

Newsletter of the
Association of Retired
Ministers and Spouses



To ARMS!

JANUARY 2020

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Should retirees
care about a
separated UMC? 1

How will UMC's
future affect
pensions & retiree
medical benefits? 2

Exercises to keep
you healthy 3

Remembering
those who have
passed away 3

Information about
how to support
ARMS 4

This year's ARMS
Retreat will focus
on hope in
changing times 4

To ARMS! is
published several
times a year on a
periodic basis.

Send news to:
Editors, *To ARMS!*
1200 Pulliam St.
N. Chesterfield,
Virginia 23235
or email:
alhorton@vaumc.org

Should Retirees Care?

A Separated UMC

 by the Rev. Dr. Margaret T. Kutz

The year I graduated from seminary, 1976, the “incompatibility language” was written into the *United Methodist Book of Discipline*. It’s been an issue ever since, growing in intensity in more recent years, finally culminating in a very real possibility of a split in the church. The “large tent” we used to live under appears to be two, maybe three or more, smaller tents.

For many clergy, especially those retired or near retirement, the big issue has been our beloved pension. With nearly half the clergy delegates to Annual Conference being retired, pension protection has been essential to any plan. This is true of the most recent plan coming from an unofficial group that represents most of the major factions of The United Methodist Church. Clergy will continue to receive what has been promised from Westpath.

So does that mean we can get out of the fight and

let the church move into this new stage of history with us in rocking chair neutral? I hope not. This is the most significant issue in the life of The United Methodist Church since I graduated, and I would guess that is true for you as well.

Ministry has never been harder. Based on the people whom I have the privilege of serving as their life coach, pastors have never worked harder against such odds with fewer good results. As retired clergy we have a unique opportunity and clear responsibility to encourage our pastors and to be the prophetic voice in our churches.

I can hear the high-pitch voice of Jimmy Reynolds. “Bishop, Jim Reynolds from the Peninsula District. I have an amendment to the resolution.” Or the almost apologetic voice of Emmitt Cox suggesting there is a more peaceful way to move forward. Or the impassioned voice of

Leontine Kelly calling the conference to stand up for justice. Or the fatherly voice of Ed Wright encouraging us to do the right thing.

As retired clergy we still have a voice. In the local churches we attend we can support our pastors, lead studies, attend meetings, talk to people during fellowship time over a cup of coffee, quieting the divisive voices. We can attend Annual Conference, all the sessions, speak up and vote for the new thing God is doing in our church. We can pray for our church, our bishops and district superintendents, delegates, and especially our pastors. We have more time to pray now than we did before retirement, right?

So in the spirit of all the brave souls who have gone before us, let us claim our voice for justice and our call to continue to pastor the church.



A diverse group of United Methodist advocacy group representatives with contrasting views (including so-called traditionalists, progressives, centrists, and bishops) has agreed to a proposed separation plan for The United Methodist Church called, “Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation.” This proposal will be presented to General Conference in May. For more information about the document, visit www.vaumc.org.

As the Church Considers Changes

What’s in Store for Retiree Benefits?

By John Fuller, *Executive Director, Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.*

As 2020’s General Conference approaches, and with ongoing dialog around the future structure of the denomination, questions have been raised regarding pensions and retiree medical benefits.

In particular, some retirees have asked if denominational changes, such as separation or schism, would result in the loss of any pension or medical benefits. Others have asked if a retiree’s decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church would result in a loss of benefits.

With regard to pensions, the answer is clear: no retiree will lose any benefits from Wespath-administered denominational pension plans. Pension benefits are fully vested. If a retired clergyperson elects to align with a new expression of United Methodism, or elects to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church in any way, pension benefits will not be lost.

The only impact resulting from a retiree’s election to surrender clergy credentials and disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church would relate to the Pre-82 pension plan. In such a situation, the disaffiliating

retiree would not benefit from future increases in the Pre-82 plan’s Past Service Rate, or PSR. There would be no impact on any benefits being received from the Ministerial Pension Plan or the Clergy Retirement Security Program.

In the event of a denominational split or schism, no benefits that have been earned in the denominational pension plans would be lost.

There is less certainty around the Conference-sponsored retiree medical benefits program. This program is approved and funded annually by the Virginia Conference, so it is possible that a future Annual Conference could elect to change, or potentially terminate, the retiree medical benefits program.

If the current program’s sustainability is in jeopardy, it is likely that consideration would be given to strategies that would mitigate any adverse impact on current retirees, such as through a grandfathering provision that maintains benefits for current retirees, or by gradual reductions in the program’s generosity.

Under the retiree medical program’s current provisions, a Virginia Conference retiree’s eligibility for retiree medical benefits is determined at the time of retirement. **Any decision made after retirement to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church would not impact a retiree’s eligibility for the retiree health plan.**

Again, however, as the retiree medical program is approved on a year-to-year basis at Annual Conference, it is possible that the program’s provisions could be modified to make any disaffiliating retiree ineligible for the plan.

We are hopeful that much of the current uncertainty around the future of The United Methodist Church will be resolved following this year’s 2020 General Conference. As additional details become known, the VUMPI office will share updates with ARMS.



**General Conference
May 5-15, 2020
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Exercises to Keep You Healthy...

Dr. Hamidah Sharif-Harris, a health education expert and CEO of Thrive Well Co., led several sessions during last year's ARMS Retreat on the health benefits of proper diet and exercise.

Here are just a few of the exercises she said most anyone could do at home:

1 Plank Exercise — This exercise strengthens your core, which includes all the muscles in your midsection including the front, back, and sides. It involves maintaining as long as possible a position similar to a push-up, with your body's weight held up on your forearms, elbows, and toes.



Plank Exercise

2 Chair Squats — This exercise targets a number of muscles in your lower body. Stand in front of a chair. Raise your arms and slowly squat down onto the chair. Keep your knees behind your toes. After sitting, lift yourself back to standing, and repeat.



Chair Squats

3 Seated Leg Extensions — This exercise strengthens the front of your thigh and hip. Extend one leg at a time and hold for 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times for each leg.



Seated Leg Extensions



In Memoriam remembering those who have died since our last report *March 2019*

Retired Bishop

Ralph Kern Eutsler (8/2/19) RB Jan. 2, 2020

Retired Clergy

Calvin Eugene Meek (11/12/48) RE April 1, 2019
 William Hepler (4/21/39) RL April 3, 2019
 Maurice S. Luker Jr. (6/4/34) RE March 27, 2019
 Eugene R. Hemphill (4/18/38) RE May 14, 2019
 Wendell C. Beane (10/21/35) RE June 19, 2019
 Glen H. Cannon (9/7/42) RE July 12, 2019
 Floetta G. Legg (6/12/41) RE July 24, 2019
 Joseph L. Lotts (11/27/30) RE Aug. 4, 2019
 Russell E. Larkin (11/3/41) RE Aug. 24, 2019
 Lynn R. Wilbur (12/26/42) RE Sept. 16, 2019
 Ward L. Donat (3/15/24) RE Sept. 25, 2019
 Emily H. Brothers (8/1/32) RA Oct. 20, 2019
 Isaac Paul-Coker (11/22/38) RE Nov. 5, 2019
 Willie A. Chappell Jr. (7/13/25) RE Nov. 7, 2019
 Robert E. Hawkins (10/6/34) RE Nov. 28, 2019
 C. Bailey Jones (2/6/21) RE Dec. 5, 2019
 Robert C. Hastings (5/25/33) RE Dec. 8, 2019
 James Robert Regan (6/25/30) RE Dec. 9, 2019
 Brenda L. Rose (4/5/56) RE Dec. 12, 2019
 Walter A. Whitehurst (7/11/33) RE Jan. 4, 2020

Retired Diaconal Ministers

Laurel G. Trego (4/27/27) RDM Aug. 10, 2019
 Dorothy Ricketts Barbour (9/13/16) RDM Aug. 13, 2019

Spouses of Retired Clergy

Dorcas Beighley (Rev. Paul Beighley) April 1, 2019
 Dallas Frederick (Rev. Lou Ann Frederick) June 08, 2019
 Phyllis P. Newman (Rev. M. Douglas Newman) Aug. 10, 2019
 Anita M. Cook (Rev. Marvin Cook) Oct. 27, 2019
 Shirley Butler (Rev. Henry Butler) Nov. 30, 2019
 Janie W. Dowdy (Rev. Roger C. Dowdy) Dec. 28, 2019
 Claire James (Rev. Frank James) Jan. 21, 2020

Widows/Widowers of Deceased Clergy

James Myers (Rev. Jane Myers) March 12, 2019
 Betty Shackelford (Rev. Robert Shackelford) May 22, 2019
 Charlie Fay Collie (Rev. Earl Collie) June 02, 2019
 Vivian L. Renner (Rev. Harry Renner) June 03, 2019
 Margaret Haley (Rev. Carl Haley) June 07, 2019
 Lucille Davidson (Rev. William F. Davidson) July 03, 2019
 Geneva Shepherd (Rev. G. C. Shepherd) July 22, 2019
 Miriam Livermon (Rev. William R. Livermon Jr) Aug. 17, 2019
 Martha B. Bodie (Rev. G. Raymond Bodie) Oct. 5, 2019
 Hazel Hunt (Rev. Marvin Dana Hunt) Oct. 5, 2019
 Reba Edwards (Rev. Howard Edwards) Oct. 9, 2019
 Beverly Thornton (Rev. Prince Thornton) Nov. 17, 2019
 Evelyn Preston (Rev. Norman Preston) Nov. 18, 2019
 Sue Volskis (Rev. Wilhelm Volskis) Nov. 25, 2019
 Alice W. Matthews (Rev. Henry Mathews) Dec. 12, 2019
 Mary Durkovich (Rev. John Durkovich) Jan. 04, 2020
 Linda Messner (Rev. James Messner) Jan. 11, 2020
 Wise S. Moon (Rev. William Moon) Jan. 18, 2020
 Carrie M. Potts (Rev. Reginald Potts) Jan. 19, 2020



Return Address:
1200 Pulliam Street
North Chesterfield, VA 23235

Board of Pensions & Health Benefits
Virginia Annual Conference
P.O. Box 5606
Glen Allen, Virginia 23058
Phone: 800-768-1100

To Arms! Is published on line via RetireeNet, ClergyNet, SpouseNet, and sent to ARMS members upon request.

Want to support ARMS?

Send suggested donation of \$10 per person to:

Susan Brack,
Treasurer
128 Glenwood Cir.
South Hill, VA
23970

Make check payable to "Virginia Conference UMC" with "ARMS donation" in memo line.

Upcoming ARMS Retreat to focus on 'Solid Hope in Changing Times'

The 2020 ARMS Retreat, set for **Oct. 7-8 at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg**, will focus on the many changes taking place in and around The United Methodist Church, especially how retirees and their spouses can find hope in such circumstances.

The retreat's theme, "Solid Hope in Changing Times," will be centered around the Scripture, "**For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth**" (*Psalm 71:5*).

The Rev. Kenneth C. Horne, Jr. (Ken) will present music during the two-day event,

which will also include time for fellowship, worship, and a presentation by John Fuller, Executive Director of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. Additional presenters will be announced at a later date.

Registration fees are \$60 per person (double occupancy) and \$80 per person (Single occupancy). First time retreaters - such as new retirees, their spouses, and anyone who has not attended before - can attend at half price.

Deadline for registration is Oct. 1.



Look for registration forms and more detailed information about the retreat in future newsletters and emails.

2020 ARMS Leadership Team

Co-Presidents: John & Catherine Price
Co-Vice Presidents: Steve & Susan Hassmer
Secretary: Judy Mann
Treasurer: Susan Brack
Retreat Consultants: Harry & Gale Kennon
Sunshine Correspondent: Susan Hassmer
Newsletter Editors: Al & Cheryl Horton
Co-Past Presidents: Paul & Martha Phillips