SHENANDOAH RIVER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Download the District Newsletter in PDF Format

A Message from Rev. Dr. Kyungsuk Cho

Watch this month's video from our District Superintendent.



DISTRICT NEWS

Charge Conference Dates

SAVE these dates!

Eastern Location – (Loudoun & Fauquier Counties)
Saturday, October 24th - 10:00 a.m
Round Hill United Methodist Church, 11 West Loudoun Street, Round Hill, VA 20142

Northern Location – (Clarke & Frederick Counties and the City of Winchester)
Sunday, November 22nd - 3:00 p.m.
Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church, 210 E. Main Street, Berryville, VA 22611

Central Location – (Page, Shenandoah & Warren Counties)
Sunday, October 25th - 3:00 p.m.
Manor Memorial United Methodist Church, 9320 North Congress Street, New Market, Va 22844

Southern Location – (Augusta, Rockingham & the City of Harrisonburg)
Saturday, November 21st - 10:00 a.m.
Vision of Hope United Methodist Church, 1723 Port Republic Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Important Reminders and Resources

You've likely already seen some of these items come through district or conference channels, but they're important enough to highlight again here. Please take a few minutes to review and make sure you're up to date on the following:

- **Our Mailing Address has changed!** ALL Shenandoah River District mail should be sent to **PO Box 1995, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.** Please do not send mail to the old Toms Brook address.
- **Accountable Reimbursement** - Review the updated policy for how churches reimburse pastors and staff for ministry-related expenses. **LEARN MORE**
- **Micro Communities** - Curious about micro communities and how they might fit into your church's ministry? Watch this short conference video to learn more. **WATCH VIDEO**
- **Centralized Payroll** - Learn about the three approved options for Clergy Payroll, including how the conference's centralized payroll system works and what it means for your clergy and staff. **LEARN MORE**
- **Clergy 1-1 Meetings** - Clergy need to sign up for their annual 1-1 meeting with the DS. That signup form came from Debbie this week.
- **District Conference** will be **December 5 from 10-12**. More details to follow- save the date!

Training Opportunities

- **Do No Harm Registration** - Register for this important training on healthy boundaries and safe ministry practices. REGISTER
- **Congregations of Call** - Interested in helping raise up the next generation of clergy? Learn how your church can become a Congregation of Call. **LEARN MORE**
- **FX Rural Church Gathering** - Join this Fresh Expressions gathering focused on rural church ministry. **LEARN MORE & REGISTER**

Lay Servant Training Day - September 26

Lay Servant Training Day is **Saturday, September 26, from 9 AM to 4 PM at Strasburg UMC** in Strasburg, VA. Registration is now open, and the Basic Course is being offered free this time. **Click here to register**; required books and reading materials are listed at registration.

Our keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley, who will also teach Leading Worship. Rev. Alexis Owens will teach the Basic class. Rev. Tommy Stelzl will teach Preaching, and Rev. Denise Childers will teach Aging in the 21st Century. **Pastors**, please help us

CARING Lay Servant Ministries COMMUNICATING LEADING

LEARN MORE & REGISTER

encourage youth and young adults to take the Basic Course.

Discernment Day

Is God Nudging You to Do More? Do you think God is calling you, but you're not sure how to answer?

Discernment Day is an opportunity for you to explore your sense of call alongside others who are discerning. **Join us Saturday, September 12, from 9:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Braddock Street UMC.** The event is free and meals are provided. When you register, you'll be invited to choose two discussion groups to join. LEARN MORE

LEARN MORE & REGISTER

Hatching Faith

The Hatching Faith Cohort program is designed to help churches more fully engage and include children in worship and prayer. **Registration is open now for Cohorts 4 & 5,** which will run simultaneously, joining together in a Kick-off Event in Spring 2027. The registration link as well as FAQs, cohort timeline, and contact information, can be found at vaumc.org/hatchingfaith.

LEARN MORE & REGISTER

CELEBRATIONS



New Clergy Introductions

We invited clergy serving new appointments as of July 1 to introduce themselves so that we can get to know them and welcome them to the district. You can see those introductions on our Welcome New Clergy page.

Of the five we've received, **one** was once in the CIA, **one** spent some time as a tourguide at Luray Caverns, **one** has climbed Mt. Fugi, **one** is a pilot, and **one** was once a farmer. Find out who is who and learn more about them all **HERE**.

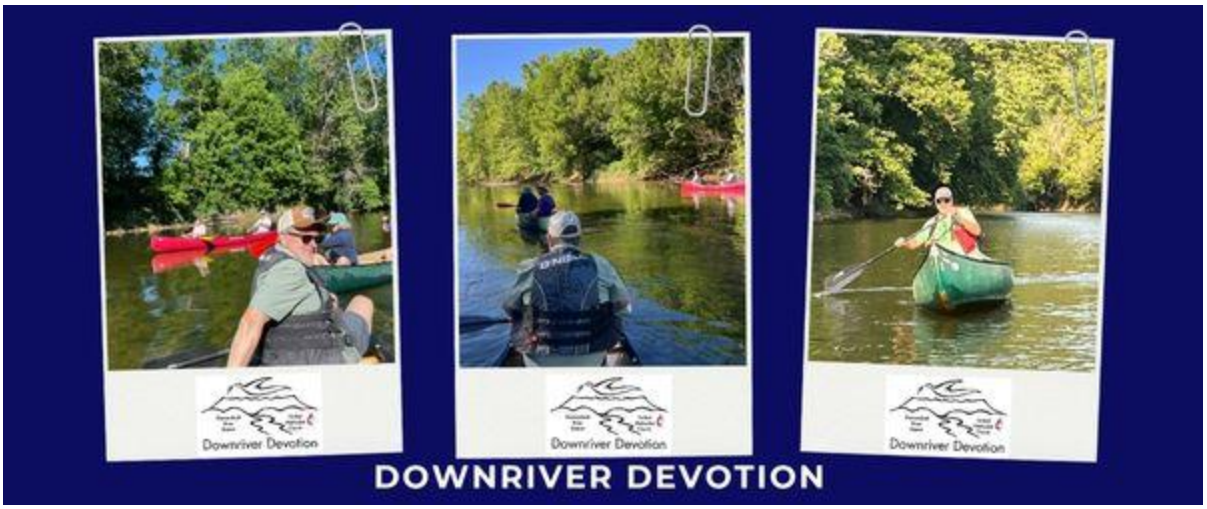
AC 2026 - A Student Perspective

From June 17th - 20th, I had the privilege of attending the 244th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference (VAUMC) for my fourth year in a row. This year the Annual Conference was held at JMU in Harrisonburg (in our own Shenandoah River District!). Once again, it has been an honor to serve my church and my district by representing the youth inside the youth cohort.

Throughout the conference, I had the opportunity to participate in discussions, observe the conference proceedings, and witness how important new decisions are made for the church. Each year, this opportunity gives me a greater appreciation for hearing all voices and thoughtfully considering every topic that comes before the conference.

Once again, I am grateful for this wonderful opportunity to attend, and I would love to attend next year for the fifth and final time (as a youth delegate)!

Joshua Foster



Downriver Devotion - Celebrating Ministry on the Water

Each Wednesday morning this summer, Rev. John Haynes, Jr. (Strasburg UMC) and Rev. Gary Heaton (Kernstown UMC) have been gathering with fellow ministry leaders on the Shenandoah River for Downriver Devotion, a time of prayer, collegial connection, and encouragement on the water. What a gift it is to see our clergy pause together in God's creation and be renewed for the work ahead! If you'd like to join in, meet at the Strasburg Town Park Boat Ramp at 8:00 a.m., just check with the hosts first since it depends on river conditions. **LEARN MORE**

IMPORTANT DATES

- **September 2:** UMM Rally (Keezletown UMC)
- **September 12:** Discernment Day
- **September 18:** UMM Spiritual Retreat
- **September 26:** Lay Servant Training
- **October 11:** Miracle Sunday
- **October 24-25:** Charge Conferences (East & Central)
- **October 26:** Poetry for Preachers (CLERGY)
- **November 21-22:** Charge Conferences (North & South)
- **December 5:** District Conference

Full Calendar

Submit Events

Local Church Events

Wednesdays: Downriver Devotion

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VAUMC NEWS

Find links and information from the Virginia Conference below.

VAUMC News

Find links and information from the Virginia Conference and the UMC below:

- Georgia unification gains final approval
- The Wonder Summit: Reimagining Congregational Worship & Prayer with Children
- Season of Creation starts September 1
- Registration now open for Convocation & Pastors' School (Duke University)
- UM Foundation webinar on stewardship (Recording)
- Lay Servant Academy Registration now open
- Connect college students to campus ministries
- Servant Sister Scholarship
- Journey with Jonah to find purpose and peace

Ministry Toolbox Articles

- VBS Is Over. Now What? Staying Connected with Families
- Why Now Is the Time to Plan Your Church Calendar
- Supporting our College Students–at Home and Away
- AI Keeps Changing. You Don't Have to Keep Up With It Alone.
- New Hire Laws in Virginia
- Ministry With: Partnering with Nonprofits for the Common Good
- Microsoft Publisher Is Going Away

Miracle Sunday Coming this Fall

This fall, Virginia United Methodists are invited into a six-week worship and small group series called "Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously," beginning September 6 and culminating on Miracle Sunday, October 11. The emphasis supports theological education for 500 pastoral students annually across Africa, Europe, and the Philippines.

Every congregation is encouraged to receive a special offering on October 11; worship and small group resources are available at **vaumc.org/miraclesunday.**



MINISTRY PARTNERS

Find the latest news and information from our **Ministry Partners** using the links below!

- **UWF August Newsletter**

Brotherhood Mutual: News & Updates

Inflation & Property Values: Keep Your Property Inventory Up to Date
With inflation driving up property values, now is a good time to make sure your church's property inventory is current. An up-to-date inventory helps your ministry know what to replace and how much contents coverage you need in the event of a disaster or damage. **Read the full article here** for tips on getting started, and reach out to church insurance agent Herb Bennett at **herb@sanfordinsuranceva.com** with questions. You can also visit our **Ministry Partner page** for more resources.

RMN's "Tent, Table, Wonder" Playlist

Don't miss the follow-up list of favorite "tent," "table," and "wonder" songs, along with YouTube links to accompany us on the journey of building relationship. Please continue to send your contributions to **lauradouglass@vaumc.org**, and they'll be added to the playlist. See what we have so far here: **READ MORE**

UMM Fall Rally & Conference Retreat

Keezletown United Methodist Men are planning a **September Rally** **September 2**, 2026 (Wednesday) at 6:30 PM with a Low Country Boil and guest speaker from the JMU Suitcase Clinic. Rev. Richard Bensinger plans to share about upcoming UMM ministry/opportunities as well.
The VAUMC UMM will hold a Spiritual Retreat September 18-19, 2026. **REGISTER**

Equipment for Caring

Equipment for Caring is in need of hospital beds. The supply has been depleted and they are in need of them for their community needs.

Office On The Move

We continue to offer our services to the churches in our district. Please note the days of the week our staff are available to serve you in your area.

Kyungsuk - Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday
Tommy - Monday, Friday
Debbie - Monday through Thursday
Kim- Availability varies weekly

Staff members' calendars are linked to their names above. Click the name to schedule an appointment.

NOTE: Debbie is working on a special assignment from the conference office and will not be able to answer emails or phone calls on Wednesdays for the foreseeable future. Please feel free to call or email on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday until 1 pm.

The Shenandoah River District

Office Phone: 540-433-2382

Our Mailing Address: PO Box 1995
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Website: ShenandoahRiverDistrict.org

Facebook: facebook.com/ShenandoahRiverDistrict

District Staff

Rev. Dr. Kyungsuk Cho - District Superintendent - **ShenandoahRiverDS@vaumc.org**

Rev. Tommy Stelzl - Developer of Congregational Innovation - **Tommy Stelzl@vaumc.org**

Mrs. Debbie Creech - District Administrator - **DebbieCreech@vaumc.org**

Kim Johnson - VAUMC Director of Resourcing, SRD Communications - **kimjohnson@vaumc.org**

Do you have any changes, errors, or additions to the District Website?
Click here to complete the form.

If you would like to include an article in this newsletter, please email Debbie Creech, District Administrator, at DebbieCreech@vaumc.org by the 25th of each month.

Shenandoah River District of the UMC | PO Box 1995 | Harrisonburg, VA 22801 US

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