

## **How are we relevant?**

We don't just meet once a month for food and fellowship. Nor are we just yard hands, repair guys, painters, and cooks. We are disciple makers and Kingdom builders!

**Amending Together-** Having received a Micah 6:8 grant from the Virginia Conference, the UMM of Virginia completed leadership and facilitator training for 10 men in April 2020. **Amend** is a program to engage men and boys in challenging a culture that supports violence against women by cultivating healthy masculinity and teaching men how to stand up against societal norms that objectify, shame, and otherwise denigrate women. These ten men will now be engaged at the District level in sharing and facilitating the prevention program using the grant funds to purchase course curriculum and videos for men throughout the conference. Contact Todd Hoar for more info.

**Scouting:** The UMM Scouting Ministry received a grant to support scouts at the troop level in 2019. Fifty percent or more of scout families have no church home so sponsoring a troop at our churches is one of the best ways to make, mentor, and grow Disciples of Christ.

**Mentoring:** Recently launched on line based on Wesley's 21 questions, mentoring helps new disciples grow and helps experienced disciples fulfill the Great Commission. Read more in the April Beacon here on our web page @ <https://vaumc.org/UMM/> or go to the Resources mentoring guide link, also here on our web page.

**Wesleyan Building Brothers:** a leadership program designed to turn men into servant leaders by breaking down barriers and filling the father vacuum experienced by many men, WBB is a year-long once a week process of making men into spiritual fathers and grandfathers.

**Wesley Small Groups:** In the Mid-1800's American Methodists stopped meeting in small accountability groups that John Wesley had established initially to help the poor, but which had morphed into transformational apprenticeship groups required for admission to Sunday worship. Why did they die out? Answer: due to the advent/popularity of Sunday Schools and the growing affluence of American society. Many Church members today still hold fast to once a month social gatherings or weekly informational Sunday Schools and Bible Studies, rejecting the concept of Wesley Transformational groups where faith is converted to action. The pandemic has helped drive a resurgence of these groups as we are forced to keep a physical distance, but long for a personal and spiritual connection with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Men's Bible Studies:** The Discipline (among other things) exhorts men to engage daily in Bible Study and Prayer. My Church's weekly men's study has shifted to on-line teleconferences and we have doubled our attendance during the pandemic. Bible study is integral to discipleship and includes meditation, prayer, journaling, preparing for discussion (research), active listening and finally, turning the Word into action. And you thought it was just about opening the good book to the right chapter and verse!

**No Man left Behind:** Many churches do not get the results they want when it comes to having their men lead powerful, transformed lives. The problem is not lack of effort; many have tried diligently for years with no lasting results. But determination is not a strategy. The problem is not a lack of intent; every pastor and men's leader wants to see men disciplined. But desire is not a strategy. **No Man Left Behind** is a comprehensive strategy that: a. doesn't require you to add a bunch of new men's-only activities; b. targets all the different types of men you have in the church; c. isn't dependent on a specific curriculum; d. takes advantage of everything that your church is already doing; e. gives your leadership team the tools necessary to assess, plan, and implement their vision; and f. will result in more men coming to church and more men being disciplined. The UMM have three certified men's Ministry Specialists serving the Conference and teaching **NMLB**.

**Service ministries:** Perhaps the best way to see men grow as disciples is when we put our faith into action, truly following Jesus. We have active Prison and Jail, Hunger Relief, Intellectually Disabled (Heart Havens and Camp Rainbow), Scouting and other service ministries where everyone can learn how to be doers of the word and not hearers only. In the words of the Apostle John, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17 NIV).

**What do you think? Are we relevant? If not, how can YOU help?**