



# A Service of REMEMBRANCE

244th Session

Virginia Annual Conference  
The United Methodist Church

June 18, 2026 Harrisonburg, Virginia



# A Service of Remembrance



**Thursday, June 18, 2026**

**2:00 p.m.**

Virginia Annual Conference  
The United Methodist Church  
244th Session

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## GATHERING

### Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

*“Steal Away” (traditional spiritual) and “Be Still My Soul”  
(Jean Sibelius, **UMH #534**)*

**Leader:** We gather today as a community, carrying with us the losses, pains, and sorrows of this year, and indeed of our lives. In this sacred space, we acknowledge the weight of our grief, trusting that it can be brought into the presence of God.

**Leader:** We bring **Han** **한**, a Korean concept expressing the deep, unresolved sorrow and pain carried through life, a grief that longs to be acknowledged and transformed.

**Leader:** We proclaim **¡Presente!**, a Latino tradition of remembering those who have gone before us. When spoken, it affirms that the deceased are present in our memory, in God, and in the communion of saints.

**Leader:** We hold onto **Hesed** **חֶסֶד**, a Hebrew word for the steadfast, covenantal love of God, a love that refuses to let us go and sustains us through sorrow and loss.

**Leader:** In this time, we recognize that grief is not something to bear alone. We come longing for healing, belonging, and the comforting presence of God among us. Together, across our different cultures and traditions, we lift our hearts to God, trusting that God meets us in our grief, holds us in our pain, and invites us into hope and renewal.

### Instrumental Response

**\*Call to Remembrance (adapted from Hebrews 21:1,  
Exodus 34:6-5, John 14:8)**

Leader: We gather in the shadow of the Great Cloud of Witnesses. We bring our "Han," the deep, unresolved knots of grief, the pains of our past, and the sorrows of this conference year.

**People: We bring our losses to the God of the Covenant.**

Leader: We remember that we are not orphans. We are held by Hesed (Hreced), the love that refuses to let us go. And as we remember those who have gone before us, we declare: God is here.

**People: God is here.**

Leader: Dios está aquí. (Spanish)

**People: Dios está aquí. (Spanish)**

Leader : 하나님 이 여기 계십니다. (Hananim-i yeogi gyeshimnida.)  
(Korean)

**People: 하나님이 여기 계십니다. (Hananim-i yeogi gyeshimnida.) (Korean)**

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who meets us in our grief, who heals our hearts, and who gathers us into a place of belonging.

**People: God is here.**

**\*Opening Hymn “For All the Saints” (UMH #711)**

**\*Prayer (by Mary J. Scifres)**

God of ages past and hope to come, we offer our gratitude for those who have gone before, we offer our hope for those yet to come. As we honor the past, help us dream of a future of love and peace.

Comfort us in our sorrow. Strengthen us for the journey. Guide us on the path of justice. Help us live as your people, that others may see and remember your wisdom and truth living in us. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

**PROCLAMATION**

**Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58:6-12**

*Musical Call & Response to Scripture*

***"Open the Eyes of My Heart" p. 3008 Worship & Song***

**Musical Call & Response:**

Leader - Open the eyes of my heart,  
Lord, open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see you,  
I want to see you.

**People - Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see you,  
I want to see you.**

**Reader:** Hear these words from Isaiah 58:6-12

<sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you;  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

***All Sing: Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart; I want to see you, I want to see you.***

**Reader:**

<sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

<sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you continually  
and satisfy your needs in parched places  
and make your bones strong,  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water  
whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

**All Sing** *Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see you,  
I want to see you.  
To see you high and lifted up,  
shining in the light of your glory.  
Pour out your power and love  
as we sing. Holy, holy, holy.  
Holy, holy, holy.  
Holy, holy, holy.  
Holy, holy, holy.  
I want to see you.*

**Reader:** The Word of God for the People of God.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

### **Song of Preparation, Choir, “A Hallelujah Medley”**

(Hallelujah, Amen by Nolan Williams, Jr. #118 AAHH/”Revelation 19:1”  
by Jeffrey LaValley/“Alpha & Omega” by Erasmus Mutanbira)

Sermon: Rev. David McAllister Wilson

### **The Litany of “¡Presente!”**

**Leader:** In the midst of our worship, we pause to remember those who have gone before us.

**People:** We remember them with gratitude and commend them to God’s care.

**Leader:** They are held in God’s steadfast love, a love that does not fail or fade.

**People: Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.**

**Leader:** In our grief and in our hope, we trust the mercy of God.

**People: Held in God’s love, we rest in the promise of resurrection. Amen.**

**Leader:** “In the Latino and Hispanic tradition, when the names of the faithful departed are spoken, the community responds: ‘¡Presente!’ It means ‘Present’—not only that they are remembered by us, but that they are present with God and still alive in our midst through love, memory, and witness. Please respond with the word ‘¡Presente!’ when each name is read.”

For those who labored in the vineyard of Virginia, whose voices still echo in our sanctuaries...

**Congregation Responds (After each name): ¡Presente!**

**CLERGY MEMBERS:**

Gregory Lee Adkins  
Chester T. Ashby  
Harlan R. Beckley  
Andy Brock  
Charles C. Caudill  
Richard Daily  
Phyllis R. Earley  
Priscilla Gay Hall  
William Pembroke Hall  
F. Chancellor Hamilton  
Charles H. Harless  
John W. Haynes  
Jo Ellen Hetherington  
James E. Galford  
Howard M. Gosnell  
Charles E. Johnson Jr.  
Theodore J. Kitchen  
Dennis C. Lipke  
Herschel J. Lynch  
C. Ralph Mills  
Robert E. Moore  
W/M. Mayton, Jr. (Bill)  
Herbert A. Moyer  
William F. Porter Jr.  
Evelyn A. Puckett  
Waverly G. Reames  
Cheryl Martin Bass Rhodes  
Reginald G. Rumburg  
Robert L. Russell  
James A. Salmon  
John F. Shappell  
William Joseph Shepherd  
Harry B. Spear III  
Martin K. Spilman Sr.  
Leslie G. Tyndall

## **CLERGY SPOUSES:**

Sandra J. Baker  
Marian D. Bomberger  
Brenda M. Douglass  
Ann E. Fink  
Frances C. Gibson  
Ila B. Gravely  
Shirley A. Hunsicker  
Alice S. Johnson  
Marvel E. Johnson  
Sherry R. Jones  
Nancy Y. Knight  
Shirley S. Kyle  
Wanda E. Landis  
Rebecca B. Leonard  
Annie McWilliams  
William Mears  
Winnifred J. Moyer  
Elizabeth May Murphy  
Jayne H. Paschall  
Ruth M. Porter  
Magie L. Raney  
Elizabeth J. Ridout  
Jane B. Rilee  
James D. Sortore  
Marie Sturtevant-Carper  
Betty B. Westbrook  
Betty C. Whitehurst

## **LAY MEMBERS**

Miriam Charnock  
Ronald Hardman  
Ella Lee Northan-Roux  
Jane Carol Preston

**Leader:** “We also remember the faithful lay members of our local congregations—those known deeply in their churches, in their pews, in their small groups, and in their daily witness. Though their names may not be spoken here, their lives are written in the heart of God and in the life of the Church.”

**People:** “We give thanks for their faithfulness, their service,

**and their love. We honor their witness and entrust them to God's eternal care."**

### **The Intercession: Tongsung Kido (meaning "praying aloud")**

*We will now enter a time of prayer in the tradition of Tongsung Kido, which means praying aloud together. In this practice, I will give a prayer prompt, and when I say, "Let us pray," we will all lift our voices at once, each praying aloud in our own words and in our own language, crying out to God together. Do not worry about the noise; God hears the symphony of our hearts."*

#### **PROMPT 1**

For the families grieving today and for the empty chairs in our homes.

**Leader 1:** Let us pray.

**Congregation:** (Audible collective prayer for 30–45 seconds)

**Leader 1:** Offers a short closing prayer for this concern. (about 30 seconds)

#### **PROMPT 2**

For the brokenness of our history and the pain of our divisions.

**Leader 2:** Let us pray.

**Congregation:** (Audible collective prayer for 30–45 seconds)

**Leader 2:** Offers a short closing prayer for this concern. (about 30 seconds)

#### **PROMPT 3**

For the future of our Conference and for the strength to live out God's hesed, (*steadfast love*)

**Leader 3:** Let us pray.

**Congregation:** (Audible collective prayer for 30–45 seconds)

The Close

**Leader 3:** Offers a short closing prayer for this concern. (about 30 seconds)

**Leader 3:** Lord, hear our cries. Let the many voices become one breath of hope.

### **Lord's Prayer**

## **Tapestry of Remembrance**

*(Small colored ribbons representing different cultures, lives, and communities will be distributed upon entry. You are invited to come to the nearest station during the service, or you may come later, after the service. There, you may tie your ribbon to the communal cloth and offer a silent prayer. Stewards at each station will welcome and assist you.)*

**Leader:** “Friends in Christ, we now enter a sacred act of remembrance and belonging.

In your hand is a ribbon—simple, fragile, and unique. It represents a life, a story, a people, and a place within God’s unfolding tapestry. No single ribbon tells the whole story, yet together they reveal the beauty of God’s creation and the communion of saints.

You are invited to come to the nearest station at this time, or you may come later, after the service. Both are sacred, and there is no urgency.

When you are ready, stewards at each station will welcome and assist you. There, you may tie your ribbon to the communal cloth and offer a silent prayer—for someone you remember, a community you carry in your heart, or for the healing and reconciling work of God among us.

These woven communal cloths will be carried into our Juneteenth service as a visible sign of our shared stories and our unity as one body in Christ.

Move at the pace of prayer, for this is prayer in motion. As you come forward and return to your seat, remain in a spirit of reverence and quiet reflection.

Let us now prepare our hearts as we come before God, the Master Weaver of our lives, who gathers every thread into grace.”

## **SENDING**

**Leader:** May the God of the ancestors, The God who walked the Middle Passage, The God who crossed borders with the migrant, The God who met the exile in the wilderness, Now wrap you in Hesus. Go from this place not just as those who have lost, but as those who have been found. You belong to God. You belong to each other.

**Congregation: Amen.**

**Closing Song:** “UMH # 701. *When We All Get to Heaven*”



## THE MEMORIAL ROLL 2025-2026

*In Memory of those persons related to the Virginia Conference who died in the last year. Those with Memoirs to follow are noted in italics.*

### RETIREED CLERGY

<b>Name of Deceased Clergy, (Date of Birth), &amp; Conference Status</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Theodore J. Kitchen (01/19/27) RE .....	May 15, 2025
<i>Harry B. Spear III (08/15/42) RE .....</i>	<i>May 31, 2025</i>
<i>Gregory L. Adkins (07/25/1950) RE .....</i>	<i>June 05, 2025</i>
Herschel Jack Lynch (09/11/31) RE .....	July 29, 2025
<i>Waverly G. Reames (02/27/44) RE .....</i>	<i>August 11, 2025</i>
Evelyn A. Puckett (11/20/42) RL .....	August 14, 2025
<i>James A. Salmon (05/24/40) RL .....</i>	<i>August 14, 2025</i>
<i>James E. Galford (07/17/44) RL .....</i>	<i>August 24, 2025</i>
Cheryl M. Bass Rhodes (12/10/46) RE .....	August 29, 2025
<i>Dennis C. Lipke (09/22/46) RE .....</i>	<i>September 10, 2025</i>
Priscilla Gay Hall (11/02/46) RE .....	September 13, 2025
Jo Ellen Hetherington (03/09/50) RE .....	September 17, 2025
<i>William F. Porter Jr. (10/21/50) RE .....</i>	<i>September 19, 2025</i>
Charles E. Johnson Jr. (03/23/52) RL .....	October 7, 2025
<i>F. Chancellor Hamilton (11/12/42) RE .....</i>	<i>October 12, 2025</i>
Harlan R. Beckley (11/27/43) RE .....	October 20, 2025
John W. Haynes (07/29/24) RL .....	October 20, 2025
Charles C. Caudill (07/10/32) RE .....	October 22, 2025
<i>Phyllis R. Earley (10/21/53) RE .....</i>	<i>October 26, 2025</i>
Chester T. Ashby (03/20/29) RE .....	November 14, 2025
Richard Daily (06/18/48) RE .....	November 23, 2025
C. Ralph Mills (07/11/43) RD .....	December 04, 2025
Herbert A. Moyer (08/05/29) RE .....	December 20, 2025
John F. Shappell (02/20/47) RE .....	December 23, 2025
<i>Andy Brock (07/22/52) RE .....</i>	<i>December 24, 2025</i>
Robert L. Russell (12/29/49) RL .....	December 24, 2025

<i>Reginald Rumburg (11/22/49) RA</i> .....	<i>December 25, 2025</i>
Howard M. Gosnell (09/22/35) RE .....	December 26, 2025
Martin K. Spilman Sr. (12/27/33) RE.....	January 23, 2026
Leslie Glenn Tyndall (02/05/42) RE.....	March 05, 2026
Robert E. Moore (08/22/34) RE .....	March 14, 2026
William Pembroke Hall (06/26/29) RL.....	March 27, 2026
Charles H. Harless (07/19/1930) RE.....	March 28, 2026
<i>William Joseph Shepherd (10/02/50) RE</i> .....	<i>March 29, 2026</i>
<i>W.M. Mayton, Jr. (Bill) (03/06/36) RE</i> .....	<i>April 27, 2026</i>

**Key to Conference Status Abbreviations:**

RE - Retired Elder	RA- Retired Associate Member
RD - Retired Deacon	FD- Deacon in Full Connection
RL - Retired Local Pastor	RB- Retired Bishop
PE - Provisional Elder	PL- Part-time Local Pastor
PD - Provisional Deacon	FL- Full-time Local Pastor
RDM- Retired Diaconal Minister	FE- Full Elder
RP - Retired Probationary/Provisional Member	

**CLERGY SPOUSES**

<b>Name of Deceased Spouse and (Related Clergy’s Name)</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Sherry R. Jones (Rev. John R. Jones Sr.).....	May 23, 2025
Elizabeth J. Ridout (Rev. Edward Ridout).....	June 1, 2025
Ruth S. Porter (Rev. William F. Porter Jr.).....	June 30, 2025
James Sortore (Rev. Marion Sortore).....	July 08, 2025
Rebecca B. Leonard (Rev. Eddie Leonard).....	November 19, 2025
Betty B. Westbrook (Rev. Walter W. Westbrook).....	December 03, 2025
William Mears (Rev. Charlene Landes Mears) .....	December 03, 2025
Shirley A. Hunsicker (Rev. Philip Hunsicker).....	December 14, 2025
Marian D. Bomberger (Rev. C. Grant Bomberger).....	January 31, 2026

**CLERGY SURVIVING SPOUSES**

<b>Name of Deceased Spouse and (Related Clergy’s Name)</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Brenda M. Douglass (Rev. Carl Douglass Jr.) .....	May 2, 2025
Marie Sturtevant-Carper (Rev. William Sturtevant) .....	May 5, 2025

Alice S. Johnson (Rev. Charles M. Johnson).....	May 13, 2025
Ila B. Gravely (Rev. James Gravely).....	May 14, 2025
Frances C. Gibson (Rev. Huron G. Collins) .....	May 23, 2025
Marvel E. Johnson (Rev. Calvin B. Johnson).....	August 12, 2025
Magie L. Raney (Rev William N. Raney).....	September 16, 25
Sandra J. Baker (Rev Herbert E. Baker).....	October 25, 2025
Wanda E. Landis (Rev. H. Warren Landis) .....	November 23, 2025
Betty C. Whitehurst (Rev. Walter A. Whitehurst).....	December 13, 2025
Shirley S. Kyle (Rev. William R. Kyle Jr.).....	December 20, 2025
Nancy Y. Knight (Rev. William E. Knight) .....	December 22, 2025
Winnifred J. Moyer (Rev. Herbert A. Moyer).....	December 29, 2025
Annie McWilliams (Rev. Joseph McWilliams).....	January 01, 2026
Ann E. Fink (Rev. William Fink).....	February 14, 2026
Jane B. Rilee (Rev. Phillip R. Rilee) .....	February 15, 2026
Elizabeth May Murphy (Rev. Floyd Murphy).....	March 28, 2026
Jayne H. Paschall (Rev. Hugh C. Paschall).....	April 5, 2026

## LAY MEMBERS

<b>Name of Lay Member/District</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Miriam Charnock, Mission Rivers District .....	December 14, 2025
Ronald Hardman, Mission Rivers District .....	April 26, 2026
Ella Lee Northan-Roux, Coastal Virginia District .....	October 5, 2025
Jane Carol Preston, Mission Rivers District .....	December 1, 2025

*Updated 05/01/2026*



## 2026 Memoirs

**GREGORY LEE ADKINS (THE REV. DR.)**, of Springfield, Virginia, passed away at home on June 5, 2025, surrounded by family. He was 74. Greg was born in South Point, Ohio, to Ruth Ellcessor Adkins and Roy Lee Adkins, the eldest of five brothers. At age 13, he experienced the sudden loss of his father. During the funeral, he overheard someone describe the tragedy as “God’s plan.” Even then, Greg felt a deep unease with that explanation — a discomfort that would shape his theological and pastoral calling for the rest of his life. He attended Mt. Carmel High School and the Kentucky Mountain Bible Institute, where he met Denise Lucille Salter. Their first date took place on a snowy Friday in January 1970, when Denise slipped her arm through Greg’s as they crossed campus together. She never let go. They married on September 1, 1972. Greg earned degrees from Asbury University, Asbury Theological Seminary, and Emory University before beginning 38 years of ministry in the United Methodist Church. He faithfully served congregations throughout Virginia, including Bethia, Fairfax, South Boston, Raleigh Court, Washington Street, and Fairlington United Methodist Churches. He also served as Vice President of Virginia United Methodist Homes. It was during his final appointment at Fairlington United Methodist Church that Greg most fully found his pastoral voice. There, he helped lead a reconciliation process affirming the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in the life and sacraments of the church. Greg believed pastoral care must begin with human dignity and compassion rather than institutional conformity. He met people where they were. He challenged the Church’s tendency to distort the truth that all people are created in God’s image by reprojecting that image narrowly in its own likeness, thus turning a universal truth into a tool of exclusion. His theology rejected the idea of a punitive God that orchestrates suffering. He embraced a certain kind of God revealed in the life and death of Jesus Christ—a God who stands with the suffering, walks beside the excluded and marginalized, and resists the bullying forces of self-righteousness. In word and witness, Greg called the Church to do the same: to stand with those who have been silenced, to speak when silence is easier, and to love with a justice that reflects the inclusive heart of the Gospel. Greg leaves behind two preacher’s kids to whom he did not preach. Instead, he invited them to explore the Great Mystery. He acknowledged the doubts of the faithful and never tried to make God simple to make the world less complex. Through both words and actions, he showed them that love and compassion were the whole point. They remain deeply grateful for his kindness, wisdom, and the safe harbor of his presence. Greg carried the energy of his youth throughout his life. He loved basketball, swimming, running, fishing, reading, writing, music, and evenings near the water. His booming but melodic voice lives on in old college recordings and in the memories of the many people who called him pastor, mentor, and friend.



**PASTOR ANDY LINDSEY BROCK**, 73, of Frederick County, VA, returned home to his Heavenly Father Wednesday, December 24, 2025.

Pastor Brock was born in 1952 in Wilmington, NC, son of the late Paul Brock and Annie Cooper. He was a veteran of the United States Air Force and devoted his life to his Lord and Savior. Pastor Brock served many congregations in the area.

Pastor Brock married Regina Petersen in 2006 in Berkeley Springs, WV.

Surviving with his wife are daughters, Raini Newman and Marion Teaford; son, Steven Petersen, Jr; grandchildren, Wyatt Teaford, Joshua, Natalie and Elise Petersen; and brother, Michael Cooper.

A memorial service took place on Friday, January 2, 2026, at Omph Funeral Home, Amherst Chapel. Officiating was Pastor Dr. Victor Gomez and Reverend Clay Knick.



**REV. PHYLLIS ANNE RUCKLE EARLEY**, 72, formerly of Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Chase City, Virginia Beach, Vienna, Norfolk, Arlington, Poquoson and later Fredericksburg, went to be with the Lord, Sunday, October 26, 2025.

Born in Portsmouth Naval Hospital, she was the daughter of the late Philip Stephen Ruckle Sr., and Mary Smith Ruckle. She was preceded in death by her husband, Rev. Dr. James N. Earley II, brother Michael Ruckle and sister in law Debbie.

Phyllis lived out a life of faith, and service to others. She was a United Methodist clergy for 30 years in the Virginia Annual Conference, serving churches as small as Plantersville in Drakes Branch, and as large as her last appointment at Trinity in Alexandria. She was most recently attending Ebenezer in Stafford and Tabernacle in Poquoson.

Phyllis loved having the opportunity to meet and get to know people through the local church, during mission trips, working with youth and while traveling with Jim. They were frequently in Lake Junaluska NC and Playa del Carmen Mexico, and were always planning their next trip, looking for friends to invite along for the adventure, and hoped to retire together in Mexico.

Initially Phyllis had not planned to attend college, but began the process of college and ordination as an adult student first at Southside Virginia Community College, then Virginia Wesleyan College, and finally Wesley Theological Seminary. She went on to serve in local churches across the conference and worked in the Arlington

District Office where she was able to mentor and befriend many other clergy before having to take medical leave.

Here to continue telling the family stories are her daughter, Alacia Harrison (Jeff); son Nathan Earley (Jennifer), grandchildren Zachary Kearns (Miranda), Xavier & Naomi Harrison, and great-grandchildren Adleigh, Nicholas, and Rory; and brothers Philip (Pat) and Jeff (Pam), brother in law Chris (Carrie) and many nieces and nephews.

The family extends special thanks to Dr. Atkins and his team at the Lombardi Cancer Center at MedStar Georgetown Hospital, and staff at Legacy Hospice. Phyllis survived 20 years with kidney cancer before she was able to rejoin Jim.

Interment will be scheduled at a later date at Olive Branch Cemetery in Portsmouth, VA.



**THE REVEREND JAMES E. GALFORD** (Jim) and his wife Sheila were members at Shiloh UMC in Lynchburg, VA and both of them had taken classes to become Lay Speakers in the Methodist Church, they had been hearing that so many ministers were retiring or no longer wanting to preach they were concerned that churches would not have anyone to preach, so they wanted to help if needed. During this time Jim was told that he would make a good minister so after praying and thinking about it he decided to go to the course of study and become a minister.

Jim's first class at Duke Divinity School was when he was 60. While he was going to school there "a cloud of Reverened witnesses" as he called them offered him advice, encouragement, and training. March 2011 marked the completion of the "Course of Study" at Duke Divinity School. This five year program provides theological study, pastoral care training, and Bible study. This education is a requirement (by Book of Discipline) to appoint a Licensed Local Pastor in the United Methodist Church.

Jim's first appointment was Leesville UMC/West Campbell Charge from June 2003 through June 2006. Jim served as Associate Pastor at Rustburg UMC from July 2007 through June 2009. Jim was officially appointed to Mt. Zion UMC on October 15, 2008.

Jim not only studied and prepared each weekly sermon he also created the bulletins, printed them and Sheila would fold them and get them ready for handing out on Sunday mornings. In one of the bulletin inserts in August 2011 he wrote these words "I had much encouragement for deciding to become a minister but most of all "an angel accompanied me as we drove to Duke for every class, and I know, that if it were not for Sheila's love and support, I would not have been in that black robe – in Duke Chapel. As I approached the row of seats, there was my cheerleader, greeting fellow pastors, and professors (she now counted as her friends), and seated in alphabetic

order, Rev. Samuel Grist was on my right, and unbelievably, Mrs. Grist was seated next to Sheila.

Jim grew up on a small farm in Green Bank, WV. The mountain to the west is now the Snowshoe Ski Resort. The cell free valley to the west of route 28/92 has several radio telescopes operated by the federal government as the National Radio Observatory. Jim graduated from West Virginia University with a BS in Mechanical Engineering and a MS degree in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (structural design and analysis). After employment with Allegany Ballistics Laboratory (missile propellant design) and Teledyne Materials Research (nuclear power plant piping design), Jim moved to Lynchburg to work for Babcock & Wilcox in November 1972 as a mechanical engineer. Jim retired in July 2004 from AREVA (the evolved company name) after 32 years. Prior to appointment Jim participated in United Methodist Lay Speaking and taught at CVCC (math, strength of materials, hydraulics).



**REV. FREDERICK CHANCELLOR HAMILTON's** life was a testament to faith, compassion, and steady, grace-filled presence. Raised in Boulevard United Methodist Church in Richmond, he grew into his calling surrounded by a community that shaped him — and that he, in turn, helped to shape. A graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, Ferrum College, RPI (now VCU), and Union Theological Seminary, he committed himself fully to the work of ministry.

Across thirty-seven years of pastoral service in the Virginia Conference, Chancellor ministered to congregations at the West Hanover Charge, New Kent Charge, Wesley (Vienna), Mt. Pisgah (Midlothian), Good Shepherd (Dale City), Welborne (Henrico), St. Luke's (Yorktown), and Walker Chapel (Arlington). He later continued his ministry with twelve years of devoted service as a chaplain at Cedarfield. He also gave back to his alma mater, Ferrum College, serving as a Trustee and remaining deeply committed to supporting its mission and students. Chancellor quite literally grew up with the church — and the church grew with him.

He was known first and foremost as a pastor — someone who lived his calling through presence, kindness, and walking the journey beside others in good times and in bad. He served as part of a clergy team with his wife, Margaret, and their daughters, Amy Margaret Hamilton MacDougall and Christen Proffitt, shaping a family ministry grounded in hospitality and service.

Chancellor was deeply grateful for the mentors who shaped his own ministry and treasured the friendships he formed with fellow pastors across the Virginia Conference. As the years went on, he was proud to return that gift, guiding and encouraging those discerning their calls. Investing in emerging clergy brought him joy.

He also cherished the deep friendships he formed with parishioners

over the years. These relationships — built through meals, laughter, shared grief, and the ordinary holiness of daily life — were among the greatest gifts of his ministry. He counted it a privilege to walk with families through their milestones and challenges and held those friendships close to his heart.

His ministry extended beyond church walls — into homeless shelters, coffee houses, and into the lives of parents who had lost children. He carried the sorrow of others with tenderness, believing that God cried with us in our human pain. He was known to sleep on hospital floors simply because he would not leave a grieving family. He spoke with anyone, anywhere, believing every encounter was a chance to share grace.

Music was a lifelong love. From childhood choirs to collaborations with school, civic, professional, and military musicians, he brought joyful reverence to worship. Hymns like “One Bread, One Body” and “The Church’s One Foundation” were convictions he lived.

In Northern Virginia, he worked closely with funeral homes to ensure that families burying loved ones at Arlington National Cemetery received compassionate support and dignified services.

Chancellor Hamilton walked with others through life with humility, kindness, and a deep love of God. His presence was his greatest sermon, and his legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched.



**THE REVEREND DR. DENNIS CHARLES MICHAEL LIPKE** went to be with his Savior on September 10, 2025, in Hopewell, VA, at the age of 78. He was born in Durban, South Africa, on September 22, 1946.

Dennis spent the first 40 years of his life in South Africa, where he met and married Dale Norma Usher. He then studied at the Bible Institute of South Africa, where he became a candidate for the Methodist ministry. He attended Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. They had three children, Charmaine, Caroline, and Andrew. Dennis served God by serving God's people in various churches in South Africa.

Dale and Dennis brought their family to the United States of America in 1987, where he continued his studies and received a Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary. Dennis continued to serve God's people through his ministry in the USA, until he was called home.

He was a beloved Pastor to countless congregations and will be sorely missed. Both Dennis and Dale had a heart for missions and went on numerous Volunteers in Mission trips. He was also an avid gardener, with a green thumb, and spent many hours tending to his precious plants, his favorite of which were his roses. Another one of Dennis's passions was to travel; he and Dale loved to cruise and traveled to

many different countries throughout their more than 55 years of marriage.

Next to his love for God was his love for his family. He was the oldest of six children, and is predeceased by his parents, Violet Annie Lipke and William Charles Lipke; and three of his siblings, Hazel Nel, Beverly Fouche, and Mark Lipke. He is survived by his siblings, Norma Siebert and Basil Lipke. He is also survived by his wife, Dale; his three children, Charmaine Cowell (Edwin), Caroline Fleming, and Andrew Lipke (Myriah); and his eight grandchildren, Zachary Cowell (Devon), Joshua Fleming (Samantha), Ryan Cowell, Jacob Fleming, Jonas Fleming, Arabelle Lipke, Juliet Fleming, and Scarlett Lipke, who loved him dearly.



**WILFRED (BILL) MAYTON, JR.**, passed away on April 27, 2026. He was born in Farmville, VA, such a long time ago that he was 90 years old when he died. That age made him “the oldest Mayton to ever live.”

Bill was a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the Candler School of Theology. While in seminary, Bill did three things: sang, served as a student pastor, and married the love of his life, Kay (deceased 2019).

Zada Lovelace (Bill’s mother) and her husband, Bob Lovelace, were Licensed Local Pastors in the Farmville District in the 1950’s. On Zada’s license, the masculine pronouns were crossed out and replaced with the appropriate feminine pronouns. That planted a seed in Bill’s ministerial life. Throughout his career, Bill worked to include female pastors in the cabinet, chairing Bishop Goodson’s task force on Women in the Cabinet. He served 10 appointments in Georgia and Virginia Annual Conferences, including serving as the Superintendent of the Eastern Shore District. He proudly served on the Staunton District Committee on Ordained Ministry and mentored new clergy, especially his dear friend, Mi Sook Ahn. During his appointment to Lacrosse (1964-67), Bill stood for desegregation in Virginia public schools by refusing to allow the church he served to be used as a ‘whites-only’ private elementary school.

Throughout his 47-year career, when asked which appointment was his favorite, Pastor Bill always said it was the one he was serving. At every appointment, he immersed himself in the community. He loved meeting new people and becoming part of their lives.

He was proud when his son, Mike, told him he had accepted his call to ministry. Upon hearing the news, Bill simply said, “Isn’t there anything else you can do?” And “Remember, Sunday comes around every week.”

As with so many of the followers of Christ throughout the ages, the ministry of Jesus Christ was the purpose and the blessing of Bill’s life.

Thanks be to God for the pastors who have brought us to this point in

faith. Thanks be to God for the life and ministry of Bill Mayton.



**REV. FOREST PORTER** and his wife **RUTH**, both passed away in the summer of 2025, 81 days apart.

Forest was ordained an elder in 1978 and served four churches throughout his thirty seven years of active ministry.

Forest first became a pastor in 1970 when he was a sophomore at Eastern Mennonite College, serving Mountain Valley for three years. He and Ruth married in 1973 and moved to Parnassus UMC. They timed their wedding around Annual Conference so they could move into a parsonage together. They loved catching up with friends at Conference and would often celebrate their anniversary with a Dairy Queen stop on the way back home.

They served Lynnhaven in Virginia beach for 6 years then moved to Trinity in Orange for 23 years. He retired in 2007, the year before their daughter Sara was commissioned because he said the Conference wasn't big enough for the both of them.

Forest served on the Board of Ordained Ministry and many other District and Conference roles.

During their time in Orange, he became deeply connected not only to the church but to the wider community. Sometimes referred to as the "mayor of Orange," he worked tirelessly to connect people, assist in their time of need, and be a friendly voice and presence. He was President of Love Outreach Food Pantry for many years and instrumental in its beginning and success. He answered calls for all kinds of community needs: furniture, housing, toys for kids at Christmas. He visited the sick in homes, hospitals, and nursing homes, offering a friendly presence and an encouraging word.

He did not look away from poverty, pain, or suffering. He was known and loved by many.

When asked about staying in Orange for so long he'd say, "well they didn't want a preacher and I'm the closest thing to not being one."

On a more serious note, he credited his longevity in Orange to his introduction of Disciple Bible study and the way that those classes flourished and involved many in the church for several years.

Ruth was not only his wife but his partner in ministry. She served the church as secretary, Sunday school teacher, UMW president, children's music director, and many other roles that are part of the connective tissue of a church community.

He deeply cared about his family and staying up to date on their wellbeing and adventures. He could and would talk to anyone, relaying stories from the mundane to the extraordinary.

Forest loved being outside. Along with his wife Ruth, he loved to take his boat out on lake Anna or the RV to the mountains. He could not sit still. He was a world class tinkerer and excelled at putting around, whether working on cars or weeding the yard.

They were almost always together, difficult to separate, hard to talk about one without the other.

Whenever they would be apart, they would pray this prayer together: “the Lord watch between thee and me, while we are parted one from the other.”

81 days was not long to be parted, and now they are together.



**REV. WAVERLY GRANT REAMES**, aged 81, of Winchester, Virginia, died Monday, August 11, 2025, in Spring Arbor of Winchester Assisted Living.

Waverly was born February 27, 1944, the son of the late Thomas Labon Reames and Fern Louise Sechrist Reames. He grew up in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, where he attended Corinth United Methodist Church. Waverly was the second in his family to graduate from high school and the first in his family to attend college. He graduated from Ferrum College in Virginia, Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Methodist Theological School in Delaware, Ohio. Waverly was ordained in the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church in 1968 and spent the next 41 years in full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church. He served as Associate Pastor at Calvary in Arlington, and Braddock Street in Winchester. Waverly was Pastor of Park View in Lynchburg, Stephens City and Orrick Chapel in Stephens City, Community of Faith in Herndon, and Harmony in Hamilton. He later served as part-time Visitation Pastor in Stephens City for 9 years. Waverly never stopped ministering to others, even in assisted living, where he often led Bible studies and Holy Communion services for his fellow residents.

For many years Waverly served as a Supervising Pastor for those seeking to become ordained United Methodist ministers. He served on the District Board of Ministry for the Arlington and Winchester Districts, the Virginia Conference School of Missions Committee and has been Dean of the Virginia Conference School of Mission. Additionally, he served on the Winchester District Council for several years, as well as the Winchester District Worship committee and Finance committee. For many years, Waverly was on the Board of Directors of the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center in Blackstone. He was also on the Chaplaincy Advisory Board of the Loudoun Hospital for several years where he was one of the on-call chaplains.

Throughout his life, Waverly enjoyed a range of handcrafts, including knitting, crocheting, and tatting. He also enjoyed playing the piano

and gardening. He was particularly proud of his giant fig tree he raised from a small sapling. Waverly took great joy in baking - especially lemon chess pies, and in making fig jam from the figs he grew and harvested himself.

Waverly married Cheryl Wallace Reames on June 3, 1967, at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee.

He is survived by his two sons, Matthew D. Reames of Winchester, Virginia, and Andrew C. Reames and his wife, Lauren of White Post, Virginia, and his two grandchildren, Miles and Waverly.

Waverly's final resting place is in Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.



**REGINALD "REGGIE" GRANT RUMBURG** loved! He loved God, he loved his family, he loved those whom he was sent to serve as their Pastor. Ministry took him to towns, villages, cities and countryside's he never imagined he would live and was blessed as a result of serving there. That was part of God's call on his life and he without question (well maybe with a few) went where he was sent.

For over forty years, he faithfully served the people of God in the Virginia Annual Conference. Forty plus years mixed with love, tears, joy, and sorrow, was a humbling gift for him. He confidently remembered that he was called to be faithful! His life was so much richer because of this guiding principle.

Reggie was a "punny" man indeed! His quick wit and ability to not take himself too seriously was a spiritual gift he whole heartedly embraced. Laughter is good for the soul!

If your path ever crossed his, you were blessed. Even in times of pain and difficulty, Reggie had the ability to make you smile. It was important to him that you knew you were loved and precious in God's sight.

Reggie encouraged us all to listen a little closer to what is being said in all situations and even closer to what is not being said. He urged us to care more for one another. The people God places in our lives are there for a purpose. Life is short so please in Reggie's memory, don't take yourself or life too seriously. Laugh every chance you get and please don't underestimate the gift of a good sense of humor!

As this memoir is being written, it is not a coincidence that for the first time in weeks, rain is gently falling and renewing the earth. Reggie has been renewed! Well done, Reggie! Well done, good and faithful servant! Thank you for giving to the Lord! May we all, in the power of God's Holy Spirit, follow Reggie's example as he followed his Savior, Jesus Christ.

His wife, Glenda, daughters: Jennifer, Melissa (Daniel), Rebecca (Todd) and grandson, Charles will forever miss him and his aiding love. We, however, are so grateful to God for the gift of Reggie, aka Daddy, and Papaw and we have that sure and certain hope that he is in the land of everlasting life with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and all those who have gone before him. Save us a space at the table, when we all will feast together at Christ's heavenly banquet! Until we meet again, we love you more than you'll ever know!

Thanks be to God for the life, witness and testimony of Rev. Reginald "Reggie" Grant Rumburg!



**JAMES ALLAN SALMON, JR.** peacefully claimed the Promise of the Resurrection while in the loving care of his wife, Sue Ann on August 14, 2025. Born on May 24, 1940 in Richmond, VA, he was the son of J. Allan and Kate Salmon. He was predeceased by his parents, and sister, Mary Lee. He is survived by Sue Ann, his wife of 44 years; his stepdaughter, Jill Herren; grandson, Jared Herren; as well as cousins, in-laws, nieces, and nephew.

He was raised in Richmond, Va and attended schools there. As a youth he was active in DeMolay. He attended Thomas Jefferson High School where he was active in the band, orchestral and an on campus military organization. After graduation, he attended UVA and RPI(VCU.) In his 20s and 30s, he worked in sales and marketing and received recognition for outstanding sales performance by two companies. Later, after his marriage to Sue Ann in 1981, he continued in sales and marketing while also planning and starting his own company in Landscape Design and Installation.

He attended Leigh Street Baptist Church where he was baptized and was active and held lay positions as a teen and young adult. He participated in the choirs, Sunday School and later held different offices as an adult.

He and Sue Ann were married in August 1981. Not long after their marriage, they moved to a farm in Caroline County that had at one time been owned by a 4th great grandfather and been in his family for over 200 years. Soon after moving to Caroline, they attended and later joined Shiloh UMC.

After several years at Shiloh UMC, Jim attended Lay Speaker training and, following training, spoke at churches in the Ashland District. To that he added teaching The Disciple Bible Study after taking the training course offered. During that time, he discerned a call to ministry, spoke to the DS, and followed all the required steps that led to him being recommended for serving as a Full Time Local Pastor. He received his first appointment in June 1995. He served Grace UMC, Irvington UMC Charge, Central UMC Matthews, and The Montross Charge, before retirement in 2007. After retirement he

served as an interim minister, then served 2 years part-time at Allegheny UMC. He and his wife returned to their farm home after she retired from ministry in 2015.

He was a good and faithful servant pastor who also made it a point to volunteer in the local communities where he served.



**REV. WILLIAM JOSEPH “JOE” SHEPHERD** was born on October 2, 1950, in Columbia, South Carolina. He passed away at his home in Hampton, Virginia on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026. He attended Bridgewater College where he met and married his wife Claire and then attended Wesley Theological Seminary. Joe was preceded in death by son Andrew.

Joe served the Trinity Circuit, Park View, Saint Mark’s, Fishersville, Loudoun, Mathews Charge, Bethlehem, Brunswick and Norview. He retired from Norview UMC in Norfolk, after serving for 14 years.

Joe had a special place in his heart for people, especially those struggling with addiction. If there wasn’t an AA or NA group in the church/community he served, he worked to get one started at his church. If one was already established, he worked to make it stronger. At Norview UMC he was loved by the AA and NA groups because of his caring and support for the members of each support group.

Joe felt that serving the church he was appointed to also included being involved within the community he lived in. He coached soccer, he served as a volunteer police chaplain, and as a mediator to the Norfolk Courts system.

Joe’s strength came from his Lord and his family. He knew he was called and lived his life as a pastor as faithfully as any could. He was a good pastor, husband, father and a good friend. Rest in peace God’s faithful servant.



**REVEREND HARRY BINGHAM SPEAR, III** was born on August 15, 1942, in Portsmouth, Virginia, to Minnie Brooks Parker Spear and Harry Bingham Spear, Jr.

Harry was a proud graduate of Randolph Macon College and Wesley Theological Seminary, where he earned his master’s degree in Sacred Theology and where he met his beautiful bride, Patricia (Pat) who was studying to become a Director of Children’s Ministry. On their first date, Harry insisted that one day she would be his bride, and she laughed. God surely had a wonderful plan for their love and their future ministry, together!

Shortly after marrying Pat, the newlyweds partnered in ministry at Galilee United Methodist in Sterling, VA. Every year following, Harry and Pat brought a new child into this world - Patty, Becky and Bing.

Harry dedicated his life to serving as a pastor in the Virginia United Methodist Conference (VUMC), ministering to eight additional church congregations, including St. Mark's (Daleville), Trinity (Orange), Huntington Court (Roanoke), First (Norfolk), First (Hopewell), Wesley Memorial (Martinsville), St. Andrews (Portsmouth), and Trinity (Smithfield). He also took on roles throughout his ministry on various committees, including the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Board of Missions, and the Board of Church & Society.

Harry was known for igniting passion for missions in the churches he served. He helped congregations feel the synergy of being a connectional church, stressing the importance of reaching out to our neighbors and throughout the world spreading the love of Christ and helping others in times of need. What joy it brought him to think that the Methodist church was one of the first to assist and the last to leave, restoring a devastated community. Occasionally, he accompanied a mission team to provide local aid, and once, he joined a Portsmouth District mission team serving a community in Russia.

Harry's commitment to community service extended beyond the church, as he served as chaplain to various Fire Departments, Police Departments, and Hospitals in the towns and cities where he lived. Harry was also an active member of numerous Lions Clubs and Kiwanis groups over the years, and he even served as Chaplain for the Virginia State Freemasons in the 1980s.

One of Harry's favorite times of year was going on the annual spiritual retreats with fellow preachers known as "the Monks". His extensive library gave evidence of his passion for studying great theologians. He was very proud of the many young pastors he mentored as they prepared for ordination, and he cherished the meals shared with this growing group at Annual Conferences.

Harry passed away on May 31, 2025, surrounded by his loving wife of nearly 58 years and their children. Known for his loving soul, booming voice, and great bear hugs, Harry will be dearly missed by his family and many others who had the privilege of knowing him.



