**Save the date: Commission on a Way Forward, General Conference 2019 Q&A Event**

If you have questions about the Commission on a Way Forward, the Commission’s reports going before General Conference (GC) 2019 or GC 2019 itself then save the date for “A Way Forward: a Q&A event with Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, the Rev. Tom Berlin and Ms. Martha Stokes.” The 90-minute event will be held on Wednesday, September 26 at 7 p.m. at Reveille UMC, 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. Bishop Lewis, the Rev. Berlin and Ms. Stokes will share their thoughts as well as moderate questions on these topics. The event will be livestreamed and archived at <https://livestream.com/VAUMC/COWFQA>.

If you can’t make it to Reveille for the live event, there are seven additional sites around the conference where you can attend:
- Floris UMC, Arlington District
- First UMC, Danville District
- South Hill UMC, Farmville District
- Hillcrest UMC, Rappahannock River District
- Thrasher Memorial UMC, Roanoke District
- New Town UMC, York River District
- Williamsburg UMC, York River District

Questions for the event will be taken via email. You can start to submit your questions now and during the event at <wayforward@vaumc.org>. For additional questions, please contact conference director of Communications Madeline Pillow at <MadelinePillow@vaumc.org>.◆

**Bishop’s Prayer Convocation**

Laity and clergy are invited to attend the Bishop’s Convocation on Prayer, Saturday, September 15, at Reveille UMC, 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. Rev. Dr. Terry Tekyl will be the plenary speaker. There will also be small group learning opportunities in the areas of prayer and Wesleyan spiritual disciplines. The cost of registration is $10 which includes lunch. Find a brochure and registration information at <www.vaumc.org/Events>. Convocation participants may attend two workshops. Please indicate workshop preferences with registration. Deadline to register is September 8. Contact <MarcBrown@vaumc.org> for more information.◆

**Embrace 2018**

Embrace 2018: Virginia Clergywomen’s Transformational Event will take place September 25-26 at the Virginia Crossings Conference Center, 1000 Virginia Center Parkway, Glen Allen. This is the first gathering of the Virginia clergywomen in 30 years! Join us for two days of worship, study, and community. Engage in hands on missions, show off your skills in a Talent/No Talent Show, and participate in panel discussions on change and growth within your own ministry context. But most importantly, connect with other clergywomen and claim a renewed sense of call. Be inspired. Be nourished. Be embraced.

Find registration, CEU’s and grants information at <www.vaumc.org/Events>. For questions call (703) 303-9017.◆

Westview on the James invites you to be a part of our Camper Open Golf Tournament! The tournament will take place October 29 at Stonehenge Country Club in Midlothian. By participating in this event you will be helping to send underprivileged kids to camp who otherwise would not be able to attend. We have several options for those who would like to participate, whether it be attending the tournament and playing on a team or becoming a sponsor to help us reach our goals. Register and become a part of a team for $100 or create a team for $400. We know not everyone can be available to participate on a team but if you would still like to become a sponsor we would love to have your participation. Register at <www.westviewonthejames.org/camperopen>. Thank you for all your participation and we look forward to seeing you on the green!.◆
Richmond District

The Virginia Conference • United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 5808 • Glen Allen, Virginia 23058
Telephone (804) 521-1124 • Fax (804) 521-1176 • RichmondDistrict@vaumc.org

September 2018

Friends,

Can We Be Thankful that We Are United Methodist?

Let’s be honest. We have been pretty hard on ourselves, especially these past months and years as a denomination. It is likely to get worse as we make our way to General Conference 2019. Some of it may be warranted, others not so much.

But these past months, I have found myself grateful and thankful for what we have. I have also found myself needed to confess the tendency to take what we have for granted. Let me explain.

Anytime there is a scandal anywhere in the church it hits me hard. I would imagine it is the same for you. As Paul said, when one part of the body suffers we all suffer. Therefore, as we continue to hear more and more about the scandals within the Catholic Church it falls also on us. For years, I have received multiple gifts of fruit and insight from the ministry of Willow Creek Church and its leader, Bill Hybels. I have attended several seminars at the campus and God has used that time to further my ministry. When the scandals around his leadership rose up in these past months, the news hit hard.

As United Methodist, we can’t throw any stones, but we can stop and appreciate the gift of being a connectional church. Some might label it an imperfect system but it is still a pretty good system of keeping our clergy and other leadership accountable. We have Bishops, and District Superintendents and Committee on Investigations and Conference Relationship Committees. All these groups and persons are there to encourage but also to keep us in check as leaders. We have mandatory Clergy Training and Sexual Ethics Training. We are reminded regularly of having policies to keep healthy boundaries around us and our work, recognizing that this can happen to me too. And when it does, there is a fair process that is designed to not avoid the issue but to deal with it as fairly and transparently as possible. Before I began my work as a District Superintendent, I had multiple training sessions on how to respond to a complaint or issue of sexual misconduct. That training gave me various policy options but it did not give me the option of overlooking the offense without extensive investigation and fair process.

We can never be self-righteous in seeing the struggles of others. We must always remember this too can happen to us. But at the same time, we can be appreciative and be thankful to God and to the many, many people in our midst who help us to follow the Wesleyan way of keeping each other, especially our leadership, accountable. It is a gift, especially today.

So as we go into General Conference, rest assured that there will be plenty of opportunity for beating ourselves up. Some, though not all, of that is warranted. At the same time, let’s keep perspective. We have some very good things in our denomination. Two hundred and fifty years of wrestling have taught us a few things. Not all of what we are is represented by what we will see in February 2019. Let’s keep our eyes on the prize!

In Christ,

Pete

RICHMOND DISTRICT DISPATCH

September 2018

God Unbound

You are invited to a special discussion of God Unbound: Wisdom From Galatians for the Anxious Church with Elaine Heath, Dean of Duke Divinity School, on Sunday, September 23, at 2:00 p.m., in the Reveille UMC sanctuary, 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. Her book leads readers through a study of the Letter to the Galatians to encourage them to expand their views of God, themselves, and the church’s mission. This event is free and open to the public, Call 359-6041 for more information.

Grief Workshop

Full Circle Grief Center and Reveille UMC are partnering together to offer “Journeying Through Grief,” an interactive, educational workshop, September 18-December 18, with different topics each month. The workshop will be led by a professional counselor who will share educational materials about grief and loss, engage the group in therapeutic activities, and facilitate group discussions. The workshop will meet 5-6:30 p.m. in the church parlor and is open to everyone who may benefit. Reveille UMC is located at 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. No registration is required. For details, visit <www.reveilleumc.org/congregational-care>.

UMVIM Leader Training

A United Methodist Volunteer in Mission (UMVIM) Team Leader Training will be held at Providence UMC, 4001 New Kent Highway, Quinton on Sunday, September 23, 1-5:00 p.m. This course will provide the tools needed to confidently lead a mission team from your church congregation to anywhere throughout the US and the world. Glenn Rowley, director of Justice and Missional Excellence, from the Virginia Conference will be facilitating the training. There is no cost; download the leader book from <umvim.org/resources/for-team-leaders/handbook/>. Lunch will be provided from 12:30-1 and snacks and drinks will be available during the training. No childcare will be available. Please contact 932-4973 or <Office@pumcqva.org> to reserve your place. For more information call Pam Hill at 901-0989.
The District UMW would like to invite you to attend our many upcoming events in September. As the summer comes to an end, get together with friends and new folks to educate yourself and to relax and enjoy the fellowship of others in Christ.

**September 14–15—Young Women Event** (18-40 years of age), Camp Overlook, 3014 Camp Overlook Lane, Keeletown. The theme this year is Speaking Out Loud led by Rev. Joanna Dietz from Braddock Street UMC in Winchester. Cost is $75. Scholarships are available from the District and the Conference UMW. Contact (804) 640-5355 for further information.

**September 22—District UMW Annual Meeting** Lakeside UMC, 2333 Hilliard Road, Richmond. Speaker: Andris Salter, operations officer, Office of General Secretary, UMW, New York, NY. We are very happy to have our sisters from Brookland and Ginter Park UMW units to assist Linda Pomfrey (Lakeside) with the social.

**September 23—Annual Chickahominy PoW WoW** 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Hoping to travel for the afternoon celebration, arriving in time for ‘The Grand Entry.’ We have two buses and a van for transportation. Call Ruth Wilkinson 218-0627, to sign up.

**September 27-28, ’Our 2nd On The Road In Mission Express’ will be going to the Eastern Shore for two days of hands on mission experiences. For more information on any of these events call president, Scotty Doyle, 640-5355.

**Prayers for...**
- Rev. Amy Lenow, deacon on family leave, on the death of her father, John Voorhis, on August 13.
- Rev. Katie B. Gooch, director of Pace Student Center at VCU, on the birth of baby, Henry Beeler Gooch, on August 16.
- Rev. G. Thomas “Tom” Brown, retired, who was hospitalized in August with various health issues.

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**Financial Peace University**

Financial Peace University (FPU) is a nine-week, life-changing program that empowers and teaches you how to make the right money decisions to achieve your financial goals and God’s plan for your life. The course includes practical lessons on eliminating debt, building wealth, giving like never before, and much, much more! Through video teaching, class discussions, and interactive small groups, FPU presents biblical, practical steps to get from where you are to where you’ve dreamed you could be. The class will meet Thursdays, September 20-November 15 from 6:30-8 p.m. at Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Road, Henrico, and is designed for individuals, couples and/or families. The cost is $99 per household. Must register for free childcare weekly. This life-changing class is being facilitated John Fuller, executive director of the Virginia United Methodist Conference Pensions and Benefits office. Register at <www.daveramsey.com/fpu/classes/>. For more information, contact Rev. Lisa McGehee at <lisamcgehee@vaumc.org> or 270.7613.

**Musician Damian Muller**

The Reveille UMC Leisure Club will kick off the season with popular Richmond singer and songwriter, Damian Muller on Tuesday, September 18 at 11 a.m. in the fellowship hall for a relaxed time of fellowship, great music, and a buffet luncheon. See details at <www.reveilleumc.org/leisure-club>. Reveille UMC is located at 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond.

**CROP Walk**

The 48th Annual Richmond CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday, September 16, beginning and ending at Ginter Park UMC, 1010 W. Laburnum Avenue, Richmond. Registration begins at 1 p.m., and the walk begins at 2:00. Find more information and register online as a team or individual at <crophungerwalk.org/richmondva>. Shalom Farms is a local recipient of our funds. For more information call 271-2289.

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Your VA PAUMCS (the Professional Administrators of the United Methodist Connectional Structure) invites you—full-time administrative assistants and part-time secretaries, paid office managers and volunteer newsletter editors—to our fall event: Experience Your Conference Connection 2018, Wednesday, October 31, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Virginia United Methodist Center 10330 Staples Mill Road, Glen Allen.

Our speakers for the event are Madeline Pillow and Nicholas Ruxton.

Maddie is the conference directory of Communications and Advocate editor. She writes, curates, takes photos and manages the upkeep for the monthly Advocate publication. In her role as director, Madeline helps resource local churches in topics ranging from communications plans to crisis communications and manages the conference-wide communication in partnership with the Bishop and director of Connectional Ministries. She joined the conference staff in 2015.

Nick is the conference videographer. He travels around the conference sharing stories of incredible ministry and engaging people through video. He also takes photos and helps with the conference social media. Nick writes a monthly blog, “Through the Lens” which can be found on the conference website at <www.vaumc.org/Videographer>. He joined the conference staff in 2014.

Social media has vastly changed how society communicates and how people expect communication to happen. These changes require the church to keep up with changing technology and communication trends in the outside society. During the event’s sessions, we will examine what social media is, current realities, best practices and examples of “good” social media for churches.

.5 CEU (continuing education units) is available to those who attend all sessions. Find registration information at <www.vaumc.org/paumcs>. Call 521-1124 for more information.
District Training

Friday, November 2, 6:15 p.m.–10:15 p.m., and Saturday, November 3, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. at Willis UMC, 8360 Willis Church Road, Richmond.
◆ Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course, led by Rev. John Hall
◆ Leading in Prayer, led by Dann Ladd
◆ Planning Worship, led by Tianna Durbin

Lunch and snacks are provided by the Ladies at Willis UMC.

For Registration information call 333-6402 or email <cawms@comcast.net>.

Influence 2018: Worship

Tuesday, October 30
Woodlake UMC, 15640 Hampton Park Drive, Chesterfield VA 23832

Early Bird Registration: $30 per person
Must Be Registered by September 26
Event Registration: $40 per person, Registration Deadline October 22
Team discounts available
(Every 5th person free when registered together)

For more information and to register go to <www.vaumc.org/5talent>

District Opportunities

◆ September 8–Richmond District Mini-Mission Encounter, Beulah UMC, 674-5220.
◆ September 15–Bishop’s Convocation on Prayer, Reveille UMC, 521-1134.
◆ September 18–Grief Workshop, Reveille, 359-6041.
◆ September 18–Leisure Club, Musician Damian Muller, Reveille, 359-6041.
◆ September 20–November 15–Financial Peace, Good Shepherd UMC, 270-7613.
◆ September 23–District UMW trip to Chickahominy PowWow, 640-5355.
◆ September 23–UMVIM Team Leader Training, Providence UMC, New Kent, 932-4973.
◆ September 23–God Unbound, Reveille UMC, 359-6041.

◆ September 26–Commission on the Way Forward Q&A Event, Reveille, 521-1110.
◆ September 26–Leadership and Anxiety in the Church, First Mennonite Church, Richmond, 630/627-0507.
◆ September 27–28–UMW On the Road Again trip to Eastern Shore, 640-5355.
◆ October 14–19–Virginia Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation, Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond, 703/281-5506.
◆ October 16–Grief Workshop, Reveille, 359-6041.
◆ October 29–Westview on the James, Camper Open Gold Tournament at Stonehenge Country Club, 457-4210.
◆ October 31–VA PAUMCS Fall Event, VAUMC Center, 521-1124.
◆ November 2–Richmond District Lay Servant Training, Willis UMC, 333-6402.

Lay Servant Schedule

Bessie Owens, director, Lay Servant Ministries: <obessie10@yahoo.com>, 745-5372. Richmond District Certified Lay Servants lead worship regularly at the following care centers:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Beth Sholom</td>
<td>A. Henderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>University Park</td>
<td>B. Stephens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Beth Sholom</td>
<td>A. Henderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>Elmcroft</td>
<td>G. Stephens</td>
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