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# The merits of Scouting

United Methodist churches  
have long partnership with  
Scouting programs





# Advocate

Virginia United Methodist

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**"We envision faith communities  
where all God's people are  
welcomed at table, nurtured  
and transformed to be  
Christ to others in the world."**

— Virginia Conference Vision Statement


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## From the Editor's Desk

# Scouting: Great ways to be in ministry with young people



Neill Caldwell  
Editor

**T**ime for true confession: I was probably the worst Boy Scout ever.

No kidding. Now mind you I was a *great* Cub Scout, really enjoying my time in that group. But I don't think I lasted a year in Boy Scouts. The atmosphere was different, not as much fun somehow, and some of my friends did not continue into the program. So I am sad to say I dropped out. (To this day I feel like I let down my father, who earned the rank of Eagle Scout, and, in fact was buried wearing his Eagle pin.)

So because of my crummy record I am feeling a little under-qualified to write about the wonderful Scouting programs. I do know that The United Methodist Church has a rather stellar record in supporting Scouting.

Scouting ministries fall under the General Commission on United Methodist Men, which supports not just Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, but also 4-H, Campfire USA and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Officially, those five organizations are supported because of their Christian connections, their long-time relationships to individual United Methodist congregations and their participation in the "God and Country" program. Unofficially, it's a great outreach to young people who, like the general church, are interested in serving others, and a great way to get these kids and their parents into our churches!

As the United Methodist Men's website states, "the mission of the church is to reach out to those within the community, receive them as they are, relate them to God, nurture and equip them and send them back into the community in order to make the community a more loving and just place in which to live." That is another way of saying our denomination's mission to "make disciples for the transformation of the world."

The website continues that "statistics indicate that of all the youth who join Scouting through the church, 25 percent are United Methodists, 25 percent are members of other denominations or faiths and 50 percent come from unchurched families. Therefore, Scouting is one potential entry point for persons to join the church, which then has the opportunity to introduce, nurture and strengthen a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Both Boy and Girl Scout organizations are 100 years old, and from day one Methodist adults have participated as leaders, while churches have opened their doors as places for Scouts to meet. I hope that historic connection continues for many years to come.

Many mission opportunities are made available through all of these five youth agencies, and connecting with one or more groups can be a great outreach ministry of the local church. If your congregation is already supporting a Scouting, 4-H, Campfire or Big Brothers/Big Sisters group, thank you. If not, please look into it. It may be as simple as opening the doors to the church one night a week.



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*Neill Caldwell*



## Virginia Conference Scouting ministry gets boost from 10 specialists

**V**irginia Conference churches are discovering scouting as a way to reach young people in their communities.

That discovery is being led by 10 persons who have been certified as scouting ministry specialists by the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Bill Chaffin, coordinator of scouting ministry in the Richmond District and assistant district commissioner for the Huguenot Trail District, was certified as the first specialist in the conference in May 2009.

For the past two years, Chaffin has led a national effort to provide back-packing New Testaments to Scouts on treks across the Sangre De Cristo Mountains in New Mexico and paddling streams in Minnesota and Ontario. In an average year, the commission and the National Association of United Methodist Scouters (NAUMS) provide more than 7,000 copies of New Testament, Proverbs and Psalms to Scouts attending the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico and Scouts participating in Northern Tier canoe trips.

For the past six years, Chaffin has also given copies of the back-packing New Testament with special covers to many Eagle Scouts in troops chartered by United Methodist congregations and United Methodist Scouts in troops chartered by other organizations.

After serving as chairman of a Cub Scout committee, Chaffin organized a Boy Scout troop with 13 Scouts, including his oldest son. The former Life Scout, patrol leader and member of the Order of the Arrow then completed requirements for the Wood Badge Award, scouting's premier training program.

Nine years ago he was recruited to serve as scouting coordinator for the Richmond District while he was attending a Virginia Conference United Methodist Men's weekend that annually includes a camporee attended by some 1,000 Scouts from throughout Virginia.

A recipient of a Cross & Flame Award and the District Award of Merit, Chaffin now encourages other churches to present similar awards to Scout leaders. He also helped organize a Bishop's Dinner for Scouting to encourage churches to charter Boy Scout troops or host other youth-serving groups. The event was attended by representatives



*Bill Chaffin, a Scouting Ministry Specialist from the Virginia Conference, attends the 2010 National Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. He is wearing a 'Buzz-Kill' shirt to support the drive for funds for Nothing But Nets. Jamboree participants raised \$17,000 for the effort to provide bed nets in several African nations.*

from 80 churches.

Chaffin has traveled to Philmont Scout Ranch on three occasions – once for training in religious emblems and twice to attend the UMC Scouters' workshop. He also served on the staff for The United Methodist Church at the 2010 National Jamboree Camp at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia.

A life member of the NAUMS, Chaffin has served as recording secretary of the board of directors, and he is in his second year as manager of the Bible project.

Chaffin also serves on the newly created Council Religious Emblems committee which supports God and Country study programs sponsored by the St. Louis-based Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY). The group also is developing programs to provide summer camp chaplains as well as training for chaplain aides. The committee is now considering plans for a number of other faith-based efforts such as a Ten Commandment Hike.

Chaffin was selected to serve as an at-large member of the Virginia Annual Conference, and he has submitted a proposal for scouting funds to conference Common Table.

If you would like more information about scouting ministry, contact Chaffin at <bcumcbsa@juno.com>.

If you are interested in becoming a scouting ministry specialist, contact LaNisha Sayles at the General Commission on United Methodist Men at (615) 620-7260 or <LSayles@gcumm.org>.

—Rich Peck, General Commission on United Methodist Men





*Six little  
sentences  
spoke volumes*

## What is Scouting all about?

**B**y all standards, Troop 14, which is chartered by Wilderness Community Church in Spotsylvania, has had a landmark year or two. While summarizing the highlights of the past year in quantifiable terms for the recent Scout Sunday bulletin insert, it was apparent that all the hard work and countless hours of volunteering by the uniformed leaders and committee members had paid off. There was tremendous growth, numerous awards, high marks for this and ribbons for that, record numbers attended every event, great fund-raising, and there were even three Eagle ranks achieved. That list should speak for itself, shouldn't it?

So, surrounded by all this apparent glory (and the accompanying grit) of supporting a fairly large and obviously successful program, one would expect that all is peachy keen. The adults should be basking in the warm glow of accomplishment, while our Scouts vault skyward, nurtured by our efforts. The numbers put to paper clearly show that we should all be completely satisfied and feel totally appreciated.

However, in real life, Scouting's adult leaders are known to mumble and grumble now and then. About how much time we put into the program. How much of our own money. The hours spent away from family. About how much blood, sweat, tears and raw emotion is poured into every event. How we're sure nobody recognizes the value of what we're doing, all for the sake of making better Scouts out of the boys we've been given an opportunity to mold.

After the recent Eagle Court of Honor, the entire Troop could not have been more proud. We had two broth-

ers recognized at the same event, and their long journey had been completed.

That's what it's all about! Every Scout and adult returned home that night knowing they had witnessed the pinnacle of Scouting achieved.

A few days later, the Scoutmaster shared with the other adult leaders and committee members an e-mail he had gotten from someone attending that Court of Honor. It read: "I have known of one of your Scouts since he was in second grade. I saw him in fourth and fifth grade and thought he was on a downward spiral if someone did not help him. I saw him tonight and (although he is not mine) felt very proud that he was part of your dynamic group of young men. You may get praise from the parents of your den/troop – not sure of what they are called – but from an outsider, you – and all the other adults have given this young man the path to follow. Had it not been for you all, (there's) no telling where he would have ended up. If only more individuals would give their time and talent..."

After the lights go out on the awards ceremonies, after all the rank advancements and merit badges are handed out, after all the handshakes and shoulder pats are done, after all the equipment is cleaned and packed and the dust settles on another outing, what really matters about Scouting is the very quiet message in that short e-mail. We have made a difference in the life of a boy through Scouting. No recognition, accolade or plaque could have meant more to the Troop's adult leaders. Six little sentences spoke volumes.

*—Belinda Howard, Membership/Relationship Chair of  
Troop 14, Wilderness Community United Methodist Church*





**S**ome churches think of Scout troops and Cub packs as annoying groups that simply use the church as a meeting space. On the contrary, the presence of hundreds of unchurched youths meeting in our churches offers an opportunity for congregations to minister to the needs of youths.

Pastors should help congregations view scouting as a way to serve their communities and a method to introduce unchurched young people to Jesus Christ.

More than 17 percent of youths in Scouting experience church for the first time through membership in a Cub Scout pack or a Boy Scout troop. Additionally, surveys conducted in United Methodist churches indicate that approximately 50 percent of youths that meet in these units come from unchurched families, underscoring the need for reaching out into the community, inviting youth into the life of the church, and eventually making new disciples.

In order for a church to take advantage of this well-kept evangelistic secret, it must commit to two responsibilities:

1. **Providing a meeting place in the church building.**
2. **Identifying, selecting and approving adult leaders.**

Church-sponsored units enjoy many benefits from the local Boy Scouts of America (BSA) council including youth-protection training for its leaders; liability insurance; low-cost accident insurance; access to camps and high adventure facilities, including rustic chapels; and basic and ongoing training for all registered adult leaders.

All this in addition to the opportunity to reach out to unchurched families in our communities and disciple boys to become principled Christian men.

One of the key points for a church is reflected in the twelfth point of the Scout Law, "A Scout is reverent." Although scouting is a secular organization it is grounded in tenets that reflect a recognition and reverence for God. British general, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, mentioned "duty to God" as a primary function of Scouting in his 1908 best-seller, *Scouting for Boys*.

During the last 20 years of the BSA's 100-year history, religious institutions have emerged as the primary charter partners. There are several reasons for this phenomenon.

Many denominations view Scouting as an evangelistic

tool and a way to serve the youth of their communities. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) uses Scouting as its official youth program like the UMYF. The Mormon church is the largest charter organization of the Boy Scouts, followed by The United Methodist Church. More than 371,400 youths meet weekly in 11,300 units in 6,700 United Methodist churches or approximately 20 percent of the congregations in the denomination.

Churches may integrate teachings about the Christian faith into the programs of their Scout units. One such avenue is provided by the St. Louis-based Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY). PRAY administers achievement awards (formerly called God and Country awards). With four levels, this age-appropriate religious study series is offered by many denominations. Hundreds of churches use the curriculum for confirmation class, Sunday school and for Vacation Bible School. More than 7,500 awards were earned by youth meeting in United Methodist churches in 2010.

Recent reports indicate that 43 percent of United Methodist churches in the United States did not receive a member by profession of faith in 2010, and yet 50 percent of boys in Scout troops housed in United Methodist churches are unchurched.

What an opportunity we are missing!

Scout units meeting in your church may include un-

churched boys. Inviting them to participate in the P.R.A.Y. religious-study series may be their first step to becoming lifelong members of The United Methodist Church.

Steering Scouts to mission projects on the trail to becoming Eagle Scouts is also an effective way to develop principled Christian leaders. (Bishop Will Willimon of the North Alabama is an Eagle Scout, as a matter of fact.)

*—Larry Coppock is director of Scouting Ministries for the General Commission on United Methodist Men. First printed in the Circuit Rider magazine (fall 2011).*

*Many denominations view Scouting as an evangelistic tool and a way to serve the youth of their communities.*



# Scout leader offered a remarkable life of faith and service

by Betty Owers

**J**im Ray became involved with the Boy Scouts in Maryland when, after his father died, two brothers who were Boy Scouts asked him to attend their Troop's father/son camping trip. Ray went, and Scouting became his passion for life. He earned the rank of Eagle in high school in West Virginia.

Scouting provided Ray the male character role models and activities that his mother believed "all boys need" and reinforced in him her belief in "God first." These fundamental strengths formed the basis of Ray's life. In the words of his daughter, Sarah, he was "a natural at the entire philosophy and ways of Scouting." He later served in the U. S. Navy.

Ray was a man of many talents. A good speaker, he held a listener spellbound while he discoursed on almost any subject. Blessed with a powerful voice and an impressive repertoire, he loved to sing. He was proud of the time he sang religious songs on a radio show in his youth. He attended the weekly Men's Prayer Breakfast at Reveille UMC in Richmond, where he sang in the choir. He had an awesome knowledge of the Bible and taught Adult Sunday School. During the last 15 years, Ray attended Trinity UMC, where he was also a choir member. He served as Scoutmaster of Troop 440 at St. Giles Presbyterian Church for several years.

He loved the outdoors, and took his Scouts camping, backpacking, canoeing, hiking, spelunking and rock climbing. To Ray, Scouting's outdoor program was the lure that attracted youngsters. Before they knew it, he was teaching them citizenship and character.

Dave Ansell, Roundtable Commissioner at Heart of Virginia Council, Richmond, at age 11 met Ray, who was then Scoutmaster of Troop 720. For the next 41 years, during which Dave earned his Eagle in the now renamed Troop 440, he addressed him as "Mr. Ray."

Ray was proud of the many Scouts who made Eagle under his leadership. Achieving Eagle was a priority, and while he guided his Scouts on this quest, he transmitted to them his profound relationship with God. On a Sunday morning camping trip, he would give a Scout the respon-



Jim Ray and young scouts of Troop 442.

sibility of leading the worship service, loan him his New Testament, and sit back to see the results. He was never disappointed, and was always inspired by the "Duty to God" response of his Scouts.

Always seeking knowledge and opportunities to express his faith and to serve youth, Ray felt called in 2007, with passionate persistence, to establish a BSA troop in South Richmond, sponsored by the Central UMC on Porter Street. The impetus for this undertaking came from two directions: his involvement with the Micah Initiative, an inner-city outreach program encompassing Oak Grove and Bellemeade elementary schools in Southside Richmond; and Trinity UMC's mission to offer to inner-city at-risk teens a quality Scouting program. Ray believed the ben-

*Scouting provided Ray the male character role models and activities that his mother believed "all boys need" and reinforced in him her belief in "God first."*

efits of Scouting should be made available to every youth, and with a fervour that was contagious, plus splendid support from Trinity UMC and Central UMC, he established Troop 442. The first committee of 10 "hand-picked" members met on

Nov. 1, 2007. No one was able to serve as Scoutmaster, so Ray accepted the job until a replacement was found. Jon Tracy was appointed assistant Scoutmaster. Generous friends of Scouting made donations to the fledgling Troop. A Troop flag was proudly displayed on Scout Sunday in January 2008, when Troop 442 and its Scout leaders were recognized at Sunday worship, and Pastor Matt Bates was presented with the Troop Charter.

It is remarkable that this amazing man, at the age of 80, began a repeat of his Scouting career! He had served



Scouting for more than 60 years, received the Silver Beaver award in 1972, and the James E. West Fellowship Award in 2005. At the time, Ray was serving as Unit Commissioner, was on the District Committee, and a member of the Council at Large. Yet he took on the new role, imparting his knowledge and instilling a strong desire for success into our hearts. Twelve boys were initially enrolled, but not all remained in the Troop. Parental involvement was minimal; some of the lads had never heard of Scouting. Getting the new Troop started was challenging, and keeping it going is a challenge we still face.

Thanks to the sponsoring churches, Troop 442 still meets in the Scout room at Central UMC where the flag collection Ray had amassed during his lifetime is distinctive and outstanding. The flags displayed are those that have at some point in time waved over U.S. soil. Ray

compiled a detailed description of each flag and its nation, with accurate historical data. This collection, which the Troop views as a treasure, is on loan from the Ray family to Troop 442, and we thank them.

Ray is present in that room; the words we speak are the words he taught us; the Pledge we make is the Pledge he made; the Scout Benediction the one he voiced at meeting's end. These things will endure forever in memory of a leader who inspired hundreds of young men not only to reach the apex of Scouting but also to appreciate and savor the gifts of God's creation.

*—Elizabeth Allen Owers is secretary of the Troop 442 Committee, with acknowledgements to Jim Ray's daughters, Sarah and Jennie; Scoutmaster Jon Tracy, Dave Ansell, and the Heart of Virginia Council office for contributing material.*

## A very exceptional Scout

Several years ago Scoutmaster Mickey Moore, a member of Asbury UMC in Harrisonburg, was contacted about allowing a severely handicapped Cub Scout into our unit. At the time, Troop 40 already had several Scouts with learning disabilities and was working with them through their advancement problems.

Jack was a different situation altogether. He was born with cerebral palsy and was confined to a wheelchair. His motor functions were limited, and his speech patterns were almost indistinguishable. His Webelos leader confided in us that he would be with us as much as possible while Jack was with the troop. His mother, Shelia, would also help as much as possible.

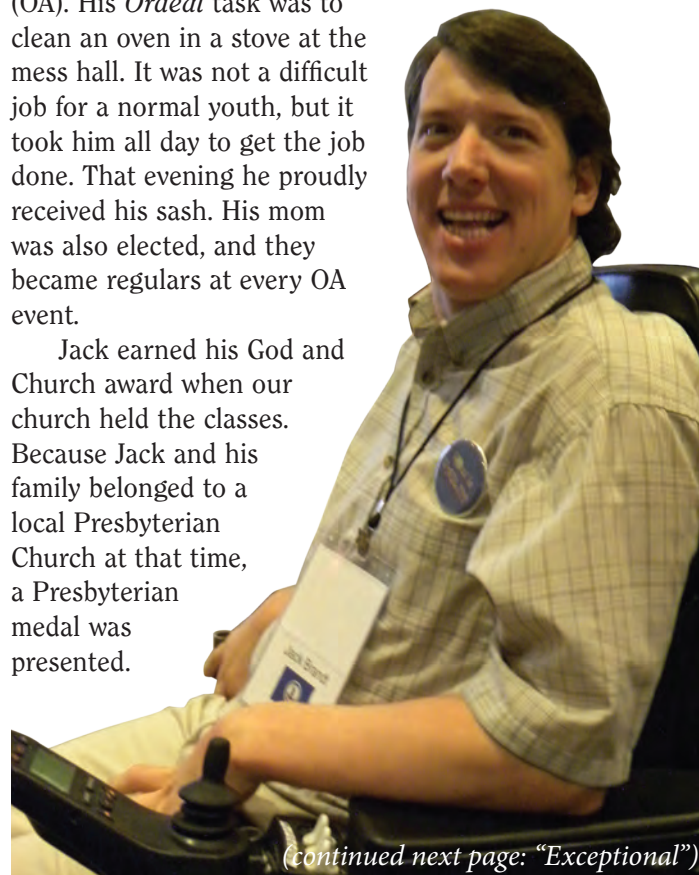
It wasn't long after Jack became a member of our troop that we found out that his physical difficulties did not limit his mental capacity. He was very intelligent and could make his wishes and needs known. The rest of the Scouts in the troop took an immediate liking to him and started making plans that included camping, hiking and other activities that Jack would be able to do.

On one camping trip, Jack and the other boys were all playing "Capture the Flag" in a field near a woods. The Scouts were having a grand time — yelling and running around after dark — when the Scoutmaster and I heard a series of yelps and realized something was wrong. The Senior Patrol Leader informed us that the boys had run into a nest of ground wasps, and nearly everyone had been stung. Grabbing the first aid kit, we ran down to find that everyone had at least one sting and was in some kind of pain — except Jack. Although he had been stung, he was sitting in the wheel chair with a big smile on his face! We

realized that he had enjoyed the game so much that the sting only made him feel more like a member of the troop.

A year or so later, after receiving his First Class Advancement and satisfying the camping requirements, Jack was elected to the Order of the Arrow (OA). His *Ordeal* task was to clean an oven in a stove at the mess hall. It was not a difficult job for a normal youth, but it took him all day to get the job done. That evening he proudly received his sash. His mom was also elected, and they became regulars at every OA event.

Jack earned his God and Church award when our church held the classes. Because Jack and his family belonged to a local Presbyterian Church at that time, a Presbyterian medal was presented.



*(continued next page: "Exceptional")*





Scouting in the state of Virginia is carried out by eight different local councils, which are then divided up into Districts which support the individual Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturing and Exploring units that provide the values-based programs to the youth we serve. Those councils and their headquarter cities are:

- ◆ National Capital Area Council (Bethesda, MD) supporting Scouting in northern Virginia
- ◆ Heart of Virginia Council (Richmond) and the surrounding counties
- ◆ Del-Mar-Va Council (Wilmington, DE) supporting the Eastern shore of VA



- ◆ Colonial Virginia Council (Newport News) and the surrounding towns/counties
- ◆ Blue Ridge Mountains Council (Roanoke) and the surrounding counties
- ◆ Tidewater Council (Virginia Beach) and surrounding area
- ◆ Stonewall Jackson Area Council (Waynesboro) and surrounding towns/counties
- ◆ Shenandoah Area Council (Winchester) and surrounding towns/counties

("Exceptional" continued)

Jack, always outspoken in many matters, refused the Presbyterian medal and asked for a Methodist medal, stating that when the troop at his church didn't want him due to his disabilities, our troop welcomed him. Later, the entire family transferred to our church.



Jack progressed through the ranks and satisfied every requirement on the way. Very few items were waived in his climb to Life Scout. Then the question arose: "What can he do for an Eagle Project?" Jack had the answer. His younger brother played Little League baseball at a nearby middle school, and the field had no bleachers. Jack suggested that they build bleachers at the field for his project. The requirements stated that he show leadership in a project benefiting a school, community or church. Jack, using his computer and a CAD (Computer Assisted Drawing) program, designed a bleacher system that could be set up by members of his family with help

from the baseball community and his troop.

He financed the bleachers by sending out an appeal to several local businesses in the area. Funds came in, and the bleachers were bought and constructed, with Jack doing much of the directing at the construction site. The project actually came in under budget, so the excess funds were given to the Little League.

Now an Eagle Scout, Jack was also honored with two of the Order of the Arrow's highest recognitions: the Vigil Honor and later the Founder's Award.

Jack became a person to look up to. A couple of years after he entered our unit, we were asked to take another boy with Cerebral Palsy, although his condition was not as severe as Jack's. Matt was on crutches and had finished

most of the requirements for his Eagle Advancement, when his troop shut down. All he needed was a few nights of camping to satisfy the Camping merit badge requirements, but camping was difficult for Matt due to his disabilities. With encouragement from Jack, Matt completed the Ordeal's night of solitude and went on to earn his Eagle Award.

Everyone that knew Jack had a story about him. There are too many to list here. But you may be asking what happened to this young man? Here is a copy of his biography when he received a presidential appointment on Jan. 11:

**"Jack Martin Brandt, Appointee for Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities: Jack Brandt is the Disability Policy Specialist for the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University, a position he has held since 2010. In this role, Brandt's work focuses on developing and promoting evidence-based and person-centered practices to improve outcomes in self-advocacy for people with intellectual and development disabilities. Previously, Brandt was the Disability Rights Advocate at the Virginia Office for Protection & Advocacy from 2008-2010, a Disability Policy Consultant for the State of Virginia from 2006-2008, a Virginia Governor's Fellow at the Office of Community Integration for People with Disabilities in 2006, and a Congressional Intern for the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee in 2005. Brandt received a B.A. from James Madison University and is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University."**

Our church has supported Scouting with the Troop so much that on March 1, we began the 83<sup>rd</sup> continuous year being charter partners. A great many truly good people have given their time without benefit of compensation to make this unit one of the best in the Council.

*—Kemper Dadisman has been a leader with Troop 40 for the past 25 years.*





## United Methodist volunteer in right place to help during disaster



**T**he Boy scout Motto is “Be Prepared,” which means be prepared for anything. Being prepared helped save the lives of many Scouts and leaders during the 2005 Jamboree. The event happened Monday, July 29, the first day of the 2005 Jamboree. The first day is usually the

most hectic. The buses full of Boy Scouts begin lining up outside the gate at 6:30 a.m.

I was assigned as United Methodist chaplain to the western region, sub camp 7. The other chaplains in the sub camp and I gathered in the programs tent, the chaplains’ tent. We were going over the schedule for the next week. We would be the ones to make initial contact with the troops and troop leaders, tell them about the religious services, and encourage them to earn the “Duty to God” award for their uniforms.

The Alaska troop arrived earlier than expected and had begun setting up camp about 100 yards from the chaplains’ tent. There were the usual sounds of a Boy Scout encampment going on around us as we met. I heard the sounds of hammers driving tent pegs into the ground, Scoutmasters loudly encouraging older boys to help the younger ones. Boys were laughing, yelling and shouting at one another in a fun sort of way. An Army helicopter flew over the tent several times. Army soldiers in Humvees drove by outside. In short, we were all getting ready for an uneventful, fun, wonder-packed jamboree.

About 1:30 p.m., I heard shouts that were different

from the other shouts. These shouts were filled with terror. I heard someone shout “help!” and “medic!” I heard that sound and ran out of the tent. I saw a Scout running and pointing his finger toward where his troop was setting up. He was still crying “medic” as he ran. Being a former EMT, I ran toward where the boy pointed. I saw what he was pointing at. The center pole of a 60-foot activities tent was not straight. The pole had fallen over while they were setting it up, though I could not see what was holding the pole in the angle that it was. Smoke was billowing from under the tent. As I ran toward the scene I heard someone else yell “Cut the power!”

When I arrived at the tent I saw four men who had apparently been standing around the pole. They were on the ground lying with their feet towards the pole. I heard the humming sound of electricity around me and saw the ground burning. As an EMT I learned that you never go into an area unless the scene is secure. The scene was not secure, and I saw other boys and leaders who had come to help. I yelled, “Everyone get out of the area!”, and people began to back up. I watched helplessly for a moment and then had another focus.

I did not want the boys to come down and try to help by getting the men out, nor did I want them to see the scene under the tent. My previous training told me that the leaders were gone, and nothing could be done for them. I also did not want the boys to scatter and not be able to locate them later. Someone who looked like a leader from Alaska appeared, so I said “Get all of the boys up to that tent.” As we gathered the boys, one of the program people stopped me and said, “We need someone at the chaplains’ tent. Now!” I left the larger group and focused my attention on the boys I first heard calling for a medic.

I arrived at the chaplains’ tent and found two boys, Robert and Wade, in serious emotional distress. Wade had helped set up the tent as the pole slipped and fell against the power lines, and was not hurt because he held one of the outer poles of the tent. Robert was in his tent reading and heard Wade’s call for help. Robert looked up from his tent and saw the fire and one of the leaders. I took Robert to the medical tent and another chaplain took Wade. The medic tent was over-run with people who had seen the  
(continued next page: “Disaster”)

*A memorial was set up at the site of the disaster (below), where four men lost their lives when a tent pole brushed a power line. Michal Shibe from troop 129, Mike LaCroix from troop 711, Ronald Bitzer from troop 129, and Edward Powell. Shibe had two sons at the Jamboree; LaCroix had one.*







*("Disaster" continued)*

incident and the normal complaints of heat exhaustion and dehydration. I stayed with Robert for several hours while waves of grief washed over him and then would subside, and he would talk about other things. Robert would ask, "Are they all right?" "The Army is taking care of them," I said truthfully.

I sat with Robert and then both Robert and Wade. Robert called his mother and father and told them what had happened. Wade chose not to call any family member yet. I finally extracted myself from the situation about 9:30. The Army took the troop to an air-conditioned barracks on the other side of the camp and put them up for the night. The Army brought its own teams to work with the boys

and to break the news to the three boys who lost their fathers. Two of the men who died had boys in the troop. One man had a set of twins, and the second had one son.

Ten of the 70 boys went home, including Robert and Wade. That meant that 60 stayed. The chaplains went the next day to transition them back into the Jamboree. We went every day thereafter to teach the boys skills they need when the waves of grief wash over them.

The United Methodist Church allowed me to attend the Jamboree as a chaplain, and God placed me at the right time and place to bring peace to a chaotic situation. The United Methodist Church was there that day.

*—Paul Ritter, Harrisonburg*

## American Heritage Girls, a faith-based alternative to Girl Scouting, grows more popular

**G**irls in vests and sashes with merit badges sit squirming on the floor in the school commons until it's time for the flag ceremony. The girls, meeting at St. John Lutheran School in Ellisville, aren't Girl Scouts. They are American Heritage Girls, a Christian-based option to the more secular Girl Scouts.

After the flag ceremony, and before they begin the evening's projects, they pray. "Thank you for bringing us together to do your service today," says Jody Token, troop coordinator, standing before the group. "We do this all in Jesus' name. Amen."

American Heritage Girls began in 1995 with a Cincinnati-area woman and her friends who weren't happy that the Girl Scouts had allowed the word "God" to be substituted with another option, such as "my creator," in the Girl Scout Promise.

The group started with 100 girls in Ohio, and in recent weeks has surpassed 18,000 members in 45 states and six countries. Nine groups with a total of 357 girls meet in the St. Louis area; there were five local groups at this time last year. They are based at private schools and churches in Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties.

Founder Patti Garibay, who had been a long-time Girl Scout leader for her daughters, wanted a choice. "We are faith-based, and they are secular, and that's a change. We're not for everybody, but we're obviously for a lot of people."

Garibay estimates that 90 percent of Heritage members have left the Girl Scouts.

Shanna Stewart, who home-schools her two daughters in Wentzville, found American Heritage Girls after becoming concerned when she learned the Girl Scouts had invited a lesbian to speak at the national level. "They were encouraging girls to

embrace whoever they were; it didn't matter what choices they made, as long as they were true to themselves. That was a concern."

"Are we going to talk about God? Are we going to talk about Christ? Absolutely we are. But I love the fact that it's not in our face, but it is there," Stewart said.

Donna McDowell of St. Charles County organized an American Heritage troop at Harvester Christian Church after realizing she wasn't happy about the Girl Scouts — especially after her home-schooled daughter's troop, based at a public school, had taken the word "God" out of the promise.

The Girl Scouts don't ban or endorse prayer or any particular religion and call themselves a secular group founded on American principles such as freedom of religion. They let individual leaders determine what type of faith teaching is relevant to their group, and Scouts can earn religious awards. They also do not take a position on sexuality or birth control.

The creed for American Heritage Girls requires members to honor God, keep their minds and bodies "pure," and to respect the beliefs of others. Even though the group is Christian-based, it is open to girls of other faiths.

American Heritage Girls also have aligned themselves with the Boy Scouts of America, which isn't Christian-based but whose promise includes a duty to God.

*—St. Louis Post-Dispatch*



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## Every Scouting leader touches young people's lives

I grew up in Asbury Methodist Church in Uniontown, Pa., which sponsored Boy Scout Troop 5. This was way back in the days of World War II. I had admired the Scouts in our church when they attended in their spiffy uniforms on Scout Sunday, and I couldn't wait until I reached age 12 so I could become a part of them (Cub Scouts didn't exist then).

Our Scoutmaster was a young man named Dick Conn, and he could not serve in the war due to his 4-F status. Instead, he dedicated himself to do his bit for his country by helping to shape the lives of the younger generation of citizens. Conn was the second-most important influence in my life, right behind my grandmother. He taught us self-reliance, honesty, integrity and patriotism, all infused with a deep spirituality. He did not just tell us how we should live, he showed us by example, living the Scout laws in his own life.

Sitting around the campfire during campouts and

listening to him tell stories about his own growing-up experiences inspired and challenged us. He always had an encouraging word and a smile for us as we struggled to earn our merit badges and climb the ranks.

After I had several years' experience he elevated me to be a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, and my heart swelled with pride as he presented me with that emblem for my uniform. As I developed leadership skills and took on more responsibility, he encouraged me to think how I might become a leader in the greater society. It was largely because of his influence that I decided to dedicate myself to serving my faith and became a minister of education and youth.

One of my early jobs was as the director of youth research at the Character Research Project at Union College in Schenectady, N.Y. As a result of my work there I wrote a book for Association Press called "How to Stand Up For What You Believe" and dedicated it to Dick Conn. When I sent an inscribed copy to him, he told me in a return letter that it was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for him. It was the least I could do for a most remarkable and dedicated Scout leader. He is no longer with us in body, but he lives on through the hundreds of young men whose developing lives he touched.

—Herb Detweiler, Greene Memorial UMC, Roanoke

## Eagle project creates the ultimate backyard at the Brandermill Church

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Boy Scout Duncan Monroe, 16, has created a haven for outdoor recreation and special gatherings on the grounds of The Brandermill Church. Duncan, a member of Boy Scout Troop 860, first consulted with the Rev. Burt Brooks, drew up plans and cleared them with community officials before embarking on his project of installing the "ultimate backyard" near the church playground at the edge of the parking lot.

The process involved receiving nearly a dozen approvals from various entities, including the fire department and the BCA Architectural Review Board. According to Duncan, Clover Hill Planning. Commissioner Russ Gulley, also an Eagle Scout, helped facilitate county approval.

When it came time to start fundraising for the project, Duncan created a tri-fold board display of the plans and displayed it outside the church sanctuary to generate interest. The Branyon family stayed to the end of the fundraising session and made a generous donation in memory of the late Curt Branyon, who started Scout Troop 890 at The Brandermill Church in in late 1970s. Since then, two



Duncan Monroe and other Scouts built a large recreation area at the Brandermill Church.

other troops have spun off from the original troop.

Thanks to his family, friends and church members, Monroe raised more than \$4,000 for the project. Working a total of about 180 hours, Monroe, fellow Scouts and parents built and installed two picnic tables, four benches and created an area with a fire pit. The crowning glory was installation of a basketball goal.

Monroe is the son of Cathy and Andrew Monroe.

—Wendy Parker, Managing Editor,  
The Village Mill in Midlothian





## York River District Girl Scouts get together to promote prevention of child abuse

A group of women meet at a Panera's restaurant in Hampton on Wednesdays to share faith, personal and spiritual stories, prayer concerns, and support for one another. Out of this group of women, a mustard seed idea took root and flourished into a wonderful, collaborative opportunity that involved not only them, but an entire district of United Methodist Women and local Girl Scouts.

One of the women is passionate about raising awareness of preventing child abuse. She retired from the Newport News Department of Human Services where she heard about and saw too many children impacted by child abuse and the poor choices of their parents. For years she has participated in the Blue Ribbon campaign. She literally "insists" that everyone in her church wear blue ribbons every year during April – National Child Abuse Prevention Month. So, with the creative energy of the York River District United Methodist Women and Girl Scout Troop 1000, a melding of talents, ideas and commitment quickly grew and grew and grew.

The women's group coordinated what came to be known as the "Stole Project" as a part of their Spiritual Awareness and Social Actions mission initiatives. With the support of the mission team and the York River District United Methodist Women units, they orchestrated purchasing material, cutting it, distributing stole sewing "kits" to United Methodist Women across the district and assuring that sewn stoles were returned to the district office.

In the meantime, another one of the women in the Wednesday group mobilized Girl Scout Troop 1000. Girl Scout Troop 1000 took on the "Stole Project" as its Bronze Award project. The Bronze Award is a "leadership adven-

ture and the highest award a Junior Girl Scout can earn." The Girl Scout volunteer team helped the Girl Scouts learn about child abuse: what it is, what signs to watch for in their friends, and to whom they should turn if they suspect someone they know is being abused. Once the sewn stoles were all returned, the troop hosted a party where they and some friends from the community placed their paint-laden hands on the stoles in the shape of butterflies. The children's handprints represent the hope and desire for awareness and release for all children from pain and suffering. For those of us who attend church, those hands in a butterfly represent the transforming power of our risen Christ.

At the March district clergy meeting, representatives from all three groups discussed the project, blessed the stoles and distributed them to the pastors. The pastors were requested to wear or display the stoles in the month of April, to spotlight, bring awareness and support Child Abuse Prevention Month.

*A seed planted over lunch, watered by the York River District United Methodist Women's desire to make a difference in the lives of children, and nurtured by the hands of Girl Scout Troop 1000, blossomed in an effort to change the world.*

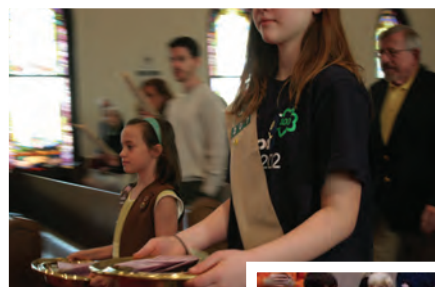
The Blue Ribbon Jamboree for Child Abuse Prevention was held on March 31 at Warwick Memorial UMC in Newport News, with more than 100 in attendance. The program included clowns, praise dancers, a youth choir, karate/safety demonstrations, crafts, face painting and finger printing. Community supporters were from the State Police, Newport News Sheriff's Department, Hampton and Newport News Human Services Healthy Families and Parent Educators, Genesis Counseling Services, Peninsula Crime Victims Council, UMC Conference Children's Initiative and Safe Sanctuaries, Girl Scout Troops 1000 and 1089, and a representative from the York River District Boy Scouts.

*—Shan Sixby and Gwen Williams, York River District*



*Gwen Williams places one of the hand-made stoles around the shoulders of the Rev. Brian Sixby.*

# Scouts and churches enrich each other



A couple of years ago, our Girl Scout troop (along with Cub and Boy Scout troops) divided the church grounds into sections for landscaping. Semiannually, our girls tend to the beds in our areas which encompass the right hand side/back right and front sections adjacent to the church building itself. The girls trim, weed, plant, rake, etc. the beds preparing them for winter or for spring.

Yearly, Beech Grove UMC (Suffolk) hosts an "Easter Egg Factory," which makes thousands and thousands of flavored chocolate eggs to sell to the public. They have been doing this for many successful years and ship far and wide. It is a very elaborate set-up to say the least. Recently, the floors were cleaned for the start-up and the church worked with us, allowing us an alternative route to still continue to hold our meeting that night without messing up the cleaned floors. Our team made sure no one went where we weren't allowed. Our older Cadettes through ambassadors yearly help the egg crew by getting on the assembly lines shaping and molding the eggs as well as frosting them. Younger girls participate by helping fold and label boxes and even

learn about the process through a simplified tour and get to make two eggs of their own to take home. We help each other out by collecting egg sales for them as well as assisting in all aspects of the factory.

Yearly, the church holds Scout Sunday, where Girl and Boy Scouts attend one of the church's two Sunday morning services. Some even take on a hands-on role in leading the service.

When we are working on cooking patches or having guest speakers talk to our girls, the church is always helpful in offering us the fellowship hall or sacristy to provide needed appliances or quiet away from other Scout meetings taking place simultaneously. The girls have made many a pizza and gotten flour on the floor in the church kitchen all in good fun.

Quarterly our troop sends information to the secretary about what we are doing for publication in the weekly bulletin. This informs congregants of what the Scouts are doing with the help of their facilities.

Most recently, our troop, in preparation for our first "Powder Puff Derby," collaborated with the boys and the Scout leaders to help our girls make derby cars, using the fel-

lowship hall as a construction zone. The Cub Scout leaders gave us four hours out of their busy Saturday to bring in their tools and equipment to show our girls how to use jigsaws, lathes, sanders, drills, scales and calculating weights. They even made model templates for our team to trace. Don't misunderstand, though, it was our girls who did the work. They had so much fun doing something different and donning their safety glasses. Our parents and leaders were so appreciative of all the work and assistance they provided us, in addition to the few boys who worked on their racers for their Pinewood Derby at this clinic. We were so grateful to the church for allowing us the space for this collaboration to succeed.

Beech Grove excels in working with its Scouting troops by allowing us use of storage sheds in the back, playground use, as well as full use of a copy machine.

Pastor Keith Moore and his team have been more than accommodating to us, and I feel we have developed a win-win relationship. We are so happy they allow us the opportunity to provide so many activities for our members!

—Cheryl Hendricks, Troop 5292



## 'Strength to Service' program started by one Scout

*"Raise up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"*  
(Proverbs 22:6 KJV).

**E**van Hunsberger's upbringing epitomizes the essence of this Proverbs verse. Evan, a 13-year-old Life Scout in 1999, frequently watched his grandfather, Eugene, read from a pocket-size WWII-era devotional book, *Strength for Service to God and Country*. Eugene had comforted sick and dying men as a Navy corpsman in the island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific theatre. Now on his death bed, Eugene listened intently as Evan described his plan to re-publish the book as his Eagle Scout service project, as it had gone out of print after the Korean War. Eugene nodded his enthusiastic approval in his last hours, knowing that his grandson's actions would resurrect a spiritual treasure.

Evan spent the next three years gathering devotions from people of color, women, and both laypeople and clergy, characteristics not common to the original edition but certainly relevant for a changing and diverse military. He

spent 2,500 hours soliciting and compiling devotions, editing content and seeking and finding a project sponsor – the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM).

Evan's initial goal was to get 5,000 books printed at a cost of \$25,000 and distribute them to Marines at Camp Pendleton. During this laborious and time-consuming process, Evan stayed true to his training – by his parents and by his Scout leaders. He never abandoned hard work for the easy way out. That would have been easy to do as most kids his age were not used to the sacrifices he was experiencing.

Working in partnership with the GCUMM, his project sponsor, the revised edition was finally published in 2002. The first 10,000 copies were shipped to soldiers in Afghanistan through the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, the Pentagon. Since that time more than 445,000 copies of this remarkable little book have been distributed to military men and women and other public service personnel.

Evan's training at a young age, his Scout experiences combined with a caring and mentoring family, helped establish for him a solid Christian foundation. Thirteen years later, Evan is a newly married 26-year-old who blazes new trails perhaps not as dynamic as *Strength for Service*. Yet today he carries with him a tool kit equipped with integrity, honesty and truth, attributes that stand the test of time.

—Rich Peck, General Commission on United Methodist Men



Our church has a great partnership with Boy Scout Troop 295 and Cub Pack 295. They have a great tradition of helping boys learn leadership, respect and brotherhood. These Scout groups have brought families into our church, ministered to families already in the church and served our congregation very well. In the last eight years, Eagle Scout candidates have led Scouts and parents in the building of 17 picnic tables, podiums, and a drain field for our parking lot, just to mention a few projects that have impacted the life of our church. Our Scout families support our mission ministries as well. Many of the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts who are a part of our church have been involved with our ministry to the homeless in Washington, D.C. I have been blessed to offer prayers at various ceremonies, including Eagle Scout presentations, which have been incredible. At Old Bridge Church, scouting is alive and well!

**Burton Robinson,**  
Senior Pastor at Old Bridge UMC

Troop 36 at First United Methodist Church in Charlottesville was a great troop to be a part of in the late 1950s. We had approximately 40 members, and out of that group came doctors, lawyers, a Circuit Court Judge, a top quarterback at the University of Virginia and several Eagle Scouts, ....of which I was proud to be one in 1959. These were "the good old days"! We were a top troop in the Stonewall Jackson Council, capturing numerous blue ribbons at local camporees. Our Church advisor was Assistant Pastor A.D. Goodson. He was always available to be our "father figure" while away from home, and it was a good thing at that age.

**John F. Davis**

A group of adult Scout leaders in Arlington wanted to establish a new troop in Arlington due to the dramatic increase in the number of Scouts in the area. We approached Walker Chapel as a potential Chartered Organization to sponsor a new troop because the pastor is an Eagle Scout. Little did we dream that we'd discover that from the early 1930s through the mid-1970s the church had sponsored not only a Scout troop but also a Cub Scout pack. Now Walker Chapel has Boy Scout Troop 641 (the original number) and is helping build that old/new troop as part of its outreach in the community. The troop is growing quite rapidly. The troop is very active in supporting Walker Chapel activities, like their OctoberFest fundraiser and work at the Arlington Food Assistance Center, even though our Scouts come from a variety of different churches and synagogues in town.

**Kirk Shaffer**

## Girl Scout Cookie Facts

- Girl Scouts in the U.S. have been fund-raising with cookies since 1917.
- Girls Scout cookies raise approximately \$714 million per year.
- Girl Scout cookies are kosher.
- The best selling Girl Scout cookie year after year is Thin Mints.
- During peak bake times, Girl Scout cookie producers Little Brownie Bakers—owned by the Kellogg Company—bakes more than 4.5 million Thin Mints per day.
- About 65 percent of Girl Scouts participate in the cookie sales each year.



Girl Scouts from Troop 402 in Botetourt

- During peak Girl Scout cookie production 230,000 lbs. of peanut butter, 1.05 million lbs. of flour and 300,000 lbs. of vegetable oil shortening are used in one week.
- The slogan for Girl Scout cookies is: "Every cookie has a mission – to help girls do great things."



## Scouting by the numbers

**28,335,249**

Number of service hours provided by Scouts and reported in 2010

**1,111,453**

Number of volunteers who provided leadership for Scouting programs in 2010

**266,748,720**

Hours of volunteer time given to support Scouting in 2010

**52**

Age of Juliette Low when she started Girl Scouts in 1912

**3.2 million**

Approximate number of Girls Scouts in 2011

**181**

Number of NASA astronauts involved in Scouting (57.4 percent of astronauts) – 39 astronauts are Eagle Scouts

**56,176**

Number of youths who earned the rank of Eagle Scout in 2010

**2,056,870**

Number of merit badges earned by Boy Scouts in 2010

**35.5**

Percentage of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point cadets who were involved in Scouting as youths – 5.6 percent of cadets are Eagle Scouts

**23**

Percentage of U.S. Air Force Academy cadets who were involved in Scouting as youths – 12 percent of cadets are Eagle Scouts

**25**

Percentage of U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis) midshipmen who were involved in Scouting as youths – 11 percent of midshipmen are Eagle Scouts

**206**

Members of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress who participated in Scouting as a youth and/or adult leader – 29 members are Eagle Scouts.

**1.1 million**

Number of youths who attended a council camp or national high-adventure camp

**6,626,926**

Number of First Aid merit badges earned since 1910

(Source: 2010 BSA Local Council Index)

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_



# Virginia

## Construction underway on new episcopal residence

Work began in early April on a new residence for a new Virginia Conference bishop.

The 2011 Annual Conference voted to organize a committee that would sell the current episcopal residence, which did not meet the conference's "Parsonage Guidelines," and explore buying or building a new home. The committee looked at buying an existing home but could not find one that could be purchased as cheaply as building a new home, which is being built to "green" Star Energy Efficient certification standards.

The 2011 Annual Conference further authorized the conference Council on Finance and Administration to make available up to \$200,000 for securing the newly constructed residence and selling the present residence. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished for under \$100,000 if the current home sells for what is expected, according to the Rev. Lee Sheaffer, chair of the committee.

The conference is spending \$106,000 in options to make the house more energy efficient, but gets

a 20 percent discount for adding the energy-efficient upgrades. The house will also be totally handicapped accessible, with wide doors and hallways inside and a ramp at the back of the house.

The house is being built in the Triple Oaks subdivision on Highway 33, Mountain Road, about eight miles from the conference office in Glen Allen. The house will be 3,200 square feet, with three bedrooms downstairs, including the master suite, and one upstairs. It will have a double garage, an office for the bishop and a large great room upstairs. The wooded lot on a cul de sac is about 1.5 acres, and will have a circular driveway. The house is being built by Main Street Homes, which owns the subdivision.

The house should be ready for occupancy in August, said Sheaffer. Other members of the committee are Tommy Herndon, Shirley Huffman, Craig Lane, Albert Lee, Kirk Nave, Martha Dodd-Slippy, Pat Wright and David Dommissie.

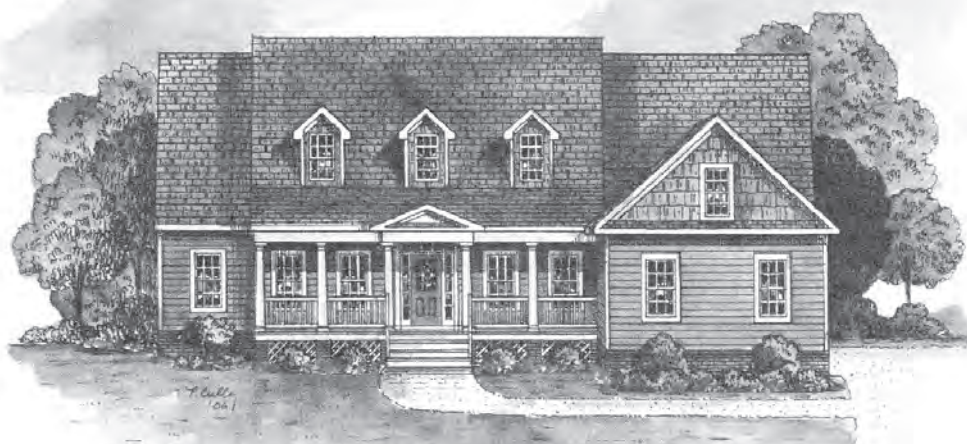
The current residence, off Lauderdale Drive in the Short Pump sec-



*Surveying the site for the episcopal residence in the Triple Oaks subdivision in Hanover County. The plan is at left.*

tion of Richmond, will be put on the market later in May.

The committee doing the work asked Bishop Kammerer to participate in the project by picking interior colors and fixtures. She and her husband, Leigh, will move to their home at Lake Junaluska, N.C., where they will live in retirement.





*The SEJ College of Bishops gather for a group photo at the close of the 2008 gathering at Lake Junaluska.*

## Virginia's SEJ committee representatives seek input about our next bishop

**D**arlene Amon and the Rev. Tom Berlin, Virginia's lay and clergy representatives on the jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy, have embarked on an unusual path this spring: asking people around the conference what kind of bishop we need.

With Bishop Charlene Kammerer retiring this summer, the Virginia Conference will be assigned a new leader when the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) meets in July, and that person will start Sept. 1. Two representatives from each conference form the SEJ Committee on the Episcopacy, and those people will sit down together after five new bishops are elected and determine who goes where.

So in preparation, Amon and Berlin are doing something that's not been done before in seeking input from others. They've asked various groups around the conference a series of questions, including "what do you see as the top challenges facing the Virginia Conference and our new bishop?", "what do you see as the three most important areas of episcopal leadership for the Virginia Conference?" and "what do you see as the three or four most important qualities or leadership characteristics

that our next bishop should possess?"

"It's important that Darlene and I go to the committee meeting as prepared as possible," said Berlin. "Meetings are all about preparation. 'Seeking the counsel of many' is what we're trying to do. We want to be the two best-prepared people to walk into that room."

The process is done behind closed doors like any clergy appointment session, but does not involve balloting, cigar smoke or even a dart board. And there is no white smoke released when the final decision is made.

Deciding which conference gets which bishop, Berlin says, has evolved from "a highly political process to one more about discernment. That kind of closed process is unhealthy. Four years ago people made a real covenant to get away from pre-arranged deals."

Of course four years ago there was only one bishop elected and few changes made. This year two-thirds of the conferences will get new bishops.

The committee does not perform its work in secret, although they have had to tape paper over the windows of the meeting room at Lake Junaluska to discourage lip-readers. The com-

mittee meets once a year – twice in a voting year – to talk about how things are going with the annual conferences and their bishops. The members are assigned a bishop not from their home conference to meet with for evaluations.

Going in to the jurisdictional conference – set for July 18-20 this year – it's important to know something about those people who are running for bishop. Then those who are elected are immediately interviewed by the committee. "You can imagine the state they're in," says Amon.

Once the election process is completed, and the last elected bishop is interviewed, the committee gathers to do the assignments. Eight years ago, with six new bishops elected, that part of the process stretched into the wee hours of the morning. Bishop Kammerer, for example, got her call telling her she was going to Virginia at 4 a.m.

People know about the supposed "rules" for assigning bishops, like a bishop cannot be assigned to the conference they were elected from until they have served elsewhere first. Those things are actually traditions rather than hard and fast rules, Amon and Berlin said.

"Every bishop is on the table when we get to seriously considering appointments," Amon said.

"We would never trust that a conference has one voice about their bishop," Berlin adds. "To me it's important to know what each bishop is passionate about. They really have only four short years to make an impact in a conference."

"We're charged with doing what is best for the jurisdiction, not what is best for an individual conference. But what is good for Virginia is good for the Southeastern Jurisdiction. People pay attention to what Virginia does."

While this way of discernment is new, some traditions remain. "I've (already) heard who our bishop is going to be," Berlin says with a sigh, "which is the single most preposterous thing I've ever heard."

—Neill Caldwell







## Eastern Mennonite teams up with Wesley Theological Seminary

**E**astern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) and Wesley Theological Seminary (WTS) are teaming up to provide more opportunities for United Methodist students at both schools.

“Eastern Mennonite Seminary seeks to be fully accountable to the United Methodist University Senate, which has asked that non-Methodist seminaries approved to teach Methodist students either enter in partnership with a Methodist seminary or hire a full-time Methodist faculty member,” said Michael King, EMS dean.

This year EMS has done both. In two separate processes, EMS has entered into a partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary and hired Dr. David Evans, PhD, a United Methodist and Wesley graduate, as assistant professor of history, mission, interfaith and intercultural studies.

United Methodist students at EMS will have the opportunity to take some of the required courses for ordination through WTS, either online, on the EMS campus, or on the WTS campus in Washington, D.C. WTS is providing a United Methodist advisor who will help students navigate between the two schools and manage the requirements for ordination.

Julie Nitzsche has taken an online class from WTS already. “As a mother of two small children I appreciate the opportunity to take online classes from Wesley to supplement my classes at EMS. This partnership allows me to continue to take classes at EMS, which is closer to home, while helping me get the credits I need for ordination in The United Methodist Church.”

Wesley students will have the opportunity to work with EMS and the world-renowned Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, taking peace studies courses, such as “Managing Congregational Conflict” and “Theology and Peacebuilding.”

“Both schools agree that Dr. Evans and the partnership activities hold potential to create exciting bridges across EMS and Wesley resources for Methodist students, and the rich range of denominations both seminaries serve,” King said.

Currently 33 of the 131 students at EMS are United Methodist.

For more information contact the seminary at (540) 432-4260 or email <seminary@emu.edu>.

— Laura Lehman Amstutz, Eastern Mennonite University

### UMFS Announces a Special Journey to England and Germany

September 6-13, 2012

You are invited to join us this September to discover the history of John Wesley in England and visit UMFS's Partner Program in Germany! **This Special Journey to England and Germany is limited to 20 participants. The all-inclusive cost of this tour is \$3,250 and may be tax-deductible.** For additional information, please contact: Development Office-United Methodist Family Services at (804) 254-9450 or [Development@umfs.org](mailto:Development@umfs.org)

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## Wesley Community Center turns 75

**F**or 75 years, Wesley Community Center has been a beacon of hope to the people of Portsmouth.

One of 100 nationally supported missions by the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, Wesley has a proud heritage. The center has played a role in the establishment and formation of a host of community outreach programs, including the former Southside Neighborhood Training Center, Tidewater Child Care Association, Portsmouth Area Resources Coalition, PARC Place Shelter for Homeless Families and Portsmouth Community Health Center.

During their spring executive meeting, officers of the Virginia Conference United Methodist Women visited Wesley, where they held a service to commemorate its 75th anniversary




*Director John Hatcher led the dedication of the Wesley Center with the Virginia United Methodist Women's Executive Committee.*

and its relationship to the Virginia Conference United Methodist Women. Now in its home facility, the former Elm Avenue/Martin Luther King Church, the Wesley Center is continuing needed restorations. Much of the work has been done and more is planned in phases. With the support of local units, the kitchen makeover to extend ministries is well under way, a ramp is being constructed for accessibility, and one wing is preparing for much-needed heat and air conditioning systems.

—Betsey Davis



*Virginia UMW Mission Team with Wesley Director Hatcher in front of new plantings.*




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# Nation & World

## Conference's Initiatives of Hope reaches out to Cambodia

*Methodist church there hopes to become autonomous by 2016*

By Glenn Rowley

*The Methodist Mission in Cambodia is the newest international focus of the Virginia Conference's Initiatives of Hope. On a visit to Cambodia in March this year I had the privilege to experience the growing Methodist witness of justice and mission in that country.*

Imagine a country where more than half of the citizens are children, where only 45 percent of those children finish elementary school, where years of war and genocide have left the people struggling to recover. Welcome to Cambodia.



*A youth arrested by the Communist Khmer Rouge in the mid-1970s.*

Imagine a church where there are more children and youths than adults, and in many cases the parents become disciples because of the witness of their children. Welcome to the United Methodist Mission in Cambodia.

Cambodia, located in Southeast Asia, shares borders with Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. It experienced civil war in the late 1960s and early 1970s between the Khmer Rouge (a communist guerilla group led by the tyrannical leader Pol Pot) and the government of Cambodia. The United States became involved in the civil war because the communists in North Vietnam were using Cambodia to transport supplies to their troops in the south; the U.S. heavily bombed the Ho Chi Min trail that resulted in the deaths of innocent Cambodians (500,000 in a six-month period).

In April 1974 the Khmer Rouge captured the capital, Phnom Penh, and began their attempt to create a new pure communist society, resulting in the genocide of more than two million people. Most Americans only know a small portion of the suffering of the Cambodian people during this reign of terror through the movie "The Killing Fields." A visit to those fields will cause anyone to pause, reflect and pray for understanding our inhumanity and seek hope in the midst of despair.

The recent history of this predominantly Buddhist country has had a long-term effect upon the people, the culture and their hope for a secure economy and productive future. It has a population of almost 15 million, and its Gross Domestic Product per capita was just \$2,000, which ranked 188th (out of 229) countries.

Since the Khmer Rouge effectively destroyed virtually all the educated members of their society, Cambodia is now working to rebuild. There is widespread poverty, lack of trained teachers and medical personnel. HIV-AIDS, prostitution and sex trafficking are widespread. Food shortages, insufficient housing and polluted water sources contribute to a situation of despair for many Cambodians. Cambodia is also one of the most heavily mined areas in the world;

*Because of the trauma and the betrayals suffered by the Cambodians for the past three decades, they are searching for a renewed sense of community. The Methodist Mission in Cambodia is helping to build that community.*

there are a minimum of four million land mines (in a country of 15 million people), and 40,000 people live as amputees, which is one of the highest rates in the world.

But, the church is making a difference here in so many ways. In 2001 the United Methodist Women's School of Christian Mission studied a book titled "New Life on the Mekong," referring to the Mekong river that flows through Southeast Asia. The title of the section on Cambodia was "The Rebuilding of Trust." Since 1998, Methodists from Singapore, Korea, France, Switzerland and The United Methodist Church here in



***Cambodian church members***

the U.S. have been working together to coordinate their efforts in that rebuilding of trust. Because of the trauma and the betrayals suffered by the Cambodians for the past three decades, they are searching for a renewed sense of community. The Methodist Mission in Cambodia is helping to build that community.

Through the work of Cambodian pastors in 10 districts, more than 150 new congregations have formed

*(Continued next page: "Cambodia")*



***A new Cambodian pastor stands in his pulpit. Photo by Glenn Rowley***

## Thank you for supporting our ministry

Blessings from God have been showered on us through your generous hearts, especially through your fervent prayers for us as we work to bring a Christian presence and a better quality of life for street children, orphans, and the poor living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. On behalf of the children who benefit from your dedicated support, I express our sincere gratitude for all you have done to help these less fortunate ones.

In our Lenten/Easter meditation at the office, we studied the verses Mark 11:8-11. When discussing what the people in Cambodia would ask to be saved from if they cry "Hosanna" (save us), most of the United Methodist staff commented, "Save us from poverty and injustice." Our help is direly needed to help the poor escape the effects of poverty and injustice in this part of the world.

And as we help the poor of Cambodia grow spiritually, we



***Cambodian street children***

see great changes in the lives of our children and communities as recipients of God's mission.

Without your help, we can't do anything. Yours are the hands of God reaching out to these less privileged and less fortunate ones. Luke 13:9 says, "Let us not be weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up."

Our reports cannot contain the happiness and joy of these children as they receive gifts not only in kind, but of love, as we stand with them and share with their pains and agonies of poverty and helplessness. Let us continue to concretize God's love to them. The harvest will come.

*—Clara Biswas is a Virginia-sponsored missionary in Cambodia*



***Clara Biswas with a Cambodian child.***





("Cambodia" continued)

in the last 20 years. Under episcopal leadership of retired United Methodist Bishop Roy Sano, the Methodist Mission in Cambodia's goal is to become an autonomous Methodist Church by 2016. The Virginia Conference has entered into a partnership through the Initiatives of Hope to offer support toward that goal by sending United Methodist Volunteer-In-Mission (UMVIM) teams and financial support.

The Methodist mission is directed by Cambodian leadership as well as missionaries from other partner church bodies and United Methodist missionaries sent by the General Board of Global Ministries. This group of leaders is charged with equipping pastors and laity for their work sharing the gospel and building community and trust by planting new faith communities and offering support to those communities as they preach, teach and work in partnership to meet social needs in their villages and cities.

The Community Health and Agricultural Development (CHAD) program provides program support to churches to address several issues of poverty and scarcity. One is setting up rice banks and animal banks to help with the ongoing problem of food security. Another is to provide micro-loans to use as startup money in entrepreneurial business ventures. Community-based primary health care is another aspect of the CHAD program as well as teaching villagers to test for contaminants in their water.

Children's ministry is a primary focus of the church. Most parents of children in school are illiterate. When the educated were executed, the country was left with no intellectual base from which to start rebuilding. Schools have reopened, but children go to school half days if they have a uniform and book bag and paper to write on. Street Children Ministry in Phnom Penh works with children and

their families as they face difficult lives living and working in trash dump areas, as well as children in orphanages and HIV-AIDS victims. This ministry also works to provide teachers and scholarships to at-risk children in the poorer areas of Phnom Penh. Curriculum particular to the culture and needs in Cambodia is also being developed for Sunday school and Bible study to serve the growing number of young Christians. About 70 percent of the population is under age 30.

I was moved by the wounded and still-hopeful people of Cambodia, and I was inspired by the Methodist Church there and its work to define itself as an important community of trust-building and witness of hope by proclaiming

the good news of Jesus Christ.

Through the 2012 Annual Conference Offering and through UMVIM trips, we in Virginia have a unique opportunity to participate in what God is doing in Cambodia as the Methodist Mission grows into its role as the body of Christ in that place.

If your church would like more information about participating in the Initiatives of Hope Cambodia Mission, contact Juanita Csontos at <juanita@csontos.net>, or me at <glennrowley@vaumc.org>, or call the Center for Justice and Missional Excellence at (804) 521-1144.

*—The Rev. Glenn Rowley is director of the Center for Justice and Missional Excellence*

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# Appreciating water, a divinely appointed gift

When the Rev. Kevin Havens of Mount Olivet United Methodist Church in Arlington saw a photograph of a girl on a donkey in a developing country and learned how far she had to travel every day to get water for her family, he says, “my whole perspective changed.”

At that moment, said Havens, who was attending an event at Ginghamburg UMC in Ohio, he realized how so many of us take water for granted. The moment became a seed that would spring Havens’ Christian praise band, JC Reigns, into action to raise awareness and money for fresh, sanitary water.

“A paradigm shift occurred that fall,” Havens says now. “I had always seen our band as leading worship not raising awareness.”

That night, Havens learned more about the work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and



JC Reigns’ concert raised \$25,000 for UMCOR water and sanitation projects.

decided to utilize the power of music and worship to raise awareness about the lack of access to safe water around the world. He leveraged JC Reigns, in coordination with the release of a new album, and held two benefit concerts for UMCOR water projects.

JC Reigns is a multi-generational, multi-denominational praise team composed of various professionals, including accountants, lawyers, policemen and at least one United Methodist pastor. One of their concerts was held last November to promote their third album, *Jesus Christ, All Access*. The second event, “Thirsting for Christ,” encouraged congregants to participate in a water fast for six hours.

During the fasting event, JC Reigns used mixed images for participants to ponder. For instance, there was a photograph of a beautiful pond in the U.S., and another of a man in China carrying two bucketsful of water on a stick. The images flipped back and forth, continuously engaging participants to meditate on what they were seeing, from fresh water to mud holes.

In the end, both events stirred interest, action and

generosity. JC Reigns raised \$25,000 for UMCOR water projects, surpassing their \$20,000 goal. Later this summer, several more concerts will be held in Pennsylvania and Virginia to raise additional funds for UMCOR through the Global Water and Sanitation Advance #3020600.

“We are so pleased and humbled by Mount Olivet’s efforts and generosity toward UMCOR,” says Landon Taylor, manager of Church Relations for UMCOR. “And, we know that Mount Olivet is just one example of the many United Methodist churches engaged in God’s mission in the world through UMCOR.”

The monies raised by JC Reigns will support the Waiting Women’s Shelter, a condemned building that is a functioning part of Old Mutare Hospital in Zimbabwe, where there is currently no running water or working bathrooms. The hospital provides services to pregnant women who are about to give birth.

In addition to the photograph that caused Havens to wonder about how to meet the needs of those who have little or no access to fresh water, there was another catalyst for his band’s action. “Someone gave us \$3,000 and said ‘Multiply it for the Kingdom,’” reports Havens. “We didn’t know what cause we were going to pick. But, it all came together in the fall,” he continues.

Havens used the seed money to produce and record the JC Reigns album. When the people involved in the project learned about the water cause, doors began to swing open. The music studio offered them a reduced rate, and everyone they came into contact with chipped in their services. JC Reigns sold the new CD for the “asking price” of \$15, but many gave above and beyond to support this important ministry.

Aside from the benefit concerts and album production, yet another seed was planted. Mount Olivet’s youth got a taste of what it means to have no water. Through the church’s *Jeremiah Project*, where youths help vulnerable communities with small repair work, 200 children settled in for dinner after a hard day’s work. They sat at the dinner table and said grace, but noticed their cups were empty. They were instructed to take their cups and walk down a dusty road to get water from someone who was waiting for them with a jug filled with water. They walked a quarter of a mile each way, and the exercise showed them what most people must do in developing countries to obtain water.

“When I saw those kids going down that road, I just thought, what a great life lesson this is for them,” says Havens. “Here, some of these kids just don’t get to appreciate (our water supply), and we just take this water for granted,” he says.

—Judith Santiago for UMCOR





## Survey tracks technology use among United Methodists

While most young adults in the church are immersed in new technology, many older members are also jumping on the bandwagon. That's according to a new study conducted by United Methodist Communications that tracks how United Methodists are adopting and using new technology.

The purpose of the *United Methodist Emerging Technology Survey* was to help determine the need to broaden the use of certain new technologies in order to reach members and seekers. The survey found younger members are busy texting, watching videos and socializing online, and older members are making progress in technology use, though they still have some catching up to do before the same digital tools are integrated into their daily lives.

According to the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, the survey reveals a different conversation going on between younger digital natives and older digital immigrants. "We inhabit different worlds depending on when we came to the digital terrain," Hollon said. "Digital immigrants are people like me who were born before the Internet, while digital natives are younger persons who have experienced broadband access and cell phone use as a part of their everyday life from birth."

Findings from the survey include:

- **Both old and young are fans of Facebook.** In the last two years, Facebook use among United Methodist members went from 43 to 63 percent among older members. Among 25-34 year-olds, its usage increased from 83 to 95 percent, and 84 percent of

35-44 year-olds, up from 65 percent.

- Older adults are discovering that texting is a pretty handy means of communications. Usage of texting by adults 35 and older increased from 49 percent in 2009 to 63 percent. Other than the use of apps, which was just beginning at the time of the earlier study, texting and Facebook are the only new technologies garnering increased usage by older adults.
- Younger adults in the church are still way ahead on technologies like mobile apps, Twitter, Yammer, blogging and YouTube. Responses from adults over 35 show little or no growth in the use of Twitter, blogging and YouTube.
- Owning smartphones also seems to be a function of age. Among adults 25-34, 82 percent own a smartphone compared to the 66 percent of those 35-44 and 44 percent of older United Methodists.

Why are older United Methodists less involved or engaged in technology? This appears related to attitudes towards technology. Younger adults are much more likely to describe themselves as interested in learning new technology or as early adopters. They also are more likely to show signs of "addiction" to technology, needing to check for e-mail frequently during meetings or feeling lost without their smartphones.

Although findings indicate there is indeed a divide between younger and older church members when it comes to technology usage, older members polled say they are accepting of new technology, but are more likely to "wait and see" how new products evolve. On the other hand, younger persons tend to jump right in when new technologies and products are introduced to the market.

What do all these percentages and predictions have to tell us about the way churches and church leaders are using technology?

It's pretty obvious that electronic tools like websites, e-newsletters, and now Facebook are becoming common marketing and evangelism avenues; however local churches may still be missing some significant opportunities to keep in touch with younger adults through apps and texting. While those 45 or older spend about 11 hours a week communicating electronically (answering e-mail, on Internet sites and using Facebook), younger adults have them beat. Adults 25 to 34 spend twice that (22 hours), and those 34 to 44 spend an average of 18 hours a week.

When it comes to learning more about digital communications, church leaders and pastors want to know more about setting up websites (37 percent) and e-newsletters (37 percent), but are less interested in being trained to create podcasts and various other tools.

—Diane Degnan, *United Methodist Communications*

# Upcoming Events

## JULY

### **Helping Hands**

**July 19-20 at Woodlake UMC in Midlothian, and Aug. 6-7 at Williamsburg UMC.** Rising 4th through 6th graders and their adult leaders can learn about mission opportunities and the importance of being a caring Christian. Cost is \$36 per person, which includes a t-shirt, meals and snacks and overnight stay. Each group must have one adult leader for every six children. Churches should register their entire group by getting a flyer and mailing it in. No e-mail or phone call registrations. For Williamsburg event, contact Cindy Banek at (757) 229-1771 or <cbanek@williamsburgumc.org>. For Midlothian event, contact Beth Christian (804)739-4535, ext. 28, or <bchristian@woodlakeumc.org>.

### **Camp Rainbow Connection**

**July 8-13 and Aug. 12-17, Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center.** Potential campers must be at least 16 years of age, have an intellectual disability as their primary disability, and be able to independently complete activities of daily living. Contact the Office of Leadership and Inclusivity to receive an application packet. New and returning staff volunteers are also needed. Staff members

must be at least 16 years of age by July 1, agree to a criminal background check, attend a training session in the spring and commit to attending the full week of camp. For the first time in 2012, there will be the opportunity for a limited number of 15-year-olds to serve as Camp Rainbow Connection Youth Advocates. Applications for staff and Youth Advocates are available on the Conference website, <www.vaumc.org>. Select "Ministries," followed by "Disabilities," then "Camp Rainbow Connection." For more information, contact the Office of Leadership and Inclusivity by calling 1-800-768-6040 or (804) 521-1100, ext. 153; or by e-mail at <marthastokes@vaumc.org>.

### **Camp Loud and Clear**

**July 13-15, Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center in Appomattox County.** This is the second year for the camp which is specifically designed to meet the needs of children who are deaf and hard of hearing regardless of their degree of hearing loss or their chosen communication mode. Counselors at the camp will have experience working with children with hearing loss. There will be nationally certified interpreters present for the children who are deaf. Camp Loud and Clear is being supported by the Virginia Conference Commission on Disabilities, Longwood University, Radford University and the Holiday

Lake 4-H Educational Center. For additional information, contact Dr. Lissa Power-deFur at <powerdefurea@longwood.edu> or (434) 395-2972; Jennifer Kingsley at <jkkingsley@hotmail.com> or (434) 391-3679. A flyer and camper application can be found on the conference website at: <www.vaumc.org/loudandclear>.

## LEAD

### **July 27-August 5, Salvation Army Roakoke.**

LEAD is a leadership training event offered by the Conference Council for Youth Ministry. This experience will be a 10-day leadership immersion. District and local church youth councils are invited to select 3-5 youths who are willing to commit to this 10-day intensive experience and a covenant action plan to enact newly developed leadership skills in their districts and local communities upon return. The first three days of the event will be spent working with participants to understand vocation: identifying their strongest gifts and deepest passions, discovering how their gifts and passions intersect with the needs of the world, and responding to God's call to ACT on and live out their discoveries. During the next five days, youths will pick a track based on their discoveries and be immersed in one of three areas (worship, spiritual formation or outreach). Finally, the event will end with a culminating experience of "design studio" where youths create action plans and covenants for making a difference in their district and local community. Cost is \$300. For more information, e-mail <alisonmalloy@gmail.com>.

## AUGUST

### **All God's Children Camp**

**Aug. 5-10, Camp Highroad in Middleburg; Aug. 5-10, Occohannock on the Bay in Belle Haven, Eastern Shore; and Aug. 12-17 at Westview on the James in Goochland.** Children ages 7-12 who have an incarcerated mother or father spend a week at camp participating in activities such as boating, swimming, hiking, archery, music, crafts, Bible study and conflict resolution. Contact Casey Torrence at <caseytorrence@vaumc.org>.

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# Local Church



▲ United Methodist Women at Andrew Chapel UMC in Montross, Frederickburg District, were pleased to have guest Chris Anton present a program about the Wounded Warrior Project. Anton and his wife, Judy, sponsor a program each summer for some of the Wounded Warriors and their families at their subdivision on the Potomac River in Westmoreland County, where many of their neighbors help host and entertain these guests. (The Wounded Warrior Project is a non-profit group that works to raise awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured service men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. Visit <[www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org)>.)



▲ Farmville UMC partnered with Longwood University to host the largest Stop Hunger Now packing event in Farmville. More than 100 participants packed 22,000 meals for hungry people around the world. Pictured, from left: Jo Smith, Paul Baker, Carol Fields; right: Devin Rivers and Mandy Newman.



▲ United Methodist Women at Burnt Chimney UMC collected baby blankets, lap robes and throws which were delivered to Franklin County Family Resources for use in their Women's Shelter. Pictured, from left: Maxine Sink, Virginia Meadow, Kathy Goad, Judy Gunnufsen, Geri Keyser and Anita Chichester. The congregation at Burnt Chimney also celebrated the church's 50th anniversary on April 21-22.



▲ In March, Robert Bridges and Peter and Michelle Surran of Franktown UMC traveled to Haiti's El Shaddai Children's Home. It was a realization of the dream to put up shelters through the organization Shelter 2.0. The mission of this group is to produce, ship and assemble shelters made of pieces that are flat-packed and shipped wherever they are needed. On arrival, the shelters go together much like a puzzle. You can visit <[www.shelter20.com](http://www.shelter20.com)> for more information. Pictured, Surran, on the left, Bridges, far right, and the hard-working crew of local people who assisted in building the shelters like the one in the background.

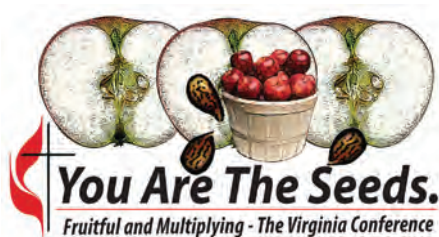


▲ Youths from Redland UMC in Cross Junction hosted a Valentine party for the residents at Spring Arbor, a retirement home in Winchester. Youths helped the residents make Valentine cards and shared an afternoon of laughter, music, cookies and soda. They visited with many of the residents in their rooms and took them candy and hand-made cards.



▲ English as a Second Language (ESL) students gathered at Bruen Chapel UMC in Fairfax for a "Game Night" on March 22. Students and teachers in the photo are from more than 10 different countries. Four major world religions were represented in members of this intergenerational group who, while practicing English conversation, were stretching across cultural divides as they had fun together. Bruen Chapel began hosting ESL classes in late spring of 2010. ESL classes in 2010 and 2011 were a joint venture with New Light UMC. Bruen Chapel now offers ESL classes during the regular academic year.

*(Continued on page 32, "Local")*



## 4 CANS 4 CONFERENCE

Each clergy and lay member of the 2012 Annual Conference is asked to bring a minimum of 4 cans of food to this year's gathering at the Roanoke Civic Center. The offering should be at least: 1 can of meat; 1 can of vegetables and/or fruit; 1 can of soup and/or stew; 1 "pop-top" can. If each Annual Conference member and visitor brings the minimum number of cans, we may be able to present the Southwest Virginia (SW-VA) Food Bank more than 10,000 pounds (5 tons) of food to distribute to the various agencies in the area.

This can be a church-wide collection, youth group project, an initiative of United Methodist Women or Men, your congregation's mission emphasis group, or an opportunity for individuals to take up a meaningful, personal act of charity and grace.

In addition to the cans, there is a need for cereal (hot, cold or instant), peanut butter and jelly, cooking oils, dry preparation aids (like Hamburger

Helper, pasta, etc.) and flour.

Also, please try to bring your items in recyclable grocery bags, rather than the easily-available and often-abused plastic bags. The SW-VA Food Bank will gladly pass the 99¢ re-useable ones along to the recipients with the food.

Do not bring home-canned items, out-of-date cans, glass jars, damaged cans, fresh fruits/veggies, or already-opened or partially used supplies. Remember those who will be receiving these gifts as you prepare them!

As you might already know, the need for the ministry and supplies of the SW-VA Food Bank continues to grow. More requests come every day for food supplies. To get additional insight, visit the website, <[www.faswva.org](http://www.faswva.org)>.

In the last three years, Virginia Conference United Methodists have given more than 25 tons of canned and staple goods to the Southeast Virginia Food Bank in Norfolk and the Southwest Virginia

Food Bank in the Roanoke Valley as we gathered there for Annual Conference.

If you have questions, contact the Rev. Jim Earley via e-mail <[revsruess@comcast.net](mailto:revsruess@comcast.net)> or at Walker Chapel UMC at (703) 538-5200.

(Continued on page 33)



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# Living the Word



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*The Rev. Dr. Edward M. Garrett Jr. retired in 2007 with 42 years of service in the Virginia Conference. He graduated from the University of Richmond (B.A.), Duke Divinity School (B.D.), Union Theological Seminary (M.A.), and St. Mary's Seminary and University (D.Min.) He is the author of two books on Christian worship and he still conducts numerous leadership training workshops across the conference. Currently he is teaching at Life-Long Learning Institute in Richmond and is on the Board of Directors for Chesterfield, Colonial Heights Alliance of Social Ministry. He has contributed numerous articles for the Advocate over the years. He and his wife, Marian, are active at Chester UMC.*

**May 6, 2012**

**"The Bread of Life"**

*John 6:22-35*

**B**read has unique features. One, it is the very source of life. Without nourishment, one will die. This passage identifies Jesus as the basic source of survival and the One who satisfies our every need. Two, bread is a gift of God and needs to be shared. Each time we eat we need to be thankful and realize how blessed we are. Three, to be effective bread has to be digested and absorbed into the body. When we consume bread, God's spirit comes personally to us and we should appreciate the coming of God's grace anew.

"I am the Bread of Life" is one of the greatest claims and also one of the greatest offers of Jesus. There is but one condition. The gift must be accepted. We have to respond to the eating of the bread by risking and reaching out to others.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good" was the Old Testament invitation. "The one who comes to me shall not hunger," the Master said. Who would decline so rich an invitation? At the Lord's Table is food that nourishes the deepest hungers of our souls. Here is an even greater miracle than the manna distributed in the wilderness. Here is Jesus – the Christ, the Messiah – the very presence of God with us!

When we take seriously that Christ is the Bread of Life, we become more aware of Christ's presence. Here are some reminders about our eating habits at the Table: 1) Eat in the right manner. Swallow your pride. Don't feed on jealousy, envy, stubbornness

and bitterness; 2) Eat slowly. Don't devour the bread too quickly. Take time to reflect on the spiritual nourishment you are receiving; 3) Eat a balanced diet. Be sure to include quiet time before and after you receive Communion. Be in prayer for yourself, God's church, and especially those in pain and need; 4) Don't take too much for yourself. Share bread with the hungry each week. Find ways to offer your time and service to others who are waiting to receive nourishment, both physical and spiritual.

**May 13, 2012**

**"Being Good Shepherds"**

*John 10:7-18*

**T**wo concerns strike me about this passage: 1) We need to understand the qualities of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and connect them to the ministry of God's shepherds today. In Biblical times there were certain characteristics of a caring shepherd. One, the shepherds knew their sheep – their habits, where they liked to graze, what scared them or calmed them, etc. Second, the shepherd provided security and protection to the flock. The sheep could rely on the shepherd. Three, the shepherd brought life to the sheep. Our scripture says the good shepherd would lay down his life for the sheep. He didn't quit when things got tough.

These qualities are important to pastors, church leaders and teachers today. We need leadership that is humble, not arrogant or pompous. The shepherd genuinely cares for the flock, and spends time and energy in knowing the people and their needs. They do not hide in the office or behind a computer and say they are too



busy to share with their flock.

The caring shepherd is sincere, not saying one thing to one group and something different to another. They are honest with everyone and willing to stand up for the least, the lost and the lonely. They are risk-takers and not simply keepers of the status quo. They empty themselves daily for the sake of the sheep and God's kingdom.

Our Church Councils, Staff Parish Relations committees and church staffs must work with their shepherds and seek the qualities of the Good Shepherd. In this process, we need to realize that sometimes our shepherds can become depressed and lonely and need to be loved.

2) We must intentionally support our shepherds and church leaders in their tasks. What encouragement do we offer our leaders? Too often it is "We" against "Them" and we never figure out that God wants "all of us together in the flock."

Consider together:

- Do we trust the work of our shepherds (our pastor(s), staff, trustees, finance committee, etc.)? Or do we seek control and keep finding fault with others?
- Are we cooperative with our shepherds, praying for and with them regularly, and offering visible signs of support? Or do we look for ways to undermine their efforts?
- Do we look beyond our shepherds' humanness and see them as servants of God and fellow travelers in our faith journey? Or do we keep nit-picking and expect them to see things "our way" or "the highway"?

God is truly at work among the flock. Let us respond and come to the Good Shepherd for comfort, strength, and direction.

**May 20, 2012**

**"Easter is Extraordinary"**

*John 11:17-27*

A group of kindergarteners was asked by the teacher: "Does anyone know what makes Easter special?" A little girl raised her hand and replied: "Because Jesus rose from the dead..." Before the teacher could compliment her, she kept on talking: "...but if he sees his shadow, he has to go back for seven weeks." Yes, there is confusion about the meaning of the Resurrection.

Let's consider what makes the Resurrection extraordinary:

1) God's full power is released in the world in victory. The Lord is actively engaged in bringing order out of chaos. In the drama *The Trial of Jesus*, John Masefield has the centurion, Longinus, report to Pilate after the crucifixion of Jesus. Longinus had been the head officer at the execution. After he presented his report, Procula, Pilate's wife, asks him how the prisoner died. Once the account is given, she asks, "Do you think he is alive?" Longinus answers, "No, my lady, I don't." "Then where is he?" asks Procula. Longinus replies, "Let loose in the world, my lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth." Easter is about an everlasting power surge – HE IS RISEN INDEED!

2) We can look ahead and not be afraid. We are no longer entangled in fear. The enemies of sin and death are beaten. Ultimately the battle has been won. We must still reckon with them, but fundamentally we do not have to fear them anymore. The future is open for us!

3) We can live new lives now, as well as look forward to new life in the final Resurrection. The great Easter truth is not only that we will live new lives after our death, but also that we are to live new lives here and now by the power of the Resurrection. We are to live nobly now because we are to

live forever.

Easter calls us to share the Good News of Christ's victory over sin and death with others. William Sangster, the great Methodist who helped guide Londoners through the horrors of World War II bombings, fell ill to a disease that progressively paralyzed his body, and eventually his vocal cords. On the Easter just before he died, he managed to scribble this short note to his daughter: "How terrible to wake up on Easter and have no voice to shout, 'He is risen!' Far worse, to have a voice and not want to shout."

**May 27, 2012**

**"Way, Truth and Life"**

*John 14:1-14*

Jesus' proclamation, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" can better be understood by examining three C's: change, claims and commitment.

"The Way" means a change in the direction one is going. Notice Jesus did not say, "I will point you to the way." He did not say, "I'll give you the directions." Nor did he say, "I will open the way for you." He said, "I AM the way."

We may give persons directions to destinations they seek. We may direct them in words, giving detailed instructions how to get there. We may give them maps on which we have carefully drawn their routes. We can say to them, "You can't miss it!" But even with the best directions, a person can still get lost. The best thing we can do is say, "I know the way, come with me, and I will take you there." We become the way for that individual. Jesus not only tells us the way. Our Redeemer not only gives us instructions about the way. Christ is the absolute way. I have appreciated so much the persons who have taken time to guide me when I was lost and needed to find my way.

*(Continued on page 32, "Living")*





# Letters & Commentary

## We must look beyond words of Jesus on social issues

I am impressed by the amazing feat of journalistic legerdemain you achieved by leaving a blank space in your "Editor's Desk" column in the March *Advocate*. For in that blank space, you not only presented the words of Jesus about homosexuality, you also presented what he said about pedophilia, the sexual exploitation of women, human trafficking, racism, alcoholism, gambling addiction, drug dependency and a whole host of social and moral issues.

The point is that we must look beyond the reported words of Jesus to seek guidance in dealing with many such issues. But in the case of homosexuality, we do not have to look far. As the Rev. Keith Boyette pointed out in his article on pg. 4, we only have to look to the words of Paul to determine that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.

—John J. Paylor, Paoli, Pa.

## March issue left questions unanswered

Regarding homosexuality and the church [March *Advocate*], we should be informed mostly from Scripture and not the culture. I see a number of questions not addressed in the articles in that month's issue:

- How does a homosexual fulfill God's first commandment of humans in Genesis 1:27?
- In Scripture, marriages became final not at the ceremony, but afterward in private through consummation, when the two become "one flesh." In what physical way do homosexual men meet this marriage requirement? How about homosexual women?
- As to what Jesus didn't say about homosexuality, didn't He speak mostly to the sins that people of the day didn't own up to, i.e., sins of the heart, not to behavior commonly accepted by His audiences as sin?
- Doesn't John 21:25 allow for the possibility that Jesus did speak directly about homosexuality? Why didn't Jesus speak directly against slavery, or child molestation, etc, etc? Perhaps He did?

- Isn't the parallel between The United Methodist Church today eerily similar with that of the church described in Revelation 2:18-29?
- Didn't the Episcopal Church hierarchy ignore I Corinthians 6:5-7 in suing its own churches over this matter?\*

I'd also like to add one historical clarification to Rives Priddy's statement about physicians eliminating homosexuality as a disorder. I distinctly remember reading a statement by one of the physicians on the American Psychiatric Association's board responsible for the content of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, the psychiatrist's Bible on disorders, at the time. In resigning from the board, he said the elimination of homosexuality was the first time in the history of the *DSM* that a decision was made to drop a disorder with absolutely no medical evidence to support it. In fact, he went on to say, it was done because of intimidation from homosexual activists. I later read (unsubstantiated, but plausible) that because psychiatrists had such a poor record in helping homosexuals who came to them, there wasn't much resistance to the change.

—Scott Hamel, Cross Junction

*\*Editor's Note: In January a Virginia judge ruled against seven congregations that broke away from the Episcopal Church in 2006, rejecting their argument that they owned their church property and deciding in favor of the national denomination. The United Methodist Church has a similar rule, called the Trust Clause.*

## Lay member stands with Paul's teachings

Thank you for dealing with the divisive issue of homosexuality in the March issue of the *Advocate*. This is not a new problem. I appreciate the Apostle Paul's insight and wisdom on God's plan for man written to "all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints." (Romans 1:7a)

Below I quote selected verses from Romans Chapter 1, and suggest a reading of the entire chapter.

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven

(Continued on page 32, "Paul's teachings")



# Ministry Study Commission a missed opportunity

In response to the World Council of Churches' document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* which outlined the broadest ecumenical theological convergence in modern church history, The United Methodist Church conducted studies on Baptism and on the Eucharist. Those studies produced two documents – *By Water and the Spirit* and *This Holy Mystery* – which now guide our church both theologically and practically in our understanding and practice of the sacraments.

**Commentary by  
Rev. Dr. Daniel L.  
Garrett**

The first UMC Ministry Study Commission drew excitement across the church as many of us hoped for the same process that guided our studies of Baptism and Eucharist. The theological convergence that grounds our sacramental life in the best biblical, theological and historical wisdom is also available to guide our understandings of ministry and ordination. Yet, over two quadrennia we have walked away from the Ministry section of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and produced a report that offers little theological clarity on the meaning of ordination, orders and the practice of ministry. Without a coherent understanding of ordination, the proposal coming to the 2012 General Conference wants us to ordain people at the entrance to a provisional process where, if they fail to meet the requirements for full conference membership, they face the prospect of something like being “unordained!” The Study Commission states that it was operating under a mandate from the 2008 General Conference to separate conference membership and ordination, and we are left with a pro-

posal in which conference membership obviously trumps ordination. Not only have we separated them, we have demonstrated that our preference for practical solutions to ministry issues operates without any guiding understanding of ordination.

Another puzzling proposal on sacramental authority attempts to solve the ecumenical embarrassment we face in authorizing non-ordained persons to celebrate the Eucharist, by clarifying that it resides in the office of ordained elder. And in the same breath it grants Bishops the authority to give that Eucharistic presidency to non-ordained licensed persons as well as ordained Deacons in certain missional settings. What guides our understanding of ordination, not to mention Eucharistic presidency? It is obvious that we have no coherent theology of ordination and continue to justify various proposed actions out of supposed missional urgency.

You do not solve practical ministry issues, such as guaranteed appointments and new forms of leadership, by disregarding the theological underpinnings of ministry. Our preference for functional, organizational tinkering creates more problems than it solves. John Wesley's practical solution to a ministry urgency problem in 1784 was to send a chalice to America and instruct us to *ordain* people for Eucharistic presidency.

The opportunity and necessity to clarify our ministry is at hand. The proposals before the 2012 General Conference miss that opportunity once again.

*—The Rev. Dr. Dan Garrett is interim co-pastor at Braddock Street UMC in Winchester*

## How do we respond to Trayvon?

Last week, while I was dealing with a tragic death in my own community, the world became aware of the death of another young man: a boy named Trayvon Martin. The speed and intensity of the backlash – the depth of polarizing reactions – simply underscore the fear and distrust that still lurks just below the surface of American life.

This one incident has become a lightning rod. But what is it that causes us to focus on one fallen Tray-

von while ignoring all the rest?

Every 40 minutes a person is murdered in America. The odds are almost two to one that the victim will be non-white. Add in numbers from epidemics like AIDS and suicide, and the statistics become even more foreboding.

**Commentary by  
Rev. Larry Jent**

When something happens to breach that reservoir of communal grief, the results can unleash bewildering emotions. Soon we're donning hoodies in Trayvon's name, but no amount of sweatshirts can account for those who continue to fall.

What can we do? The answer starts with you. Notice the Trayvons in your neighborhood. Get to know them before they fall. Be sure someone

learns their names. If, God forbid, they do fall to violence or suicide, help your community express their grief. Care enough to find out why they fell.

Then get involved. Tell their stories. Weep with their friends and loved ones. Tell them that you know a God who has wept beside the tomb. You serve a Lord who knows what it's like to see His only Son die. And you know a God who will finally wipe away every last tear.

Until that day, our task is simple: Just love your neighbor so much that not one of them falls to violence.

Never again.  
Not one.

*—The Rev. Larry Jent is pastor at Fishersville UMC*



(“Living the Word” continued from page 29)

Ask yourself: Am I helping someone today find her way to Christ?

“The Truth” means facing oneself honestly and allowing the claims of Jesus to impact directly how one thinks and acts. This is challenging; for the truth is realistic and narrow in its scope. When we go to the doctor, we want a prescription for exactly what we will need to get well. We would be quite startled if the doctor said, “These pills ought to cure you if you are sincere.” Or would you trust a surgeon who had received no specialized training, but was simply a really good person who meant well? Of course not! Truth is narrow and you’ll trust your life only to someone who knows exactly what she is doing. Who do you trust?

“The Life” means making a daily commitment to step forward in faith. It is making necessary changes in one’s attitude and behavior, and letting God’s spirit direct your choices. I remember a youth saying to me, “Commitment is sticking with Christ, no matter what. I want that sticking power with me always.”

Once we accept God’s path and priorities, then we can move forward with confidence and strength to serve God.

(“Paul’s teachings” continued from page 30)

against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them... Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images... Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desire of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another... Women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones... men abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another, committ[ing] indecent acts with other men... Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done... Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:18-19, 22, 24, 26-28, 32 NIV)

I choose to stand with Paul.

—Jean T. Holmes is a member at South Hill UMC

## March issue carried a powerful message

Congratulations on your March issue of the *Advocate*, especially the editorial (From the Editor’s Desk, pg. 2-3). All together it carried a powerful and pertinent message.

—The Rev. William F. Quillian Jr. is retired in Lynchburg

(“Local” continued from page 30)

▼ Glovier Memorial UMC members performed a play called “Meet the Disciples” in April. “We are a small congregation and had 27 people in costume to perform,” writes Dottie Wiest. “It was a very touching presentation of the lives of the 11 Disciples the year following the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”



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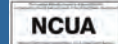
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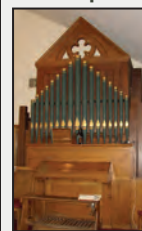
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## Words of JESUS

MARK CHAPTER 10  
MATTHEW CHAPTER 19

## HOLY MATRIMONY

"But at the  
beginning of  
creation, God  
made them male  
and female.

For this reason, a  
man will leave his  
father and mother  
and become  
united to his wife,  
and the two will  
become one flesh.

So they are no  
longer two, but  
one. Therefore,  
what GOD has  
joined together,  
let not man  
separate."



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GENESIS 2:24

## 2012 Annual Conference Information

June 22-24, Roanoke Civic Center

For updates, visit <www.vaumc.org>

(Continued from page 27)

### Annual Conference schedule

The 2012 Annual Conference schedule is posted on the conference website, <vaumc.org>.

Some important items to note are:

- ❖ Annual Conference will begin at 3 p.m. on Friday afternoon and conclude at noon Sunday.
- ❖ Clergy Session and Laity Session are on Friday beginning at 1 p.m.
- ❖ Only reports requiring Annual Conference action or reports about past annual conference actions (i.e., construction of the episcopal residence) will be received verbally.
- ❖ There will be a special recognition of Bishop Kammerer's ministry on Saturday morning.
- ❖ The General Conference report and endorsement of episcopal nominee will occur on Saturday morning.
- ❖ There will be a presentation on "All Things New"/Vital Congregations on Saturday afternoon
- ❖ Some recommended conference rules changes to note:

### CONSENT AGENDA

Agenda items and reports not requiring action by the Annual Conference other than a vote to receive said item for publication in the *Journal* shall be

placed on a Consent Agenda. For any item or report to be eligible for placement on the Consent Agenda, it must have been distributed in the pre-Conference materials. Determination of items to be placed on the Consent Agenda shall be made annually by the bishop in consultation with the Consent Agenda Committee. This committee shall be composed of the conference Secretary, the conference Lay Leader, the chair of the conference Rules Committee, and the director of Connectional Ministries. An individual item may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a motion to that effect which is approved by a majority of the members of Annual Conference, provided that such motion must be presented and approved during the first business session of the Annual Conference. When an individual item has been removed from the Consent Agenda, it shall be placed into the regular agenda.

### Banquets

If you are planning a banquet for Annual Conference and would like to have your event listed in the Banquet Schedule, forward the following information to banquet coordinator Mike Reaves at <mbreaves@charter.net>. Please include name of group, location, date and time of the gathering and contact information.

You can find the updated banquet schedule on the conference website, <www.vaumc.org>. Most groups have also posted their banquet information on the conference's ClergyNet and LaityNet e-mail groups.

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# Clergy & Diaconal

## TRIBUTE

A little history of how “important” **Margaret Sisson** became while serving as our Virginia Conference United Methodist Women’s secretary for Financial Interpretation during the era that the “Baker’s Dozen” served from 1993-1996. We named ourselves this because there were 13 conference officers during those four years she served, and in a Baker’s Dozen, there are 13 instead of what a regular dozen would represent, plus my last name happened to be “Baker.”

Margaret was small in stature, but “mighty” in the works of serving her Lord in all areas, whether it was attending Regional School, training events, UMW annual meetings, all those Executive Committee meetings and all those other called meetings throughout the years we served. We united, not only in all the matters of serving our specific office, but in representing all the United Methodist Women throughout our conference.

Margaret will never be erased or forgotten in our hearts, as well as those she represented in her local church or districts she and Richard served. During last year’s Annual Conference, I ran into Richard and Margaret and gave each a big hug and we laughed at those “good ol’ days” of serving our Lord thru witnessing as United Methodist Women!

Margaret will not only be missed by her warm hug and big smile, but her love and willingness to serve in other areas throughout the conference. Our entire team shall miss her but know that Margaret is smiling down on us from her new home in Heaven! We are thankful to have served with Margaret.

*—Sandra W. Baker served as president of Virginia Conference United Methodist Women from 1993 to 1996.*

## Deaths

**The Rev. Rudolph Doyle Kidd**, 84, of Williamsburg, died on April 7, 2012. Preceding him in death were his wife, Rhea Kidd, and his son, Steve. Kidd was a United Methodist pastor for 46 years. He began his career in 1946 in the Holston Conference. He became a member of the Virginia Conference in 1955 where he served Guilford, as the associate pastor at Park Place in the Norfolk District, then pastor of Mechanicsville, Sherbourne Avenue, Central in Richmond, Culmore, High Street in Franklin, Chestnut Memorial, Ginter Park, St. Paul in Woodbridge, and Springfield. He retired in 1992.



Kidd

**The Rev. Loyde Mayo Middleton**, 86, of Laurinburg, N.C., died April 3, 2012, at Scotia Village. Middleton received his education at Tennessee Technical University and Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. He was an ordained minister with The United Methodist Church and served as a missionary to Bolivia 1947-1968. Returning to the U.S., he joined the Virginia Conference. In 1990, when he retired to Huntington, W.Va., and more recently to Rockingham, N.C. Appointments he served in the Virginia Conference included Ivey Memorial, Barton Heights, Blackstone, Grace in Newport News, and Ferebee-Halstead. Middleton is survived by his wife of more than 60 years, Sarah L. Middleton.



Middleton

**Richard J. “Richie” Estes**, 14, son of the Rev. Shayne and Kelly Estes, died March 21, 2012. He was a ninth grader at Washington & Lee High School in Montross and was active at Andrew Chapel UMC, where his father is the pastor. His service was held at Good Shepherd UMC in Glen Allen.

**Mavis C. Edwards**, 81, died on Good Friday, April 6, 2012. She is survived by her son, Rev. James A. Edwards, and his wife, Loyce, of Bowling Green. A service was held at Mount Pisgah UMC in Midlothian. Edwards is pastor of the Bowling Green Charge, Fredericksburg District.

**Nancy Myers**, the mother of Ann Craig and mother-in-law to Rev. Tim Craig, senior pastor at Mount Olivet UMC, Arlington District, died March 22, 2012.

**Helen H. Petre**, 103, died March 16, 2012. She was the wife of the late Rev. W. Ridgway Petre, with whom she shared 63 years of marriage prior to his death. Her husband served many churches, including Epworth in Norfolk and Francis Asbury in Virginia Beach.

**Sandy Ann Hook Tilley**, 86, died March 28, 2012. Born in Staunton, she was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Charles V. Tilley.

## Births

**The Rev. Samantha Tuttle**, her husband Mike and son Noah, announce the birth of Audrey Reese, born on March 16. Tuttle is the pastor at Dranesville UMC, Arlington District.

## 'Be prepared' for new ministries to grow out of Scouting



**Charlene Payne Kammerer**  
Bishop of the  
Virginia Conference

The United Methodist Church has long been the leader in being sponsors for Scouting units at local churches. Scouting reflects a long-term commitment to help nurture boys and girls, young men and women, in character development.

When I was growing up, my home church sponsored both Brownie and Cub Scouts troops, also Girl and Boy Scout units when I was older. I enjoyed both Brownies and Girl Scouts, along with the children and youth ministries my congregation provided. In fact, it was like they were seamless, going to youth group, choir practice and Scouts, for they were all at the church. The adult leaders often were the same people in at least two of these groups. Sometimes my Scout leaders were also my Sunday school

teachers.

When we were raising our son, Chris, he was very active in Cub Scouts and later Boy Scouts. Leigh was a hands-on parent with the many projects, camping trips and gatherings of Scouts. I was both a present pastor where my churches sponsored Scouting units and a supportive Mom for many years. As I reflect on my own Scouting experiences and that of our son, I realize that now Scouting looks different and needs to be different in reaching our new generations of youth.

As a young girl, it was only my school and church friends who were also a part of Scouts. They were all white like me. When my son was in Scouting, there were a handful of African-American boys who were part of his troops. Now Scouting reaches so many diverse ethnic/racial groups: Latino, Asian, Native American, African-American, Caucasian, African and many more. A large number of children come from single-parent homes or live with grandparents or other family members. The family units look different. The challenges in the public school are different. The ability of local churches to reach these boys and girls and young adults is far more difficult.

The need for Scouting ministries is stronger than ever! Boys and girls, young men and women need to know that there are caring adults who are in their corner. They need to know they can succeed in learning, gaining skills, competing and serving. They need to know they can make friends. They need to know that the church in their neighborhood has not forgotten about them or their families. They need to know that at least one adult truly cares about them and will offer them guidance and unconditional love.

As we seek to grow Vital Congregations, it will be critical how we are reaching out to children and youth through Scouting ministries. Christ would bid us "Be Prepared!"

Grace and Peace,

*Charlene Kammerer*

### Connecting with the *Virginia Advocate* official news magazine of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church

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### Deadlines

The *Virginia Advocate* is published once a month. The deadline to submit news and ad copy for the June 2012 issue is May 7. For more information on future deadlines, contact Peggy Cribbs in the *Advocate* office or visit the Web.

### 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 (please no more than one item per issue). Color photos 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* reserves the right to edit all letters.

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