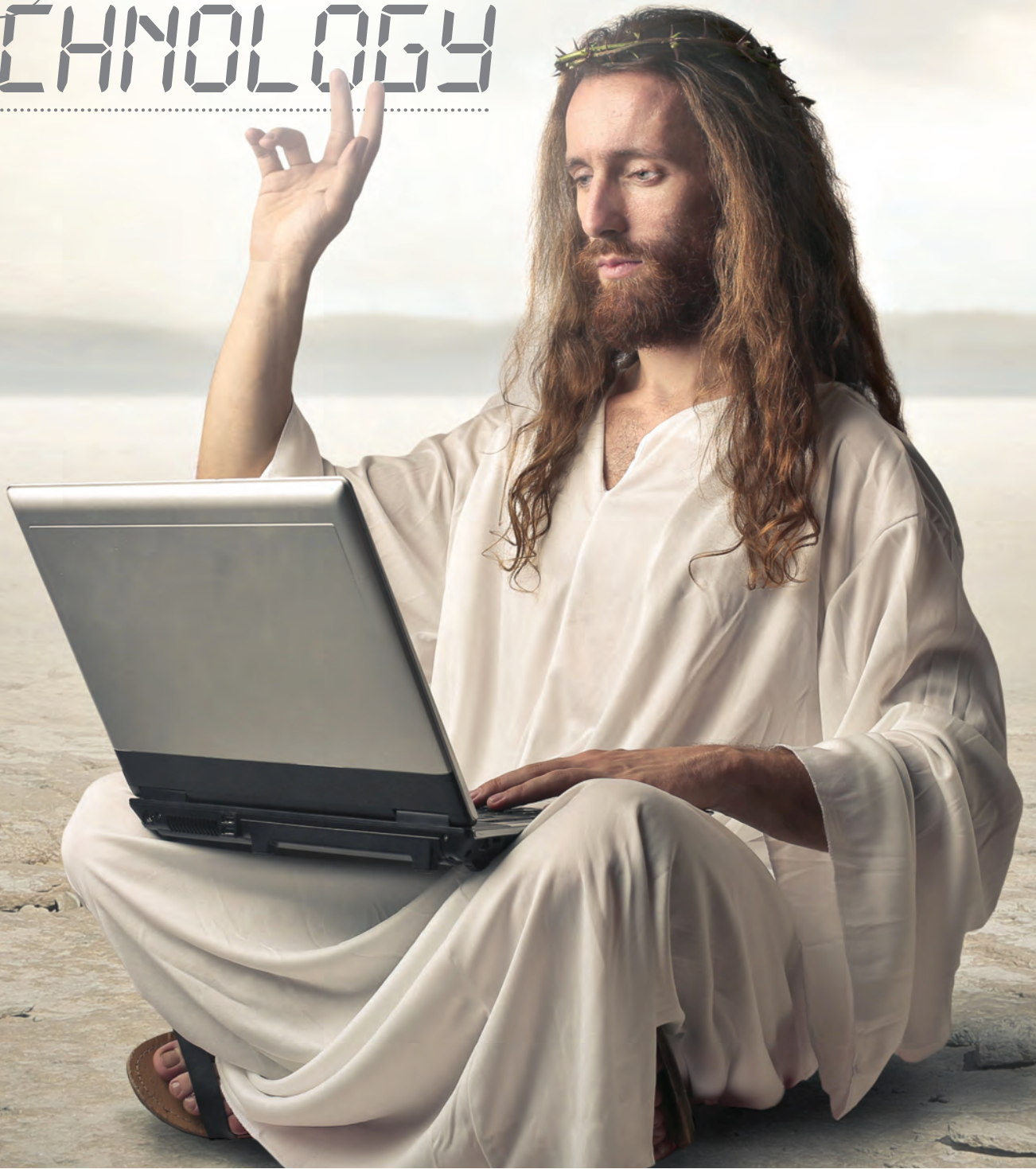


September 2018

Advocate

Church & TECHNOLOGY



Connecting with the



VirginiaAdvocate

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

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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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PILLOW TALK



Madeline Pillow
Editor

I remember first using a school computer every so often when I started kindergarten.

By third grade, we took reading quizzes in the computer lab. In fourth grade, I had my first AOL email address. Middle school and high school were all about instant messaging friends on AIM through AOL. I anxiously waited to get my college email address so that I could join Facebook my senior year of high school.

Boy, have the times changed. Each one of us has experiences with technology and note how over time it has changed our everyday lives. Going from printed maps to having GPS is a change that I fully embrace and love.

This month's feature focuses on technology and how it can impact the life and worship of a church. Too often change is viewed negatively instead of embracing the new opportunities it can usher in.

Just like standing at the edge of a diving board as you stare into the water below, there is always that moment of hesitation, no matter how many times you have jumped before.

Our church looks very different than it did 50 years ago. Yet throughout our history there have been many jumps off the diving board that afforded many new and exciting opportunities.

If your church is standing at the diving board thinking about the community around you and how to be relevant today, it starts with technology.

Our world is increasingly active on the Internet and social media and this new trend of socialization is not going away. So work with those in your church who are tech-savvy or family that is passionate about it.

Something you can take comfort in is the fact that as our world changes with technology, we are all experiencing and trying to understand these changes together. We just have to be willing to embrace change and learn as we go.

I hope you get some ideas from this issue for your local church and remember that the conference Communications staff and our Board of Communications is here to help resource and answer questions for our local churches! 🍷

Madeline C. Pillow

Standing
at the
diving
board



TABLE OF CONTENTS



SECTIONS

- 4-6 Letters & Commentary
- 7-11 Virginia News
- 24 Events
- 25 Local News
- 26-27 Living the Word
- 28-29 Clergy & Diaconal
- 31 One Last Word

FEATURE

- 12-23 Church and Technology

STORIES

- 7 Teaching confidence, guidance at All God's Children Camp
- 10 Children accomplish goal of large donation



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LETTERS



The One Church Plan at General Conference 2019

I served as a volunteer page at the 2016 General Conference and was deeply moved by our bishops' profession of their "broken heart" over the state of our relationships together. Upon the earnest request of our delegates for their leadership, they suggested the Study Commission on the Way Forward which

the General Conference eventually proposed and adopted.

Our annual conference has called upon the upcoming 2019 General Conference to "resist schism and express openness to diverse perspectives" (*Resolution 1 "Affirm Unity in Christ"*). The recent public release of the "One Church Plan" reveals it to be the best expression of these aspirations. It is entirely appropriate for us to affirm the leadership of

our bishops who, upon their prayerful study of the Scriptures, have recommended this plan and the gracious unity it offers our church. I am particularly concerned for our younger clergy, many with whom I have had the privilege to serve beside. They have inherited a church where division has festered and grown. They deserve the future that a unified church promises us all. 🍀

– The Rev. Bill Davidson, retired,
Richmond District

Information on The One Church Plan

*Released by Council of Bishops on
May 24, 2018*

The Council of Bishops is offering a video outlining the One Church Plan as a resource for annual conferences as they prepare for the 2019 Special Session of General Conference. The video may be shown to be used in discussions.

During their meeting in May, the bishops voted to recommend the One Church Plan as the best way forward for the future of The United Methodist Church. The recommendation is based on the work of the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward.

The One Church Plan will be placed before the 2019 General Conference for legislative action.

To honor the work of the commission, and in service to the delegates to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference, the Council of Bishops will also provide supplemental materials that include a historical narrative with disciplinary implications related to the connectional conference plan and the traditionalist plan.

The One Church Plan video is available in various file sizes and formats so that it may be shared via social media and also presented at large gatherings.

Here is the link to the video files:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f03rtma3lqm952o/>



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

COMMENTARY

A moment of faith

By Larry Jent

It was a moment I could not have imagined three years ago. I arrived at a church in turmoil and decline, and folks wasted no time telling me it was my fault. Many of them left. Some of them did so at the top of their lungs in the middle of worship. It was humiliating. The brutality of it was stunning.

Then it got worse.

Every time I thought the situation stabilized, a new bombshell would drop. "We're being transferred to Okinawa." Half a dozen families said, "I just got offered early retirement and we're leaving the state." Or worse yet, "Please understand, our decision to move has NOTHING to do with you." After a while, that began to feel like the unkindest cut of all.

Attendance dropped. Giving dropped. Morale dropped. Anger and blame, however, were up.

About a year ago, things began to change. We called in a consultant. Lay people began to focus on revitaliza-

tion. They reshaped their board to involve fewer committees and more task forces. The church began to feel good about the direction it was going. Prince of Peace UMC (PoP) was no longer trying to recreate the 1980s. I invited folks to see our time together as God's call into the chrysalis. We learned to trust God for metamorphosis even when it was painful.

Naming our time together as a bridge rather than a destination offered freedom to imagine what might come next. As my time there drew to a close, an unexpected moment of emergence began. People asked to be baptized; honest to goodness converts to the faith. In a movement of conversion,

folks wanted to stand up and give their hearts to Jesus. They wanted to join the church.

In the picture accompanying this article, you see a congregation laying hands on their pastor and praising God. I see beloved members of the family of faith and dearly beloved friends. It honestly did not hit me until that night that there is a bigger story here.

Two of the women who came to be baptized were twins, Amanda and Andrea. They also brought Andrea's infant son, Joseph. Their mother is Roman Catholic. Their father is Muslim. The girls are also Mohawk Indians. Their family was blessed with three

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

Naming our time together as a bridge rather than a destination offered freedom to imagine what might come next.

A moment captured of the congregation surrounding the Rev. Larry Jent in one of his last moments of ministry at Prince of Peace UMC in Manassas.



COMMENTARY

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

strong spiritual streams, but they didn't know anything about them. They were raised with no faith.

Joseph was the catalyst for change. Andrea wanted to know faith. She wanted to have something worth giving to her son. They came to me because they had family in our church, and they felt a Native Christian might understand their situation. They didn't know what would happen when they approached a pastor. Andrea is an unwed mother. They had never been to Sunday school or Confirmation or First Communion or Friday prayers. So we talked

about seeking to love God and grow in faith and they were all in. I counseled them about becoming a part of a family of faith, and what it meant to claim Joseph for that faith.

So here we were, at the end my ministry in Manassas. The baptism of this child brought together Catholics and Muslims and United Methodists and Mohawks. Look at the photo again. See that set of eyes looking straight at you? That is Andrea's father. He came forward to thank God that his grandson was baptized and loved. He came forward to pray for me.

He wasn't sure he'd be welcome in our church. What would we say to a Muslim man in our midst? A year or two ago, I would have been scared to ask. But as I looked at that photo, I realized he was praying beside a man who was a staunch Trump supporter. The fateful and faithful juxtaposition took my breath away.

In this one photo, there are conservative Republicans, liberal Democrats, Jews, former Catholics, Native

Americans, Africans, Filipinos, Pacific Islanders, immigrants, CIA employees, Homeland Security Agents, Puerto Ricans, Cajuns and Creoles, Pentecostals and a few pagans for good measure.

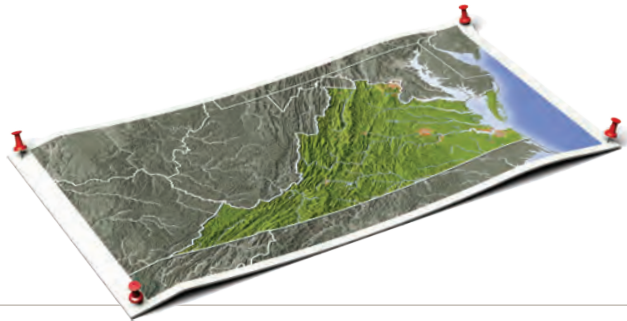
In sharing this story I acknowledge it has been a TOUGH journey, but at the end there has come joy. I want to offer you more of this story, but I do not want to make it about me. I am but the shell of the chrysalis falling away. If this beautiful creation is to take flight, then I must decrease that Christ might increase.

However, I do think the story of these two young women may offer hope to our divided and fractured world. If someone is willing to let Amanda and Andrea talk about their faith journey, I would be glad to put you in touch with them. If not, I hope your heart has at least been blessed by this tale of faith and metamorphosis. 🍷

— The Rev. Larry Jent can be reached at LarryJent@vaumc.org.

The Rev. Larry Jent





The United Methodist connection in **VIRGINIA**

'I am somebody': Giving confidence, guidance to at-risk children in camp program



By James H. Seaborn

All God's Children Camp is a weeklong United Methodist overnight experience for children with an incarcerated parent. The camp has three one-week ses-

sions during the summer. Locations include Camp Overlook near Harrisonburg, Va., Camp Chanco on the James River, and Occohannock on the Bay on the Eastern Shore.

Children travel from all over the state to visit

the camp. A staple of the program is getting participants out of urban home environments and giving them experiences that they could never have where they live.

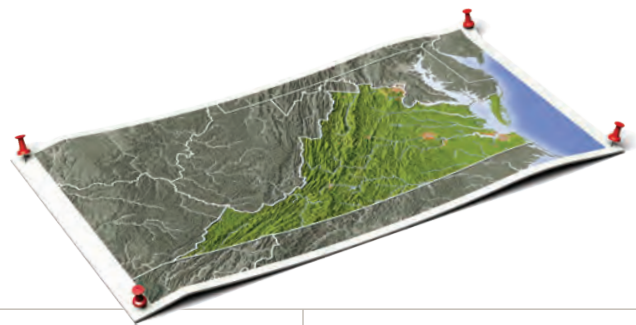
At the Camp Overlook session (June 25-30 2018), participants paddle boated and paddle boarded around a small lake. Open fields and wooded hills served to provide a sense of adventure to participants. Overlook campers spent their nights in simple cabins with new friends, surrounded by unfamiliar sounds of nature. A diverse set of

Photos from the All God's Children Camp Facebook page.



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

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



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

activities made up their daily camp schedule. Campers participated in a marshmallow flinging competition one morning, then hiked Shenandoah Valley trails and played outdoor games later that day.

Midweek the campers made lion pillows in recollection of the Bible story of Daniel in the lion's den that they had learned about earlier in the day. Teambuilding games and arts and crafts take up a sizeable share of All God's Chil-

dren: camp time.

Life lessons are a crucial part of the All God's Children experience. The camp day begins with a lesson from mentors for the children, such as an anti-bullying activity that exists to empower at-risk children to take a stance against bullies they encounter in school. At the center of these lessons is a love for Jesus and celebrating the gifts of every individual.

Camp director Lori Smith shared that making a difference with the camp is important to her. She said she was particularly proud of two 16-year-old brothers who returned to serve the camp as junior mentors after being in the program yearly from the time they were seven. She spoke of her desire that campers take the skills and confidence they pick up at camp into their outside lives. The ultimate goal is for participants to bring the values and lessons they learn at camp into their communities, to keep the at-risk participants and those they interact with on the right path.

Smith said many campers that began camp at young ages have emerged as leaders at camp in subse-



quent years, and participants often carry the values they pick up at camp from year to year.

The ultimate goal is for participants to bring the values and lessons they learn at camp into their communities, to keep the at-risk participants and those they interact with on the right path.

She said she has seen the impact of mentors on her campers first hand, and knows God is there at camp with children who come in with no confidence, who discover that they are someone truly special, and can triumphantly



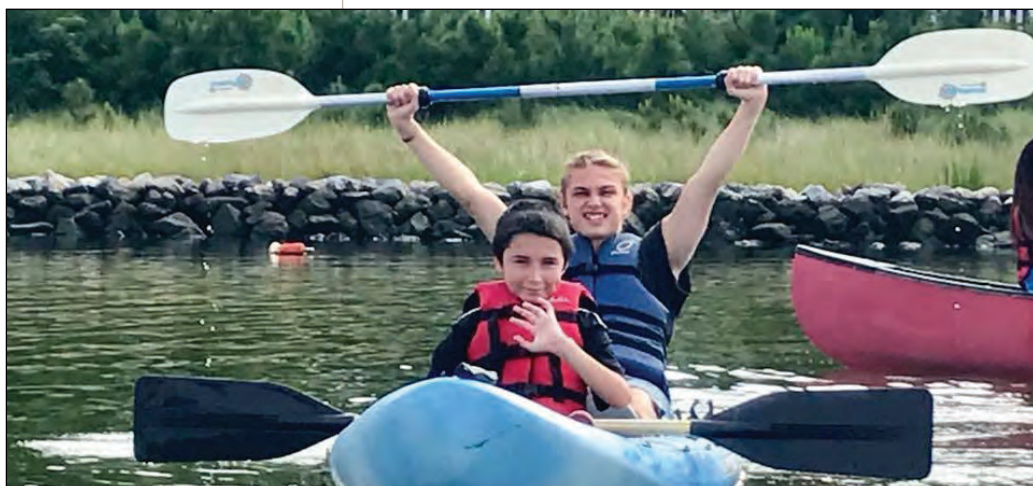
The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



say “I am somebody” by the end of the week. She said she sees growth during every single session of All God’s Children Camp.

Smith also reaffirmed that funding for this camp has been “fantastic,” and has allowed the camp to provide hygiene products and clothing for children who didn’t arrive at camp with adequate supplies.

A current camp concern is the decreasing amount of camp

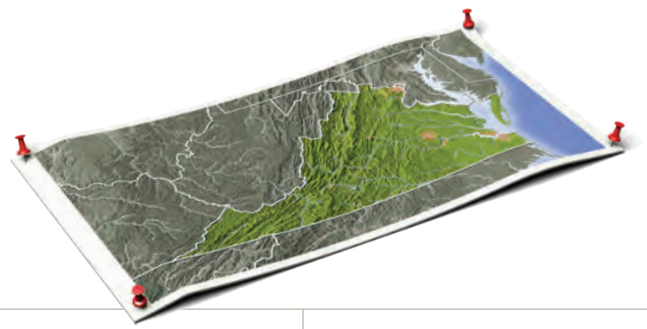


mentors. The camp has a goal of a one-to-one camper and mentor ratio, but currently is only able to provide a two-to-one ratio for campers. At the Camp Overlook session, 15 mentors served 30 campers. Volunteer mentors between 18-70 years of age come from all over the state to serve for a week at one of the three sessions. All God’s Children is a clear example of mission goals of The United Methodist Church, and those involved appeared quite proud of their attempts at reaching out to those who may need support, love and guidance during hard times, Smith said.

If interested, visit www.vaumc.org/agc for more information. 📌

— James H. Seaborn is a 2018 summer intern through Connections 21 for the conference Communications office.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Small group of children accomplish goal of large donation

By Forrest White

When Rikki Brown arrived last fall as children's director at Bethel UMC near Warrenton, there were about five dedicated elementary school age children. She acknowledged to the Rev. Faith Weedling, Bethel's pastor, that it was a small,

young group, but that she also knew of their worth to the church.

"She said [to me], 'I know it's a small group, I know they're young, I know they're kids, but I want them to realize they're disciples, too, and they have a part in the life of the church,'" said Weedling.

That core group of children set the lofty

goal of raising \$5,000 to donate a Gift Ark through Heifer International, and they set a summer 2018 deadline, in time for their donation to be matched as a part of Heifer's matching goal campaign.

An added incentive for reaching the goal?

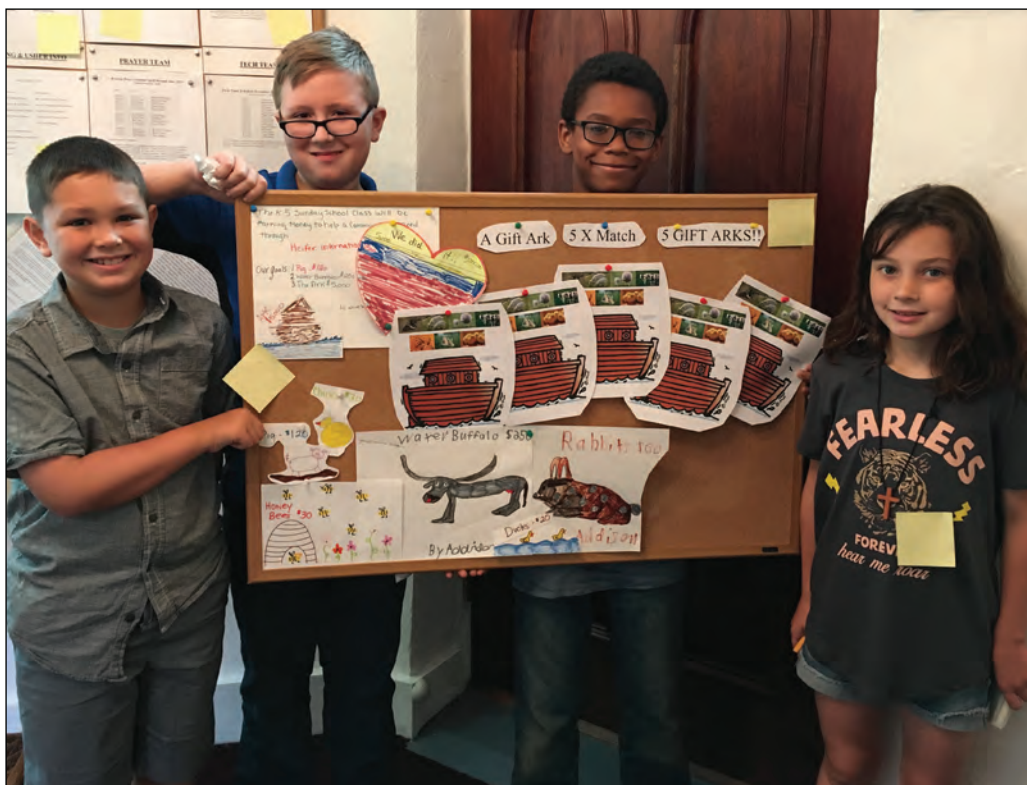
Weedling would dress up in a cow costume on a Sunday morning.

On June 24, with District Superintendent Jeff Mickle in attendance, Weedling delivered the benediction in a cow costume, after having first delivered what she calls "udderly delicious" ice cream to the children during the Sunday school hour.

Their \$5,000 donation was quadrupled by Heifer, meaning a total donation of \$25,000 or five Gift Arks, which significantly impact the life of receiving communities.

According to the Heifer International website these donations go around the world and in area of hunger and poverty, the organization provides animals and training through donations. Specifically, a Gift Ark donation "includes two water buffalos, two cows, two sheep and two goats, along with bees, chicks,

Photo courtesy of Faith Weedling.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

rabbits and more. Donating a Gift Ark will help: care for entire communities with milk, eggs, honey and wool; provide income by supplying an abundance of goods to sell; sustain farming by providing livestock to work the land; and improve the lives of families for generations by multiplying and passing on the gift."

The Bethel children used a variety of unique ways to raise the money:

- ❖ They chose their favorite disciple, put together information on that disciple and created a donation box for each. They asked the congregation to vote for their favorite by putting a donation into that disciple's donation box.
- ❖ They joined in the United Methodist Women's yard sale event. The children brought clothing and toys they had outgrown and invited others to do the same.
- ❖ They drew pictures and had an artwork auction.
- ❖ They had a bingo night, complete with a fellowship dinner.



The Rev. Faith Weedling fulfilled her promise to come to church dressed as a cow when the children met their goal.

Inspired by the children, the Bethel missions council made a donation to the cause as well.

Now in her third year at Bethel, which averages about 145 each week in worship across two services, Weedling was heartened by the way the congregation supported both the children and Brown, in her first big undertaking as children's director.

But there was something even greater than

seeing the congregation come together for such a worthy cause.

"I believe this really empowered the kids," Weedling said. "They're a small group, and they accomplished this really amazing thing." 🍷

— Forrest White is news associate with the conference Communications office.





Scripture of the Day @DailyBread
I will send my messenger, who will prepare
the way before me [#Malachi 3:1](#)
💬 ↺️ ❤️ 1 ✉️



Peter @AKASimon
Following [@jesus](#)
Goodbye fishing!
↺️ Retweeted by @GoFish



John the Baptist @JtheB
Just baptized Jesus! He's the guy I told
you about! [twitpic.com/likeadove...](#)
💬 ↺️ ❤️ 12 ✉️

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Andrew @GoFish
Following @jesus
Who's in? @Nat @TaxMan @Tom
@MareBear @PhilMeUp @Judas
@Beloved @james1 @Jim2 @Thad



John @Beloved
@james1
Road trip! Go tell Dad and
then catch up, kid.



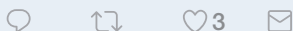
James @james1
@John
I call shotgun! Save my spot!



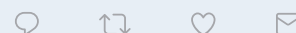
Technology can significantly change the life and worship of a local church in a positive way. It can make a church service more inclusive to all persons. Technology can also make church more relevant to persons who are used to more contemporary worship styles. Read more of this feature to see how technology is changing church in local churches around the Virginia Conference.



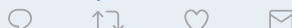
Mary Magdalene @MareBear
Bringing my BFFs @Joanna and @Suze.
#InCaseYouNeedDirections



Matthew @Matt
Can this wait until after
tax season? #slammed



Thomas @Tom
How do we know he is the real deal?
#Ineedproof #nationalID



By Mary McGhee-Pasternak



Nothing cuts through the pain of loneliness and lifts the spirit like a friendly visit or a warm embrace. But when in-person visits aren't possible, at **Fredericksburg United Methodist Church (FUMC)**, there's 'CHATI'! CHATI stands for *Connecting Hearts Across the Internet*.

Using refurbished or donated iPads equipped with FaceTime, CHATI allows virtual visits with people who can no longer come to church. This includes inclusion in attending church services, Sunday school, participating in meetings or visiting with family and friends. Using the interactive feature of this technology, people said they feel transported into whatever place they are visiting.

The participants have said, "It is like you are all here with me in my living room!"

"You mean I can come back to Sunday school and see my friends, and they can talk to me and I can hear the lesson?!"

"People can visit me while I'm in the hospital?"

"Can this be brought into nursing homes?"

The program was introduced in dramatic fashion when one of FUMC's members, who was receiving extensive treatment in a hospital an hour away, was able to "attend" a church service. His image was projected onto the wall of the sanctuary. At first everyone thought it was only a picture, until he

started to speak. He was able to tell the congregation about his progress and how much the gift of a prayer shawl had helped him get through his treatments. He thanked them for their cards, visits and prayers. And then, he could hear the prayers being offered especially for him. The brief "chat" was closed as he saw the congregation waving and wishing him well. What a special blessing!

The program allowed a grandmother who could not travel to the wedding to share an incredibly special moment with her granddaughter before the bride went down the aisle.

Each participant is provided with an iPad set up just for them – with members or with groups with whom they would like to connect. From there, it is one step to connection. If they want to have a visit with a person all they have to do is either tap the person's name or picture.

The participants must have WiFi access in order to be a part of the program. After initial setup, anyone with an Apple product, (iPhone, iPad or iPod) can visit with these members. Currently in the works is FUMC's ability to use other tablets and platforms.

While nothing replaces
human touch and actual
face-to-face interaction,
the next best thing is
"virtual" face-to-face
interaction!

The potential of this ministry is only limited by our imagination and helps us to share our love with one another by bringing our brothers and sisters in Christ closer together. Those confined at home, whether temporarily or long term, can now have their own visitation ministry and reach out through the Internet. Having purpose and meaning enhances life and vitality. Personal connection tears down



Nathanael @Nat
@Tom I know, right?
Can anything good from Nazareth?



Philip @PhilMeUp
@Tom @Nat @ TaxMan
I have a good feeling about this. Just come.



James @Jim2
Been saving my PTO
#BoysTrip #willtherebewine?

the walls of isolation, giving participants a sense of community.

Loneliness and social isolation can have devastating health consequences and are becoming a national epidemic. Loneliness puts the body and spirit in a state of chronic stress and has the potential to compromise overall health, to rob us of joy, and to threaten general wellbeing. While nothing replaces human touch and actual face-to-face interaction, the next best thing is “virtual” face-to-face interaction! This program is not a replacement for an in-person visitation program, it is meant to enhance one.

While anyone can watch a church service any day of the week, the unique value of CHATi is having a personal connection with their home church family. CHATi allows people to maintain the promises they made when they joined the church and for the church to fulfill the promise it made to the member. 📖

– Mary McGhee-Pasternak represents the Better Health Ministry at Fredericksburg United Methodist Church.



By Alan Layman



It was nearly 1 p.m. when I walked out of **Grace United Methodist Church** on Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017. Behind me were two regular Sunday morning services and soon to come were two special Christmas Eve services. I was there late to prepare for the Christmas Eve

services. As I started down the steps, I heard a familiar, “Alan! Pastor Alan!” There was one car in the parking lot and it belonged to “Ruby.”

Ruby was not a member of Grace, never having worshipped here before. I knew her from a local restaurant as she had been my server a few times and we had struck up conversation, leading to relationship. We had talked and she had shared some of her story before she learned I was the pastor of Grace Church. That’s how I liked it.

“Pastor Alan, I know it’s late and church is over but can I talk to you? I am having a really bad day.” I went back inside with Ruby.

“I was in church with my friend’s grandparents, it’s Christmas Eve, and I’m thinking how this is not for me, and I need to talk with someone, and I thought of you,” Ruby said. “I Googled your church trying to find you and what I read on your church website just told me that I needed to see you today. I hope you don’t mind.”

Ruby was hurting and searching on that Christmas Eve. By God’s grace, I was there when she needed me. A relationship formed casually about town gave way to a new relationship with Christ this day, one that would take weeks of fits and starts, and occasional worship and even longer talks. But it turned a new page on Christmas Eve.

A month prior and Ruby would not have found me. The website she used to locate me was new. We rolled out a new website for Grace Church the first of December. The previous site had encountered technical difficulties that we could not overcome. We needed to freshen the site with how we managed it and how we presented ourselves to the community.

We had been dependent upon professional expertise for updates and unable to update essential information, like who the current pastor was (me). So we shifted our primary audience to the general public, those looking for a new church or a connection to the community and gave ourselves a new look and a fresh message.

Our new website at www.Graceumcesva.com made a difference in the life of one young woman that Christmas Eve. 📖

– The Rev. Alan Layman is pastor at Grace UMC in Parksley, Va.



Judas @Judas

Thaddeus still has a dumb phone...I'll bring him [#oldworldproblems](#)



13



Matthew @TaxMan

Wait...Leave EVERYTHING behind? [#easiersaidthandone](#)



Jesus of Nazareth

@Jesus

Nazareth

The Way, the Truth, the Life

Follow

FOLLOWING 15



By Forrest White



soon-to-be groom approached Linwood Campbell, director of worship and outreach at [Peakland UMC in Lynchburg](#), late in 2017 with a unique request. It didn't have to do with a surprise for the bride or the wedding party dancing down the aisle as seen on that YouTube video that went viral a few years ago.

This groom knew that Peakland UMC used technology to livestream the sermon from one of its Sunday worship services on Facebook. He was hoping the wedding could be livestreamed to enable family back in Thailand to watch. He found the right person in Campbell, who embraces the role technology can play in the life of the church and in spreading the Gospel.

"Every United Methodist church should be doing something with technology," Campbell said. "It can be as simple as an iPhone or as complex as possible. The Great Commission rings in my head a lot and that is why I have looked at ways to spread the Word."

Campbell set up four "camera" angles and tapped into the sound console in the sanctuary for the audio feed of the wedding.

"All the iDevices (technology) have 12 megapixel cameras so the video looked good while streaming," he said.

So, who was more nervous on the big day, Campbell or the bride and groom?

"I wasn't nervous," Campbell said. "I had done a test run on the previous Tuesday with family in Thailand and I did another test stream during the wedding rehearsal on the Friday night prior to the wedding on Saturday. By Saturday I was pretty confident it would go well, at least from my side."

It went so well that Campbell was able to give the newlyweds a gift to remember the day.

"All devices also recorded their 'angles' and I was able to combine them into a finished video that is quite large and really good looking!"

You aren't likely to find a bigger proponent of using technology in the church world than Campbell.

"I could write a small book on that. Anything a church does is a good start."

For example, Peakland has a Wednesday "Facebook Church" each week at 12:15 p.m. Sometimes it's live and sometimes it's prerecorded. It's usually about three to eight minutes long.

Campbell is quick to offer a reminder that there are licensing fees when it comes to using music. That's why Peakland only livestreams the sermons.

"Music is hard to do well and it involves more licensing fees and a really high end music production team to pull it off well," Campbell said. "Very few churches can compete with the original artist version on YouTube so why bother? You can turn off a potential viewer if they have to 'endure' a praise team or choir that's mediocre on a good Sunday. So stick with what is good and makes your church individual – not like any other cookie cutter church. And I am the music guy here so I know that I include myself in that mix."

It might not be as costly as you think for your church to use today's technology well.

"I spent time as a music director in a very large Baptist church with a big TV production so I understand the ins and outs of doing things for a broadcast," Campbell said. "So I've tried to find ways to offer a quality production on a shoestring budget."

If you'd like to talk technology and creative ways to use it at your church, you may reach Campbell via email at linwoodcampbell@gmail.com.

– Forrest White is news associate with the conference Communications office.



James @Jim2
We got invited to a wedding!
[#betterbeenoughwine](#)



Peter @AKASimon
[@jesus](#) healed M-I-L...not sure
how to feel about this [#feverB-
gone](#) [#happywife](#)
💬101 ↺20 ❤️45



John @Beloved
Let's make the healed leper
story go viral! [#can'tkeepitquiet](#)
[#sorrynotsorry](#) [#healingtouch](#)

Using video technology in worship



By Brian Siegle

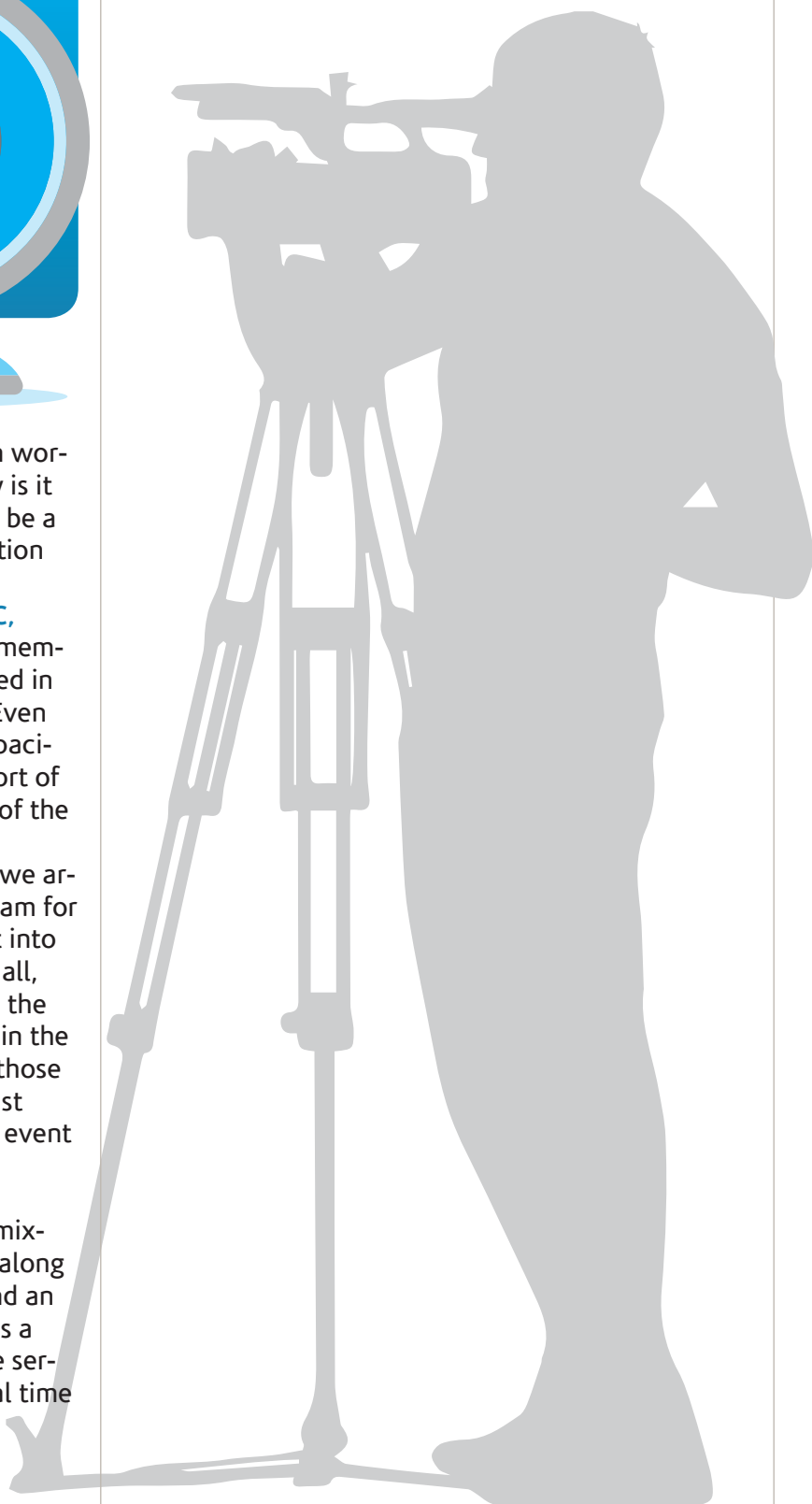


sing video can be an amazing asset in worship and for the community. Not only is it helpful for special occasions, but can be a tool to share the life of the congregation with the larger community regularly.

The first use of live video at [South Hill UMC, Farmville District](#), was a funeral service for a member of our youth group who was tragically killed in a traffic accident involving her whole family. Even though we have one of the highest seating capacities in town, we realized that we would be short of space because of her involvement in so much of the life of the high school and wider community.

I reached out to the conference office, and we arranged for some assistance creating a live stream for this service. We used that stream to broadcast into our secondary worship space and fellowship hall, as well as making the information available to the wider community. So many more participated in the service while reserving the in-person seats to those who knew her best, and well over 1,000 did just that. It was a win-win situation out of a tragic event that drew us together.

Live streaming of this nature requires some specialized equipment and a dedicated video mixing person. Ideally, multiple cameras are used along with a video input from the worship visuals and an audio feed from the sound system. The result is a high-quality audio/visual representation of the service that can be monitored and adjusted in real time for maximum visibility on the other end.





Thomas @Tom

If I didn't see it, I'd never believe they actually lowered him through the roof! #BFFs #Forgiven #WalkThisWay



Philip @Phil

Come for the message... stay for the food! #lots-o-loaves #plenty-o-fish



Nathanael @Nat

@Jesus Casting out demons where others fear to tread #Legion #Allthatbaconthough

The power of sharing

After the funeral service, we realized the power of being able to share worship outside the walls, but we didn't have the budget for all of the specialized equipment nor the personnel to manage it.

After looking at various options, we discovered a very economical solution. Using an inexpensive web camera that plugs into the USB of any computer, we are able to multitask our existing worship computer. Using an audio feed from the sound system for better clarity, we simply record the service using the software that came with the webcam in the background while running the media screens in the foreground.

This approach could be used on virtually any machine purchased in the last year or two (the faster, the better, of course).

After the recorded service, the video is uploaded to a YouTube channel for the church. It's there for anyone to access and create a link including bulletin addition on the church website. It's not live, but it works well. It's not high quality, polished video, but you can see well enough to have value over audio only. For shut-ins and those traveling, it is a wonderful tool to stay connected. For those looking for a church home, it gives a very clear idea what goes on in our church.

Video technology can be extremely useful in connecting the church to the wider community. Recording and/or streaming can be very highly polished requiring trained people, or simple and easy to accomplish. Video can use high-dollar equipment or simple devices that may already be lying around unused.

A word of caution: if you are recording and posting music, you should have an additional license over the standard one used to make reproductions (video or print) for the church. This is an additional cost, but is minor and is usually based on average worship attendance. On occasion, YouTube will block a video because of specific song and/or videos even with licenses. Usually simply editing them out and reposting is sufficient. 📌

— The Rev. Brian Siegle is pastor at South Hill UMC, Farmville District.



By Bob Dishman



Like many seniors in churches, I had trouble making the transition of using video screens in the sanctuary. I had no problem with them in Sunday school rooms, meeting rooms and social halls, but, in the sanctuary just didn't feel right, especially in older, historic sanctuaries.

However, I have experienced video screens in sanctuaries, even in older churches where the installation was tastefully accomplished and have come to appreciate the value of the screens during worship services. In one case, a sermon about earlier saints of a church that has fourth generation members today, included a three-minute slide show of people many of us knew, who exemplified Christian living. The video said more in three minutes than 10 pages of words could have.

As a senior with profound hearing loss, I would like to suggest that churches should also consider use of other technology for those who sit in the congregation and have trouble hearing the announcements, Scripture being read, the sermon and prayer requests. For them, simple improvements in church sound systems or use of Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) systems would make worship services more meaningful for members who do not hear well, even in a church that has no video screens.

The Center for Hearing and Communications shares that one out of three people over the age of 65 have some degree of hearing loss and two out of three people over 75 have hearing loss. However, some experience hearing loss as early as in their 50s. The degree of hearing loss experienced may be categorized as mild, moderate, severe or profound.

Helping those people to improve the worship experience may not have to be an expensive solution. Our church recently added a wireless microphone, which is taken to members in the congregation by the acolytes, for the congregation to use when mak-

The power of tech for those with



Andrew @GoFish
 @AKASimon Props for stepping out on the water, bro! Got this photo for Ma: [twitpic.com/surferboy](https://twitter.com/surferboy)
 ↑ Retweeted by @AKASimon



Judas @Judas
 I stand amazed at the number of people @Jesus heals with just a touch! #MyKind-ofKing #IsHeForReal?
 💬 1034 ↻ 12 ❤️ 📧

Technology in worship hearing loss



The Center for Hearing and Communications shares that one out of three people over the age of 65 have some degree of hearing loss and two out of three people over 75 have hearing loss.

ing announcements, prayer requests and for telling about “God moments” they experienced during the week. When the microphone was used for the first time, comments were made about just how nice it was to clearly hear such things as the announcements. To some, it was for the first time in years.

If your church has one of those old “public address” sound systems, where the volume is turned-up until it squeals, and back just a little, it is time to think about replacing it. Those with mild hearing loss may not have a problem with it, but those with moderate and severe hearing loss would certainly benefit by a system replacement. Replacement systems are available in analog and digital. The newer digital systems can be adjusted with a computer at the time of installation, taking in consideration the size, shape and acoustical characteristics of your sanctuary.

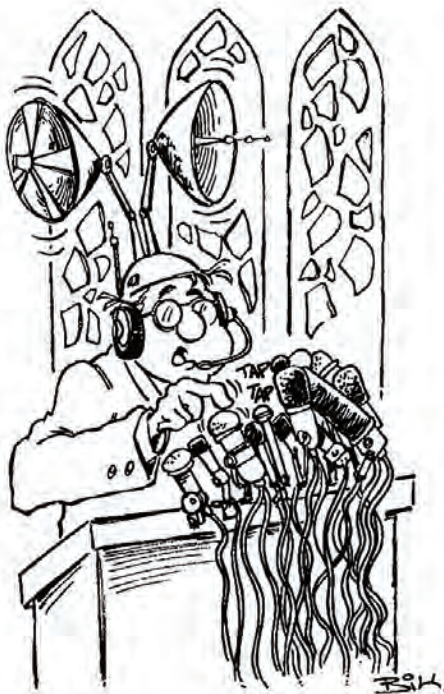
Those with severe and profound hearing loss are, most likely, wearing hearing aids. Your church

should investigate ways in which you can help them to hear the audio directly from the sound system to their hearing aids, rather than through the sound system speakers. Modern hearing aids have built-in technology for that purpose, including T-coils, Bluetooth, and FM. The ability to use one or more of those technologies may be gained by adding equipment to your existing sound system. That equipment might be an inexpensive transmitter with several pocket receivers, or an installed loop system, both of which will work with T-coils inside a member’s hearing aids, and connected by a variety of accessories that can be made available. For those with hearing aids that have Bluetooth connectivity, a well-placed Bluetooth transmitter connected to the sound system may provide coverage over an area of your sanctuary, or perhaps the entire sanctuary, depending on its size and shape.

It is suggested that churches form a small group (please include those with hearing loss) for an initiative of making the worship experience more meaningful for those in your congregation who cannot hear well. The group may need technical help. You may find a local audiologist who might be willing to provide guidance. One other source that would

be helpful is the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) that can be accessed at www.hearingloss.org or 301-657-2248. The HLAA also has several local chapters in Virginia with very knowledgeable members. 🇺🇸

— Bob Dishman is a member of Mount Vernon UMC in Toano.



“Am I on?”



Peter @AKASimon

@Matt You might like fishing if all fish had coins in their mouths!

#Tax-freeFishingDay



Simon @Don'tCallMePeter

Did anyone take notes out on the mount? Great sermon!

#LordsPrayer #BestSeller



Matthew @Matt

Dinner at my house, guys! BYOF

#JesusintheHouse

#Don'tMindthePhariseesOutside

Tool helps online worshippers establish relationship with their church



By Ashley Allen



livestream of the 9:15 and 11:00 Sunday morning services has been offered at **Floris UMC in Herndon** for the last few years. Pro-

viding access to these worship services has helped Floris members stay connected when life calls them away. Livestream has also helped Floris members share their church home with friends and family.

The feedback from these individuals and their loved ones was overwhelmingly positive. Families were able to share in baptisms, confirmation, special Sundays and more. As the stream gained viewership, we found it also provided those who were looking for a new church in and around the Herndon area the opportunity to watch before visiting in person. So, when the Floris leadership was approached about the prospect of planting an online campus, the decision was easy. We knew that if God had done this much through the livestream so far, the possibilities as a campus were limitless.

Establishing relationship

Floris launched their third campus, Restoration Worldwide, on March 11 under my direction. Since then, a live group chat has been added to the Sunday morning online worship experience. This addition has been the tool that has helped online worshippers establish relationship.

On the chat, we pray for each other, encourage one another and celebrate together. In an effort to take online community a next step, we piloted online small groups during Lent this past spring. Two Lenten study groups were formed to provide engagement for 26 people, all online, in our church-wide study.

"I felt particularly blessed because I was able to join the study via an online virtual small group led by one of our local church members," said Thanhia Sanchez who participated in the Lenten Study. "I had a number of simultaneous commitments during the spring and live 20 minutes from the church and was concerned about being able to participate. The technology worked, the leadership was engaging and the group had great interaction. Since then, I've run into several of our Lenten Study group at the church and it's great to smile and say 'hi' and feel a connection - just as you would after any other small group."

Livestreaming also gives access to persons who can't always attend church in person.

"Livestreaming our services has been a blessing for me," said Jim Pierobon. "As someone struggling with a serious illness who can seldom make church on Sundays in person, I can participate in our sermons and grasp the messages my pastors and our guests have to share, along with the music that accompanies them. Even when I'm away from home, Floris livestreams mean I don't miss a beat. But here's my favorite part: participants can communicate with associate pastor Ashley Allen who warmly greets us in the chat room and answers any questions we may have."

Dana Floehr uses the livestream to go to church with her brother even though she lives in Texas.

"When I sign in on Sunday morning, I'm greeted just like I am there, and I know that even though I have never met you or anyone else there, I feel cared about and prayed for and it means so much to



Jesus of Nazareth @Jesus
Peter, James & John finally saw the light today. #TwoBonusProphets #IAm #WordofGodSpeak



Philip @PhilMeUp
@Jesus
Lazarus, we thought we lost you there for a few days! #RaisedFromTheDead #Ripe #IsThereNoLimit?

💬 ↺ ❤️ 18 ✉

me. I receive many cards from people in the church, and it always makes my day to come home from work and I have a card, or an email from the pastor, telling me that I am being prayed for and asking how I am doing," said Floehr.

Restoration Worldwide is for people with stories like these—stories of those who are disconnected from community, have never had authentic community or never knew such a thing existed. Restoration Worldwide is church for people all over the world, some of whom travel for work, some of whom are caring for ill family members, some of whom have moved away from the northern Virginia area, but all come together to journey through life in community. As we continue to discern God's vision for Restoration Worldwide we look forward to implementing innovative small group opportunities and discussion forums as well as service and fellowship opportunities.

Every day our digital culture advances. We all look to technology to answer our questions instantaneously, to meet our needs rapidly and to help us accomplish tasks that our schedules often complicate. Church is no different. Jesus calls us in the Great Commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Matthew 28:19) What better way to do that than through the online faith community? This is Restoration Worldwide. This is church™. 🐦

— The Rev. Ashley Allen is an associate pastor at Floris UMC in Herndon.



Jesus of Nazareth
@Jesus
Nazareth
The Way, the Truth, the Life

[Follow](#)



24 Retweets 3,567 Likes



Peter @AKASimon
Replying to @Jesus
Jesus, you know I love you.



John @Beloved
Replying to @Jesus
Jesus, I know you love me. #TheMost



Judas @Judas
Replying to @Jesus
Too much love and not enough revolution! We need a KING, not a poet!



Mary Magdalene @MareBear
I don't know how to love him
What to do, how to move him
I've been changed, yes really changed
In these past few days, when I've seen myself I seem like someone else.*

*Lyrics from "Jesus Christ Superstar", by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.



Andrew @GoFish
Parade today for @jesus! BYO palms.
Wear comfortable sandals.
#KingoftheJews
#Whattupwiththedonkey



Matthew @Matt
Things are getting weird.
Anyone seen Judas?
#Gethsemane #AllNighter



James @Jim2
Dinner with @jesus and the
guys tonight. Upper room.
#willtherebewine?

Pastor tests video conferencing for small groups



By Kris Beckert



rior to ministry, I was a research scientist in environmental and marine biology. While my favorite place to be was in the field, I spent most of my time in the lab. The lab resembled a bit of what you would find on “Bill Nye the Science Guy,” but that place was also a nursery for questions, for hypotheses and for the design of experiments.

The carryover of a mindset of experimentation has been an integral part of my ministry as a pastor and church planter who tries to do the most with what God has placed around me. As in science, it’s easy to get trapped in boatloads of information and problems, shaking your fist at the world around you that’s changing faster than a melting snow cone at Virginia Beach. But sometimes the solution is right beneath your fingertips, smartphone and keyboard—an experiment. That’s exactly what I did this past spring when I was thinking of how to start a special Lenten study leading up to Easter.

The Problem:

Small groups and classes are a great means of making disciples. The problem often is connecting people. People are busy, small children go to bed early, commutes are long and terrible and week-nights are difficult. Where I live in Northern Virginia, some people leave for work at 4 a.m. and don’t get home until after 7 p.m. Others travel quite regularly. I could hold a Lenten class as normal, but how could I make it accessible to a wider range of people?

The Hypothesis:

The good news is if you’ve ever Facetimed or even texted someone across locations and time zones, you know that technology easily eats these barriers for breakfast. If I planned a class that would “meet” once a week from 7:30-8:30 p.m. by way of a video-conferencing platform, people anywhere could “chime in.” In addition, I could record group gatherings for those who were unable to attend.

The Plan:

The Spiritual Practices Laboratory was born. After checking out various video conferencing platforms, I selected Zoom. This is a service you have to pay for if you plan to meet longer than 45 minutes, but participants don’t need to create a login or sign up – they just click a link or dial a phone number sent to them via email. Google Hangout (which requires access via a registered email address) or Skype Group Chat (for up to 10 people) are good free services, but I think Zoom is the most seamless.

The class met for six weeks on Wednesday nights from 7:30-8:30 p.m. (we kept a “time promise” of an hour). The topic, appropriate for Lent, was spiritual practices. Using Richard Foster’s, *A Celebration of Disciplines*, I created a short summary of each practice along with questions, which I sent along ahead of time. Each week we discussed one or two practices and practiced them together before taking time for prayer requests. Each participant had “homework” – to practice what they learned during the week and report back when we gathered again.



Peter @AKASimon

Who is this Jesus everyone is talking about?? I never met him!
#Roosterbedamned #undercover



Nathanael @Nat

How can this be happening? The whole city has turned on Jesus! They are mad!
#WhyMustHeDie? #Appeal

(Con't. on page 30: "TWEETS.")



Pontius Pilate @Prefect5

I just want this day to be over
#NotMyCircus

The Result:

Fourteen people joined the class, only three of whom had been previously part of a group. People joined us from the car, from work, from Nevada and from Hawaii (of course taunting us with their scenic backdrop of palm trees). Some ate dinner, put kids to bed or tuned in while driving. I had been nervous about the level of interaction, but that proved not to be a problem. Folks even connected with one another when they saw each other on Sunday. Almost everyone participated in the weekly "homework." At the end of the class, I asked if they'd do it again, and the overwhelming response was: yes, in a heartbeat.

Conclusion:

Video platform small groups and classes are a great supplement to in-person groups and can allow people to connect and grow in their relationship with God and with one another no matter their location or schedule. I've been wondering what it could be like to start a singles group across Virginia or teach a class on being a neighborhood missionary for anyone across the country. If you find your congregation and even people outside the church strapped for time and travel and gathering during the week is geographically difficult, technology may be a wonderful remedy.

And who knows? It just might turn into a worthwhile holy experiment. 🍷

-The Rev. Kris Beckert is the associate pastor of The Vine Church in the Arlington District.



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Wesley Heritage Tour

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EVENTS



SEPTEMBER

Bishop's Convocation on Prayer **Sept. 15, 2018**

Reveille UMC, Richmond

Both laity and clergy are invited to attend the Bishop's Convocation on Prayer on September 15, 2018 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Deadline to register is September 8 and the cost is \$10 which includes lunch. The Rev. Terry Tekyl will be the plenary speaker. Visit www.vaumc.org/bishopsconvo18 for more information and to register. Contact Marc Brown for more information at MarcBrown@vaumc.org.

OCTOBER

Virginia Academy for Spiritual Formation

Oct. 14-19

Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond

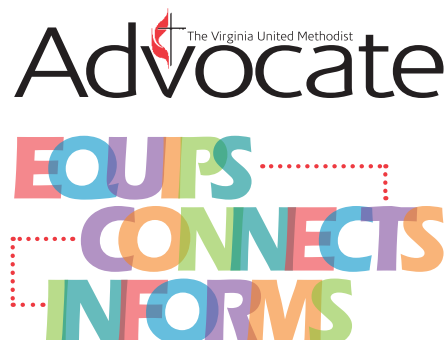
Registration is now open for the 2018 Virginia Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation to be held October 14-19, 2018 at the Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond. Sponsored by the Virginia Conference in cooperation with The Upper Room, this retreat is open to clergy and laity who are seeking to deepen their relationship with God through prayer, learning and worship.

The Academy uses a Benedictine model with periods of silence, morning and evening prayer, daily Eucharist and covenant groups. Each day includes instruction by outstanding faculty

and this year the faculty leaders will be: Dr. Luther Smith, Professor Emeritus at Candler School of Theology and Dr. Amy Oden, Professor at St. Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University.

Registration information can be found at: <http://academy.upperroom.org/events/214>. 📧

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



www.vaumc.org/Advocate

DISCIPLES HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD



▲ The week of June 4-8, 2018 was an exciting week for 67 adults with special needs on the **Eastern Shore District**. The week's theme, "Return to Tropical Paradise," was filled with fun and laughter along with devotions, story time, Zumba and boat rides at Occohannock on the Bay Camp and Retreat Center in Belle Haven. The Rev. Brenda Laws, a deacon appointed as a support coordinator at the Eastern Shore Community Services Board, was the camp director for a second year. Several pastors participated and local churches provided lunches.

"More than 25 volunteers made the week of the 31st Annual Special Needs Camp enjoyable and spirit-filled. Campers had a wonderful week and want to do it all again next year! I'm thankful our Eastern Shore District supports this ministry," said Laws.

The Eastern Shore District and The ARC of the Eastern Shore (a

non-profit organization) coordinate efforts each year to provide this camp for our intellectually and developmentally disabled citizens on the Shore.

The Rev. Nathan Decker of **High Street UMC in Franklin, Va.**, has a heart for children. When the Vacation Bible School (VBS) staff decided to have the nightly offering go toward Puerto Rico relief through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), he challenged the kids at VBS to raise \$500 for UMCOR and told them that if they did, they could dump a bucket of ice water on him the last day. By Wednesday night they had already exceeded the \$500; he told them that if they made it to \$700, he would let them dump a cooler of ice water on him. At the close of VBS, they raised \$892.07. Decker indeed had the bucket AND a cooler of ice water dumped on him! ▶



LIVING THE WORD



Kenn Speicher is a co-founder of Northern Virginia Friends of Refugees, a grassroots interfaith network of volunteers who welcome, assist, and advocate for refugees. A member of Mount Olivet UMC in Arlington, he serves on the Conference Church and Society Board and Immigration Outreach Committee, and as Mission Coordinator for the Alexandria-Arlington Districts. Speicher leads the Haiti Ministry at Mount Olivet and takes mission teams to the Arcahaie area to work on school and community development with the UMC-affiliated Thomas Food Project. Now retired after a career in advertising, Speicher lives in Arlington with his wife, Ann.

September 2, 2018

Ezekiel 20-21

Welcome the Stranger

Imagine war comes to your city in the Middle East. First come air strikes, then ground attacks. There's no food. No electricity. No water. No work. Neighbors arrested. Neighbors killed in the street. Wives and daughters assaulted. There's a brief ceasefire, and you flee with your family. Anything is better than this. You cross a parched desert to a neighboring country and join hundreds of thousands living in refugee camps, people who arrived destitute with the clothes on their backs and perhaps a bit of money. Prospects are grim. The odds are that you will live here for more than 20 years. A lucky few (less than 1 percent) may be accepted by the United Nations refugee program and, after two or three years of vetting, resettled in a developed country, where they will be strangers in a strange, often hostile land. This is the outlook for our world's 68 million refugees and displaced people.

How do we make sense of disaster and suffering like this? I don't pretend to have the answer. But this question is asked again and again throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. Writer after writer wrestles with the questions. "How long, O Lord?" "Why have you forsaken me?"

Ezekiel, the voice of the Babylonian exile, would recognize the plight of today's refugees all too well. Judah and its capital, Jerusalem, had fallen. The survivors were deported to Babylon and held in bondage. In these chapters, God speaks through Ezekiel. Again and again, Israel's people have rebelled against God, tempting God to destroy them, but each time they are offered another chance – and hope. As God brought the Hebrews out of Egypt, "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered."

The Jewish people were refugees in Egypt and Babylon. They grappled with why they suffered, as we all do. Personally, I do not believe that God acts to save us from suffering. Rather, God is always with us, a comfort in sorrow and pain and a guide to how we should live. Given the history of Ezekiel's time, it's no wonder that "welcome the stranger and "love your neighbor" are among the most frequently stated of God's ordinances throughout the Bible. We are commanded to care for our neighbors as ourselves, all of our neighbors.

September 9, 2018

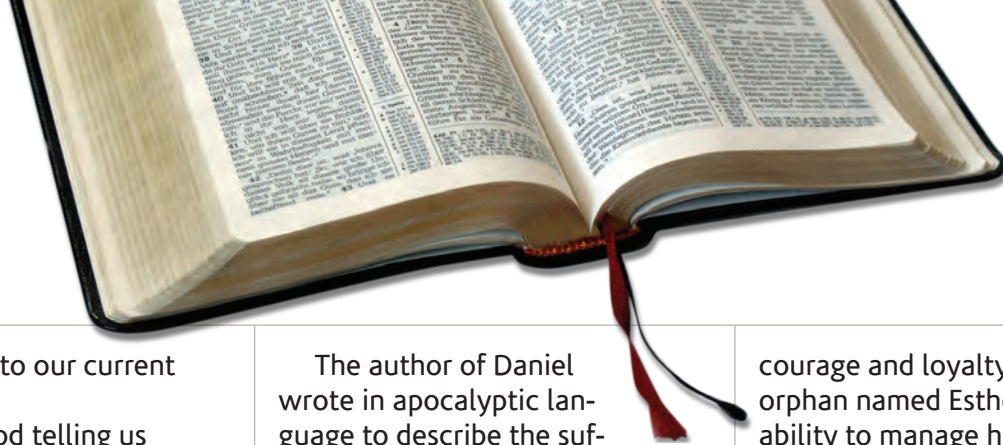
Ezekiel 40-41

Call to Mission

A few years ago, I went on my first international mission trip. A friend talked me into joining her team to help with the recovery in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. I didn't know what to expect and calling my handyman skills negligible would be a stretch. Dutifully, I filled out the forms and checked off my experience or lack thereof in areas like carpentry, electrical, plumbing and masonry. But I did go to Haiti, and it changed my life.

This passage from Ezekiel reminded me of my original fears and expectations. It was written with carpenters and builders in mind. God reveals to Ezekiel the new temple that will be constructed in Jerusalem in all its dimensions, reed by reed, and cubit by cubit. Here are all the instructions that this ancient "mission team" would need. Ezekiel's vision was a blueprint for the restoration to come and a source of hope of liberation for those who keep faith.

But from the vantage point of 2018, we know that many more tribulations would lie ahead. Israel would fall to the Greeks and Romans. The new temple and most of Jerusalem would be destroyed in 70 CE, followed by the Jewish diaspora and the consolidation of Christianity in Rome. Disaster and recovery would happen throughout



history right up to our current day.

So what is God telling us through Ezekiel? There is value in the mission. The new temple in Jerusalem was an improvement on the old one. We can build back better, but we should not get hung up on the details and lose sight of the bigger picture.

In spite of the tragedies of history, we build to come closer to God's Kingdom of justice and kindness. In Haiti, I have felt a call to serve — not simply to rebuild, but to help my new friends build brighter futures and sustainable communities. Recalling a day at the ruins of the Port-au-Prince Cathedral, I know now that recovery is not measured in reeds and cubits or bricks and mortar, but in lives restored and, with God at our side, hopes fulfilled.

September 16, 2018

Daniel 7-9

Resist the Oppressor

These are the beast chapters of the Book of Daniel. And while they are the stuff of dreams, of both Daniel and King Belshazzar of Persia, make no mistake — these beasts are very real.

There is not room here to explain all the background, but suffice it say that the beasts represent the empires that have oppressed God's people. For Daniel, these were Egypt, Assyria, Persia and Greece. The story of Daniel takes place at the time of the Jewish exile in Persia, but the Book of Daniel was written much later during the Greek occupation of Judea and Samaria.

The author of Daniel wrote in apocalyptic language to describe the suffering of the Jews, especially at the hands of a Greek tyrant named Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was responsible for the slaughter of the Jews of Jerusalem and defilement of the temple (about 167 BCE). The interpretation of the beasts foretells the downfall of empires and describes the ascent of the "Son of Man," who will defeat the last, most terrible beast and usher in God's Kingdom.

This is literature of resistance — resistance to persecution and enslavement, to the forces that undermine faith, and to the doubt and despair that come with great suffering. Daniel comforts us with stories of survival in the lion's den and the flaming fiery furnace. He shows his readers that the oppressive empires have "feet of clay" and will fall to ruin. And, he offers the hope of a bright new day when God's Kingdom triumphs on Earth.

Many of us say that politics have no place in the church. What would the Jews of Daniel's day say to this? Confronted with persecution, injustice and suffering throughout the world and here in the United States, our faith tells us to resist.

September 23, 2018

Esther 1-5

Liberate the People

As I read through the story of Esther, I am struck by the precariousness of life. The survival of the Jews in this story hangs on a very slim thread: the

courage and loyalty of a Jewish orphan named Esther and her ability to manage her dangerous, unpredictable husband, King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), the most powerful man in the world whose every word was law.

Esther knows quite well that she only became queen when her predecessor failed to obey the whim of the king, who had commanded her to appear and be shown off for the humiliating amusement of his drunken buddies. The story takes an even more sinister turn when Haman, the king's chief advisor, plots to kill all of the Jews in the empire. Esther must reveal her Jewish heritage and carefully win the favor of the King to take down Haman and save her people.

Throughout this book, there is no mention of God or Scripture or theology or laws or prayer, just the faithfulness of Esther to her people and heritage. So what are we to make of this?

Esther is a story of liberation. The Jews were a small minority whose very existence was threatened. But with courage, humility and smart planning, Esther and her cousin, Mordecai, save their people. God works in the world through people just like them — and just like us.

Ending evils like genocide, war, poverty, and human-caused climate disasters can seem too big for us, and the future of so many still hangs by a precarious thread.

(Con't. on pg. 28: "LIVING WORD.")

The Living Word devotions will coincide with the 2018 Bible Reading Challenge from Bishop Lewis. Find the September schedule on pg. 30. Find all 2018 readings at www.vaumc.org.



("LIVING WORD," cont. from page 27.)

But as we see time and again, even the smallest group of people can make a difference. Abolition. Racial justice. Women's rights. The plight of Native Americans. Worker rights. LGBTQ equality. These movements all began with small groups taking action, often from faith communities. In houses of worship across our nation, people of all faiths are doing God's work in every food pantry, shelter, clothes closet, ESL class, support group and soup kitchen. From seeds like these, the hope of liberation keeps growing.

September 30, 2018

Malachi 1-4

Who Is Our Neighbor?

In summer 2016, two friends from an Episcopalian church in Arlington were dismayed with the public rhetoric that was vilifying refugees, asylees and all displaced people seeking new lives in America. After organizing large public forums on the global refugee crisis and how people could help, a growing interfaith network of 740 people began called NOVA Friends of Refugees.

With members from numerous states and countries, the group represents more than 150 faith communities, non-government organizations, government agencies, businesses and refugee communities. Activities include advocacy, life-skills training and support for refugees, and community events, which included the One Journey Festival at the Washington National Cathedral this year. A clear vision guides

everything that NOVA Friends of Refugees does: to make every refugee feel welcome and everyone a welcoming friend.

In Malachi, the short book at the end of the Old Testament, is buried one of the most critical questions in the Bible: who is our neighbor?

Malachi takes his fellow Jews to task for rebelling from God. But at one point he writes, "Have we all not one Father, has not God created us all?" He offers one of the earliest glimpses in Scripture of the universality of God's Kingdom for all and sets the stage for the Good News of Jesus for the transformation of the world.

God tells us time and again to "welcome the stranger" and to care for each other as we would want to be treated in need. At the One Journey Festival in June, more than 4,000 people gathered to celebrate refugee talents, stories and contributions to our communities. People from many cultures and countries joined together. At one point, a stranger approached one of the event founders and said, "This is what heaven must be like." I am proud to be a part of NOVA Friends of Refugees and am reaching out to UMC congregations across the Virginia Conference. But whether you are called to serve refugees, veterans, immigrants, the elderly, disaster victims, those in poverty, or those facing prejudice, oppression, or marginalization, we are all neighbors. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." 

DEATHS



The Rev. Hyung Il Moon, 55, of Williamsburg, died on July 5, 2018. He was serving as pastor of Susanna Wesley United

Methodist Church, Gloucester, at the time of his death. Previously he was a pastor of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington and subsequently served Prince Edward Charge in Farmville, Epworth United Methodist Church in Norfolk, and Urbanna United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Yeon Sook Jung and two daughters, Erin and Alvina; his mother, Jung Ue Lee, and two brothers in Korea.

Murice Kincannon, 91, died July 23, 2018 in Alexandria. Mrs. Kincannon is the mother of **the Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon** and **the Rev. Dr. Karla Kincannon** of the Alexandria District. Mrs. Kincannon was a member of Aldersgate UMC in Alexandria.

James T. Weakley, 79, of Virginia Beach, died July 17, 2018 surrounded by his family. Weakley is father to **the Rev. Bart Weakley** who pastors Market Street UMC on the Eastern Shore District.

Lt. Col. Charles Mitchell "Mike" Johnson USA CHC (Ret.), 88, died after a long illness on July 12, 2018. After a full Army career as a chaplain, he continued to serve

CLERGY & DIACONAL

as the administrator of the United Methodist Home on the Eastern Shore.

Sarah L. (Sally) Boice, wife of the **Rev. James H. Boice (retired)**, died May 20, 2018 in Chambersburg, Pa.

BIRTHS

Wesley Grace Donald was born on June 1, 2018 to **the Rev. Chris Donald** and wife, **Rebecca**. Chris is the pastor of Calvary-Kerns Memorial Charge in the Danville District.

Leah Elizabeth Catherine Ware was born on May 29, 2018 to **Sara Stanley and the Rev. Andrew Ware**, pastor of Wood's UMC in Chesterfield County. 🌹



Notice: The *Advocate*, due to the increasing number of entries for this section each month, will only publish death notices for individuals rather than full obituaries. To have additional information published, please contact the *Advocate* office at advocate@vaumc.org or mail to c/o Communications Office, P.O. Box 5606 Glen Allen, VA 23058-5606. The Communications Office receives obituaries from a number of sources, but to ensure we receive a particular notice, please contact us with copy.

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("TWEETS," cont. from page 23.)



Centurion @SpecialForces
Truly that man was the Son of God.
[#JesusRockedMyWorld](#) [#IWillFollowHim](#)



The Jerusalem Post @Jerusalem_Post
BREAKING NEWS: Strong earthquake in Jerusalem followed by total darkness for three hours. Possible damage to temple and city walls. Only one fatality reported. [#StayTuned](#) [#Didn'tSeeThisComing](#)



John @Beloved
Gathering in the U.R. [#heartbroken](#) [#noWords](#)
[#SomeThingsYouCan'tUnsee](#)



Mary Magdalene @MareBear
Walking to the tomb to prepare his body. [#SpiceGirls](#)



Mary Magdalene @MareBear
[#OMG](#) Come Quickly! The stone is rolled away, and Jesus is not here! [#WhoStoleMySavior](#)
[#IsThisWhatHeMeant?](#) [#ThatAngelTho](#)



John @Beloved
[@AKASimon](#) Race ya!
[#IKnewIt!](#) [#HeMakesAllThingsNew](#)



Peter @AKASimon
[@Tom](#) You are never gonna believe this, my friend
[#HeHasRisenJustAsHeSaid!](#)



Jesus of Nazareth
[@Jesus](#)
Nazareth
The Way, the Truth, the Life

Follow

FOLLOWING 2.18 B

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. 🙏🏻 [#TheGreatCommission](#)

24 million Retweets 1.98 billion Likes

– by Cathryn Huff

Bishop's Bible Challenge readings for September

September 1	Ezekiel 18-19
September 2	Ezekiel 20-21
September 3	Ezekiel 22-23
September 4	Ezekiel 24-27
September 5	Ezekiel 28-31
September 6	Ezekiel 32-34
September 7	Ezekiel 35-37
September 8	Ezekiel 38-39
September 9	Ezekiel 40-41
September 10	Ezekiel 42-43
September 11	Ezekiel 44-45
September 12	Ezekiel 46-48
September 13	Joel 1-3
September 14	Daniel 1-3
September 15	Daniel 4-6
September 16	Daniel 7-9
September 17	Daniel 10-12
September 18	Ezra 1-3
September 19	Ezra 4-6, Psalm 137
September 20	Haggai 1-2
September 21	Zechariah 1-7
September 22	Zechariah 8-14
September 23	Esther 1-5
September 24	Esther 6-10
September 25	Ezra 7-10
September 26	Nehemiah 1-5
September 27	Nehemiah 6-7
September 28	Nehemiah 8-10
September 29	Nehemiah 11-13, Psalm 126
September 30	Malachi 1-4

ONE LAST WORD



"Following last month's flannel-graph presentation on The Need to Update Technology, the board voted in favor..."



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