012 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, N.C. Now, as the Virginia Conference prepares to welcome its new bishop, the Rev. Dr. Young Jin Cho, delegation members say they hope the fruits of that conversation will be far from ordinary.

Even before Cho was elected and anyone knew he would be returning to Virginia as our bishop, the delegation drew up a covenant, pledging to devote at least an hour each day to prayer and other spiritual disciplines – a central tenet of Cho’s plan for the clergy under his episcopal leadership. In welcoming Bishop Cho in his new role, the delegation is sharing that covenant with the entire conference in hopes that clergy and laity will prayerfully consider committing themselves to this act of intentional spiritual renewal.

Although the covenant covers only the first 100 days of Bishop Cho’s episcopal leadership, it is hoped that this will serve to ignite and continue a process of spiritual renewal that will last well past that first 100 days.

“By participating in the covenant, we can make the

change of an episcopal leader into something more than just a ‘church hierarchy’ event,” says Richmond District Superintendent the Rev. Steve Jones. “It becomes personal. If we join in an hour of prayer or other spiritual disciplines, we can deepen and enrich our spiritual lives – and by doing so we can bless our own lives and the lives of all for whom we pray: our families, our friends, our churches, our communities and our new bishop.”

What can you do to participate in this time of spiritual renewal?

1) Pray. Then read the covenant online at www.ipetitions.com/petition/vaprayercovenant. Take some time to read it, pray about where you are in your life and if you are willing to commit to taking this time. If you believe you are called to join in this endeavor, you can sign the covenant online and begin this journey with the delegation.

2) Pray. Then pass the story and the link along. You can e-mail it to your friends and family, share it on Facebook and Twitter, or pass the word on. If people do not have online access, print out the covenant and share it that way.

3) Pray. Then let your church know what you’re doing. Whether that’s by means of newsletter, Sunday morning announcement, or simply by talking to people, make sure you share in this with your faith community.

4) Pray, fast, read, study, meditate – commit yourself to a spiritual discipline to which you feel called, and do it for an hour a day. Pray, especially, for Bishop Cho as he begins this new phase of ministry, and for each other as the conference undertakes this journey with him. ☞

Rev. Layman named interim Arlington District superintendent to replace Bishop Cho



The Rev. Tony Layman

willingness to serve in a crucial capacity. Please surround him with your prayers and support as he prepares for this transition.”

Layman will replace Bishop Young Jin Cho, who was elected to The United Methodist Church episcopacy on June 19 and assigned to lead the Virginia Conference. Cho begins his four-year term as bishop on Sept. 1.

Earlier, Bishop Kammerer had announced that the Rev. Ralph Rowley, senior pastor at Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield, would be named the new Arlington District superintendent. But on Aug. 6, she announced that

Bishop Charlene Kammerer has announced that the Rev. Tony Layman will serve as interim Arlington District superintendent from Sept. 1 through June 30, 2013, the end of the conference year.

“A retired pastor and a former DS, Rev. Layman will bring a depth of experience and expertise to this role,” Bishop Kammerer said. “I am very grateful for his

Rowley had decided not to join the Cabinet.

“After further consultation with Rev. Ralph Rowley about his projected appointment as superintendent for the Arlington District, he has decided not to take the appointment,” Bishop Kammerer said. “I am reappointing him as Senior Pastor for the Messiah UMC.”

She said Rowley’s decision was based on recent changes to the salaries paid Virginia Conference district superintendents.

“This turn of events has been caused by my unintentional misrepresentation of the salary and compensation to Rev. Rowley,” Bishop Kammerer said. “I was under the mistaken impression that the new salary level for DS appointments in the Virginia Conference was effective for 2013. However, the Annual Conference approved the recommendation of CFA that the new salary amount for DS’s would be effective from July 2012 forward.”

During the June 22-24 session of the 2012 Virginia Annual Conference, members approved a recommendation from the conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) to establish the annual salary for all new district superintendents (appointed July 1, 2012, and after) at \$88,000. All current district superintendents who are presently earning less than \$88,000 will receive salary increases.

(Continued on Page 28, “Rev. Layman”)



Southeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops

2012 bishop assignments in the Southeastern Jurisdiction:

Alabama-West Florida Conference - Bishop Paul Leeland
 Western North Carolina Conference - Bishop Larry Goodpaster
 Florida Conference - Bishop Ken Carter
 South Carolina Conference - Bishop Jonathan Holston
 Holston Conference - Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor
 Kentucky and Red Bird Missionary Conferences - Bishop Lindsey Davis
 Mississippi Conference - Bishop James Swanson
 Tennessee and Memphis Conferences - Bishop Bill McAlilly
 North Georgia Conference - Bishop Mike Watson
 North Carolina Conference - Bishop Hope Morgan Ward
 Virginia Conference - Bishop Young Jin Cho
 North Alabama Conference - Bishop Debbie Wallace-Padgett
 South Georgia Conference - Bishop James King

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EVENTS



All Things New: Meeting Your Vital Congregation Goals training

- Sept. 29:** Staunton District (Calvary UMC, Stuarts Draft);
- Sept. 30:** York River District (Warwick Memorial UMC, Newport News);
- Oct. 13:** Fredericksburg District (Tabernacle UMC, Fredericksburg);
- Oct. 20:** Farmville District (Main Street UMC, South Boston);
- Nov. 11:** Roanoke District (Cave Spring UMC)

The Cabinet and Virginia Conference staff will continue the Vital Congregations events in the fall, which are separate from the regular district training days. Nearly 600 people participated in the five training events held in April and May. Workshops will be offered in key areas of vitality including worship, mission, small groups and invitation.

“Launch Pad”

Sept. 28: Virginia United Methodist Center, Glen Allen

Church planter training in two installments: a two-day intensive, followed by a field trip to a newly launched United Methodist plant; a distance learning weekend later in the mid-year, designed for the planter and his/her local launch team. Leaders include Path 1 staff Paul Nixon and Sam Rodriguez. For more information contact Pat Hickman at 1-800-768-6040, ext. 155, or (804) 521-1155, or e-mail PatHickman@vaumc.org.

Ministry as a Presence

Oct. 2-3: Richmond Hill Retreat Center, Richmond

A diaconal retreat, sponsored by the conference Order of Deacon and the Center for Clergy Excellence, will explore how we cultivate presence – in self, in others, in ministry, and in relationship to God? – through spiritual and Family Systems study. For more information contact Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org or call 1-800-768-6040 or (804) 521-1100, ext. 127.

United Methodist Women

Oct. 27-28: Blackstone Retreat and Conference Center

The 40th annual meeting of the Virginia Conference United Methodist Women.

Large Church Pastors annual gathering

Oct. 31: Reveille UMC, Richmond

The Rev. James Howell of Myers Park UMC in Charlotte, N.C., will speak on “Preaching in the Large Church.” For more information contact Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org or call 1-800-768-6040 or (804) 521-1100, ext. 127.

Mid-Size Church Pastors annual gathering

Nov. 1: River Road UMC, Richmond

Consultant Gil Rendle will speak on “Strategic Planning, Goal Setting, and Leading Change.” For more information contact Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org or call 1-800-768-6040 or (804) 521-1100, ext. 127.

United Methodist Men

Nov. 2-4: Blackstone Retreat and Conference Center

The 35th annual spiritual retreat for the conference’s United Methodist Men. For more information contact Jim Green, conference UMMen president, at jimgreen14@hotmail.com.

Middle School Fall Retreat

Nov. 9-11: Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg

Youth will be challenged to grow as disciples of Christ through worship, Bible study, and small groups while building new friendships with youths from all over Virginia. Contact Becky Tate at BeckyTate@vaumc.org or (804) 521-1139.

New Church Leadership Institute

Nov. 13-15: United Methodist Center, Glen Allen

The training event will help clergy and laity discern whether church planting is a part of their call. This event is being sponsored by the conference Center for Congregational Excellence and will be led by Jim Griffith. Visit www.vaumc.org/NCLIRegistration for more details.

High School Fall Retreat

Nov. 30-Dec. 2: Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg

Retreat will include a Youth Service Fund (YSF) “walk for change” that will help youth gain mission awareness of how to make a difference in the world. Contact Becky Tate at beckytate@vaumc.org or (804) 521-1139.

Be the Gift!

Dec. 26-Jan. 5: Nassau, The Bahamas

The Virginia Conference Council on Young Adults is offering a mission trip to Nassau, where the group will serve two different orphanages and an AIDS Camp. The event is open to all young adults across the conference. For more information, contact the Rev. Jessie Squires at pastorjessiesquires@gmail.com.

Clarification

The 2010 Virginia Annual Conference approved a resolution to require mandatory ethics training every four years for clergy and church professionals. Ethics II training topics include self care, boundaries, and challenges of the digital age. Ethics II events will be offered once on each district over the next four years with four events per year. Clergy and church professionals may attend the event on their district or another district. The first Ethics II event will be Wednesday, Sept. 19, in the York River District. Register on line at www.vaumc.org.

The October issue of the Advocate will feature more information on sexual ethics training.

In addition, all new clergy in their first year under appointment, and other church professionals, are required to attend Sexual Ethics Training and Clergy Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Training. Information about registration is sent directly to those needing to attend.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Second ‘LEAD’ helps young people discover their call

The Virginia Conference-sponsored leadership training event called “LEAD” began in Roanoke with more than 40 young people, young adults and adult staff spending 10 days living in community with one another. There is something about sleeping on the floor together, cleaning our own bathrooms side-by-side, and learning about what God has created us to be that builds community.

The goal of “LEAD” was that young people would discover the ways in which God is calling them to serve the world.

The three tracks (worship, spiritual formation and outreach) included time at a rescue mission, exploring faith in art, learning about different worship

spaces, interviewing clergy, facilitating worship for the Rescue Mission Rally, fasting, being in fellowship with the local community and having fun. The young people then created their plan of action to go out into the world to make a difference. These covenants from young disciples

are the jumping off point for the good works these people will do in the coming weeks, months and years.

For more information, contact Alison Malloy, Conference Council for Youth Ministries, at alisonmalloy@gmail.com or (540) 908-8403.



‘Bridges out of Poverty’ program creates community

For 15 weeks, members of the Roanoke community gathered for a program designed to help people “bridge” from their current situations. We sought to develop resources and to help transform lives and the community in which people live.

Did we do it? Did we transform lives, create authentic community and unleash people through the power of the spirit? The people in the program have said it was transforming and I have personally felt transformation. So I think we got part-way there.

Since we started the “Bridges out of Poverty” program, 18 adults, 20 children, plus many workers with Mary Lou Lewis

(from Bonsack UMC) and me as facilitators, gathered once a week. We came as strangers to one another and started talking. Something happened as we talked, worked and shared meals together. We started to become a community. The community started to expand to include other workers (and churches) and on graduation night we had many folks from many backgrounds all celebrating achievement and community.

Maybe your church could try this experiment of faith in your community? I know some people who can help. For more information on Shalom Zone: Grace Ministries call (540) 989-3335, and also for questions about “Bridges out of Poverty.”

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

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

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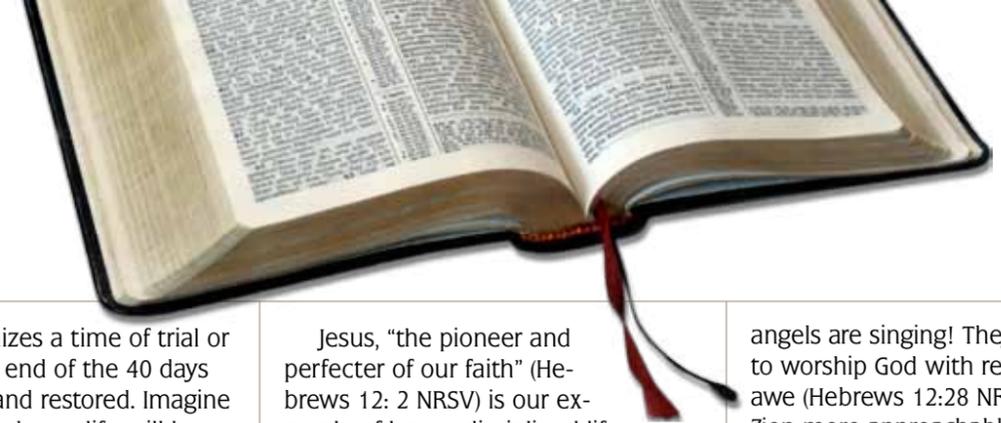
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Devotions from International Lesson Series

LIVING THE WORD



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
The Rev. Lisa McGehee is a commissioned deacon and currently serves Good Shepherd on the Richmond District. She is the Minister of Adult Discipleship and Communications. She also serves the Richmond District as chair of the Leadership Support Team and is active in the Virginia Christian Educators Fellowship. She is also a trained labyrinth facilitator and enjoys sharing this ancient form of prayer with others. She earned her Master of Divinity from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and completed 27 hours of work at Union Presbyterian Seminary (formally Union Theological Seminary/Presbyterian School of Education). She is married to Donald McGehee. They enjoy hiking any woodland trail they can find, antiques and organic gardening.

September 2, 2012 "Faith Developed In Community" Hebrews 10: 19-31

The book of Hebrews was written for the Jewish believers who were struggling in their new found faith. As excited as they had been to receive freedom in Christ, they wavered with being drawn back into their traditional practice. They were caught in the middle between the needs of helping a new community develop and the traditional Jewish and Roman leaders who were trying to contain the excitement of this movement. What made this even more difficult for them is that they believed Christ was going to return immediately. As time went on their hope began to diminish, arguments and disagreements started, good works began to go by the wayside and folks began to stay home from worship because they did not want to be involved in the negativity. They forgot that Christ's life, death and resurrection had brought them together as a community of faith.

How do we sustain this hope 2000 years later? We, too, are faced with structures that appear to be crumbling, we have disagreements about who we are called to be as followers of Christ, and economics often keep us from the good works we know we should do. It might sound trite but we hold to hope through relationships. Relationships with fellow believers help us see God when we begin to lose hope.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, had this in mind when he created small groups. In true Wesley fashion they were a complicated system of bands and classes. However, the essence of the system was designed so that people could be in community where they could grow in their faith as they journeyed to be disciples of Christ.

Small groups are growing strong once again. Fall is an excellent time to gather with others for prayer, study and service. If you are not a part of a small group, think about starting one. Your pastor, lay leader or director of Christian Education can help you get started. Make a habit of opening your time together with prayer, spend time studying scripture – digging deeper into Hebrews would be a great place to begin, and then serve together. Your serving together as a group will paint for others a beautiful image of what it means to be a Christian. Who knows,

you might help revitalize this movement that is grounded in hope.

September 9, 2012 "The Silence of the Soul" Hebrews 11: 1-3, 6; Psalm 46: 1-3, 8-11

The BBC TV series The Big Silence tells the story of five people invited to learn how to incorporate silence into their lives. During the nine-day retreat the only time they were able to speak out loud was during daily meetings with a spiritual guide and when they created their video log. The documentary explores the ups and downs they experienced during this extreme introduction to silence. I'll not share all of the details. It's worth the watch and can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_zDtdYu3mA.

Before I lose you, I'm not suggesting you go on a nine day retreat. With our daily schedules of doctor's appointments, soccer practice, teaching, preparing sermons, working and preparing meals, you are probably like me – it's almost impossible to find silence. We are surrounded by noise. A single room in our homes can have a T.V., several phones, computers, conversations, and the chatter in our own heads. Sadly, noise has become so pervasive that we are entering into a time where we do not know what silence, well, what silence sounds like. It's not easy, but it is vital because, as Abbot Christopher Jamison shares in The Big Silence, "Silence is a path that leads us to God and takes us to the center of who we are. It is the gateway to the soul and it is the gateway to God."

In silence we will know God as we listen for God's voice calling to us. This is reason enough to be silent. It does take practice. This week, I encourage you to find time each day for silence. You do not need to go away on retreat to find silence. You can have your own retreat wherever you are. Try this. Take a deep breath. Repeat Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know I am God." (NRSV) Say it to yourself one time. The next time drop the word "God", the next time drop "am" and so on until you have the word "be." It's in the being that we enter into the silence. Now, sit in silence for 30 seconds. That's it for the first day. The next day, add 30 more seconds. Continue adding until you reach 20 minutes. It will take 40 days to reach 20 minutes. Forty in

scripture symbolizes a time of trial or a journey. At the end of the 40 days one is renewed and restored. Imagine how your soul and your life will be renewed after spending time with God each day.

September 16, 2012 "Running the Race" Hebrews 12:1-11

Did you watch this year's Olympics? I was captivated by the twists and turns of Virginia's own gymnast, Gabby Douglas; and the talent of South Africa's Oscar Pistorius, the first double-amputee runner to compete in the Olympics, was more than amazing. I also enjoyed the interviews and commercials that gave us insights into how the Olympic athletes got to London. AT&T's ad that showed a younger swimmer watching Missy Franklin set the world record. The young swimmer erased the old record off of her dry-erase board and replaced it with the new world record. She had a new goal to achieve and a new role model who could show her how to achieve the goal. Those who train for the Olympics do so with the hope that they will have the opportunity to compete in the Olympics. We cheer them on because they accomplish things we can only dream of and because we know their training is not without suffering.

Suffering is not easy. We do not like it. In the last week you probably have heard of someone who has lost a job, has an illness without a cure, known someone who has lost a loved one, or perhaps, worship attendance has dropped – again. No, suffering is not easy. So how do we endure while keeping our eye on the goal? We discipline ourselves. Uh, oh, she's talking about discipline. I don't like to be disciplined either, but discipline is what helps us get through the tough times.

Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12: 2 NRSV) is our example of how a disciplined life can help us get through times of suffering. Jesus did not have an easy time. He was persecuted and talked about; he was the center of gossip and scorn. He was envied, despised, hated and that was just from the religious leaders. He was able to persevere because he sacrificed conveniences and ease to reach his ultimate goal. Just as an Olympic athlete has to say "no" in order to compete in the Olympics, we, too, may need to let go of some things so we can become more like Jesus. What are your spiritual goals? Do you desire to spend more time in prayer or reading the Bible daily? Would you like to participate in a small group but just can't seem to find the time? What are you willing to let go of so that you can achieve your goals of running the race toward becoming more like the pioneer of our faith?

September 23 "We Have Come to Mount Zion" Hebrews 12: 14-29

In the first week of this devotional series we learned that the new Christians were wavering in their trust in the New Covenant and were returning back to their former ways of worship and understanding. To illustrate these choices the writer gives them a contrasting image of Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion. Mt. Sinai represents the former covenant and is a reminder that Mt. Sinai was a blazing fire, it was dark and wild and full of gloom. Even Moses, who mediated the covenant, approached with fear. It could be touched, but the penalty was death. (Exodus 19:12-13 NRSV).

The writer then contrasts this image with that of Mt. Zion which represents the New Covenant, the spiritual heavenly promised land. The

angels are singing! They can come to worship God with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28 NRSV). Why is Mt. Zion more approachable? The Old Covenant called for blood sacrifices to be offered for forgiveness of sins. Such is not the case in the New Covenant because Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, is the sacrifice.

The images of Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion represent two sides of a coin. They give us two different images of God. In Mt. Sinai we see a God that is unapproachable, stern, a judge and filled with words that we do not want to hear. In the Mt. Zion image we see a God that is more revealing of who God is. It's not that God has changed, it's that God has chosen through Jesus Christ to reveal more of Godself to us. The writer says "we have come to Mount Zion" (v. 22). We have come, we have arrived.

How are you approaching God? Do you come to God in fearful trembling? Do you come with the assurance of forgiveness? Do you rejoice in knowing that you have arrived at Mt. Zion? The writer of Hebrews wanted the new Christians, and us, to know that nothing is better than living fully into the hope of Mt. Zion. Nothing is better than living into the reality that God loves you, forgives you and wants you to know you. Come, come and live fully in Mt. Zion!

September 30, 2012 "Unselfish" Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13

All You Need Is Love was a popular song written and sung by the Beatles. Over and over again the lyrics remind us that "All we need is love, love, love, love, love. Love is all we need." In this time of war, shootings at movie theaters, bullying and continued economic collapse, we need love more than ever before. And yet, what we

(Continued on next page, "Living the Word")



CLERGY & DIACONAL

"Living the Word" (Continued from Page 27)

fear most is giving and receiving love.

Chapter 13 is the practical application chapter of Hebrews. It takes all of the doctrine given in the first 12 chapters and shows us how to live them in our daily lives. Chapter 13 is a list of moral instructions reminding us that our everyday actions are most pleasing to God when they are done in love. If we look back at the devotional for September 23, the writer in Chapter 12 highlighted that we have received the spiritual kingdom. Our response to this gift is then to love one another. The key is that we are not only to love our family or friends but we are to also love the stranger, the least, the most unlovable, the enemy – it's this love that counts the most.

This agape love is action-oriented love. It's the love we exhibit when we unselfishly give of ourselves. This type of love is about motivation. Paul encourages us to love without boasting (1 Corinthians 13: 4). Churches today walk a fine line as we share news about our programs and missions as a way to attract new people. We want people to know that in our churches they can find a community that takes seriously the commandment to "love one another." We put on our websites and Facebook pages images of us serving in the community. We keep track of the number of people served when we are in mission. Paul warns us to be cautious and to check our motivation. Are we being boastful and arrogant or are we serving without worrying about photo opportunities? How is your church serving? How are you serving? Are you serving with an unselfish heart, a heart that results in greater action than faith and hope? ☞

"Rev. Layman" (Continued from Page 23)

es, to bring them to \$88,000 as of Jan. 1, 2013. All district superintendents currently earning more than \$88,000 will remain at their current salary levels.

"I have apologized profusely to Rev. Rowley and his wife, Marcia, to the Messiah congregation, and to the Arlington Committee on Superintendency," Kammerer said. "I regret so very much that my mistake has brought pain and confusion to so many people."

"Rev. Rowley has done nothing wrong," she added. "He and Marcia have only been gracious with me in the midst of a very difficult situation. For that, I am so grateful. I also ask you, members of the Virginia Conference, for your prayers and forgiveness."

"I am honored to have been considered for appointment to the Cabinet as superintendent of the Arlington District, and am especially grateful to Bishop Kammerer for her confidence in me in making this appointment," Rowley responded. "Nevertheless ... it is not in my best interest to accept an appointment to the Cabinet at this time. Therefore, I gladly return to ministry at Messiah." ☞
-Linda Rhodes

"Heart Havens" (Continued from Page 8)

"Volunteers from area United Methodist churches and community organizations have played a vital role in the lives of the residents of the Perkins Home," she added. "Throughout this process, volunteers were kept informed of plans for the Perkins Home and encouraged to maintain the relationships they had developed with the residents. It was important to all concerned that the friendships and relationships that were developed between residents and volunteers continue to be nurtured. In our meetings with the administration and staff at GNH, we discussed the role volunteers played in the daily activities of the residents and GNH was eager to continue to support those relationships."

Many of the staff will continue to work at the Perkins Home as employees of GNH and/or Heart Havens.

Heart Havens, a non-profit organization providing residential services for adults with intellectual disabilities, operates 12 other homes across Virginia supporting more than 50 individuals.

For more information about Heart Havens, visit www.hearthavens.org. ☞

"Voices of Youth" (Continued from Page 11)

from the little boy who thanked us for helping him wash his toy car to the homeowner carrying her granddaughter on her hip as she tearfully described her beloved former neighbors. Their stories have become ours as we retell them, honoring their strength and courage.

"My favorite part about Voices of Youth is the community that the program creates," said Virginia Greer, a four-year veteran of the choir. "A group of youth who have mostly never met each other beforehand learns to function as a family unit for the better part of a month. No one is entirely inside their comfort zone, and we are exposed to people with very different backgrounds from our own. The simplest understanding of the result of all this is that Voices forms a network of United Methodists around the state and whom ever we meet at the mission site. This is the biggest impact Voices of Youth makes."

I give thanks for the Virginia Conference, which nurtures its young people into strong leaders with a passion for missions. I give thanks for those we met at Rebuilding Joplin, the work sites, Ozark Christian College and local establishments. I give thanks for the Virginia churches that hosted and/or supported us. I give thanks for those who allowed us to be in ministry with theme. And, of course, I give thanks for the students and staff who attended Voices of Youth: Winds of Change 2012. ☞

-DeLyn Celec is Worship Arts Coordinator at Shenandoah University

Deaths



The Rev. Anthony Christopher Busic, 49, of Salem, died, July 23, 2012. He graduated from Mathews County High School and

Virginia Wesleyan College and from the Duke Divinity School. He served the Orange Charge, Mount Pleasant (Roanoke), the Bethel/Emmanuel

Charge, Central in Salem, and Chestnut Hill in Lynchburg. He served there until health complications forced him to discontinue active service in 2009. Busic is survived by his wife, Vickie Tetreault Busic; by two daughters, Jacqueline Busic and Lisa Duca; and a son, Kenneth.

The Rev. David Raymond Chew Jr., 30, of Parksley, died July 16, 2012. Chew was an Emergency Medical Services provider, employed by both Northampton and Accomack counties,



and was was a member of the Bloxom Volunteer Fire Co. He was appointed July 1 to Hallwood UMC, Eastern Shore District. He attended the

University of West Virginia and Eastern Shore Community College. Chew was active in the Boy Scouts, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca, and a son, David Raymond Chew III. The Revs. Tammy Estep, Alex Joyner and Adam Cooke officiated at his service in Parksley. [See story, pg. 8]



The Rev. William Troy Kessler, 83, of Marion, N.C., died July 21, 2012. He attended Ferrum College and received a BA in Religion from

Lynchburg College. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Candler School of Theology, at Emory University. He served the Virginia Conference for 39 years, including: West Buckingham (Farmville District), Agricola/Mount Tabor (Charlottesville), West Mecklenburg (Farmville), Bethlehem (Charlottesville), Whaleyville/Somerton (Portsmouth), Hickory (Norfolk), Centenary Chase City (Farmville), Tabernacle Poquoson (Peninsula), Wesley (Alexandria) and Chesapeake Avenue (Norfolk). Retiring in 1993, he moved to Williamsburg, where he served as a visiting minister at Tabernacle. In 2002, the Kesslers moved to Raleigh, N.C., to be closer to family, and then to Marion. He is survived by his wife, Marian Saunders Kessler of Marion; a daughter, Kerrie, and her husband, David; a son, Paul, and his wife, Jennifer.

(Continued on next page, "Clergy")

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CLERGY & DIACONAL

"Clergy" (Continued from Page 23)



The Rev. Arthur Holmes Sr. died Aug. 3, 2012, in Raleigh, N.C. Holmes began his ministerial career in 1971 in the Eastern Pennsylvania

Conference. He transferred to the Virginia Conference in 1977 and served the Waynesboro Circuit, Roberts Memorial, Randolph Street and Leesburg-Hamilton. He retired in 1993. He is survived by four sons and four daughters.

Peggy Elaine Adams Anderson, 62, of Richmond, died July 23, 2012. She was married to the **Rev. Joseph R. Anderson**, a retired clergy member of the Virginia Conference

Christine Rudd Cook, mother of the Rev. Linwood G. Cook, died July 8. Rev. Cook is retired and serving Swansonville UMC in the Danville District.

Edel Swadley, 96, mother of the **Rev. Charles Swadley**, died Aug. 2, 2012, in Oregon. Rev. Swadley is retired and lives in Williamsburg.

Mamie Speas Spough, 81, died on July 15, 2012, in Chesapeake. She was the **mother of retired Virginia clergy the Rev. Dan Spough**.

Births

Philip Baker Hall was born on July 25, the son of **Clint and the Rev. Elaine Hall**. He has a big brother, Martin. Rev. Hall is associate pastor at Springfield UMC, Alexandria District.

Avery Holland White was born July 21 to **Katy and the Rev. Justin White**. Rev. White is the pastor at Pleasant Valley UMC, Arlington District.

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ONE LAST WORD



Tweets heard 'round the conference

ReNe'e Teague @rrteague
Is it just me or is VBS "Operation Over-board" a lot like Jimmy Buffett?

Andrew Ware @AWare12
It is very hard to write a 10-page paper due at midnight while watching the Olympic opening ceremony.

Lindsey Baynham @crazeelb
Best part of talking to my mom on the phone is the farewell statement "peace out girl scout."

Pastor Jason Elmore @PastorJasonE
Sunday afternoon football! Oh how I've missed you! Welcome back!

Keith Boyette @wildpastorva
During closing of Peru VBS, we asked all children to sit and shared the Gospel. More than 200 stood to receive Jesus. Praise God!

Steve Jennings @SteveJennings7
Open the Door and Walk Down the Street. Counsel for everyone who serves the poor.

Heart Havens @HeartHavens
Brenda Capen Rocks!

Alan Combs @thricemantis
I've been asked to pray to help dedicate the new Wendy's in Altavista. Trying to think through the theological significance of such an act.



Virginia Beach's Gabby Douglas wins gold, not shy about giving the glory to God

Virginia Beach native Gabrielle Douglas says her faith helped her manage the pressures of competing on a world stage to win Olympic gold.

"Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me," the 16-year-old tweeted after she won the women's gymnastics all-around gold medal in London. Douglas also told a reporter that "the glory goes up to Him, and the blessings fall down on me."

Douglas' Olympic victory made her the first woman of color to win the women's gymnastics all-around.

And on July 28, she tweeted a verse from Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Douglas, comes from a devout Christian family. The full name of the 4'11" teenager, dubbed the "Flying Squirrel"

for her soaring on the uneven bars, is Gabrielle Christina Victoria Douglas. "Her name means, 'God's abled-bodied one.' As you can see, she has lived up to her name," mother Natalie Hawkins explained to the Los Angeles Times.

And God's abled-body she is. She was the underdog going into the women's gymnastics individual all-around event, not even expected to qualify. But she outscored 2011 World Champion and fellow U.S. teammate Jordyn Wieber and made the cut to compete. Then she outshined teammate Aly Reisman, who came in fourth during the women's all-around. Russia's Victoria Komova earned the silver and compatriot Aliya Mustafina the bronze.



Amid the intense pressure and spotlight, Douglas has leaned on Scripture and her Christian faith to keep things in perspective. She also tweeted, "Thank you guys for everything! I am SO grateful God has truly blessed me! Remember to ALWAYS give him the glory for he is GREAT!"

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