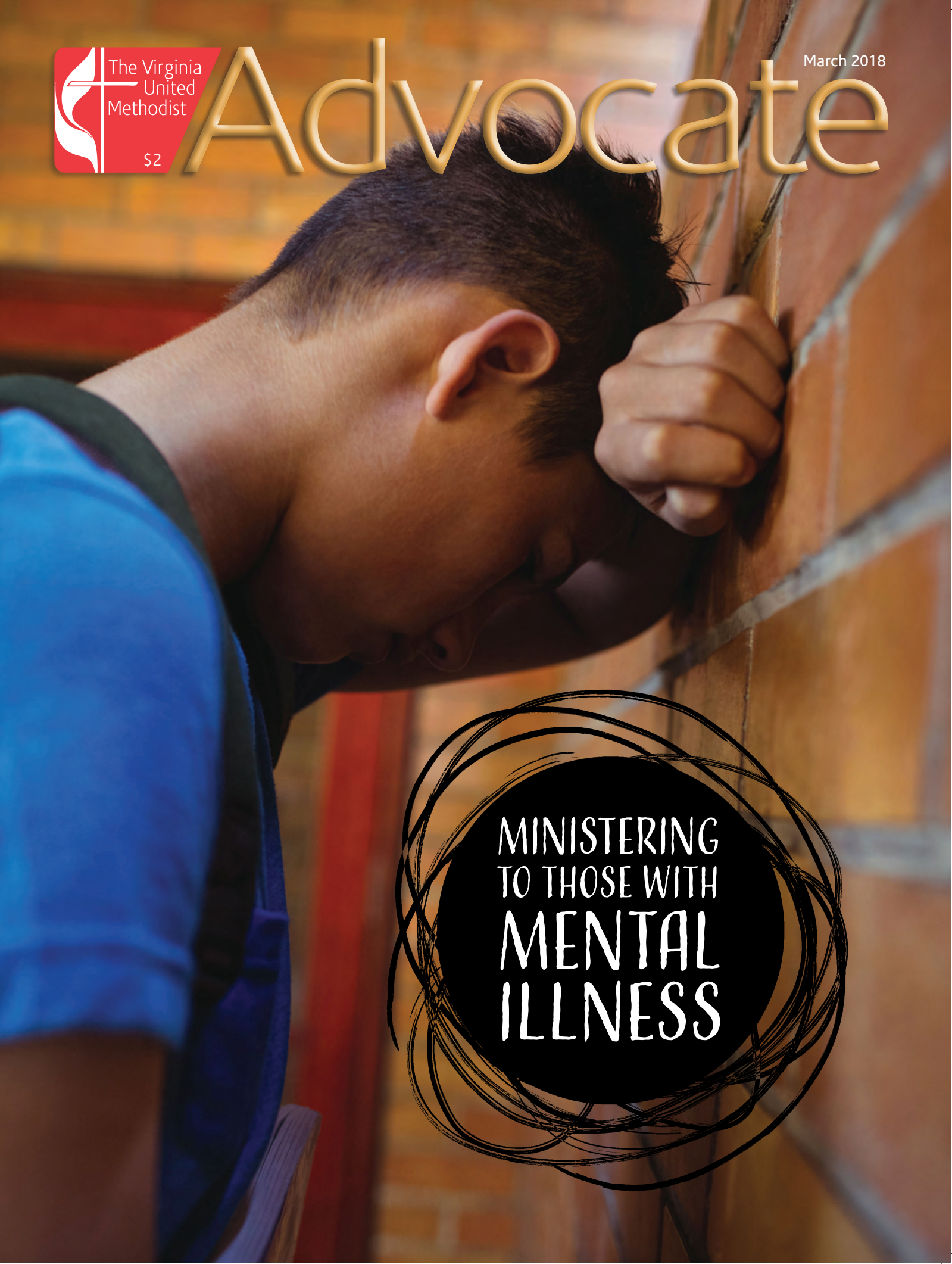


\$2

March 2018

Advocate

A photograph of a man in a blue shirt, seen from the side, leaning his head against a brick wall. His hand is pressed against the wall near his forehead, and his eyes are closed, suggesting a state of distress or exhaustion.

MINISTERING
TO THOSE WITH
**MENTAL
ILLNESS**

Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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

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

Phone: 1-800-768-6040 or

804-521-1100

Fax: 804-521-1174

E-mail: advocate@vaumc.orgWebsite: www.vaumc.org

Detailed guidelines for the following
available upon request.

Subscriptions

Print subscriptions are \$20/one year; \$30/two years; \$40/three years. Special bulk rate for five or more copies going to a single address is \$12 each for one year. For both printed copy and online access, subscriptions are \$25/year; \$35/two years; \$45/three years. For online only, cost is \$10/year; \$15/two years; \$20/three years. Subscribe online at www.vaumc.org, under "Resources>Publications."

Deadlines

The Advocate is published once a month. The deadline to submit news and ad copy for the April 2018 issue is February 23. For more information on future deadlines, contact the Advocate office or visit the website.

Advertising/Tributes

Rates for advertising and tributes are available upon request.

Local Church News

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

Letters

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

©2018 Virginia Advocate

USPS 660-740 ISSN 0891-5598

Published monthly by Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc., an agency of the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Periodical postage paid at Glen Allen, Va., and at additional mailing offices. The Virginia United Methodist Advocate is owned by Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.

POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to Virginia United Methodist Advocate, P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058. Editorial and business offices are located at 10330 Staples Mill Rd., Glen Allen, Va. Office hours are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow
Editor

Thoughts and prayers

The phrase, "My thoughts and prayers are with you" following a tragedy has started to get some heat

especially in past months with the large number of national and worldwide tragedies.

I've also seen a number of Christians say and post on social media things such as "Enough with the thoughts and prayer. Time for action."

But I wonder, why would Christians say that? I understand nonbelievers finding no meaning in that phrase. Of course "thoughts and prayers" ring hollow to them. But Christians?

Maybe some of these folks say this because, to them, thoughts and prayers have no meaning behind the words. And that very well may be true. Are our churches putting some "oomph" behind those thoughts and prayers? Are we active in the needs of our different communities?

But at the same time, maybe we aren't putting enough "oomph" into our thoughts and prayers. I mean, how sore are your praying knees? When you say you will pray for someone, what does that mean to you? A short prayer and then out of sight, out of mind?

I'm guilty of this as well. Many times, I have apologized to people because all I can offer are my thoughts and prayers in a certain situation. But just as I am trying to break a cycle of apologizing when either I'm not actually sorry or I shouldn't be apologizing, maybe this phrase can also be saved from the brink (there's a great Dove commercial on this, if you haven't seen it.)

If you often offer your "thoughts and prayers," are you following these words up with action? If you are tired of the phrase, how much time and effort are you putting into your prayer life? ☕

Madeline C. Pillow



TABLE OF CONTENTS



SECTIONS

- 4-6 Letters & Commentary
- 7 Events
- 8-11 Virginia News
- 20-21 Nation & World
- 28-29 Local News
- 30-31 Living the Word
- 32-33 Clergy & Diaconal
- 34 From the Bishop
- 35 One Last Word

MINI FEATURE

- 12-19 The Virginia Historical Society

FEATURE

- 22-27 Ministering to those with mental illness

STORIES

- 8 Guide to Annual Conference 2018
- 10 Bishop's Convocation on Faith, Science and Ministry
- 20 Way Forward fleshing out three possible futures



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

The Virginia Advocate Staff

Madeline Pillow | Editor, Director of Communications

Cathryn Huff | Graphic Designer

Pam Culler | Administrative Secretary

Board of Directors of Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.: Keri Marston, chair. The *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* uses the services of United Methodist Communications and United Methodist News Service. The reporting of news regarding any person or event, or the placement of any advertisement within these pages, does not constitute endorsement by the *Virginia Advocate* or any entity of The United Methodist Church. Opinions of writers are solely those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.

What is the Legacy and Modern Significance of Martin Luther and The Protestant Reformation?

Last October was the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. There have been a great deal of editorials in mainstream media as well as Christian publications addressing the history of this important event. I have especially enjoyed a recent biography by Eric Mexatas on Martin Luther and also a recent video by Christian History Institute titled "This Changed Everything."

I grew up in the Lutheran Church and as a result have always had a great appreciation of Martin Luther, his personal courage and the Reformation that he started. Even today when I hear and sing "A Mortal Fortress is Our God," it brings back incredible memories of faith, courage and conviction.

I was enthralled by the recent article in the *Advocate* by Heather Hahn who discussed the legacy of the Reformation in several key areas. It was refreshing to see that we as Methodists have some connection to Luther and the numerous other reformers in our history.

I had the opportunity to

attend a combined service in our local community celebrating the Reformation, but also addressing some of the divisions that still remain. The keynote speaker talked about the Reformation from a Mennonite perspective which is something that I had not thought about. Brother Luther was a very complex person and lived in a time of great social, political and religious change and with the hindsight of today, several of his writings and thoughts are obviously dead wrong. He would be the first person to admit that he was clearly a sinner and constantly in need of God's grace to lead a righteous life.

The contributions of all of these leaders in the Reformation movement are significant and have moved our religious thought to the point where we are today. Ms. Hahn very eloquently wrote about six important concepts from the Reformation. I strongly believe that one of the most important thoughts and writings by Luther and his contemporaries in this movement was the concept of Free Will and the establishment of how each one of us comes to meet our maker and redeemer and form a personal relationship with Him through Scripture, prayer and God's grace.

Before Martin Luther and the advent of the print-

ing press the only way a 16th century merchant or peasant could receive the word of God was through a priest and the local church. The church at that time was so corrupted by greed and avarice through the selling of indulgences to finance Pope Leo's new Sistine Chapel as well as the local princes political aspirations that Luther felt that change was needed. He should be greatly commended for having the courage of his convictions and the intestinal fortitude to speak out against these abuses. We have Martin Luther and other church leaders of the time to thank that we can pick up a Bible and read the Scriptures, that we are saved by faith alone, and that we receive God's unmerited grace which is freely given to everyone if we only believe. In spite of Martin Luther's wrong opinions on some subjects, he should be thanked for "starting it all." 📧

— Frank Vetting,
Bridgewater, Virginia



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

COMMENTARY

Understanding the #MeToo movement

By Larry Davies

Unless you live in a cave, there is no escape from recent headlines. Women from all walks of life are speaking out and sharing stories of mistreatment and sexual harassment and the shame and embarrassment they've lived with. The many thousands of stories spawned a movement called #MeToo on social media, revealing the seriousness of a problem that can no longer be swept under a rug.

Mistreatment and harassment is nothing new. It's as old as the Bible and Christmas: "This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement." (Matthew 1:18-19)

Being told his future wife is pregnant and he isn't the father is devastating for Joseph. But then, Mary claims the Father is God? That's really hard to



The Rev. Larry Davies is pastor of Fredericksburg UMC in Fredericksburg, Va.

believe. Joseph is a kind man but this is too much. In the movie, "Nativity Story" Joseph has a dream. The whole town surrounds Mary. People begin to pick up stones to throw. One man walks over and hands a big rock to Joseph and says, "You first!" Joseph wakes up in a sweat. If Joseph doesn't do something, that could be Mary's fate.

Then, Joseph has another dream: "An angel of the Lord appeared. 'Joseph, son of David,' the angel said, 'do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" (Matthew 1:20-21)

"Do not be afraid." That is the critical part of the story. Something happens to Joseph after this. Rather

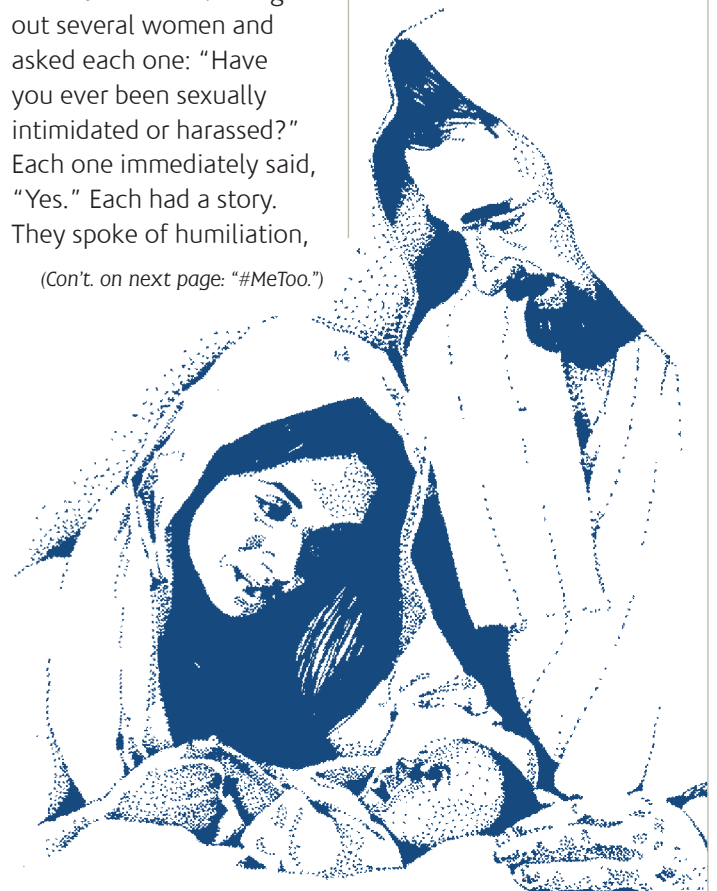
than quietly seeking a divorce, Joseph becomes Mary's chief defender. Rather than abandoning her, he truly becomes Mary's husband.

So, how does the story of Mary and Joseph help us better understand the #MeToo movement?

I've been quiet. Why? First, I don't want to be a "headline to headline" preacher. Second, I wasn't personally involved in any of the accusations. I've not sexually harassed anyone. I try to be encouraging and respectful in the way I treat others. So, why should I get involved?

But God kept nudging me to learn more. I sought out several women and asked each one: "Have you ever been sexually intimidated or harassed?" Each one immediately said, "Yes." Each had a story. They spoke of humiliation,

(Cont. on next page: "#MeToo.")



COMMENTARY

(“#MeToo,” cont. from page 5.)

embarrassment, fear of reprisal or being judged or condemned. Each one told their story as if it happened yesterday and the pain experienced was very real.

The #MeToo movement is a tribute to the victim’s courage to share what happened. But sharing alone is not enough. Just sharing stories will not provoke lasting change. What needs to follow the sharing is a move toward adjusting our behavior and how we treat each other.

Joseph awoke from the dream determined to

believe and defend Mary. We too need to wake up and be prepared to believe and defend the victims of sexual harassment and abuse. But that alone is not enough. We must be prepared to quickly and firmly condemn the perpetrators and we must offer more understanding and compassion to the victims.

“Do not be afraid, Joseph. Do not be afraid, Larry. Do not be afraid.”

Joseph, after receiving the comfort of God, would become Mary’s defender and continue his engagement and marriage and... well, you know the rest of the story.

Whenever you see mistreatment, it’s safer to ignore it and do nothing. When you raise your voice in defense of others, you put yourself at risk. But retreating will only protect you temporarily and usually leads to more injustice and suffering.

The Old Testament Prophet Isaiah says: “Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down and out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless.” (Isaiah 1:17)

Robert Kennedy said: “Justice and kindness are everyone’s business: Each time you stand up for an ideal or act to improve the lot of others or strike out against injustice, you send forth a tiny ripple of hope...and those ripples

build a current which can sweep the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

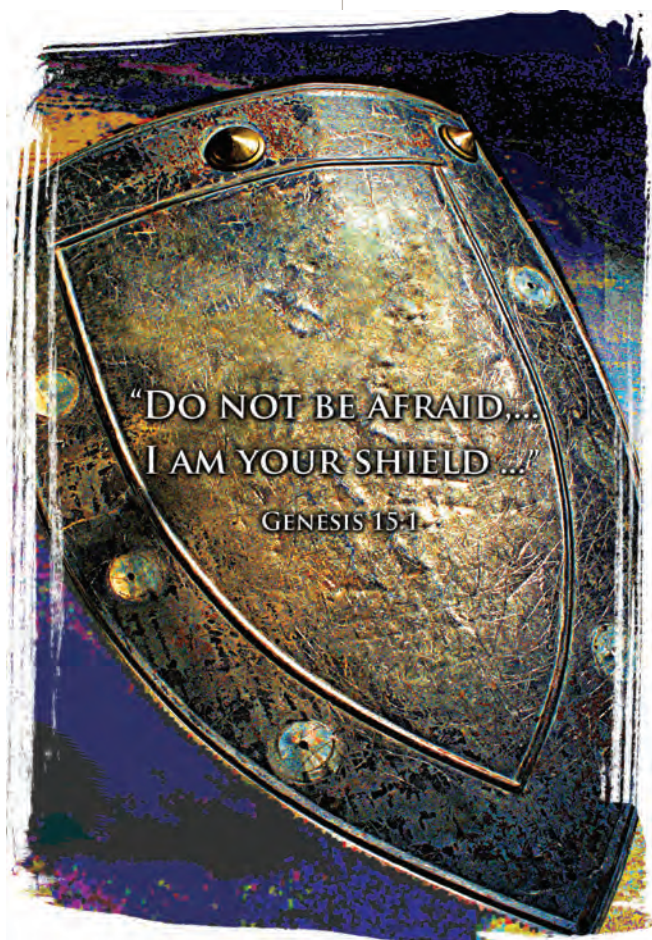
Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down and out.

Each time you do, you send forth a tiny ripple of hope.

And the Angel of the Lord says, “Do not be afraid!”

Lord, help me to have the courage of Joseph to make a stand for what is right. Give us courage to stand for those who need our strength. May we have zero tolerance for those who would sexually harass or mistreat others. May we have endless compassion for those who are victims. Thank you for teaching us through Joseph. Thank you for your promise: “Do not be afraid!” Amen. 🇺🇸

– The Rev. Larry Davies is pastor of Fredericksburg UMC in Fredericksburg, Va.





EVENTS

MARCH

Lay Servant Academy

Mar. 2-4, 2018, 4H Educational Conference Center, Wirtz

Registration for the 2018 Lay Servant Academy, Mar. 2-4, will be open until Feb. 20. Event will take place at the 4H Educational Conference Center in Wirtz. The Lay Servant Academy is about equipping laity (those who are not clergy) to carry out the mission of the church. All of the courses are open to anyone who would like to take one. Each course is designed to help those serving the local church learn more about leadership, personal faith development and a deeper understanding of The United Methodist Church. The courses are also designed to support those seeking to become Certified Lay Servants and Certified Lay Speakers. To register and for more information, visit www.vaumc.org/2018LSA. Contact Beth Christian with questions at BethChristian@vaumc.org or 804-347-5999.

APRIL

Bishop's Convocation on Race and Reconciliation

Apr. 14, 2018, Annandale UMC, Annandale

Bishop Lewis has called a Convocation on Race and Reconciliation on Saturday, Apr. 14, 2018, at Annandale United Methodist Church. It will begin with registration and a continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and end with Communion at 4:00 p.m. Lunch will be served.

The convocation will empower participants to become lifelong learning disciples who will be able to conduct the difficult conversations related to issues of racial division,

justice and God's call to ministries of reconciliation and peace.

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

Registration is available at the conference website at www.vaumc.org by clicking on the conference calendar and the corresponding date for the event.

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

Faithful Aging Conference

Apr. 24, 2018, Williamsburg UMC, Williamsburg

Theme for the Faithful Aging Conference will be "Always a Place at the Table" on Tuesday, Apr. 24, 2018, at Williamsburg UMC in Williamsburg. At the event you can network with other faith communities, share ideas and talk about how to address opportunities and changes as society ages alongside local church congregations. Consider being an exhibitor or sponsor to share ministry and service providers on hand to share information and help others understand the different levels of services and resources available, as well as the needs and issues older adults face. Registration opening soon. Questions can be directed to MStokes@pinnacleliving.org.

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

JUNE

Randolph-Macon High School Youth Theology Institute

Jun. 23-July 1, 2018, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland

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

JULY

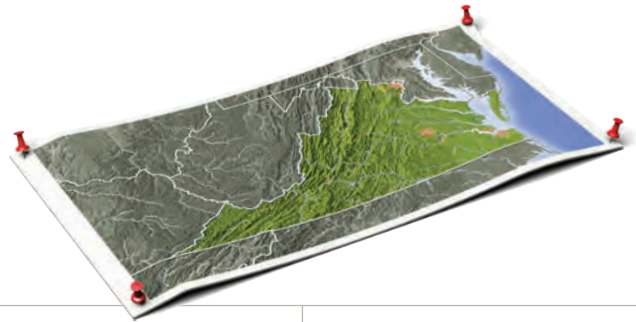
Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute

Jun. 23-July 1, 2018, Shenandoah University, Winchester

Shenandoah University's Youth Theology Institute is an intensive two-week program designed to help rising high school sophomores, juniors and seniors become better leaders through deep and thought-provoking experiences. During the course of the two weeks, daily rhythms of academic study and religious reflection will be balanced with immersive experiences. Students will be exposed to different faith traditions, service opportunities and a mixture of rural, wilderness and urban contexts at Shenandoah's Winchester campus, its Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Spring and the Wesley Theological Seminary campus in Washington, D.C.

(Con't. on page 9: "EVENTS.")

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Guide to Annual Conference 2018

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace and in its various forms.”
1 Peter 4:10

There will be some variations to the Annual Conference process and format in 2018. Be sure to share this information within districts and local churches to ensure that first-time attendees as well as long-time veterans of Annual Conference will know what to expect.

Great Day of Service

Following the Mission Service on Saturday, June 16, Bishop Lewis is asking all clergy and lay members to participate in a Great Day of Service from 2 to 5 p.m. This event will be broken into three sec-

tions: ministry within the City of Hampton, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) kit building in the convention center, and presentations on social justice issues at the convention center. Each clergy and lay member will be asked to sign up for one of these activities prior to Annual Conference. Registration is forthcoming. Each participant will receive a T-shirt to be worn during the Great Day of Service. How will you help create an impact on the Hampton Roads area with your service? Below are the three service options:

❖ Ministry in Hampton Roads area (off-site):

There will be two primary areas of work to accom-

plish outside the convention center: clean up and Block Walks.

Clean up: This area involves the physical labor of pruning, digging and the removal of debris from historical cemeteries and children’s parks. Also included is the removal of debris from several alleyways in the Hampton Roads community, around some of the schools and a youth community center. In the event of bad weather or extreme heat, there will be indoor activities, such as painting, in the area schools and youth center.

Block Walks: Working with several departments within the City of Hampton, volunteers will be handed a distribution packet to be delivered to the residents in targeted neighborhoods within the city. The purpose is two-fold:

1. To make a personal contact having a face-to-face interaction with people in the neighborhood in order to offer support through a caring presence that may address needs they may have with contact information, a listening ear and, if invited, to offer prayer.
2. To make a brief general assessment of the person’s well-being that if needed can be reported back to the

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

city public health contact person. (There will be a brief orientation to all volunteers by the city to assist in this assessment.)

❖ **UMCOR Kit building (Convention Center):** There will be three stations set up in the convention center to build hygiene kits for UMCOR. Each station will hold eight to 12 people per shift and all of the material will be provided. The kits will then be packed, taped and placed on shipping pallets and loaded on a truck. Each shift of people can take breaks after 15-30 minutes. The goal is to build 3,000 kits.

❖ **Social justice presentations (Convention Center):** There will be three separate social justice issues addressed at the convention center. Each presentation will last 45 minutes and will feature a Q&A portion. Each person who signs up for this option can attend all three talks.

Annual Conference Schedule

To accommodate the Great Day of Service and complete the business of the Annual Conference, the schedule of Annual Conference will be new in 2018. Annual Conference will begin Friday at 10:30 a.m. with the clergy and laity sessions. The opening session of annual conference will begin after lunch at 2 p.m. The Friday afternoon session will also be extended an extra 30 minutes to 5:30 p.m. before the recess for dinner.

Housing information

Clergy and laity Annual Conference members should be aware that the Annual Conference Housing letter will be handled differently this year. No hard copy letters will be sent by

mail. All letters will be emailed to members at the email address the conference has on file for them (active clergy will receive the letter at their @vaumc.org address.) The letter will also be posted on the conference website at www.vaumc.org/AC2018. The letter was posted and emailed on Feb. 1, 2018. Hotels, however, will not be taking reservations until Monday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. Clergy and district staff should make any lay member who does not have an email address on file aware of this and provide them with a copy of the letter. This change in process will allow all annual conference members to receive the letter and review their choices prior to making their reservations.

Daily Advocate

At the 2018 Annual Conference, due to increased printing costs and a tighter Annual Conference session, there will be no *Daily Advocate*. This small publication is a one page (front and back) handout given out at the beginning of each day. The Communications Office is aware that members typically use these sheets to report Annual Conference news back to their churches. Every year, Madeline Pillow, director of Communications and Advocate editor, creates a report for the United Methodist News Service the following Monday or Tuesday after Annual Conference. Conference attendees will receive this report as an aid for their local church reports by their email. This report will also be posted on ClergyNet and LaityNet, the conference website and social media. 📧

("EVENTS," cont. from page 7.)

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

Most importantly, the Youth Theology Institute will help students discern their vocations in the midst of our ever-changing world. Contact the Director of the Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute Rev. Colleen Hallagan Preuninger at (540) 665-5453 or cpreunin@su.edu. Find more information and apply at www.su.edu/campus-life/spiritual-life/institute-for-church-professions/youth-theology-institute/. 📧



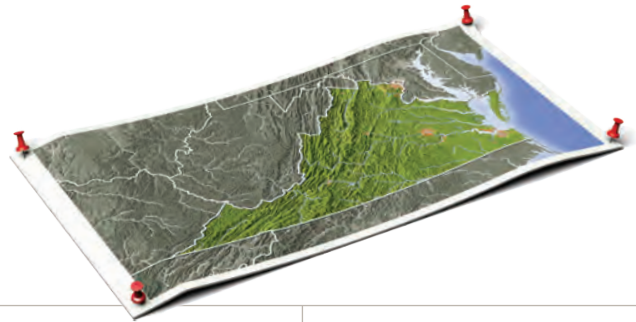
October 20-30, 2018

Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Masada, Nazareth, and much more!
Mr. Jimmy Nammour, guide with 40 years experience.

For information and registration form, contact

Rev. Cynthia Corley
ccorley@ctsi.net

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Convocation focuses on faith, science and ministry

By Forrest White

Dr. April Maskiewicz Cordero entered the University of California, San Diego, as a teenager with Jesus as her Lord and Savior and her sights set on a degree in biology. She believed the Bible was God's revelation, but she also believed in evolution.

Her professors and her pastors didn't agree on much, but they agreed on one thing.

"It's evolution or faith," Cordero said, during the

Bishop's Convocation on Faith, Science, and Ministry held Jan. 20. "Both sides told me it was mutually exclusive."

In her biology courses, she found mounting evidence to support the "reality of evolution."

So, she made a conscious decision to give up her faith.

"I became an atheist," she said.

A couple of years after graduating with the biology degree, Cordero went to Japan to teach English. She had a couple of boxes of books shipped from California, so she would have something written in English to read. At the bottom of a box, she found a Bible, though to this day she still isn't sure how it got there.

Reading Scripture brought her back to Christ, and she spent the next decade wrestling with philosophical and theological issues until finally reconciling her Christian faith with her acceptance of evolution.

"Evolution does not mean 'without a creator,'" Cordero said at the convocation at the conference center in Glen Allen, which was streamed live to remote locations around the conference. "It does not mean you have to reject God. There is plenty of space for there to be a Creator."

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis said she can relate to Cordero. She, too, earned a degree in biology. She, too, heard often about the perceived mutual exclusivity of science and faith.

"People asked, 'How can you believe in God and major in biology?'" Lewis said, at the event. "I would respond with 'Are you kidding me?'" It was God who created the beauty of nature.

"When you feel the warmth of the sun, you feel the warmth of God."

Creating this 'new' event

The convocation was in some ways the rebirth of a unique program known as the Blackstone Seminar for Science, Theology, Ethics, and Ministry, born from a 2000 endowment by Dr. Russell and Mrs. Louise Fox.

During World War II, Dr. Fox's work on uranium isotope separation became part of the Manhattan Project. The experience shaped his conviction that the church needed a deeper understanding of science and technology in the context of faith.

When the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center closed in May 2016, it cast doubt upon the future of the annual gathering.

But it found new life in Bishop Lewis's ministry vi-



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

sion for the conference “to be disciples of Jesus Christ who are lifelong learners who influence others to serve.”

Cordero’s keynote address – Exploring the Coexistence of Evolution and Christianity – was a highlight of the convocation, which also featured workshops led by Jennifer Secki Shields, founder and director of Discovery & Faith; the Rev. Bill Maisch, an elder in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference; and Dr. Michael J. Wriston, founder and president of The Competitive Edge and a member of River Road UMC, Richmond.

Being ‘church’ in a world shaped by science

During nearly 16 years as director of Christian education at Christ Crossman UMC in Falls Church, Jennifer Secki Shields experienced the fruits of bringing faith and science together for worship and discipleship for adults, youth and children.

In the summer of 2016, she began working with WesleyNexus, Inc., to launch Discovery & Faith.

At the convocation, Shields cited studies indicating that 60 percent of children disconnect from church life after the age of 15.

“The church is not preparing young people to be disciples in a world shaped by science,” she said. “The church must help our children experience the harmony between science and Biblical truth, and we must begin in early childhood.”

Both Cordero and Shields encouraged those in attendance to explore BioLogos (www.biologos.org), which “invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.”

Now a biology professor at Point Loma Nazarene University and a BioLogos speaker, Cordero said she can’t imagine a world where someone has to reject either evolution or God, but she knows the “pick one” mentality remains alive and well in churches and academia.

Cordero got emotional when speaking of her youthful days when she felt as if she had no choice but to deny the existence of God.

“That God chose to have a relationship with me, knows who I am,” she said, pausing and looking up. “It gets me through every day.”

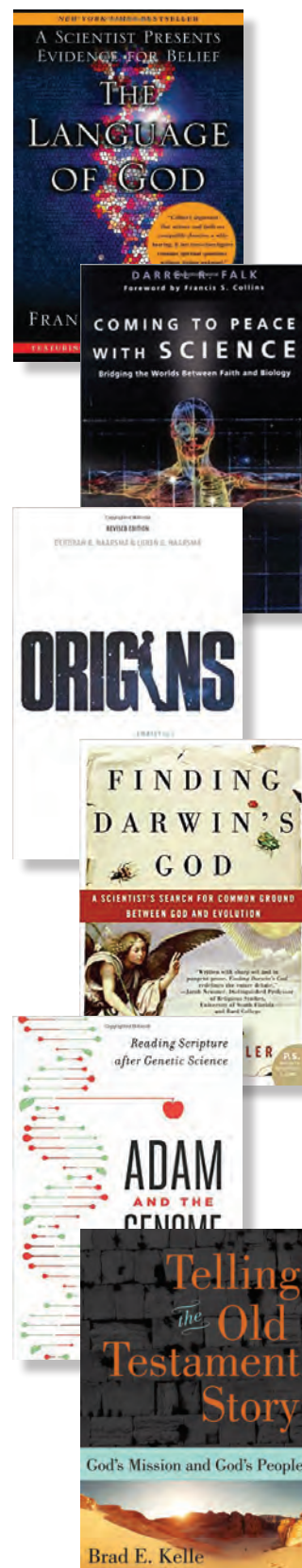
– Forrest White is a news associate with the Virginia Conference Communications office.

Reading List

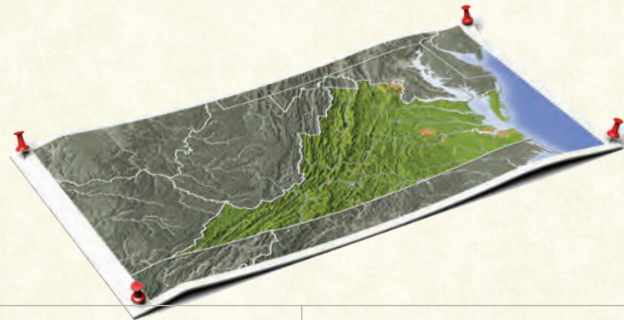
Shields provided a list of resources on the Discovery & Faith website. You can find it by visiting: www.discoveryandfaith.org/bishops-convocation-on-faith-science-ministry/.

Cordero recommended six books:

- ❖ *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* by Francis S. Collins
- ❖ *Coming to Peace with Science* by Darrel R. Falk
- ❖ *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* by Deborah B. Haarsma and Loren Haarsma
- ❖ *Finding Darwin’s God* by Kenneth R. Miller
- ❖ *Adam and the Genome: Reading Scripture After Genetic Science* by Dennis R. Venema and Scot McKnight
- ❖ *Telling the Old Testament Story: God’s Mission and God’s People* by Brad E. Kelle



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Virginia Conference Historical Society to Host the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society Annual Meeting

By Jack Martin

Mark your calendars for an outstanding event coming this summer. The annual meeting of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society will take place in Williamsburg from July 17-20, 2018, hosted by the Virginia Conference Historical Society (VCHS).

A steering committee of the VCHS, chaired by the Rev. Myrtle Hatcher, has been planning this event for more than a year. The theme is "Religious Liberty in the Historic Advance of Virginia Methodism." Lectures and tours will present an overview of the advance of Methodism

from colonial times to the present, including a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Uniting Conference of 1968, which brought the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Central Jurisdiction and the Methodist Church into a

union known as The United Methodist Church. A highlight of that evening will be a vocal concert featuring a quartet from *The Brethren*, a professional men's chorus from northern Virginia.

An outstanding group of lecturers and panelists will tell the story of the church's growth over the course of nearly 250 years, with emphasis on the colonial period, the Shenandoah Valley, the Chesapeake Islands and the union which formed the UMC. There will be tours of Colonial Williamsburg and Historic Jamestowne, and encounters with historical interpreters, designed to help experience an earlier era.

Williamsburg from July 17-20, 2018

Various books, brochures and displays will be on view at Williamsburg UMC, where the lectures and banquets will take place, providing in-depth look at the work of the Conference Historical Society in its effort to preserve and interpret our Wesleyan heritage within the Commonwealth. Three bishops will provide leadership during the event, including the anniversary banquet and the closing service of Holy Communion.

It has been nearly 20 years since Virginians hosted this SEJ meeting. Certainly, the hope is to be able to provide an experience that will be long remembered. Bishop Sharma D. Lewis is preparing several short videos for the event that will provide welcome and insight to Virginia United Methodism.

Williamsburg Church has made its facility available, along with its caterer, who will prepare all the evening meals and special banquets. This church is ideally situated for this gathering, with its proximity to the restored area and ample lodging.

A full agenda and registration materials can be found by visiting **vaumc.org/SEJHistoricalSociety2018**. The Center for Clergy Excellence is offering one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) for those who attend all the lectures, panels and tours. It is hoped that many clergy and laity from the Virginia Conference will register for this rare event that will celebrate in various ways God's blessings on "the people called Methodist" over the centuries in Virginia. 🇺🇸

— The Rev. Dr. John (Jack) T. Martin Jr. is president of the Virginia Conference Historical Society.

Photos for this feature were made available by Jack Martin.



VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation— The Cradle of Methodism

By Carol Corker and Jim Mott

The old Brunswick Circuit—the first Methodist circuit in Virginia and one of the oldest in America—was created as the Petersburg Circuit in 1773 and renamed Brunswick the following year. The Rev. Edward Dromgoole wrote in a letter that, at that time, Virginia had “but one Circuit, which extended from Chesterfield County... to the north of Petersburg, to the south of Tar-River in North Carolina, including many counties, making several hundred miles to ride once around.”

The Brunswick Circuit hosted major revivals in 1775-1776, a time in which the colony's Methodist population almost doubled. This enthusiasm and growth of Methodism in the Brunswick Circuit greatly outpaced the rest of the nation; therefore, the region is considered by many to be “the cradle of Methodism.”

A group of enthusiastic historians bonded to preserve early vestiges of Methodist history centered on the Brunswick Circuit resulting in the formation of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (OBCF) in 2004. Now to fulfill its goal of

heritage education through historical preservation and interpretation, The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation owns or manages three historic sites within the boundaries of the original circuit: Ebenezer Academy, the Rev. Edward Dromgoole house and the original Randolph-Macon College and the Boydton Institute.

Ebenezer Academy

Ebenezer Academy was established between 1783-1793 and was the first Methodist school in America. The school building no longer stands; the site is a quiet commemorative interpretive park. The school building outline is marked by the foundation stones with a memorial obelisk at its center. Plans are to provide more extensive interpretive signage. Further

research is desired on former students, the building appearance, and additional information

on the Ebenezer Greys, a local infantry unit of the Confederate Army. The OBCF maintains the property and keeps on-site informational brochures. Ebenezer Academy Park, located off U.S. Route 1 in Warfield is open to visitors from 9 a.m. to dusk.

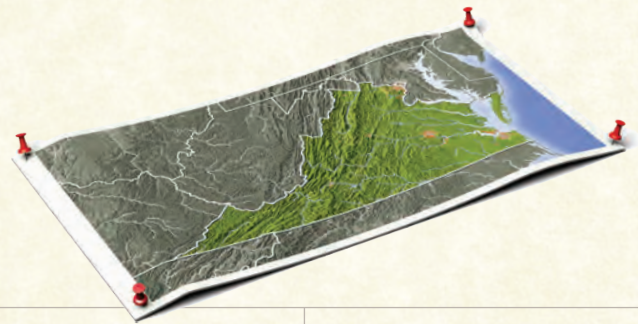
Rev. Edward Dromgoole House

The home of early Methodist circuit rider the Rev. Edward Dromgoole was a center of activity for the spread of the Methodism and the gospel when

(Con't. on next page: “BRUNSWICK.”)



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



("BRUNSWICK," cont. from pg. 13.)



the nation was young and the Brunswick Circuit of Virginia and North Carolina was frontier.

Edward Dromgoole (1751-1835) had emigrated from Ireland to America in 1770 and had been converted from Catholicism to Methodism. While preaching on the Brunswick Circuit, Dromgoole met, converted and married Rebecca Walton, daughter of a wealthy planter. As a wedding present, Rebecca was given 200 acres of land in southern Brunswick County on which they built "Canaan" their home and the home of their family for generations. Dromgoole rode the circuit until 1784 and then ministered locally. Dromgoole was devoted to the cause of freedom. During the Revolutionary War, Dromgoole read the Declaration of Independence from the courthouse steps in Halifax, North Carolina for the benefit of those who could not read.

The Dromgoole home was frequently visited by American Bishop Francis Asbury. It was at Canaan that Bishop Asbury, the Rev. Peter Pelham and Dromgoole met to organize Ebenezer Academy. The house was also the birthplace and home of Edward's youngest son, George Coke Dromgoole, who served in the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate and in the US Congress for nine years where he was serving at the time of his death in 1843.

In 2008, in order to preserve this architectural and historical but deteriorating gem, the Foundation purchased the Rev. Dromgoole house and 16 acres. The long-term goal is to preserve and restore the house, which retains much of its original interior woodwork, and to add a structure for meetings and retreats in this quiet, natural setting. The house will serve as the focal point and visitors will be able to watch progress as the house slowly undergoes restoration.

Since acquisition the house has been "moth-balled" with building wrap and the perennially wet basement problems abated with drainage improvements. In 2017 the partially rotten sill was repaired and the house was leveled and secured until sufficient funds can be procured to

proceed with foundation repair. This second stage that will include repair to the stone foundation around the entire house, chimney repair, and re-pointing may cost as much as \$60,000.

In September 2017 eminent architectural historian Carl Lounsbury visited the Dromgoole House, providing expert opinion to date the house construction (last quarter of the 18th century) and identifying architectural significance that will contribute to the planned application for the National Register of Historic Places. The site, located in Valentines, Va., is open by appointment only.

Original Randolph-Macon College

Randolph-Macon College was chartered by the Virginia General Assembly in 1830 in Boydton, Virginia. This is the original site of the oldest Methodist-affiliated college, still operating in the United States. It opened on October 9, 1832; however, in 1868, largely due to economic difficulties caused by the Civil War, the college was moved to Ashland, where it operates today. Subsequently, the vacated buildings were used by a northern faith-based organization as a school to educate recently emancipated slaves and their families. Under the

VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

name of the Boydton Academy and Bible Institute, the site continued to educate African Americans into the 20th century—generating accomplished educators, missionaries and ministers, many of whom became influential in the Civil Rights Movement.

In November 1794, while working to establish Cokesbury College, Bishop Asbury expressed the following strong opinion that schools should be religious in nature:

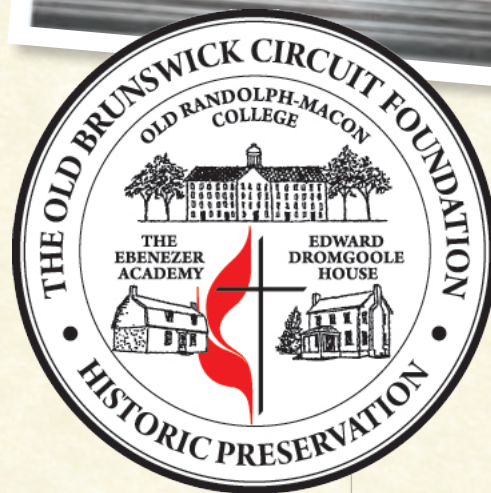
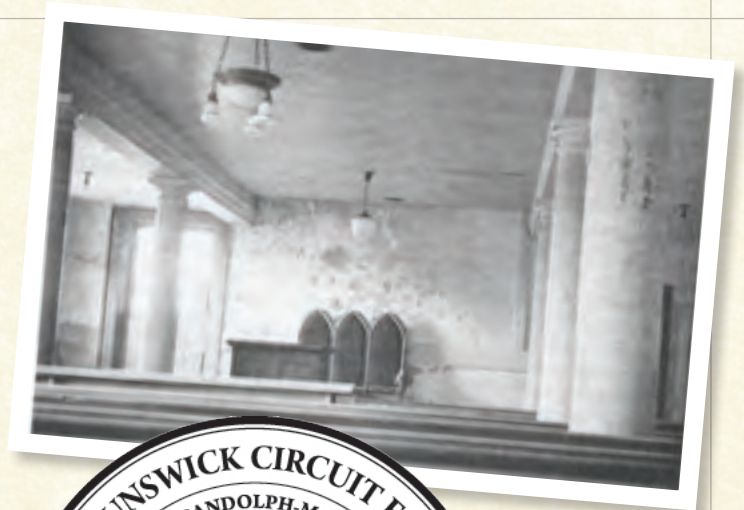
“If we cannot have a Christian school, (that is a school under Christian discipline and pious teachers) we will have none.”

However, having learned the dangers of and fought against state-endorsed religions, the Virginia General Assembly would only charter Randolph-Macon College under the agreement that it would not be an educational facility with a religious focus. Ironically, the Boydton Institute, by being a Bible school which educated generations of ministers and missionaries, fulfilled Bishop Asbury’s dream of a religious school.

Having purchased the Randolph-Macon and Boydton Institute property in 2017, the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation envisions developing the site as an historic park and tourist attraction along Route 58 near Boydton. While the stabilized walls of

the Randolph-Macon and Boydton Institute will be the main exterior attraction, the nearby Helensha Cottage that was built as the headmaster’s cottage for the Boydton Institute, will serve as a complimentary interior space. It will provide a combination small interpretive museum, workspace and living quarters for site caretakers or visiting speakers and advisors. Every attempt will be made to use the development of this site as a learning laboratory to engage a diverse population of students—from educational facilities as well as from the community—in every aspect of the preservation process.

To date, the OBCF has made initial contacts to utilize the college site and structures as a learning laboratory. A number of cooperative endeavors are in the works with several schools including Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Randolph College, Southside Virginia Community College, and Mary Washington University, as well as HistoriCorps, an organization that restores historic properties as a building classroom. Due to the fragile state of the old college walls, efforts were made to record the remains using drone aerial photography. Additionally, as a class project, students in the Historic Preservation program at

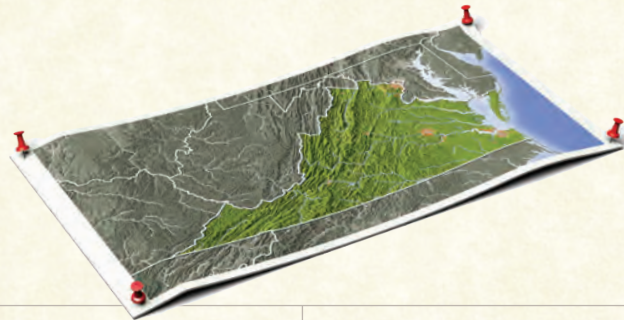


Mary Washington are using digital software to make a 3-D rendering of the main Randolph-Macon College building as it appeared in the 1830s. A preliminary engineering report with cost estimates was prepared by Lysaght Engineering. It identified three options for preserving the remaining walls. “Clean-up” work days are planned for early 2018. An R-MC “Greek Week” clean-up is planned to clear underbrush and debris from the cottage and yard. 📌

—Carol Corker is the secretary for the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (OBCF). Jim Mott is the president of the OBCF.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Historic Site Serves Exciting Role as Learning Laboratory

By Ann Keeling

While the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (OBCF) works to preserve the original Randolph-Macon College and Boydton Institute in Mecklenburg County, they have stumbled upon another constructive role that this historical site can play—that of a learning laboratory.

(below) The historic Helensha Cottage on the grounds of the original Randolph-Macon College.



It started during efforts to create digital, visual three-dimensional depictions of the main college building. The OBCF reached out to various institutions that had the equipment and expertise to help them accomplish such a feat. Not only did they find an experienced drone operator, Mr. James O'Neill, who used his sophisticated drone equipment to provide aerial videos of the building in its current state, but they also were fortunate to connect with Dr. Michael Spencer.

Spencer is the head of the Department of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg. He recommended that the OBCF use software called *Google Sketch-Up* to create animated renditions of the college based on architectural measurements. Using this opportunity as a class exercise, Spencer volunteered to have his class also create a digital three-dimensional tour of how the main Randolph-Macon College building appeared in the 1830s.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Travis C. McDonald, director of Architectural Restoration at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, brought students who were in Poplar Forest's Architectural History and Restoration Field School on a field trip to the Randolph-Macon and Boydton Institute campus. Dr. K. Edward Lay, an architect and expert

on Jeffersonian architecture, as well as Mr. David Clauss, a senior restoration craftsman at Poplar Forest, were also in attendance. Together participants inspected the college walls and were also invited by the private owner to visit the nearby home that was the residence of this college's early presidents. The visiting experts shared their expertise concerning the architectural elements of these buildings with the students as well as the members of the OBCF.

Having experienced such enthusiastic responses in 2017, the OBCF has reached out to a number of schools and organizations to seek additional partnerships. Several projects are currently in the planning stages for implementation in 2018.

HistoriCorps is a non-profit organization that provides volunteers of all skill levels with a hands-on experience preserving historic structures. Volunteers work with HistoriCorps' field staff to learn preservation skills and put those skills to work saving historic places that have fallen into disrepair. In return, many of the volunteers earn certifications for these newly acquired skills.

Coordination is underway with HistoriCorps to work with the Southside Virginia Community College and the Mecklenburg

Mini Feature

VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

County High School to help with the renovation of the Helensha Cottage. The Helensha Cottage is another historic building on the grounds of the original Randolph-Macon College. It was built for and named in honor of the wife of the first principal of the Boydton Institute, Helen Sharpe, who served as matron of the school for about 30 years. The Helensha Cottage is important to the overall history and preservation of the site. The OBCF envisions using it as a combination small museum, work space and caretaker's living space. Accordingly it will support the preservation and historical interpretation of the main college building as well as the Helensha Cottage itself.

Several departments from the Randolph-Macon College in Ashland have also responded enthusiastically about partnering with the OBCF's preservation efforts. Their McGraw-Page Library has agreed to be the official archival repository for information gathered on the history of this Boydton Campus. As their community service project during Greek Week, sorority and fraternity members will be arriving in Boydton in the spring to help clean up the grounds around the college walls and the cottage. There is even the possibility that students from their Department of


Environmental Studies will observe --and if they want they can participate in--the removal of the honey bees that have taken up residence and built their hives in the walls of the Helensha Cottage.

Randolph College in Lynchburg also saw the grounds OBCF's historical sites as a teaching resource. They have recently established a new major in Museum and Cultural Studies. In support of this new program, they are exploring how they can partner with the OBCF by helping with content development and graphic design for promotional material, interpretive signage and museum displays needed at the cottage and college.

Randolph College's Department of Environmental Studies and Physics views the Boydton campus as a completely different kind of opportunity. They

want to partner with OBCF so that their students can survey the grounds with their department's ground penetrating radar (GPR). While surveying the grounds, students will get hands-on experience using this equipment and at the same time assist the OBCF in their search for underground evidence of historical features such as cisterns or privies. These types of details have the potential of adding to the knowledge of the bygone, day-to-day life on this campus.

The eagerness of all these institutions to partner with the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation is both productive and encouraging. It demonstrates that historical preservation sites can serve as exciting learning laboratories for students who are passionate about studying a variety of topics. All of those who

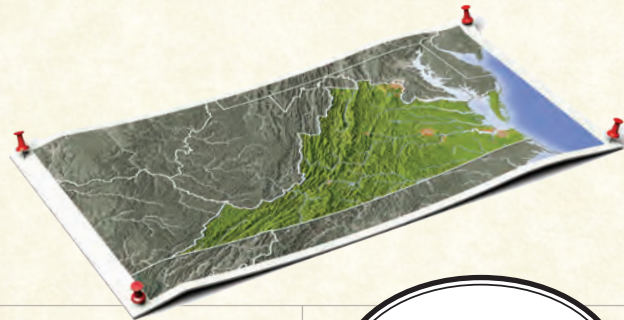
participate are preserving history and promoting awareness of the sites while also increasing their knowledge and improving their skills sets. 

– Ann Keeling is a trustee of the Conference Historical Society.

(below) Dr. Michael Spencer and his Historic Preservation class at the University of Mary Washington.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



The Future of Conference Archives

By Stephanie Davis and Jack Martin

The Virginia Conference Archives, located in the United Methodist Center in Glen Allen, is an important repository for conference records, church histories, local church closing records, books, historical documents and paraphernalia germane to the Virginia United Methodist heritage and predecessor denominations. Part-time archivist Stephanie Davis meticulously maintains the permanent collection and

receives new materials for cataloguing or disposal.

A large part of Davis' job is encouraging and assisting churches to preserve their records, compiling local church histories and celebrating their heritage. When churches close, she accepts their valuable records and stores them for future use. Davis also accepts, when possible, gifts of books, records, papers, pictures and objects that help to tell the story of Methodism in Virginia.

Davis searches for baptismal records and researches many other topics. For example, when churches celebrate anniversaries or homecomings, she helps provide lists of ministers, with their dates of service and pictures.

Any person is invited to visit the archives to use its resources.

A growing demand

The recent closure of the Blackstone Assembly Center brought a significant amount of material into the archives, significantly straining the capacity of the facility. Digitization is one way of preserving this growing amount of material with efforts under way to procure state-of-the-art equipment to do so, but it is costly and resources are limited.

While the archives has computerized information programs and a move-

DID YOU KNOW?

Each local church can write its own history and place a copy in the Archives. The conference archivist can also assist local churches in setting up a history committee, a history room or in writing their church's history.

Contact the conference archivist at 804-521-1132 or stephaniedavis@vaumc.org for office hours and assistance with research questions.

able shelving system that provides easy access to storage, Davis reports that more space is needed to adequately carry forward the work, and that new equipment is needed, including a new computer. One of the important aspects of her position is assisting those who do historical research. Up-to-date equipment is essential for this work. Through the generous contribution of a Conference Historical Society trustee, a new scanner was purchased last year.

One of the more significant efforts of the Virginia Conference Historical Soci-



VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ety (VCHS) is the preservation and promotion of the Patti Russell Endowment, which helps to support the salary of archivist. Russell served the conference for many years as volunteer archivist.

Looking to the future, the VCHS hopes contributors will be generous in helping to grow the endowment in this age of expanding technology where faster retrieval and much greater capacity are needed, even as the historical society is working with Davis to find new ways to care for materials within the confines of the present archives, while looking for additional space. 🍷

—Stephanie Davis in the conference archivist at the conference center located in Glen Allen. The Rev. Dr. John (Jack) T. Martin Jr. is president of the Virginia Conference Historical Society.

HERITAGE publication in 45th year

The *HERITAGE* is a bi-annual scholarly bulletin published by the Virginia Conference Historical Society. Each issue presents: two or more well-researched and documented articles about the people, places and events of Virginia United Methodist history; recent history-making events and efforts to preserve United Methodist history; updates from conference archivist Stephanie Davis; and the Rev. Raymond Wrenn's Notes from the Ethelbert Drake Society.

To produce *HERITAGE*, a dedicated, all-volunteer publications committee meets twice yearly to discuss the upcoming issue and to plan for future ones. All articles are composed by writers who are passionate about Virginia United Methodist history and who are knowledgeable in their subjects. Authors are compensated with free issues of the publication in which their article appears.

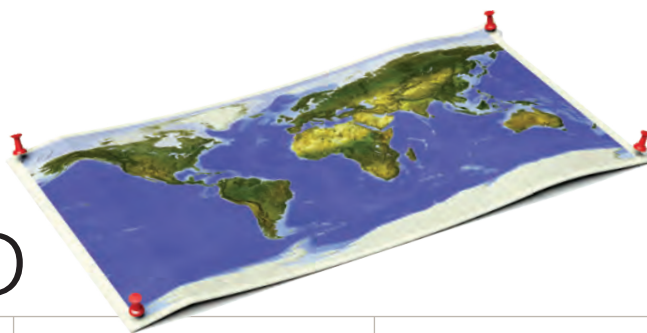
The *HERITAGE* team is always searching for good stories and welcomes all queries and manuscripts concerning Virginia United Methodist history. You can reach editor Myra Lindsey at heritage@vaumc.org.

HERITAGE is available in print and online editions. A one-year subscription (two

issues) costs \$10 for the print edition, \$7 for the on-line version; \$12 for both. Issues are available in mid-May and mid-November. To subscribe, visit vaumc.org/heritage. 🍷



Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD



Way Forward fleshing out three possible futures

By Heather Hahn

The Commission on a Way Forward is fleshing out the details of three possible models for how the denomination treats LGBTQ* inclusion.

The multinational group, appointed by United Methodist bishops, held its seventh meeting behind closed doors Jan. 18-20 in Dallas.

Each model has its supporters among the 32 commission members with no single plan having a clear majority, commission members told United Methodist News Service.

"Some commission members prefer one sketch; others prefer a different sketch," the Rev. Tom Lambrecht said. "There's no one sketch that predominates

how we think is the best way to go forward."

Dave Nuckols, another commission member, said that it's less relevant which model commission members prefer than that they provide the bishops what they need.

The bishops also have asked the commission to draft a theological statement that both informs the three models and creates a compelling narrative for them.

"Ultimately, the final report of our work is really not going to be our final report," Nuckols said. "It's going to be what the bishops make of our work because we are supporting them."

Commission offers three potential options

The three options, in no particular order, are:

- ❖ Affirm the current *Book of Discipline* language and place a high value on accountability. The church policy book says the practice of homosexuality "is incompatible with Christian teaching" and lists officiating at a same-gender union or being a "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy member as chargeable offenses under church law.
- ❖ Remove the *Book of Discipline's* restrictive lan-

guage and place a high value on contextualization. This sketch also specifically protects the rights of those whose conscience will not allow them to perform same-gender weddings or ordain LGBTQ people.

- ❖ Create multiple branches that have clearly defined values such as accountability, contextualization and justice. This model would maintain shared doctrine and services and one Council of Bishops.

All three models come with a way for churches to exit the denomination.

While United Methodists have bandied about the first two options in earlier church discussions, the third is different from what came before.

"The multi-branch option is intended to provide a space within the overall church where different groups could operate according to their conscientious beliefs," Lambrecht said.

"Structurally, that's still under development as how that would look. But I think the intent is that it would abide by one of the principles we operate under, which is that there would be no winners or losers in this scenario."

However, Nuckols — a Minnesota Conference lay

The Commission on a Way Forward convened in Nashville, Tennessee, October 30 - November 1, 2017.
Photo by the Rev. Maidstone Mulenga.



Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD

leader and treasurer of the Connectional Table – sees the first and third options as ultimately untenable. He favors something along the lines of the second option, which offers more local decision-making.

“Our bishops requested ‘contextual differentiation,’” he said. “That means allowing more space so that we can each succeed in varied mission fields and so that we no longer litigate a single uniform church law treating married homosexuals differently than married heterosexuals.”

He said the second option offers space within one church, while the third offers space between different branches.

“The simpler Space Within approach cultivates greater tolerance as a sustainable path to unity, discipleship and mission,” he said. “The well-intentioned but complex Space Between approach offers structural co-existence, but in my opinion, its long-term consequences will be instability and schism.”

Lambrecht is a leader in the advocacy groups Good News and the Wesleyan Covenant Association – both of which advocate for maintaining the church’s restrictions.

“I think it’s fair to say most evangelicals would prefer to see an option similar to option one – whether that’s realistic at

this point is up for grabs,” he said.

The bishops will use the commission’s work to develop legislation that will go before the 864 lay and clergy delegates of a special General Conference on Feb. 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri. The special meeting of The United Methodist Church’s top lawmaking assembly will be limited to acting on a report by the Council of Bishops. Nevertheless, at least some United Methodists are already drafting their own plans to propose as substitute legislation.

While the Wesleyan Covenant Association has not decided whether to submit its own legislation, Lambrecht said he knows of individuals who are working on their own proposals.

At the beginning of the recent commission meeting, Council of Bishops President Bishop Bruce R. Ough offered some advice to the commission members.

“Time is running short and we need to focus,” he said, according to a commission press release. “Simple is better than complex. Reasonable detail is better than ambiguity. Fewer disciplinary changes is better than more. Honor the parameters and values of the ‘mission, vision and scope’ document – unity, contextualization and enhanced mission.”

Retired Bishop David

Yemba of the Democratic Republic of Congo also urged the commission to keep the denomination’s global nature in mind. Yemba is one of three bishops serving as commission moderators.

“Many United Methodists outside of the United States would like to see the context be taken into consideration seriously,” he said, according to the press release. “Whatever models the Council of Bishops will come up with and recommend to General Conference as a way forward, it is expected that such a recommendation will provide space to focus on what unites us and not what separates us as well as what we can say together as basic principles on human sexuality in the light of the Gospel.”

The Council of Bishops will have a special meeting in February to review the commission’s work. The commission has two more meetings scheduled this spring. The bishops have a deadline of July 8 to submit their petitions to the special General Conference. 🌈

**An initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.*

–Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.

“It is expected that such a recommendation will provide space to focus on what unites us and not what separates us as well as what we can say together as basic principles on human sexuality in the light of the Gospel.”

RETIRED BISHOP DAVID YEMBA,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



SENIOR CENTER FOR WOMEN MINISTERING TO THOSE



WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



The United Methodist Church calls members of the church to be in “ministry to individuals and their families challenged by disorders causing disturbances of thinking, feeling and acting categorized as ‘mental illness.’” The church acknowledges that in the past and still today, progress in the field of mental health has been hampered by lack of knowledge, fear and misunderstanding.

John Wesley and other founders of The United Methodist Church grounded the denomination in the redemptive ministry of Jesus and placing an importance on healing a whole person: physical, spiritual, emotional and mental. The love and compassion shown by these founders can still today model the church’s response to those persons challenged by mental illness.

This feature shares information from organizations like UMFS and Pinnacle Living to emphasize that knowledge is empowering and can help us be better members of our communities.



HOW THE CHURCH CAN BE IN MINISTRY WITH INDIVIDUALS CHALLENGED BY DISORDERS

By Charles Wickham and Bill Francavilla

Steve was in his early 50s when he received the life-changing diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. He had been a probation officer with an amazing reputation in the community, so this diagnosis was not easy to accept. Steve volunteered at his church and was a Scoutmaster for the local Boy Scout Troop. The progression of Steve's symptoms led to dementia, and I realized he was forgetting far more than I will ever know in my life. As a pastor and friend, I found myself often speechless. Many times, there were no words needed, just presence. So, we would sit in silence and hold hands knowing that love was shared.

All of us would like to be of "sound mind and spirit." Unfortunately, as we age, we know that older adults can face mental health challenges that need to be recognized. When we think of mental health in older adults, we often think of dementia and cognitive impairment. We forget someone's name. We forget why we went into a room. We find it difficult to repeat something we have heard. So we make an excuse or simply disregard these experiences and go on about our day. Yet mental health, especially in older adults, is so much more than a few forgetful moments. It is: anxiety, mood disorders, addiction and more that can often come about or be exacerbated in the transitions of aging.

Mental health affects our thinking, mood, behavior, relationships and even our physical health. The United Methodist Church calls its members to be in "ministry to individuals and their families challenged by disorders causing disturbances of thinking, feeling and acting categorized as 'mental illness.'" While that is easy to say, how do we do this? What does this ministry look like?

In the article, "When the Mind Goes: Reflections and Resources" available at www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/when-the-mind-goes-reflections-and-resources, William Randolph and Taylor Burton-Edwards from Discipleship Ministries give three simple steps:

FIRST, DON'T HIDE FROM REALITY

Baby Boomers, the largest demographic of people, are generally considered to fall between birth years of 1946 and 1964. Many do not seek diagnosis of issues. Whether it's due to fear of knowing or just ignoring the symptoms, these indi-

viduals are in our midst. So, how are we, The United Methodist Church, to respond?

SECOND, WE MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE


We must motivate the younger generation and develop a network of resources that can be readily shared with individuals as well as their families. There is nothing worse than thinking, "I could have done more!"

THIRD, GET SOME TRAINING

Individuals and congregations need to know how to be active in mental health issues. Melissa Andrews, executive director of Leading Age Virginia, a senior adult advocacy group, recently said she saw a sign in a business window that said "Dementia Friendly Business." Melissa went in and asked what the sign meant. An employee said they had been trained to assist people with dementia and other memory issues. Simply put, this business was a safe place. What an inspiring concept! Are our churches willing to do the same?

Together we must prayerfully consider what needs to be done. If you believe you have little to offer, then consider the lesson of Jesus and the widow's mite. There is little irony in the fact that Jesus uses a widow in his illustration of what we can give. In Luke 21:1-4, the rich gave large sums of money into the treasury while a widow added two cents. Jesus, knowing that this was all she had, told his disciples that she gave more than the other who gave only a portion.

Can you spare a little time or resources? We certainly hope so. Looking back, the time spent with Steve seemed like I was doing little, but now I understand the impact that you and I can have. The church can play a vital role in reaching out to older adults facing cognitive impairment or mental illness in our congregations and communities, even by taking small steps.

Remember that our Pinnacle Living communities are available to assist your church as you consider how you might have greater impact in this type of outreach and ministry. Please call on us if we can be a resource for your congregation. You can find a listing of our communities on our website at PinnacleLiving.org. 

—The Rev. Charles Wickham is the director of Donor Development at Pinnacle Living and Bill Francavilla is the chaplain at WindsorMeade, Williamsburg.




FACTS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

MENTAL ILLNESS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

The magnitude of mental illness in this country is staggering. According to the Surgeon General, one in every five Americans experiences a mental disorder in any given year and half of all Americans have such disorders at some time in their lives. These illnesses of the brain affect all of us, regardless of age, gender, economic status or ethnicity. Nearly every person sitting in the pews has been touched in some way by mental illness. And yet individuals and families continue to suffer in silence or stop coming to their faith community because they are not receiving the support they so desperately need. They become detached from their faith community and their spirituality, which is an important source of healing, wholeness and hope in times of personal darkness.

According to the Surgeon General, one in every five Americans experiences a mental disorder in any given year and half of all Americans have such disorders at some time in their lives.	These illnesses of the brain affect all of us, regardless of age, gender, economic status or ethnicity.
About one in 17 lives with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder	One in five U.S. service members who served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffers from major depression or combat stress (PTSD)
One in 10 children and youth has a serious mental illness condition	About half of students with a serious mental illness in special education drop out of high school – the highest dropout rate of any disability group
Fewer than one-third of adults and one-half of children who live with mental health needs receive any level of treatment in any one year	Only one in three adults who lives with a serious mental illness is employed, even though most want to work
26 percent of the homeless population lives with a severe mental illness	One out of every five community hospital stays involves a primary or secondary diagnosis of mental illness
About 20-25 percent of jail and prison inmates and youth involved with juvenile justice live with a serious mental illness	We lose one life to suicide every 15.8 minutes. The suicide rate for older adults is 50 percent higher than the national rate as a whole
One in four persons sitting in our pews has a family member struggling with mental health issues	Many individuals with a mental health issue go first to a spiritual leader for help
Studies show that clergy are the least effective in providing appropriate support and referral information	Our faith communities can be a caring congregation for persons living with a mental illness and their family members.

People with mental problems are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help, we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries for help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away. Because it will not go away, and because of our spiritual commitments, we are compelled to take action.

Mental Health Ministries is an interfaith web based ministry to provide educational resources to help erase the stigma of mental illness in our faith communities. Their mission is to help faith communities be caring congregations for people living with a mental illness and those who love and care for them. Learn more at <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net>. 

– According to Mental Health Ministries, a nonprofit organization founded by United Methodist minister, Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder.



LIFE EXPERIENCES PREPARE FAMILY SUPPORT PARTNERS TO HELP OTHERS

The suicide attempts; the various treatment facilities; the persistent sense of helplessness. These are some of the things Cristy Corbin recalls from that tumultuous time between 2010 and 2015.

Cristy is the mother of two daughters. Her youngest, McKenzie, was 13 years old when it was discovered that she had been self-harming.

School officials first sensed that something was amiss when McKenzie refused to remove a heavy-hooded sweat-shirt during an outdoor gym class on a 90-degree day in late spring. A teacher finally was able to reason with her, and that's when Cristy got the call.

"The teacher noticed cut marks on Kenzie's wrist," Cristy said. "That was the first I'd heard of it. I asked the team – the school nurse, psychologist, gym teacher – what do I do? What do I do?"

At the time, Cristy was working as an EMT at VCU Medical Center. She had some medical experience but little psychiatric experience. On the advice of school officials,

Cristy took McKenzie to the emergency room.

"The doctor said she's not sick enough to be hospitalized, but she did need counseling," Cristy recalled. A therapist was referred, so Cristy called immediately to make an appointment.

The wait list? Four months.

"I took it because I didn't know what else to do," Cristy said.

It was a long summer awaiting that first therapy session. For a time, Cristy continued working at VCU Medical Center, but she ultimately resigned. As the severity of the situation set in, she knew she needed to be home.

"It hit me like a ton of bricks, that the life I need to be saving is that of my own kid."

June, July, August and September came and went. Finally, McKenzie's first therapy session. It started out well.

"Kenzie started building a rapport," Cristy said.

But shortly thereafter, the therapist relocated, and the subsequent therapist "fell off the face of the earth," Cristy said. But the third therapist was able to help McKenzie find the treatment she so desperately needed.

The therapist told Cristy she'd never seen such a young child so sick. The diagnosis was Major Depressive Disorder with multiple suicide attempts and self-harm.

Cristy was urged to pursue residential treatment right away.

"What is that?" Cristy remembers asking. "I don't know what that means."

When you're new to the mental health system and dealing with a child's behavioral needs for the first time, Cristy said, everything is incredibly overwhelming.

Fortunately, the therapist walked Cristy and McKenzie through the process, explained residential treatment, and even helped find a placement.

Cristy was grateful, not just for the recommendation that McKenzie enter residential treatment, but for initiating the first step forward down a long and winding path. Cristy said she wouldn't have known where to begin had it not been for that therapist.

"She did the leg work," Cristy said. Through residential treatment, it was revealed that McKenzie also had ADHD, borderline personality disorder and suicidal ideations. Uncovering these allowed them to be treated.

McKenzie is now 21. She lives independently and hasn't self-harmed in more than a year. Cristy added with a wide smile, "And she had a baby in August."



Cristy Corbin



FAMILIES BECOME EXPERTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Some 2,000 miles away in Arizona, Laura May was navigating stormy seas of her own.

Laura has six children, two of whom are on the Autism spectrum and a third with mental illness. Two of her children have been hospitalized numerous times for attempting to die by suicide.

Laura's had her fair share of dealings with the health-care system through the years, and she likened some of her earliest experiences to "a bad nightmare."

"As parents, we work under the assumption that the people in the system are the experts and we need to trust them," she said. "It is intimidating."



But in many cases, the experts are just providers. "It is the family that is the expert on the family," Laura said.

Embracing that philosophy was, in part, what inspired her to expand the scope of care that she provided to her children.

Common treatments had been mostly fruitless, so Laura turned to non-traditional treatment. Wilderness therapy, art therapy and dance therapy all proved effective.

"I know best what my children need," she said.

THE FAMILY SUPPORT PARTNERS PROGRAM

This is but a snapshot of the experiences endured by Cristy, Laura and their respective families. Such scenarios unfortunately aren't uncommon.

Countless parents and guardians at this very moment need a guiding light as they pursue care for children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges.

UMFS identified this need and responded with its Family Support Partners (FSP) program in 2014. FSP advocates for families whose children have emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. Not only are they well trained, they're skilled because of personal experience.

"Been there, done that," said Cristy, the FSP supervisor.

"I am a parent with experience of navigating Virginia's behavioral health system with my own child, and I'm now in a position to pay it forward and partner with other families attempting to do the same."

The little things can be transformative for a family in crisis, Laura said. To be introduced to resources or have someone help them learn medical terminology is empowering.

"Parents of children with special needs have a skill set unparalleled to any clinician," she said. "It is a huge service to share my experiences with another family that is developing their skills."

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

UMFS Board Chair Margaret Hardy worked as a psychiatric nurse before pursuing a career in law. She's now president and healthcare group leader of the law firm Sands Anderson.

She called the FSP program a "step in the right direction in terms of navigating the difficulties" of the mental health-care system.

"And not just the system," Margaret said, "but the emotional and family dynamic, and all of those issues that go along with it."

Cristy said the FSP outcomes have shown that many families have reached a level of self-efficacy that, per their comments, otherwise would not have been possible if not for the program.

And as the success of the program grows, so too does the need for resources.

Cristy has been with UMFS since 2014. Laura joined the agency in August. They are two of six full-time FSP staffers across the state, and UMFS has 23 FSP positions open in Fairfax County, Richmond, Petersburg, Tidewater and Winchester.

"I was reluctant to jump in and start working with just any agency," Laura said. "I kept my ears open and waited until I found an agency that was known for its integrity. Working with my children's providers and attending National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and other classes, one agency's name was repeatedly mentioned positively: UMFS." 🍀

Please contact UMFS at www.umfs.org if you or someone you know may benefit from the services provided by Family Support Partners. If you already have experience navigating the mental health system, you might be interested in joining UMFS as a Family Support Partner. Photos courtesy of UMFS.

DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ **Sydenstricker UMC in Springfield** conducted a Shepherd's Run on Christmas Eve. Six fire stations, a police station and two INOVA 24-hour emergency centers received trays of homemade cookies in appreciation for their "night watch" on this holy night. A recipient remarked that no one ever remembers them on Christmas Eve. A church member who delivered a tray of cookies said it was the highlight of her Christmas.

▼ United Methodist Women (UMW) members of **Chestnut Memorial UMC, York River District**, dressed in red in support of the UMW annual awareness campaign, "Intercept the

Traffickers." Members were asked to stand in the "Red Zone" to symbolize their push to move through the goal posts toward victory against human traffickers.

Asbury UMC, Harrisonburg, did double duty during the frigid weather Jan. 1-7, 2018. Asbury housed the rotating night thermal shelter, Open Doors, and also opened a daytime warming center. **Senior pastor Steve Hay** opened the center because Harrisonburg has no known plan for daytime shelter. Asbury alternated with Our Community Place to provide shelter from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily. Jerry Marshall, a formerly homeless

man who hosts Asbury's shower and laundry facilities, served as manager and was assisted by 14 volunteers. Center guests watched movies, played games, slept and helped process school supplies for mission kits. ▼



Last summer, the **Rev. Sarah Dumas Locke** and the **Rev. T. Bryson Smith** had a vision. Their respective churches have been on a mission to show love to their community and connect with the city of **Staunton**. Over the past six months, they have launched a campaign called #ForStaunton, to declare that in the same way God is for people, the church is for its community.

Both pastors asked themselves, "What if on one of the holiest nights of the year [Christmas Eve], we invited our community to come together in a different way? What if we invited folks to celebrate in a different way? What if we gathered in the heart of city and prayed for Christ to break into the place we love to live?"

On Dec. 24 at 11 p.m., members from both **Christ UMC** and **St. Paul's UMC** gathered in the parking lot of the Staunton Depot. The owners of Stack's Restaurant, located inside the old American Hotel, graciously offered their space without cost. Folks sat on the steps of the train depot as all who gathered sang.





▲ The most beautiful part of this service was the sight of a worshipping community. A local principal worshiped next to a homeless family. A family from Mexico worshiped alongside African-American leaders in the community. A young boy lit his candle singing “Silent Night” next to folks in their 70s.

Locke said she hopes that their witness extends past midnight on Christmas Eve, and that they truly begin to build connections with their

community that are broad, inclusive and all for the glory of God.

▼ The Nurture Committee from **Bridgewater UMC, Harrisonburg District**, presented a “Veteran’s Day” recognition program in the fellowship hall to remember and recognize all the members of the church who have served in the country’s Armed Forces. The program on Nov. 19 consisted of music, reflection and prayer for the country and its veterans. 🇺🇸



Advocate

The Virginia United Methodist

EQUIPS
CONNECTS
INFORMS



www.vaumc.org/Advocate

LIVING THE WORD



Forrest White is a news associate in the Conference Communications Office. He has served as United Methodist Volunteers In Mission Coordinator for the conference since June 1, 2013, and served as the long-term recovery manager for the conference's Disaster Response Ministry from April 2016-October 2017. Forrest is a 1987 graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C. His wife, Desda, serves on staff at St. James UMC in Greenville, N.C. They have three children -- Haley, 25; Austin, 22; and Kerrigan, 16.

March 4 Numbers 21-22 Deal makers and traders

"If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities." Numbers 21:2

When I was a youth, I used to try to cut deals with God all the time.

"God, if you give me this, I'll do that ..."

"God, if you take away this, I'll do that ..."

If I'm being honest, there have been times in my adult life when I've tried to make similar deals, as if my will is somehow better than God's will. *Hey God, Forrest knows best!!!*

Ahem, not so much.

Reality is this, we're all deal makers or traders. When I think about the concept of trading, I think about pro sports.

The Dallas Cowboys traded running back Herschel Walker to the Minnesota Vikings in 1989 to stockpile draft picks for the coming years. Dallas parlayed those picks into more picks and assembled a team that won three Super Bowls in four years. Walker was a Viking for less than three years, never gaining 1,000 yards in a season and never winning a playoff game.

The Boston Red Sox traded Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees in 1920 for cash. Ruth had been a star pitcher for Boston, leading the 1918 team to a World Series win, its third in four years with him on the roster. Ruth was becoming an offensive weapon, hitting 29 home runs in 1919, but Boston didn't want to pay the \$20,000 salary he demanded. So they sold him to the Yankees, where he emerged as one of the greatest hitters ever. Boston didn't win another World Series until 2004, while the Yankees won 26. Baseball fans refer to the trade when speaking of Red Sox futility in the midst of Yankee dominance as "the curse of the Bambino."

The sports world points to the Walker and Ruth trades as two of the worst trades ever, unless, of course, you're a fan of the Cowboys or Yankees.

A few years ago, I previewed some materi-

als from the *Right Now* movement, which tried to convince a generation to trade pursuit of the "new" American Dream (more money, more power, more wealth, more fame, more stuff ... you get the picture) for pursuit of more godly things.

"Are you a trader?" they asked, already knowing the answer.

Yes, we're all traders!!! Each of us makes a trade every time we choose to do something. But something's out of line when we consistently trade godly pursuits for worldly ones, when we approach our faith as though it were something to fit into the calendar when we can find an open space or two.

I believe free will is one of God's greatest gift to us. Only a God who loves us dearly would allow us such freedom.

May we use that freedom more wisely than the 1989 Vikings and the 1920 Red Sox, every time we make a trade.

March 11 Deuteronomy 1-2 God's unchanging goodness

When things don't go our way, it's human nature to grumble and let our immediate situation blind us to the bigger picture. But, since we have the big picture knowledge from Scripture of God's love story for creation, we must never sink so low as to utter the phrase, "The Lord hates us," as the Israelites did when they were convinced the Amorites would destroy them.

I have a friend on Facebook who often uses the phrase "God is good." Of course, she's right. "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good." (Luke 18:19)

The Book of James puts it this way: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17)

God is good – God does not change with the passage of time or a change in circumstance, both of which account for the shifting shadows



of which James wrote.

So, why then, when my friend posts "God is good," do I almost always squirm in my seat?

It is the context of her posts. A family member gives birth to a healthy baby ... God is good. A seriously ill loved one gets better ... God is good. The storm hit a few towns over ... God is good.

I realize that phrase might simply be my friend's way of expressing gratitude and praise to God whom she dearly loves.

But... what if the baby had been born with an awful disease? What if the sick loved one died? What if the storm ripped through her town? What if it destroyed her home?

In those times of sorrow, in those times when things don't go our way, in the times of great loss, we aren't quick to say "God is good!" are we?

The three best days of my life were the three days my children were born – Haley in December 1992, Austin in June 1995, Kerrigan in October 2001.

The worst day of my life was when my dad died in April 1992.

God was as good on the day my dad died as on the days my children were born.

We must never tie God's goodness to the circumstances of our lives or God's love for others to the circumstances of theirs.

It is our job as disciples of Christ to remind those who have lost much in storms of life and storms of nature of God's unchanging goodness, of God's unwavering love.

And, when life brings us hurt and sadness our way, we must remind ourselves, as well.

March 18

Deuteronomy 21-23

Will you "Walk on By"?

"If you see your fellow Israelite's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to its owner. If they do not live near you or if you do not know who owns it, take it home with you and keep it until they come looking for it. Then give it back. Do the same if you find their donkey or cloak or anything else they have lost. Do not ignore it. If you see your fellow Israelite's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its feet." Deuteronomy 22:1-4

When I read this Scripture, I thought first of the Dionne Warwick song "Walk on By" from the 1960s. I guess, maybe, I've been playing too much *SongPop* on my phone.

But, soon, I thought about a man who changed countless lives because he chose not to simply ignore a young woman in need.

On a late summer evening years ago, I sat alone in front of the TV, flipping through the channels. Somehow, on that day, I happened upon Virginia Currents, the public television program that, as they say, "celebrates the people and places of the Commonwealth."

The segment featured Project W.A.R.M., which supplies wood to needy families in the Richmond area. Almost immediately, I knew it was a great way for the youth at my church to serve.

What are the chances that I would happen to be in front of the TV at just the right time to catch a re-run of a segment filmed a few years before?

Fast forward about six months

from that random summer night, and I was standing with Lou Wilson, the man responsible for Project W.A.R.M. Back in October 1976, he happened to be in front of the TV at just the right time, also.

The local news told the story of a single mother burning her summer clothes to keep her children warm. So, Lou began cutting, splitting and delivering wood to that mother.

Over time, word spread and he found himself supplying wood to more and more families. He reached out to others to help him. And, in 1989, he actually formed Project W.A.R.M., which stands for "Wood Association of Richmond Metro."

"When people are cold and hungry, they don't make the best decisions," Lou once told me, as he leaned against a shovel at the wood lot near John Marshall High School.

He told me about walking into homes and seeing extended families huddled around wood stoves trying to stay warm, of walking into homes where there was no floor left except in the kitchen – the rest had been burned to stay warm.

Lou's body died in the spring of 2014, after another season of wood delivery was complete. The Project W.A.R.M. ministry lives on today.

Thank God Lou didn't simply change the channel when he saw a young woman in need all those years ago.

Thank God Lou seized the opportunity set before him to make a difference in the lives of a poor, single mother and her children.

(Con't. on pg. 35: "LIVING WORD.")

The Living Word devotions will coincide with the 2018 Bible Reading Challenge from Bishop Lewis. Find the March schedule on pg. 34. Find all 2018 readings at www.vaumc.org.

CLERGY & DIACONAL



DEATHS



The Rev. Norman S. Chattin, of Richmond, died Dec. 19, 2017. He is survived by his devoted wife of 70 years, Ber-

nice Bryan Chattin; daughter, Norma Anne Chattin; and son-in-law, Henry Verlander; one granddaughter, Kathryn Renee Chattin; two great-granddaughters, Hailee and Macie Marchese; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his son, David Bryan Chattin. After serving in the Navy during World War II he went on to graduate from Randolph-Macon College and Duke University's seminary program. Over a period of 40 years, he served as senior pastor in 10 church appointments with the Virginia United Methodist Conference. Norman began his ministry in 1953 at St. Peter's, Beaverdam, and served Westhampton, St. Andrew's and Aldersgate on the Richmond District. He also served Victoria, Emmanuel in Amherst, Sledd Memorial, Main Street in Emporia, Kilmarnock, Chestnut Hill, and Highland. He retired in 1993. A Celebration of Life Service was held Jan. 5, 2018, at Westminster Canterbury.

Edward Herbert Wright was born on Oct. 14, 1928 in The Bronx, N.Y. and died on Aug. 14, 2017 in Hampton, Va. As a young teen, Wright anticipated becoming a medical doctor until a Methodist pastor ministered to his family at the death of his father.



It was then, inspired by the Rev. Wayne White, he decided to be a minister.

After high school, he entered Western

Maryland College (now McDaniel) in Westminster, Md. During his junior year, Wright met the love of his life "a silly freshman" named Elizabeth Anne Schubert, whom he married after her graduation in 1952. In the meantime, he attended Westminster Theological Seminary, receiving his Divinity Degree after which he was ordained in the Methodist Church (now The United Methodist Church). The young preacher and his wife lived in a variety of parishes-rural, suburban, downtown, college campuses while also parenting four lively children. The hallmark of Wright's ministry in addition to tending his flock was participation in social justice.

During the 1960s, he worked with Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson and the Poor People's Campaign. Indicative of his leadership, he was the encouragement of the laity as they sought to perform ministries in the church and community. In addition, he participated in Virginia Conference activities: district and conference youth work with Millie Cooper; mentor for churches in transitional communities"; member of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry; and co-chair of the Memoirs Committee for many years.

After 25 years of marriage, when his wife experienced a call to ministry, Wright supported her in her endeavors to enter a profession heretofore a man's domain. Following his retirement after 44 years in ministry, he became a much loved "minister's spouse" singing in the choir and

teaching popular Bible classes. After his retirement, he also initiated an English worship service at a Korean Church. In between times he enjoyed traveling with his family and spending time at the old family log cabin retreat Mutton Hollow in Greene County.

In addition to his parents he is preceded in death by his brother, Clarence; sister, Ruth; and infant grandson, Spencer. He is survived by "Libby," his wife of 65 years; a brother, Wally(Pauline) Wright; children, Shirley-Ruth Hulick and Violet(Toby) Breder, Fred(Sheila) Wright and Garry(Sally) Wright; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and a host of devoted nieces and nephews.

The Rev. Tom and Dreanna Murphy's grandson, Jason, died Dec. 13. The Rev. Murphy is the pastor of Sunset Drive UMC in Broadway, Va.

Eugene Field Moorefield Jr., 87 of Danville, died Dec. 10, 2017. He was a retired vice president from John W. Daniel, Inc. & the Daniel Group, where he worked for over 45 years. He served as board chairman for the Henry Fork Service Center for many years and was instrumental in raising the funds for their current facility. He was past chairman of the Salvation Army Advisory Board and chief election judge for the city of Danville. He served as district lay leader for the Danville District UMC and brought pastors into The United Methodist Church through his lay speaking ministries. He also served as a Sunday school teacher at Fairview UMC, Kerns Memorial UMC and Westover Hills UMC.

Elaine Nuckols, 92, of Roanoke, died Nov. 10, 2017. She was an ordained diaconal minister in The United Methodist Church and received her certifi-

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

cation from Emory University. She was a long-time member of Cave Spring United Methodist Church and several of its United Methodist Women's groups.

Marie Corathers Withers, 90, of Frederick County, died Nov. 1, 2017. She was a member of Brucetown UMC and was very active in the United Methodist Women's Ministry, the United Methodist Minister's Wives Ministry, and served as a member to Annual Conference. Her husband, the **Rev. William Ray Withers**, whom she married on September 26, 1953, preceded her in death in 2016.

Jacquelyn Trammell Dodd, 77, died Oct. 20, 2017, at her home in La-Grange, Ga. She was the widow of **Dr. James Dodd**, a clergy member of the Virginia Conference.

HONORS

The Rev. Lyle E. Morton, pastor of West End and St. Paul UMC, Roanoke District, received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major for Justice Award from the Roanoke Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) on Jan. 12.

The Rev. Baesick (Peter) Choi, pastor of West Franklin Charge on Danville District, successfully defended his PhD thesis on "Leviticus and Its Reception in the Dead Sea Scrolls From Qumran" at University of Manchester in England on Dec. 8, 2017. 🇺🇸

The Virginia United Methodist
Advocate
EQUIPS
CONNECTS
INFORMS
www.vaumc.org/Advocate

Lewis & Hitchcock, Inc.
Pipe Organ Builders Since 1915
11561 Edmonston Rd, Beltsville, MD 20705
Phone: 1-800-952-PIPE (7473)
Fax: (301) 931-2378

Pew Upholstering & Refinishing
Reversible Pew Cushions
New Pews • Carpeting
Complete Renovations
www.churchinteriors.com
1-800-289-7397
Church Interiors Inc.
The Nation's Leading Church Renovation Specialists.
High Point, North Carolina

For Your Printing Needs
**Benj. Franklin Printing Co.**
John R. Overbey, III (Jay)
Ellen A. Overbey
1528 High Street
Richmond, Va. 23220
(804) 648-6361
FAX (804) 643-7114

Where would your church like to go?



We have the right bus to take you there. Over 40 styles of excellent vehicles to choose from. Prices to fit any church budget. On-site service available. Call for a free demonstration.

Sonny Merryman Inc.
VIRGINIA'S BUS COMPANY
800-533-1006

Central Virginia • Hampton Roads • NOVA • sonnymerryman.com

FROM THE BISHOP



New District Superintendents

Dear Virginia Annual Conference,

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis said she is pleased to announce three new district superintendent appointments effective July 1, 2018.



The Rev. Dr. Victor R. Gómez, currently serving the Mount Olive-Relief Charge, Winchester District, will be the new

superintendent of the Harrisonburg District. Gómez will replace the Rev.

Ernest T. "Tommy" Herndon Jr. who will leave the Cabinet after serving as the Harrisonburg district superintendent since 2010.



The Rev. Sylvia S. Meadows, currently serving Chester United Methodist Church, James River District, will be the

new superintendent of the James River District. Meadows will replace the Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell who will leave the Cabinet after serving as the James River district superintendent since 2013.



The Rev. Dr. Steven J. Summers, currently serving Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, Richmond Dis-

trict, will be the new superintendent of the Winchester District. Summers will replace the Rev. Larry Thompson who will leave the Cabinet after serving as the Winchester district superintendent since 2010.

Please join Bishop Lewis in congratulating these servants and pray for their churches and the transition to the Cabinet.

Peace and Blessings.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for March

March 1	Numbers 14-15, Psalm 90
March 2	Numbers 16-17
March 3	Numbers 18-20
March 4	Numbers 21-22
March 5	Numbers 23-25
March 6	Numbers 26-27
March 7	Numbers 28-30
March 8	Numbers 31-32
March 9	Numbers 33-34
March 10	Numbers 35-36
March 11	Deuteronomy 1-2
March 12	Deuteronomy 3-4
March 13	Deuteronomy 5-7
March 14	Deuteronomy 8-10
March 15	Deuteronomy 11-13
March 16	Deuteronomy 14-16
March 17	Deuteronomy 17-20
March 18	Deuteronomy 21-23
March 19	Deuteronomy 24-27
March 20	Deuteronomy 28-29
March 21	Deuteronomy 30-31
March 22	Deut. 32-34, Psalm 91
March 23	Joshua 1-4
March 24	Joshua 5-8
March 25	Joshua 9-11
March 26	Joshua 12-15
March 27	Joshua 16-18
March 28	Joshua 19-21
March 29	Joshua 22-24
March 30	Judges 1-2
March 31	Judges 3-5

ONE LAST WORD

("LIVING WORD," cont. from page 31.)

Thousands of lives have been touched because he flipped on the TV one day, was moved by her story, and decided he would do something about it.

What about you? Will you choose to get involved or simply to walk on by?

March 25 Joshua 9-11 Get lost

Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous ..." Joshua 10:25

Those words spoken by Joshua to the army commanders echoed a portion of the words spoken to Joshua by God, when he was installed as leader after Moses died. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

Once upon a mission trip, my team was charged with cleaning up a playground near a housing project in the notorious Anacostia section of Washington, D.C.

Our ministry leaders knew we could handle the cleanup. They also knew that getting buy-in from the housing project offered the best hope for keeping the playground straight once we left it.

So, about eight of us folks from the West End of Richmond took a little walk through the projects. (It's easier to be strong and courageous when we acknowledge that God is with us and already at work ahead of us.)

I remember X-rated rap music blaring on a stereo. I remember obscenities being yelled out of windows at us.

I remember the foreboding look and demeanor of a very large man who passed us on the sidewalk. But here's what stands out most from that walk to remember.

A young man, probably in middle school, spotted our group and ran up to us, his eyes as wide as if he had seen a ghost.

"Y'all must be lost, aren't you?" he said.

Every time I think of him, I smile because in my mind I can still see that look on his face.


We found willing help from the kids of those projects and encouragement from dads sitting on the front steps outside their apartments. When it came time to meet at the playground, most of our recruited helpers showed up, as promised.

Who knows what impression we left on the people we met that day?

Perhaps they thought we were crazy. I hope they thought we were lost.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it," Jesus said. (Matthew 10:39)

If you've ever been a part of a mission team you know what Jesus meant here.

When we put aside the daily routine of our lives and get lost in the lives of God's children in need, we find more than we can ever imagine about what truly matters in this thing called life. 

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7



RANDOLPH-MACON
COLLEGE



Building Extraordinary Experiences

This summer, high school students can explore the realm where faith and science meet during CONVERGENCE, a 9-day residential experience at Randolph-Macon College.

Highlights include:

- ▶ topics such as The Origins of Life, Caring for God's Creation, and Food and Faith
- ▶ hands-on projects that foster discovery and introspection
- ▶ excursions to Shalom Farms, the Brock Environmental Center, and area rivers and waterways

Hurry! Applications/Nominations close on May 1, 2018
convergence.rmc.edu



convergence

JUNE 23 - JULY 1, 2018

A High School Youth Theology Institute on Faith and Science

www.rmc.edu | (804) 752-8712