

September 2019

# Advocate

TODAY  
is the  
DAY

.....  
MOTIVATED FOR MINISTRY

Special Section: The *Advocate* remembered



Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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

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

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

Fax: 804-521-1174

E-mail: [advocate@vaumc.org](mailto:advocate@vaumc.org)Website: [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org)Detailed guidelines for the following  
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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

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

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# PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow

Editor

## The focus in this month's issue is motivation.

It's something that is not always easy to sustain, but during certain times of the year—like the beginning of the year or as kids head back to school—our minds may naturally focus on it more.

I was reminded of a story recently: 67-year-old Elisabeth Smith decided to take up ballroom dance after her husband suddenly died. The year following his death was a dark place for her, and she realized she needed to find something to pull herself out of it. She started taking dance lessons, and after four months she entered into her first competition. Every week day she now dances for 3 hours.

The *Washington Post* recently published an article about Sarah Yerkes, a decades-long landscape architect, alongside other creative ventures, who just published her first collection of poems at the wonderful age of 101.

I could also mention that the dear late actor Alan Rickman only started acting at 41.

It is never too late to start. Just take a tiny step forward and keep pushing.

I know I get frustrated when I start measuring my progress by looking at another's progress. That won't get you very far. As individuals and as a society we don't do a great job of celebrating progress. We too often see a final product as the best way to measure success and progress.

As we move from summer into fall, you may have a number of goals to accomplish. Learn more in our feature about how leaning on your faith and centering yourself can help you in your ministry. Find positive examples of motivation like the stories above that are personal to you and challenge you to accomplish your own goals. Most of all, remember to celebrate your successes—every step of the way. 🍷



Who says  
it's 'too  
late'?

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Meet Melvin on page 20 and learn about his journey from the the United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Treatment Foster Care program to studying criminal justice at Old Dominion University.



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**Madeline Pillow** | Editor, Director of Communications  
**Forrest White** | News Associate  
**Cathryn Huff** | Graphic Designer  
**Pam Culler** | Administrative Secretary

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## “Love one another” from Annual Conference 2019 and beyond

By Bill Pike

**J**ust before 5 a.m. on Saturday morning, June 22, I awoke to ready myself for the conference sponsored 5K run. I was attending the Annual Conference of the Virginia United Methodist Church as a Richmond District at-large member for Trinity, my home church in Henrico County. Out of all the races I have signed up to run, this one had the earliest start time — 6:15 a.m.

From the Hampton Inn airport location, it was a short drive over to the Best Buy parking lot. That was the gathering point for the runners, walkers, and bike riders who had signed up to participate. The group was hard to miss. Everyone, but me was wearing their bright yellow T-shirt commemorating this first annual run. Despite not wearing the new shirt, I was treated kindly.

We received instructions about the course and how the start to finish was organized and learned about the local



Participants at the 5K event.

nonprofit, Kids Soar, who would benefit from the event's proceeds.

About 300 had gathered, and shortly after the announcements, we started walking toward the Lick Run Greenway trail. We walked parallel to the interstate and then crossed over the highway via a sturdily constructed footbridge with all of the safety trimmings in place.

At the end of the footbridge the path started and slowly participants began moving out.

The first steps of a 5K are like being jostled in a bag of pinto beans. We are all looking for a bit of elbow room. It takes some maneuvering, but gradually the path opens up.

I overheard an early comment about the terrain. We started off going downhill. The course is a loop. So that means getting back to the finish line will require recovering this ground, but going uphill at that time.

The course was nice. A wide path of asphalt, lots of green vegetation on both sides. There was even a quietly chatting creek running with us for a while. Birds were chirping a greeting as I slogged into their domain. One must run under a walnut tree as I saw a good sized green walnut laying on the path. I recall an early childhood lesson about how the oil from a walnut hull can stain clothing.



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



# COMMENTARY

I admire the vision of the planners who carved out this trail. I wish I had that kind of foresight. Saving green space like this is good for all Roanokers.

There is a short trek on a quiet neighborhood street, and then we reconnect to the trail. Further along we loop into the Brown/Robertson Park. Briefly, we leave the smooth asphalt for a terrain of worn turf and dried mud. I grabbed a cup of water at the water table.

Course marshals keep us properly directed, and

out of the park we return to the trail. We have already encountered the really fast runners who will finish this 5K in a blink. On the way back, we encounter walkers and runners plodding along. All appear to be content.

Slowly, I work my way back over the course. Finally, I'm at that downhill section where we started. My old body can feel the pull of going uphill. But somehow, I keep lifting my legs. I cross the bridge, and push toward the next incline.

A good crowd lines the path on both sides as I approach the finish line. Gentle applause and words of congratulations greet the participants. My goal for any race is to cross the finish line.

That too is the goal for everyone who works behind the scenes for the annual conference, get to the finish line.

But, just because annual conference has a natural ending, that doesn't mean our work as United Methodists comes to a stop.

Out on that 5K course, there was a significant

Scripture on a sign: "Love one another."

Just like that singular walnut out on the trail had the capacity to stain my clothing, I hope my takeaway from annual conference is that I need to be stained by those words— "Love one another."

If we United Methodists expect to endure the challenges we face as a church, we must embrace those three words— "Love one another." 🍅

—Bill Pike is the director of operations at Trinity UMC in Henrico.



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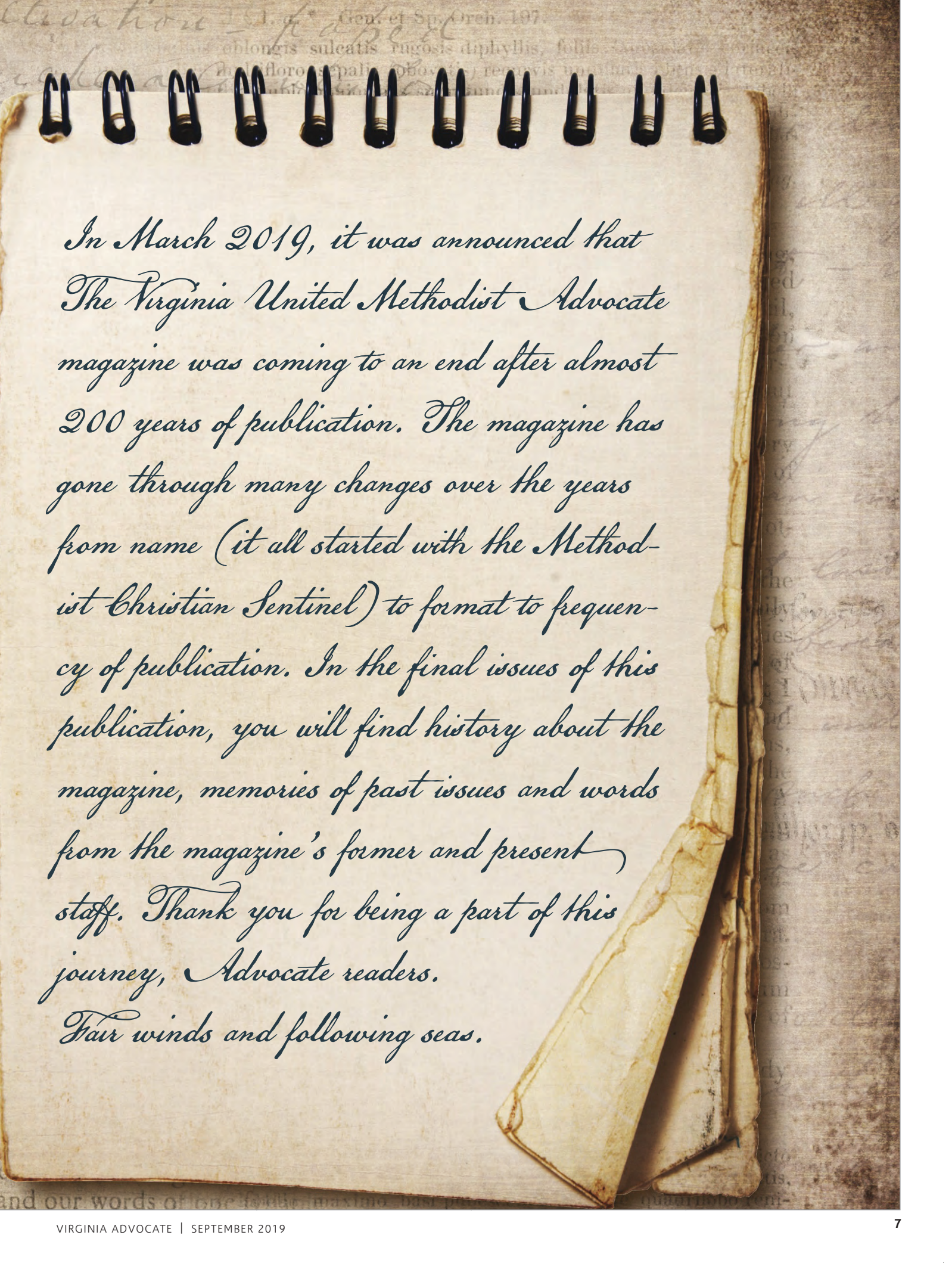
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# Advocate Memories



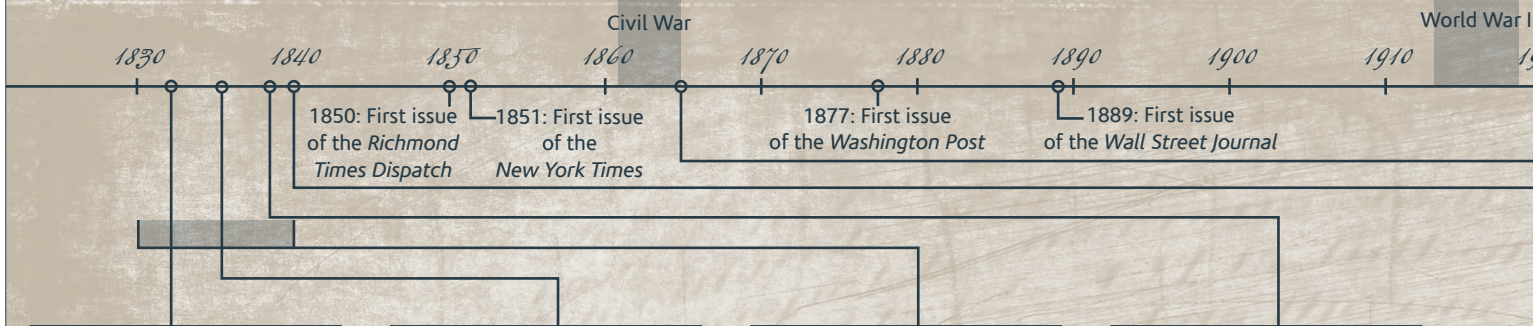




In March 2019, it was announced that The Virginia United Methodist Advocate magazine was coming to an end after almost 200 years of publication. The magazine has gone through many changes over the years from name (it all started with the Methodist Christian Sentinel) to format to frequency of publication. In the final issues of this publication, you will find history about the magazine, memories of past issues and words from the magazine's former and present staff. Thank you for being a part of this journey, Advocate readers.

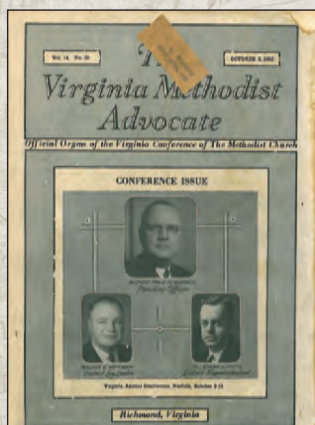
Fair winds and following seas.





*June 8, 1832*  
Ethelbert Drake started the newspaper, *The Methodist Christian Sentinel*. The publication was similar in size to other papers of the time: folio size with six columns of print on each of its four pages. "It was published every Friday morning four doors above the Columbian Hotel, Cary Street, Richmond, Virginia" ("The *Richmond Christian Advocate*: 1832-1840" by Joseph Mitchell)

*1836*  
Drake ran the newspaper as a one-man operation but was soon broke. The conference voted to take it over with a new editor and a committee overseeing its work. Leroy Lee was selected editor.



*1832-1840*  
Subscriptions grew from 400 subscribers to more than 3,000.



*Late 1840s*  
The publication was affectionately known as "Old Richmond"



## Timeless memories

### Quick Facts:

Past editors have included clergy, journalists and even a bishop.

There have been 22 editors of the *Advocate* publication.

In 2001, I was reading an article in the *Advocate* that mentioned a Virginia Conference pastor named Grace Ellen Rice. My wife and I loved the name Grace Ellen so much we gave that name to our firstborn, who arrived in April 2002.

— Rev. Douglas Forrester Reveille UMC, Richmond

I recently celebrated my 80th birthday. As a very young girl, I fondly remember my grandmother reading the chil-

dren's story from the *Advocate* while I sat on her knee. Evidently the *Advocate* published a children's story in each issue. I looked forward to that special time with my grandmother. Faith and family were important to Grandmother.

— Audrey Parsons Daniels

My maternal grandfather, T. M. Ayers, passed away in 1954 at the age of 86. He lived with my parents, sister and me until the time of his death. He had been a subscriber to





1840

General Conference assumes control of the Virginia and North Carolina Conference *Journal* and the question of the magazine's name comes up once again. It becomes the *Richmond Christian Advocate*.



1865

All *Advocate* assets were burned in the fire that devastated Richmond at the end of the Civil War.



1938

The publication takes on the name the *Virginia Methodist Advocate*.



1997

The *Advocate* begins printing in full color



# of the Virginia Advocate

the *Virginia Methodist Advocate*, and my parents carried on the tradition in our household. My sister and I grew up following the events and activities of the conference at an early age. After the death of both of my parents, I continued with the family tradition of maintaining a subscription. Even though the format and official name have changed through the years, I have continued to look forward to each issue. I have saved some of the past issues of the

*Advocate* with the oldest dated November 22, 1962. Although I will be sad when the final print edition comes out in December 2019, I know that the conference Communications staff will continue to keep the members of the Virginia Conference informed.

— JoAnne Stevenson  
Christ UMC, Norfolk

As a retired clergy member of the Virginia Conference, as well as the son of a long deceased Virginia

clergy father the Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Hawkins, there are a number of thoughts and emotions that surfaced since reading of the *Advocate's* demise.

Simply put, the fact that a copy of the *Virginia Advocate* adorned the coffee table in my living rooms since my earliest memory, says something to and about the *Advocate* and my family. I seriously doubt if ever there was an issue that was not thoroughly read and digested.

I proudly entered my personal subscription in 1965. I think the cost was three dollars a month — I don't recall now how many issues a month were published.

So, this 85-year-old preacher will miss his *Advocate*, like other vestiges of Methodism, our *Advocate* has fallen along the wayside. I, too, will shed a tear over a few vestiges that should have, but did not fall along the wayside.

— The Rev. Robert Hawkins, retired





## Memories from Advocate editors

By the Rev. Dr. R. Franklin Gillis Jr.

The year was 2001. The previous year, a pastor friend had asked me, "What more do you want to accomplish before retiring?" I did not have an answer for her, but after serious prayer and discernment, I chose to take early retirement to discover a new, but unknown call. After 39 years of appointments in a variety of ministerial settings, I took a leap of faith, uncertain of what doors would open.

The week following my retirement, I was asked to serve as interim editor of the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate*. (The previous editor, Al Horton, had accepted a pastoral appointment after 15 years in the position.) During my time of discernment for the next chapter of ministry I was to pursue, I never imagined taking a position for which writing skills were essential! However, by God's grace, I said yes to the new and challenging role.

Following Al's award-winning editorship of our conference news

magazine was both humbling and challenging. However, the implementation of this role became so much easier because of the supportive seasoned staff. I soon discovered that putting together an issue of the *Advocate* was a team effort. My job was rather like being a captain of a ship, whose responsibility was to insure we reached our destination. The objective of producing two issues a month could not have been achieved without the expertise of crew members with specific tasks and responsibilities which ensured "smooth sailing."

The *Advocate* production "crew," associate editor Brenda Capen and production coordinator Debra Duty, were knowledgeable and proficient, which insured that each issue would be of the best quality possible (there was at least one perfectionist on staff); and they also made sure that we would meet each deadline for publication and release across the Virginia Conference. So much happened behind the scenes for each issue that I didn't know

about, nor did I need to know, because of the skills and dedication of faithful staff. (I am also blessed with a wife who is a retired teacher, and who through the years has been my personal editor!)

Sometimes God leads us to where we least expect to go but are needed. I took the interim editor position feeling unqualified, but soon discovered that it is in such times that we grow the most. I also discovered the joy of writing for the *Advocate* and have continued to write short devotionals called "Reflections for the Journey."

As I perceive it now, my brief tenure at the *Advocate* office was God's gift for my time of transition. My stint spent at the *Advocate* is filled with fond memories of personal growth and doing a new thing!

—The Rev. Dr. R. Franklin Gillis Jr.  
served as *Advocate* interim editor  
from 2001-2002.

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By the Rev. W. Hewlett Stith

In 1972 I became the second-youngest editor in the *Advocate's* then-140-year history. Today I find myself the oldest surviving editor as the *Advocate* moves toward its final issue.

It was a tumultuous decade when I served as editor. We were still trying to work out the bugs in the 1968 merger of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren. A new bishop retired due to health concerns and we had to share a bishop with the North Carolina Conference. The nation was involved in a controversial war overseas and in racial discord at home.

The *Advocate* had its own problems as it was in precarious financial straits. One board member said, "If my business looked like this, I'd be declaring bankruptcy."

My approach was emphasizing the news aspect of the *Advocate's* mission. In a series of listening sessions on all 18 districts, I learned people wanted straightforward news about what the church was doing and why.

For 10 years, those sessions gave me my marching orders.

We dealt with controversial subjects, but from a news standpoint. I followed the Jeffersonian admonition that if the people have accurate information, they can be trusted to make wise decisions. We reported the news, even when it was bad. I wrote a weekly column that might be personal reflections. More than likely it was pointing out trends I saw in local church ministries. For decades, pastors had been encouraged to send bulletins and newsletters to the *Advocate*. Several hundred did, with little evidence that they were read. I found goldmines there. I saw how congregations responded to events and served their communities.

The *Advocate* didn't win many awards in those days. The church competitions were divided into newspaper and magazine categories. We were

a news magazine, so we competed against magazines the likes of *Together* (full color, general church publication), *New World Outlook* (full color, huge staff), *The Interpreter* and *Circuit Rider*. We had limited staff and limited budget, so we didn't compete. But we did see how we stacked up, however, by entering in competitions of the International Association of Business Communicators, where we received a number of merit awards. We also won a photo award from United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC) for a Holy Week photo essay that was picked up by almost every regional publication in the denomination.

During my tenure, I was blessed with two outstanding editorial associates. Judy





This was a period when the appointments of pastors to churches were really “news.” I recall one year having a hymn-sing on the final morning while the bishop and his Cabinet worked out the last six appointments.

Samuelson Shapleigh came straight from college to our staff, where she made immediate contributions with insightful reporting and skillful writing. After three years, Joyce Dixon took her place and brought an outstanding mix of talent, understanding and courage with her.

The glue that held our staff together was Evelyn Bowers, who had joined the *Advocate* in 1932, fresh out of high school, and worked there until she retired in 1976. Most of her time was pre-computer, so many things were done manually. Even then, she insisted on backup systems. Every few months she would have a printout made of all the Addressograph plates used in mailing the *Advocate*. She would store the printouts under her bed at home, “just in case something major were to happen.” When she retired, her husband exclaimed, “Finally, there’s room for my slippers under the bed.” I was the fourth editor she had worked with, but she put 40 years of loyalty on my desk and never looked back. “We’ve never done it that way” was not part of her vocabulary.

For most of my 10

years, the *Advocate* came out weekly, except for Christmas week and one week in the summer, which was a relentless schedule. In 10 years, we missed only one deadline. On special occasions, such as Annual Conference, we would go up to as many as 32 pages. That was quite a race when we got back from conference Thursday evening and had to have 32 pages ready for the printer on Tuesday.

Knowing that “a picture is worth ...” we generated a lot of photographs for the *Advocate*. An old storage closet became our darkroom. With tight deadlines on the annual conference issue, I would develop film in my motel room so that we were ready to start making prints when we returned to the office.

This was a period when the appointments of pastors to churches were really “news.” I recall one year having a hymn-sing on the final morning while the bishop and his Cabinet worked out the last six appointments. The *Advocate* not only carried the “news” of the appointments, we provided them to several local papers. Eventually, we began doing radio

feeds to local stations across the conference so that they had news of new pastors coming to their area.

During this period the *Advocate* began to thrive. Churches responded to the content and the presentation. Advertising increased and circulation climbed, reaching 27,000 and flirting with 28,000 a few times. We had come from the seeds of bankruptcy to the full bloom of solvency.

I like to think that the quality of the *Advocate* had a lot to do with some other professional activities I undertook: editor of the *Daily Christian Advocate* for the Southeastern Jurisdiction for two quadrennia, president of the Virginia Chapter of the Religious Public Relations Council and member of the executive committee of the Richmond Public Relations Council.

Now, as the *Advocate* nears its departure, I count it a privilege to have served in the long line of editors that began with Ethelbert Drake in 1832. The *Advocate* may be at peace, but it will never rest.

– W. Hewlett Stith was the *Advocate* editor from 1972 to 1982



## *Notable milestones during W. Hewlett Stith's tenure*

- ❖ Staff initiated and coordinated the first joint simultaneous publication by four denominational journals. The staffs of the *Advocate*, *Catholic Virginian*, *Virginian Churchman* (Episcopal) and *Religious Herald* (Baptist) produced material describing the churches' relationship to the criminal justice system.
- ❖ The office conceived and implemented the denomination's first ethnic minority communications internship. A church grant funded the first year and the *Advocate* funded the second year.
- ❖ When we saw the need for churches to pay more attention to persons with handicapping conditions, we produced a special issue with that emphasis. When denominational officials realized they had nothing comparable to offer churches, they asked for a 25,000-copy rerun of the issue so they could distribute it until they could produce their own.
- ❖ The assignment of a new bishop in 1972 was the occasion for an unprecedented two-day fly-around. The bishop was flown to airports in every district and he got to meet more than 3,000 church members. One of the *Advocate* photos of the event appeared in *The New York Times*.
- ❖ During some of the "tumultuous" times, the *Advocate* was on hand to provide church members and leaders first-hand reports of what "really" went on, sometimes correcting public media misrepresentations (we secured the rare front-page retraction from a major daily paper). After one especially difficult period, one district superintendent stated that our work had saved enough World Service money on his district to run our office for a year.
- ❖ We began daily subscription Conferencegrams from General Conference sites. This gave next-day reports of actions. It was the occasion for one of our first brushes with advancing technology. I typed a report in Portland, Oregon, and then using the "new" facsimile machine could send it to Richmond (one page took six minutes), where the local newspaper had let us piggy-back their system and someone from our office would pick up the copy and prepare it for first-class mail the same day.
- ❖ The 150th Anniversary issue contained the first full-color cover for the *Advocate*.





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# DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ Retired Bishop **Ralph Kern Eustler** will celebrate his 100th birthday on Aug. 2. Eustler was born in Bridgewater, Virginia. After graduation from Berea College (B.A.) and Union Theological Seminary in New York (M. Div., cum laude), he received his first appointment in the Virginia Annual Conference and served in that conference until his election to the episcopacy in 1984 by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Berea College named him a Distinguished Alumnus, 1986

His appointments in Virginia were: Greenville-Mint Spring; Elkton; Luray; South Roanoke); Ginter Park in Richmond; Washington Street in Alexandria; Executive Director, Virginia Methodist

Homes, Inc.; District Superintendent, Alexandria District; Reveille in Richmond; and Conference Council Director.

**The Front Royal United Methodist Women (UMW)** held a Legacy Tea on Sunday, May 19, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the UMW. More than 40 women

from the Front Royal church and **Winchester District** enjoyed tea, sandwiches, and cookies. Several members created and acted out a skit of the 1869 meeting in Boston which led to formation of UMW's predecessor organization, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Shown in the photo from the left: Eleanor

Chadwell, Jo Dickenson, Bev Morrison, Susan Schneider, Penelope Dublin, Louis Van Doren, Gerry Funk, Pat Cullers, and Phyllis Blankenship, FRUMW President. ▼



## PODCAST

"Letters to the Inquiring Mind on Theology and Scripture"

Hosted by

Richard N. Soulen, PhD,  
Prof. of New Testament  
(retired),  
Virginia Union University

R. Kendall Soulen, PhD.  
Prof. of Systematic  
Theology,  
Candler School of  
Theology

at  
[soulenandsoulen.com](http://soulenandsoulen.com)

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# MOTIVATED for





# MINISTRY

by Madeline Pillow

As the summer comes to a close, we ready ourselves for the “back-to school” season whether we are attending or have kids in school or not. Much like a new year is a time of much reflection, the ending of a season that turns into fall gives us pause and a chance to reset ourselves.

Sometimes all we need in the busyness of our lives is that moment or day to feel we are equipped to face the challenges and changes ahead. We constantly need motivation.

As Christians a large source of motivation can come from leaning on our faith. As we head into fall, I encourage you to read through this feature with a heart of peace and with openness to find new ways of being and new ways to be motivated this fall.

One way to start is by focusing on your prayer life and looking for how you can turn to God for motivation help.

Is prayer your first defense or last resort?

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What is your first memory of prayer?

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Who inspires you to pray more deeply?

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How was prayer a part of (or absent in) your life growing up?

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Do you ever say “I’ll pray for you,” and then forget to pray? How can you better follow through?

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## PRAYERFUL BEHAVIORS TO TRY



Create a “prayer box” and list all those persons and things you are praying for on small slips of paper. When specific prayers are answered you can list the date on the slip of paper.

Keep a journal or a jar of small notes detailing one good thing that happened to you each day. It will make you feel more gratitude!



# MOTIVATED for

## Motivated to serve

By Kimberly Barker-Brugman

As I write this at the end of July, we are in the Summer Sabbath season of the church year. It is a time when the choir goes on hiatus. Maybe Sunday school programs were altered or stopped for the summer because many people are on vacation. The pastor probably took a few weeks off to get a well-deserved break before the fall season. Maybe we had the opportunity to take some time off from the ministries and rest and relax.

As you read this, it will be September and the Summer Sabbath is over. September is our time to gear up to reach the world and relaunch all the children's and youth ministries, adult studies, pre-schools and after school programs. Do you look forward to this activity with joy and anticipation or face it with dread? Are you ready to serve or are you ready to quit? Is serving a duty or a calling?

### WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION IN MINISTRY?

People have many motivations: rewards, love, pleasure, ego or the need to help others. Motivations can also be negative like fear and power.

Sometimes fear is our motivation for serving. Fear that the church is getting smaller and will die. Maybe we are so caught up in our title or role that we can't give it up because no one can do it as well as we can, and we question what our purpose in church would be if we weren't the "insert title here." When fear is our motivation we are likely to be burned out, unenthusiastic, and certainly not putting our best effort into our ministry. If that is the case it is likely our ministry won't bear any fruit.

And in truth — is it "our" ministry — or do we recognize it as God's ministry? We need to stop and ask ourselves: Why am I doing this? Do I enjoy it? Am I acting as a servant or a drudge? Is it time for me to say "no thank you" in order for someone else to hear and respond to the call?

What if you have you "retired" from serving in ministries? As our God called Abraham and Sarah even as they were past retirement age, we know that God always has ways for us to serve. If we can't make it to church, we can pray every day to help undergird the work of the church. Pray for individuals and their ministries. Pray for the pastor and the leadership and the attendees. Pray for the new folks who are coming. Pray for the unchurched. Pray your way through the church directory to cover everyone in prayer. Pray up a storm of love. And maybe you can encourage those who are "burned out" with a thank you card or a handwritten note saying: "I prayed for you and your ministry today." What a blessing that would be and how far it would go to inspire and refuel others in ministry.

### WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION FOR SERVING?

Jesus was all about love. He was living in a stream of love that flowed between him and God, the parent. He was teaching the disciples about this divine love and calling for love to be the motivation for keeping Jesus' commandments. Love was his motivation: love for God and love for his disciples (and all of humanity) and love was the power that made it all happen.

### IS THIS OUR MOTIVATION?

God is our power source and perhaps you haven't had time to spend with God lately. Our world and our lives move so fast and are so full that September offers a good time to step back, take a deep breath, and pray about the ministries we are involved in.

Very few servants are at the "top of their love factor" every day. Some days we are, and some days we aren't. But as we take a step back and assess where we serve, I pray that there are more "love motivated" days than not. It is in knowing God and knowing why we serve that will make our ministry much more fruitful and beneficial to the kingdom.

Don't start the year off or this new season on the wrong foot — or with the wrong motivation. Start it out with a heart filled with love for God and neighbor and see what a difference that will make in you and in your ministries.



# MINISTRY

## ACTIVITY ONE:

Draw a heart — write "Love of God" in the middle of it. Think of all the ministries you are a part of and write them down around the heart. Ask yourself what is your motivation for doing them?


Don't forget to include worship and studies that feed you around your heart. Do you not have any of those? Maybe that is something to pray about as these can give you the energy and enthusiasm you need to serve.

Pray over each ministry and ask God: "What is my motivation"? Is it love? Can I move this ministry into the center heart? If the ministry can't quite make it into the "Love of God" heart then draw a heart around it where it is as an act of intention to bring it closer to the heart of God in the middle of the page. Put hearts around each ministry and offer them up to God in prayer. Ask God to lead you, heal you, motivate you for continued service in this new year. And don't be afraid to re-evaluate how you serve and where you serve if you find that love is not your motivation.

Feeling creative? Get some red construction paper and make another bigger heart and paste your first paper into it — because no matter what, God's grace and love cover it all.

If you prefer, journal your findings or perhaps you want to chart them on a line numbered from 1-10, with 1 having nothing to do with love and 10 being all about love. Do what comes naturally for you and what will help you see what your heart is saying.

## ACTIVITY TWO:

Burned out? Not motivated by love and want to change that? Maybe God is calling you to spend some time with God in order to be grounded in love. This doesn't have to be a huge endeavor. Start small. Draw two hearts. In the left heart write one thing you love. In the right heart write a time when you knew and saw God's love — the first day you can just write one. Sit with those two hearts. Talk to God about those items. Sit in silence for a minute or two (set a timer so you don't have to worry about that) and listen to what God has to say. Each day add another item to the heart and after a week or so maybe increase your listening time. Once a week just sit with all that love that you have and that God has. Let it fill you. You are God's beloved child. Let God love you. 

—The Rev. Kimberly Barker-Brugman, member of Kindred Project, pastor at Asbury UMC, Nokesville and extension minister to Soul Story Ministries, a ministry of spiritual direction and retreat work

## Motivationally speaking...

Never give up. Great things take time.  
Be patient.

Challenges are what make life interesting.  
Overcoming them is what makes them meaningful.

Passion first and everything will fall into place. —Holly Holm

Difficult roads always lead to beautiful destinations. —Zig Ziglar

Success is what comes after you stop making excuses. —Luis Galarza

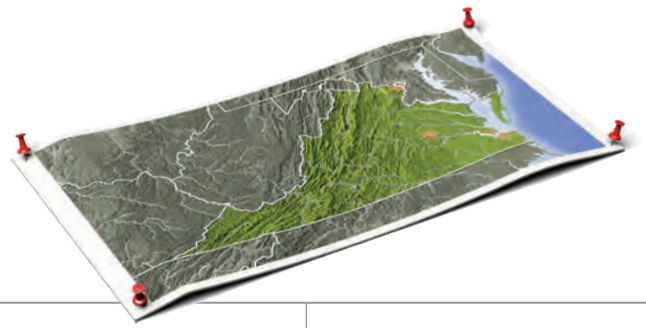
You will never always be motivated.  
You have to learn to be disciplined.

Start where you are. Use what you have.  
Do what you can. —Arthur Ashe

I'm not telling you it is going to be easy;  
I'm telling you it's going to be worth it.  
—Art Williams



# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



## From Foster Care to College Campus

By UMFS

**M**ELVIN WAS WALKING BRISKLY along one of the many shaded and brick-lined paths on Old Dominion University's (ODU) campus in downtown Norfolk when it dawned on him.

"Wait, what's today's date," he asked as he

came to an abrupt halt. "It's March 27? Well, then yesterday marked four years since I came into care. It was March 26, 2015."

Shortly after entering the foster care system at age 15, Melvin was referred to the United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Treatment Foster Care program, which specializes in helping older foster children find placements. Melvin said for all of the uncertainties associated with being an older kid in care, there's one thing he's always been sure

of.

"I knew I wanted to be here one day," Melvin stated confidently with the ODU Monarchs' iconic Lion Fountain at his back.

Melvin was understandably overjoyed when he learned he'd been accepted to ODU. To be crowned a Monarch was indeed a well-deserved reward for this well-dressed and well-mannered young man from Richmond.

"We've always known Melvin wanted to go to college," said Talia Brown, project





# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

manager for Project LIFE, a foster care support program for teens. "I've known him since he became involved with Project LIFE, which wasn't long after he came into care. He's said all along he wanted the experience of a four-year university."

Project LIFE (Living Independently, Focusing on Empowerment) is a partnership between UMFS and the Virginia Department of Social Services. The program helps equip youths with critical life skills so they can be successful when they age out of foster care. At first, Melvin was skeptical of Project LIFE.

"I just thought it was something being pushed on me because I was new to the system," he said. "But as time went on, through the support groups and speaking opportunities, I learned that I have a voice."

Melvin's attitude continued to improve, and Brown said he became one of the program's most active members. In fact, Melvin said had it not been for UMFS and Project LIFE, he may not have been prepared to attend a four-year university directly after high school.

"Maybe I would have gotten here another

"I've see it so many times where foster youth are told that they can't do this, this, or this because of their situation."

way," he said. "But I don't know. I've grown a lot. I've developed communication skills and leadership skills, and definitely people skills."

Melvin said Project LIFE staff always offered encouragement as he worked to establish a network of like-minded people.

"That's one of our main goals," Brown said. "It's to help youths build permanent connections." One of Melvin's connections, in particular, is Keara Chambers, a former Project LIFE employee. "She's not only become a mentor, she's a friend," Melvin said. "Keara's been there through the low moments and the high moments."

And as of late, Melvin's highs absolutely are outweighing

his lows. He's slowly trying to re-establish a relationship with his family, he's about to start his sophomore year of college, and momentum behind his newest endeavor is picking up.

"It's called Foster-U," Melvin said with his signature soft-spoken confidence. "The 'U' stands for University."

Melvin's been working tirelessly and with great patience to get Foster-U up and running on the ODU campus. The concept is to connect college-aged students who have experience in the foster care system with supportive peers who have similar experiences and are of a comparable age. He was inspired, in part, by Project LIFE.

"I feel like it's so important to have that type of program on the university level," he said.

Brown said she was floored when Melvin reached out with his ideas for Foster-U.

"I've been very impressed," she said, citing Melvin's ambition and resolve. "It takes a lot of work to get something like that going. What can I say? Melvin's just awesome."

While Melvin is excited and passion-

ate about Foster-U, the pursuit isn't about earning accolades as much as it's about extending advocacy.

"When people doubt you, it's real," Melvin said. "And I've see it so many times where foster youth are told that they can't do this, this, or this because of their situation."

Melvin's been in that situation before, and it's a situation he wants to help others avoid.

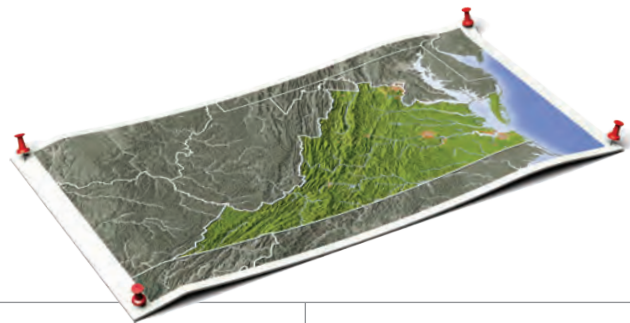
"When people don't take the time to see the good in you, then they're only going to see the bad."

Melvin plans to major in Criminal Justice. He and eight other students are continuing their pursuit of higher education and vocational training thanks to academic support from the United Methodist Family Services Scholarship Program. You can help young people like Melvin achieve their goals by contributing to the UMFS Scholarship Fund at [UMFS.org/donate](https://umfs.org/donate). 

*— United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) is a nonprofit agency that provides a comprehensive array of programs to meet the needs of high-risk children and parents to enable them to overcome challenging circumstances and succeed.*



# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



## Course of study program begins in Burundi

By Forrest White

**I**N THE UNITED STATES, we don't often see The United Methodist Church in the news these days without accompanying talk of division and turmoil and the potential of a denominational split looming on the horizon. But in the East African

nation of Burundi, there is much joy and celebration within The United Methodist Church — it is reunited after 12 years of division.

"When I was asked to share a greeting from the United States United Methodists, I talked about the Spirit in the room," said the Rev. Alex Joyner, who spent 10 days in June teaching pastors in Burundi, "the way that it was bringing new life to the Burundi Church, the way we longed to share in that Spirit of unity in the U.S. church."

Joyner was the first of a number of instruc-

tors bound for Burundi over two years as part of a course of study program for 200 pastors.

The Burundi UMC announced the program as part of a partnership between the Virginia Conference, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and Ginghamburg UMC, a megachurch in Tripp City, Ohio.

During his 10 days in Bujumbura with 200 pastors divided into groups of 60-70, Joyner's teaching focused on Reformation and Wesleyan history and theology. He taught a similar course for

The Rev. Alex Joyner with people who began the cooperative mission on church land. — in Bujumbura, Burundi. Photo courtesy of Joyner's Facebook page.





# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

19 years at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology.

In Africa, he taught in English. The Burundi pastors speak Kirundi. Interpreters were, of course, integral to the process.

"The language was a challenge but I think the biggest frustration was the lack of readings available in Kirundi," Joyner said. "The course had to depend almost entirely on the lectures."

Those lectures took place over 12-hour days in the classroom.

"It was grueling but fascinating, too," Joyner said. "I never knew what sorts of questions I would have to respond to and what things might not translate."

There was also another factor beyond his control — the heat. None of the classrooms were air-conditioned.

"I always felt well-used at the end of the day," Joyner said.

He returned to Virginia and went straight to Annual Conference in Roanoke. Adrenaline kept him going.

"When I finally had an off day I found myself falling asleep every time I sat down."

The Burundi church

Among the questions Joyner had never dealt with before — "What are the ethics of doing a full immersion baptism with hippos in the vicinity?"

was split into two factions before the recent reuniting, one led by the Rev. Lazare Bankurunaze and the other by the Rev. Justin Nzoyisaba.

Their fight for church control began in 2005 upon the death of Bishop Alfred J. Ndoricimpa and continued until May 2017, when the Rev. Jean Ntahoturi was elected legal representative of The United Methodist Church in Burundi. Wounds began to heal. Relationships began to grow anew.

"We lost many things during 12 years of internal fighting in the Burundi UMC. We lost our social relationships, and when social rela-

tionships are broken it means spiritual relationship with God is tremendously affected," said Georges Nshimirimana, a lay leader who worked with Bankurunaze, in a United Methodist News Service article from the spring of 2018.

Most of the pastors there went without any formal studies during the 12-year divide.

"I was very impressed with the commitment of the pastors," Joyner said. "Many of them had hard journeys to get to Bujumbura and had endured great hardships just to be in ministry. They had long days of instruction but were very attentive and had lots of great questions."

Among the questions Joyner had never dealt with before — "What are the ethics of doing a full immersion baptism with hippos in the vicinity?"

"It's definitely not advisable," he said.


With his first trip now behind him, Joyner hopes to return to Burundi. "It's hard not to be attracted to its energy," he said, describing it as "a young, vibrant, chaotic, beautiful, struggling country."

Though there were challenges, there were also great rewards.

"Being reminded of the United Methodist connection was probably the biggest reward," Joyner said. "Developing relationships that were founded on a sense of something we held in common was powerful."

He brought home with him a greater sense of hope for how the Holy Spirit might shape the future of the denomination in the United States.

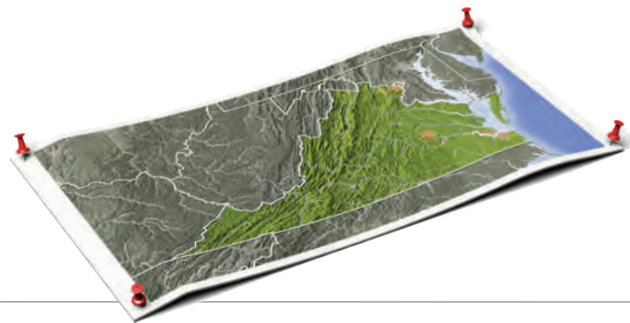
"Most of our interactions in the U.S. church these days are tinged with an air of tragedy as we lament the divisions that are tearing at the connection," Joyner said. "I had a real sense that the Burundi Church is at the beginning of a new chapter in their story and the Holy Spirit was evident in their work."

"Despite continuing divisions in the nation around them, they have visions and hopes based on what God can do through a reunited church. I pray we will be moving into a similar chapter soon as we move into something new in the U.S. church. We don't have to reflect the divisions in the culture around us." 

— Forrest White is a news associate with the conference Communications Office.



## The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



# Couple fighting for surrogacy rights finds support at church

By Forrest White

LOOKING BACK ACROSS THE DARKEST TIMES, Jay Timmons remembers waking up panicked in the wee hours of countless mornings, unable to escape what haunted him.

Because it wasn't a dream.

Jay Timmons and Rick Olson with their children, C.J., Ellie and Jacob.

It was reality, a hellish fight fought alongside Rick Olson, his husband, for parental rights of their son, Jacob, who was born via surrogacy.

"We felt hopeless and alone, even though we fought like we had never fought before and even though we were surrounded by boundless love and support from family and friends," Timmons said. "To be honest, we also wondered if God had forsaken us."

But there were reminders of God's love, too, even in the darkest nights, made manifest in part through the people of Walker Chapel UMC in Arlington, Va., where their daughters attended preschool and where their family – all five of them – now worships, basking in the light of their new reality.

To appreciate the beauty of that light, you must first try to imagine the depths of their darkness.

Already parents to daughters C.J. and Ellie through previous sur-

rogacies, Timmons and Olson, who married in California in 2008, opted to have their son delivered by a surrogate in Wisconsin, where the state Supreme Court had upheld surrogacy and other same-sex couples had breezed through the process. At the time, Virginia didn't allow surrogacy unless a parent had a genetic connection to the baby.

"Jacob is a product of an embryo we rescued from potential destruction," Timmons said. "We were offered the embryo by a couple who had four children through in vitro fertilization and they didn't want to risk the remaining embryos being destroyed."

A Wisconsin judge granted the couple parental rights on an interim basis six weeks before Jacob was born in August 2015. The surrogate and her husband were happy with their arrangement, so everything seemed fine.

But another judge in Wisconsin took issue with the embryo having no genetic ties to





# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Timmons or Olson. (Their two daughters are genetically related to one of them.) He opened his written opinion on the case with this statement: "Human trafficking comes in many forms."

"We kept (temporary) custody of our son, but the judge (and a hand-picked guardian) tortured us with the thought we could lose him at any moment," Timmons said. "Ten months after the ruling where we were granted parental rights, this new judge took them away, left Jacob an orphan and branded us 'human traffickers' for bringing the embryo to life."

That judge resigned in May 2016.

"Another judge quickly restored our rights," Timmons said. "We fought for justice against the resigned judge and the guardian for another three years until, after numerous hearings (before) judges in the Wisconsin Circuit, Appeals and Supreme Courts, we won everything."

Married in a Unity Church, Timmons said the couple had struggled to find a church in the Northern Virginia/District of Columbia area that "spoke" to them. Both were raised

in the Christian faith, Timmons in a United Methodist Church in Ohio.

"We weren't sure that Christianity was willing to accept us for who God had made us," Timmons said.

They continued to search because "We felt strongly that any children we had should have the opportunity to be exposed to the faith community and the values that religion teaches," Timmons said.

With their daughters attending Walker Chapel preschool, Timmons and Olson met the Rev. Jim Earley and "were impressed with his warmth and embrace of children," Timmons said.

So, they attended the church occasionally.

"When our horrible journey to obtain our parental rights began four years ago, the Rev. Earley was one of the first to offer assistance," Timmons said. "He immediately wrote a character reference letter (which the judge refused to accept) and made sure he kept our family in prayer."

The battle for Jacob became "all-consuming," Timmons said.

Olson left his job to manage a team of 14 lawyers. The family

faced financial doom, taking out two additional mortgages to help with legal costs in the hundreds of thousands.

"We withdrew from many activities to focus solely on our family," Timmons said. "We stopped attending church. We were physically and emotionally drained."

When their legal battle for Jacob was finally won, the couple turned their attention to advocating for a change in Virginia law "so that no family would be subjected to this same heart-wrenching, emotional torture," Timmons said.

They turned to Delegate Richard "Rip" Sullivan Jr., who represents Virginia's 48th District. Sullivan filed a bill to protect parental rights of same-sex couples and single parents who use surrogates. HB 1979 passed the Virginia General Assembly in February and became "Jacob's Law" when Gov. Ralph Northam signed it in June.

The signing ceremony was held at Walker Chapel, where Jacob now attends preschool.

"When we were successful, we knew we wanted the preschool


to be a part of the victory, because so many parents of our children's classmates had been advocates too," Timmons said.

The Rev. Lynne Alley-Grant was new to Walker Chapel when the signing ceremony took place in late June. She offered a prayer of unity for the nearly 300 people who witnessed the legislation becoming law.

"For us, this was our public acknowledgment that God had, indeed, not forsaken us and that Romans 12:21 was speaking to our hearts: 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good,'" Timmons said.

On Alley-Grant's first Sunday at Walker Chapel, Timmons and Olson and the children were there, too.

During children's time, she read a book entitled *A Church for All*.

"We knew then that we were back home," Timmons said. "In the United Methodist Church at Walker Chapel, we have found love and care and concern for families of all types." 

— Forrest White is a news associate with the conference Communications Office.



# LIVING THE WORD

*The September Living the Word devotions were written by the conference Communications staff.*

**September 1, 2019**

**Genesis 18:16-19:29**

**Key Verse: Genesis 19:29**

“ ”

**Written by Madeline Pillow**

**I**t's not an uncommon reaction to freeze in the face of fear. Can you think of a time when it happened to you? Action is overcome as your mind cycles through the possibilities until inaction is the action taken; there is too much fear of the unknown to then act.

In these chapters, Lot is so overcome by the fear of the unknown that he is sluggish to attend to the actual disaster in front of him. If not for God's mercy and for the angels' prodding, Lot could have easily fallen to ruin like the rest of the city.

In a similar way, Lot's wife disregards the angels' warning and looks back only to turn into a standing pillar of salt. You have to believe there was some sort of fear going on in her heart.

Fear can lead us down the wrong path. It can keep us from going forward and stuck in the past. Strangely enough, often when God is extending us mercy, similar to Lot's wife, we turn away to what we know.

Living a life of faith means taking the risk of plunging into the unknown with God and finding ourselves waist high in the mercy of God. But we have to take that first step. We have to listen. Jesus says to us in Luke 17:33 "Whoever tries to preserve their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life will preserve it."

God's abundant grace and mercy is in this passage. In Genesis 19, we remember that God told Abraham and that he would remember him. Here he remembers him, in extending mercy to Abraham's descendant.

God extends that grace and mercy to us as well. Are we listening? Are we acting within that grace and mercy that has been extended to us?

**September 8, 2019**

**1 Samuel 1:1-20**

**"God remembers"**

**Written by the Rev. Pamela Culler**

**T**his is a story of God's grace coming to Hannah at the darkest moment of her life. It can also be the story of God's grace for us. It is the amazing grace that can transform the future and bring hope within despair and pain. In her darkest moment, Hannah made her greatest discovery. God did not forget her. God heard her cry, knew her misery and answered her prayer. What God did for Hannah, God can do for each of us.

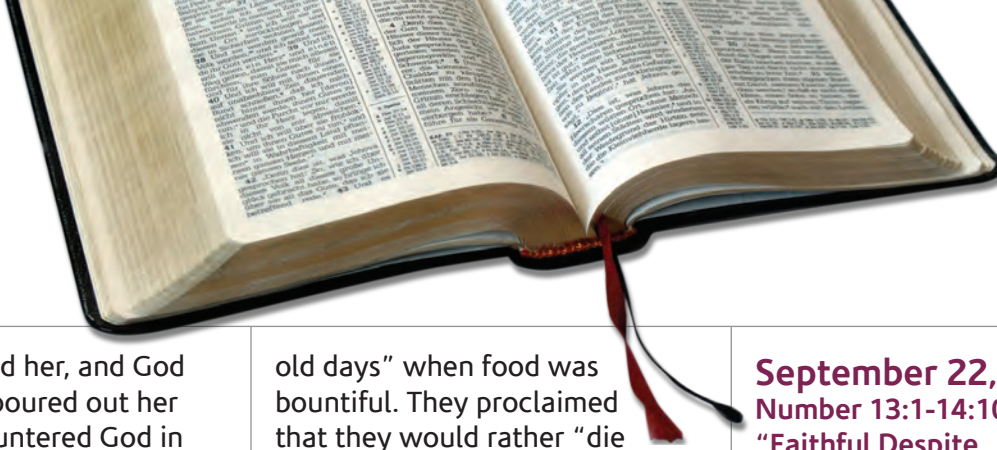
Many of us have felt the same anxiety that Hannah felt. The barrenness you labor under may be the lack of accomplishment and achievement. One's sense of "worthlessness" can result from the inability to reach one's goals and ambitions, instead experiencing constant defeat and setback. The unkind words and criticism of others, can cause us to weep and lose our appetite, as Hannah did. How easy it is to slip into an attitude of "worthlessness."

Sometimes we may feel we do not have God's attention. Jesus taught us that we already have God's attention, and God is aware of our need. The fact is, God is not detached from any of us. What is needed on our part is just for us to know that God cares, and God remembers! God is always near and attentive.

Hannah's story offers us with a simple theme: prayer will quiet and comfort the most troubled heart.

After all of her troubles she found peace. Many times it is the offering of prayer, not the answer to prayer, that brings peace. Peace is not the result of God answering prayer, but peace comes in the very act of turning to God in the first place. Hannah did not know if she would get an answer to her prayer, or know the outcome, but one thing she did know:





God remembered her, and God listened as she poured out her heart. She encountered God in prayer and she found peace.

Hannah's response to the gift of God's grace was to give back what she received. We, too, must give back the grace we receive. How have you given back the grace that you receive from God?

## September 15, 2019

### Exodus 16

#### "The good old days"

Written by Nick Ruxton

During my high school summer breaks, I would help my grandparents around their house. Often I was tilling the garden or working with my Granddaddy outside. I will always cherish those conversations filled with humor and life lessons.

Most of the stories would start with, "Back in the day" or "In the good old days." Granddaddy would share how he used to tromp through the swamp of the Appomattox River near Hopewell, or how the church used to be the only thing open on Sundays and you were expected to be there, no matter what you did the night before.

Granddaddy would finish these stories with, "Well it is a little different nowadays." He would always tell me how he accepted change, even when it was tough, because he knew it was all in God's design.

In Exodus 16:3 the Israelites are doing something similar. As the Israelites are starving in the desert questioning God, they are also looking back at the "good

old days" when food was bountiful. They proclaimed that they would rather "die by the Lord's hand in Egypt" and have plenty of food than be in their current tough situation. It was not until the miracle of the Lord providing them food that they started looking ahead to the future and trusting God.

There are days when all we want is to be back in the "good old days." We could all learn a lesson from my Granddaddy by accepting that things may be tough but to look for the positive. When situations are changing around us, instead of resisting the change and looking back, we should accept change and see how we can better the situations and ourselves.

Imagine a community where we all looked forward to the future with trust in God's plan and how we can leave a positive legacy for the next generation to come.

What is something that you look back on? How can you use that experience/memory to better the future?

What is a time that you have felt like the Israelites wishing you were "in the good old days" instead of being in the present?

## September 22, 2019

### Number 13:1-14:10a

#### "Faithful Despite Unfaithfulness"

Written by Brenda Capen

It is a tradition in my family to gather and watch The Ten Commandments (the one with Charlton Heston as Moses) each Easter. And every year, my heart goes out to Moses. He goes through so much and proves time after time that God is with them. But the people still whine and complain and need more proof. I sometimes think if I had been Moses I would have thrown my hands up in frustration and told the Israelites, "You are on your own!" But then, if I'm honest with myself, I know I would be one in the crowd doing the loudest whining and complaining. Would you be a Moses, or one of the whiners?

This week's lesson finds Moses in another challenging situation. The people are traveling from Mount Sinai toward the promised land, grumbling all the way. They now claim that living in Egypt was far better than journeying through the desert, some even claiming they would rather be dead than endure the journey they are on. How often do we look back on "the good old days" and want to keep things just as they are? Are we ready to step out of our comfort zones to do what God is calling us to do?

(Con't on next page: "LIVING WORD")

The 2019 Living the Word devotions are from the *Standard Lesson Commentary* from Cokesbury. Note: you can follow the September readings for the 2019 Bible Challenge from Bishop Lewis on pg 31.



# CLERGY & DIACONAL



## DEATHS



**The Rev. Glen H. Cannon**, 77, of Springfield, Va., died July 12, 2019. Cannon began his ministerial

career in 1968 as the associate at Wesley, Alexandria District. He served as senior pastor to St Matthias, director of the Rappahannock Area Division of Alcohol Studies, Essex-King & Queen, and then Trinity in the former Peninsula District and finally Fort Hill in the Lynchburg District. He retired in 2005.

**Dr. Micah Scott** died July 11, 2019, in North Carolina. Her brother is **the Rev. Luis (Ned) Alderman** of Trinity King George UMC.

**Lucille Phelps Davidson**, 90, died July 3, 2019. She was the wife of the late **Rev. William Fred Davidson**.

**Ana Santiago Harper**, 45, of Springfield, NJ, died July 11, 2019. She was daughter-in-law of **Warren Harper**, lay leader for the Virginia Conference.

**Louise Pope Buxton**, 92, of Norfolk, died June 28, 2019. She is the mother of **the Rev. Lawrence W. Buxton**, retired elder in the Alexandria District, and **the Rev. Craig A. Buxton**, a licensed local pastor in the James River District.

**JoAnn McClain**, 83, of Wintersville, Ohio, died June 25, 2019. Her son-in-law, **the Rev. Marc Roberson**, serves at Riverton UMC in the Winchester District.

**The Rev. Claude A. Reed Jr.**, 89, died June 26, 2019, in Charlottesville, Va. He served North Fluvanna, Colonial Beach, and Aldersgate in Charlottesville. He went on Honorable Location in 1971 and retired in 1999.

## BIRTHS

**Lydia Rosner Bass** born July 10, 2019, daughter of **the Rev. Allie Rosner Bass**, pastor of Arlington Temple UMC, and husband, Jonathan.

**Oliver Webster Locke** born July 18, 2019, son of **the Rev. Sarah Locke**, pastor of Hickory UMC, Elizabeth River District, and her husband, Joseph. ☞



(“LIVING WORD” con’t from previous page.)

Many of the Israelites may not know they are on a great turning point. The time has come for them to enter the land of Canaan which God had promised centuries before to give to Abraham’s descendants. The people have done nothing to earn such a gift, but God is fulfilling a promise.

Twelve men are chosen to go “spy” on the land they will be entering. After 40 days they return and give Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey!” But they also report the people currently occupying that land were “powerful and large” so 10 of the 12 men are intimidated instead of inspired to proceed. Caleb and Joshua are the only two who want to proceed. The thought to remember: In the midst of unfaithfulness, God remains faithful. How will you step out in faithfulness in your life?

**September 29, 2019**

**Numbers 14:10-23**

**“Moving Forward”**

**Written by Forrest White**

**T**his Scripture from the Book of Numbers reminds us of many things. It speaks to the importance of approaching God on behalf of others, as Moses did for the Israelites, and as we do through intercessory prayer. It speaks of being held accountable and of being rewarded for faithfulness. And it reminds us, yet again, that our God forgives. Whenever I think about forgive-



ness I always remember a line from one of my favorite books, Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. "And, when you can't go back," Coelho writes, "you have to worry only about the best way of moving forward." Is there a more difficult aspect of trying to live a godly, Christ-like life than the act of true forgiveness? I don't mean forgiving someone for something simple, like accidentally bumping into us and making us spill our coffee. I mean forgiving those who have left scars upon our soul. Only those closest to us are capable of leaving such marks. So when we're dealing with forgiveness of the soul-scarring actions, we're likely doing so with people who are a part of our daily living, whose presence may remind us of what hurt us so deeply. I don't think it's possible to ever fully forget our deepest hurts. But, it is possible to find a place where we don't dwell on them anymore. Those who hurt us can be held accountable for their actions (as God did here with the Israelites), but they can't go back and change what they did to hurt us. So, the best we can do is as Coelho suggests – focus on the best way of moving forward. It is not easy, but it is necessary ... for us. So today and every day, may you find the best way of moving forward. 🍷

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# ONE LAST WORD

## How to: Mandalas

By Madeline Pillow

Creating and coloring mandalas are spiritual in nature and can be used as a spiritual meditation in your self-care and closeness with God.

### What is a mandala?

These designs are circular in nature, and the viewer's eye is focused on the center. The word mandala translates as "disk" or "circle" in Sanskrit. These designs are intricate with symmetrical imagery.

Used in the Christian tradition, they have also been used in other religious traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century Benedictine nun, used mandalas to express her visions and beliefs. These creations also have formed patterns in the stained glass windows of churches like the Rose Window in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris and the "Bishop's Eye" rose window in England's Lincoln Cathedral. As well they can be found in the Celtic cross, halo and rosary.

### Coloring and creating mandalas

The act of creating and coloring a mandala allows for focus on a solitary task and relaxation. Some people use the act of creating and coloring mandalas as a way to pray while the hands are active and busy.

You can also use this time to

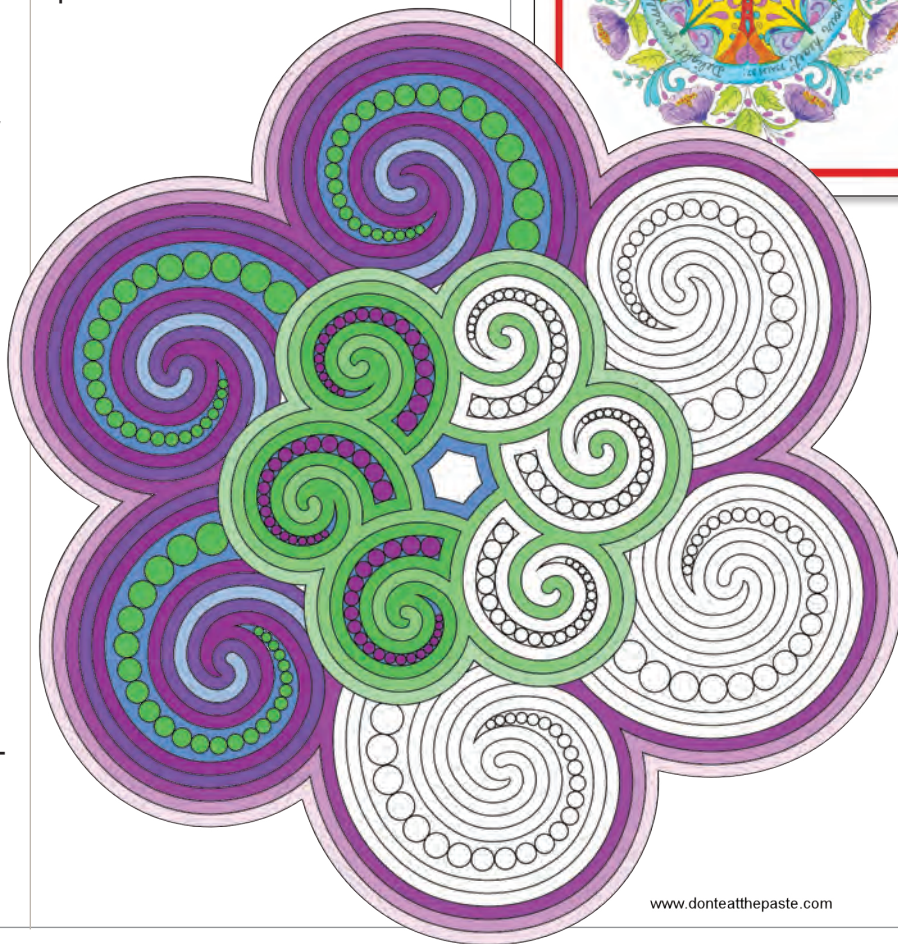
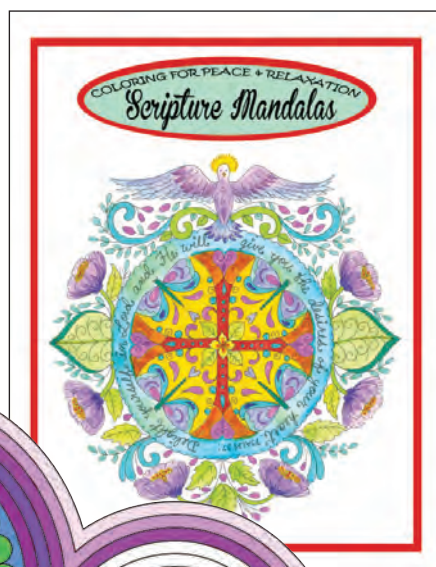
do a devotional. Begin by reading a Bible passage, then begin to color. By focusing on the Scripture while coloring, you can consider your connection with it and what God may be telling you.

To add this to your spiritual discipline, there are mandala coloring books for purchase as well as free downloads online. Or you can create your own.

Creating your own mandala can be a very personal experience by finding shapes and patterns to express your own quiet time. The process of creating your own pattern is unique to you. You can do it free-hand or with the use of a ruler or compass. When coloring your mandala, it can be with watercolors, colored pencils, markers or pastels.

Repetition is the key to a mandala. Whatever you do on one side of the circle needs to be repeated on the other side. This is completed by taking it slowly. Draw one shape at a time. By building upon each shape you create, you will in turn complicate and make your mandala more and more complex. 🍷

— Madeline Pillow is editor of the Advocate.



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<https://www.etsy.com/listing/219655090/coloring-book-scripture-mandalas-art-for>

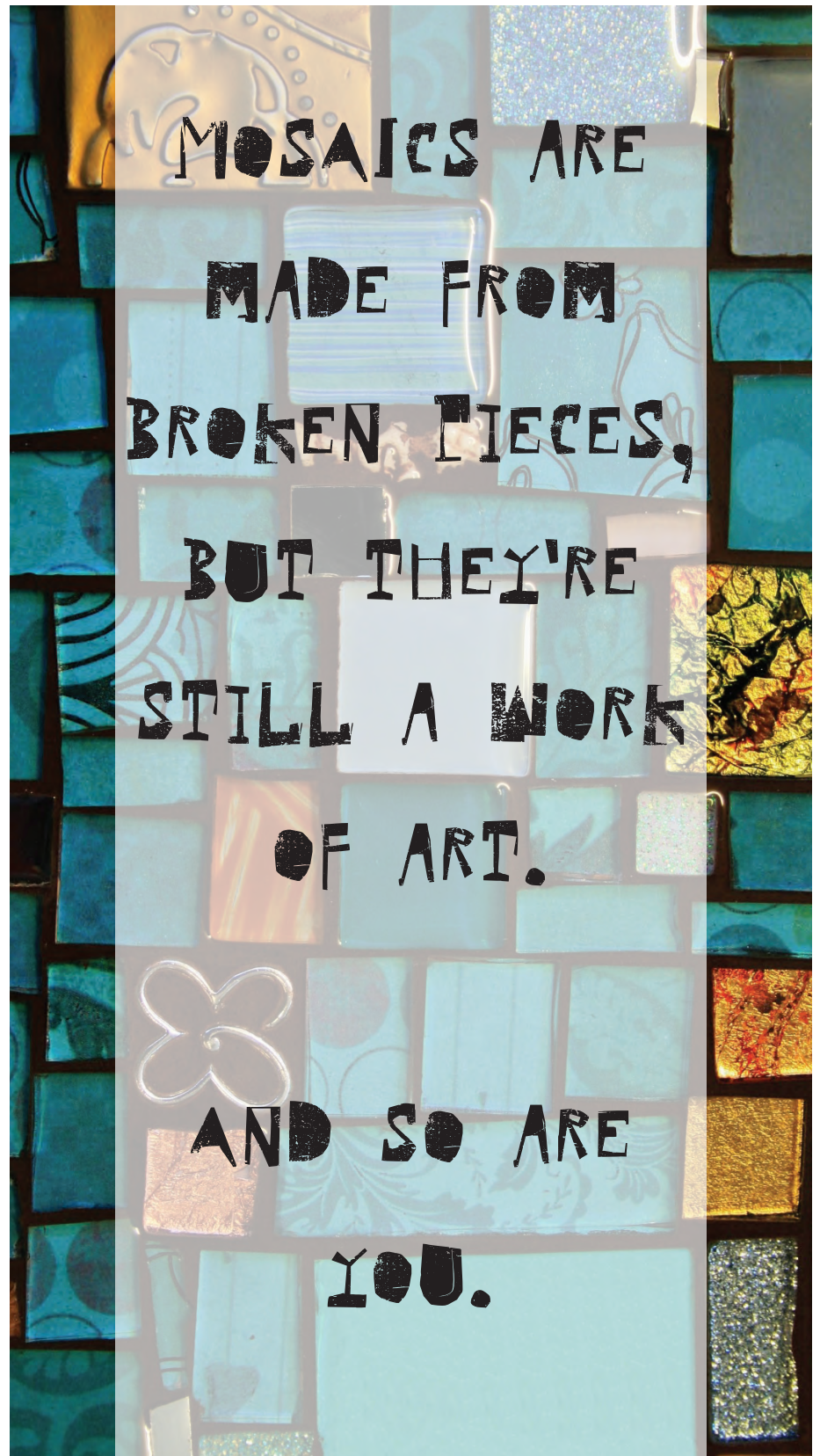




# ONE LAST WORD

## Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for September

Sept. 1	Ps. 135-136; 2 Cor. 11:1-15
Sept. 2	Ps. 137-139; 2 Cor. 11:16-33
Sept. 3	Ps. 140-142; 2 Cor. 12
Sept. 4	Ps. 143-145; 2 Cor. 13
Sept. 5	Ps. 146-147; John 1:1-28
Sept. 6	Ps. 148-150; John 1:29-51
Sept. 7	Judges 1-3; John 2
Sept. 8	Judges 4-6; John 3:1-18
Sept. 9	Judges 7-8; John 3:19-36
Sept. 10	Judges 9-10; John 4:1-30
Sept. 11	Judges 11-12; John 4:31-54
Sept. 12	Judges 13-15; John 5:1-24
Sept. 13	Judges 16-18; John 5:25-47
Sept. 14	Judges 19-21; John 6:1-21
Sept. 15	Lam. 1-2; John 6:22-44
Sept. 16	Lam. 3-5; John 6:45-71
Sept. 17	Amos 1-3; John 7:1-27
Sept. 18	Amos 4-6; John 7:28-53
Sept. 19	Amos 7-9; John 8:1-27
Sept. 20	Ezekiel 1-2; John 8:28-59
Sept. 21	Ezekiel 3-4; John 9:1-23
Sept. 22	Ezekiel 5-7; John 9:24-41
Sept. 23	Ezekiel 8-10; John 10:1-23
Sept. 24	Ezekiel 11-13; John 10:24-42
Sept. 25	Ezekiel 14-15; John 11:1-29
Sept. 26	Ezekiel 16-17; John 11:30-57
Sept. 27	Ezekiel 18-19; John 12:1-26
Sept. 28	Ezekiel 20-21; John 12:27-50
Sept. 29	Ezekiel 22-23; John 13:1-20
Sept. 30	Ezekiel 24-26; John 13:21-38





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