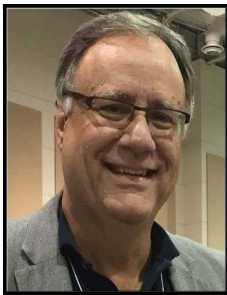


# THE BEACON

News from the Virginia Conference United Methodist Men

## President's Message | Andrew Kissell

### *Diversity Inherent to Unity*



Andrew Kissell  
President

### Greetings!

It troubles me to hear that some men have put Christian service on hold or that some churches are withholding part of their apportionments awaiting the outcome of the 2020 General Conference.

It is also painful to accept that our struggles as a denomination have become so bitter that many would rather leave friends, neighbors, brothers, and sisters in Christ over this disagreement.

Being a *United Methodist* for me has never been about uniformity. I relish the opportunity to hear different opinions, read different Bible translations, and apply the scriptures to my life. Iron sharpens iron. I believe our faith is best lived out, tested, and grown through service. I could not imagine quitting Kairos prison ministry or no longer ringing the bells for the Salvation Army during Advent because my fellow ecumenical volunteers didn't share every belief I have.

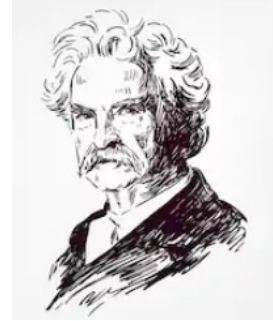
For me, diversity is inherent to unity. As a civil engineer, I know that composite materials exhibit greater strength and durability when combined in the right way. By combining steel and concrete, we build bridges and skyscrapers. The concrete provides compressive strength while the steel provides malleable strength.

Shrimp is my favorite seafood. But I don't just eat it one way. Steamed with Old Bay. Or fried and dipped in cocktail sauce-extra horseradish, please. Oh, and pass the hush puppies. Scampi -- smell the garlic? Kung Pao, stir fried with plenty of ginger and, no, this will not be a Bubba Gump list.

Unity with diverse cultures doesn't just make things stronger or more interesting. It has many benefits: clarity, healing, improving our connection with God and each other, reflecting more of Christ's love, building up the church (relationship building), efficiency, effectiveness, financial stability, diversity, and peace.

Mark Twain, after visiting Europe and the Holy land for the first time famously said, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry,

and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people [Americans] need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."



In my travels, including living in Europe for 6 years, I came to understand that most things in life are not easily defined as better or worse, just different.

Grace and Peace,

*Andrew*

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## ***New Gen Discipleship | Millennials and Gen Z Register for the Tri-District Retreat | January 3-4 at Camp Overlook***



In the life of the church, we are constantly striving to reach new people in new ways. Often there is the call for young people. Come and join Rev. Josh Orndorff, chaplain at Randolph-Macon Academy in Front Royal, at the Tri-District Retreat at [Camp Overlook](#) on **Friday-Saturday, January 3-4, 2020**. He will lead and inspire us to understand and connect with Millennial and Gen Z'ers so we can form lasting relationships to further the Kingdom of God.

The Tri-District Retreat is a joint partnership with the Staunton, Harrisonburg, and Winchester Districts UMMen and the Virginia Conference UMM. This retreat is the **only** conference-wide retreat for men in 2020.

Please register [online](#) now, or mail the registration form in the [brochure](#). The deadline for registration is **December 27, 2019**.

For more information, contact [Steve Cunningham](#).

*Friday, Jan. 3  
Check-in 6:00pm  
Supper 6:30pm*

*Saturday, Jan. 4  
Closing at 2:00pm*

**Register Me NOW!**

## **New Conference Approach to Funding and Spiritual Retreats** *Partner with Districts | Reduce Costs*

Over the past 3 years, both our Spiritual Advance attendance and Virginia Conference level fund raising have dropped dramatically. This can be attributed directly to the closure of VUMAC in Blackstone as well as other factors. As a result, the Virginia Conference UMM Cabinet agreed in September 2019 to:

- Reduce administrative costs associated with Virginia Conference UMM -- primarily those related to the Spiritual Advance, publishing *The BEACON*, and providing email service to promote events;
- Partner with districts to host and promote spiritual retreats. The first joint retreat will be with the tri-districts of Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Winchester at Camp Overlook, Friday and Saturday, Jan 3-4, 2020. (See article above to register);
- Publish *The BEACON* and issue promotional emails with the assistance of Virginia Conference Communications using a new service provider;
- Request that both individual fellowships and districts fund Virginia Conference UMM administration (dues and travel costs); and
- Remind fellowships to support our ministries directly: Heart Havens, Hunger Relief, Prison Ministries, Prayer Advocacy, Leadership Training, Scouting, etc.

Because the budgeting cycle for Virginia Conference 2020 funding has already passed, we will be soliciting support in the amount of \$20 from each UMM fellowship for administrative costs (primarily dues and travel). UMM fellowship treasurers, UMM presidents, and church lay leaders will receive a mailing in January 2020 requesting support and explaining the change in funding, our budgetary requirements, and our initiatives to reduce costs.

For 2021 and subsequent years, we will request from each of the sixteen district offices a line item for Virginia Conference UMM funding in their budget submissions.

## **AMENDING Through Faith Now Available** *Break the Cycle Against Domestic Violence*



# AMENDING THROUGH FAITH

"Give justice to the weak and the orphan;  
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.

Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

[Psalm 82:3-4 \(NRSV\)](#)

[AMEND Together](#) is an innovative, primary prevention initiative dedicated to ending violence against women and girls by engaging and educating men. It was started by YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee, operators of the largest domestic violence shelter in the state. AMEND Together was developed to prevent violence against women before it occurs in response to the shelter constantly at capacity and in need for more beds.

The General Commission on United Methodist Men has partnered with AMEND Together to create [AMENDING Through Faith](#), an eight-week group study in which men learn to recognize, respond to, and prevent violence against women.

Todd Hoar, Men's Ministry Specialist with the GCUMM, Secretary of the VACUMM, and member of the team that reviewed *AMENDING Through Faith*, indicates, "What I found was an awareness of the vulnerability and harm that a simple utterance or gesture can cause. My brother and I played baseball as young boys, and we were always chiding my younger sister for the way she threw "like a girl". I understand now that this was bullying at its basic form. These actions, learned as children and carried into adulthood, can possibly escalate and incite violence in adults."

How does it end? "Good men" must play a critical role in creating a community where all women and girls are valued and safe. Extensive work by experts in gender violence prevention reveals that this is accomplished through education and mobilization. Only with the support and involvement of men and boys can the cycle of gender violence eventually stop.

The General Commission values your ability to break the cycle of domestic violence, and Jesus convicts you to serve and save the women and children who are in need of breaking those chains of abuse. Though not an easy task, the *AMENDING Through Faith* series will be fun, simple, and challenging.

*AMENDING Through Faith* participant and leader guides are available at [www.gcumm.org/store/category/books](http://www.gcumm.org/store/category/books).

**Support Society of St. Andrew on Giving Tuesday, December 3**  
*Join the Mission to End Hunger*

Tuesday December 3 is a global day of generosity. Join the movement and the mission to end hunger and share fresh produce. Give thanks for the abundance in life and give today so a family, who needs it the most, can have access to fresh, healthy produce.

By joining the mission to end hunger, on a global day of giving, you help ensure that every person in this country has healthy, nourishing food to eat. With a match from generous donors, every \$1 given provides 70 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables for families struggling with hunger.

Please donate at [endhunger.org/giving-tuesday](https://endhunger.org/giving-tuesday). Thank you for your support.



Society of St. Andrew  
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS  
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

# Tuesday, December 3

Mark your calendar for a special event!



## #GIVING TUESDAY

### Double Your Impact!

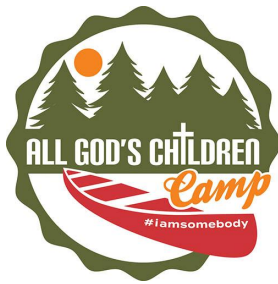
Your gifts will be matched to a total of \$21,000\*  
This is your last chance to double your impact in 2019.

[Endhunger.org/givingtuesday](https://Endhunger.org/givingtuesday)

\* Your gift will be matched by gifts totalling \$21,000,  
pledged by generous donors who requested to remain anonymous.

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All God's Children Thanks Virginia Conference UMM  
2020 Goal to Sponsor 90 Children | Giving Tuesday is 12/3/2019



In 2019, All God's Children had camp for 78 children at two locations. In a letter thanking the Virginia Conference for supporting All God's Children, Lori Smith, Director, included these words of thanks to the Virginia Conference United Methodist Men:

"Thank you to our United Methodist Men for providing transportation for our campers who went to Camp Chanco on the James. Without you all the children would not have been able to attend camp. You all provided safe travels and good conversation for our campers to and from camp. You were the first to greet them and the last to share their stories."

For 2020, All God's Children has set a goal to sponsor camp for 90 children who have an incarcerated parent. Here they will learn self-esteem building and conflict resolution as well as enjoy and experience camp life. The \$425 registration fee for each child covers a full week overnight camp and all the activities camp has to offer.

Please consider helping during #givingtuesday (December 3) either through Facebook, visiting the website [www.vaumc.org/agcc](http://www.vaumc.org/agcc), or by mailing a check to The Virginia United Methodist Conference Center at P.O. Box 5606 Glen Allen VA, 23058, attn: Becky Tate.

Thanks to all of you for supporting All God's Children. Please contact Lori Smith at 571-245-9591 or [lttlelori@gmail.com](mailto:lttlelori@gmail.com) with any questions.

## Words to Live By . . .



### *Giving Thanks for the Fruit of All Creation*

In the just reward of labor,  
God's will is done.  
In the help we give our neighbor,  
God's will is done.  
For our worldwide task of caring,  
For the hungry and despairing,  
In the harvests we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

F. Pratt Green  
For the Fruit of All Creation

Recommended Reading:  
[1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)

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