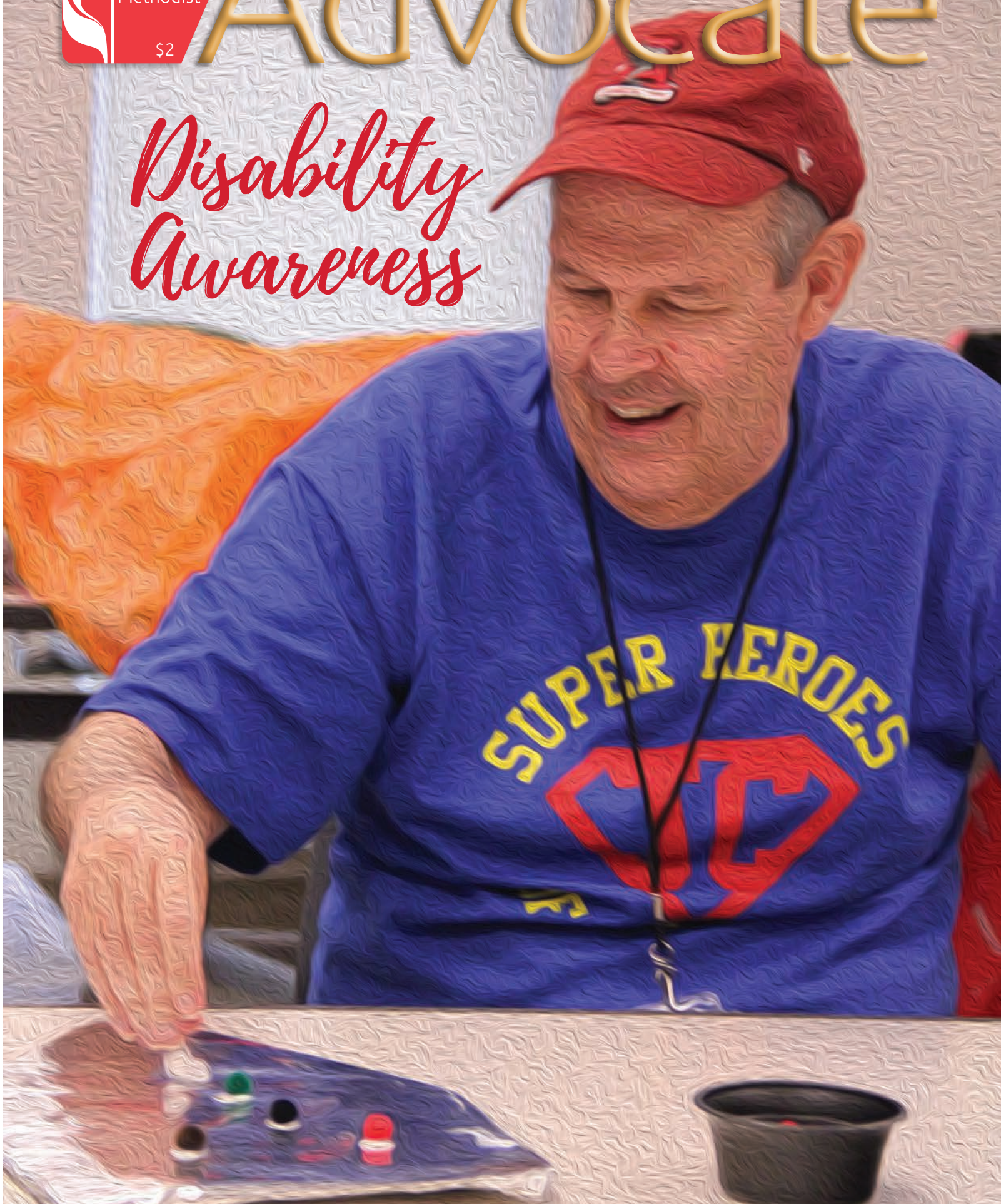


January 2018

Advocate

*Disability
Awareness*



PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow
Editor

**Wishing
for the
good ol'
days**



This past weekend, my family attended the funeral of a good family friend and watched as my brother and grandfather, both pastors in our conference, performed the service. There were tears and, luckily, laughter because Anne Stevens Thaxton was a wonderful woman who deserves to be remembered for her goodness as well as her infectious smile and laugh.

The funeral service was held at Court Street UMC in Lynchburg, the church where I attended from middle school until I moved for graduate school. Although we were there to say goodbye to Anne and signal her passing, it was a time for her family, friends and for those former members I grew up with to come together. Being back in that beautiful sanctuary and seeing such good people from my past made it seem like I was back to being 13 and everyone was well and whole again.

This year has been a hard one for my family with the passing of family members and many dear friends. It has been a year that, for additional reasons, has made me reminisce about the good ol' days and miss them.

With all that's been happening this year politically, socially and morally, I'm worn out. But my nostalgia for better days is just a fiction. Pick a time that you consider to be the "good ol' days." Is it the 1980s? 1960s?

If you go back to those years, you will find people much like today—wishing they could go back to their idea of the good days. You can go to every decade and find writings of people nostalgic for easier or better times.

The fact is that people have been wishing for that same thing throughout the span of time. You see, nostalgia makes it easy to paint everything from a certain time as far rosier than reality. So despite what I may think were better days, I am here. And though the world seems a bit tense and grim right now, and loved ones are passing on, I have to realize that life is a cycle—there are ups and downs.

Nostalgia comes from the passage of time and from the softening in our minds of those curves that were, in fact, quite turbulent.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." (Ecclesiastes.3:1)

I find myself as we close the year holding on to faith. I have to remember that in every action we see on this earth is just one strand in God's greater plan.

Here's to 2018: holding onto the faith, being present in the here and now and doing our part to make the world around us better. 🍷

Until the next issue,

Madeline C. Pillow

P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058

Phone: 1-800-768-6040 or
804-521-1100

Fax: 804-521-1174

E-mail: advocate@vaumc.org

Website: www.vaumc.org

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Deadlines

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Advertising/Tributes

Rates for advertising and tributes are available upon request.

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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Photos courtesy of Stacey Roberts.

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Cover photo courtesy of Stacey Roberts.

The December *Advocate* feature, omitted by mistake that one of our writers for the section, Gerry Burkholder, while a retired local pastor, is also currently serving at Hites Chapel UMC on the Winchester District. We apologize for the exclusion.



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The Virginia Advocate Staff

Madeline Pillow | Editor, Director of Communications

Cathryn Huff | Graphic Designer

Pam Culler | Administrative Secretary

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COMMENTARY

Learn more about Disability Awareness Sunday

By Peggy Packard

"Disability Awareness Sunday shall be observed annually on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Disability Awareness Sunday calls the church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities and calls the church and society to full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community." *Book of Discipline*, ¶1265

The Virginia Annual Conference suggests the first of Sunday of February be designated as Disability Awareness Sunday. However, if for some reason this Sunday is not appropriate, another Sunday in February should be so designated.

As a pastor you may be thinking, "Another special Sunday? What am I expected to do?" There is no "officially correct" way to celebrate Disability Awareness Sunday. Feel free to decide what would work best for your congregation. A selection of resources is posted on the conference website. Go to www.vaumc.org and type "Disability Sunday" in the search box. Scroll down to see links of what has been done in previous years. You will find sermons, Scripture,

liturgy for worship, children's sermons, and hymn suggestions. If you think of other ideas, please share them with the Commission on Disabilities. Other suggestions for a children's message or youth group meeting include: borrowing a walker, wheelchair, or crutches and/or using masking tape to hold a person's knees and ankles together; or tying thick layers of newspaper around a limb so bending is impossible and then having the "disabled" visit selected areas of the church; placing a sling on the dominant arm or tight socks on hands and then asking participants to tie their shoes, put on a coat, or eat a snack; playing "Simon Says" either mouthing the instructions or having participants wear earplugs or cotton balls in their ears; wrapping layers of plastic around old sunglasses or rubbing Vaseline on the lenses and then having persons try to read Scripture. Take time after the experience for participants to reflect on and discuss these challenges.

Be sure to invite disabled persons to speak to a Sunday school class or small group and in worship. Even better, ask them to assist in leading worship and not just on Disability Awareness Sunday!

—The Rev. Peggy Packard
serves Weyers Cave UMC,
Harrisonburg District.

Accessibility in the second half of life

By Martha Stokes

Disability is a normal part of life, experienced by almost everyone. The longer we live, the greater our chances of living with one or more disabling conditions.

The 2016 Disability Statistics Annual Report published by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics of the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire* reported that 35.4 percent of people ages 65 and older have a disability.

By age 75+, the number grows to 45 percent and, by age 85+, to almost 73 percent. While all disability types increase with age, difficulties with mobility were most commonly reported.

So what does this mean for The United Methodist Church, a denomination where average age is 58-60 and an estimated one-third of our membership is 65+? What about our church facilities, many of them built in a time when accessibility was not a priority? We have steps — lots of them. We have multiple levels in churches that added rooms and gathering



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.



COMMENTARY

spaces. We have unpaved parking lots, inaccessible restrooms, hymnals with print too small for aging eyes, and spaces without sound amplification that make it hard for older ears to follow along.

In my travels around the Virginia Conference, I can't tell you how many times I've heard stories of sanctuaries with stairs that make it difficult for older family members to participate in weddings and for funeral homes to bring caskets in for services celebrating the life of one who has died. All this when surveys tell us people are more likely to value religion and find growing importance in the practice of faith traditions as they grow older.

Although religious communities and the entities they control are exempt from some sections of law related to Americans with disabilities, institutions of faith have always been governed by the moral mandate of justice. Under this higher authority many congregations and other religious entities have created accessible and welcoming environments for people with disabilities of all ages.

As the general population and our United Methodist membership continues to age, accessibility to pastoral care and programs grows in importance. The church needs to



Martha Stokes is the director of Church and Community Relations of Pinnacle Living.

be prepared to work with us as we experience "new normal" ways of living.

Along with accessibility, engaging in ministries by, for and with older adults requires the same planning for safety, care and prevention of abuse that ministries with children and youth mandate. However, we seldom give the same attention to protection policies for older and vulnerable adults.

The edition of the Safe Sanctuary materials *Safe Sanctuaries: The Church Responds to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults*, by Joy Thornburg Melton (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2012) is a valuable resource for local churches in developing adult policies.

While the resource walks through concerns around abuse of elder and vulnerable adults, it also asks church leaders to consider programmatic considerations and needs.

For example:

- ❖ Does your church have first aid and equipment to meet medical needs? You not only need basic first aid supplies available but at a minimum a wheelchair and an Automated External Defibrillator (with appropriate training).
- ❖ Have you prepared your hospitality team members, greeters and ushers to appropriately assist older and vulnerable adults? The entire church could benefit from training to become more dementia and disability friendly.
- ❖ How do you create the safest environment possible for your older adults? This requires a look at program schedules (day vs. night gatherings), indoor accessibility (handrails, non-slip flooring, etc.) and outdoor considerations (doorway and parking lot lighting, walkways and parking areas).
- ❖ Does the church provide educational opportunities for older and vulnerable adults, along with their care partners, for the purpose of learning the facts about elder abuse and how the church is responding? This could be as simple as making print resources

(Con't on next page: "Accessibility")





COMMENTARY

(“Accessibility,” con’t from page 5.)

es available to a series of speakers on topics of safety, financial planning, local service agencies and more.

Richard Rohr, Franciscan priest, said, “There is a deeper voice of God, which you must learn to hear and obey in the second half of life....The true faith journey only begins at this point. Up to now everything is mere preparation.”

Aging and the cultural concepts of what is appropriate or expected of us in our “mature years” can heighten our awareness of spiritual needs and call us to be more intentional in our spiritual journey. If we choose to move from preparation to a deeper experience of God in our later years, we need the church to be intentional about walking the journey alongside us.

The response of the church can take many directions: recognizing and placing greater emphasis on faith formation for older adults; offering a variety of ways to practice spiritual disciplines that nurture people of all ages and ability levels; and with our United Methodist call to social justice, becoming stronger advocates on issues that are important to older adults. And let’s not forget the importance of being physically and pro-

grammatically accessible for those of us living into elderhood.

Our Pinnacle Living communities are available to assist your church in addressing the needs of older adults. Please call on us if we can be a resource for your congregation. You can find a listing of our communities on our website at PinnacleLiving.org or contact me directly at 804-474-8718 or by email at MStokes@PinnacleLiving.org.

– Martha Stokes is the director of Church and Community Relations of Pinnacle Living (formerly Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.).

* View report at: https://disabilitycompedium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016_AnnualReport.pdf.

The challenge of extravagant generosity

By Larry Davies

A letter to Fredericksburg UMC:

“Recently, my husband and I visited your church. We received along with everyone else, a gift—a \$10 bill—as part of your “Practicing Extravagant Generosity Campaign.” We were encouraged to either multiply the gift and bring the proceeds back as an offering or use the gift for one or more acts of kindness. After the service, I asked if you would mind if I took the \$10 from your church and applied it in a way that would help a friend in York, Pennsylvania. You graciously encouraged me to do so and write about it.”

A church giving away \$10? Whoever heard of such a thing? Especially now when most churches are having stewardship campaigns to raise more money, not give it away!

Jesus told this parable: “The Master called together his servants and gave them money to invest for him while he was gone. He gave five bags of gold to one, two bags of gold to another, and one bag of gold to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abili-



ties—and then left on his trip.” (Matthew 25:14-15)

Why would Jesus talk about a rich guy giving money to three employees to invest? Employee number one doubled the investment as did employee number two. Both received praise from the boss. But the third employee hid the money under his mattress and then returned what was given. The boss became angry and immediately fired the worthless employee. Ouch!

The lesson? To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. (Matthew 25:29)

I asked our church’s finance committee whether we could teach this lesson to our congregation by giving each of them \$10 and challenging them to either look for ways to multiply the gift and bring the proceeds back as an offering or use the gift for an act of kindness.

It sounded like a great idea until someone calculated the cost: \$10 times 500 people equals: A lot of money!

After some discussion and prayer, to the committee’s credit, they enthusiastically agreed. One even said, “I can’t wait to see the look on their faces when

they open the envelope and see that our church is giving them money! What kind of church does that?”

What were the results? Numerous acts of kindness in our community and beyond. Increased awareness that even a small amount of resources, used with creativity and prayer can make a huge difference! The realization that practicing extravagant generosity can be life changing for the giver as well as the receiver! Not a bad lesson for \$10.

The kindness of \$10

“While grocery shopping I noticed an elderly lady using a cane to walk. I offered to buy her groceries. She told me she lost her husband years ago and had hip and knee replacements and now has stomach cancer. That gesture was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for her. What a great feeling!”

“A 12-year-old boy who attended our local middle school last year was hit by a car while riding his bike. He died a week later. We decided to use our \$10 along with some of our money to make a donation to help his family—who could not afford a funeral.”

“I was one of the people you mentioned would get stressed out over what to

do with our \$20 (\$10 x 2). I decided to make it a family project and discuss it with our three sons. They came up with all kinds of ideas! We landed on purchasing 20 boxes of cereal for the food pantry restock drive at school. The thought was to help as many people as possible; however, it quickly turned into a competition. What happened is that when the other students saw them carrying in 20 boxes of cereal they gave generously too.”

“I am the Executive Director of a non-profit in Nashville, TN. We received \$20 as a gift from your church’s giving challenge. We disciple married couples through Christian premarital and marital counseling which we offer at no cost. I wanted you to know your church is making a difference here in Middle, Tenn.”

– The Rev. Larry Davies is pastor of Fredericksburg UMC in Fredericksburg. This is an excerpt from one of his posts on his blog, *Sowing Seeds of Faith*.





EQUIPPING FOR MINISTRY



Including those with disabilities in the local church

By Peggy Packard

How can those with disabilities be included in the life and ministry of the local church?

Some real life examples from around the conference include:

Skipper, who is autistic and does not speak, is a very enthusiastic usher. He shakes the hand of each worshiper as he gives out bulletins. On Saturdays he's at church discarding old bulletins and adding inserts to the current ones.

Fred is an active participant in United Methodist Men's meetings. He recently shared the devotion.

A wheelchair-bound member serves as liturgist. Another woman in a wheelchair shares childrens' messages. An intellectually challenged adult serves as acolyte and usher.

Sam sang in the choir. In the adult Sunday school class, he was the Scripture reader. (Sam is no longer with us physically, but people remember him fondly.)

Danny, a resident at Heart Havens, reads Scripture, plays in a commu-

nity bell choir, assists with Communion and ushers. He is actively involved with the United Methodist Men at both the local and district levels. He enjoys helping with the annual district golf tournament where he drives a golf cart. Danny sees his mission as making sure everyone is included and comfortable. He is a member of the Commission on Disabilities (COD) and takes his role seriously, particularly making churches accessible to all.

Dos and don'ts

If a new family starts attending your church and has a child with a disability, look below for some "dos and don'ts."

- ❖ Greet family members and be welcoming. Be truly happy to see the child and call him or her by name.
- ❖ Include the child in church activities.
- ❖ Do not judge the child for his or her behavior when the behavior is the result of his or her disability.
- ❖ Pray for the family.
- ❖ Do not be afraid to interact with the child, even if the child doesn't speak.
- ❖ Do observe the personal space of a child, especially a child with autism (i.e., some autistic children do not like to be hugged or touched—talk to the parents first).
- ❖ Do talk to the parents about their child and ask what you can do to help.
- ❖ It is NOT helpful to talk to parents by telling them that God chose them to have this child because they were such strong people! It is better to say, "I do not understand why your child was born with this disability, but I do know that God will give you the strength and wisdom that you need as parents. We, as your church family, are here for you. We are praying for you. Please lean on us and tell us how we can help."
- ❖ A simple, "How is your child doing?" can go a long way to helping parents feel that you really care.
- ❖ Never say to parents, "It could be worse" when discussing their child's disabilities!
- ❖ Observe an annual Disability Awareness Sunday.
- ❖ Provide training for staff and volunteers.
- ❖ Check with the conference office for available training for your

EQUIPPING FOR MINISTRY

pastor as outlined in the *Book of Discipline*.

- ❖ If there are other children in the family, be sure to acknowledge them and engage with them.
- ❖ Remove barriers that make worship difficult for a child with disabilities.
- ❖ Talk to the parents about the needs of the child so that everyone who works with him or her knows what to do in case of an emergency.
- ❖ If needed, find a responsible older youth to be a “buddy” for the child with disabilities.
- ❖ Educate the children in the church about different disabilities (children’s moments, Sunday school, etc.)
- ❖ If the disability is severe and the family has to miss church for an extended period of time, offer respite care (offer to baby-sit, offer to cook a meal, etc.)
- ❖ Complete an annual Accessibility Audit as required by the *Book of Discipline*. 📌

—The Rev. Peggy Packard
serves Weyers Cave UMC,
Harrisonburg District.



DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ The United Methodist Women and choir at **High Street UMC in Franklin, Va.**, found a unique way of reusing the old 1960s hymnals by turning them in to Christmas Angels to sell at their recent fundraiser.

The Rev. Dave Kirkland, pastor of **Dulin United Methodist Church, Falls Church**, ran in the Walk and 5K to end HIV in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 28. He raised \$10,300, the highest individual fundraiser. A total of \$543,000 was raised. ▼



▲ The "Hearts to Hands" Fiber Arts ministry at **Mathews Chapel UMC, York River District**, presented Gaylia Hudgins, a retired nurse, 50 hand-made puppets prior to her departure to the Philippines as a volunteer with the international "Operation Smile" program. This is her fifth mission trip where she serves as the medical records clerk and gives every young patient a puppet to help calm his or her fears prior to the cleft palate/cleft lip surgery. Pictured from left are Alice Dennis, Doris Pritchett, Brenda Callis, Gaylia, Virginia Owens, Peggy New-some and Martha Frame.

Reveille UMC, Richmond District, celebrated its \$48,000 gift to the Friends of Barnabas Foundation with a consecration ceremony and reception on Nov. 5. The donation will support the organization's Extended Care program in Honduras for children whose medical needs go beyond the care provided by Community Health clinics. Extended Care offers families case management services, including educational workshops for caregivers of children with special health needs, home visits, transportation to appointments, medications, treatments and surgeries.

Reveille UMC has a long-standing

relationship with Friends of Barnabas Foundation and sends a mission team to Honduras each summer to provide medical care for impoverished children at the Community Health clinics.

Several members from the Friends of Barnabas leadership team and board were present for the gift consecration ceremony, including special guest Nury Janania, the Honduran director for the foundation. Many of Reveille's past Honduran mission trip participants also took part in the ceremony.

The funding for the gift to Friends of Barnabas was made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor to Reveille UMC. ▼



To have your church or church organization featured in the "Disciples helping to transform the world" section, email your story and photos to MadelinePillow@vaumc.org by the first of the month. Stories should be approximately 100 words, and photos should be 300 dpi jpgs.

EVENTS



JANUARY

New Year's Day observance at conference office

Jan. 1, Glen Allen

The conference office in Glen Allen, Va. will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day.

Five Day Intensive Workshop Safe Sanctuary Policy

Jan. 8-12, Richmond

Prepare for your children and youth programs with this five-day online workshop for congregations that don't have a Safe Sanctuary policy or whose policy is outdated, needs revision, doesn't meet the needs of current ministries, etc. Participants will learn why congregations should have an up-to-date policy, what the policy includes generally and specifically, and how to get a policy written, approved implemented or edited.

Because this is an INTENSIVE workshop, participants will need to be involved on the site every day to receive a completion certificate. Plan on reading two documents, posting a response to one question, and posting responses to at least two other participants every day – a minimum of an hour a day. Visit the conference calendar to register and for more information.

FEBRUARY

United Methodist Day at General Assembly

Feb. 1, Richmond

Ever wanted to know how to create real change in our state government? Ever wanted to know more about real issues facing our legislature? United Methodist Day at the General Assembly is the place for you! This is

our opportunity to help faith communities become empowered to serve as missionaries of justice, as well as the more traditional missionaries of mercy. Event will be held from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and participants should meet at Bon Air UMC, 1645 Buford Rd, North Chesterfield, Va. Space is LIMITED. Due to construction at capitol square this year and the relocation of the General Assembly Building, space will be more LIMITED this year.

There will be a briefing on Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. at Bon Air UMC, 1645 Buford Rd.

Register by January 1 and pay \$30 early registration. After January 1, pay \$40 until January 12 when registration closes. Registration includes information packet with reusable bag, hot breakfast, box lunch (sandwich or salad), parking, transportation to the capitol grounds, and afternoon speakers. All registration materials, maps, information on advocacy and other important documents will be sent to you by email. No refunds.

Questions may be directed to the Rev. Barbara Lewis at BarbaraLewis@vaumc.org or (434) 594-6241. Presented by the Board of Church & Society and The United Methodist Women of the Virginia Conference.

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.

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Disability



Photos provided by Peggy Packard.

AWARENESS

A young pastor and his wife had just welcomed their second child into the world, a son. They had been warned during the pregnancy there would probably be complications due to an RH incompatibility between mother and father. The baby had been oxygen-deprived and the prognosis wasn't good even after a total blood transfusion. The doctor told the pastor, "If he makes it through the night, he has a good chance of survival, but, right now, it doesn't look like he is going to make it through the night."

*A story
about*
MAC



Photos provided by Peggy Packard.

With a heavy heart, the pastor went to pick up his young daughter who had been staying with church members. They asked how the baby was doing and were given the report. After the pastor left, the members began calling other church members. There was no formal prayer chain, just people making phone calls. The members of this congregation all stopped what they were doing and prayed for baby Mac.

Mac survived the night and today is living in Charlotte, N.C. As a result of the oxygen deprivation, he has some challenges which include cerebral palsy, speech and hearing issues and some cognitive issues. Mac is labelled "disabled."

Despite these challenges, Mac is thriving. He received training and worked in the laundry room of a large hotel in Charlotte for 25 years. He lives independently in an apartment designated for the elderly and handicapped.

As a "PK," Mac was raised in the church. Many Sunday school teachers lovingly accepted him into their classes and encouraged the other children to do the same. His mother patiently worked with him. Expectations were adjusted to his abilities. He attended special schools and then enrolled at a sheltered workshop.

Mac has been loved and supported by various churches since his birth. Recently, two churches in Charlotte have taken him under their wings. At one church, a couple picks him up for Sunday morning services. If for some reason they can't pick him up, he will be quick to assure you that he watches church on TV.

The other church holds a men's prayer group early

every Monday morning. Afterwards, some of the men head to their jobs while others go out to "do mission." Mac is one of their "missions." The guys take turns picking him up, taking him to a late breakfast at his favorite pancake restaurant, and then to do his errands (trips to the bank, grocery store and sometimes a stop at the barber shop). The men at this church also include him in the annual Thanksgiving breakfast and Mac does such things as setting the tables or putting the frozen biscuits on baking sheets.

Both churches got involved for Mac's two knee replacement surgeries. Transportation was covered for therapy and follow-up appointments and meals were arranged as he recovered. He proudly shares his collection of get well cards. One of the social workers said, "It sure seems like he has had a lot of visitors."

Mac has gifts. These gifts include his friendly personality and his positive outlook on life in spite of his challenges. Another strength is his memory.

One of the churches held a catered Wednesday night dinner. Attendees made reservations, and then paid for the meal when they arrived. Mac and his mother sat at the registration table where they greeted people.

As his mother's memory began to decline, she had difficulty remembering some of the names. She would welcome the people and take care of payment, but, once they were out of earshot, would ask Mac who they were. He always knew their names.

When Mac's mother passed away, his sister, who was writing the obituary, asked Mac their mother's wedding date; he knew the exact date.

Some of you reading this already know or may have figured out, I am the older sister. Earlier in my ministry as I reflected on that question about "usefulness to the denomination," I pondered what unique experience, skills and knowledge I might have that not everyone else possesses.

I discerned that I should apply to serve on the Commission on Disabilities (COD). With our emphasis on hospitality to all of God's children, I feel called to use my background to help others understand and welcome those who years ago were kept home and not accepted in our churches.

I hope my story and the rest of the information from COD in this issue will encourage you to not only find ways to welcome those with differing gifts and abilities to your churches but also to see their gifts and include them in the life of the church. 🍷

—The Rev. Peggy Packard serves Weyers Cave UMC,
Harrisonburg district.



Disability Awareness: seeing people, not disabilities

By Shaun Smith



Mission

The Commission on Disabilities (COD) provides advocacy, education and direct service on behalf of persons with challenging conditions.

Structure

COD is made up of 16 elected representatives, eight lay and eight clergy, and representatives from agencies to include Heart Havens, Camp Rainbow, the conference Cabinet and Common Table and conference staff. It is our goal to have a representative from each district among our elected representatives. While we are not there yet, we get closer each year.

We have two committees:
Education, Advocacy, Programs, and Accessibility
Grants, Finance, Nominations, and Monitoring

Importance of education

The primary work of the committee is education. It is our goal to increase awareness and inclusion of people with disabilities to the point where persons with disabilities are fully integrated in our church life and we no longer see a person with a disability, but rather a brother or sister in Christ.

The COD does not address mental health-related disabilities, but it is an initiative of the Education Committee, chaired by the Rev. Peggy Packard.

A long-time member of the commission, Dot Payne, was asked to do the children's message on Disability Sunday this year. She talked to the children about understanding and interacting with people with disabilities. At

the end, she asked them if they knew anyone that was disabled. Their universal response was, "No." What you may not know is this: Dot has been a wheelchair user for many years and was there, in front of the children, in her motorized chair.

We are called on by Christ to see the inherent worth and dignity of each and every person, to love them, and to not judge them. The children that day didn't see an elderly woman in a wheelchair, they just saw Miss Dot—a woman who loves them for who they are.

There is a lesson in this for all of us—love your neighbor (Mt 7:1).

(Con't on next page: "COD")



A scene from the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Florida. Photographer John C. Goodwin, right, is greeted by Newtonia Coleman. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UMNS



("COD," *con't* from page 15)

Accessibility audit

All churches in the Virginia Conference are required to have completed an accessibility audit on the church building, associated buildings, and the parsonage and are asked to verify the audit is up to date annually for Charge Conference. Visit this link for more information:

<http://www.vaumc.org/NCFileRepository/Disabilities/AccessibilitySurveywebversion.pdf>.

Removing barriers

People are not "handicapped"; they are handicapped by the environments we provide for them to live, work, shop, and worship. When we remove the barriers to accessibility, they are no longer handicapped. While the above checklist (see link above) is a good start to being an accessible church, it is only a place to start.

To be a truly accessible church, members must strive to be like Jesus – when he encountered someone with a disability he embraced them. We can be the loving arms of Christ when we look beyond the cane or wheelchair, when we look and listen beyond a hearing or sight issue, when we look beyond a physical challenges, to love, welcome, and include.

Accessibility During Annual Conference

Have you ever been to Disney World? The Disney theme parks are among the best examples in the world for accessibility.

Whether you are in a wheelchair or have other mobility issues, your experience at their parks is practically seamless. You don't notice it unless you are disabled (or with someone who is) because of the park's intentional design. This is called universal design, making all products and places usable and accessible for all persons and how to use them is intuitively obvious.

We try hard to make the annual conference event space as accessible as possible for everyone in attendance. The most visible evidence of accessibility at are the interpreters on one side of the stage, but there is a lot more!

Along with the interpreters, we have special seating for those visually impaired, so they can be close enough to see. In addition, we provide seating for persons to see monitors and read the scrolling text—yes, someone with fast fingers is typing everything being said. Imagine trying

to type while Bishop Lewis is preaching!

Along with the monitor, we have hearing assistance devices available in the same area.

Getting around the conference presents challenges for those with disabilities when it comes to mobility. The display room is simply open floor space until we move in and set up tables and start running extension cords to the closest available outlet. These cords create a trip hazard to many.

Setting up as many as 2,500 chairs in Hampton is challenging enough, but making the aisles a safe place to transit can be more difficult. Add five cameras and 10 microphones and a giant sound board to control everything that happens, and you have a HUGE mess of cables!

Cross-guard cord protectors can be used to prevent falls and protect the cord, but we like to take the planning a step farther—the tables are set up so they surround the outlets and cords. Displays on tables are set so that seated persons can read and access the material.

Members of the COD work with the annual conference committee during setup to ensure the facility is as accessible as possible by doing a walk/roll around prior to the event.

Ease of access, intuitive design and safety are what we try to achieve, and we get better every year.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve your time at annual conference and to ensure that no one's experience is limited by disability.

Three years ago, in Roanoke, getting from the main event area to the display area was difficult. The following year that path was cleared and improved with better signage. This year in Hampton there was a cable problem by the stage; next year the sound board will be adjacent to the stage limiting the number of cables run across the floor where you walk or roll. One of the most problematic areas in Hampton was the bathrooms, specifically the doors, which could not be opened by persons in wheelchairs. (See Vicki Poindexter's article "Can you get out of your bathroom"). We have asked the convention center to correct this problem.

If you have input that can improve the event, please contact COD through **Cindy Ingroff at 804-521-1100** or cindyingroff@vaumc.org. If you would like to be a part of annual conference planning, please talk with your pastor and/or district superintendent. 🍷

— The Rev. Shaun Smith is chair of the Commission on Disabilities,
James River District Construction Consultant
and Dendron Ministry Coordinator.



Members of Commission on Disabilities (COD)

ELECTED CLERGY:

Ashley Allen, Arlington
Timothy Barth, Danville
Neil McLaughlin, Charlottesville
Claire Miller, Alexandria
Peggy Packard, Harrisonburg
Shaun Smith (chair), James River
Heather Wray, Winchester
Donna Mott, James River
Barry Throckmorton, Rappahannock

ELECTED LAY:

Marjorie Long-Brown, Arlington
Faye Godbey, Eastern Shore
Sylvia Massie, Rappahannock
James Mitchell, Rappahannock
Cheryl Nester, Richmond
Vicki Poindexter, Arlington
Clarisa Shepherd, Roanoke
Susan Rigg, Farmville

EX-OFFICIO:

Jennifer Boydton, Heart Havens
Stacey Roberts, Camp Rainbow
Seonyoung Kim, Cabinet rep.
Marc Brown, Common Table



Learn more about Camp Rainbow on pg. 20.
Photo courtesy of Stacey Roberts



Can I get out of your church's bathroom?

By Vicki Poindexter

A question we should be asking churches came to light at Annual Conference 2017 after I got trapped in a bathroom and the ensuing conversation is worth sharing.

I had to take a bathroom break prior to the start of a conference session. I opened the door with the front of my scooter and used the trash container to prop the fire door open only to have someone close the door while I was inside! I did not have the arm length to pull the door open in this Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible bathroom and get out. Having left my phone at the display table, I sat and knocked on the door until someone came and let me out, 15 minutes later.

When it's my turn to man the Commission on Disabilities (COD) table I like to ask two questions—after this episode I had THREE! “Have you done your accessibility survey and posted it on Equipping Vital Congregations (EVC)?” “Is your church accessible?” and “Can I get out of your church's bathroom?”

You see, most people in chairs or scooters are not flexible enough to pull a door toward them all the way to the wall and make a turn to get out while holding the door open behind them. While in the bathroom, there is the additional problem of being able to use the ADA stall—can you get in the stall, in less than 10 turns and is it long enough for scooters without leaving the door open?

In 1991, some people got together and created ADA requirements. Since then architects, that rarely are disabled, have been using those guidelines to design buildings. Just because it meets code does not mean it is going to work!

Many people do not think about accessibility until they or a family member or friend are not able to get in or out of facilities. It does not have to be a permanent disability. It can be something that puts you temporarily in a wheelchair like a broken leg.

While I was asking my questions at Annual Conference, some of the answers I received were:

- ❖ They can take a friend to the bathroom to open doors.

- ❖ We are to the standards, what extra do we need to do?
- ❖ We don't have the money.
- ❖ The only way to get into our church is to park and walk to the back of church and get in though the kitchen.
- ❖ We will pick you up and get you in the church door. (You can't begin to imagine how terrifying it is for a person in a chair to be picked up)
- ❖ It's just a short walk. (We heard that one a lot).
- ❖ We don't have anyone in are church with a mobile disability, so we don't have to worry about it.

Is your church really accessible to all?

According to Webster's Dictionary, accessibility means: ease of access or approach. When most people think of accessibility, they think of bathrooms with large doors and higher seats. Some think of ramps and elevators that can accommodate wheelchairs. Some even think of push button doors.

It begins with the arrival at the church, with parking spaces marked for disabled persons and large enough to accommodate the vehicle door opening all the way.

Parking surfaces matter, too.

- ❖ Is it gravel, dirt or cement?
- ❖ If a person is walking with walker or cane, is parking close to a ramp or at the other end of the parking lot?
- ❖ Is the ramp built to code?
- ❖ Is the door sill even with the floor or does it have a lip on it? (A half -inch lip can turn a chair over; a quarter-inch lip is the maximum allowed.

Loose carpet is another problem for manual wheelchairs and walkers. Electric push buttons on the wrong side of the door is another problem. Must you move out of the way of the opening door? Can you get inside before the door closes?

So the question churches and their leadership should consider is “Can I come to your church and get in and out,

including the bathroom, without asking for assistance?”.

There is an easy way to find out. Get a manual wheelchair, start at the ADA parking, and go everywhere in your church without someone helping you or using your legs.

Make sure to include a trip the bathroom! 🇺🇸

–Vicki Poindexter is the vice chair of the Commission on Disabilities (COD).



The Rev. Eric Pridmore adjusts the harness that helps Gene, his Seeing Eye dog, guide the United Methodist pastor to his seat in the chancel area at Goodman Memorial United Methodist Church in Cary, Miss. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS

Etiquette tips

Do you use proper etiquette when interacting with people who have disabilities? What feels like common sense, suddenly, is not as we sometimes question what to say or do when we are communicating with someone with a disability. Although there are no hard and fast rules for every person and every situation, there are some general “etiquette” rules that may challenge you to re-think how you might be more sensitive to people with disabilities. Consider the following:

- ❖ People with disabilities are people first – focus on the person rather than the disability.
- ❖ People with physical and/or sensory disabilities know they have a disability – no need to “pretend” that they don’t.
- ❖ Adults with disabilities don’t want to be treated like children. Don’t make decisions or answer questions for the person.
- ❖ Mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, etc.) are not confining. In fact, the provision of these devices allows for independence. Try to avoid phrases like “confined to,” “afflicted with” and other terms that communicate that the person is “restricted” or “suffering.”
- ❖ Respect personal space. Always ask if and what kind of assistance the person wants before you act.
- ❖ Don’t be condescending. (No one likes a pat on the head whether physically or a “proverbially” by what you say.) Example: A person using a wheelchair should not be referred to as a patient unless they are in a hospital setting.

People with disabilities have unique and different personalities like everyone else. Our comfort level and awareness is communicated, not only by what we say, but, how we say it, through our verbal as well as our non-verbal communication.

Everyone appreciates kindness, dignity and respect. Continuing to strive for physical and emotional acceptance creates welcoming environments for all of us! 🇺🇸

– Tips provided by Kelly Hickok, Community Advocate with Resources for Independent Living in Richmond, Va.

Learn about Camp Rainbow



Camp Rainbow Connection (CRC) is a week-long respite camp for adults with intellectual disabilities sponsored by the Commission on Disabilities in the Virginia Conference.

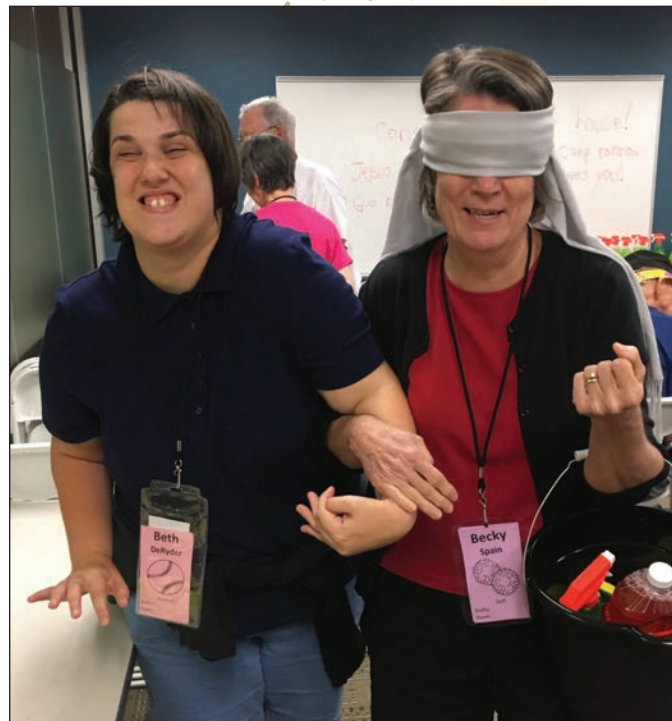
CRC operates with 80-95 volunteer staff who share God's love with 100-120 campers throughout a week in June and a week in July each summer. The camp is hosted by Richard Bland College (RBC) in Petersburg.

Last year was the first year that Camp Rainbow was held at the college. The theme was homecoming. Activities included morning classes such as Bible and Arts and Crafts, afternoon mission projects and carnival games, and evening favorites, the annual talent show and dance.

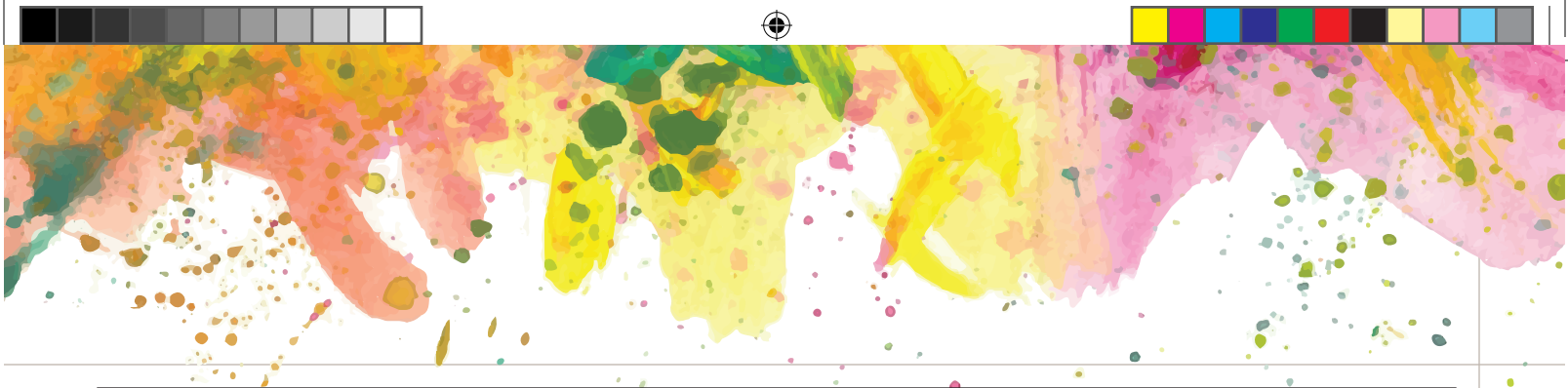
The best part of camp, according to camp director Stacey Roberts, is the sense of belonging.

"There is the genuine sense of belonging and the collective understanding that God created each of us uniquely to share His love with everyone," said Roberts. "We had a great 2017 and are really looking forward to camp this year!"

2018 camp dates will be held at RBC from June 23-29, 2018, and July 21-27, 2018. More details are available on the conference website: www.vaumc.org/campirainbow.



Photos courtesy of Stacey Roberts.



LIVING THE WORD



The Rev. Neil W. McLaughlin is a full-time local pastor who has served churches on the Harrisonburg District. He is currently serving at Byrd Chapel UMC, Charlottesville District. He is married to Catherine and they have two sons: Philip, 26, an adult with special needs who lives in Richmond; and Ryan, 23, a Special Education teacher for Waynesboro City Schools. Neil has been a member of the conference Commission on Disabilities (COD) since 2015.

Jan. 7, 2018

Job 14-16

True friendship

What is true friendship? This is a question that comes to my mind as I read these chapters from the book of Job. Imagine a time in your life that you have felt emotionally down, a time when you felt all alone, defeated, and in need.

What was it that you needed most from your friends? In these three chapters, we read a second round of discussion between Job and his friends. Job's friends should have been comforting him, but instead they condemned him for causing his own suffering.

Job lashes out and lets his friends know how he feels about their response. Then he gives them some examples of what he would do to support his friends if the tables were turned.

Job would support them by lamenting to God on their behalf for strength. He would not be quick to judge them. He would be there for support in any way for his friends.

How do you respond to your friends in their time of need? Are you quick to judge why your friends are going through a difficult situation or are you ready to be there for support in any way you can?

The Apostle Paul gives us a good definition of true friendship in the Epistle to the Romans, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:7-8).

In the Gospel of John, we see an even greater example. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13).

Jesus shows us the example of true friendship!

Jan. 14, 2018

Job 38-39

Remembering a promise

I remember on June 13, 1998, when my youngest son passed away due to an automobile accident caused by a drunk driver, how I lamented to God as to why this would happen.

This is a question we tend to ask when we are going through a time of suffering. Job was not even close enough to understanding the reasons for his suffering.

Job wants to know why God would treat him so badly without explanation.

God did speak to Job, finally, out of a whirlwind, but not with answers as to why Job is suffering.

God reminds Job that it was God who made him and all creation and that Job would never be able to understand his sufferings.

It's so easy for us to dwell on the situation that we are going through by continuing to ask why. When we do that, we are not putting our focus on the One who will bring us through the situation. As believers, we need to submit to God's authority and rest in God's care by remembering the promise that God has given to us in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

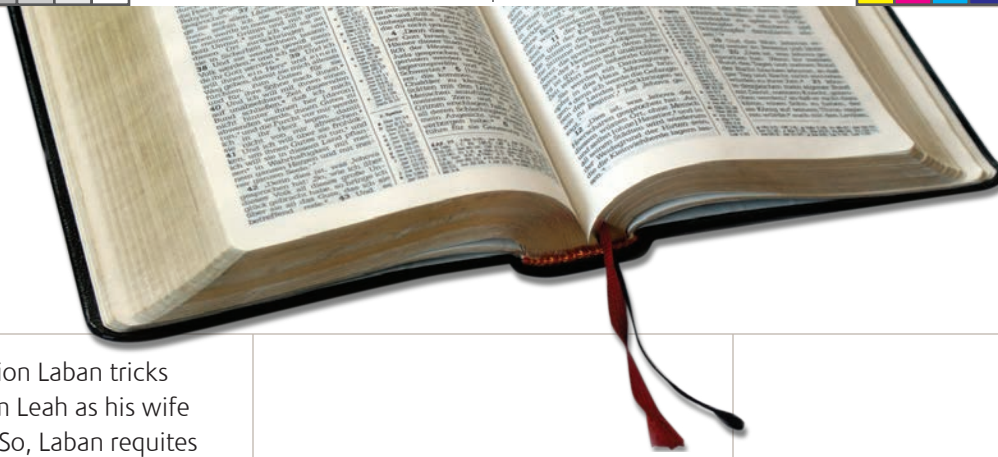
Jan. 21, 2018

Genesis 27-29

Sowing and reaping

As we go through life we all have choices to make. Sometimes we make good choices, others times we don't. We must be careful because the choices impact our future. Paul made it clear as he wrote to the Galatians (6:7), "...for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

In the Book of Genesis, we read the story of Jacob, who runs away to his uncle Laban's house because of a choice he made to deceive Isaac and steal Esau's family blessing. When he sees his uncle Laban's daughter Rachel, Jacob falls in love and wants to marry her. He agrees to work seven years to pay a dowry for Rachel. At the end of the seven years, he asks for Rachel's hand in marriage.



At the celebration Laban tricks Jacob by giving him Leah as his wife instead of Rachel. So, Laban requites Jacob to work another seven years to have Rachel as his wife.

We need to remember how we treat others may come back to haunt us.

Think of a time when you have felt cheated in your life. How did you respond? How would God have you respond to the person who cheated you? Think of a time when you have acted unjustly toward someone. What can you do to make things right with that person?

Jan. 28, 2018

Genesis 46-47

New journeys

Can you remember that time in your life when you went off to college, started a new job, got married, etc.? These are all times of new journeys. When we take these new journeys, we tend to fear what lies ahead.

God called Jacob to leave the comfortable life that he had and take his family to a new place called Egypt. God assured Jacob that he would be protected and taken care of. God even promised him that his family would be made into a great nation.

We must remember that God has a purpose for us as believers. When we fear what God has called us to do in life, we are simply saying that our trust is not in God. We have to remember that God will always be with us "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

That's a promise for us as well.



The Living Word devotions will coincide with the 2018 Bible Reading Challenge from Bishop Lewis. Find the January schedule on pg. 26. Find all 2018 reading at www.vaumc.org.



CLERGY & DIACONAL



DEATHS



The Rev. Nolan Ray Crowder, 74, of Lynchburg, died Nov. 5, 2017. He served as a pastor in the United Methodist Church

throughout Virginia for 33 years.

Richard Gerde, died in Minneapolis, Minn., on Nov. 21, 2017. Gerde was the father of **the Rev. Tim Gerde**, retired. Gerde was active all his life in The United Methodist Church. In North Dakota, he served many years as a district lay leader. Later, after retirement, he and his wife Florine moved back to Minneapolis and Gerde served as an usher for the Minnesota Twins and sang in the choir at the Normandale Hylands UMC in Bloomington, Minn.

Martha Elizabeth Hawkins Crumb, 91, wife of **the Rev. C. Warner Crumb**, a retired elder and former district superintendent in the Virginia Conference, died Nov. 18, 2017.

In 1947, Martha married the Rev. Charles Warner Crumb and spent the rest of her life as a worthy and devoted helpmate in her husband's United Methodist ministry, sharing her skills and her loving spirit with her children and grandchildren. Martha was an avid reader, a wonderful cook and a devoted mother to her two daughters, to whom she wished to be referred to as "The Landlord." The Landlord laid

down the law and expected compliance. She was rarely disappointed.

Loving survivors include: her devoted husband of 70 years; her daughters, Elizabeth Snead (Bob) and Nell Bodine; grandchildren Martha Facenda (Dave), Elizabeth Bowdel (Jamey), David Bodine (Kristen) and Michael Bodine.

Delores Kay Taylor, 77, of Suffolk, died Nov. 11, 2017. She was predeceased by her husband, **the Rev. William Cecil Taylor**. Taylor was a member of Strasburg UMC in Strasburg.

She is survived by her daughters, Karen Shaw (Dean) and Amy Selby (Hunter); grandchildren, Nicholas Selby, Dana Shaw; and great grandchild, Aubrey Margaret Beery.

Jean Weaver Stevens Stockton, wife of retired **Bishop Thomas Stockton**, died Nov. 11, 2017. The Stocktons were married for over 64 years. She taught in the Physical Education Department at Duke University for two years, and later at Mars Hill College and Queens University. After her husband graduated from Duke, they studied in Cambridge, England, for nine months. They returned to the United States, where Jean served with her husband in pastorates in Paw Creek (Thrift United Methodist Church), Reidsville (First), Charlotte (Dilworth), Asheville (Central), Charlotte again (Myers Park), and High Point (Wesley Memorial). She continued to serve in Virginia where Tom served as bishop. They retired to the city of High Point, and then moved to Arbor Acres in Winston-Salem five years ago. A constant through all those years was her love for the mountains and Lake Junaluska.

Stockton was a multi-talented

person. As a pioneer in liturgical dance, she inspired worship services and taught others. She was a great student of the Bible and was widely loved as a teacher of the Scriptures. She studied counseling and was a confidante and supportive friend to many. With boundless creativity, she painted, sculpted and knitted. Among the many hobbies at which she was competitive were golf, tennis, bridge, croquet, pool and board games. Her disciplined devotional life was deeply meaningful for her, and influential in the lives of others.

She was proud and full of joy to have brought three children into the world: Lisa, Tommy and Shannon. Later she faithfully embraced the role of mother-in-law to James Howell, Margie Stockton, and Shannon Miller. She loved the arrival of nine grandchildren: Sarah Howell-Miller, Grace Howell, and Noah Howell; Megan Stockton, Liz Stockton, and Katy Stockton; and Regan Miller, Taylor Miller and Sydney Miller.

Katherine Cox Lee, 84, of Prince George, died Nov. 8, 2017. She was preceded in death by her parents, Cornice Cornell Cox and Geneva Louise Westbrook Cox; her loving husband of 45 years, **the Rev. Julius Haywood Lee**; and her brother, Zeke Cox. She was a devoted wife, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother.

Lee was a member of Matoaca United Methodist Church where she taught Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, served Communion, visited shut-ins from her church, led Bible studies, played the organ and piano and sang in the choir.

She loved everyone and was an example of a true Christian and witnessed her faith to anyone she met. She is survived by her daughter, Mar-

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.

tha Lee King (Keith); granddaughter, Cynthia Rebekah King; brothers, Cornell Cox (Jane), Jerry Cox (Nikki) and Gene Cox (Mary Kay); sister-in-law, Carolyn Cox; dear friend, Virginia Littell; and numerous nieces, nephews, and other extended family and friends.

Betty Louise Watts, 94, died Oct. 28, 2017. She was born in Portsmouth, the daughter of the late Edward P. Watts, Sr. and Louise Wilson Watts.

A diaconal minister in the Virginia and Holston Conferences, Watts worked for many years as a Director of Christian Education for various United Methodist churches in Hampton, Richmond, Winchester, and, most recently, in Williamsburg. She served as the conference director of youth work from 1951-1957. She was a member of Williamsburg United Methodist Church.

She is survived by nephews, Stephen E. Watts (Margaret) and Edward Clayton Watts; niece, the Rev. Peggy Watts Jefferies (the Rev. Bruce Jefferies); and numerous great-nieces and great-nephews.

Besides her parents, she was predeceased by a brother, George Wilson Watts and his wife Jean; sister-in-law, Virginia Matthews Watts; and niece, Nancy Watts.

Miriam Snow, grandmother of the **Rev. Jason Snow** died on Oct. 31, 2017, in Florida. The Rev. Snow is the senior pastor at Burke United Methodist in Burke, Va.

Myra Lou (Creswell) Nine, 80, of

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FROM THE BISHOP



2018 Bible Challenge

Dear Virginia Annual Conference,

Last year I kicked off the Bible Challenge to participate in daily readings from Genesis to Revelation. I want to express my appreciation those of you who stuck to the daily readings. Several of you in the conference shared your testimonies from this experience:

"I've been in the Church for 30 years and have never read the Bible cover to cover."

"My husband and I are diligently reading together every morning."

"I'm glad you've challenged us to read this year."

"What are we going to do next year?"

As we come to the end of our 2017 Bible Challenge, I pray you have found this journey through the Bible uplifting and enriching. Bible study is very essential to building our faith. Through God's Word, we gain an understanding that God is the one who gives the gift of knowledge for us to live productive lives as believers. I would like to invite you again this year to read the Bible **chronologically** (in the order of events). The readings will be posted on the conference website and in the monthly *Advocate*. If you were not successful in completing the challenge let me encourage you to try again this year.

Tips on reading the Bible daily:

- ❖ Start reading the Bible today.
- ❖ Set aside a specific time and place each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it. Mornings are great; but feel free to use any time that works consistently with your schedule.
- ❖ Get a good study Bible to help to illuminate the meaning of the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek text.
- ❖ Choose a translation to use during your reading.
- ❖ Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding.
- ❖ Dive in and enjoy the richness of God's Word!
- ❖ Apply God's Word to your life.

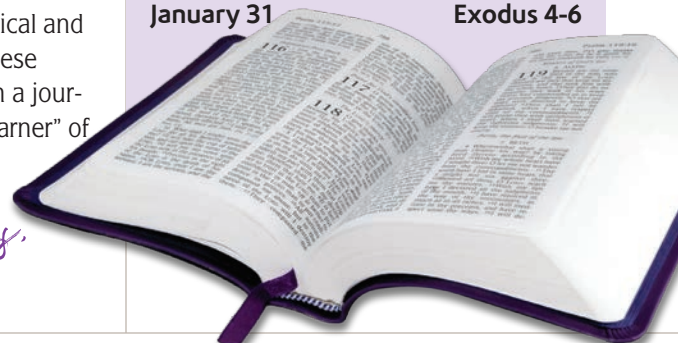
Bible study should be practical and applicable. I assure you that these seven steps will help you begin a journey in becoming a "life-long learner" of God's Word. 📖

Peace and Blessings.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for January

January 1	Genesis 1-3
January 2	Genesis 4-7
January 3	Genesis 8-11
January 4	Job 1-5
January 5	Job 6-9
January 6	Job 10-13
January 7	Job 14-16
January 8	Job 17-20
January 9	Job 21-23
January 10	Job 24-28
January 11	Job 29-31
January 12	Job 32-34
January 13	Job 35-37
January 14	Job 38-39
January 15	Job 40-42
January 16	Genesis 12-15
January 17	Genesis 16-18
January 18	Genesis 19-21
January 19	Genesis 22-24
January 20	Genesis 25-26
January 21	Genesis 27-29
January 22	Genesis 30-31
January 23	Genesis 32-34
January 24	Genesis 35-37
January 25	Genesis 38-40
January 26	Genesis 41-42
January 27	Genesis 43-45
January 28	Genesis 46-47
January 29	Genesis 48-50
January 30	Exodus 1-3
January 31	Exodus 4-6



ONE LAST WORD

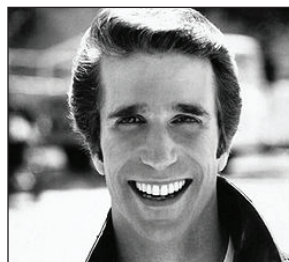
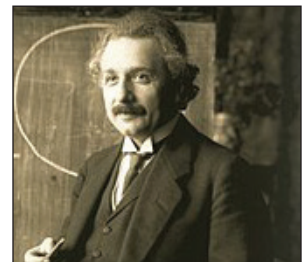
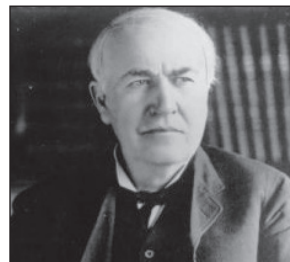
Famous people with disabilities

There are many famous people you may know who had or have disabilities. From the Bible, Moses had a speech impediment of some sort; Paul had a “thorn in the flesh.”

Itzhak Perlman, a world renowned violinist, was paralyzed from the waist down. Helen Keller was blind and deaf. Ludwig von Beethoven was deaf. Franklin D. Roosevelt had polio and was in a wheelchair. Stevie Wonder is blind. Thomas Edison didn't read until he was 12. Albert Einstein had memory issues and struggled with math. George Washington could barely write and had poor grammar skills.

Tiger Woods stuttered in his childhood. Agatha Christie, Cher, Tom Cruise, Henry Winkler, Walt Disney, and Woodrow Wilson are or were dyslexic. Robin Williams had ADHD. Dan Aykroyd and Daryl Hannah have Asperberger's syndrome. Chris Burke, an actor with Down Syndrome, portrayed a young man with Down Syndrome in the TV show “Life Goes On.”

There are others and probably many undiagnosed or who choose not to publicize their challenges. God created us all and calls us to love, accept, and welcome ALL of our neighbors. 🌈



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