

MAY 2022

DISTRICT DISPATCH

A Newsletter for Charlottesville & Richmond Districts

Message from District Superintendents

From your District Superintendents to the Virginia Annual Conference: As we anticipate the coming Annual Conference, we, your eight district superintendents, are excited about the new possibilities ahead. All sixteen current VAUMC districts have been working diligently and carefully to craft plans to move forward as eight new districts following Annual Conference. We have been inspired and motivated by the work of our fellow districts and their teams throughout this process and are eager to share that with you as we come to Annual Conference. Each of your District Superintendents has been working with a local team to help develop new district structures for our district-level work, projected to be starting July 1, 2022. It is anticipated that once the Annual Conference votes on the final number of Districts, we will see new Districts doing new things all across our conference. We have been listening, asking questions, challenging the status quo, and searching for the best funding and structures possible to meet the unique needs of our areas, and this work has been done by laity and pastors in the areas they serve. We are incredibly thankful for the participation of so many people in this process, from those who took surveys and participated in listening sessions, to teams of people asking the hard questions of "How can our district help the local churches best?" Out of this time of listening and creation, we have been innovating and restructuring in ways many of us never imagined when we started. We don't know what the future holds, and that is probably the biggest challenge of this season. How will our denomination change in the next season of ministry? Who will come with us on a journey to focus our attentions on making disciples and transforming the world? We don't know, and yet in that space between now and the unknown future, we will innovate and experiment and learn new things. As your District Superintendents, we are enthusiastically optimistic that with God's help, we will help further the mission of Christ in the Virginia Conference. We ask for your approval of eight districts at Annual Conference so this work can move forward.

Your District Superintendents: Denise P. Bates, Danville & Lynchburg; Charles F. Ledlum-Bates, Rappahannock River & York River; James H. "Jay" Carey Jr., Farmville & James River; Sarah L.K. Calvert, Alexandria & Arlington; J. Douglas Forrester, Roanoke & Staunton; Victor R. Gomez, Harrisonburg & Winchester; Hyo J. Lee, Charlottesville & Richmond; Seonyoung Kim, Eastern Shore & Elizabeth River

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United Women in Faith

Yes! United Methodist Women is officially United Women in Faith. We've had several name changes over the years but our purpose remains the same with United Women in Faith replacing United Methodist Women. We have a new mission statement:

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities. Our new name is part of an overall move to refresh our organization that includes a new look, a new feel and new and improved programs. The new operating name is also welcoming women whose local churches may choose to align with another denomination or who are already members of other denominations. We are still the only official women's organization of the United Methodist Church and our corporate name will remain United Methodist Women.

All of our traditional structures on the conference, district and local levels – circles included – remain intact. The new tools are additional options available to help nurture current members and recruit new members. Changing the world through faith, hope and love in action remains our core work. Being in mission with women, children and youth remains our focus as we seek to do God's mission in an everchanging world.

To learn more about United Women in Faith, go to the uwfaith.org website. There you will learn about the new programs that are available to each of us as we step out in faith as United Women in Faith.

Let's embrace our new name and continue to be women in mission working to change the world for women, children and youth. That's what God calls us to do.

The Conference United Women in Faith's Spiritual Life Retreat will be held on May 14 via zoom. Rev. Jessie Colwell, Director of Clergy Excellence for the Virginia Conference UMC, will be the retreat leader. Her topic is "Blessed Wrestling". You can go to the Conference UWF website to register, vaumw.com.



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050f4ca4ad2ba2fa7-youth5>

Are We Listening?

"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." – Psalm 126:1

On April 20, the Rev. David Jimenez-Cardenas (Memorial UMC, Elizabeth River District) shared a message at the VAUMC chapel service titled "On Dreaming with Christ". He invited us to dream with God about our futures and to claim "the power at work within us [that is] able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20). It reminded me of how God is speaking to us and to our churches, even today, and as we read in the Book of Revelation, I believe God is writing a letter to each of our churches. We have a responsibility, a duty to respond to hear what God may be saying to our churches. We are called to discern what the letter might be saying to us today and what our faithful response should be.

No one can deny that we are living in challenging times. Reading the letters to the churches found in Revelation we see that Christians in the first century were also very challenged. The churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea were facing a myriad of problems. Jesus is speaking to them and saying "I love you just as you are but I love you too much to leave you where you are."

Many of us are familiar with the church life cycle. All churches experience change over the years, and actually, it isn't healthy to be "stuck" in any phase of the life cycle.

Churches move from growth to health to maintenance, preservation and life support.

It is possible to "start over"; however, it requires an honest evaluation of where we are and intentionally investing in the future. Two of the ways we can hear God speaking to us today is through the Scriptures and communion. Our churches can study the Word of God together, and we can break bread together. As we participate in these spiritual disciplines, God will reveal God's self to us.

Through the letters in Revelation, God spoke to the early churches. God speaks today as well. Are we listening?

--MaryKaye Cochran, District Administrator

Fun, Fellowship & Food Trucks!

Beaverdam is a rural community in western Hanover County that finds itself lacking in a place for the community to gather to share a meal. A few months ago, a local start up food truck had their soft opening practice run for their smash burger truck at a local business parking lot. The feedback on the local Facebook community page was great food, but really wished we had a place to gather and eat. Well, Beaverdam UMC has a picnic pavilion, playground, and great central location in downtown Beaverdam. Why not let them come here? After several Facebook messenger exchanges with the owner, Chad Reamer, Reamer's Burger Barn set up a regular monthly date to park at Beaverdam UMC. This is a meeting of opportunities. The Western Hanover Charge, Beaverdam and Rouzie's Chapel, had been exploring ways to reach out to the community and build relationships with our neighbors. The Burger Barn wanted to be a part of the community and was searching for a place locally that had good visibility. Partnering together to reach out to the community has been great. Church members and community folks are grabbing dinner, eating together and kids are playing on the playground. Future plans include adding other family themed activities like crafting and movie nights. The Beaverdam and Rouzie's are exploring the possibility of providing gift certificates to the food truck in welcome baskets to people who move into the area as a way to welcome them to the community. This is a win / win for our community. A business is growing, and relationships are being built in our community and in our church.

--The Rev. Owen Taylor



Visit United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) for a free tour of the Richmond campus. You'll learn a bit about UMFS' 122-year history and hear stories about the high-risk children, teens, and families they serve in Richmond and across Virginia.

You'll also get a peek inside the new UMFS residential treatment building. This brand new healing space serves youth ages 11 – 17 who are working to overcome trauma and significant mental health challenges.

Visit [UMFS.org/campus-tour](https://umfs.org/campus-tour) to learn more and sign up. Groups are also welcome. Contact Jill Gaynor with any questions: jgaynor@umfs.org or 804-254-9463.

Cans and Kits for Annual Conference

Where has the time gone? We are entering the month of May and Annual Conference is a month away. As you are busy collecting cans and kits for Annual Conference, I just want to say thank you for being God's hands and feet in today's world. The needs in our communities and the world are great. Each can be a part of God's mission in our communities and around the world. We can share God's love and our love for our neighbors as we collect Cans and Kits for Annual Conference. This is an effort being carried out in each of the districts in our Conference.

When you collect your cans and kits, please let the District Office know the number of items your church has collected. There will be a special blessing of the collected items at Annual Conference in June. The cans and other nonperishable food items are to be taken to the local food pantries. A list of churches with food pantries in the Richmond area can be found on the Richmond District website. School kits are to be taken to your neighborhood schools.

Hygiene kits and cleaning kits for UMCOR will be collected as follows: In the Charlottesville District, June 4th, 2-4pm, at Trinity UMC, 4637 Plank Road, North Garden, and at Culpeper UMC, 1233 Oaklawn drive, Culpeper. The Trinity contact is the Rev. Tim Worley, 434-977-5585, and the Culpeper contact is Darryl Lam, 540-219-2829.

In the Richmond District, June 11th, 9am-12noon, at Lakeside UMC, 2333 Hilliard Road, Richmond. If you can't take the hygiene kits and cleaning kits on June 11, please call Kip Robinson at (804) 539-2494, and arrange a time to take the kits to Lakeside UMC. The Richmond District website has the UMCOR information for assembling the kits.

We had a great collection of Cans and Kits for Annual Conference in 2021 and I believe 2022 will be another great year! Thank you for all you do in mission with God.

--Linda Porter, Richmond District Missions Coordinator

Annual Conference Orientation 7pm Thurs. June 9

All clergy, lay members and interested persons are invited to the Annual Conference Orientation with the District Superintendent on Thurs. June 9, 7pm, via Zoom. To register, please fill out this [form](#) and you will be emailed the Zoom link.



If you know a youth or volunteer with youth, then be sure to get connected with Andy Glascott, Director of Youth Ministries at Mt. Pisgah UMC in Richmond. He is publishing a monthly newsletter that highlights events, mission opportunities, training resources, and more. You can access the newsletter [here](#). Andy can be reached at youth@mtpisgahva.org or 804.794.5856, ext. 223. He'd love to hear from you!

Charlottesville & Richmond Districts

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Rev. Hyo J. Lee - District Superintendent
MaryKaye Cochran - Executive Administrator,
Richmond District
Linda Truslow - Executive Administrator,
Charlottesville District
Maria Maxwell - Church Revitalizer
Rev. Jim Chandler - Strategic Consultant
Richmond Lay Leaders - Susan Custer, Elizabeth
Farrell
Charlottesville Lay Leaders - John Glass, Dian
McNaught, William & Linda Stead
Richmond Treasurer - Jennifer Honeycutt
Charlottesville Treasurer - Linda Truslow