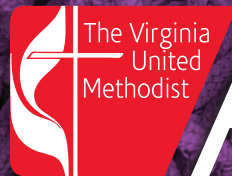


DAILY Advocate

Friday, June 19, 2015

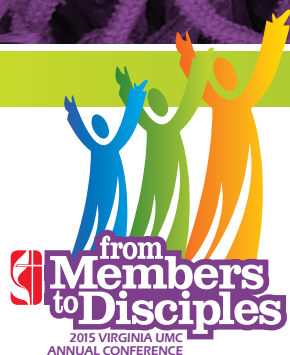


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Welcome to the 233rd Virginia Annual Conference, Berglund Center, Roanoke, Virginia



TODAY'S SCHEDULE

- 10:00 Clergy Session
(Berglund Performing Arts Theatre)
- 10:00 Laity Session
(Berglund Center Coliseum)
- 11:15 Laity Gathering
(Berglund Center Coliseum)
- 2:00 Call to Order
Opening Prayer
Welcome and
Organizing Motions
Elections
Rules Committee
General/Jurisdictional
Ballot
Commission on Status and
Role of Women
Episcopal Address
Cabinet report
Recognition of New
Faith Communities
Consent Agenda
Balloting
Equitable Compensation
Report
Historical Society Meeting
- 5:00 Recess for dinner
- 7:30 A Service of
Remembrance and
Holy Communion

Golf tournament supports Imagine No Malaria

Over \$4,000 was raised at the Mulligans Against Malaria golf tournament yesterday to benefit the Imagine No Malaria conference initiative.

The tournament, played at the Blue Hills Golf Course, had 58 participants as part of the pre-Annual Conference activities. The money was raised by participating teams who got sponsors from local churches for birdies and eagles and/or on a per stroke basis.

The event was planned by the Roanoke District and Thrasher Memorial UMC. One of the organizers, Rev. B. Failes, was excited by the turnout and the efforts towards malaria prevention.

Maria Maxwell, field coordinator for Imagine No Malaria, was thrilled by the individual's participation and the effort. "Thank you for putting your talents and gifts into something I am so passionate about," she said. "From the bottom of my heart, thank you for giving kids and families a chance like those in this country have. You've made a difference."

The weather was in the



Participants in the Mulligans Against Malaria golf tournament braved the heat and raised money for Imagine No Malaria. The team of Tom Davis, pictured above, won the entire tourney.

80s for most of the event, with a large deluge of rain catching only one group outside as they completed the course.

Prizes were given out for a number of achievements. The Drinkard team raised the most money as a team with almost \$1,000, and Gene Lee won for the most money donated as an individual with just around an \$850 contribution.

The event brought together individuals for a fun afternoon

with friends to benefit a cause that is very dear to the conference.

Annual Conference 2015 is underway, and efforts to raise money for Imagine No Malaria are not slowing down. 🍀



Annual Conference Special Offering

A special offering will be collected during worship on Saturday morning to support global mission projects designated by the bishop. This year the Annual Conference special offering goal is \$150,000.

Contributions will benefit the following ministries:

❖ Methodist Mission in Cambodia

We want to continue to strengthen our partnership with the Methodist Mission in Cambodia by offering support as they continue to purchase property to establish new churches and expand their fast-growing mission.

❖ UMCOR Global Health Ministries

These funds will go to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Global Health ministries to aid the Ebola-ravaged countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both of these

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

❖ Children Out of Poverty in Virginia

This will provide financial support for mission projects working with the poor in the Danville and Eastern Shore districts of our conference. Both of these districts are working in ministry in areas of Virginia that are well below the national and state poverty levels. Of particular concern and emphasis are children living in poverty. 🍀



Methodist Mission in Cambodia

Let's Talk: Pub Theology creates a safe space for fellowship and faith-based questions

On Thursday night as part of pre-Annual Conference events, the Roanoke District sponsored *Pub Theology* in downtown Roanoke. The event was organized by Ted Sutton.

Sutton said the group had been gathering in an upstairs room over Cornerstone Bar and Grill since January 2014, but they moved to Corned Beef and Company in September 2014.

"We started Pub Theology as an outside the church ministry hoping for diversity among people who may never or seldom go to a church service. We wanted a safe place where anyone could ask the hard questions and never be preached to or have any expectations," said Sutton.

This is reflected in a quote that sums up the group, "We don't have all the answers. We wonder the questions too."

Since their start, the group has had 30 gatherings that have included speakers from other faiths including the Jewish faith.

Pub Theology is a concept that is taking hold across the country as a creation of Bryan Berghoef, who has also written books going

into detail of the concept. In his words, from a blog featured on the *Huffington Post*, he sees it as a worthy conversation. "Pub theology is not the newest trendy outreach effort. It is open, honest conversation, wherever that leads," said Berghoef.

In Roanoke, Pub Theology was begun as a direct inspiration from the efforts of Rev. Jason Micheli of Aldersgate UMC in northern Virginia. Last night, a large group gathered to hear Dr. Kendall Soulen from Wesley Seminary answer questions posed from the audience.

These questions ranged from "Why do we still suffer from racism?" to "What causes evil?"

While Soulen left the floor open to interjections and comments, he drove the conversations from these questions.

In response to the presence of evil in the world, Soulen noted that it was too easy to lay the blame on the Devil who, at one time, was a good being. "The source of bad in this world is the abuse of freedom. The result is what we call 'evil,'" said Soulen.

The conversation led to gay marriage, a topic that is currently a big discussion in the conference.

Though Soulen knows that both laity and clergy are divided on the subject, he believes that no matter what side of the spectrum, believers should stick to those beliefs. "The church should find ways to honor these differences in belief," said Soulen.

The beauty behind Pub Theology is that every meeting allows for discussion between a variety of ages and among believers of other faiths.

Though the air-conditioning was broken in the space, a large crowd still gathered to enjoy drinks and share in conversation. When Soulen took a break after a barrage of several long questions, he took a drink of water to the applause of the crowd. "I don't know how much beer John Wesley drank, but he did have a wine merchant he was in contact with," said Soulen.



Crowd listens to Dr. Kendall Soulen as he covers questions posed by the audience.



Dr. Kendall Soulen found the comedy sign behind him hysterical as he led audience-based questions for Pub Theology.

Voting electronically

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

The Virginia Conference will elect 11 clergy delegates and 11 laity delegates to General Conference. Another 11 clergy and another 11 laity will be elected to join the General Conference

delegates to attend Jurisdictional Conference.

Finally, 10 clergy and 10 laity reserve delegates will be elected to serve if any of the previously elected delegates are unable to be part of

the delegation.

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

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

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

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

