

Advocate



Living fully, aging with grace...
dying with dignity

Connecting with the



Virginia Advocate

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Linda S. Rhodes
VAUMC Director of
Communications

**Abundant
life – all the
way to the
end**

Before my mother came to live with us six years ago, I had never really thought much about the needs of older adults. That changed quickly.

At the age of 90, my mother, who had been living alone in her own home for 15 years after my father died, suffered a serious fall. She lay on the bathroom floor for two days before my brother found her. She spent one month in the hospital and a second month in rehab trying to recover. Her three children told her she could no longer live alone. She didn't argue.

We gave her choices: a very nice assisted living facility in her hometown in Oklahoma where my brother and his family live; an assisted living facility near my sister's home in Kansas; or live with me and my husband in our house in Virginia. She chose Virginia.

But we had to make changes before she could come. We put in a stairlift so she could maneuver our two-story house. We installed a walk-in bathtub and widened the door to the bathroom to accommodate a walker or wheelchair. My husband put up grab bars everywhere. And we got rid of all the scatter rugs and tripping hazards.

Even so, there are four steps from the garage into the house that we couldn't modify. I told Mother that she had to be able to climb up four steps to get into the house. She didn't bat an eye. She told the rehab nurses they had to get her some stairs to practice on. She worked and worked until she was able to climb those stairs – up and down.

After she got here, I had more to learn, though. I had to deal with Medicare, visits to doctors, a variety of medical specialists, medicines, hospitals, nutrition, power of attorney, living will, hired caregivers while we were at work and much more. Most importantly, I learned that growing old is neither easy nor for the timid.

I've watched my mother struggle, persevere and overcome. I've also watched her physical and mental capabilities decline. Through it all, I've tried to be there for her. At least she's not doing this alone.

My husband and I have no children. We sometimes laugh and say that after one of us dies, the survivor will probably end up tied to a chair in a corner of a nursing home somewhere – alone and forgotten. After all, who will care?

You see, not everyone will have choices, much less the ability to make them for themselves. As huge numbers of Baby Boomers reach "older adulthood," churches must be aware of this increasingly crucial aspect of ministry. We need to identify older persons in our congregations who may become vulnerable as they age. We need to know how to help them have an abundant life—all the way to its end. Jesus would expect no less. 🍷



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The Advocate is published once a month. The deadline to submit news and ad copy for the June 2015 issue is May 4. For more information on future deadlines, contact the Advocate office or visit the website.

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Local Church News

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

Letters

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

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USPS 660-740

ISSN 0891-5598

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

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

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On the cover: Charlotte Copley (left, and author of article on page 19) and her dear friend, Nancy Contos, during a walk on the WindsorMeade campus.

The *Virginia Advocate* Staff

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LETTERS



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Weeping on Holy Saturday

It is Holy Saturday and, as is often the case, I find myself weeping. I remind my students that we call it Good Friday because we know the ending, but Jesus' disciples were filled with despair that weekend. The newspaper is bursting with stories about the anniversaries of Richmond's fall and MLK Jr.'s death.

The Virginia Advocate headline reads "Heeding God's Call." Notably absent are stories of LGBTQ members. I weep for the UMC because it has lost many children of God with gifts for ministry to other denominations, other conferences, loss of faith and even death. I weep with parents who grieve with or mourn their children. And, yes, I weep for myself.

When explaining my call to a colleague who had found resistance in her own denomination because of her gender, she asked if I should be in a different church. The UMC is the church of my birth, my Baptism, my first communion (at a time when unconfirmed children were not welcome at the Table) and my Confirmation. Its people nurtured my call when I was a teen and young adult. Through it I have known God's grace. With prayer it has been clear that God expects me to stay and witness. I have been blessed with employment that uses my God-given gifts for ministry and a

home church that supports my wife and me. Too many others have not been so fortunate. It is our loss!

— Rives Priddy, certified Director of Christian Education

A view from the pre-vaccine era

As someone who was born in 1946, my early childhood was spent in what would now be considered essentially the pre-vaccine era. There were exceptions. My smallpox vaccination at one year of age did protect me from smallpox, and my parents did not have to dread that I might die from diphtheria, the disease that filled New England cemeteries before the 1920's with small tombstones. I was lucky: I would only have to contend personally with measles, mumps, rubella and chicken pox. Although there were other effects on my childhood. My mother would not let me play in the park in the summer with other children, because summer was polio season. Until 1955, my parents had to fear that their children might end up in one of the dreaded iron lungs. Two friends who had polio are now in wheelchairs because of Post-Polio Syndrome. I know a boy whose measles turned into encephalitis and caused permanent brain damage, and I had friends in college who were desperate to contract rubella/German measles before they married, in order to avoid the

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severe damage to unborn children that could be caused by the disease.

Having lived in this pre-vaccine world, it makes me somewhat crazy to see the rise in numbers of parents who are not vaccinating their children because of fear-mongering websites, flawed logic, individualism and distrust of government. Therefore, I was rather surprised to see the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* article which seemed to feed right into this mindset. I know Lisa Sykes and do not doubt her sincerity. But the websites she cites as proof of her thesis are basically anti-thimerosal advocacy sites, not scientific ones. PutChildrenFirst.org, for example, is founded by parents who believe in a government and "Big Pharma" conspiracy that covers up the causes of autism. There is an old saying: just because it's in print does not mean it is true.

I understand that in our individualistic world we tend to distrust "the other." But, frankly, if you go to research something medical on the Internet, wouldn't you generally want the answers from research-based agencies like fda.gov (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control), nih.gov (National Institutes of Health), apha.org (American Public Health Association), as opposed to conspiracy theory sites?

We all know mercury is toxic. But do we all know that thimerosal is ethylmer-

cury, and the mercury we're worried about in fish and manufacturing is methylmercury, which are as different as ethanol alcohol in wine and methanol alcohol in antifreeze? If you're interested in a thoughtful and research-based article, I would suggest you read "Mercury, Vaccines, and Autism" by Jeffrey P. Baker, MD, PhD with The Trent Center for Bioethics, Humanities and History of Medicine, Duke University School of Medicine, in the (much respected, founded in 1911 and peer-reviewed) "American Journal of Public Health" (February 2008), made available online by the National Institutes of Health.

Although I do not doubt the sincerity of those in the anti-thimerosal movement, I do think they are misguided. And I very much hope that this article did not cause United Methodist parents to worry about vaccinating their children. I have to admit I was very sad to read in Lisa Sykes' article that needed stocks of tetanus "intended for pregnant women in [Kenya] where tetanus is still a great threat" were turned back because of this movement.

*The Rev. Susan Schweitzer Garrett,
retired, Berryville, Virginia*

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COMMENTARY

“Vaccine: Truth Is Better Than Fiction”

By Dr. Alethea Allen

“For God did not give us spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline.” - 2 Timothy 1:7

As a pediatrician, I often think that having a little fear as you work is a good thing. Fear keeps us on our toes and can be a motivator to get things right. Fear reminds us to listen well and look closely, but fear should never cloud our judgment. You would not want to have a doctor that makes decisions based only on emotion. A good doctor knows that the art of medicine is most beautiful when a well-trained mind listens to the whispers of a well-trained heart.

Sometimes, though, fear can overtake reason and become paranoia. This type of fear-driven disregard for reason is most apparent in our current vaccine debates. In the beginning, when questions were raised about a possible link between vaccines and autism, the medical community began to look at vaccines and their ingredients in the hopes of finding something that could explain a supposed connection between the two. One of the early culprits of these inquiries was thimerosal. Thimerosal is used in very small

quantities as a preservative in vaccines and contains a type of mercury called ethylmercury. This is not the same type of mercury found in nature that can cause mercury poisoning. Seafood, thermometers, etc., all contain methylmercury. In the world of biochemistry, one letter or one molecule can make a huge difference in how a compound behaves in the human body. A good example of this is the difference between ethanol and methanol. If you drink a glass of wine, which contains ethanol, you will be fine. If you drink a glass of methanol, you may end up blind or even die. Just like ethanol and methanol, methylmercury and ethylmercury are not the same. Once ingested, the human body cannot get rid of methylmercury and it will accumulate in the body slowly over time. In large quantities methylmercury can be toxic. Ethylmercury (from thimerosal) is broken down in the body and eventually cleared from the blood stream. It does not accumulate in the same way as methylmercury. Thimerosal in vaccines should never be compared to other types of mercury. Anyone who tries to imply that vaccines contain the same neurotoxic substances as other sources of mercury poisoning is being misleading.

Over the last few decades, multiple research projects were undertaken around the world looking at

the use of thimerosal as a vaccine preservative. All of them pointed to the same conclusion. Thimerosal, in the amounts contained in vaccines, is not harmful to children or to babies whose mothers receive vaccines during pregnancy. Thimerosal in vaccines does not cause autism or brain damage. Since the first calls to remove thimerosal from vaccines went out in the late 1990s, many studies have been done that have provided us with enough conclusive evidence to make it clear that initial fears and concerns about thimerosal were wrong. So much so that in 2008 the World Health Organization (WHO) officially endorsed the use of thimerosal in vaccines as a safe and reliable preservative. In 2013, the American Academy of Pediatrics followed with their own statement of support for the WHO's decision.

But what about all of those babies in developing countries? Why are we still sending them vaccines with thimerosal? Isn't this an issue of social justice? Yes. It is very much about social justice. Vaccines sent to developing countries need to contain thimerosal in order to remain safe. Thimerosal acts as a preservative and prevents the growth of potentially deadly bacteria within the vaccine vials. Each time a needle is inserted to draw out a dose of vaccine, bacteria can be introduced. Before thimerosal was added to



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vaccines, many babies died from these types of infections. In America, most vaccines are now single dose vials, eliminating the possibility of bacterial contamination. This is not a practical option in the developing world where refrigeration storage is limited and where distributing vaccines is an already costly endeavor. Removing thimerosal from these vaccines and converting to single dose vials would increase the cost of vaccinating these children by over \$300 million per year! If we continue to push for the removal of thimerosal from

vaccines in the developing world, we will create a financial roadblock so great that vaccination efforts in many countries would come to a screeching halt. Simply put, children will die because we are trying to "protect" them from a vaccine ingredient that has been shown to be safe. (For more details on the above see "Global Justice and the Proposed Ban on Thimerosal-Containing Vaccines," by Dr. Katherine King, et al. in Pediatrics, Vol. 131 No. 1 January 1, 2013 pp. 154-156)

One of the benefits of attending seminary after

becoming a physician was the opportunity to see the multitude of ways in which the church and medicine need each other. John Wesley believed this so much that he became a practicing physician. It is right and it is good for the church to care about vaccine safety. We should speak with authority about the need to protect children from unnecessary harm. But do we want to speak words of fear or words of truth? It is time for The United Methodist Church to revisit its 2008 statement, "Protecting Children From Mercury-Containing Drugs." The

science cited in the statement is outdated and now disproven. Its language is inflammatory and misleading. As a church, we should use wisdom and discernment to listen to those who are considered true experts, not simply crusaders for a cause. We should be careful to whom we give unlimited platforms. Do they provide us with sound, tested, reliable information or sound bites and pseudo-science? The reality is that our current Social Principles statement regarding thimerosal-containing vaccines has the potential to

(Continued on page 13, "Vaccines")



To all **mom**s,

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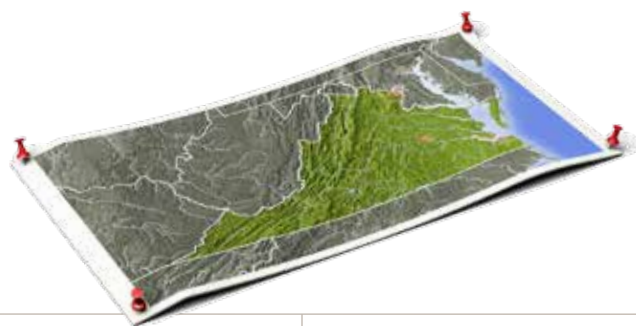
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The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Kibbey tells convocation to believe in power of prayer

By Linda S. Rhodes

You must believe that prayer can really make a difference, the Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey told participants in the March 21 Bishop's Convocation on Prayer. Belief in that idea "is absolutely essential if we're going to lead a prayer initiative at our churches," she said. "No halfway."

Kibbey was speaking to a packed sanctuary at Trinity UMC in Richmond. But Kibbey, main speaker for the convocation, was miles away at the time. Stuck in Philadelphia where her flight from Ohio to Virginia was snowed in, she spoke via Skype to the gathered crowd.

"Thank God for technology," said Bishop Young Jin

Cho in his introduction of Kibbey whose face appeared on a giant screen in the front of the sanctuary.

Kibbey, director of Missional Church Initiatives for the West Ohio Conference, offers coaching and training to congregations that have been invited to participate as a way to revitalize their ministries. She requires participating churches to include "Breakthrough Prayer" in their revitalization efforts.

"By 'Breakthrough Prayer' I mean the kind of prayer when we are asking God to break through in new and supernatural ways, with no limits," Kibbey said.

Kibbey said that just as physical food nourishes our bodies and makes us healthy, prayer is the food that nourishes the body of Christ, which is the church.

"Is it any wonder that some of our churches are

wasting away?" she said, adding that some churches are "snacking" on prayer rather than "feasting" on prayer.

"Breakthrough Prayer is prayer that requests a miracle," Kibbey said. "It is asking God to do beyond what we can do ourselves." And it requires us to surrender and align ourselves "to where God's compass is pointing us."

She showed video stories of churches that have been changed through collective "Breakthrough Prayer" used by their congregations.

St. Andrew UMC in Beaver Creek, Ohio, (a suburb of Dayton) suffered from internal conflict and ongoing attendance decline when a new pastor was appointed. The pastor and congregational leaders entered into an extended season of prayer walking the church facility regularly, and asking God to break through in new ways. The church was transformed to a growing, outwardly-focused congregation.

Stonybrook UMC, near Columbus, was landlocked and believed growth was limited because of limited parking space. "God showed up in a big way," Kibbey said, when the congregation did a prayer walk through the parking lot and prayed over 10 acres of land next to the church, asking that it be used for God's purposes. Three days after the prayer walk, the church got a phone call saying that the property

Prayer Convocation audience members discuss where they believe their church most needs a breakthrough.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Bishop Young Jin Cho introduces the main speaker at the 2015 Bishop's Convocation on Prayer.

was for sale.

(Video stories that Kibbey shared during the convocation can be viewed at <http://vimeopro/westohioumc/snkvirginia>)

"Breakthrough Prayer is an incredible way to collectively help your church get on board with praying," Kibbey said. "I think people in the church want to pray. We just don't always know how to set the stage for that to happen."

She suggested that "Breakthrough Prayers" be included in "typical" prayer practices in the church. "Take the existing practices of prayer in your church and enlarge them to ask God to break through," she said.

"In the morning pastoral prayer in the worship service, pray for God to break through in new and important ways," Kibbey said. "And in opening and closing prayers for meetings, also include prayers for God to break through, to do a new thing, to show

us a new reality." And prayer chains can pray for a breakthrough for each person being prayed for.

She also recommended that churches engage members in "prayer walking."

"I learned ... how easy prayer walking is for many people who would never come to a prayer meeting," Kibbey said. "There is something about walking and praying in different locations that engages people who would have never come to a typical prayer meeting."

She also told the clergy present that the pastor of a church must lead the prayer initiative.

"What we've found is, this is something very important when the pastor makes this a top priority," she said.

"Do you believe that prayer makes a difference?" she challenged convocation participants. "If you do, then you must ask, are we leading our churches in such a way that we believe that prayer makes a difference. Are we living our lives in a way that we believe that prayer makes a difference?"

Following Kibbey's presentation, convocation participants could attend one of 11 workshops on prayer.

— Linda Rhodes is Virginia Conference director of Communications



The Rev. Kiok Cho leads a workshop on "Centering Prayer."



The Rev. Derrick Parson leads workshop on "How to Pray with Children and Youth."



The Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey speaks to Bishop's Convocation on Prayer participants via Skype from Philadelphia where her flight stranded her due to a snowstorm.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



The Grace of technology

By Bill Pike

On the afternoon of Friday, March 20, I was running on fumes as the last preparations were being made for the Bishop's Convocation on Prayer. A little after six, I came into my office to pack up and check e-mails before heading home. I saw an e-mail from Marc Brown, director of Connectional Ministries, and I figured it was simply a last-minute request by one of the presenters. My guess was way off target.

The keynote speaker, Sue Nilson Kibbey, was stranded at the Philadelphia airport thanks to a snow storm on the first day of spring! Several hundred flights had been canceled during the day, and the backlog prevented her from making the last leg of her trip to Richmond. Marc noted that the game plan was to ask the presenters to conduct two sessions instead of one, and the convocation would go forward without Sue. I notified our director of Contemporary

Worship, Evan Taylor, about this change, and went home to get some rest.

On Saturday morning, Evan and I were at Trinity early enough to talk with Marc Brown about the unfortunate weather and the alternate transportation options considered for bringing Sue to Trinity. We were checking out a classroom set-up, when Evan offered Marc another choice: why not try to Skype in Sue and her presentation?

Marc pondered this and asked a few questions of Evan, and then Marc quickly called Sue. She was still at the hotel in Philadelphia making preparations for a return flight back home to Ohio. Marc ran the idea by Sue, and she was agreeable as long as she could work out staying in her hotel room longer and rearranging her flight home.

At this point, preparations started moving with a real sense of urgency. Fortunately, Sue had already forwarded to Evan her PowerPoint notes and film clips, and Evan had those loaded into our system. In the sanctuary, Evan worked on the Skype connection, and from her hotel room Sue coordinated linking with that connection. Within a few short minutes, Evan had Sue up on the projection screen complete with audio. A few technical glitches were adjusted related to sound, but the visual components in a trial run came together nicely.

Suddenly, we were all feeling good about this

unexpected technological opportunity, and then out of the blue the router for the sanctuary misbehaved. Fortunately, the router only needed to be reset, and with the help of an extension ladder and Trinity Youth Director Brian Clayton, the router was reset.

I'm sure some participants were disappointed that Sue wasn't present, but having the capacity to Skype her in kept the day from being a disaster. Her presentation worked seamlessly thanks to Evan's efforts, and miraculously we never lost the Wi-Fi signal between Richmond and Philadelphia during her program.

If Trinity staff members had been asked to Skype in a program like this a year ago, we wouldn't have had the capacity to make it happen. Fortunately, the church's Trinity Foundation had the courage to completely fund a sound and media upgrade for our sanctuary and Trinity Hall. The success on Saturday was a testament to faith, a faith grounded in the founding members of our church who had the foresight to develop financial plans for projects like this.

Maybe we were lucky on Saturday that everything came together with the technology, but perhaps Marc summed it up best, "the Grace of God's work often surprises us!" 🍀

— Bill Pike is director of Operations for Trinity UMC, Richmond

Evan Taylor, the director of Contemporary Worship at Trinity UMC.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

2014 contributions to VUMAC include major bequest

Individuals, local churches, church groups, including United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and Sunday School classes, districts, business groups, professional associations and a family foundation made contributions totaling \$273,179 to The Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center (VUMAC) at Blackstone in 2014.

These contributions included a major gift of \$100,000 from the estate of the late H.S. Abernathy of Virginia Beach and the payment of a challenge matching grant of \$50,000 from the Titmus Foundation. The Titmus gift was designated for renovation of the north portico of the historic main building at VUMAC. The Abernathy gift provided funding for a cooling tower, an air conditioner condenser for the auditorium, kitchen freezers and other renovation and maintenance.

The remaining \$121,927 in 2014 was contributed through the "VUMAC Partners" appeal, a new initiative which included financial commitments from the Charlottesville, Elizabeth River, James River, Lynchburg and Staunton districts, local churches, church groups, individuals, businesses and related groups. The United Methodist Women, through the Dimes and Dollars program established in 1975, contributed \$31,000 as VUMAC

Partners in 2014.

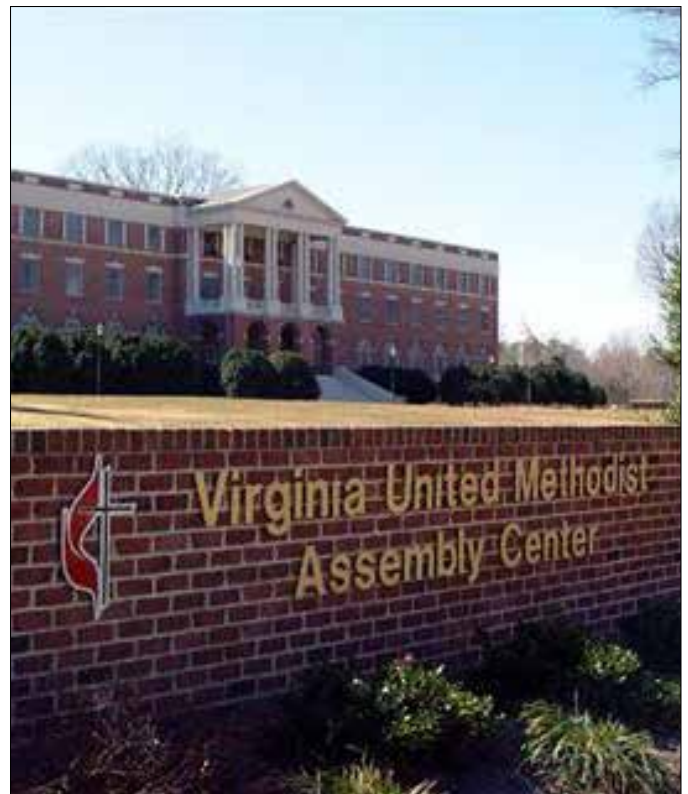
The Elizabeth River District Board of Mission made a special grant of \$6800 in 2014 in the VUMAC Partners appeal to provide for renovation of a guest room at VUMAC in recognition of the faithful ministry of local churches which have been discontinued on that district. Other gifts for renovation of guest rooms and meeting rooms are being encouraged, according to Sam McCracken, executive director at VUMAC.

Rev. E. Thomas Herndon Jr., chairman of the board of directors at VUMAC, says: "We are very appreciative for this wide range of financial support from across the conference which I believe reflects the important role which VUMAC has as a unique center for spiritual renewal and leadership development for laity and clergy, youth and adults. Since VUMAC receives no annual apportionment from the Annual Conference, we must seek about 20 percent of our budgeted expenses each year from contributions to supplement the fees paid by those who use the facilities."

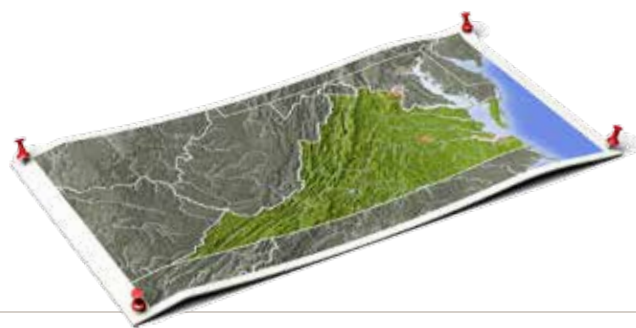
Abernathy was a Certified Lay Speaker and was a leader in the United Methodist Men of the Virginia Conference having served as district and conference president. He and his wife, Mavis, also deceased, were long-time members

of Community UMC in Virginia Beach. A graduate of Randolph-Macon College, he had a 38-year career in public education as a teacher and administrator and retired as assistant superintendent of schools for finance in Virginia Beach. Mr. and Mrs. Abernathy established scholarships at Randolph-Macon and Virginia Wesleyan. "Ab Abernathy is an example of one whose life was influenced deeply by his experiences at the Assembly Center," McCracken said.

For further information, contact Sam McCracken, (434) 292-5308. 📞



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Virginia Wesleyan College names Scott Miller as fourth president



Virginia Wesleyan College turned to one of the most experienced liberal arts college presidents in America to succeed longtime president Dr. William T. Greer Jr., who will retire in June after 23 years as president of VWC. Dr. Scott D. Miller, president of three private liberal arts colleges during the past 24 years, was elected to succeed Dr. Greer at a special meeting of the VWC Board of Trustees held Feb. 25.

Miller is in his eighth year as president and M.M. Cochran Professor of Leadership Studies at Bethany College, a nationally ranked, classical, residential liberal arts institution and West Virginia's oldest degree-granting college or university. Previously he was president of Wesley College in Delaware (1997-2007) and Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee (1991-97).

"As we look forward to strengthening the resources and enhancing the national reputation of Virginia Wesleyan, it is truly exciting to have a president of Dr. Miller's experience and energy to lead our next phase of growth," said Gary Bonnewell, chair of the VWC Board of Trustees. "My fellow trustees and I look forward to welcoming Dr. Miller and his wife, Annie, to our community."

"I am honored to be chosen as the next president of Virginia Wesleyan, one of the nation's top liberal arts colleges, an outstanding institution of The United Methodist Church and a member of the select Old Dominion Athletic Conference," Miller said. "After eight wonderful and rewarding years of building a stronger Bethany College, Annie and I look forward to joining the Virginia Wesleyan family."

Virginia Wesleyan's location and quality provide educational opportunities that directly support its mission and will foster future growth and progress. Dr. Greer has positioned the college for bold, forward momentum."

In its 53-year history, Virginia Wesleyan has had just three presidents: Joseph S. Johnston (1965), Lambuth M. Clarke (1966-1992), and William T. "Billy" Greer (1992-2015).

Miller's appointment is the culmination of a national search that began last summer after Greer announced his plans to retire. Trustee David Kaufman chaired the search committee composed of VWC trustees, faculty, staff and student and alumni representatives.

"Virginia Wesleyan College is exceptionally fortunate to have attracted Dr. Miller, a transformational, higher education leader, as its fourth president," said Kaufman. "As Dr. Miller himself takes on his fourth college presidency, he brings to VWC significant experience, success and passion leading liberal arts institutions. We are excited about Dr. Miller's arrival this summer to continue the outstanding leadership of Virginia Wesleyan College."

Growing up in Pennsylvania, the son of a public school administrator, Miller has dedicated his career to the opportunities available through education.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

An outspoken and passionate supporter of the small, classical, liberal arts college environment that offers students personalized pathways to life and career success, Miller is a respected national leader on the challenges, opportunities, and viability of small, liberal arts, church-related colleges.

He earned his B.A. degree in communications from West Virginia Wesleyan College, worked as a journalist early in his career, and earned an M.A. from the University of Dayton, an Ed.S. from Vanderbilt University, and a Ph.D. from The Union Institute and University, becoming one of the nation's youngest college presidents at Lincoln Memorial University.

Miller has been featured in several books in recent years including *The Entrepreneurial College President*; *The Small College Guide to Financial Health*; *Born, Not Made: The Entrepreneurial Personality*; and *The First 120 Days: What a New College President Must Do to Succeed*.

Last month he was one of 22 presidents of colleges and universities in the United States and Canada profiled in “#FollowTheLeader: Lessons in Social Media Success from #HigherEd CEOs.”

A highly sought presenter, mentor and author on higher education topics including financial sustainability and presidential performance for national conferences and trade journals, Miller is a regular

columnist for “The Huffington Post,” “College Planning and Management,” “Enrollment Manager,” and “The State Journal.” He is author of a widely distributed e-newsletter, “The President’s Letter,” a daily blog, “Dialogue,” and a campus-wide morning message, “Nota Bene.” He is co-executive editor of “Presidential Perspectives,” an online presidential thought series that has resulted in nine books, and he co-published two volumes of “President to President: Views on Technology in Higher Education.”

Miller and his wife, Annie Cook Miller, have two adult daughters. Lifetime members of The United Methodist Church, the Millers are members of Christ United Methodist Church in Wheeling, WV.

Virginia Wesleyan College was named one of the nation’s best institutions for undergraduate education by *The Princeton Review* and listed in the top tier of national liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News and World Report*. The private, four-year liberal arts college is focused on empowering students to become active learners and engaged citizens. In accord with the college’s United Methodist heritage, Virginia Wesleyan aspires to be a supportive community that is committed to social responsibility, ethical conduct, higher learning and religious freedom. The college is located on a 300-acre campus on the border of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. 🍷

(“Vaccines,” continued from pg. 7)

do more harm than good. Any Methodist will be quick to tell you that one of our greatest charges as a people of God is to “do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God.”

I would urge any church member who wants to learn more about thimerosal and vaccines to visit these reliable online resources:

<http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/SafetyAvailability/VaccineSafety/UCM096228>

http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Concerns/thimerosal/index.html?s_cid=cs_748

<http://vec.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-safety/vaccine-ingredients/thimerosal.html>

<http://aapnews.aapublications.org/content/early/2012/06/01/aapnews.20120601-1.full?rss=1> 🍷

Dr. Alethea Allen is a board certified Pediatrician who practices in Front Royal, VA. She is also a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Rev. Dr. Justin Allen, live in Winchester with their three children. She is a member of Braddock Street United Methodist Church.

IMAGINE NO MALARIA

Virginia United Methodists play 'March Gladness' basketball to raise money to fight malaria in Africa

By Linda S. Rhodes

In the midst of college basketball's March Madness, some United Methodists in Virginia played "March Gladness" basketball to try to keep people in Africa from dying of malaria. They raised more than \$2,308 for Imagine No Malaria through team sponsorships and entry fees, not including some team entry fees that were sent directly to the Virginia Conference office.

The event was the result of friendly rivalry among Virginia Conference district superintendents.

After the Eastern Shore District held a basketball tournament to raise money for Imagine No Malaria as part of its district conference last November, Eastern Shore District Superintendent Alex Joyner declared the winning team the "conference champion."

Fredericksburg District Superintendent Ted Smith took exception and challenged other districts in the Virginia Conference to enter teams in a "March Gladness" three-on-three basketball tournament fundraiser for Imagine No Malaria.

Originally scheduled for March 7 – which turned out to be a snowy, icy day with treacherous road conditions across the state – the tournament was rescheduled to Saturday, March 28, at Regester Chapel UMC in Stafford.

Ten teams from church-

es in the Arlington, Eastern Shore, Fredericksburg and Winchester districts competed for the title of conference champion.

The three-member teams, mixed in age, gender and ability, played three-on-three 10-minute games until one team remained to face the champions from the Nov. 2 Eastern Shore District tournament.

Seven teams came from the Fredericksburg District, including Providence UMC, part of the Montross Charge; Rehoboth UMC, Caroline County; Galilee UMC, Edwardsville; Wright's Chapel UMC, Ladysmith; New Hope UMC, Fredericksburg; and Wilderness UMC, Spotsylvania. Sterling UMC, Sterling (Arlington District); and Cedar Grove UMC, Winchester, (Winchester District) also fielded teams. Members of the Eastern Shore District championship team came from St. John's UMC, Atlantic, and Deas Chapel, Horntown.

Galilee UMC actually fielded two teams: FishersMen and the Rock. The two Galilee teams dominated play, winning all games and ending up playing each other for the right to face the Eastern Shore champs in a best two-out-of-three final.

The Rock beat both FishersMen and the Eastern Shore champs to earn "bragging rights as the conference champion," according to Smith.

"Wait until next year," Joyner said, noting that the

The Rev. Alex Joyner, Eastern Shore District superintendent (left), Bishop Young Jin Cho (holding basketball), and the Rev. Ted Smith, Fredericksburg District superintendent (third from right), join members of the Eastern Shore District championship team (in red) and "The Rock" from Galilee UMC in Edwardsville (in white) at "March Gladness." "The Rock" won the tourney to claim the title of Virginia Conference champs.





IMAGINE NO MALARIA

Randolph-Macon Academy basketball tourney snares \$1,000 to fight malaria

games were played “all for the glory of God and the end of malaria.”

Bishop Young Jin Cho, who conducted the opening coin toss for the finals, thanked the players for what they were doing.

“Your efforts can touch the lives of people on the other side of the world,” Bishop Cho said. “This is a way we can transform the world.”

For halftime entertainment Joyner and Smith each put up \$100 and played each other one-on-one with the winner to be the first one to make five baskets. After several minutes of play, a member of the crowd shouted out an offer of \$100 if the two district superintendents would stop – an offer the two immediately accepted.

“It was lots of fun,” Smith said. “I think it did what Bishop Cho asked us to do, and that is to raise awareness about malaria and have fun doing it. To do that on a multi-district level, I think was pretty phenomenal.”

– Linda Rhodes is Virginia Conference director of Communications

On March 2, Randolph-Macon Academy (R-MA) students faced off against faculty and staff in a fundraising basketball game to benefit Imagine No Malaria. The event raised \$1,000.

The game was organized by the R-MA Fellowship of Christian Athletes, R-MA Chaplain Joshua Orndorff, and R-MA Community Service Director Stephanie Portillo.

“We had a great crowd, and both the game and activities were lots of fun,” Portillo said. “The Faculty/Staff Team earned the most points with the final score being 32-28, but I know we will all agree that our brothers and sisters in sub-Saharan Africa are the real winners since all of our efforts have been to help them prevent and treat malaria, a deadly but totally preventable disease affecting that region, incredibly taking a life every 60 seconds.”

Participants in the game were each asked to find a \$10 sponsor, which will save one life from malaria. For a \$5 fee, contest participants had the chance to earn prizes in a half-court shot contest or a trivia game at halftime. The trivia contest, designed to educate listeners about the impact of malaria, was hosted by Maria Maxwell, Virginia Conference field coordinator for Imagine No Malaria.

Victoria Quigley, female representative from Bravo Flight, won the trivia contest, earning her flight on a day when students can wear their activity uniforms (polo shirt and khaki pants) instead of the Air Force JROTC uniforms they normally wear. After quite a few attempts, four students made the half-court shots, earning \$20 prizes in cash and gift cards: Kota Ikemoto '19, Sam Beavers '17, Ebot Makia '15 and Fafa Eke-Spiff '15.

The R-MA Parents' Association sold baked goods, drinks and Imagine No Malaria bracelets. One hundred percent of the proceeds went to Imagine No Malaria.

“Pretty much every office and department on campus had a hand in making this a very successful event and fundraiser,” said Portillo. “It was also a great morale booster.”

Randolph-Macon Academy (R-MA), founded in 1892, is a college-preparatory, coeducational day and boarding school for students in grades 6 through 12. Students in grades 9-12 participate in R-MA's 91st Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and have the option to participate in a flight program. R-MA is affiliated with The United Methodist Church and is located in Front Royal.

– Celeste M. Brooks
director of Public Relations



Randolph-Macon Academy staff member Jeff Moxie of Front Royal (in white) snatches the basketball before eighth grader Stanley Richards of Bowie, MD, can grab it. Although most of the student team consisted of upperclassmen, two middle school students also participated.



Josh Orndorff, Randolph-Macon Academy chaplain, not only helped organize a fundraising basketball game to benefit Imagine No Malaria, he also played in it. Students started calling his shots “holy” because he made so many baskets.



Martha and Trula 2014 – Martha Stokes and her mother, Trula Ensley, right before her mom's 89th birthday in December.

THE SECOND “TALK”

By Martha Stokes

Almost 45 years have come and gone, yet I clearly remember how our time together unfolded. I can't recall specific details of what was said. I don't remember what precipitated the conversation. Yet, even as I write I can summon up the emotions: that uncomfortable, squirmy feeling of knowing something was coming that I really didn't want to face, nervousness, preteen (and parental) uneasiness with a serious life-changing discussion. As we sat on my bed, my mother proceeded to bring out a series of little multi-colored

booklets that led us into

...“the talk.” That little set of books remained hidden inside an old pillowcase in one of my dresser drawers for years.

My mother doesn't share the same memories of that “talk.” In fact, when I asked her about it a few months ago, she giggled like she was the preteen feeling anxious.

The things that are now hidden out-of-sight are her will, power of attorney and other documents, all secure in the green metal box that my brother and I know where to find. My amazing mother surprised us back in 2008 by telling us of her plans to move from the house we all had known as home and then, only a short time later, telling us she was going to stop driving. Lately,

the conversation has begun to focus on possible next steps when her mobility becomes even more challenging. One thing you need to know: my mother is 89, my brother is 68 and I'm 54. None of us are youngins anymore.

And today – not in my dresser inside an old pillowcase, but right on top of the nightstand – is a multi-colored booklet that talks about long-term care options. When age-related lifestyle transition or end-of-life issues come up in our household, the conversation between me and my husband often ends with one of us saying, “I don't want to talk about this right now.” We're not alone. Those of us who are members of the Boomer generation just can't admit that we're getting older and need to begin seriously thinking about the spiritual and practical aspects of aging.

It's even harder for most of us to think about having the second half of life “talk” with our parents. Neither of us – child nor parent – really wanted to have the first talk. We certainly don't want to talk about senior adult transitions and memorial wishes. Who wants to have that conversation about moving from the family home, the physical or mental changes that are becoming more noticeable, or advance directives?

But talk we must. In fact, it's really time for the children of Boomers to be having “the talk” with us as the oldest members of our generation turn 69 this year. One senior service provider calls this the 40-70 Rule: by the time a child, family member or close friend approaches age 40 and a loved one is around 70, you should have “the talk” about future wishes and desires. (Visit www.4070talk.com for more information.)

This conversation should naturally be led by the church. There is no other support group of professionals and experienced sages better equipped to talk about living fully, aging with grace and dying with dignity. Yet, I believe we are failing: failing to do all we can to engage those of us in mid-life and beyond in the important, necessary conversations that come with growing questions of faith and changing relationships in our later years. Youth group leaders often become anxious about the possibility of addressing heavy topics like dating violence, teen alcohol and drug use, sexuality and suicide. The same thing can be said about those who coordinate groups on the other end

(Continued on next page, “The Second Talk”)



The Life Cycle Library – The three-volume Life Cycle Library pamphlets, copyright 1968.


("The Second Talk," continued from previous page)

of life's spectrum. We hesitate to talk about late-life transitions, the growing prevalence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease and challenging faith questions around aging and death, to name only a few issues. If today's church is to meet the needs of society's changing demographics, we must be as authentic with those who are aging as we are with young people.

We must also do more to encourage renewed (or new) adult faith development. Sadly, many religious scholars and church professionals have concluded that mainline Protestant and Catholic churches do not respond as well as they might to the hunger for spiritual experience that often emerges in the mature Christian. There are so many varied and vital ways church as an institution and each congregation as a Christian community of faith should lead us on this journey, but we often fall short.

Back in 1944, the Virginia Annual Conference of The Methodist Church had a "talk" about its role in supporting those who were aging. The decision was to formally enter into the mission and ministry of offering living and service options for older adults. What would become Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. (VUMH) was born that day in Lynchburg as Bishop William Walter Peele was authorized to appoint a committee with authority to incorporate a board for the Home for the Aged. The mission of VUMH has never wavered: to provide facilities, services and programs to enhance the quality of life for older persons. A cornerstone of that mission is the Samaritan Program, supported through the special offering in our congregations from Mother's Day to Father's Day each year. The Samaritan

Program provides financial assistance to residents who have outlived their monetary resources and, through no fault of their own, can no longer afford the full cost of their care.

My hope is that you will use the personal witnesses and information in the pages ahead to have "the talk" in your families and in your congregations, recognizing that Virginia United Methodist Homes can be a resource to assist you in this conversation. 

— Martha Stokes
is director of Church and
Community Relations,
Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.



Long-Term Care Booklet – Essential
reading now on the nightstand.

OLDER ADULT RECOGNITION SUNDAY IS MAY 3

The 2008 General Conference adopted legislation inviting congregations to celebrate Older Adult Recognition Day each year during the month of May. The Virginia Conference was well ahead of the legislation when, in 2006, the first Sunday in May of each year was designated as Older Adult Recognition Sunday. Through an Older Adult Recognition Sunday, United Methodists are invited to show appreciation and support for older adults who continue to enrich and strengthen our faith communities. This Sunday also calls the church to action in addressing the needs of older adults in the congregation and community. Your congregation can choose the first Sunday in May or another date that best fits your needs. For more information and worship resources, go to the Discipleship Ministries website at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/older-adults1>

CHURCHES ASKED TO TAKE SAMARITAN OFFERING MAY 10-JUNE 21

Churches in the Virginia Conference are asked to receive a special offering between Mother's Day on May 10 and Father's Day on June 21 for the 2015 Samaritan Offering to support the Samaritan Program of Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. (VUMH), a benevolent fund which provides financial assistance to residents who have outlived their monetary resources and, through no fault of their own, can no longer afford the full cost of their care. VUMH has mailed each charge a packet of promotional materials, including a short informational DVD, offering envelopes and a copy of the new VUMH 2015 Giving Catalog. Additional suggestions for promoting this special offering, including cut-and-paste newsletter articles, bulletin announcements, Facebook posts, Tweets, worship resources and bulletin inserts, are posted on the website at www.vumh.org under the "Samaritan Program" section. Your support of this special offering is crucial not only to inform each congregation of the opportunity to give, but also to share the story of VUMH, its communities for older adults and the need for benevolent care. For help in telling the VUMH story within your congregation or extra copies of promotional materials, contact Martha Stokes, director of Church and Community Relations at Virginia United Methodist Homes, at MStokes@VUMH.org or (804) 474-8718.

I THANK GOD THAT I AM WHERE I AM TODAY

By Charlotte Copley

Several events inspired my husband, Otis, and me to begin thinking about moving from our home in Williamsburg. The care of the lawn and grounds, even with a lawn service, became a bigger chore as well as caring for the home itself. Otis's mother, aunt and two of his sisters spent their final years in nursing homes. We wanted to plan for our future and didn't want to be a burden to our children. At the same time, we began to hear of a small retirement community planned by Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. to be built in Williamsburg. It sounded perfect for us. After looking at options and making visits to several communities, we told our children about our decision to move to WindsorMeade.

Not only was "aging in place" a goal, but the more we thought about it, the more being in a main building with food service, fitness programs, activities and entertainment seemed the best fit for us. We also wanted to have people around to offer support and friendship. I even realized there were a lot of material things I said I could never give up, but now find I can let go of more easily than I thought. Having the continuous care options of assisted living and health care has become even more important as our needs have changed since the time we moved. I thank God many times a day for being where I am today.

Otis' and my faith has been very important to us through the transitions of aging. We continue to attend church regularly at Williamsburg UMC where we have been active for more than 20 years. We are involved with Sunday worship and religious life activities at WindsorMeade. Our church offers many support groups, and the Congregational Care Ministers are always there when needed. The training I received to serve as a Stephen Minister and my association with my care receivers and other Stephen Ministers have increased my faith.

The church has an important role in supporting older adults and families as they make decisions about living choices and other difficult conversations like end-of-life issues. Our church, like many others, has an aging congregation and is addressing the needs of those our age. Volunteers have become very involved by forming groups such as Shepherd's Fold whose members visit at least monthly with those people who, due to failing health or age, must remain at home. Shepherd's Fold visitors spend time with these members of our church family, sharing devotions, maybe offering a small gift and always giving a listening ear.

As part of our congregational care ministries, Williamsburg UMC has a CARE Committee – Congregation Actively Reaching Everyone – which offers transportation for medical appointments, provides care for families when a loved one dies and reaches out in many other ways. Yearly, one of the ministers leads "Living Fully, Dying Well," the small group study by Bishop Rueben Job which encourages older adults to plan for the future.

At the present time, Otis attends the Respite Care Center at Williamsburg UMC one day a week. There he is engaged in enriching activities with other participants including music, arts and crafts, exercise, therapeutic gardening and games. The Caregivers Support Group for Respite Care meets monthly. Moving into care facilities is discussed and visits have been made as a group to several facilities. Being in a group helps with support and comfort.

I would encourage the generation that is following us to begin to volunteer or to visit someone who is living in a Continuous Care Retirement community, assisted living or health care setting. You'll find out a lot about living with purpose. Then begin to think about where you'd like to live as you grow older. Consider moving while you can enjoy all the activities, be involved in organizations, learn new things and meet new friends. Most places these days are not "old folks' homes" but are full of residents enjoying an active lifestyle. I don't remember hearing but one person say they moved too soon. It is always, "Why did I wait so long?" 🌸

Socializing helps Respite members enjoy life, reducing boredom. Barbara and Margaret (104 years old) share a laugh. Photo courtesy of the Respite Care Center at Williamsburg UMC.





A LIFELONG METHODIST CONNECTION, LEGACY AND LOVE STORY

As shared by Ann Via and written by Martha Stokes

Ask Ann Via about her Methodist roots, and a deep connection to the mission and ministry of Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. emerges. Her father, the Rev. Dr. W. Carroll Freeman, became pastor at Boulevard UMC soon after The Hermitage in Richmond opened its doors for residents. He was very involved in communicating the need for such a community during his stay at Boulevard (1950-1954) and beyond.

Rev. Freeman was serving as Roanoke District superintendent in the early 1960s when the district Board of Missions began to address concerns about the need for services for older adults in the western part of the state. Ann's sister went to work at the Roanoke United Methodist Home (now the Hermitage in Roanoke) soon after it opened. When the time came to look at living options for her mother, Ann and her family chose The Hermitage in Richmond. She states boldly that "God was good" as her mother moved in right next door to a dear friend, helping to ease the transition from the family home. The staff cared for Ann as well, offering compassion, support and "hugs when needed" as she adjusted to her mother's changing health needs.

Just a few months after The Hermitage opened, the Rev. Dr. Bernard S. Via Sr., the first superintendent and administrator, brought together a representative group of women from across the Virginia Conference. This organization of "Key Women" was the beginning of the Hermitage Guild, representatives from local churches called upon to spread the message about this new mission opportunity. Ann's husband, Conrad or "Connie" as he's known to everyone, is a distant cousin with a noticeable family resemblance when standing next to a portrait of Dr. Via.

When her mother died in 2005, a Guild member encouraged Ann to continue the connection as a volunteer. She started doing mending and sewing for residents on Wednesdays. Soon Ann was working in the Country Store where she contin-

ues to visit with residents and offer support. Connie also became an active volunteer. Through her involvement, Ann reminds the congregation at Chamberlayne Heights UMC of the value of our United Methodist connection in its greatest sense and of the need to support The Hermitage and VUMH through giving of time and resources - volunteering, visiting and participating in fundraising and other events. Ann adds, "My heart is here. I love this place."

Ann and Connie now face different needs. Their first step in thinking about second-half of life decisions was writing a will when Connie was confronted with major heart surgery 40 years ago. Additional life changes had to be faced following a devastating automobile accident in 2008 in which Connie suffered spinal injuries and brain trauma. When asked about the future, Ann noted, "We'll stay at home as long as possible, but we're not looking anywhere other than The Hermitage."

Their continuing love story is clearly evident in how they care for one another. Ann had not taken more than a few hours away from Connie following his accident until last summer. At the urging of her daughter, Ann planned a two-week vacation with family. She talked with staff at The Hermitage about a respite stay for Connie, but also had an option of a grandson and good friends who would care for him while she was away. When given a choice, Connie chose The Hermitage. It was comfortable: he knew his way around the familiar hallways and people knew him. When a friend asked about their planned vacations, Ann responded, "I'm going to Maine." Connie added, "I'm going to The Hermitage. I can't wait to go!"

Our conversation ended in the Furniture Room of the Country Store at The Hermitage with Ann's parting words of "This is just home." What a fitting close to our time together talking about her lifelong connection to The United Methodist Church and legacy of support for the mission of Virginia United Methodist Homes. And the love story continued as Ann and Connie headed out the door on a date - a Senior Connection lunch at Chamberlayne Heights with members of their church family. 



Connie and Ann Via taken during a visit to The Hermitage.



“PASTOR, CAN YOU HELP ME?”

By Charles Wickham

“Pastor, can you help me? I need to find a place I can trust where my parents can move. They are just not able to live independently anymore, and they refuse to move in with me or my siblings. What do I look for? How do I know they can be trusted? I know this is the best for them, but I just don't know what to do!”

Comments like this and other similar ones occur quite often in our local churches. In trying to help a family work through these and other questions, I believe there are some important aspects one needs to consider. First, I encourage my families to look for a faith-based senior living community. In my opinion, there is a difference between one that is faith-based and one that is not. Second, look for a community that offers a wide range of services so that as your loved one's health changes, he/she can still remain in the same community. Third, look for a community that is centrally located to doctors, grocery stores and other community services, or one that at least offers transportation to them.


When I was appointed to Stanleytown UMC on the Danville District many years ago, Mrs. Nellie Hundley got me involved in the Hermitage Guild. In time I began to serve on the Roanoke Regional Advisory Council and currently serve as the vice-chairman on the Board of Directors for Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. In each level of involvement, I have found myself so impressed with VUMH. There are currently seven communities that serve seniors throughout our conference. Each has its own personality, but all have many basic similarities:

- ❖ Residents receive services and programs in an environment filled with love and respect.
- ❖ Each community offers a wide variety of programs and services.
- ❖ Offering senior living options is a ministry and mission, not just a business.

In the church, it is often hard to see any of our members leave our community and move into a senior living commu-

nity. However, there are some things we can do to make sure we stay connected with them:

- ❖ Senior of the Month – Honor a different senior in your church bulletin and newsletter each month. Invite church members to send cards, notes, gifts, etc.
- ❖ Card Showers – Place a bag with the person's name on it in an easily accessible place and invite church members, Sunday school classes, children's programs and other groups to make or sign a card and place it in the bag.
- ❖ Newsletters/Bulletins/Mailings or E-mails – Our seniors are getting very technologically savvy. Use any form of communication to stay in contact with them on a regular basis.
- ❖ Friendly Visits – Everybody enjoys having visitors. Make friendly visits to members of your congregation and other residents. Consider going as a group and scheduling a tour or time to talk with staff.
- ❖ Weekly Bible Study/Sunday School/Adult Vacation Bible School – If there is a retirement community in your area, talk with the activities director and offer some type of religious service so your church member can tell everyone “this is my church.”
- ❖ Special Music Programs – If you do something special at your church, offer to bring it to the senior living community as well.

As a pastor and board member, I recognize the hard decisions families have to face. However, our VUMH communities work hard to assist families in this important process. For more information, contact your pastor or the closest community to you. Schedule a visit and get to know the wonderful community nearest you which helps to make up our Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. 

– The Rev. Charles Wickham is pastor at Trinity UMC, Danville



The Hermitage in Richmond



Hermitage in Roanoke



The Hermitage at Cedarfield in Richmond



Hermitage on the East

YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. WE HAVE ANSWERS.

As the Boomer generation ages, the number of American senior citizens is rising to higher levels than seen before. How can we provide support for this growing number of older adults?

Planning for the future is key to successful aging.

In my personal and professional life I live by the old adage “Plan the work, and work the Plan.” I feel this adage applies to life as we age as well. Typically, each of us has developed a financial plan for aging. We consult with financial planners to save for retirement. We work with legal counsel to develop wills, powers of attorney, estate plans and the like, but many of us overlook a key point – the need to plan for our personal wellness as we age.

Today, when experts use the terms wellness or wellbeing when talking about healthy aging, they aren’t just talking about a healthy diet and exercise. Research has proven we also need to explore and develop creative expression, intellectual growth, spirituality, social connections and brain fitness, to name a few.

With quality medical care, we are living longer than we could have ever

expected even a few short years ago. But as we age, many of us realize that quality of life will become more important than longevity. A healthy diet and exercise are important. Having the financial resources to live as we choose is also very important, but we cannot overlook the importance of wellbeing. From a planning standpoint, working to identify WHAT we will do as we age is imperative to successful aging.

– Chris Henderson

President and CEO, Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.

What do I want to do for my “next act,” and how will that determine the legacy that I leave behind?

So much conversation in the “Boomer world” revolves around finances, healthcare and that perfect retirement age that we may forget something far more important: What is my meaning here on earth, and what will I leave behind that made a difference?

Boomers come from a time of advocacy and response, and nothing probably characterizes the emerging psyche better than action, with action leading to purpose. While younger Boomers may still be engaged in conversation about retirement destinations, grandchildren and around-the-world vacations, older Boomers are becoming far more interested in what to take on next – spiritual awakening, charitable acts or even entrepreneurial exploration.

For Baby Boomers, retirement is going to be redefined. It will no longer be associated with an age or expiration date, but with the time in one’s life to use knowledge and experience as a jumping off point for the next big adventure; this time, with a purpose greater than ourselves.

“So many people have that yearning for something and they don’t know what ‘it’ is. Sometimes it takes the better part of a lifetime to find out what your passion is, but in my observation, if you do, it might be the best part of your life.”
– Jane Pauley, *Your Life Calling: Reimagining the Rest of Your Life*

– Marilyn Gray, executive director, WindsorMeade of Williamsburg

– Kate Leach, director of Marketing, WindsorMeade of Williamsburg

What is the most important question the church can help a Boomer begin to address right now?

Boomers inside the church might answer this by asking, “What does the church have to offer me?” We performance-driven Boomers have continued to ask this question of anything with which we have become connected. We came of age in a time when we had great influence and choice, and we are used to exercising leverage and control. If we are involved in the church, we may see it as another organization to mold in order to meet our needs. So an important question we churched Boomers would likely ask of the church is, “How is this worth my time and participation?”





ern Shore



The Lydia H. Roper Home in Norfolk



WindsorMeade of Williamsburg



Hermitage in Northern Virginia

But the sad truth is the majority of Boomers have very little relationship with church or religious organizations. Without going into the whys of this fact, unchurched Boomers will answer differently than those involved. Boomers outside the church have a different sensibility and individually vary so much that they seem almost a different generation altogether.

This outside group of Boomers, if they were to raise a question of the church at all, might be curious about where the church is making a difference in the world. I say “if” because at least some unchurched Boomers believe the church has nothing to offer them. Therefore, this proposition would not resonate with them and they would not respond.

Those outside Boomers who might answer the “help” question would be interested in knowing where the church is making a difference in the world. These Boomers were activists and idealists and practiced civil disobedience. They marched in protest and were involved in sensitivity training in their younger days in their effort to change the world. They never gave up their utopian dreams even as they downsized them and became involved with raising families.

It would be interesting to combine these two perspectives and questions. The result would look something along the following lines. Instead of asking, “What can I get out of the church?” or “Where is the church making a difference?” the question would be, “Where can I serve in the church to help it make a difference in society?” Or: “Where can the church make a difference in my life?” Both of these questions are ones that should be raised and answered by the church. If the church raised either one of these questions, perhaps the larger group of Baby Boomers, who believe the church doesn’t hold a lot of promise for them, would change their minds and become connected.

Since the church is serious about claiming Baby Boomers for the Kingdom, we must continue to point the way to the rising questions and come to answers like these. Making a difference in the world always changes the persons who are working toward this goal and offers satisfaction, happiness and purpose as the “something in it” for us.

— The Rev. Dr. William Randolph, director of Aging and Older Adult Ministries
Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church

Why is it hard to bring up the conversation about the future with aging parents or family members?

We all want to deny that we are growing older. Many times we don’t handle our own aging very well. Therefore, we don’t want to see the signs of our parents’ aging because reality is too tough, uncomfortable and scary when we don’t have the answers. As parents and loved ones age, they don’t want to deal with change because it is overwhelming to them. Signs of need exist: housekeeping, laundry, cook-

ing, clutter, unpaid bills, hearing and vision issues, mobility changes and what the older adult is forgetting though it was discussed frequently. We see our parents, but do we really look at them? How much has changed since the last birthday or holiday you spent together? How your loved one presents can give you real insight. Sometimes you really need to just look at them.

That is when you become parent to your parent. You are the adult child, but now you have to be more than that. You have to be the responsible one, and it is difficult to find yourself in this role. This is when it is time to begin the talk. This is the time for the baby steps to education, to educate yourself to all the services and options available to seniors today. Good decisions come from doing homework and talking to professionals who want to share and guide you to making the best decision with your loved ones. Every family and situation is different, and so are the options.

— Elaine Lavinder, executive director
Hermitage in Roanoke

What is the first step in exploring living choices?

Whether researching for yourself, or a loved one, take the time to educate yourself. There is an entire spectrum of retirement living choices, from aging in place (remaining at home with services) to full-service retirement communities. It can be overwhelming, so first things first:

- ❖ Carefully consider where you will live. Do you plan to move closer to your adult children, relocate to warmer climates or stay where you are? Know the availability of long-term care services in the area: home health agencies, nursing homes/assisted living/rehabilitation facilities and quality professional medical care.
- ❖ If you plan to remain in your home, consider WHO will manage, arrange and oversee your future care needs on your behalf. What if you eventually need more care which cannot be adequately provided in your home?
- ❖ Visit area nursing homes and assisted living communities and prepare a backup plan. Some may have waiting lists. Ask about costs. Not everyone accepts Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements. Don’t wait for a crisis to happen before there is a plan in place.
- ❖ Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) can be a wonderful solution for older adults who are independent and active today, but who seek the peace of mind that comes with living in a community that provides assisted living and health services (nursing care) if and when it’s needed. There are many different types of CCRCs with numerous choices in contracts. One size definitely does not fit all.

- ❖ You can't learn everything from websites. It's a great start, but do make appointments and visit the communities you feel best fit your need or lifestyle. Additionally, many communities can provide resources to assist you in your planning whether you choose their community or not.

– Marti Miller, director of Marketing
The Hermitage at Cedarfield

How do aging parents get children to pay attention to their wishes?

Sometimes, children get so busy growing up they forget their parents are also growing older. I love how Tina Gunn from Senior Living Blog puts it: "Walking a mile in your aging parents' shoes and understanding their biggest challenges may not always be easy. Nor is helping them get to know us as their full-fledged adult children. But these things help us enjoy and make the most of our time with them. They may be 90, and we may have just cashed in on our first 'Senior Discount' at the movies, but they're still our parents and we're still their kids." (<http://www.aplaceformom.com/blog/>)

So, how do elderly parents get their children to pay attention? I believe through stories. How many of us remember sitting at the feet of our parents with excitement and anticipation as they read us our favorite bedtime story? Elderly parents can share their wishes through a heritage or legacy project where parents and children work together on capturing memories, wishes and values. A project like this provides quality time parents desire and a great way for children to gather information. This project doesn't need a deadline. It can be looked at as a way to foster positive, fun communication between parents and children. Use this time to ask questions about what your parent desires in this season of life or how they want to be remembered. As stories are shared, listen intently because often there are little pearls of wisdom to be captured.

– Kenya Bryant, Social Service coordinator
Hermitage in Northern Virginia

What intentional ministries with older adults does the Older Adult Ministries Council recommend that local churches offer to assist with "The Talk"?

Virginia Conference Older Adult Ministries uses a "Legacy Box" to provide a means for parents, grandparents and, possibly, great-grandparents to share special faith experiences with their descendants. The "Legacy Box" is a decorated box provided with cards of various shapes related to themes or category cards to identify memories to share. For example, a "house-shaped" card provides opportunity to write a summary of the places we have lived and what was special to us

in those places.

Of significant importance as Christians is the sharing of our faith walk and the personal experience we have had with God in Christ. Placing special cards in the "Legacy Box" telling of special events from our Christian walk, of answered prayers and of the ways your life was shaped as a disciple of Jesus Christ, are priceless pictures and testimonies of our loving Lord.

Filling a "Legacy Box" with events and personal experiences can be a special blessing for descendants. Sharing about events like confirmation, a special youth retreat or a special Christian concert, relates to others what influences your life. Writing your favorite Bible verses, stories, hymns or Christian songs provides both a clearer understanding of who you are and a testimony to God's love and faithfulness.

The Rev. Carol Bookwalter
Chair, Virginia Conference Older Adult Ministries Council

How can local churches care for caregivers, a growing number of whom are in a generational squeeze between caring for older family members and children or grandchildren?

As our population ages, demand for families to take on the role of caregivers for aging parents will continue to grow. Challenges for caregivers are many. Of those caring for an aging parent, 41% also care for a child under the age of 18. More than 60% balance a career with caregiving responsibilities. Caregiving impacts the mental, emotional and physical health of the caregiver. Many feel isolated because they cannot participate in normal activities, and 75% of caregivers suffer from depression.

Churches can play an important role in assisting caregivers and those for whom they care. Often caregivers will turn to their church for support, guidance and assistance. Here are some simple ways church members can help those who are caregivers:

- ❖ Give them a break – offer to stay with the person for whom they care while the caregiver takes a break to spend time with his/her children, attend a support group, or attend to his/her own medical needs;
- ❖ Offer transportation to medical appointments for the person for whom they care or for their children so they can participate in activities with their friends;
- ❖ Help with errands or chores around the house, such as mowing the lawn, cooking a meal or helping with home repairs;
- ❖ Educate the caregiver by providing information on community resources;
- ❖ Listen and provide encouragement with your presence.

The underlying message is that caregivers need help and support. Spiritual and practical support from their churches can be a vital part of the well-being of caregivers, their families and the individuals for whom they care. 🍀

— Sherry E. Peterson, chief executive officer
Alzheimer's Association Greater Richmond Chapter, www.alz.org/grva

Want to Do Your Loved Ones A Favor?

Have you wondered what you might do to make life easier for your loved ones? Here are some suggestions that may be very important to you and most appreciated by those whose responsibility it is to either (i) take care of you when you are unable to take care of yourself or (ii) wrap up your affairs when you depart this life.

Suppose you are not able to handle your affairs due to an accident, illness or infirmity from age or a chronic condition whether attributable to physical or cognitive issues. In most cases you will want to have someone who has the power to act on your behalf with a general power of attorney. This allows someone to sign documents and conduct your general business and financial affairs without having to go to court to have a guardian appointed. A living trust also serves this purpose.

Make sure that you have an Advanced Medical Directive so someone will have the power to make medical decisions when you are not cognitively able to make them yourself. When two medical professionals, including a physician, make a determination that you cannot make decisions yourself, the person you appoint decides what type of medical treatment is given or withheld, where you are admitted for care – all in accordance with the wishes you set forth in such a document.

You will also want to have a will to make clear your wishes with respect to your property at the time of your death. Sometimes a living trust is used both to allow the trustee to handle your assets while you are living and distribute them to your beneficiaries at your death without having to go through the public probate process.

If you take the time to put these documents in place, you will have peace of mind, and your loved ones will have been spared many hours of work trying to figure what you would want and how to make it happen. In the end, everyone will be pleased you thought of them.

CARING CLUES: SIGNS THAT YOUR LOVED ONE MAY BE READY FOR A CHANGE

Have you observed any of these clues in your loved one? Here are a few early warning signs that may signal the need for conversation about living and support options.

Problems with general household chores

Keep an eye out for changes in your loved one's household situation. Empty refrigerator or pantry? Moldy or outdated food? Unpleasant odors? Is the home that once was a haven becoming increasingly dangerous?

Poor money management

Here are things to look for that may indicate your loved one may need some form of financial protection: Stacks of unopened mail? Moved large amounts of money or sold assets? Unable to find financial documents? Seems worried about finances for the first time? Made purchases from people who call on the phone or come to the door? Made odd purchases?

Change in physical health

Maybe your loved one has an ongoing health condition that needs careful monitoring. Complaints about frequent pain? Difficulty controlling bladder or bowels? Recent illness, infection or accident? Following instructions on medications? Need help with personal care?

Unclear thinking

Changes in mental health can be brought on by grief, declining physical health, financial concerns, distress or side effects of medicine. Does your loved one have difficulty remembering recent activities, dates or people? Trouble understanding information or following directions? Trouble driving?

Signs of depression

Does your loved one seem sad, quiet or withdrawn? Sleep a lot, especially during the day? Complain about loneliness? Seem more confused or disoriented? Have decreased contact with friends and relatives?

If you're starting to wonder about the independence of a parent or loved one, there are a multitude of resources available. A starting point may be SeniorNavigator, a website with information about programs and services helpful to seniors, caregivers and their families. Also remember that you that can use the resources of our United Methodist connection by contacting the Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. community nearest you. You can find the list of VUMH communities and contact information at www.vumh.org. 🍀

GROUP GIVES AFTERNOON OFF FOR SENIOR CAREGIVERS

Song and laughter ring through McKendree UMC's social hall on the third Thursday of each month. It is a meeting of C.A.R.E. – Caregivers Afternoon Respite Event – which gives an afternoon off to those who are full-time caregivers of elderly persons.

Sponsored by the United Methodist Women at McKendree in Manquin, the event has been a hit, both for those who attend and for those who organize and staff the event. Caregivers – many of whom have few or no resources for a break from their responsibilities – are offered a four-hour respite at no cost while they attend to their own needs, such as shopping, a doctor's appointment, or just an afternoon of rest. It's a win for everyone involved.

Inspired by a challenge at the dedication of McKendree's new social hall, a small committee began to explore the possibility of serving senior caregivers in some way. "Use it up, use this new building up...," urged the Rev. Ted Smith, Fredericksburg District superintendent. With its wide open spaces and handicap access, the new hall was the perfect place for a senior activity. Following months of planning, resolving insurance issues, press releases, community calendar listings and other local publicity, the first event was scheduled for June 19, 2014.

To the great disappointment of the committee, there were no registrations for several months. With perseverance and prayer, the UMW and C.A.R.E. committee continued its publicity efforts by speaking at a senior citizen

group, talking with county social services, contacting area churches, sending letters to local newspaper editors and distributing flyers throughout the community.

On Oct. 19, the first event was held and it was a resounding success. The afternoon schedule always includes a devotional, a program, hymns, games with prizes and a snack. On occasion a participant is surprised by a "This Is Your Life" presentation complete with family photos and accolades earned during their lives. "You just see the light in their eyes," exclaimed Sonya Blommel, chairman of the C.A.R.E. Committee, "It's such a blessing!" Volunteers staffing the event agree. It is as rewarding for them as for the participants. Gerry Mick, committee member, commented that C.A.R.E. is the single most rewarding church effort in which she has ever been involved.

While participants are welcome to visit or join McKendree UMC, recruiting new members is not the focus of the outreach. C.A.R.E. is simply fulfilling its mission, "To reach out to the Manquin community in the love of Christ by serving needs of its aging population."

As the months have passed, the small group of attendees continues to grow. The Middle Peninsula Alzheimer's Association has trained C.A.R.E. volunteers as the ministry considers expanding its program to include participants with dementia. 🍷

– McKendree UMC is located at 4247 Manfield Road in Manquin, Va.
For more information, call (804) 769-4407.



"This is your life" stars Frank Townsend, center, while emcee Sonya Blommel, far right, shares a life story, to the amusement of Dawn Shanks, left.



C.A.R.E. Ministry volunteers present an old radio skit.
(Photos by Eugene Campbell.)



EVENTS

May

Virginia PAUMCS 'Get Away from it All' Spring Retreat
May 3-4, Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, Toano
Beanie Rankin, retired assistant director of Records and Statistics of the General Council on Finance and Administration, will offer training in the areas of apportionments, record retention, effective cyber communications, church software and membership records. This event is an opportunity for church secretaries and administrators to learn, network and enjoy fellowship. For more information, call Virginia Chapter President, Bev Myers, at **1-800-768-6040 ext. 134**, or **(804) 521-1134**, or e-mail her at **BevMyers@vaumc.org**.

Your Legacy and Life Beyond this Life

May 12, Camp Overlook, Keezletown

The Virginia Conference Older Adult Council is partnering with Overlook Retreat & Camp Ministries to offer "Your Legacy and Life Beyond this Life!", a one-day retreat from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, at Camp Overlook. The morning will focus on the legacy we leave as older adults. The afternoon will be encounters with eternal life as shared by individuals who have had glimpses of heaven. Lodging is available the night before. For more information and to register, go to **www.campoverlook.org**.

School for Children's Ministries

May 30, New Life UMC, Midlothian

The School for Children's Ministries is on the road again featuring the same school at four different locations on four different dates. The first will be Saturday, May 30, at New Life UMC, 900 Old Hundred Rd., Midlothian. Learn "Extraordinary Lessons from Ordinary Objects" plus three more workshops. A .5 CEU offered. Only \$20 per person. For more information and to register, go to **www.vaumc.org**, click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

June

Conference on Aging

June 2, Lynchburg College

Virginia Conference Older Adult Ministries and Lynchburg District Older Adult Ministries are co-sponsors of the Lynchburg College Beard Center 2015 Conference on Aging to be held Tuesday, June 2, on the Lynchburg College campus in Lynchburg. The theme is "Aging Well in Mind, Body, Spirit." Keynotes will include "Choosing to live a happy, balanced, vibrant life" by Kathleen Passanisi, internationally recognized speaker, humorist and medical professional; and "May the circle be unbroken: Spirituality, faith and aging" by

James L. Brooks, associate state director for AARP Virginia and ordained United Church of Christ pastor. Early registration deadline is May 1. For more information or to register, call **(434) 544-8456** or go to **www.lyncburg.edu/beard**. Registration deadline is May 15.

Annual Conference

June 19-21, Berglund Center (formerly Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke

The 233rd session of the Virginia Annual Conference will be held at The Berglund Center (formerly the Roanoke Civic Center) in Roanoke June 19-21. Theme is "From Members to Disciples." For more information, go to **www.vaumc.org**, click on "Resources" and "Annual Conference 2015."

July

Helping Hands

July 23-24, Woodlake UMC, Midlothian

This event gives rising 4th-6th graders the opportunity to do hands-on missions in the Richmond area. Participants have the option of early-bird registration which includes three on-site mission opportunities or regular registration which includes two on-site mission opportunities. For more information, contact MaryKaye Cochran at **(804) 639-8872** or **mcochran@woodlakeumc.org** or go to **www.vaumc.org**, click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

September

School for Children's Ministries

Sept. 12, Timberlake UMC, Lynchburg

The School for Children's Ministries is on the road again featuring the same school at four different locations on four different dates. The second will be Saturday, Sept. 12, at Timberlake UMC, 21649 Timberlake Rd., Lynchburg. Learn "Extraordinary Lessons from Ordinary Objects" plus three more workshops. A .5 CEU offered. Only \$20 per person. For more information and to register, go to **www.vaumc.org**, click on "Conference Calendar" and the date.

DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ At the beginning of Lent, Pastor Doug Gunsalus and the children at **Centenary UMC** in Lynchburg put “Alleluia” in a box – literally. They put the letters A L L E L U I A in a box, and Pastor Doug explained that during the reflective time of Lent we put away “Alleluia.” On Easter morning the kids were greeted with a giant mysterious box. During the children’s sermon Pastor Doug showed them that the box they had put the “Alleluia” in was empty. Then they were blown away as “Alleluia” burst forth from the mystery box. Pastor Doug shared that our joy at knowing Jesus as the risen Lord should burst forth like our “Alleluia.”

▼ **Burnt Chimney UMC, Epworth UMC, Flint Hill UMC and Red Valley**



UMC in the Danville District worshiped together on Holy Wednesday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Offerings were taken up each night for “Imagine No Malaria.”

▲ The men of **Magnolia UMC** and **Main Street UMC in Suffolk** joined together to worship and experience the Last Supper as a dramatic and musical interpretation of DaVinci’s famous painting for the Maundy Thursday service that was held at Main Street. The men stayed in position as each one came alive to present their part of the story, then went back into pose.

▶ Every second and fourth Thursday, **Belview UMC in Radford** hosts an open music jam. The core members of this group, the New River Valley Boys, have been playing together for years. They perform at many local nursing homes each month. In January 2013 one member asked to move the jam sessions to the church’s Fellowship Hall. This event is open

to the community, and many people from the area who are not members of Belview UMC come to play. The church publicizes this bi-weekly event through flyers and social media. Photos by Shelby Vasko, Community News Editor, *News Messenger* and *Radford News Journal*.



The United Methodist Women of **Main Street UMC, Suffolk**, took time out from their busy schedules to sow seeds in individual “resurrection gardens.” After this activity, they made plans to collect large bottles of liquid hand soap, paper products (napkins, paper towels and toilet paper) and Campbell’s soup labels for the Wesley Community Service Center in Portsmouth, one of the missions supported



by Main Street's UMW. The women will also accept donations to buy legal- and letter-size copy paper for the center. On May 12, they will take the collected items to the WCSC and tour the facility. ▼



► Randy Reaves, Missions chair at **River Road UMC in Richmond**, was interviewed on the CBS 6 TV show "Virginia This Morning" about the church's "Stop Hunger Now" initiative to pack 25,000 meals on Sunday, April 12. Worship for that day was literally service. The church suspended

all three worship services in order to hold a joint worship/service opportunity. The intergenerational event, with people of all ages, included breakfast followed by a "Stop Hunger Now" packing event combined with worship, singing, praying and offering between "gongs." (A gong was rung every time packaging of 10,000 meals was completed.) The morning ended with a covered dish lunch for every-

one. "Stop Hunger Now" is a global organization with the goal to end worldwide hunger.

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



▲ A miraculous thing happened when new church plant **Journey UMC in Jetersville (Farmville District)** moved its annual Community Egg Hunt to a central community location and added the Stations of the Cross for the whole family to participate: the community came! Hundreds poured out for the second year the church held the event at this venue. Face painting was one of the popular activities. Pictured, Emma Vaughan, granddaughter of Farmville District Lay Leader Johnnie Morris, had a cross and flame painted on her face. Bypassing the offers of Pokeman and butterflies, Emma told the face painter she wanted the symbol on the motorcycle she had seen. The Mission Riders, a motorcycle ministry of Journey UMC, were at the Community Egg Hunt for the "Blessing of the Bikes." In this annual event, Pastor Michael Davis prays with the riders over their bikes for a season of safe and blessed riding. The symbol Emma had identified is one she had seen often as the symbol of The United Methodist Church. The face painter happily agreed with her choice and was able to paint from viewing one of the riders' t-shirts. ♡

LIVING THE WORD



At the 2014 Virginia Annual Conference in Hampton, Lynda Moore's Baptist ordination was recognized, and she is now an Elder in Full Connection in the Virginia Conference. She currently serves as pastor of West End UMC, Portsmouth, in the Elizabeth River District. She has served congregations on the Eastern Shore and in Richmond. Lynda retired from the Richmond City Department of Social Services in 2005. She has a passion for ministry to women who "hurt" and enjoys facilitating workshops on any aspect of church life. Lynda has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Virginia Commonwealth University, and she graduated cum laude from the School of Theology at Virginia Union University, both in Richmond. She is single.

May 3, 2015 "Words to Live By" 3 John

It was the greeting of John the Elder to his friend Gaius that caught my attention and gave me pause for thought. The Elder writes to his friend, "My dear friend, I pray that everything may go well with you and that you may be in good health – as I know you are well in spirit." (3 John: 2, Good News Bible) I pondered over this line and it reminded me of the importance of self care in our Christian life and service. Too often we are so busy doing church work that we neglect our health, not realizing that poor health keeps us from giving our very best service to God.

As a diabetic I am constantly reminded of the need to eat responsibly, to exercise regularly and take all of my medicines in order to stay healthy. When you and I neglect ourselves physically (mentally and emotionally, too, I might add) what message are we sending to our co-laborers in the mission field, and more importantly, what message are we sending to the people God is sending us out to reach? Doesn't scripture tell us that the "body is the temple of God"? How can we preach, teach and serve God while mistreating the temple? John prayed for his friend's good health. We should do the same for the people that we love.

If we know someone who is not taking care of him or herself, it would help to not only pray for him or her, but also give that person the encouragement and motivation that is needed to take better care of him or herself. Let's say, for instance, that a loved one or friend would benefit from an exercise program. Consider going to the gym together or become walking or jogging partners. Let the person know that he or she is not alone. I know when I was first diagnosed with diabetes, members of my congregation gave me diabetic cookbooks and encouraged me to watch what I ate whenever we had covered dish suppers. Now I do the same when I learn that someone else has the disease. Like the Elder, pray for another person's good health, but try your best to put your prayer into action.

May 10, 2015 "I Can Do That!" 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

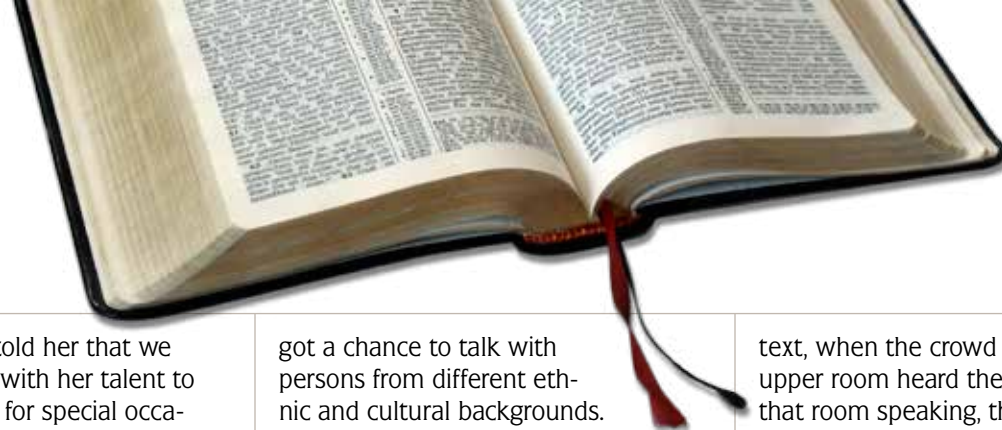
"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for their particular service." (12: 4-6, Good News Bible) People who know me in my service to the church know that I have a passion for teaching about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christians of all denominations

Our congregations are full of gifted people who don't know that they are. When the subject comes up about Spiritual gifts, invariably there is someone who will say, "I don't think that I have a spiritual gift." Or another might say, "I must not have a spiritual gift because I don't speak in tongues." In today's text, the Apostle Paul writes to members of the Corinthian church to address the questions and concerns of the congregation in the first century that serve to help us understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the twenty-first century.

This Corinthian passage opened up a whole new world for me. It stirred a passion in me to teach church members about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for Paul convinced me that the church is always at its best when the members of the church can identify and exercise the gift(s) that the Holy Spirit has given them. It gives me joy to see the excitement in someone's face or in their voice when he or she first discovers his or her gift.

God has a purpose and a place for everyone in the church and that means you. There is plenty of work to do, and the church will benefit and be blessed by the service that you give. In this passage, Paul provides a list of spiritual gifts. There are other spiritual gifts listed in other books. The writers give these lists simply to point out the wide range of opportunities for members to be a part of the church.

On a recent visit to the home of one of the members of the church I serve, I couldn't help but notice and admire the art work on her walls and was drawn to a lampshade in one of the rooms. When I mentioned them, the member told me that she drew the pictures herself and had decorated an old lampshade to give it that



distinctive look. I told her that we needed someone with her talent to decorate the altar for special occasions, and she expressed surprise that I would ask her. I told her – and I will tell anyone – when God blesses you with a gift or talent, what better way to use it than to use it in and for the church.

Every one of you is blessed with a gift from God – how will you use your gift?

May 17, 2015 **“Colaborando Juntos”** **1 Corinthians 12:14-31**

In today’s lesson, Paul is continuing his discussion of spiritual gifts with the members of the Corinthian church. In this lesson, Paul uses the analogy of the human body and the relationship of each part of the body to the whole to point out that each part of the body is important. While each has a different function, each is an integral part of the whole. In using this analogy, Paul drives home the point that just because others can’t see all of someone’s body doesn’t mean that what is visible is more important than those parts that are covered. He goes on to say that each part of the body plays a vital role in the physical health of a person’s body.

Years ago there was an event in the Richmond area called “Colaborando Juntos,” which is Spanish for “working together.” Attending this event were educators, health care providers, government workers, employment agencies, social workers and clergy who met out of a common concern regarding the needs of the city’s growing immigrant community. During the event, attendees got a chance to learn more about this “new face” in our community and talked about the work that their agency or church was doing to be a more welcoming and affirming presence to the immigrant community. During these events, attendees

got a chance to talk with persons from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There was a realization that, in spite of our differences, what we had in common was our belief in the respect, worth and dignity for all people, regardless of who they were, what language they spoke or from where they came.

The church is called to be the leader of any efforts to assure the quality life of all peoples, as we all are children of God. As the body of Christ called the Church, we have been given a charge by God to take care of this body. The good news is that we don’t have to come up with our own ways of doing this – the Holy Spirit has equipped and empowered each of us with spiritual gifts that are to be used, not against each other, but with each other for the edification of the church. The church grows and is much healthier when all our gifts are used for the cause of Jesus Christ.

May 24, 2015 **“Mass Communication”** **Acts 2: 1-21; 1 Corinthians 14: 1-25**

There is a commercial for a national cell phone company that reminds us that the way we communicate in 2015 is much different than it was 10, 20, 30 or more years ago. In this commercial, the father is sitting with his teenage daughter and he tells her that he had just purchased this particular phone. The teen is so excited and starts talking about all the things that you can do using that phone. The expression on the father’s face is priceless – you can almost see a big question mark on his face as he listens to her. He finally says something like, “I don’t know what you just said, but you can do it on your own phone.”

I can only imagine that on Pentecost Day, as recorded in the Acts

text, when the crowd outside of that upper room heard the persons in that room speaking, the expressions on their faces were similar to that father’s. It would not be surprising if the people in the upper room had similar expressions on their own faces. You could almost hear the puzzlement in their voices when some of them asked in verse 12b: “What does this mean?” (Common English Bible) For the first time in their lives, these men and women were experiencing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit was working in them in a way that they had never known before.

This is a lesson for us today. When we are around other Christians, we have a tendency to use terms that are familiar to other Christians because it’s natural for us. However, when we talk about grace, or salvation, or the Trinity or the Body of Christ to persons who are not Christian and have never heard those terms, we might as well be speaking in a strange tongue. Similarly, terms that are commonplace for us United Methodists, like apportionments or the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, are equally strange to some people. Remember that we are the mouthpieces for Jesus Christ and are called to share the Gospel with others. How can we reach others if they don’t know what we’re talking about? Friendly reminder: whenever we communicate the Christian message, let us speak in a language that our hearers will understand.

May 31, 2015 **“More Than a Four-Letter Word”** **1 Corinthians 13**

Our lesson for this month ends with the “Love chapter.” What a wonderful word that is – love. It has such a good sound to it. When Paul uses this term in today’s text, and you read it or hear it read, it kind

(Continued on pg. 33, “Living Word”)

CLERGY & DIACONAL



DEATHS



The Rev. Edwin Gayle Burch, 76, of Staunton, died April 1, 2015. He began his ministerial career in 1980 at Patrick. He went on to

serve as associate at Greene Memorial, Northview, Virginia UM Homes, Tabernacle in the former Ashland District, and Central in the Roanoke District. He retired in 2001 and served Chatham Heights-Granbery for several years. Survivors include his wife, Barbara Simpson Huff Burch; three daughters; two stepsons; four grandchildren; and four step-grandchildren.



The Rev. John C. Barr, retired, died March 22, 2015. He was a chaplain at McGuire Medical Center in Richmond and later served as Chief of Chaplain

Services. Upon retirement from the VA Hospital he served as pastor of Woodlawn UMC in Alexandria and several churches in Timmonsville, Lynchburg and South Carolina. The Rev. Barr returned to his childhood home in June 1997 so he could "farm." Survivors include his wife, Nora, and two children.



The Rev. James W. Tinney, 76, of Urbanna, died April 5, 2015, at Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in Gloucester. Jim began his ministerial career

in 1964 as the associate at Central. He went on to serve Southview, Blue Grass, Trinity in Buchanan, Clarksbury in the former Rappahannock District

and White Stone. He retired in 2008. He is survived by his wife, Anne.

Mark Teixeira, brother of **the Rev. Michael Teixeira**, died March 18, 2015. The Rev. Teixeira serves the Mt. Carmel-Phenix Charge, Farmville District.

Dallas R. Thomas died March 26, 2015. Dallas is the father of **the Rev. James Thomas**, senior pastor of Sydenstricker UMC, Alexandria District.

William W. Mottley died March 24, 2015, three weeks shy of his 100th birthday. He is the father of **the Rev. Keith Mottley**, pastor of Beulah UMC, Richmond District.

Bonnie Cutright died March 25, 2015. She is the sister of **the Rev. Sandra Stanley** (on leave of absence) and the aunt of **Sara Stanley Ware** (wife of **the Rev. Andrew Ware**, pastor of the Twin Grove Charge, James River District).

Merle D. Ogren died March 21, 2015, in Ottumwa, Iowa. He is the father of **the Rev. Mark Ogren**, director of Congregational Excellence for the Virginia Conference.

Pattie Rhea Curry, 100, of Roanoke, died March 17, 2015. She was the widow of **the Rev. Joseph Curry** with whom she served in the Virginia United Methodist Conference.

Martha Usher died March 11, 2015. Mrs. Usher is the mother of **the Rev. Vernell Carter**, a retired elder last serving on the Alexandria District.

Lois Barnett, wife of **the Rev. Clarence Barnett**, retired, died on March 31, 2015, at her home in Cary, N.C.

Clayton Herring, father of **Linda Mottley** and father-in-law of **the Rev. Keith A. Mottley**, died on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015. Herring was a

resident of Rose Hill, N.C.

Virginia Featherstun Everett Laine, 93, died March 19, 2015. She was predeceased by her husband of 45 years, Elisha Lee Everett of Suffolk, and her second husband, **the Rev. Alvin Woodrow Laine**, of Richmond. She was a member of Oxford UMC.

Fern K. Thomas, 85, died March 19, 2015. She was the widow of **the Rev. Wilbur E. (Bill) Thomas**. She was a member of Corinth UMC in Sandston.

Marsh M. Marshall, husband of **the Rev. Betty Daniels Marshall**, died March 28, 2015. Betty is the pastor of the James River Charge, Farmville District.

BIRTHS

The Rev. Mark Montgomery and his wife, **Melissa**, announce the birth of a son, **William "Liam" Beckett Montgomery**, born March 18, 2015. Montgomery serves an extension ministry appointment at United College Ministries in Northern Virginia.

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("Living Word," continued from pg. 31)

of gives you that good feeling. "Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but is with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things." (Verses 4-7, Common English Bible) Let's face it, who wouldn't want that kind of love? It almost seems idyllic, doesn't it? Yet, Paul is writing to the church about a love that is available to all – a love that is attainable and doable for all Christians.

The love that Paul describes in this text is a gift from God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and manifested by Jesus Christ. This kind of love would eradicate all of those "isms" that adversely affect the lives of others – sexism, ageism, racism, to name a few. How can we discriminate against someone or some group of people? How can we abuse another? How can we turn our backs on persons who are in need, if we look at them through the lenses of love as Paul describes it? We can't, because the love that comes from God won't let us.

Let's go back to the body analogy that Paul used in one of the previous lessons. Paul talked about the church as the Body of Christ and said the use of spiritual gifts was analogous to functions of parts of the body, with no one member being more important than another. He said all parts of the body have to work together if the body is to function properly. Loving your body assures that you will do all that you can to make sure that the body is well and functioning properly.

The Body of Christ called the Church was conceived and shaped by God's love. We honor God and show our love for God when we love one another as God loves us. Christian love is what moves us to be all that we can be for the cause of Christ. 

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FROM THE BISHOP



Two Invitations

Friends,

May the grace and peace from our risen Lord be with you.

I hope you had a very joyful and meaningful Easter celebration. Easter is the foundation of our hope: the hope that truth and love will prevail in the end; the hope that life will defeat the power of death and darkness; and the hope that God will have the final word in our challenges and sufferings. All these hopes are grounded in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we, Easter people, are people of hope which nothing can shake. Let us give thanks to God for giving us this hope!

This month I would like to remind you of two invitations. The first is an invitation to Imagine No Malaria. Since we launched this missional initiative at last year's Annual Conference, we have raised over \$430,000, which will save 43,000 lives from malaria. Our goal is to save more than 100,000 lives. April 25 was World Malaria Day. We encouraged every church to go out into their com-

munity on that day, open a lemonade stand and invite the people to join in this life-saving mission.

According to the most recent report I received prior to this writing (March 2015), still more than half of our churches have not participated in this initiative. By the end of April, I anticipate that many more churches will join this mission. From the beginning our thought was that if every church participated and if every member saved a life, we would easily save 100,000 plus lives. This is the reason we created the catch phrase, "Every Life Save a Life."

Now, we have less than two months to go until we get together for our 2015 Annual Conference in Roanoke. Our hope is to have a very joyful celebration during Annual Conference of reaching our goal of saving more than 100,000 lives. At this moment, we are falling short of our goal, and there is not much time remaining. I invite all United Methodists in the Virginia Annual Conference to pray and to take part in this very meaningful mission initiative of Imagine No Malaria. If we pray and work together, we can reach our goal. It is possible! This is my first invitation.

My second invitation is to our conference-wide Day of Prayer. We began this campaign last year to help create a culture of prayer in our conference as the basis for a renewal and revival of our churches. This year May 24 (Sunday) is the date of our conference-wide Day of Prayer. I invite every church to remember this day and to pray for a renewal and revival of the churches in our conference and in the entire United Methodist Church.

Last year when I visited a church on the Day of Prayer, I was disappointed during the worship service. I could not find any announcement of the Day of Prayer in the worship bulletin, and the worship leader did not mention it in any way. But I had a very different and moving experience when I visited Swain Memorial UMC on Tangier Island. Since the first Virginia Conference Day

of Prayer, this church has been praying together the Prayer for Renewal of the Church in the UM Hymnal #574 every Sunday during their worship service. I was deeply touched and moved by their prayer, and my hope was strengthened for a new future.

Today everyone says that we, The United Methodist Church, are at a crossroads. All of us are worrying about the future of our denomination. But not everyone prays seriously for our churches. Is it too difficult for us to pray for a renewal and revival of our churches during the worship time? We faithfully remember and pray for people in need. What about including the need for a renewal and revival of our churches in our pastoral prayers and prayers for our community? Is it too difficult for us to keep on praying for a revival of our beloved UMC?

If we pray together, I believe great things will happen to our churches. We truly need faith in prayer. We need to trust in our Lord who answers our prayers. In closing, I would like to share with you a prayer for the church, from our Book of Worship #501:

*O gracious God, we pray for your
holy Church universal,
That you would be pleased to fill it
with all truth, in all peace.
Where it is corrupt, purify it;
Where it is in error, direct it;
Where in anything it is amiss,
reform it;
Where it is right, establish it;
Where it is in want, provide for it;
Where it is divided, reunite it;
For the sake of him who died and
rose again,
And ever lives to make intercession
for us,
Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord.
Amen. —THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, U.S.A.*

In our Lord,

ONE LAST WORD

Woodlake worshipers sign Wesley's covenant prayer with fingerprints



In the Gathering Space at Woodlake UMC, Chesterfield is a cross made of five different canvases. Four of the canvases are marked with fingerprints of many different shapes and colors. The fifth canvas has these words inscribed on it, "I give myself completely to you, God." The fingerprints represent the marks of commitment that congregants made when they came forward and recommitted their lives to Christ through the Wesleyan Covenant service.

For the past several years Woodlake has celebrated Wesley's Covenant service on the first weekend of the New Year. The Covenant Service is a service of renewal and recommitment, particularly appropriate for a worship service at the beginning of the year, during Lent, or during another time of new beginnings. It is a powerful worship service that invites the faithful to recommit their lives to God and live under God's care.

In the past, individuals have signed the covenant prayer, which was printed in their bulletin, and placed their commitments on the table. This

year Woodlake leaders re-wrote the traditional liturgy so that it would be appealing to participants in the contemporary worship services, and restructured the service so that it could include a time of testimony, reflection and corporate prayer.

This year the church chose to emphasize the community aspects of the Covenant Service. After saying the Covenant Prayer together, the congregation took communion as a body and was then invited to sign the covenant with their fingerprint. Canvases were laid out on the table and at different prayer stations, along with ink and baby wipes. Worship leaders took time to explain the covenant to the children who were present, and they were also invited to ratify their promises with their prints.

The act of recommitment (and, for some, committing to Christ for the first time) was not an individual act but a community act, in which the entire church could participate.

"The power of this service always amazes us," said the Rev. Pete Moon, Woodlake's lead pastor. "It is old and traditional, but when you bring it forward in creative ways like this, it continues to change and form lives with fresh power every year."

The fingerprint promises now reside in the church Gathering Space as reminders of the commitment made this year. But more than that, the fingerprints are reminders that we are not alone on our Christian journey. We have the support of our Christian community to help us and to hold us accountable.

If you would like copies of the Order of Worship that was used for Contemporary or Traditional Covenant services, e-mail the Rev. Erin Reibel at ereibel@woodlakeumc.org. 📧



Tweets heard 'round the conference

Patti Money @pattimoney

Red shoes arrived today. Big day is June 20. [#gettingordainedinstyle](#)

mochel morris @preacher3

[#wesleyseminary](#) [#fruitfulconversations](#) Martin: be the one @ work who raises questions about diversity and not make it be the black person

Chad Herndon @buildingnewsong

Love Tip #39: What's a big goal your mate has for your relationship? Commit now to pray it into being; what steps, even small, can you take?

Alan Combs @thricemantis

[@goodacre](#) How are we to choose between [#FindingJesus](#) on CNN and Bible Weather on the Weather channel?

Alex Joyner @alejojoyner

The world seems a little bit more wonderful with Texas baseball back. [#NeverEverQuit](#)

Alethea Allen @AletheaAllen

[@VAUMC](#) I can't decide if I am sad, angry, or embarrassed over the Advocate's article on vaccines. Shame on you. There is no excuse.

UM News Service retweeted

Fred Burton @FredBurton13

Went to a lively, joyous Easter service at a United Methodist church. Who says 'mainline' churches are dead? [@UMNS](#)



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NICARAGUA, HOUSE OF HOPE TRIP, Spring 2015
Each year during the College's Spring Break, a group of VWC students travel to Nicaragua along with VWC Chaplain Greg West to serve at House of Hope, a Christian organization that rescues, houses and provides work and refuge for women and children leaving the world of prostitution and human trafficking.



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