

Newsletter of the
Association of Retired
Ministers and Spouses

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

Dawn or Dusk?
Seeing hope in a
darkened sky 1

President Biden
offers light of
hope to Ukraine 2

A motorcycle-
riding pastor
shares his wisdom
of 'Rising Above
the Valley' 2

Ways to rise
above the dark 3

ARMS Retreat set
for Oct. 12-13 4



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



To ARMS!

MARCH 2022

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By the Rev. Alvin J. Horton

Can you tell the difference between a dawning and setting sun? Sometimes I think I can. The dawn always seems fresher, the air more crisp. At the right time of year dawn is accompanied by the sounds of chirping birds, increasing traffic, a definite movement of 'waking up' sounds, almost like the tuning of instruments before a concert.

On the other hand, dusk can have a tired look. The sky can seem full of the day's mingled gasses, and the sounds can hardly distinguish themselves from those before or after. The sun retreats almost unnoticed, sometimes leaving a trail of orange and red to be admired by would-be gazers above the mundane.

Some say there is no difference between the two suns; the distinctions are simply in the eyes and ears of the beholder. Some will offer scientific calculations to sway their argument; others will simply point to the sun.

Think about it. If you had been asleep enough days

Dawn or Dusk?

Seeing Hope in a Darkened Sky

that you could no longer recognize the a.m from the p.m. hours. **If you were suddenly awakened out of your slumber and turned to face the rising, or setting, sun. How would you tell the difference?** And if you could not, would you have an inclination to select one at the expense of the other? Which would it be and why?

The truth is, the dawning sun is the same sun at dusk. The sky may have changed, more people may be awake, but the sun is essentially the same.

When Peter and John raced to the tomb that first Easter morning, I don't think they really knew which sunlight they were running into. In John's gospel -- in fact, the only gospel that indicates *any* of the Twelve went to the tomb -- they go in, observe the linen, then return "to their homes" (John 20: 10). It's worthy of note that *only the*

women go to the empty tomb in the Synoptic Gospels. In John's account, are the men returning to their homes at dusk or dawn?

The truth of the matter is quite simple: what you see is what you get. If you want to see the sun going down, you're not likely to see it coming up, even for someone else on the other side of your horizon. Likewise, if the sun you want to see is rising in the distance; there is no manner of argument that will ever convince you otherwise. The light is in the eye of the beholder.

So what do you see when you look at a pandemic, or war in Ukraine, or a church on the verge of splitting? Is it dawn or dusk?

I think Peter and John finally saw the truth we all need to see, what the women saw all along. "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" the women were asked as the sun rose above the tomb. They might very well have been asked, "Why are you looking at the setting sun? Turn around. The dawn is just over the horizon."



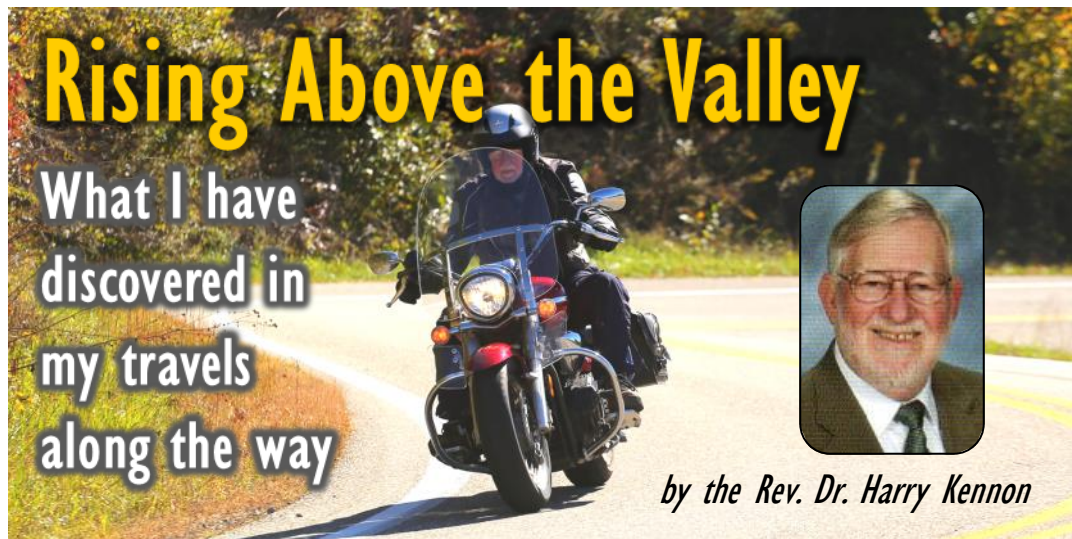
President Biden Offers Light of Hope to Ukraine from Poland

Time and again history shows that. It's from the darkest moments that the greatest progress follows...And we're seeing it once again today for the brave Ukrainian people

...So in this hour, let the words of Pope John Paul burn as brightly today. Never ever give up hope. Never doubt. Never tire. Never become discouraged. Be not afraid! A dictator bent on rebuilding an empire will never erase a people's love for liberty. Brutality will never grind down their will to be free.

Ukraine will never be a victory for Russia, for free people refuse to live in a world of hopelessness and darkness. We will have a different future, a brighter future, rooted in democracy and principle, hope and light.

President Joe Biden in Poland, March 26, 2022



Rising Above the Valley

What I have discovered in my travels along the way



by the Rev. Dr. Harry Kennon

“I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?”

Psalm 121:1

I bought my first motor vehicle, a Cushman Eagle motor scooter, when I was 15 after convincing my parents I needed it to get to my summer job working on a farm. But the real reason was my fascination with motorcycles and the freedom they represented. I was hooked for life.

I love riding in the mountains. Since retiring, I've spent countless hours there, even riding the entire length of the Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway twice; that's 574 miles of rugged mountains and pastoral landscapes in the Appalachian Mountains – a biker's dream.

It's not that the chaos down in the valley disappears when I ride in the mountains; the clouds and the storms are still there. But seeing them from a different perspective reminds me that God is still there as well. Like Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, I feel close to God up there, away from the "hustling crowd and all that rat-race noise down in the street" described in the Drifters' 1964 hit song "Up on the Roof."

The mountains are my happy place. ...Like Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, I feel close to God up there.

I moved on to a couple of Harley Davidsons during my high school years and then to a Honda 350 during the gas crisis of the early 1970s. My entry into the ministry in 1982 spelled the end of my biking days – at least until I retired in 2009. That's when I purchased the V-Star you see pictured with me on the Tail of the Dragon, a by-way featuring 318 curves over 11 miles of pure exhilaration through the Great Smoky Mountains.

The mountains are my happy place. I've seen sunrises in the Great Smokies and sunsets on the Blue Ridge Parkway. In the words of James Taylor, "I've seen fire and I've seen rain. I've seen sunny days I thought would never end." I've had the awesome experience of looking down on clouds while bathed in sunshine on the mountain-top above. I even saw lightning down in the valley below me on one occasion.



Ways to Rise Above the Dark

by the Rev. Don Powell, (Retired Chaplain, Chippenham Medical Center, Richmond)



We are rapidly approaching the Easter event which is the most significant event in the life of the church and the individual believer. Easter speaks of resurrection, new life, and rebirth. Easter speaks of hope and peace. Hope we can have. Peace is much more elusive.

In these dark days of political and social conflict, war and destruction, and personal, internal turmoil, how can we move towards being the hopeful, peaceful, whole persons we want to be and, as I believe, God intends us to be?

Here are some ideas that may seem familiar but always worth a revisit:

❖ **Take care of yourself.** This involves looking at how

we treat ourselves. It's helpful if we establish a regular exercise program. Exercise works only if it is fun, enjoyable, and renewing. Sometimes we just need to keep experimenting with exercises until we find the right one.

❖ **Learn to love yourself in a healthy way.** Jesus gave us two commandments: Love God, and love neighbor as ourselves. We do pretty well at loving God and doing our neighborly thing. But most of us don't do well at loving ourselves. Learning to love ourselves is difficult. But we can't love others very well unless we love ourselves.

❖ **Be mentally healthy.** To develop a healthy mind is important. Our mind is a peculiar thing. It controls much of what we do, how we feel, and the emotions we express. To have our mind straight, that is, to be in the right frame of mind, involves keeping our body healthy, loving ourselves, and helping our neighbors. We are complex, integrated beings. So many things work together to make us who we are.

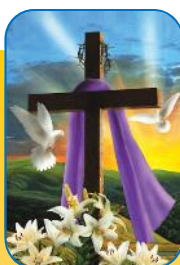
❖ **Cultivate your spiritual life.** Eastertide helps us do that. Easter helps us refocus

and renew the spiritual side of life. During this season we are more likely to read the Scriptures, practice the spiritual disciplines, attend more worship services. However, to be the whole person we wish to be, these are essential things that need to be done on a regular basis.

Darkness does surround us. We can break out of that darkness into the light of a new and refreshed life. These reminders during the Easter season may help us do just that.

The ARMS Board of Directors voted on March 14 to donate \$2,500 to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for our Lithuanian churches as they offer help to refugees from Ukraine.

In Memoriam



Remembering those who have died since our last report in November 2021

Retired Clergy

Clergy Spouses

Don L. Shull (08/02/35) RA	Oct. 30, 2021
George E. King (04/30/27) RE	Nov. 5, 2021
Edward F. Wilkins (02/11/50) RE	Nov. 5, 2021
Donald L. Long (10/31/34) RE	Nov. 18, 2021
George M. Pearson (09/01/46) RE	Dec. 12, 2021
G. Thomas Brown Jr. (02/17/47) RE	Jan. 3, 2022
Jethro Wade Munford (11/10/34) RE	Jan. 24, 2022
Myles E. Pierson (03/01/42) RE	Feb. 9, 2022
Raymond F. Wrenn (06/25/18) RE	Feb. 10, 2022
George W. Stewart (02/20/37) RE	Feb. 21, 2022
Judith Bennett (09/07/34) RE	Feb. 26, 2022
Arthur Howell Franklin (04/01/38) RE	March 20, 2022

Sylvia Tarpley (Rev. Emory Tarpley)	Dec. 17, 2021
Yvonne Grow (Rev. Ralph Grow)	Feb. 1, 2022

Clergy Surviving Spouses

Bethel J. Daniel (Rev. Denzil Daniel)	Nov. 20, 2021
Mary Barham (Rev. Charles F. Owen)	Nov. 21, 2021
Shirley Wingfield (Rev. Floyd Wingfield)	Jan. 3, 2022
Mable Knotts (Rev. Albert Knotts)	Jan. 18, 2022
Sue Sheaffer (Rev. Lee B. Sheaffer)	Jan. 26, 2022
Arlin Honaker (Rev. Albert Honaker)	Feb. 2, 2022
Patricia Harris (Rev. Paul Harris)	Feb. 10, 2022
Martha H. Davenport (Rev. John S. Davenport)	Feb. 12, 2022
Elva B. Yates (Rev. Alexander Yates)	March 19, 2022
John G. Hatcher Jr. (Rev. Myrtle Hatcher)	March 21, 2022



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

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Send suggested donation of \$10 per person to:

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

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

ARMS Retreat rescheduled for Oct. 12-13

They say, "Third time's the charm!" The last two ARMS retreats, postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, have now been rescheduled for **Oct. 12-13 at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg**. As originally planned, the retreat will focus on the 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**" (*Psalms 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. There will also be time for fellowship, worship, and a presentation by John Fuller, Executive Director of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.

Deadline for registration is Oct. 1. Look for more information in a future newsletter and emails.

