

Advocate



Celebrating
administrative
professionals

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VirginiaAdvocate

The official magazine of
the Virginia Conference of
The United Methodist Church

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Local Church News

Items should be typed (preferably sent via e-mail) or printed legibly, no more than 100 words, and of conference-wide interest. Complete names of individuals, churches and districts should be included. Because of space limitations, the Local Church section prohibits news items related to church members' birthdays (of less than 100 years), wedding anniversaries, receptions for moving and/or retiring pastors, photos of traditional Christmas trees or Easter trees/crosses, and any item over two months old. Color photos are encouraged. Photos returned only if submitted with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Photos included on a space available basis. The editor reserves the right to edit all copy or refuse publication.

Letters

Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters should be limited to 150 words for space reasons. The Advocate will not print letters addressing a topic beyond two months of the publication of that issue. The Advocate editor reserves the right to edit all letters.

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PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow
Editor

Thank you

This month, I'm excited to share some of the stories of our administrators around the conference. April 25 is recognized as Administrative Professionals Day.

Yes, if you are wondering, there are literally a number of "holidays" each day that I don't remember recognizing in the past, but I love this one.

It can be too easy to thank the person at the top of an organization, the most vocal or charismatic person in the room or the face of an organization. But we all know that the work of many people behind the scenes, largely never recognized, help get things done.

I've had jobs in the past doing the "grunt" work never once hearing any encouragement or appreciation. I am a person who takes great pride in my work and I never want to let myself down, let alone others.

I'm sure many of you can agree. Sometimes a little appreciation can make your whole day or give you a sudden boost of wanting to do even better.

Especially in the church, I think it is easy to forget how our church admins, musicians and our cleaning crew are taking on ministry roles and just as we should encourage our clergy in their ministry, our laity around us needs encouragement as well. Isn't there a quote? Something about you can't draw water from an empty well?

We all need encouragement.

This month, it is my great honor to shed light on some of the unsung heroes in our conference, the ones who do hard work, day in and out, and may not get the appreciation they so deserve.

The next time you see one of the administrators for a local church, district, or even the conference office, take a moment to share your appreciation with them.

Encourage them in their ministries and recognize their contributions.

And don't stop there. Even outside the church, be sure the thank other admins as well! 🍷

Until our next issue,

Madeline C. Pillow



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Scan this code to go to the
conference website:
www.vaumc.org

CORRECTION: The authorship of the article “Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation—The Cradle of Methodism” should have been attributed to Carol Corker and Jim Mott in the March 2018 issue of *The Advocate*. We apologize for the mistake.

The *Virginia Advocate* Staff

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A veteran's safe homecoming

The article promoting "Listen to Veterans" in the Feb. 2018 *Virginia Advocate* (p.8) struck a profound chord. My brother returned from WWII, after combat in Africa, Sicily, Italy, the D-Day Invasion, France, the Battle of the Bulge and German surrender.

When he couldn't sleep, the family dog and I would listen to him, over his coffee and cigarettes at the kitchen table. He stopped counting how many he'd killed with a BAR, at 2,000 of the enemy. He was wounded seven times. He sent home for dry socks, leather moccasins and a knife he designed for silent hand-to-hand night combat.

He was 20 then, and I was seven. Only much later do I now realize Spot and I had a part, along with many others who loved him, in his safe homecoming. Thanks to him, I have never been afraid of anything in my life.

— Jim Righter, Former Virginia Advocate editor and retired minister



Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters may be emailed to MadelinePillow@vaumc.org by the first of the month.



Domestic mission trips inspire advocacy, compassion in students

By Jo Ann Batteiger

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is familiar to many people, and it is a story that reminds us how we are to care for our neighbors who are in need. I am often reminded of this parable when I think about what it means to be a Christian and how to live out the call that God has for all of us. One of the key things that my university is now turning its attention to in its strategic plan is making sure that "Shenandoah University will be highly valued for a campus culture of compassion, responsibility, advocacy and justice which graduates

are inspired to replicate in communities beyond Shenandoah." * This means that we are required to pay attention to our neighbors needs and respond compassionately so that they are met. One way that we do this is through domestic mission trips.

This past December, in partnership with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), a group of 10 students and two staff members from Shenandoah University (SU) went to Virginia Beach to do disaster recovery work with survivors who were affected by Hurricane Matthew. In our time there, we learned that even through the most monotonous of tasks, we are allowing people the space to heal from their traumas. It is amazing how healing a fresh coat of

COMMENTARY

paint can be to a homeowner. Because of this push towards advocacy and justice, we hosted an Early Response Team (ERT) training in January. Through this training, we were able to have 22 students and staff members become certified. Of this group, all 10 students who served on the Virginia Beach mission trip participated in this training and certification, and continue to actively serve and lead in other Spiritual Life events at SU.

We anticipate that as our students are sent out into the world to educate and inspire others, that they will take with them the practical skills they have gained from being an

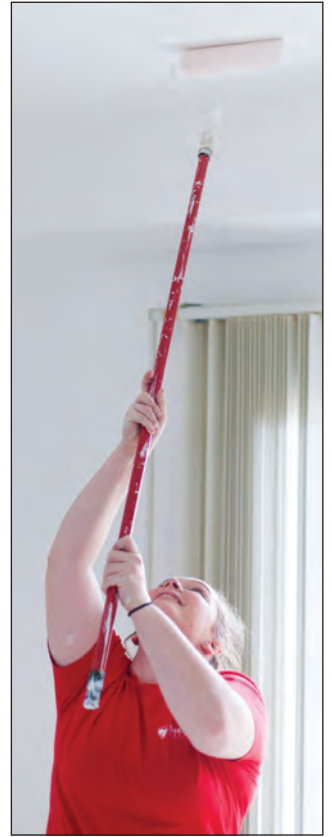
ERT. But more importantly, we know that our students will be able to practice Christian caring and know that they are there to listen and to be a presence for all different types of people. The ERT certification is so much more than just a badge that allows us to muck out homes and tarp roofs. It gives us the ability to genuinely connect with others through deep listening and empathy. When our students graduate having received this certification, they are able to be the hands and feet of Christ in any part of the world that is affected by weather-related disasters. It is our hope that as we continue to live into this vision, that we can

take a team to serve with communities in Puerto Rico with disaster relief as they continue to rebuild from Hurricane Maria, one of the most devastating storms to hit the island. By serving in this way, our students are transformed and their calls are enriched as they do the good work that God has called us to do. 🇺🇸

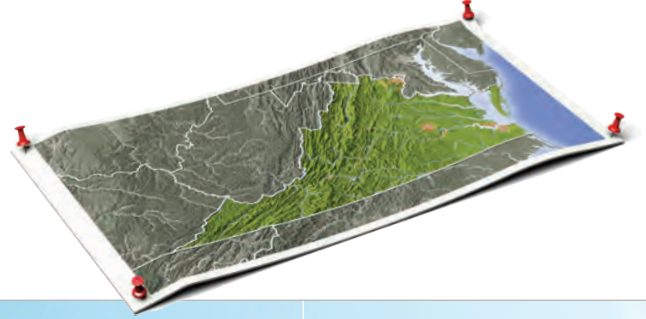
— Jo Ann Batteiger is an undergraduate candidate for the class of 2018 from Shenandoah University. A student leader of Spiritual Life at the university, Batteiger is majoring in Religion and Sociology with a minor in Psychology.

***Learn more about Shenandoah University's strategic plan: <https://www.su.edu/strategic-planning/>**

Photo credit: Zachary Hubbard



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Work progressing on vision for Virginia Annual Conference

By Forrest White

In the whirlwind of well wishes and words of wisdom that swept over Bishop Sharma D. Lewis after she was elected bishop in 2016, there came simple, practical advice from a woman who had already spent four years on the road Lewis would travel.

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, North Alabama Conference of The United Methodist Church, encour-

aged Lewis to keep a document close at hand. It's a document generated by the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy – a document that explains why an elected bishop was matched to an annual conference.

"She [Wallace-Padgett] would keep it by her side and ask, 'Debbie, are you doing what the annual conference said they wanted you to do?'" Lewis said. As the Virginia Conference prepared for life after Bishop Young Jin Cho in 2016, its leaders wanted a bishop to cast vision, to build upon Cho's clarion call for disciplined prayer as a way of life. It's written in that document from the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ), which Lewis will show you if you happen to find her in her Glen Allen office.

"God has blessed me to be a vision caster. God has blessed me to be a visionary. That's just part of my DNA," Lewis said. "It takes great strategic planning, great relationship building, great listening skills."

The birth of a vision

Quite simply, she said, a vision is not birthed easily.

In the eight months prior to the 2017 Annual Conference at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, Lewis visited each of the 16 districts within the conference, holding separate ses-

sions with clergy and laity, traveling more than 3,700 miles and meeting more than 3,250 people.

From those "Chat and Chew" sessions, the vision emerged.

On Father's Day 2017, during closing worship at Annual Conference, Lewis preached a sermon titled "Vision: Can you see it?" and unveiled the ministry vision for the conference – to be "Disciples of Jesus Christ who are lifelong learners who influence others to serve." By 2020, she said, all United Methodist churches in the Virginia Conference will have a process for intentionally forming disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world through influence and acts of servanthood.

In her travels within the conference, Lewis kept hearing people speak of discipleship, of learning that comes through study and experience, of servanthood and social justice, of putting our faith into action.

After much prayer and discernment, Lewis wrote a paragraph on this emerging vision and shared it with the Rev. Christian Washington, a United Methodist pastor and founder of REAL Coaching, whom the conference hired to assist with the visioning process. She knew it was too long to be a vision statement. More prayer led to the creation of the shorter statement,



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

which she shared with Washington.

"I said, 'Christian, this is what God has said to me!'" Lewis said. "He said, 'Good! So what?' I said, 'What do you mean so what?' He said, 'Now you have to convince me.'"

Over the course of half a day, Lewis defended the mission statement. In the end, Washington warned that her work wasn't finished. Your biggest defense is coming, he said. Would the Annual Conference be able to see it?

"After casting the vision in my sermon, I had people emailing me, calling me, Facebook messaging me... 'I see it Bishop. I see it.' The powerful thing about it? It wasn't me. Even though people keep calling it Bishop Lewis' vision, this was not me. This is what I heard for eight months on the road."

Building around a vision

In the fall of 2017, Lewis assembled a Strategic Collaboration Team of 45 people she called "probably the most diverse group we have in this annual conference."

Their charge? To take what Lewis likes to call a "deep dive" with the goal of implementing the vision because, quite simply, she isn't interested in "moving furniture around and calling

it something else. We're looking at churches that have closed, churches that should be closing. We're looking at all of that."

From the larger group of 45, a 15-person steering team emerged.

"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves. But, when they attend to what God reveals, they are most blessed."

EUGENE PETERSON

That team is using the Spiritual Leadership Inc. (SLI) loving, learning, leading model, with Paulo Lopes, conference director of the Center for Next Generation Ministries, serving as the group facilitator.

Both the larger team of 45 and the smaller group continue to meet, looking at the conference through the lens of the ministry vision statement. "We have a blank sheet of paper," Lewis said. "I

want us to take a critical, strategic look at this annual conference to see how we can do ministry more effectively."

Looking to the future

It isn't a matter of *if* change is coming, but rather a matter of *when*.

Some potential changes would require action at Annual Conference.

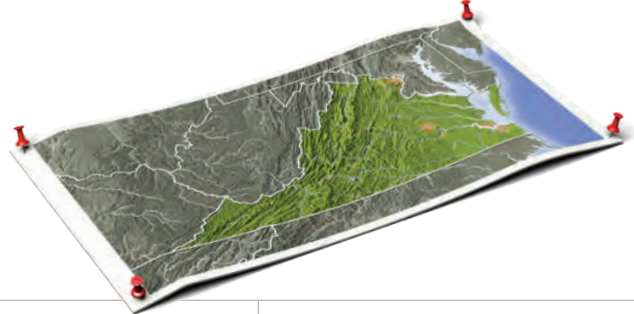
"The steering team is thinking and dreaming outside the box," Lewis said. "The team is asking tough questions like do we need to restructure the annual conference? Will we need to reduce the districts? What positions may we need to add? What positions may we need to take away? What departments may we need to add to make this vision come alive?"

All of this work unfolds amid a backdrop of uncertainty, as the Commission on a Way Forward prepares its recommendations regarding the inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the United Methodist Church in advance of a special General Conference scheduled for February 2019.

"People ask, 'Bishop, aren't you concerned that we don't know what's going to happen in the General Conference? We may be together. We may split...'" Lewis said. "Every

(Cont. on pg. 8: "VISION")

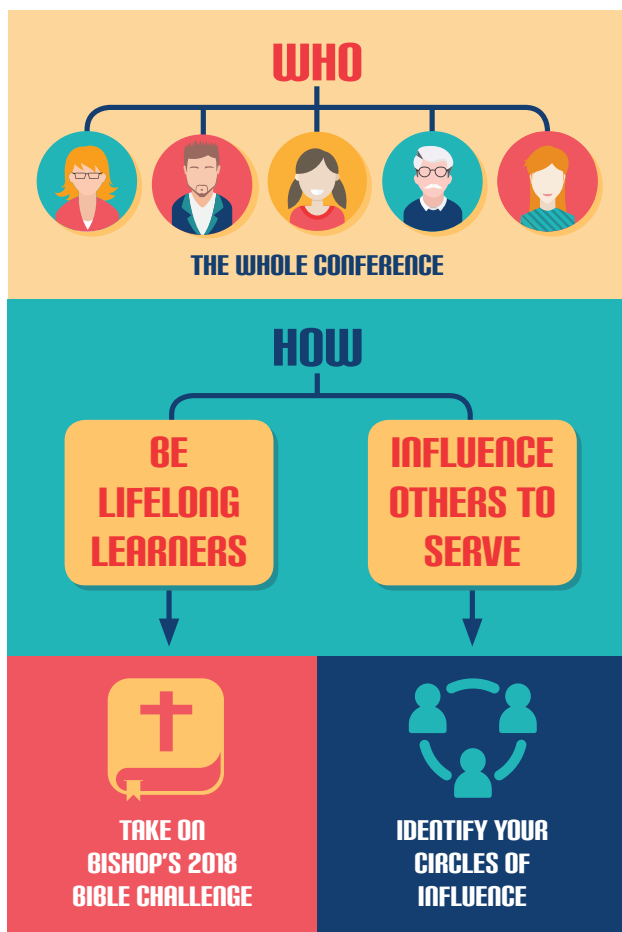
The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



BY
2020

All United Methodist churches in Virginia will have a process of **INTENTIONALLY** forming disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by your influence and your act of servanthood.

BISHOP SHARMA D. LEWIS



thing they say is true. But no matter what the denomination may look like, if you don't have any disciples you don't have a church."

Just as in the ministry vision statement, being a disciple of Christ comes first, no matter what denomination a follower may choose, no matter what a denomination may look like.

"Part of my passion is discipleship," Lewis said. "I don't care whether you're United Methodist, Baptist or whatever. My desire, even as an episcopal leader, is for people to have and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Making disciples in the Virginia Conference

Don't expect the Virginia Conference to create a disciple-making process for all of its churches to implement. One size does not fit all when it comes to churches, especially in Virginia, where there is so much diversity among the many regions.

"Plus, you know your church better than anybody else," Lewis said.

Instead of a model for all churches to use, she envisions the conference providing resources to the local church, including coaches.

"If we are intentionally making disciples and have programs in place by 2020, this annual conference should see growth," she said.

In terms of members, the Virginia Conference is the sec-

ond largest conference in the connection behind the North Georgia Conference, where Lewis was serving as a district superintendent when elected bishop.

She can't offer a timeline for when specific change will come.

The hard work continues, with Lewis trusting the Holy Spirit to move, as the smaller steering group prepares to meet again in February, the larger group in April.

"This is a work in progress," she said, a work guided by a vision statement not easily birthed, championed by a leader who keeps her marching orders close by. The Virginia Conference asked for a vision caster and got one in Lewis, who has embraced the importance of vision at every level of her church service.

On that Father's Day morning in Hampton, she opted to share Eugene Peterson's interpretation of Proverbs 29:18 – "... that without a vision the people perish." He puts it this way: "... if people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves. But, when they attend to what God reveals, they are most blessed."

"Your own life should have a vision," Lewis said. "God didn't make us to be aimlessly walking around, trying to figure out what we're going to do." 📖

– Forrest White is a news associate with the Virginia Conference Communications Office.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Students and church community come together for MLK Jr. Day of service

By Forrest White

Sometimes, glimpses of heaven come not in the sanctuary, but rather in the church basement.

On Jan. 15, students from Virginia State University (VSU) gathered in the basement fellowship hall of Ettrick United Methodist Church in Ettrick, alongside community and church members, to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by serving together.

Ettrick UMC Pastor Bob Lamb can't reflect upon that day without getting choked up.

"I'm in my 56th year of ministry, so I've been in this thing long enough to remember when there were no black people in the church," Lamb said, fighting back tears. "I told the students, 'You haven't been where I have been. You haven't seen what I've seen. There was a time when you wouldn't be here.' Thank God we're in a new day."

VSU students spent a portion of the King holiday scraping paint off the basement floor, hauling off old appliances and doing small repair work, as the church seeks to restore the fel-

lowship hall as a gathering place for the community. VSU "first lady" Ahkinyala Cobb-Abdullah even joined in the work.

It wasn't the first time the students have worked on the church. Lamb estimates the connection with VSU has saved Ettrick thousands of dollars.

But, after all, this old church is their home, too.

The Rev. Delano Douglas has been involved in campus ministry at VSU since 2009.

In July 2017, his title changed to Director of FLOW (Faith, Love, Outreach, and Worship) Wesley Foundation at VSU, which offers students a variety of ways to live out their faith – from Bible studies to a dance ministry, from service opportunities to Sunday afternoon worship in the Ettrick UMC sanctuary.

Some Sundays you'll find more than 100 students worshipping together there.

"We integrate the means of grace into all that we do as we seek to help students understand what it means to be a disciple," Douglas said.

For Douglas, that can mean the expected – leading Wednesday afternoon

Bible study in a VSU dining hall – and the unexpected – practicing against the women's basketball team to help them prepare for upcoming games.

"We are connected in many avenues," he said. "We want to have a ministry of presences in the many things our students are involved with."

Both Douglas and Lamb said they look forward to more opportunities to serve alongside VSU students.

"The more we can serve, the more opportunities to connect, the better,"

Douglas said. "It's really a beautiful thing."

Lamb agreed.

"I love the relationship with the students," he said. "We love on each other, pray together, praise together. We operate on the basis of 'we, us, and our.' This is not my church. It's our church. We do what we can do together."

Sounds like the kind of world King envisioned. 🍀

– Forrest White is a news associate with the Virginia Conference Communications office.

Photo credit: Marcus Fulton



EVENTS



APRIL

Bishop's Convocation on Race and Reconciliation

April 14, 2018, Annandale UMC, Annandale

Bishop Lewis has called a convocation on Race and Reconciliation on Saturday, Apr. 14, 2018, at Annandale United Methodist Church. It will begin with registration and a continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and end with Communion at 3:45 p.m. Lunch will be served.

The convocation will empower participants to become lifelong learning disciples who will be able to conduct the difficult conversations we all need to have related to issues of racial division, justice and God's call to ministries of reconciliation and peace.

The keynote speaker for the event is Romal Tune, whose ministry has impacted the lives of thousands through examining their own lives and stories in transparent and honest ways; in short, to "help hurting people find healing."

Registration is available online. Check for up-to-date information by visiting www.vaumc.org and clicking on the conference calendar and the corresponding date for the event.

Contact for this event is the Rev. Glenn Rowley at GlennRowley@vaumc.org; 1-800-768-6040, ext. 143 or (804) 521-1143; or the Rev. Clarence Brown at (703) 256-8330 or ClarenceBrown@vaumc.org.

Faithful Aging Conference

April 24, 2018, Williamsburg UMC, Williamsburg

Theme for the Faithful Aging Conference will be "Always a Place at the Table" on Tuesday, Apr. 24, 2018, at Williamsburg UMC in Williamsburg. At the event you can network with other faith communities, share ideas

and talk about how to address opportunities and changes as society ages alongside local church congregations. Consider being an exhibitor or sponsor to share ministry and service providers on hand to share information and help others understand the different levels of services and resources available, as well as the needs and issues older adults face. Registration available at: www.lyncburg.edu/academics/academic-community-centers/beard-center-on-aging/faithful-aging-conference/. Questions can be directed to MStokes@pinnacleliving.org.

MAY

Conference Immigration Summit

May 19, 2018, Ramsey Memorial UMC, Richmond

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis formed the Virginia Conference Committee on Immigration Outreach in 2017 to help the conference communicate the Gospel as it relates to immigrants and refugees. The committee also seeks to help the conference understand issues related to immigrants and refugees and how to advocate for them. In partnership with the General Board of Church and Society, Just Neighbors and the Southeastern Jurisdiction Hispanic Caucus, the committee is sponsoring an Immigration Summit in the Richmond area to educate and empower those who want to be in ministry to immigrants and refugees. The planned agenda (full agenda available on conference website) will start with worship at 10 a.m., a discussion about the immigration process, current realities and breakout sessions focusing on topics such as advocacy

The *Advocate* magazine publishing schedule requires that information be compiled sooner than the month for which it is published. For events you are interested in, please contact those listed for the events as points of contact for the most up-to-date information and for questions.

following lunch. Attendance to the summit is free of charge, and a boxed lunch can be purchased at the time of registration. To register and for more details visit the conference website at www.vaumc.org. Additional resources for those who want to be in ministry to immigrants and refugees are also available at the conference website.

JUNE

Randolph-Macon High School Youth Theology Institute

June 23-July 1, 2018, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland

Convergence, a High School Youth Theology Institute on Faith and Science, will be held June 23-July 1, 2018, at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland. The nine-day, on-campus experience is for inquisitive high school students of any Christian denomination interested in reading challenging texts, hearing presentations from college and seminary faculty, and enjoying hands-on experiences in the place where science and faith come together. Students receive a \$1,000 scholarship to Randolph-Macon for each year of *Convergence*. For additional information and to apply, visit convergence.rmc.edu.

JULY

Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute

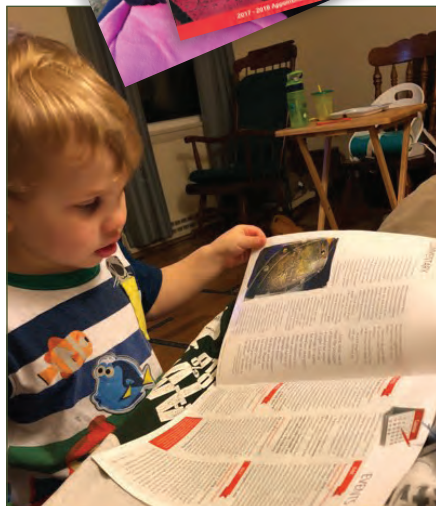
June 23-July 1, 2018, Shenandoah University, Winchester

Shenandoah University's Youth Theology Institute is an intensive two-week program designed to help rising high school sophomores, juniors and seniors become better leaders through deep and thought-provoking experiences. During the course of the two weeks, daily rhythms of academic study and



READER OF THE MONTH

Spotlight: *Advocate* reader of the month



By Madeline Pillow

Being in the role of editor for about three years now, I have heard plenty of stories. Stories from persons who can't wait to read

their *Advocate*, who have started subscribing again after a long hiatus or those who read every issue cover to cover. It's those stories that we love hearing about in the conference Communications Office. So I thought we could start sharing these stories with other readers as well.

This month, we recognize Micah Ware, probably our youngest reader. Micah's father is the Rev. Andrew Ware, pastor of Woods UMC in Chesterfield. Micah loves opening up his *Advocate*. His dedication is unmatched as he has moved from trying to "eat" the magazine as a baby, to flipping the pages and enjoying some of the pictures and articles.

Thanks for reading, Micah! 🍀

Do you want to recognize a long-time *Advocate* subscriber or someone who loves their *Advocate*? Want to share your own story of what the *Advocate* means to you? Send information and pictures to editor Madeline Pillow by emailing MadelinePillow@vaumc.org or mailing to Pillow at P.O. Box 5606 Glen Allen, Va 23058.

religious reflection will be balanced with immersive experiences. Students will be exposed to different faith traditions, service opportunities and a mixture of rural, wilderness and urban contexts at Shenandoah's Winchester campus, its Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Spring and the Wesley Theological Seminary campus in Washington, D.C.

The Youth Theology Institute is also a 3-credit undergraduate course taught by engaging religion faculty and focused on exploring Christian vocation in the 21st century. Upon their successful completion of the program, students receive credit for the course at Shenandoah University.

Most importantly, the Youth Theology Institute will help students discern their vocations in the midst of our ever-changing world. Contact the Director

of the Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute the Rev. Colleen Hallagan Preuninger at (540) 665-5453 or cpreunin@su.edu. Find more information and apply at www.su.edu/campus-life/spiritual-life/institute-for-church-professions/youth-theology-institute/.

NOVEMBER

Volunteers in Mission trip to Israel and Palestine Nov. 5-17, 2018

A Volunteers In Mission Trip to Israel and Palestine will be taking place Nov. 5 - 17, 2018. This second VIM experience is sponsored by the Virginia Conference Board of Church and Society, and will be led again by certified VIM team leaders, the Rev. John Copenhaver and the Rev. Steve Jones.

This trip will focus on learning and service with Palestinian Christians; but it will include visits to religious sites in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Hebron. There will also be opportunities to learn more about the lives of all people in Israel and Palestine. A similar VIM trip took place in February 2017. An informational meeting about this trip will take place on Sunday, April 8, 2018 at 3 p.m. at the Virginia UMC Conference Center in Glen Allen.

Interested persons should contact either leader; an itinerary and inclusive cost are available. The Board of Church and Society will be providing possible scholarship funds for young adults. Please contact John Copenhaver at jcopenha@su.edu or Steve Jones at steve-jones@vaumc.org to learn more. 🍀

DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ Martha Beville Frame, of Cobbs Creek, recently donated artifacts to **Asbury UMC in Harrisonburg** that were given to her mother, Rosa Cummings Beville of Blackstone (Blackstone College Class of 1931) by her college friend, Kathryn Eye. Eye served as a Methodist medical missionary to the

Belgian Congo from 1938 until 1960, when she was forced to return to the United States after uprisings in the Congo made it too dangerous to stay among the people she had served there.

Eye served as Director of Christian Education at Asbury until 1966 and spoke widely to church groups in the Virginia Conference about her experiences. Asbury UMC is interested in receiving any additional information, recollections or artifacts that friends of Miss Eye may wish to contribute. Please contact Pastor Steve Hay at shay@asburyumc.cc.

Pictured are Mrs. Martha Frame and her husband, Marvin, with Rick Claybrook, a member of the Historical Committee at Asbury.

Calvary UMC, Stuarts Draft, played host to composer Mary McDonald and a 90-voice choir on October 21, 2017. The house was packed, the parking lot overflowing as a mass choir from many churches and several denominations joined in singing several anthems written by McDonald. The concert also included Faithful Men, a highly regarded 12-member men's vocal group that sings excellent four-part harmony.

McDonald, former music editor for Lorenz for 20 years, has accompanied the Tennessee Men's Chorale for 35 years and has published more than 1,000 choral works. She has most recently set the Wesley Covenant Prayer to music, which this concert choir presented in Stuarts Draft. McDonald is the sister of the Rev. Nancy Vaughn, associate pastor at Calvary, and travels the country leading choral workshops and concerts. ▼



DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Rev. M. J. Kim retires

by Sung I. Yoo

(pastor at Regester Chapel UMC on the Rappahannock River District)

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” the Rev. Dr. M. J. Kim shouted at the top of his lungs, as his Regester Chapel church family and friends gathered together to celebrate his retirement on Jan. 14, 2018.

Upon his earlier retirement from fulltime ministry as an ordained elder, Kim began to serve Regester Chapel as pastor of visitation in February 2003 and completed his faithful ministry over 15 years. To honor his excellent ministry, Regester Chapel named him their Pastor Emeritus.

In his retirement service for God’s glory, Kim passionately preached on

the ultimate homecoming in heaven so as to reach and save one more soul for Christ. He has been a great Christian role model to people he has encountered and been called to serve throughout his life journey. In addition to his powerful messages, his passion for evangelical outreach has been contagious and inspiring to others. With his humorous and winsome personality, Kim easily approaches others and finds ways of inviting them to the church. He has set an inspiring example through his prayerful presence and practice at personal conversations as well as at committee meetings and other gatherings. One of his messages on Christian stewardship was about investing for God’s kingdom right now, instead of waiting until the final moment of life. In this way, we may enjoy the kingdom impacts of our eternal investment here and now, and later receive heavenly rewards from the Lord.

His influence has reached beyond

the scope of our local church toward other clergy colleagues. Kim, known as the “Korean Godfather” among the Korean-American clergy, is eager to provide spiritual mentoring and practical assistance for pastors, whenever needed, with his wisdom gained from long-time ministry experiences and his encouraging words. Among various ministry tasks, he has been challenging pastors to pay special attention to pastoral visitation.

He is now enjoying his post-retirement life with his wife, Dori, in the suburban area of Fredericksburg, and he wouldn’t hesitate to provide help for others, whenever and wherever needed. We praise the Lord for his life and ministry with us. His heartfelt message still lingers in our ears, “Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.” 🇺🇸



April
25

Administrative Professionals Day!



For this Advocate issue, we wanted to focus on these individuals who play such a vital part of their local churches, districts and roles in the conference. In this feature, you can learn more about the day-to-day activities of these individuals and how they view their jobs as a ministry. Please be sure to thank and celebrate your local administrators on April 25!

Meet our
Admins!



BEV MYERS, conference Connectional Ministries administrative assistant



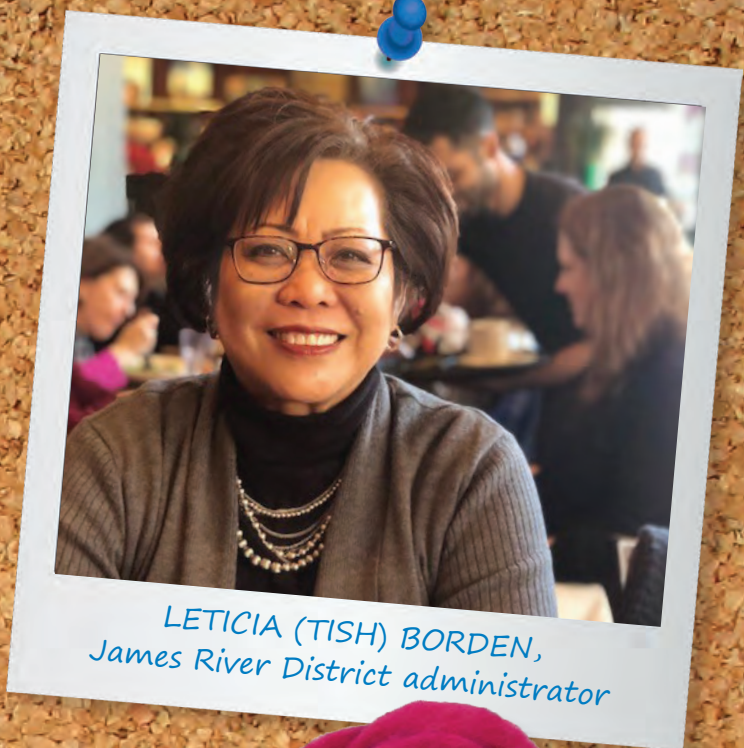
ADRIAN SMITH, Fairview United Methodist administrative assistant, Danville District



Administrative Assistant Appreciation



N MANLEY, Rappahannock River District administrator



LETICIA (TISH) BORDEN, James River District administrator



GAYLE SAUNDERS, Mountain View UMC administrative assistant, Lynchburg District



This month, we talked to church administrators around the conference to learn more about their day-to-day jobs, how they view their jobs as a ministry and what they enjoy most about their roles in the life of the church. Read on.





What is your average day like?

Bev Myers: Because my position involves so many different things, it's hard to say there's an average day. Most days do involve lots of email communication and interaction with other staff members and members of various boards, agencies and committees. There's definitely an ebb and flow to the seasons, but it's a little different from the local church; I've also been a local church administrator.

Christmas and Easter are actually less busy in the conference offices, as those are the busiest times for local churches. The period from January to June is definitely more intense, because our office has primary responsibility for Annual Conference, including nominations, compiling and assembling the *Book of Reports* mailing, official packet information, housing information and Annual Conference agenda. After Annual Conference, we work to implement decisions made by the Annual Conference.

Lynn Manley: Mornings usually involve dealing with emails from the night before which can be anything from a church treasurer asking questions about how to log in something on EVC, to a missions chair sending in an article for the weekly newsletter, to a pastor who has a question about a mission trip. I can easily have dozens of emails waiting for me before I turn on my computer in the morning and that can take a few hours to go through and respond. Then I deal with US Postal mail and any financial work from paying bills to posting apportionment remittances, processing registration for district events, etc. In the afternoons, I work on district projects such as updating the directory, updating church officer contacts, making name tags for meetings, processing committee reports, scheduling meetings for district committees, setting up meetings for the district superintendent, etc. My New Year's resolution was to start taking a lunch hour – and it's a work in progress.

Tish Borden: My day usually begins with a meeting with the district superintendent (DS) and our Director of Congregational Excellence. We review events on our calendars, confirm office appointments, discuss goals for the week and prioritize the most important needs of the district.

I answer emails and phone calls and make appointments for people who want to speak to the DS or Director of Congregational Excellence. If there is an upcoming event, I prepare handouts, order food and ensure that the room is suitable for the event. When there is a Common Table or Board of Missions meeting, I compile the financial reports. I also bring deposits to the bank and prepare checks for our district treasurer to sign.

Adrian Smith: An average day is unpredictable. You never know what God has in store for you, despite your best laid plans. Recently I spent a work day fixing a toilet, helping to organize a funeral and everything in between. There is never a dull moment.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

LM: Interacting with so many loving Christian church members and pastors. I often have folks say, "I'm praying for you" or "Bless you" and it is wonderful. I worked for state and county government for 18 years before coming to the district and this is such a different loving environment – it's a breath of fresh air.

TB: The district and conference staff are awesome people to work with! They have helped me to grow and mature spiritually, and they show the love of Jesus Christ in everything they do.

It has been a joy getting to know each of our pastors and their church members by being with them at different events and during their visits to the district office.

I have gained new skills (technological, communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, etc.), and I am eager to learn more.





Do you view your job as a ministry? How do you live out your call in this capacity?

BM: I definitely do view my job as ministry. I believe this is stated in 1 Corinthians 12:28, “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, *helping, administrating*, and various kinds of tongues” (my italics). It’s also based on the Scripture about all the parts of the body being important. We’re all in ministry together, and I can use my strengths to enable others to be better with their gifts.

TB: This position is not about answering the phone and emails or picking up the mail. God called me to this ministry to be a reflection of Him. I am called by God so that others may see and experience the same love, grace, and mercy that Jesus has for us. I am a being used as an instrument for Him by serving others and bringing glory to His name.

Gayle Saunders: My job is a ministry. One of my spiritual gifts is hospitality. I have several members that stop by because they are lonely.

AS: It’s sometimes difficult to see an administrative position as a ministry. I don’t personally feel like I minister to people in the traditional sense, but I often receive positive feedback that I am exactly where I need to be.

What might others not know you do in your job (misconceptions)?

TB: Others may not know that the administrative assistant position is not all clerical work. It also includes many other duties, including being an event planner, caterer,

office technician, project manager, bookkeeper, personal assistant to the DS, etc. I organize and assist in planning all district meetings and events, research and prepare reports for the district and conference, and handle a variety of technological needs in the office. As the district grows, more duties are constantly being added to this position. The other misconception that others have is that when they hear we have 82 churches on the district, their response is, “Well, some of those churches are small churches,” (implying that these small churches do not need as much care or attention from the district staff). Although some churches may be small in membership, they are still required to submit the same number of documents, meet the same deadlines, and their pastors and congregations need as much attention and support as our larger churches. The workload for the district staff is the same whether the church has a small or large membership!

GS: I have done everything from dishes, unclog toilets, pick up trash that animals have gotten into, etc. Some people think all I do is sit at my desk, type the bulletin and newsletter, and answer the phone.

Why did you apply for this position? What gifts did you believe you could bring to the role?

BM: I was working in a local church, which I loved, but thought this would give me an opportunity to learn more about The United Methodist Church – which it certainly has done! I learned more about the UMC in the first year I was here than I knew from 30 years of being a member, and three as a church administrator.

I like to pay attention to the details, and I realize that a lot of ministry people are more focused on the bigger picture. So, as I said earlier, I believed that my gifts could enhance theirs.

LM: I had worked for 15 years with the state of Georgia, managing the Welcome Center Program and three years

(Con’t. on next page: “ADMINS.”)



with the Henrico Library system. As a government employee, I tried hard to go the extra mile for patrons and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I felt that my organizational and people skills could be put to good use helping churches serve the community. I thrive on multi-tasking, so working with multiple churches seemed like a good fit. When people ask what I do in the district office, I jokingly tell them that I'm secretary to 74 churches – whatever they need, I do.

What are the toughest parts of your job?

BM: The actual Annual Conference session would definitely be one of them. Long hours, lots of running, trouble-shooting issues – but that is the case for any number of people involved in the production of Annual Conference. Speaking in a more general sense, I think the toughest time I've had here was in 2009 when a number of conference positions had to be eliminated, and that meant people losing their jobs. That was a really difficult time for all of us.

TB: Work-Life Balance – As in other occupations, finding the work-life balance is often difficult. I try to “unplug” during the weekends, spend time with family, and do volunteer work. Since I am in the office five days a week, I have learned to be protective of my personal time.

Flexibility – My DS has a sign in his office, “Blessed are the flexible for they shall not get bent out of shape.” I love that saying because being in ministry is unpredictable! We may have our entire day planned, but there are times when we have to readjust our plans due to unexpected circumstances.

GS: Deadlines! Also, dealing with the loss of members' family members.

AS: The toughest parts of the job for me personally are accepting help and compliments. In this role, you often feel like it's your duty and responsibility to help everyone else, but you're not immune to needing assistance yourself. And in the whirlwind that is a “normal” day, it's often hard to see when your efforts are received with thanks and appreciation.

What is it like being on the administrative side of the church?

TB: Some may disagree, but I find the administrative side of the church very exciting! The administrative side of the church is very rewarding in that it allows me to help a variety of people (pastors, church members, candidates entering ministry, the unchurched, etc.) and come up with answers or solutions to help make their tasks easier or become more effective in ministry. I also enjoy assisting the district superintendent, knowing that he/she carries a heavy load, and I am available to help. There is great trust and responsibility in the administrative assistant's position, and I am humbled by this opportunity to serve.

What makes your job different from a similar position outside of the church?

BM: There may be many parallels with any administrative position, but I think that there's just a different atmosphere in the workplace. Our work is not being done for profit – we work to bring the Kingdom of God just a little closer to our world. There's a genuine sense of trust that I think you may not find in the corporate world, and an appreciation for the work that you do. That's not to say there aren't frustrations, and that we always treat each other as we should. But what other job allows and encourages you to go to chapel on Wednesday morning?

LM: I'm so blessed to work for the church – any stress that occurs comes from the sometimes hectic rush to get things done before deadlines and not from the people I interact with on a daily basis. I've been dealing with a sick parent for the past year and the district and churches have been so supportive and loving and understanding – and that's not always the case in the private sector.

M I N S ♥

TB: My job in the district office is different from a similar position outside of the church because of our “why.” In other words, the vehicles that we use to accomplish our goals are the same as in the secular world (i.e. technology, communication, marketing, administration, accounting and finance, etc.), but the biggest difference is our “why.” We are in the business of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world! Our goal is to change people and to help them find ways to grow in ministry. By changing others, we are changing the world. What a great business!

AS: Church administrators have the special distinction of bridging the gap between the emotional and the practical side of ministry.

Are you a member of a UMC within your district? If so, how are you able to keep the two separate, from district staff to church member?

TB: I am able to keep my position as district staff and church member separate because the church does not define me by my district position alone. The church sees me as a spirit-filled child of God first and foremost, with gifts to give and a willingness to serve. I find great joy in teaching the young women’s Sunday school class, serving on the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, Preschool Board, Hospitality/Reception Committee and the Worship Committee at Wakefield UMC. Being an active member in my local church has helped me to relate to and connect with other church members in our district.



Some say working for the church means everyone is your boss. Agree or disagree?

GS: I agree that it can. Everyone wants to give you advice on how to do something. You have to set clear boundaries about the way you want to do things in the office.

In many ways you’re the face of the church during the week. Do you think of yourself that way? Why or why not?

GS: Yes, I do feel that I am the face of the church during the week. If anyone, from the delivery person to someone wanting to ask questions about the church, the way I treat them and the way I present myself reflect on the church. I always try to be calm and courteous. ♥

The Rev. Marc Brown,
conference director of
Connectional Ministries

Hear from
some of
their
supervisors



The Rev. Ted Smith,
Rappahannock River
District Superintendent



Describe your partnership with your administrator. How are you in partnership together?

Marc Brown: Bev is a co-worker in Christ. She has acquired a wealth of knowledge about the Virginia Conference through her ministry. I trust her opinion and insight as I seek to fulfill the responsibilities of the Connectional Ministries office.

Ted Smith: It is no exaggeration to say that the district office could not function smoothly nor effectively without a strong partnership between Lynn and myself. The real work of the district occurs behind the scene. It's a system in which Lynn does the "grunt work" and I show up to function as the leader and face of the district. Our partnership is one in which Lynn provides advice, counsel, technical details, and the essential office organization skills to keep things running smoothly. Our respective roles, our deep respect for each other, and our office management systems are clearly defined. Our interaction is a wonderful give and take, each one demonstrating care, compassion, and concern for one another. In my view, it's the best of a professional relationship and a very pleasant work environment. Excluding appointment matters, we discuss the best strategies for the operations of the district, the care of the clergy, and the strengthening of laity.

Rob Colwell: I do not see Tish as just my district administrative assistant but a partner in ministry as she relates well to the entire district, both lay and clergy. When

you speak to Tish, you know she is listening and will follow up if the need dictates. I trust her completely and know she will keep confidences. I will miss her greatly. [Colwell will leave the Cabinet effective July 1, 2018.]

Steve Propst: We are partners in that a lot of times I will seek out Gayle's opinion on various topics and items. She provides to me a second opinion but also realizes that the final decision often times is mine. I do not consider myself to be her boss even though at times I have to play the boss role. Rather I consider are working relationship as a team experience.

What gifts does your admin bring to the job?

MB: Bev has the gift of administration and the heart of a servant. She is a logical present-tense thinker who is able to envision future possibilities. With an ability to tell the truth, Bev offers encouragement. While she does not have supervisory responsibilities for other administrative assistants, Bev coordinates regular gatherings of various conference center offices for the purpose of communication and coordination. In addition, Bev is active in her church through the areas of music and mission.

TS: Lynn is over-qualified for the position, but never gives the impression of boredom nor of the position being beneath her. In a former employment setting Lynn was the office manager for the state of Georgia in their tourism office. She had responsibilities that included the operation of rest stops throughout the state of Georgia. On a daily basis, Lynn brings to bear patience, communication skills, organizational skills, close attention to details, flexibility, confidentiality and a willingness to learn new things related to United Methodism.

RC: Tish is the heart and soul of the James River District. She is our welcome ambassador to all who call, email or visit as well as my screener for the many questions which come into the office, most of which she is better able to answer anyway. I appreciate her in so many ways but I believe her faith in her Lord is the source of her joy and her many gifts. She truly sees her admin role as fulfilling



*The Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell,
James River District
Superintendent*



*The Rev. Steve Propst,
Mountain View UMC,
Lynchburg District*



*The Rev. Jennifer
Coffey, Fairview UMC,
Danville District*

God's call to ministry and I couldn't agree more. P.S.: My wife says, "She is an angel sent from heaven." I, along with many other, concur.

SP: Gayle knows everything about anything at Mountain View. She has been employed by Mountain View for 19 years and knows all the ins and outs. She is always available to jump into the kitchen or to pull a team together in the kitchen to prepare various meals for a variety of church activities and church-sponsored workshops. She not only takes charge in the kitchen she also can make some wonderful deviled eggs and a delicious blueberry cobbler!

Gayle has played a vital role in helping me to adjust to the position of a pastor with a staff. She has gently worked with me as I slowly transitioned into a senior pastor. She has lovingly advised me that it might be good if I could visit a certain individual or call a particular person to check up on them.

She has many gifts that she brings to Mountain View, but I think one of the greatest things she provides as an administrative assistant is a listening ear to people who are lonely. She has stopped what she was doing in her office to spend a significant amount of time listening to an elderly widow or widower who has stopped by the office seeking company. She will often make calls to church members who are ill to check up on them.

Jennifer Coffey: From our first day of working together, Adrian has shown great professionalism, dedication, quality, respect, initiative and more in her role on staff. She is creative and has a great talent for the many publications she creates for the church (flyers, newsletters, bulletins, Facebook posts, etc.). She is a team player in all we do, and she works hard to fulfill her responsibilities as well as to support others in their ministry areas. She offers ideas and asks great questions when are planning and working together. She's not afraid to learn, research and try new things either.

What are the tough parts of your admin's job?

MB: The toughest part of Bev's job (as well as those of other administrative assistants working in connectional

ministries related offices) has been multitasking a variety of ministries due to the reduction of two administrative assistant positions. This means that all of our connectional ministries administrative assistants are required to wear multiple hats in helping the Virginia Conference move forward in it mission.

TS: I believe Lynn is very skilled at managing a very busy district office. The "moving parts" of oversight are constant, ever changing, and challenging. I also believe one of the very challenging tasks is the management of the DS calendar. In the Rappahannock River district, Lynn coordinates, schedules and manages every aspect of my schedule.

In all honesty, another of the most challenging parts of Lynn's work is the interaction with clergy who are procrastinators, organizationally challenged, technically challenged and poor time managers. There are many district tasks that are time sensitive and essential to the smooth operation of the district. Smooth operation of the district is hampered when (typically) clergy do not engage their ministries with due diligence. However, Lynn remains patient with the same few who regularly delay responding in a timely manner.

SP: I think one of the toughest parts of Gayle's position is not getting the recognition nor the respect she deserves. Individuals can become extremely critical or picky about certain things she does and do not hesitate to tell her about it in a very unkind way. She has to smile through those moments and allow the person to vent. It is then that she eventually finds her way into my office to let off some steam or at least to express herself.

Gayle's position is unique in that she is not only employed by the church but she is also an active member of the church. Often times it can be difficult for her to discern when her paid position stops and her church membership begins.

JG: The tough parts of Adrian's job are balancing so many responsibilities for general church admin/finance as well as supporting staff and church leaders for the many ministries of the church, each of whom have varying needs and expectations. There are many weekly responsibilities as well as special events or even emergencies and unplanned things that come up on any given week. She is very good at this though as she is organized, flexible and grace-filled. ☞

LIVING THE WORD



Katie St. Germain works as a Family Nurse Practitioner at CrossOver Healthcare Ministry. She serves as the Outreach Chair at Welborne UMC, Richmond District, and as a member on the Conference Missional Ministries Board. She is an alumna of the University of Virginia (Religious Studies, Psychology and Bioethics) and Virginia Commonwealth University (B.S. and Masters of Nursing). She has served as an HIV missionary in Kenya in Uganda, which she chronicled in the book "Tumaini: A Story of Hope in the Heart of Africa." She enjoys being active, traveling and live music.

April 1, 2018

Judges 6-7

Gideon's story begins with him as a young man immersed in insecurity. The Israelites, his kinsmen, had done evil in the sight of the Lord, so as punishment they endured seven years of military loss. Seven years of torment and defeat and shame. They were so scared of their oppressors that they scattered across the countryside to hide. They could not even produce food without it being stolen. Enter Gideon: a young man steeped in the weight of Israel's sin and punishment. We meet him threshing his wheat in secrecy – fearful he will lose even this meager meal if he is seen.

Gideon encounters an angel of the Lord who greets him with a compliment; he calls him "mighty warrior." The angel can see what Gideon cannot: his potential for greatness in the Lord. Gideon does not even begin to believe the prophetic words of the angel. He questions the angel's words by presenting him with the reality of his horrible circumstances. Like many of us, Gideon mistakenly defines himself by his circumstances.

Despite his insecurities, Gideon responds with faithfulness and obedience. He offers a sacrifice to God. On God's command he destroys the altar of Baal which his father had erected. Even with this victory, Gideon's insecurity still demanded confirmation from God before he was willing to lead an army to drive out the Midianites. He asks God to show His power through testing the fleece...twice. God is patient and endures his testing.

After being tested by Gideon, God puts Gideon to the test. As his army approaches the Midianites, God wants to ensure that Gideon and Israel know that victory is the Lord's alone. He asks Gideon to thin out his army...twice. On the eve of their attack, God hears Gideon's silent fears. He knows that Gideon is terrified and offers for him to receive encouragement. As he enters the Midianite camp, Gideon hears prophetic words revealing his victory— from the mouth of a Midianite! Gideon leads his army to victory.

God sees all our insecurities. He hears all our silent fears, but He knows that He has victory over every single one of them. Our greatest insecurities do not stand a chance against the power of our Savior. He will patiently listen to every word of our fearful prayers, while lovingly knowing He alone can deliver us from this fear. When we walk with Lord and submit our fears to Him, we will still find victory in how we fight the battles of this world. The story of Gideon shows us the power of God's might, but it also teaches us to remember to whom victory belongs: The Lord. We have no reason to fear when our trust and our hope rest in God alone.

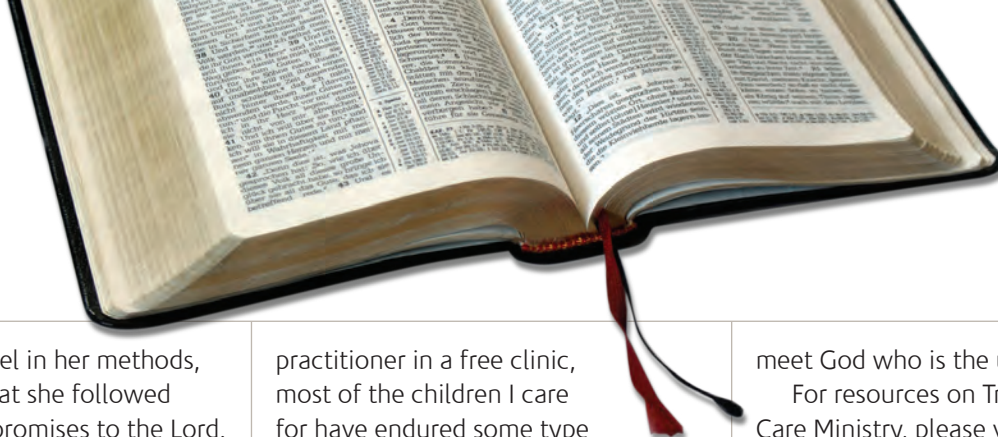
April 8, 2018

1 Samuel 1-3

There are few desires that are stronger in life than the desire to become a parent. Not everyone has this desire, but when God gives a person the desire to be a parent, there is no substitute to quell this desire other than finding a child to love. If you have ever struggled with or walked with someone through infertility, then you know that this is a difficult road. Frustration and disappointment are ceaseless until they are broken by the presence of a child.

We meet Hannah at the height of her desperation. She wanted a child, but her womb remained closed. Adding to her anguish was Peninah – her sister-wife who lorded her fertility over her. Hannah, in her despondency bargained with God, "Lord, if you but give me a son, then I will give him to You all the days of his life." The Lord was moved by Hannah's prayers. Finally, she gave birth to a son and named him Samuel.

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you, like Hannah, were desperate? I confess that I bargained with the Lord a time or two. In these moments of desperation, we usually voice our most authentic prayers. In our bargaining, we are not lying, we truly mean that we are willing to move heaven and earth to receive our desired miracle from God. Sometimes I have received my heart's desire and other times not. Unfortunately, in my human condition even in "success" I am quick to forget my promises to God. Although



Hannah is not novel in her methods, she is unique in that she followed through with her promises to the Lord.

As soon as Samuel was weened, Hannah fulfilled her promise and handed her beloved son to Eli the priest. Translation: she handed him over when he was two or three years old. If I had been Hannah, I am not so certain I could have parted with my child. I would probably bargain with God again to find any loophole to keep my child in my care. I can imagine it now, "Lord, we will do daily devotions together. We will attend church every Sunday. Surely, he is better in my care than in the care of Eli."

As Samuel grows in stature and maturity, he proves himself to be more faithful to God than Eli and his sons. God passes over Eli to use Samuel to serve as Israel's first prophet to the kings. Samuel will go on to anoint both King Saul and King David. Where would Samuel be without the faith and obedience of his mother Hannah? We will never know, but from the story of Samuel and Hannah we see the fruit of radical faith and obedience to God. When we surrender the greatest desires of our heart to the Lord, we, like Hannah, can expect Kingdom results that are beyond our wildest dreams.

April 15

Psalm, 7, 27, 31, 34, 52

When is the last time you felt completely safe? At first glance that seems like a simple question. In a perfect world, we should all be able to answer this quickly and easily. Unfortunately, as mass violence has continued to assault our nation, the concepts of refuge and safety have become increasingly more elusive. As a nurse

practitioner in a free clinic, most of the children I care for have endured some type of trauma in their short lives. I shudder to think how they would answer this question.

It is a sad reality that many of our children no longer feel safe in their schools. From my years in medicine, I can tell you that many of our children do not have reason to feel safe in their homes either. How have we provided areas of refuge for them?

An emerging area of medicine and ministry is Trauma Informed Care (TIC). TIC begins with acknowledging that most people have experienced some level of trauma in their lives. Trauma affects the body to create not only mental illness, but also higher incidences of physical illness such as cancer, heart disease and autoimmune disorders. A trauma informed approach to care (and ministry) is designed to acknowledge the impact of trauma, respond to the needs trauma creates and prevent inadvertent re-traumatization.

Trauma Informed Care is being recognized as one potential tool to preventing future atrocities of mass violence. Our General Assembly is currently voting on how it can allocate Trauma Informed Care resources to our local communities, especially our schools. Currently, TIC is getting bipartisan support. If our local churches would align our ministries to mirror and augment what will hopefully be implemented in our local communities, imagine what impact we could have!

We as Christians know that God is our refuge. As the psalmists describe in these chapters, He is our Rock, a strong Fortress, my Shield. Let's do everything we can to ensure our churches are places of refuge, so people can

meet God who is the ultimate Refuge!

For resources on Trauma Informed Care Ministry, please visit: <http://www.acesconnection.com/blog/why-be-trauma-informed-a-training-for-churches-by-chaplain-chris-haugheedmin>.

April 22, 2018

Psalm 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

The Psalmist's prayer is likely familiar to you; many pastors will repeat this prayer before delivering a sermon. At first glance, this is a sweet blessing to pre-empt a message. Upon further review, the words are heavy. Are all my words acceptable to the Lord? Would God approve every meditation of my heart? A quick review of my words and thought patterns of the previous day yields the response, "Probably not."

God leads me to Matthew 15:18, "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles." If I want to ensure that all the words which pass from my lips are pleasing to the Lord, I need to start with what is happening in my heart.

Meditation is an intimidating word. I would not profess to be good at meditation; I am however good at worrying. Worrying and meditation are similar practices at their core: they are focusing the mind on a particular object or thought. They differ in that meditation is practiced to bring

(Con't. on pg. 27: "LIVING WORD.")

The Living Word devotions will coincide with the 2018 Bible Reading Challenge from Bishop Lewis. Find the April schedule on pg. 27. Find all 2018 readings at www.vaumc.org.

CLERGY & DIACONAL



Notice: The Advocate, due to the increasing number of entries for this section each month, will only publish death notices for individuals rather than full obituaries. To have additional information published, please contact the Advocate office at advocate@vaumc.org or mail to c/o Communications Office, P.O. Box 5606 Glen Allen, VA 23058-5606. The Communications Office receives obituaries from a number of sources, but to ensure we receive a particular notice, please contact us with copy.

DEATHS



The Rev. Allen Minter Jr., 93, died February 16, 2018 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Memorial services were held in Greensboro at

Christ UMC and in Richmond at Providence UMC. Interment was held at Amelia Veterans Cemetery.



The Rev. Elisha Eugene "Dick" Jones, 82, of Roanoke died Jan. 16, 2018. Jones served many United Methodist churches in North Carolina

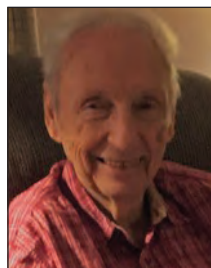
and Virginia. He retired from full-time ministry in 1997 only to continue to serve in part-time positions. Most recently, he served as pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Roanoke for 15 years. Jones was actively involved with the choir and

quartet at Grace UMC, which played host to his memorial service Jan. 20.



The Rev. Myrtle Frances Hatcher, 72, died on Feb. 8, 2018. Hatcher served the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church for 33

years. At the time of her death, she was in her seventh year as pastor of Main Street UMC Suffolk. Prior to her service there she served as district superintendent of the Peninsula District and pastor of Norfolk United Methodist Church, Galilee UMC Edwardsville and St. James UMC Hampton. She was the daughter of the late June D. and Rufus Cooper. She was predeceased by her son John Johnson. She is survived by her husband John G. Hatcher Jr.; sister, Angel Cooper; daughter-in-law, Marie Johnson; and five grandchildren. In addition to her service through the UMC, she was the founding board member of Coalition Against Poverty in Suffolk (CAPS).



The Rev. James Emerson Powell Jr., 87, of Chesapeake, died Jan. 22, 2018. He served as pastor for 40 years in the Virginia Conference and retired

in 1993. He is survived by wife Virginia, as well as three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Mary Elizabeth Davenport Quist, 52, died Feb. 5, 2018. She was the sister of **the Rev. Joanna Dietz**, a deacon in the Winchester District, who serves on staff at Braddock Street UMC.

Verla B. Green, 92, of Marshfield, Missouri, died Feb. 2, 2018. She was the widow of **the Rev. Howard C. Green**, pastor in the Virginia Conference, who

proceeded her in death in 2008.

Lydia Maria Colon Rodriguez, 91, died Jan. 27, 2018. She was the mother of **the Rev. Lydia Rodriguez**, pastor of Wesley UMC Alexandria.

Edgar Russell (Sonny) Gresham III, 78, of Goodview, Va., passed away Jan. 26, 2018. Gresham was a lifelong Methodist and a member of Main Street UMC Bedford.

Bette Monell Spaugh, 68, of Chesapeake, died Jan. 22, 2018. She was the widow of **the Rev. Daniel G. Spaugh**.

Dolores Otto, 91, of Madison, Wisconsin, died Jan. 19, 2018. She was the mother-in-law of Ted Soto, Vice-President/Operations for the Virginia Conference Foundation.

Stephanie Noel Fitch, 42, of Stephens City, Virginia, died Feb. 15, 2018. She was the wife of **the Rev. Aaron Fitch**, who serves Kernstown UMC. She was also survived by her parents and two children, Elise C. and Cooper E. Fitch.

Janet Pfeiffer, 83, of Richmond, wife of **the Rev. Bruce Pfeiffer**, retired in the Richmond District, died Jan. 14, 2018.

Helen Frances Clune Alber, 101, of Martinsville, mother of **the Dr. Rev. Judy Short**, retired in the Danville District, died Jan. 12, 2018.

Dorothy Florence Finn, 93, of Pennsylvania, died Jan. 11, 2018. She was the mother of **the Rev. Elfie Finn-McKenzie**, Edinburg United Methodist Parish in Edinburg, Va. A service was held on Jan. 19.

Vivian Minerva Williams Torrence, 91, of Appomattox, died Jan. 11, 2018. She was the mother of **the Rev. David Torrence**, retired in the Richmond District.

JoAnne Rowley, 97, died Jan. 9, 2018 in Palm City, Fla. Rowley was the mother of **the Rev. Rocky Shoemaker**, a retired elder in the Charlottesville District.

The Advocate strives to compile and share obituaries in this section through ClergyNet and LaityNet and as the office receives them. To make sure our staff publishes an obituary, please email to MadelinePillow@vaumc.org or mail to c/o Communications Office, P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058-5606.

The mother of **the Rev. Jim Bollinger** died on Jan. 6, 2018. Bollinger serves the Collierstown and Mt. Horeb churches near Lexington, Va.

Charles Edward Woody Sr., 78, of South Boston, died Jan. 6, 2018. Among others, Woody is survived by his wife, Ann Cox Lindsey Woody and step-daughter, Lorrie Lindsey Moore and husband, **the Rev.**

Wayne Moore, St. John's-Whitmell Cooperative Parish, Danville District.

Pauline "Polly" Thomas, 91, of Waynesboro, died Jan. 6, 2018. She was the wife of **the Rev. William K. Thomas**, retired elder in the Staunton District.

Mildred Louise Truslow "MawMaw" Creef, 91, of Waynesboro, died January 5, 2018. Creef was the mother of **the Rev. Janet Knott**, retired in the Staunton District.

Ransom "Gene" Rutland Jr., 94, of Smyrna Beach, Fla., died Jan. 2. He was the father-in-law of **the Rev. Helen Casey-Rutland**, Minister of Congregational Care at Williamsburg UMC, York River District.

Joe Killough, 71, of Pungoteague, died Dec. 29, 2017. He was the husband of **the Rev. Deborah Killough**, pastor of the Greenbackville Charge on the Eastern Shore District.

Edward Anthony "Ed" Warg, 86, of Stuarts Draft, died Dec. 28, 2017. He was the father of **the Rev. Deborah Koontz**, pastor of Ramsey Memorial UMC in Richmond.

Jane Sorrows, 95, of Gaithersburg, Maryland, died Dec. 27, 2017. She was the mother-in-law of **the Rev. Dr. Peter M. Moon**, Richmond District superintendent.

Elizabeth George, 89, of Richmond, died Dec. 26, 2017, just shy of her 90th birthday. She was the mother of Margaret Hamilton and mother-in-law of **the Rev. Chancellor Hamilton**, retired elder in the Richmond District.

Richard L. Meiser, 76, of Hampton, died Dec. 23, 2017. He was the father of the Rev. Rich Meiser, campus minister for Farmville Wesley which serves Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College.

Barbara Jean Setchel, wife **the Rev. Eugene O. Setchel**, retired from the Harrisonburg District, died Nov. 17, 2017 in Spring Hill, Florida. 🍷

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FROM THE BISHOP

TIMELINE



Where in
the world is
Bishop Lewis?

At the printing time of this issue, Bishop Lewis was making her way to the Holy Land. Pray for her and the group's safe return. View below some moments from Bishop Lewis in the last month.



Feb. 20

Bishop Lewis shares passing of her friend and colleague.

Bishop Lewis asked the Virginia Conference to remember her friend and colleague Robert H. (Tre) McMichael III who passed away on Feb. 19 as well as to keep his wife, children and family in your prayers. The Virginia Annual Conference will remember McMichael as one of the musicians last year at Annual Conference. He was also scheduled to do so again at Annual Conference 2018 in Hampton. He was currently appointed to Atlanta FUMC as the assistant pastor for Worship Arts and Mission Ministries and the North Georgia Conference as worship consultant.



Feb. 21

Bishop Lewis shares her thoughts on Dr. Billy Graham's passing.

"Dr. Billy Graham was a loving, fervent activist for Jesus Christ who worked tirelessly to bring the Gospel to many throughout the world. We should all remember the inspiring example he set, his high standards, perseverance and sheer joy at preaching. And as Rev. Graham himself said, he has not died. He has simply changed his address to be with his Savior."

Feb. 25

Bishop Lewis travels to the Council of Bishops meeting.



Feb 26

Bishop Lewis shares excitement that the conference ended the 2017 apportionments at 89.81%, a 2.76% increase from 2016.

Feb 28

Bishop Lewis travels to the Holy Land for a pilgrimage with members of the Virginia Annual Conference. 🇮🇱



Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for April

April 1	Judges 6-7
April 2	Judges 8-9
April 3	Judges 10-12
April 4	Judges 13-15
April 5	Judges 16-18
April 6	Judges 19-21
April 7	Ruth 1-4
April 8	1 Samuel 1-3
April 9	1 Samuel 4-8
April 10	1 Samuel 9-12
April 11	1 Samuel 13-14
April 12	1 Samuel 15-17
April 13	1 Sam 18-20, Psalms 11 & 59
April 14	1 Samuel 21-24
April 15	Psalms 7, 27, 31, 34, 52
April 16	Psalms 56, 120, 140-142
April 17	1 Samuel 25-27
April 18	Psalms 17 35, 54, 63
April 19	1 Samuel 28-31, Psalm 18
April 20	Ps 121, 123-125, 128-130
April 21	2 Samuel 1-4
April 22	Psalms 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21
April 23	1 Chronicles 1-2
April 24	Psalms 43-45, 49, 84-85, 87
April 25	1 Chronicles 3-5
April 26	Psalms 73, 77-78
April 27	1 Chronicles 6
April 28	Psalms 81, 88, 92-93
April 29	1 Chronicles 7-10
April 30	Psalms 102-104

("LIVING WORD," con't. from pg. 23.)

mental clarity and peace; worrying is often done without intention and an attempt to gain an illusion of mental control in the face of fear.

How can I change the worries of my heart to please God? I can start by speaking life into my worries and fears. Whenever a particular struggle interrupts my life which occupies a lot of my mental capacity, my Bible study leader will challenge me to find a Scripture verse that will calm my root fear. Whenever the intrusive worry enters my mind, she challenges me to combat it with the verse. Soon enough, my worries are replaced with meditation on the verse and my words are transformed into prayers. These are habits that are pleasing to the Lord.


What is the one fear or struggle that is occupying your mind right now? Find a Scripture verse that will speak life into your fear. Allow God's Word to transform your worry into meditation and your words into prayers.

April 29, 2018 1 Chronicles 7-10

I grew up during the War on Drugs; a massive amount of time and energy was poured into my generation with anti-drug campaigns. One of the most prominent tactics was having celebrities deliver Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to children warning them about the dangers of drugs. Many of the people delivering these PSAs were athletes, actors and politicians. When we learned about role models in school, these same people were cited as examples of modern-day role models. As I continued to grow up, I watched in the news as one by

one these same "role models" were arrested for drug possession, DUIs, or, tragically in some cases, died by overdose. I eventually learned the difference between a true role model and a fake one.

The nation of Israel could relate to my childhood plight. Israel had begged God for a King. Saul was the answer to their prayers. For several years, he was a good king and lived up to his promise. Eventually, though, Saul's sinful nature led him to disobey God. He lost God's favor, so God stopped responding to him. In desperation on the eve before a battle with the Philistines, Saul consulted with a medium instead of waiting to hear from God. Saul's disobedience and rejection of God caused Israel's loss to the Philistines and the death of Saul and his family.

What do we do when our leaders, whom we put our trust in, fall from grace? I think we first need to ask, "In whom do we trust?" In a world with a 24-hour news cycle, it is easy to place our trust, focus, and attention, on human leaders. Unfortunately, when we place our trust and expectation in human agents, then we put them on pedestals of idolatry. People on pedestals are almost certain to fall from grace. Instead of misplacing our trust in human leaders, we need to put our trust and hope in the truth and security of Jesus Christ alone. Humans will always disappoint us, but God will never fail us. 

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