

The Virginia  
United  
Methodist

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March 2017

# Advocate

*Back to basics*

Revisiting our social and spiritual roots



Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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

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# PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow  
Editor

## The Stranger

**I think in the months to come there will be a lot of soul searching and identity crises with the election of President Trump,**

as his election has been both lauded and denounced by equally vocal sides of our nation and even now as he moves ahead on promises made in his campaign.

This election has highlighted divides against Trump supporters, liberals, immigrants...and the list goes on and on.

The news coverage and our current society has made me think often of this Bible passage:

*"For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."*

*"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'"*

*"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"*

MATTHEW 25:42-45

What Jesus called us to and still calls us to is radical love (see above). Nothing about his ministry was safe — remember his death, think about the ministry of Peter and of Paul. Our faith is covered with the bodies of martyrs — of blood given in God's name — scenes of fire and blood and death.

Maybe we as Christians need a reminder in radical love. As 21<sup>st</sup> century people of faith, are we willing to sacrifice and enter the life of the stranger?

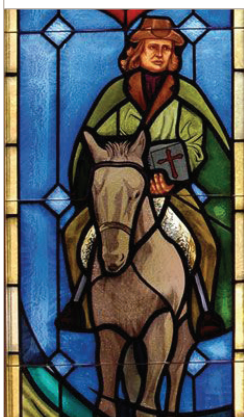
But no, God couldn't be calling us to that kind of faith. Why would he call us into the fear, uncertainty and uncomfortableness of a radical faith? Best to leave that to the prophets, to the Peters and Pauls.

Radical love is not easy. In Paul's case, it didn't always offer the best accommodations (see; jail cells). But in this world, in this political climate, it is time to be church. It's time to welcome the stranger.

I would caution us from becoming Christians who close themselves off. After all, what purpose is a Christian who has boundaries? What good is a heart for God that is only willing to be faithful so long as the journey is easy, safe and clear?

The world is looking at those of faith and finding us wanting. Believe me, that makes me take pause when a secular world is wondering about our morality — and that should make us all take pause.

I implore Christians to a radical direction that will lead you past your politics. No matter who you are or your political affiliation, there is a stranger to be welcomed. That stranger, as Jesus says in Matthew 25, is also him. Will you open the door? ☞



*Madeline C. Pillow*

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Cover: A statue of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, stands in the center of campus at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS

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## Controversy about sexuality is not new

By Rob Vaughn

Our *Book of Discipline* is one of the many blessings John Wesley and early Methodist minds created for how we would work together to make disciples of Jesus Christ. At the beginning of the *Book of Discipline* are our Social Principles, added in 1972, building upon Methodism's 1908 Social Creed. The Social Principles express our concern for personal and social transformation as well as our convictions about who we are as Christ-followers in the Methodist tradition.

The Social Principles are revised every four years through the participatory practice of General Conference. Like other legislative processes, it's messy. But it is also an expression of what it means to follow Jesus in the day-to-day issues of life.

Since the 1972 Baltimore General Conference, which added the phrase "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" to the section on human sexuality, each General Conference since has considered legislation about how that phrase has impacted our common witness and ministry. In 1984,

that phrase worked itself into the rest of our *Book of Discipline* to prohibit the ordaining and appointment of clergy who identified as gay.

In addition to the paragraph on "homosexuality" in our Social Principle statement on "human sexuality," there are other topics about sexuality such as: family, marriage and divorce, single persons, gender equality, family violence and sexual abuse, sexual harassment and much more.

As a denomination, we would not have so much trouble with questions about sexual minorities had we paid attention to building a solid foundation developing an appreciation of God's good gift of sexuality. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks noted that much of our public conversations recently are over-politicized and under-moralized. That could be said of our conversations before and after our General Conferences.

Our Social Principles help counter Brooks' observation. For example, learning to frame our conversation around the notion of holiness would go a long way to establishing a strong, moral foundation to talk about many of the "sexual" issues found in the Social Principles. Such a strong foundation would also help us realize that the

central issues of sexuality and faith are about the choices we have, not the choices we don't have.

Controversy about sexuality is not new. For example, Methodists have always been concerned with marriage — sometimes the issue is marrying an unbeliever or remarriage after divorce. Today, the dominate question is how do we embrace same-gender marriage?

But that's not necessarily the dominant question elsewhere. In the German Central Conference's social principles about marriage, there's different language. For example, the language of "the marriage bond" reads "a binding partnership." Such a change seeks to keep the historic essence of teaching about marriage while broadening its reach to a younger generation. In the Africa Central Conference, Methodist social teaching on marriage addresses issues unfamiliar to the United States and European church — like the dowry and polygamy — in order to be appropriate to that culture.<sup>1</sup>

In a blog by Charlotte's The Rev. James Howell last July, he captured our need for engaging in a deeper conversation about sexuality saying:

*Until we can recover robust ways to talk about and engage in a*



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# COMMENTARY

*holy sexuality, which is more than and different from which gender gets to have sex with which gender, we should perhaps be quiet, and relearn how to be Christian on matters of sex.*<sup>2</sup>

Although there are times I'm embarrassed by some of our Social Principles, I'm very grateful for them. They occasionally produce words of grace, such as affirming a person who's been divorced and wondering if they can still be a part of the church. The Social Principles help me to remember that everything in life should be looked at through the lens of Christian faith. I know all too well that our *Book of Discipline* and the Social Principles are not divinely inspired documents! They are the product of sincere, ordinary folks who seek to discern how to be faithful United Methodist Christ-followers in this world. It is a political process, but that's how we've chosen to be organized. The rub comes with living with one another in the midst of dissent and difference.

The church has asked the Bishop's Commission on a Way Forward to review all our social principles on human sexuality but the real underlying intention is the question, "How can we stay together in our common witness to the world

for Christ while still honoring the diversity of sincere differences we hold?" How we do that will be a powerful witness to the world.

*—The Rev. Rob Vaughn is pastor at Community of Faith in the Arlington District. He was a delegate to the 2016 General Conference.*

*'For a more extensive discussion of marriage in our denominational history as well as a treatment of how our Social Principles developed, see Darryl W. Stephens, Methodist Morals: Social Principles in the Church's Public Witness, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016.*

<sup>2</sup> July 21, 2016

## Can denomination go back as a way forward?

By Drew VanDyke Colby

**I**t all started one Sunday in 1787. On that day, Richard Allen, a Methodist preacher licensed to preach at the 1784 Christmas Conference, was forced by a church trustee to leave a "whites only" section of a sanctuary. Try not to read this as a commentary on the character of church trustees. Instead, read it as a sin, and a great loss, in the family history of the Methodist Church.

Just a few years after the American Revolution, Allen and other African-Americans formed a new fellowship; but when some of them wanted to join other denominations, Allen insisted they remain Methodist, saying, "there

was no religious sect or denomination [that] would suit the capacity of the colored people as well as the Methodist; for the plain and simple gospel suits best for any people." And so, after some legal battles, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church was formed.

Looking back, it is clear that Allen and the congregations that followed (AME, CME, etc.) maintained the holiness of the church by splitting, in faith. If we could go back and do this over, I believe United Methodists like me would have been right to follow him out. If measured in average worship attendance and budget, The United Methodist Church has been more successful in the intervening years. If measured in righteousness, we would not fare as well.

More recently, in the wake of the 2015 mass shooting in a historic Charleston, SC, AME church, our St. Stephen's congregation wanted to do something to honor this church. They were not only victims of a massacre, and not only other Christians; they were fellow Methodists. They were family — estranged family — but family nonetheless.

We decided, for one Sunday, to use the AME communion liturgy for our own communion. It would

(Con't. on next page: "FORWARD")

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# COMMENTARY



("FORWARD," cont. from page 5.)

be a way of learning from them, and of honoring the communion we believe we have in Christ. It was a holy experience for me.

In fact, as we prepared, I noticed how much more Anglican that liturgy actually is. So, I dug deeper into AME liturgies and their *Book of Discipline*. In some cases I found that this tradition has stayed better in touch with the tradition of Wesleyan Methodism than The United Methodist Church has. And, being an anglophilic liturgical snob, in many ways I liked their stuff better than ours! And so, I grieve at the effects of estrangement over time. I wish we could have kept in touch. I wish we could have stayed together.

Since that day, I have pondered a sort of thought experiment. As the UMC considers and (mostly) tries to avoid a schism, what is to happen if a schism occurs? What if it is determined to be unavoidable — or even the will of God? Personally, I hope against hope that God will make a way forward where there seems to be no way. Nonetheless, I do wonder where everyone will go. Will one "side" get the "spoils" of trademarks, logos, pensions, hymnals and the *Book of Discipline*? Who will get "custody" of these things? And what if it is not my side that "wins,"

whatever that means? Where will I go?

Ponder this with me: if I found myself ecclesio-logically homeless or orphaned, from The United Methodist Church, do you think the AME church would take me (back) in? Would the church that my church put out take me back? Even after we did her wrong? Is reconciliation after a split possible? Or, more broadly, is reconciliation instead of a split possible?

The answer may be no. For a number of reasons, it would probably be too awkward or difficult for some sort of pan-Methodist union to be born. And, let's be honest, it would probably be even more awkward for me to become an African Methodist Episcopal pastor (I'm white, by the way). Our estrangement means we have grown terribly unfamiliar with one another, and we'd make strange bedfellows.

But, what if the answer was yes? What if what came out of this whole project was a re-united United Methodist Church? Imagine that. What if instead of schism, our minds were instead set on reconciliation?

Whatever the outcome of the ongoing Bishops' Commission, I pray that the commission itself, and its aftermath, can be an opportunity to practice humility, repentance and openness to the reconciliation revealed

in the cross of Jesus Christ. May we be open to confession, forgiveness and reconciliation in order to experience the Easter life. I can't help but think that my 18<sup>th</sup> century ancestors would encourage all of us to consider the negative effects of estrangement over time. To avoid these effects would be prudent. To heal them would be a miracle.

*The Church's One Foundation* (verse 4):

'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace forevermore;  
Till, with the vision glorious,  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious  
Shall be the Church at rest. ❧

—The Rev. Drew VanDyke Colby  
is an associate pastor for  
Youth and Outreach at  
St. Stephen's UMC in Fairfax.



## Rediscovering movement roots

By Minoka Gunsekera

I have been on a great adventure the last three years as a student at Duke Divinity School. I have loved learning about John Wesley, the founder of the United Methodist movement, and the start of what we now call The United Methodist Church. I look to his work when I think about the direction our denomination should take. I believe that John Wesley was relentlessly innovative in his leadership. He spent time experiencing and building relationships with those not normally seen as “church goers.” Wesley was not guided by loyalty to one tradition, nor was he unwilling to revise his reading of Scripture when new experiences or knowledge came his way. His driving impulse was not to follow what came before for its own sake, but to showcase the love and grace of God to all people. His movement was grounded in the need of fresh expression of how church was done.

In my eyes, these roots of love and openness to new understandings are connected to the upcoming called conference. Following General Conference and in preparation of the soon-to-be called conference, it is time for the church to hear the experiences of our

peoples and to work to be more like the movement that we were founded as. I think the called conference is a step in returning The United Methodist Church toward its ground-breaking, innovative roots.

**Our denomination started not as the steepled building in the community, but as a movement of people devoted to a new way of being the church.**

Nowadays, creativity, innovation and imagination can often be lost when we speak about what church is. I love tradition just as much as the next, but I don’t think it always needs to be the only partner at the table. We, as a collective, need to prayerfully think about the ways in which church can tap back into its movement roots, finding new ways to bring the kingdom of God to Earth. To only think in the boxes that have already been thought through feels like it is slowly squeezing out any room for those who see church beyond its current reality, let alone the Spirit’s ability to bring newness.

I believe that John Wesley began his movement because he wanted not to reinvent the wheel, but to reinvent how the wheel was involved in society.

Our denomination started not as the steepled building in our communities, but as a movement of people devoted to a new way of being the church. This innovative spirit of the church that brought John Wesley to begin the Methodist Movement is what I believe is also behind the soon-to-be called conference. The innovative spirit is grounded in the love of God by its nature, and I have seen it in the people who live in the tension of what church is and what it could be.

I want to see the love that stems from The United Methodist Church to be innovative again. Our world

so desperately needs to be reminded that God’s love is innovative. I hope that in the days that lie ahead, we (both laity and clergy alike) are not only trying to transform the world in the ways we currently know, but that we open ourselves up to transformation: open to hearing from others, open to challenging our own understandings with new information and open to seeing a different view of spreading the Good News. This is what I think a movement is and what I think John Wesley was trying to build. 🍀

—Minoka Gunsekera is a student at Duke Divinity School. She was also a Calling 21 intern.

*“God is always present; EMS has shaped me to pay attention.”*

—Sarah Payne ’17, Pastor of Sherando UMC, Stuarts Draft, VA



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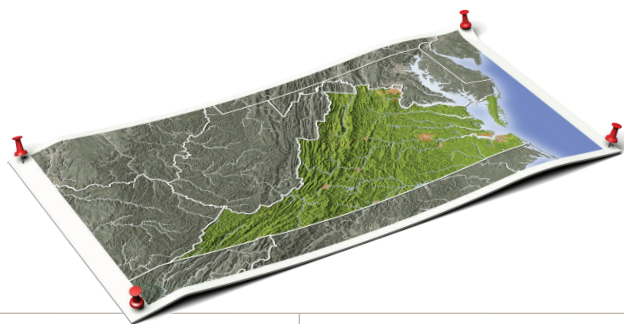
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# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



## Convocation calls pastors and churches to 'fresh vision'



By Madeline Pillow

The Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches celebrated its 10th anniversary in Atlanta, Ga., this year with the theme, "Called to Fresh Vision" based on Revelation 21:5.

Created 20 years ago, the event, hosted by the General Board of Discipleship, takes place every other year and is a resource for pastors of black

churches as well as those who support them, offering inspiration, information and encouragement. The three-day event from Jan. 10-12 offered vision in discipleship, pastoral vision as well as worship with almost 80 Virginia Conference participants in attendance out of a total 420. Bishop Sharma Lewis, resident bishop in the Virginia Conference, offered the sermon "Write the Vision" for the communion service on the second night, Jan. 11.

For those who attended from the Virginia Conference there has been a shared reaction to the event that can be labelled as energized excitement.

The Rev. Dr. Ted Smith, Fredericksburg District superintendent, was tasked by Bishop Lewis to coordinate the Virginia Conference's overall participation in the event, and he shared that this event had a transformative effect especially within the Cabinet. This

task was also shared by the Rev. Dr. Sherry Daniels, pastor of Norfolk UMC.

"This event was for many Cabinet members their first experience as a minority in a clergy gathering," said Smith.

It was also the large showing from the Virginia Conference that Smith also said electrified the rest of the denomination that was present.

"In the 20-year history of this event, no conference has ever had this volume of participants nor had the representation of the full Cabinet," said Smith.

For Daniels, she said the event was eye-opening for many in the delegation and for others—a liberation.

"It freed up pastors, all in some way or fashion, to meet people where they are and help them to embrace the Wesleyan way. All the while understanding that we can be different, unique and united in our quest," said Daniels.





# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

## Virginia Conference's Focus 20/20

At the Virginia Conference banquet on Wednesday night, attendees heard about resources available to them from Discipleship Ministries as well as the current status of Focus 20/20 in the Virginia Conference.

In 2015, Bishop Young Jin Cho created a taskforce on strengthening the black church. The goal of this taskforce according to Smith, who served as chair at the time, was to "provide our Virginia African-American churches and pastors with a means of becoming more vital in ministry." The taskforce includes representation from the Board of Laity, the extended and appointive Cabinet, the Virginia Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) as well as other clergy and laity.

As a result, Focus 20/20 coaching and vitality was created as an opportunity. The taskforce is now co-chaired by Daniels and the Rev. Gary Miller, pastor of St. John's UMC in the Eastern Shore District.

Focus 20/20 is an innovative process for African-American congregations to be the catalyst in the communities they serve. What this entails, Daniels said, is to have congregations that are willing to be coached.

"The goal is not to

create another program, but to walk alongside congregations that will grow stronger and more impactful where they serve as well as more relevant in their ministries," said Daniels. "This will and is becoming a movement."

## Diversity in the Virginia Conference

Bishop Lewis also shared at the banquet that only 54 churches in the Virginia Conference are African-American out of the approximately 1,169 churches.

Smith said that the Virginia Conference can embrace its diversity in many ways. In listing just a few things such as clergy recruitment to more diversity in clergy and laity on boards and agencies as well as pushing to be in relationship with more diverse people in communities, Smith related that this is just a very short list in the spectrum of needs and possibilities for the Virginia Conference is identifying and celebrating diversity. 🍷

*Continue to the Bishop's column on pg. 30 to read about her experience at the convocation.*

*—Madeline Pillow is editor of the Advocate.*

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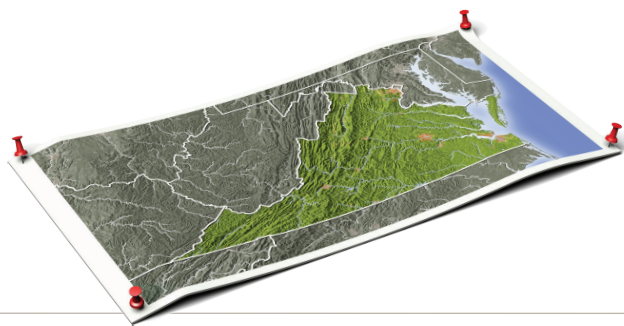
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# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



## UM Day Celebration honors past accomplishments, highlights continuing advocate work

By Barbara Lewis

*Micah 6: 8b "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

**T**he United Methodist Women and Church and Society, co-sponsors of United Methodist Day at the General Assembly, celebrated the hundreds of people who have gathered and continue to do so at Capitol Hill on Saturday, Jan. 14.

Keynote speaker Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches, shared that United Methodists should be advocates as Christians who are living

lives of discipleship and therefore cannot stand idly by and allow injustice to continue. He demonstrated this with the example of Moses.

Moses went to Pharaoh time and again to try to work for freedom for the Israelites. Winkler said that in the same way citizens need to talk with government leaders' year after year to work for changes for equality, protection and better conditions for those who are most in need of protection and help.

At this level of faithful advocacy, United Methodists have tackled issues like improving health care, changing unfair lending practices, work toward stopping human trafficking,

improving education and other issues along United Methodist Social Principles. Throughout the years, participating United Methodists have heard from the legislators how their presence and comments made a difference.

### Personal impact of a UMW-driven movement

As a young teen, I had the opportunity to meet leaders like Dolly Porter, Dorothy Ravenhurst, Pat Compton and too many others to name at United Methodist Women events around the conference. Some of these women were ones who joined with Leona Bailey and Elvira Shaw, among others, to try something new to teach others about compassion ministries and justice activities.

They knew as United Methodists we needed sometimes to take action, other times to be present at the right place to take a stand and sometimes we need to send a message. Their witness spoke loudly enough that more than 30 years later, I still remember their actions. 🌹

—The Rev. Barbara Lewis  
is pastor of the Greenwood-Laurel Park Charge in the Richmond District.

Participants in the celebration listen to keynote speaker, Jim Winkler.  
Photo by Barbara Lewis.





# The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

## Foundation office supports additional ministries in 2017

By Stephen Clark

The Virginia United Methodist Foundation offers several different types of grants to ministries across the conference with the missional focus of helping the least of them, mentioned in Matthew 25:40, in mind. The Foundation seeks opportunities for outreach and expanded ministry in United Methodist churches through grants initiative. This year the Foundation is providing more than \$25,000 in grants to 17 different groups. Their missions are unique, but their calling is the same: "Be the hands and feet of Christ in our needy world." This is substantially more than the \$11,000 distributed last year, or the \$3,500 granted in 2014.

Grants are made possible as the Foundation board allocates funds from its operations as well as from a bequest from Dr. and Mrs. William Hanna and a unique gift of real estate to create the Micah 6:8 Endowment.

One of the Foundation's 2017 grants is awarded to Mt. Olivet UMC in the Arlington District, which works with La Cocina to provide job training for

individuals related to the food service industry. The mission of La Cocina VA is to use the power of food as an agent of social and economic change to generate workforce and economic development in the D.C. metro area. Their goal is to train, certify and place unemployed low-income immigrant women and men in meaningful jobs while improving their English skills, and building a stronger community that supports this population in becoming self-sufficient and financial independent.


La Cocina provides a 17-week culinary-arts job training which includes: vocational English instruction, life skills development, job readiness training, paid internship, job placement assistance, wrap around services and highly valued culinary and food safety certifications from Northern Virginia Community College and the National Restaurant Association. The program generates new job opportunities and creates careers for low-income immigrants, transforming unemployment into full employment in a very short period of time.

One of their participants is Sandra, an unemployed,



single mother of three children who survived many years of domestic abuse. Sandra was trying to find a way out for her and her family. In February of 2015, she was accepted as a student of La Cocina VA and thus began her transformational path. Since graduation, she is working in a full-time position with access to benefits. She has been promoted and recognized by her current employer with a supervisory position. She continues to learn English and now has a plan for the future. Recently, Sandra was invited to join La Cocina VA as one of its board members, which makes her immensely proud.

Extending grants to missional ministries across the conference is the Foundation's way of giving back and creating an impact in the name of Christ.

Additional grant information is available at <http://vaumfgifts.org> – grants and scholarships. 

*-Stephen Clark is president of the Virginia United Methodist Foundation.*

### The following were Foundation Grant Recipients for 2017:

Backpack Ministry Outreach:  
St. Luke's UMC, Danville District

Beyond Denial & In Search of Grace – Community Conversations about Race: Charlottesville District

Dignity Food Pantry: Discovery UMC, Richmond District

Emmanuel Youth Mission Educational Scholarships: Charlottesville District

GracInside – Inside Out: Richmond District

Hands Across the City: Warwick Memorial UMC, York River District

Heart Havens – In-Home Support Services: Virginia Conference

Henry Fork Service Center: Danville District

Just Neighbors: Arlington/Alexandria District

La Cocina Bilingual Culinary Training: Mount Olivet UMC, Arlington District

Musikgarten: Asbury UMC, Harrisonburg District

Park Place Empowerment Center: Park Place UMC, Elizabeth River District

UM Community Summer Literacy Outreach of Roanoke: Roanoke District

Una Familia: Eastern Shore District

VA Focus 2020 – Coaching Black Church Leaders: Virginia Conference Initiative

Website Grant: Foundation –Funding to create a church website template for churches that do not have a website.

# DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ The 7th-9th grade Sunday school class of **St. Stephen's Church, Burke**, used their weekly offerings since September to adopt a family for Christmas. They purchased children's gifts at Target and wrapped the gifts during Sunday school.



▲ **The Mint Spring UMC** women from Mint Spring, Va., show their support for intercepting human trafficking.

Square Dance Caller Gene Chamberlain and dancers from the Colonial Squares presented an afternoon of fun for UMFS residential students Jan. 15. This annual event, presented by the **UMFS Auxiliary**, seeks to introduce the residential teens to the only uniquely American form of dance. In addition to squaring off to "do si do and allemande left," the teens had the opportunity for popular line dances. The Auxiliary prepared a bountiful variety of sweet and savory snacks and beverages. In addition to quarterly birthday celebrations, the Auxiliary presents a formal English Tea for the residential students the first Sunday afternoon in June. The Women's



▲ Auxiliary meets monthly the third Thursday morning and is led by President Dee Clements. Trinity members Ruth Forrest and Janie Branum were among Trinity's long-time, faithful Auxiliary representatives.

▼ In 2016, **Greene Memorial UMC, Roanoke District**, participated in the Festival of Trees at the Hotel Roanoke as an evangelistic endeavor. The Festival of Trees is an annual fundraiser for various nonprofits in the Roanoke Valley. This year all the money was donated to The United Way. People voted for their favorite tree by making a monetary donation.

The design group took the theme suggested by Pastor Gary Heaton —

"Gifts Given, Gifts Received" — and developed a tree that thousands of people viewed during the holiday season. The tree turned into a simple reminder of the true meaning of the season which is the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The feature was the Magi who presented the gifts to the Christ child. Each present under the tree had a simple gift tag which represented a gift from Jesus Christ. Joy, Love, Compassion, Hope, Integrity and Gratitude were among them. We also distributed 750 take-home coloring sheets of the Magi which included the church QR code and contact information. When the judge's votes were tallied, the Magi tree won first place and People's Choice Award. 🎁







# EQUIPPING FOR MINISTRY

## Ideas to 'think outside the box'

**N**eed some ideas to help you think more creatively? The following tips can help you think while also maintaining a clear and productive focus.

### Mind mapping

If you need to come up with new ideas for a frequent task, such as sermon writing, or address a difficult problem, mind mapping can be ideal.

Use a whiteboard, or large sheet of paper to draw the mind map; it will mimic a tree. The central idea will be the trunk and the branches are related ideas and concepts.

Mind mapping allows you to follow the pattern of a system that has a core with many connected and connecting pathways (heart/circulatory system, river/tributaries, stem/petals). Mind mapping creates a visual representation of related concepts so participants can connect the dots—even when they did not realize there were dots to connect.

### Decision trees

These “trees” can be used especially if you need to make a decision as it displays the probable consequences of different actions.

For example, a member gives a donation to your church, specifying that it can be used for capital improvements. The amount given could cover the costs of one of two possible projects in your long-term plan: resurfacing the parking lot or upgrading the roof.

On a large surface such as a board or sheet, write the words “parking lot” and “roof upgrades” with space in between.

Offshoot each term with the result

of each decision. If the result requires an additional decision, draw a square connecting the result to the choice. If the result is uncertain, draw a circle. Keep going; then review and challenge each uncertainty to make sure it is not really a decision. Your finished tree might have this pattern:

Parking lot—potholes gone—safer for all who attend—less chance of someone falling and being injured.

Roof upgrades—older parts of roof replaced with new shingles and flashing—prevent future leaks and costs of repairs.

### Similes

This is a good technique for coming up with a catch phrase, a campaign theme or an event name.


Write the following on a whiteboard or chalkboard:

\_\_\_\_\_ is/was/are/were  
like \_\_\_\_\_.

In the first blank, write the concept you are addressing; then list as many similes (comparisons) as possible in the second blank. Maybe your church is starting a coffee house on Saturday evenings aimed at young adults. You want to come up with a name for the coffee house. So you try:

Coffee houses are like clubs, cafes, hangouts, art museums, meeting places, salons.

The word “salon” intrigues the group, and you decide to name the weekly event “Saturday Salon.”

If you use these and other brainstorming techniques regularly, you will be surprised at the ease of thinking creatively. The more you use it, the more effective you become with this skill. 

—United Methodist Communications





# Back to basics

“Taking an active stance in society is nothing new for followers of John Wesley. He set the example for us to combine personal and social piety. Ever since predecessor churches to United Methodism flourished in the United States, we have been known as a denomination involved with people's lives, with political and social struggles, having local to international mission implications. Such involvement is an expression of the personal change we experience in our baptism and conversion.

The United Methodist Church believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. We cannot just be observers. So we care enough about people's lives to risk interpreting God's love, to take a stand, to call each of us into a response, no matter how controversial or complex. The church helps us think and act out a faith perspective, not just responding to all the other 'mind-makers-up' that exist in our society.”

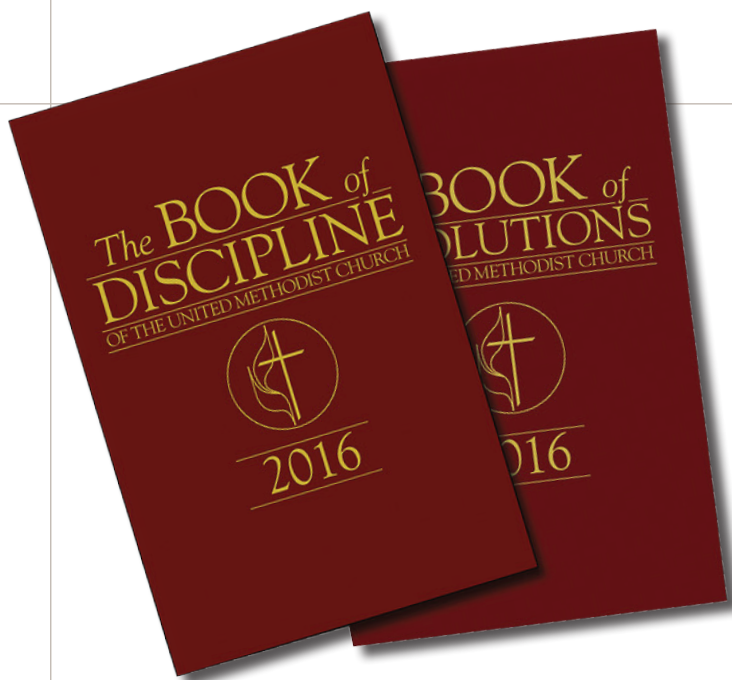
Excerpt from *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2012*.  
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# Revisiting our social and spiritual roots



Following General Conference 2016 and in the expectation of a called conference in 2019, United Methodists have entered into a new quadrennium with many questions surrounding where the denomination is headed and to what beliefs especially in regards to human sexuality will be agreed upon. So it is a time when United Methodists can reacquaint themselves with our history as well as allowing for new members or confirmands to explore basic questions from the mission of the church to how they can use the *Book of Discipline*.



## The Discipline and You

By Susan Garrett

A few weeks ago, I ordered my new *Discipline*. Officially, of course, the title is *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*. The full title is important, because what we casually call “the *Discipline*” is actually a different book every four years. Its changes reflect the will — and hopefully the best thinking and most faithful conferencing — of the people of The United Methodist Church, speaking through their elected representatives.

Some parts of the *Book of Discipline* can be changed only with difficulty: for example, The Constitution, which can only be amended by the General Conference voting to do so by a two-thirds majority, and depending on which part of the Constitution the change affects, by either a two-thirds, or three-fourths majority (for Restrictive Rules 1 and 2), of all the members voting at all the annual conferences held following the General Conference. But the usual way to change most parts of the *Discipline* is a simple majority of the General Conference.

In 1939, Bishop Roy Short called the *Book of Discipline* “a record of the successive stages of spiritual insight attained by Methodists under the grace of Christ.” The present Council of Bishops is more measured and pragmatic in its description. In its introduction to the *2016 Book of Discipline*, the bishops call it “the instrument for setting forth

the laws, plan, polity, and process by which United Methodists govern themselves. . . It is the most current statement of how United Methodists agree to live their lives together and ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”

I think one of the best short characterizations I have heard is Thomas Frank’s description of the *Book of Discipline* as “an exercise in practical theology.” Because the *Discipline* is VERY practical: it often deals with very mundane things, from how you go about a building program in the local church to what steps a clergy person must take to retire to how a church can become part of a different annual conference. But it is also theologically based, striving to be always a “word about God,” in that everything it includes deals with how the people who worship the triune God under the name United Methodist can most faithfully order their lives.

The *Book of Discipline* begins with greetings from the Council of Bishops, a listing of all bishops elected in The United Methodist Church by year, and a brief but inclusive history of The United Methodist Church. From then on the *Book of Discipline* is divided by paragraphs. Paragraphs 1-99 are reserved for The Constitution, and paragraphs 101-199 for information on United Methodist Doctrinal Statements and General Rules, a description of The Ministry of All Christians and The Social Principles.

Then we move on to the practical matters affecting the local and wider church. The paragraph numbers reserved from 201-299 cover how the local church is organized; paragraphs 301 to 399 concern clergy and their duties; paragraphs 401-499 deal with bishops and district superintendents; paragraph 501-699 speak to the organization, structure and relationships of General, Jurisdictional, Central, Annual and District Conferences; paragraphs 2501-2599, entitled “Church Property,” encompass exactly that—all matters relating to church-owned property and the duties of the trustees of that property.

Paragraphs 701-2499, entitled “Administrative Order,” cover all the General Agencies of The United Methodist Church, and paragraphs 2601-2799 contain information on “Judicial Administration,” including the Judicial Council, judicial proceedings and judicial complaints.

We United Methodists have three kinds of material in our *Book of Discipline*: information, aspirational guidelines

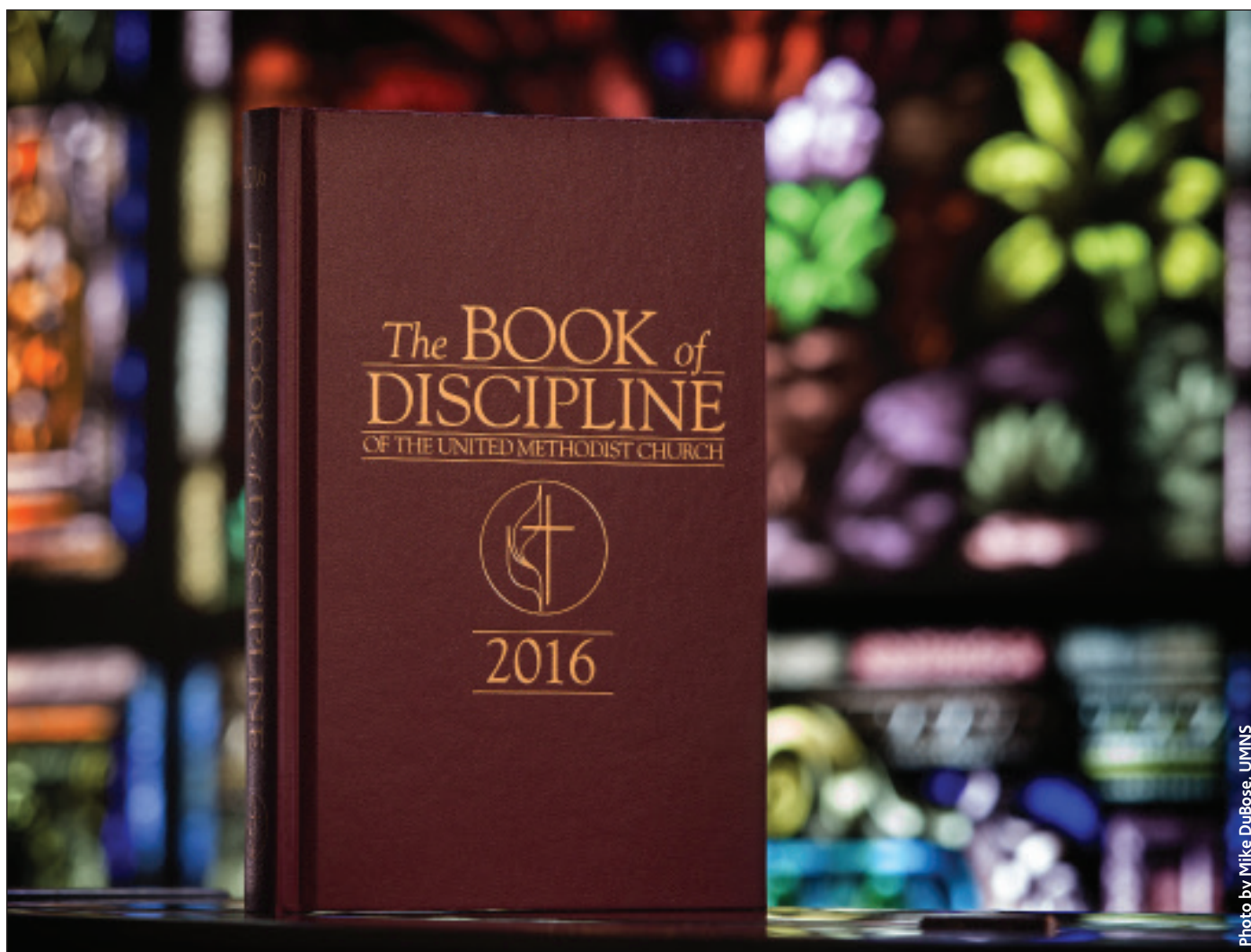


(the *Book of Discipline* specifically states that the Social Principles are “not to be considered church law”) and church law. Disagreements about human sexuality have been a part of our General Conferences since at least 1972, and the results of this conferencing have been inserted as church law into many parts of the *Book of Discipline*. The “Commission on The Way Forward” was authorized by the 2016 General Conference “to do a complete examination and possible revision of the *Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality and explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church.” Very rarely has the *Book of Discipline* been subject to this kind of meticulous analysis in overview form.

Whatever the called General Conference (now forecast to occur in 2019) decides, my hope is that it will reflect

the best thinking and most faithful conferencing possible — and that the new *Book of Discipline* to come from this called General Conference will indeed show “a record of the successive stages of spiritual insight attained by Methodists under the grace of Christ,” and that it will truly embrace “how United Methodists agree to live their lives together and ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”

—The Rev. Dr. Susan Schweitzer Garrett is the former Virginia Conference Director of Connectional Ministries and former Harrisonburg District superintendent.



# United Methodism requires clarified polity

By Daniel L. Garrett



The original glasses and Bible of the Rev. John Wesley and a replica of his chalice, a sampling of thousands of historic items housed at the General Commission on Archives and History at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Image courtesy of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UMNS

With the establishment of The Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference in 1784, Methodism in America moved from a connection of societies associated with the Anglican Church to a church in its own right with a separate structure for governance, oversight and mission. In that same year, Benjamin Franklin invented the bifocal lens.

Franklin's invention provides an apt analogy for what many have described as Methodism's continuing attempts

throughout its history to live with two basic focal points: church and missionary movement. Church types look for guidance in historical foundations of ecclesiology, doctrine and mission. Movement types look for missional definition and opportunity in each stage of its existence.

Tensions have arisen among Methodists whenever the two foci are defined as either/or rather than both/and. Our polity — system of governance, oversight and mission — is an ongoing story of our attempt to give faithful witness in each new age and context. Methodist bifocals (not a reference to the aging mainline in America) are needed for a clearer vision of the dilemmas and opportunities that we face as a denomination. Part of our present challenge is to clarify our polity, especially as we are threatened by various calls for division.

## Thomas Frank helps us think of polity in comprehensive ways:

Our practices of remembering and connecting, of gathering and gossiping, of singing and preaching and praying, are what constitutes us a church. No book or written text of any kind can capture what it means to be part of such a community of memory and hope. Least of all, one might think, could the *Book of Discipline* be anything but the hardest soil from which to grow an understanding of church.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the above, Frank also contends that the *Book of Discipline* is nevertheless essential to our understanding and practice of church. But it is precisely over provisions in our *Book of Discipline* regarding homosexuality that have created a present dilemma for The United Methodist Church. Where do we go from here? Frank reminds us that:

*Polity is a living process because the church is a living, continuous, yet ever-changing community. One generation's verities are the next generation's straitjacket. In each era the church has to work out the political arrangements that will structure the people of God for effective witness to the gospel. Likewise, the context within which polity is practiced is continually changing. Some elements of order may stay the same for generations because the church believes they are essential to its continuity. Other elements may change often to enable the church to adapt its witness and ministry to a society in flux.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice and The Mission of The United Methodist Church*, 2006 Edition. Abingdon Press, 2006. Pg. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 44



The United Methodist Church has become a world body with diverse contexts for ministry. Yet our polity has been defined essentially from the North American perspective with accommodations for other cultural contexts and expressions. But the time is fast approaching when the American United Methodist churches will be in the minority. Some have proposed that the solution to the cultural differences might best be addressed by a polity solution that would make the U.S. churches somewhat like our Central Conferences within the world-body. The argument here is that the various cultural contexts in our worldwide church need local expressions of governance and definition. In light of the fact that we have defined the annual conference as the basic unit of our connection, the regional differences even within national contexts could accommodate great diversity.

On the question of homosexuality, the understanding of Scripture comes into play, with diverse voices in the conversation, each committed to the authority of Scripture. No simple solutions seem possible. Shifts within American culture are profound. To some, the growing acceptance of homosexuality by our culture — particularly with regard to same-sex marriage — is simply evidence of cultural decline. To others, that acceptance is consistent with a scriptural call to inclusiveness, justice and equality. I find it interesting that other United States denominations have opted for the latter — namely, The Episcopal Church United States, The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Church of Christ. In each case, these ecclesial bodies are governed within the United States context. The Episcopal Church, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, has received sanctions from their own world-body on their decisions regarding homosexuality, but they remain free as a national church to make their own decisions. Perhaps it is time for The United Methodist Church to define itself in a similar worldwide communion of Methodists, with a more conciliar model of governance and connection for the total body. Even here the annual conference as the basic unit would allow for great diversity even within newly established national or regional conferences. This first step is a polity shift. But questions of basic doctrine and of biblical interpretation and authority remain.


From my own perspective, I appeal to our historical documents and the doctrinal essentials that we already have in place in The United Methodist Church as the source of our connection. I find valuable guidance in The Articles of Religions, the Historic Creeds and the Liturgies of our

church, as the essential statements of the faith we hold in common.

Some years ago, I attended the funeral of a clergy colleague whose theological perspective was quite different from mine. We had discussed, and at points argued our differences. I thought about our long-term collegial relationship as I participated in the Service of Death and Resurrection. Following the sermon and a witness to my colleague's life, the congregation stood and recited the Apostles' Creed. It was a powerful reminder of the faith we hold in common, a faith large enough to tolerate our different perspectives.

Given that common heritage, I find it entirely possible to allow for differences on particular issues, such as human sexuality. The Christian Church as a whole has never had a sustained discernment around questions of theological anthropology, at least to the same extent that it argued and tried to clarify its understanding of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. As for our understanding of the human person, modern science as a dialogue partner brings amazing new knowledge to the discussion.

Just decades ago, we could not have imagined the insights yielded by unlocking the human genome. Perhaps we are simply at the beginning of a profoundly new era of human understanding, whose insights will not be exhausted nor defined by United Methodist quadrennial statements.

When I put on my United Methodist "bifocals" I am reminded again that while Methodist polity has consistently held to connection, episcopacy and conferencing as abiding ecclesial marks, it has never been singularly focused as to whether it is church in the classic sense, or missional movement. Given our diversity, I rejoice in the shared ecclesial and doctrinal underpinnings of the people called Methodists, rooted in the Christian tradition. I find renewed energy in the prospects of faithful contemporary United Methodist witness to our own culture and to the world, grounded in the Tradition, but ever open to new opportunities and insights as the Spirit leads. Tom Frank calls such a people a "community of memory and hope." 

*—The Rev. Dr. Daniel L. Garrett is a retired elder in the Virginia Conference, having served six pastoral appointments and a concluding appointment teaching United Methodist Studies (worship, doctrine and polity) at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Virginia Union University School of Theology and Eastern Mennonite Seminary. He holds degrees from The University of Virginia, Yale Divinity School and Wesley Theological Seminary. He is married to the Rev. Dr. Susan S. Garrett.*



## Test your United Methodist History

1. The Wesley brothers had transforming religious experiences in May 1738 under the influence of what kind of missionaries?
2. Methodism in America began without authorization or support from England. True or false.
3. The first Methodist societies included active participation by people of European and what other descent?
4. The first conference of Methodist preachers in the colonies was held in Philadelphia in what year?
5. Did the American Revolution have a profound effect on Methodism?
6. The Methodist Episcopal Church formed in Dec. 1784, publishing its first *Discipline* in what year?
7. In 1789, the General Rules were officially adopted by American Methodism. A rule forbidding participation in slavery was included. At 1844 General Conference Bishop \_\_\_\_\_ was at the heart of a large debate as he had acquired slaves through marriage and either could not or would not free them; this led to his suspension from office. This caused a separation of annual conferences in slaveholding states to form The Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
8. In April 1939, what three churches were united into The Methodist Church?
9. In what year did The Methodist Church begin ordaining women and granting full clergy rights to women and electing them as members in full connection to an annual conference?
10. In 1980, who was the first woman elected to the church's episcopacy?
11. What is prevenient grace?
12. United Methodists respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious persons of faith. Wesley followed this approach, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, \_\_\_\_\_."
13. How many Articles of Religion are there?
14. What is the mission of the church?



Did any of these stump you? Pick up a copy of *The Book of Discipline* or visit [umc.org](http://umc.org) to see portions of it online.

*The answers:*

1. *Moravian missionaries*
2. *True; through the immigration of lay Methodists to America*
3. *African descent*
4. *1773*
5. *Yes; John Wesley shared writings against the revolutionary cause and remained loyal to the king. This did not benefit the image of Methodism among those who supported independence. Many Methodist preachers refused to bear arms to aid the patriots.*
6. *1785*
7. *Bishop James O. Andrew; one of only five bishops at the time*
8. *The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Protestant Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South*
9. *1956*
10. *Marjorie Matthews*
11. *Wesley understood grace as God's active presence in our lives. This presence is not dependent on human actions or human response. It is a gift — a gift that is always available, but that can be refused. Prevenient meaning "precede" refers to the grace of God preceding conversion.*
12. *Charity*
13. *There are 25 including the subject of free will, original sin and purgatory in paragraph 104 of The Book of Discipline.*
14. *The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. 🇺🇸*

## Sharing United Methodist history, beliefs

In 2015, Discipleship Ministries started a project where churches could "host" the two Wesley brothers, allowing children to learn more about the Methodist founders.

The project required laminated paper doll forms of the famous brothers; these Flat Wesleys made their way around the United States to over 700 congregations.

Melanie C. Gordon of Discipleship Ministries said the project was a special one showing the children that others had a their faith around the world.

"That is pretty special, I think, for children to know that around the world people believe in the same way that they believe," Gordon said. "What we want children to understand is that, in their Methodist heritage, there were these young men who saw that the church was not doing what the church needed to do. So we decided to connect it to covenant discipleship and help children to see that young people can lead the church."

To learn more about the project, view the video at <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/church-hosts-traveling-wesleys>.

How can you creatively be sharing UMC with the children in your church or your congregation? 🇺🇸




# Timeline of The United Methodist Church



Wellcome Library, London. Wellcome Images [images@wellcome.ac.uk](mailto:images@wellcome.ac.uk) <http://wellcome-images.org> John Wesley preaching to native American Indians. Engraving.  
Timeline source: <http://www.gcch.org/history/united-methodist-church-timeline>

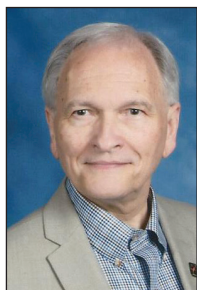
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|---|---|
| <p><b>1703</b> John Wesley is born.</p> <p><b>1707</b> Charles Wesley is born.</p> <p><b>1729</b> Charles Wesley forms the "Holy Club" at Oxford.</p> <p><b>1735</b> John Wesley serves as chaplain to Georgia Colony.</p> <p><b>1738</b> John and Charles Wesleys' conversion in London.</p> <p><b>1739</b> Formation of Methodist Societies in and around London.</p> <p><b>1744</b> John Wesley's first conference of preachers.</p> <p><b>1758</b> John Wesley baptizes two African-American slaves which breaks the color barrier for Methodist societies.</p> <p><b>1760</b> Methodist colonists arrive in America.</p> <p><b>1766</b> Barbara Heck helps to establish a Methodist congregation in New York City which is a forerunner to the John Street Church. United Ministers, a non-sectarian group, developed. This group was a forerunner of the United Brethren Church.</p> <p><b>1771</b> Francis Asbury arrives in America.</p> <p><b>1773</b> First conference of American Methodist preachers.</p> <p><b>1784</b> Christmas Conference. Ordination of preachers. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones are the</p> | <p>first African-Americans licensed to preach.</p> <p><b>1787</b> Cokesbury College opens in Abingdon, Maryland. Wesley writes to Asbury deploring the genocide of Native Americans.</p> <p><b>1790</b> Methodist Episcopal Church recognizes Sunday School as a valid ministry. African-Americans make up twenty percent of American Methodists.</p> <p><b>1791</b> John Wesley dies. <b>American Methodists number 57,000</b></p> <p><b>1792</b> First quadrennial General Conference of American Methodists. Richard Allen leads African-Americans out of St. George's Church in Philadelphia.</p> <p><b>1807</b> Jacob Albright is elected bishop.</p> <p><b>1808</b> Methodists adopt a constitution.</p> <p><b>1809</b> First <i>Discipline</i> and Catechism of the Evangelical Association is printed.</p> <p><b>1812</b> General Conference is composed of its first elected delegates.</p> <p><b>1816</b> Richard Allen forms the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME)</p> <p><b>1817</b> Richard Allen gives Jarena Lee permission to preach. <b>American Methodists number 268,000.</b></p> <p><b>1823</b> <i>Zion's Herald</i> begins publication, first</p> |
|---|---|



	Methodist weekly newspaper.				
1830	Methodist Protestant church organizes, seeking a more democratic approach to Methodism. <b>American Methodists number 500,000.</b>	1872	The Methodist churches receive the largest quota of funding from the federal government for the administration of Native American schools within their mission fields. This policy continues until the 1892 General Conference when it is deemed a violation between the separation of church and state. Actual funding continues into the early 20th century.	1913	Wesley Foundation is organized at the University of Illinois.
1840	Newbury Bible Institute (Vermont) is founded, the first American Methodist seminary, forerunner of Boston University School of Theology.			1914	Candler School of Theology is founded.
1844	Methodists North and South split over twin issues of slavery and episcopacy.	1876	Methodist Episcopal Church votes at General Conference to divide annual conferences along racial lines.	1920	First black bishops elected and a woman is granted local preacher status in the Methodist Episcopal Church.
1855	The first missionaries for the United Brethren Church are sent to Sierra Leone.	1880	Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church is recognized.	1939	Formation of the Methodist Church, union of the Methodist Episcopal Churches, North and South, and the Methodist Protestant Church.
1856	Methodist Episcopal Church's General Conference gives presiding elders authority to employ African-American pastors.	1889	New Constitution and Confession of Faith adopted which leads to the withdrawal of the Church of the United Brethren (Old Constitution) under Bishop Milton Wright.	1946	Merger of the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church.
1864	Full clergy rights for black preachers with Frank B. Smith admitted to the New England Annual Conference. <b>American Methodists number 1,800,000</b>	1901	Ella Niswonger is elected the first woman clergy delegate to the Church of the United Brethren in Christ's General Conference.	1948	The Methodist Church launches Advance for Christ and His Church which is seen as a continuation of The Crusade for Christ.
1866	Drew Theological Seminary established.			1968	Union of Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church. General Commission on Archives and History, General Commission on Religion and Race and General Council on Ministries created.
1869	The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church is formed. <b>American Methodists number 2,012,000</b>	1904	Methodist Episcopal Church women are given laity rights and admitted as delegates to General Conference.	1971	United Methodist Women formed. <b>American Methodists number 10,672,000.</b>
		1908	First Methodist Social Creed adopted. <b>American Methodists number 5,571,000.</b>	1972	First full General Conference of The United Methodist Church. General
					Commission on the Status and Role of Women created. End of Central Jurisdiction Conferences. Wilbur Wong Yan Choy becomes the first Asian-American bishop.
				1980	Marjorie Matthews - First woman bishop.
				1984	Bi-Centennial of The United Methodist Church. Leontine T. C. Kelly becomes first African- American woman to be elected bishop. Elias G. Galvan becomes first Hispanic to be elected bishop.
				1989	<i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> is published.
				1992	<i>The United Methodist Church Book of Worship</i> is published.
				1992	Africa University in Zimbabwe opens for classes. Hae-Jong Kim, is elected the first Korean descent bishop in the United Methodist Church.
				2004	General Conference creates the Connectional Table to replace the General Council on Ministries effective on January 1, 2005.
				2012	<b>American Methodists number 7,700,000</b>
				2013	General Board of Discipleship becomes Discipleship Ministries.
				2014	GBCS leads consultations as a first step toward drafting new Social Principles. 

# Devotions from International Lesson Series

## LIVING THE WORD



*Roger Dowdy is an ordained deacon [retired] in the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. He is the founder/director of CROSS-PATHS Ministries, a field-based, ecumenical ministry service devoted to strengthening congregational worship and spiritual life, and church leadership. Roger is a gifted Bible study leader, as well as workshop and retreat leader, and pastoral musician. He has earned deep regard for his leadership as a consultant and coach to congregations and annual conferences for the ministry of the deacon in United Methodist worship, as well as designing and guiding discernment and consensus-building toward Strategic Designs for Mission and Ministry. From 2006-2013 Roger served on the Executive Staff at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in Western North Carolina as Director of Ministry and Event Development.*

**March 5, 2017**  
**The Source of All Love**  
**I John 4:7-19**

**“W**e love because God first loved us!” Many persons learned that scriptural song as youngsters, long before understanding that it was Scripture. And though we may have forgotten the song, the message of those seven words remains with us: loving is our response to the perfect, unfailing, boundless, love of God toward the people of God.

The author of this letter, initially intended for the community in Ephesus, writes that the search for the source of perfect “agape”<sup>1</sup> love brings the seeker closer to God’s own self, to God’s Spirit, and to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and in closer relationship with other persons: Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another [vs. 11].

In a recent Richmond District event, Dr. Roberta Bondi, author and professor emeritus at Candler School of Theology, shared her personal faith story in light of the writings of the Desert Fathers of the 5th and 6th centuries C.E. Dr.

Bondi reflected on the means of discerning God’s love and then “practicing” extending God’s love in daily living<sup>2</sup>: discernment of God’s love rests in confessing our deepest desire and coming to realize God’s deepest desire for God’s people, as offered to us through the Holy Scriptures. Loving God is loving neighbor, and loving neighbor is loving God, the two comprise an inseparable reality! The Scripture portion for this week offers us a lyrical narrative to that “inseparable reality” — confirming that the originator, the source of perfect Love, is God.

Seeking to understand this “reality” draws us individually and communally, closer to God, the source, and compels us to live more fully into God’s love and share that love with all who we encounter.

<sup>1</sup> From the Greek, *agape*: self-emptying love, divine love.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Roberta Bondi, seminar “Discernment and the Nature of Christian LOVE from the Desert Fathers”, Richmond District presentation, 1-26-17.

As the season of Lent begins, it is fitting to explore these sacred concepts, and enter into personal and community reflection on the nature and experience of God’s love. I invite you, for the coming four weeks, to consider the Spiritual Meditation-Exercises of the noted 16th century founder of the Jesuit Order, St. Ignatius of Loyola<sup>3</sup>: Set aside intentional time and space to reflect on your life in light of God’s boundless love for you as confirmed in I John 4. Then perhaps in a small group or class, share your insights from the Scriptures and on Christ’s call to follow him in the way of Love.

**March 12**  
**God’s Overflowing Love**  
**Ephesians 2:1-10**

**O**ne reality of God’s love is the absence of judgmental exclusivity — God is the source of unreserved, “overflowing” love. God’s saving grace, received through faith, is shared by faithful disciples with any who are searching for acceptance and community.

I imagine that each of us could recount instances when we were looked upon [perceived] by others as inadequate, not “qualified,” for inclusion in [name a situation or task]. The good news, affirmed by Paul in the letter to the church at Ephesus, is that our respect and “agape” love toward others should be as unreserved as God’s loving grace gifted to us “when we were ‘dead’ through our trespasses” [vs. 5].

In faith communities where the circle of inclusion is limited, that community, Paul reminds us, shuts itself off from the call of God in extending the love of God unreservedly and widely as possible.

When the “circle” of the community of faith is drawn wider and wider, the community experiences the abundance and richness of individual gifts, perspectives, and life experiences. When the circle of inclusion grows, and expands, the

<sup>3</sup> Adapted Resource: “The Spiritual Exercises (meditations) of St. Ignatius of Loyola” (publ., 1548)  
<http://jesuitscentralandsouthern.org/spirituality?PAGE=D>  
 TN-20140728015007





fullness of the “overflowing” love of God is experienced, gifts and callings are nurtured, and then more disciples are deployed for the enrichment of living as God intended in the human community the church, and groups within a congregation, that intentionally expands the scope of acceptance and inclusion, experiences what this lesson’s author expresses as “the intrusion of (God’s overflowing) grace” into our imperfect world.

In these Lenten days we are particularly called to self-examination: of successes, failures, intentions, and commitment in becoming non-judgmental of others, in becoming more inclusive and welcoming, of others into experiencing the gift of God’s never-ending grace.

This week, continue with the second of the Meditation- Exercises from St. Ignatius:

Several times this week, create intentional places and periods for meditation and reflection on the life and inclusive ministry of Jesus, and ways you have sought to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Be honest about good intentions, failures, and a renewed focus to be a more effective disciple of Jesus.

At the end of the week, share with others, or journal, about your Lenten journey toward loving Christ more intimately, deepening your faithfulness in doing Christ’s loving, inclusive, work in the world.

## March 19

### God’s Love Made Manifest

#### John 15:1-17

**I**n our human condition, we long for and search for “that which” enables us to love and be loved/ receive love, experience acceptance and mercy. In many aspects of our

American culture, particularly our consumer culture, we are bombarded with commercial “products” promoted as the enabling “that which” for a better life: this model vehicle will make you more popular, this fashion style will give you the identity you desire. The endless pursuit and consumption of “things,” however, ultimately disappoints and does not satisfy at life’s deepest level.

In the Scripture for this week, the writer of the fourth Gospel proclaims that it is God’s love abiding in us, and then made manifest through us, which brings deep peace and joy! We are called to be channels of God’s love. Through God’s Word, illuminated by the life actions and teachings of Jesus, one can see and consider how God intends, shapes, and “nudges” God’s people to become “manifestations” of the realness of God’s active, mercy-full, engagement in the world.

In one of Pope Francis’ most recent books, *The Name of God is Mercy*<sup>4</sup>, he is clear and gentle to provide “trail-markers” for the Christian pilgrim called and sent to be “apostolos” — as one who is sent on a mission of mercy, of love. If the reader should ask along the journey, “How can I be more capable of mercy, of love?” Francis instructs each seeker-believer:

Be available, “open up one’s self to the Mercy of God,” and be loving and merciful with others [pg. 97].

Dispose one’s self to the Word of God [pg. 123].

Be open to discover the true nature of God, “the one who is” — salvation, mercy, saving grace — love [pg. 111-114; 123-124].

<sup>4</sup>Excerpt from a book review by Roger Dowdy, 2016, of the book: “The Name of God Is Mercy – A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli”, Pope Francis, Random House, N.Y., Copyright © 2016

Consider the Christian journey to be a “pilgrimage” [pg. 124].

Attend to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy [pg. 98-99].

Learn to be “non-judgmental” [pg. 124].

The immeasurable love and grace of God is a gift of mercy and a catalyst causing God’s people to respond and reflect to others the fullness and trustworthiness of God’s love — through radical hospitality and acceptance, kind words and generous actions. We, as God’s own children, are responsible for making God’s love “real” [manifest] to all humanity.

During this third week of Lent, continue to incorporate the Spiritual Meditation-Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola: live into the words of Paul’s letter [Eph.2:1-10]. Use your intentional meditation moments to consider your openness and availability to God’s movement in your life, and that of your community of faith. Ponder the question, “Where do I see the greatest and compelling needs in my community/neighborhood? Where and how I could be a vessel of God’s overflowing love?”

End the week by reflecting on and engaging in holy conversation with others about the grace-full welcoming demonstrated in Jesus’ own ministry, especially how Christ’s gift of the Eucharist — Holy Communion — was the ultimate expression of God’s grace and love.

## March 26

### God’s Love is Restorative

#### Joel 2:12-13, 18-19, 28-32

**G**od’s overflowing love is restorative — it renews the soul, it releases fresh winds of the

(Con’t. on next page: “LIVING WORD.”)

# Devotions from International Lesson Series

## LIVING THE WORD

(“LIVING WORD,” cont. from page 25.)

Spirit, it causes one to see things in a new light, and it rightly equips persons to confidently face life’s challenges.

In both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, we find countless stories of God’s love intersecting with nations, leaders, families, and individuals in dynamic ways [Gk. *dunamis*, miraculous power]. The prophesy of Joel of Jerusalem, likely written in around the 9th century, B.C.E, is a call to repentance account following a devastating “invasion” of an army of locusts; Joel calls the priestly leaders and people to change their ways, and call on God for miraculous intervention and aid to extend God’s restorative mercy-love upon Judah.


The passages from Joel for our focus this week are portions of scripture which are assigned for Ash Wednesday, and outlines how God’s people can best seek restorative, steadfast love from God: [vs. 12-13: Return to me, says the Lord God, with all your heart, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your garments.]

The three passages should be considered in the context of Judah’s faithless and unloving actions in the face of serious difficulties. The prophet Joel names the difficulty “punishment,” and calls the people and leaders to repentance and restored rightness with God.

The rhythm of restoration can also be illustrated by one form of the human learning-cycle: CONNECT>REFLECT>DECIDE>ACT — a continual cycle of assessment and learning, reflection and self-understanding, leading to decision and action. This cycle is a helpful aid particularly in transitional seasons of our lives as well as in this Lenten period:

stillness, prayer, scriptural study and holy conversation, reflection, prayerful discernment, commitment perhaps to a change of direction.

The Scriptures, such as Joel, offer spiritual guidance for restoring right relationships; and through the Scriptures we are able come to a deeper understanding that genuine restoration begins when brokenness is recognized, when persons seek forgiveness, and there is a commitment to movement toward reconciliation and renewal — this is true when the brokenness occurs between individuals or groups, or between individuals and human communities and God.

For this week of Lent, I call your attention to the fourth and final St. Ignatius’ Spiritual-Meditation Exercise: Considering God’s promise of restoration Judah in the prophecy Joel, meditate this week on the resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples. What aspects of the disciples lives needed restoration? In what ways is your life in need of restoration? And just as the disciples on the Emmaus road invited this traveler, invite Jesus to come and sit at your table — and experience his restorative power enabling you to love and serve him in concrete ways in the world. 

### March

#### Clergy Spouse Retreat

**Mar.3-4, Richmond Hill Retreat Center, Richmond**

The Clergy Family Enrichment Committee invites you to a brief time of personal renewal, networking with other clergy spouses and reflection on Friday, March 3 to March 4 at Richmond Hill Retreat Center. The keynote speaker, Martha Stokes, will lead participants through “Reflections of General Conference & Supporting the Future.” The breakout times will include making and learning to pray with prayer beads and exploring creative devotional writing. The event begins at 3 p.m. on March 3 and concludes after lunch at 12:30 p.m. on March 4. The registration fee of \$100 includes meals and lodging at Richmond Hill Retreat Center as well as supplies for the breakouts. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=226361&%20>. For more information, contact Judy Hall at [jjrbhall@aol.com](mailto:jjrbhall@aol.com).

#### Faithful Aging Conference

**March, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg**

Faithful Aging will be the first statewide, faith-based conference on aging addressing opportunities related to an aging congregation and meeting the needs of older members. Presented by the Beard Center on Aging at Lynchburg College and Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. (VUMH), this conference developed following listening sessions across the Virginia Conference to hear directly from clergy and laity about the needs of older adults in their congregations and communities. The Virginia Conference Older Adult Council is a





# EVENTS

Gold Sponsor for the event. A .5 CEU has been approved for Virginia Conference clergy and certified professionals as well as five hours of credit toward recertification for Lay Servants. Details and registration information will be available later this month about the event.

## UMMen Visioning event

**Mar. 25, Virginia United Methodist Center, Glen Allen**

How often have you thought your church might need to do more to serve the Lord? How often have you become overwhelmed serving Christ? It seems we live in a world that either leaves us wanting or overburdened. The Virginia Conference United Methodist Men (UMMen) have recognized this and are offering a Visioning event March 25, 2017, at the United Methodist Conference Center in Glen Allen. Pastors, consider bringing your UMMen chartered group, your Men's fellowship, mission team or men's Bible study as we present a day to help them discern their place in Christ's kingdom. The event starts promptly at 8:30 a.m. with a plenary session led by the Rev. Glenn Rowley, conference director for the Office of Justice and Missional Excellence. Breakout sessions will be offered encompassing Values and Vision, Mission and Social Justice, The United Methodist Connection, Men's Ministry and Reverse Mentoring. Fee is \$12 which includes all materials, continental breakfast served at 7:30 a.m. and lunch. For more information contact Dann Ladd, Vice President Virginia Conference UMMen at [ladddann@gmail.com](mailto:ladddann@gmail.com).

## April

## Bishop's Convocation on Prayer

**Apr. 1, Trinity UMC, Henrico**

Bishop Sharma Lewis will host a Bishop's Convocation on Prayer. The Rev. Juanita Rasmus, co-pastor of St.

John's United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, will be the plenary speaker for the convocation. Workshops on a variety of topics are being offered as part of the convocation and participants will be able to attend two of their choice. To see the brochure, visit the conference calendar on the conference website at [www. Vaumc. org](http://www.Vaumc.org) and click on the corresponding date. To register, visit <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=224486&>.

## May

## Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute (SUYTI)

**May 1**

The Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute (SUYTI) is a new program, funded through the Lilly Foundation, offered to Christian youth as a partnership between Shenandoah University, Wesley Theological Seminary and the Virginia Annual Conference of the UMC. The Youth Institute is designed to educate and inspire young Christians to become better leaders in their local congregations through deep and thought-provoking experiences. Each day at the institute, modeled after ancient monastic pattern, includes academic study and religious reflection balanced with immersive experiences. The program is a two-week immersive experience for rising 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders (offered this year July 23-August 5, 2017). For 2017 there is no cost passed on to student participants, except a \$50 registration fee and the cost of travel to and from Shenandoah University. Pastors and youth leaders can nominate youth they think will benefit from this youth theology institute and students can apply at <https://www.su.edu/campus-life/>

**spiritual-life/institute-for-church-professions/youth-theology-institute/**. The 2017 session of the SUYTI is now accepting nominations and applications until May 1, 2017.

## Ministers' Convocation

**May 8-10, Virginia Crossing Wyndham Hotel, Glen Allen**

The Center for Clergy Excellence invites you for a time of Sabbath retreat, learning, and fellowship together as ministry leaders at Ministers' Convocation from May 8-10, 2017. Come be engaged in theological and academic conversation while experiencing rejuvenation for ministry. The theme is "Making Space for Yourself and Others" with an emphasis on hospitality as a practice and spiritual discipline. For more information, contact [clergyexcellence@vaumc.org](mailto:clergyexcellence@vaumc.org) or visit the website for registration and event details including carpooling and roommates at <http://www.vaumc.org/MinistersConvocation>.



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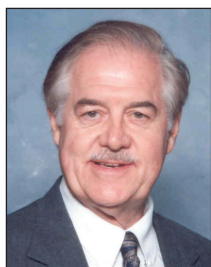
Applicant should be a faith-based individual, and willing to work with a small church to provide sacred music for church services, programs and special functions. Must be proficient on piano and willing to play piano solos, and accompaniments. Must be voice training-qualified have the ability to teach vocal parts to choir (SATB). Should have music degree or be working toward completing their degree in music and must be flexible.

**Interested parties, please call church office: 804-745-8773**

# CLERGY & DIACONAL



## DEATHS



**The Rev. Frank Sprint Crim**, 86, of Berryville, Va., died Jan. 22, 2017. Frank was born in Winchester on Oct. 14, 1930,

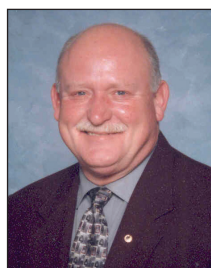
into a family rooted in the Shenandoah Valley since colonial times. He studied to be a Methodist minister at the Duke Seminary in Durham, NC and went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from Duke. After trying to enlist in the military as a chaplain and being told that they had too many Methodist chaplains, he became Dean of Men at Randolph-Macon College. His long ministry included serving as chaplain of Fairfax Hospital and as minister of churches in Norfolk, Fairfax and at Cool Spring United Methodist Church in Delaplane. Frank was also a pastoral counselor in the Fairfax and Winchester areas. In addition to his wife, Corin H. Crim, Frank is survived by three children from a previous marriage: Lucy Lee Crim of Knoxville, TN, and Jennie Lynn Crim of Fairfax, Va.; and son, F. Sprint Crim, Jr. of Leesburg; a brother, Floyd Gladstone (Buddy) Crim of Palmetto, Florida; and a cousin, Mary Lou Sprint of Winchester.



**The Rev. Paul Cassidy Harris**, 86, of Covington, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was the husband of Patricia Ann Walker Harris. Paul was born

Sept. 17, 1930, in Premier, WV. He served his country from 1950-1954 as a member of the United States Navy

where he was a Gunner's Mate 3rd Class during the Korean Conflict. A graduate of Duke Divinity School in 1978, he served several churches and charges including Crockett Springs UMC, Catawba Charge, Lafayette/Halls UMC, Mt. Bethel UMC, Parrish Court UMC and Mt. Carmel UMC before his retirement. He hosted seven different tours to the Holy Land in addition to three biblical tours through the Mediterranean area. He was also active with mission trips to Haiti. In addition to his wife, Patricia Walker Harris, Paul is survived by a son, Brian Cassidy Harris (Danielle) of Glen Allen; a daughter-in-law, Michele Warlitzer Harris of Covington; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; a sister, Zuma Agnes Truitt of Onancock; and a number of nieces, nephews and cousins. Paul was preceded in death by a son, Richard Paul Harris in 2014 and two brothers, Alvin Glen Harris and Harry Adrian Harris.



**The Rev. Daniel G. Spaugh**, 70, retired, died on Dec. 27, 2016 after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Bette M. Spaugh; two

daughters, Cathee (Ron) Brinkley and Beth Culpepper; stepdaughter, Kelli (Phillip) Peele; stepson, Chad (Alessia) Parker; three sisters, Marie Hughes, Shirley (Skip) Fremd, Susan (Wayne) Barnes; one brother, David Spaugh; 12 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. The Rev. Spaugh began serving the Virginia Conference in 2001 as a local pastor at Cradock/Indiana. He became an associate member in 2003 and went on to serve Phoebus in the former Peninsula District, and Mt.

Bethel View in the Winchester District.

**The Rev. Weldon D. White**, 82, of Waynesboro, died Aug. 1, 2016. He was born November 18, 1933 in Indiana. Weldon retired from the ministry, having served at St. Mark's UMC among his charges. He was a graduate of Bridgewater College and Wesley Seminary. Surviving are his wife of 52 years, Linda M. White; sons, Marshall and Darrel (Renee); sister, Virginia Swank (Gerald); and grandchildren, Marshall, Dillon, Emma and Carly.

**Oliver Cromwell**, husband of **the Rev. Dr. Youtha Hardman-Cromwell**, died Jan. 18, 2017.

**Virginia Clarke Gray Backus**, 95, died Jan. 18, 2017. She was born on March 16, 1921 in Suffolk, Va. She graduated from Greensboro College in 1942. Virginia was passionate about her church, Washington Street UMC in Alexandria, where she was a member for close to 75 years. There, she served in many voluntary leadership capacities, including chairmanship of the Administrative Board, president of the United Methodist Women and member of the church trustees. She was also a delegate to the Virginia Annual Conference for many years.

**Elsie Irene Vandergraff Osterhoff**, 102, formerly of Ambia, died Dec. 30, 2016. Elsie was born July 25, 1914 in Lafayette. Her husband, Louis John "Sox" Osterhoff, preceded her in death in 2001.

**Faye Smithwick Foote**, 86, of Richmond, died Dec. 18, 2016. She is survived by her husband of five years, **the Rev. Phillips (Phil) K. Foote**. Faye and Phil shared a wonderful story of love after prior marriages each lasting more




than 60 years to Bob and Aileen, respectively. Faye is survived by her four children, Dori Hammel, David (Ginny) Smithwick, Rob (Nancy) Smithwick, and Amy (Rob) Boyle; nine grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Faye's life was also graced by Phil's three daughters and their families.

**Charles P. Cox**, a retired U.S. Army Colonel, died Dec. 9, 2016. He was born Nov. 14, 1926, in Roanoke, Ala. During his enlisted service he served with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regimental Combat Team, a unit which served with distinction in the South Pacific. In 1949, he graduated with honors from Wilberforce University in Ohio. For the next 30 years, Charles served in many command, staff, instructor and diplomatic positions in Europe, Taiwan, Vietnam, (RVN) and Tunisia. Throughout his adult life, Charles remained active in local, regional, national and international agencies of The United Methodist Church and was a dedicated ecumenist. He also served as president of the Council on Finance and Administration to the Virginia Conference, as a delegate to the General Conference of the church from Virginia, as a delegate to the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Conferences of the church and the General Commission on Christian Unity and Religious Concerns. His survivors include his wife of 31 years, Ann Catherine Mallon Cox.

## BIRTHS

**The Rev. Daniel Park**, pastor of Chesterbrook UMC in the Arlington District, and his wife, **Isaiah Jennifer Park**, announce the birth of their son, **Israel Park**, born Dec. 21, 2016 at 7:12 p.m., weighing 7 lbs, 13 oz., and 21 in. long. 🍌

  
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# FROM THE BISHOP



## Reflection on the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches

**O**n January 10-12, 2017, a delegation of 78 clergy and laity traveled to Atlanta for the 10th Anniversary of the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches. Interestingly, as the idea to attend unfolded, the number of attendees began to grow before my eyes. Historically, the convocation for Pastors of Black Churches has been a place for black pastors to worship, fellowship and network. In the last 10 years, I have witnessed the convocation grow in size, mission and advocacy focus and “learning” components on leadership development, spiritual formation, discipleship, stewardship, evangelism and outreach.

I want to thank all participants for taking the leap of faith to experience a convocation that was notable only for black pastors. I invited the Cabinet, black and anglo pastors serving black churches, black pastors in cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments and Latino/Hispanic pastors. I want to thank the Offices of Connectional Ministry, Congregational Excellence and the Virginia Conference Foundation for partnering with the Virginia Focus 20/20 to make this experience a reality.

The theme for the convocation was “Called to Fresh Vision.” Its focus was based on Revelation 21:5. The convocation traditionally begins with an opening worship service by the convener, the Rev. Dr. Vance Ross. This year we were blessed with the gifts and graces of Dr. Cynthia Wilson, the Rev. Dr. Mike Bowie, the Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver, the Rev. Dr. Junius Dotson, the Rev. Dr. Kevan Harding, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Daniel, the Rev. Dr. B. Kevin Smalls, the Rev. Dr. Rose Booker-Jones, the Rev. Telley Gadson, the Rev. Jasmine Smothers, the Rev. LeKisha Reed, the Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin, the Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, Bishop James Swanson Sr., Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, Bishop Frank Beard, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and yours truly, who were all instrumental in leading worship and workshops.

All of the presenters and preachers were masterful in their area of expertise and knowledge. The plenaries included: Vision for Worship, Pastoral Vision, A Vision for Discipleship Development, Fresh Vision for the People, Fresh Vision for Community Engagement and Taking a Fresh Vision Back Home.

There was one statement about “visioning” that continued to resonate with me throughout the convocation: “A Vision is Big! Quit asking for the large print when you keep thinking small.”

There was an intimate plenary

conversation with the Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, senior pastor of Windsor Village UMC, who gave us a glimpse of “Inside the Pastor’s Studio” where he shared his personal ministry accomplishments and struggles, the responsibility of the church in this new political climate and the need for change in our ministry context.

I was blessed to share on Wednesday evening a sermon entitled “Write the Vision,” scripturally based on Habakkuk 2:2-3. I highlighted four key points: 1) a vision is birthed out of a concern, 2) a vision provides clarity, 3) a vision brings a sense of moral conviction and 4) though the vision may tarry – “wait for it.” After my sermon, in an attempt to be vulnerable about my Episcopal campaign challenges in 2012, I sought to be humorous and self-effacing. I had a poor choice of words about my appearance and by implication, that of others. I humbly apologize for those words, and ask for forgiveness from any who were offended. All people are beautiful, created in God’s image and deserve both respect and love.

The worship experience was followed by the traditional Communion service that was spirit-filled and transformative, led by Bishop James Swanson Sr. During the convocation, there were several altar calls that allowed for us to reaffirm our Baptism, to be anointed and receive the gift of healing and reconciliation in the body of Christ.

In closing, the convocation provided a space for information, inspiration and encouragement of pastors of black churches. I look forward to the next convocation in 2019!

*Peace and Blessings.*  
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis





# ONE LAST WORD

## Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for March

March 1	Deuteronomy 5-7
March 2	Deuteronomy 8-10
March 3	Deuteronomy 11-13
March 4	Deuteronomy 14-16
March 5	Deuteronomy 17-20
March 6	Deuteronomy 21-23
March 7	Deuteronomy 24-27
March 8	Deuteronomy 28-29
March 9	Deuteronomy 30-31
March 10	Deuteronomy 32-34
March 11	Joshua 1-4
March 12	Joshua 5-8
March 13	Joshua 9-11
March 14	Joshua 12-15
March 15	Joshua 16-18
March 16	Joshua 19-21
March 17	Joshua 22-24
March 18	Judges 1-2
March 19	Judges 3-5
March 20	Judges 6-7
March 21	Judges 8-9
March 22	Judges 10-12
March 23	Judges 13-15
March 24	Judges 16-18
March 25	Judges 19-21
March 26	Ruth 1-4
March 27	1 Samuel 1-3
March 28	1 Samuel 4-8
March 29	1 Samuel 9-12
March 30	1 Samuel 13-14
March 31	1 Samuel 15-17

## 7 RULES FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

*By John Wesley*

In 1761, John Wesley penned these iconic guidelines for congregations who would be singing out of the *Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed* hymn book. Although they may seem archaic today, Wesley added these directions to the beginning of this hymnal with a heart toward helping people express their worship through song,

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others, afterwards learn as many as you please.
2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
3. Sing All – see that you join the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.
4. Sing Lustily – and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half-dead or half-asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sang the songs of Satan.
5. Sing Modestly – do not bawl so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation that you may not destroy the harmony, but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one melodious sound.
6. Sing in time – whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before and do not stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices and move therewith as exactly as you can and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.
7. Sing spiritually – have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.



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