

Newsletter of the
Association of Retired
Ministers and Spouses

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

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



To ARMS!

MARCH 2021

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1



"The Risen Lord" by He Qi.

A lesson for surviving the pandemic

We Are an Easter People

by the Rev. Alvin J. Horton

The children pressed against the church doors, empty baskets in hand, waiting for those magic words, "The Easter Egg Hunt will now begin." Within moments the otherwise saintly band of angels poured out of the church like devils on a mission. They swept across the lawn like a great cloud of locusts, devouring every bush, vacuuming clean every crevice, grabbing every colored egg in sight.

The smallest of the children trailed behind, innocently gleaning the few eggs that escaped the first wave of searching hands. I followed our youngest son, Jesse, near the rear of the

all I could do not to cry the tears I knew he was trying hard to hold back.

Then, it happened. Grace appeared. A few steps away another little boy overheard Jesse's sad complaint. He reached into his own basket, and taking hold of one of the eggs he had found, he placed it in Jesse's basket. "Here. Why don't you take one of mine?" he invited.

Immediately, a smile returned to Jesse's face. He thanked the boy, and I exchanged a grateful glance with the young gift-giver's mother who stood nearby. We turned back to make our way toward the church door, and as we

**When our baskets are empty...
we have no need to fear.**



crowd, periodically suggesting to him another place to look. When it became clear that there were no more eggs to be found, he looked up at me with a deep sadness in his eyes. "Daddy, I found only two," he whimpered. It was

rounded the corner of the building we began to hear the plaintive cries of another child with an empty basket. I watched in amazement as Jesse paused, and then, taking the egg he had just been given,

he placed it in the child's basket, "Here. Why don't you take one of mine?" It was then, I believe, I began to cry.

I guess I really shouldn't have been surprised. You see, somewhere deep down inside I knew grace would appear. It always does. That's because we're an Easter people. No matter how empty our baskets, no matter how bleak the circumstances, grace always comes through. Sometimes through the outstretched hands of a stranger. Sometimes from the basket of a child. Grace always comes through. We're an Easter people.

When our baskets are empty, when a pandemic threatens to steal the last light of day from our living and close around us for the night, we have no need to fear. We are an Easter people. We always have enough eggs to share with a hungry world. Can't you see the hand of God reaching out to us, urging us to reach out to others? I can almost hear the Lord say, "Here. Why don't you take one of mine?"

The bay's Dinkel Island is setting for 3-part series

The quaint, little village on the Virginia coast of the Chesapeake Bay known as Dinkel Island holds stories of love, crime, grief, mystery, and even romance as author Hugh Harris weaves together intriguing stories of a pastor, parishioners, and a lighthouse in three separate novels in his Dinkel Island Series.

"Forgiven," "Return of Bliss," and "Secrets of Light-house Point" are the three titles in the series, and are available in paperback or Kindle versions at Amazon.com.

For more about the author or his books, email artmaker29@yahoo.com.



Hugh Harris

Hang on! An artist's message of hope in trying times...

While visiting the Grand Canyon decades ago the Rev. Hugh Harris was impressed by the persistence of a tree hanging onto life, precariously perched on the rocky rim. "Despite decades of ravaging weather," he said, "it was beautifully alive." Soon after returning home he recreated on canvas his remembered vision of that tree. He titled his painting "Tree of Life."

"Hanging on in faith propels one toward active participation in God's prevailing grace."

An accomplished artist and writer, the retired pastor says, "The coronavirus pandemic has cast us all into a world churning with ravaging storms. Illness, death, social distancing, face masks, altered lifestyles...they all challenge us." However, as he recalls his canyon visit, "in the midst of it all I think of this resilient tree shouting a visual message, 'Hang on!'"

Harris certainly knows something about 'hanging on.' His wife, Sharon, has struggled



"Tree of Life" by Hugh Harris

with memory loss, cognitive difficulties, and urinary incontinence, the major symptoms of Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus (NPH). Several years ago, he chronicled their mutual journey with her

throughout the mid-Atlantic region and won numerous awards. In recent years he pursued what he has called his 'Colorful Creations' paintings. Many of these are licensed for commercial purposes worldwide.

Much of his art is available online at FineArtAmerica.com/profiles/hugh-harris. He has also authored four Christian fiction novels, including the three-part Dinkel Island Series, and painted the artwork for the book covers.

As he considers how his art has helped him 'hang onto faith' during these difficult times, he suggests, "Perhaps I'm not alone." He asks, "What have you been doing to channel God's hope during this trying time?" Perhaps there is a Tree of Life of your own, perched on the edge of a canyon, waiting to be reborn.

condition in a book titled, "NPH: Journey into Dementia and Out Again," which is available from Amazon.

"Hanging on in faith propels one toward active participation in God's prevailing grace," he says. "One way I have done that is by staying grounded in my art." Last April he began a series of paintings he has titled "Pandemic Paintings" that he maintains has kept his focus positive.

Over the years he has exhibited in art events

2020 ARMS Retreat Rescheduled for October

Last year's annual ARMS retreat, postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been rescheduled for **Oct. 6-7 at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg**, and 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 times.

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



Bishop Charlene Kammerer, former bishop of the Western North Carolina and Virginia Conferences, will reflect on the changes that are occurring within the denomination and share her perspective on how we can find hope in the midst of these changes.

The Rev. Dr. Harry Kennon will lead a session on the many changes in the world that we have all experienced over the course of our lifetimes; and the Rev. Dr. Jack Martin and wife Marianne will join forces with the Rev. Kenneth Horne, Jr. to offer music during the retreat. In addition, the Rev. Steve Hassmer and wife Susan will direct a retreat choir that will sing during the closing Communion service.

But that's not all. There will also be time for fellowship, worship,



and a presentation by John Fuller, Executive Director of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.

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 September 24. Look for registration forms and more detailed information about the retreat in a future newsletter and emails.

In Memoriam

remembering those who have died since our last report *November 2020*

Retired Clergy

William A. Martin (5/28/28) RE*	Aug. 3, 2020
Gene C. Tatum (8/29/46) RA*	Aug. 19, 2020
Charlie S. Haley (10/30/42) RL*	Oct. 24, 2020
Travis L. Deloach (11/14/50) RE	Dec. 11, 2020
Richard L. Worden (6/13/36) RE	Dec. 17, 2020
James H. Boice (4/13/31) RE	Dec. 23, 2020
Donald A. Baird (3/31/19) RE	Jan. 2, 2021
Gilbert F. Cofer (2/2/21) RE	Jan. 4, 2021
Pamela J. Baldwin (4/22/53) RL	Jan. 20, 2021
Samuel F. Caldwell (9/30/21) RA	Feb. 3, 2021
Charles W. Crumb (8/18/20) RE	Feb. 8, 2021
Mary M. Wilkins (10/4/39) RE	Feb. 27, 2021
Bettie Jean Vanhook (10/1/26) RA	March 4, 2021
Marie M. Waters (06/3/33) RE	March 7, 2021

Active Clergy

Richard W. Coffey (4/9/54) PL	March 9, 2021
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Spouses of Retired Clergy

Carlton S. Maughlin (Rev. Joanne Maughlin)	Dec. 8, 2020
Charlotte Whetzel (Rev. Kenneth Whetzel)	Jan. 9, 2021
Phyllis Nuckols (Rev. William Nuckols)	Feb. 27, 2021

Widows/Widowers of Deceased Clergy

Cherrie Hall (Rev. William Hall)*	May 21, 2020
Marilyn Acosta (Rev. William Acosta)*	Aug. 18, 2020
Marion M. Tatum (Rev. William Tatum)	Jan. 1, 2021
Mamie Cheseldine (Rev. Charles Cheseldine)	Jan. 2, 2021
Linda Hurlock (Rev. Charles Hurlock)	Jan. 20, 2021
Marie P. Pack (Rev. Raymond Pack)	Feb. 18, 2021
Rose Marie Moore Davis (Rev. Virgil Davis)	March 5, 2021

*Not listed in November 2020 ARMS newsletter report



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.

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Alexis & Mark Fathbruckner (Class of 2021)
Bob & Susan Parks (Class of 2021)



Baptist Conference Center sends thank you to ARMS



The directors of Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center in Lynchburg sent appreciation to the members of ARMS for our \$1,000 donation to the Binky Huff Scholarship Fund, providing financial assistance to young people

and pastors who would otherwise be unable to attend events at the center. "We are extremely grateful for your generosity," they wrote, "and inspired by your willingness to partner with us during this turbulent season."

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.