UM Center Closings

The District Office and the VAUMC Conference Center will close at 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 18 and remain closed Friday, April 19 in observance of the Easter holiday.

Ginter Park UMC Hosts Shutdown Soup & Sandwich Events

On a Tuesday evening’s six o’clock news, a story came on about FeedMore bracing for increased need due to the Shutdown. And then there was a time of prayer for guidance.

By the next Wednesday, a few friends and members of Ginter Park UMC had made approximately four gallons of chicken vegetable soup and roughly 100 turkey sandwiches to give away to our neighbors in need.

We’ve done it twice since then, before the Shutdown took a break.

Handing out free lunches doesn’t make a difference in whether or not bills or the rent gets paid. Our mission is to show our neighbors affected by the Shutdown that we are with them and we care.

There has been an unexpected bonus to these events: our church calls them “God Moments.” The first one was feeding a man who was visibly starving, and getting him hooked up with our food pantry. Second, we met a woman who had just gotten a new job, but was facing eviction. We got her in touch with a friend who finds housing for people and works with the CARITAS program.

Our third God Moment came when a neighbor came over to thank us for what we were doing. In our conversation, she mentioned her son had died one year before, the day before he was to be released from jail. We stood together by the light pole on the corner of Laburnum and Chamberlayne Avenues, hugging it out and crying together. A gentleman came up to see if we were ok, and it turns out he had recently lost his 25 year old daughter. More hugs, more tears, more comfort in each other’s company and knowing God was looking out for us.

In the end, the lesson here is Be Kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). Be kind. Show love. Let God’s guiding light shine through you. You’ll find it’s amazing.

Article submitted by Ginter Park UMC member Liz Turner. For more information call Ginter Park UMC at 262-8651.

Members at-Large Elected

The following individuals were elected by the District Conference February 3 to be members of the 2019 Annual Conference representing the Richmond District.


Annual Conference will be held in Roanoke on Thursday, June 20-Saturday, June 22. Elected members will receive housing information by email in February. Copies of the Book of Reports will be sent out in May and an Annual Conference orientation session is planned for June 4. Watch for more information.

Thanks to all our members at-large for your willingness to serve in this important responsibility to the work of Christ through the United Methodist Church.

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The Beginning of Settled Reality

Friends,

We are finally here. In just four weeks, delegates from around the world will be meeting in St. Louis to discern and vote on the United Methodist way forward around matters of human sexuality.

We have been in earnest preparation. We have gathered for "Chat and Chew" sessions with our Bishop. We have met within multiple District events. We have discussed the matter over Charge Conferences. We will continue to address the issues this weekend as we join together for District Conference and training with Susan Beaumont.

And now we will vote. Folks are understandably anxious about the coming decision, or lack thereof. We rightly sense or discern the stakes. This decision will be what I have labelled with many of you as "the beginning of settled reality." By this, I mean to say that whatever is decided or not decided at General Conference will be the start of the crystallizing of our future direction and character. If the One Church Plan passes, that will determine not just how we minister in the present, but it will define who we are as a denomination for decades to come. If we approve the more traditional plan, that too will define our future. If we decide to make no changes, we will be as we are for the foreseeable future.

I hear the voices of many. There is always General Conference 2020 and beyond. But the voting demographics will continue to move away from the United States and that will result in an increasing seal upon, or distinction from the decisions made at this conference.

Perhaps this sounds ominous and in many ways it is. However, right now, as a denomination, we spend most of our connectional time walking on jello. Little is clear or firm and when we try to build anything, we are building on a shaky denominational foundation. We may agree or disagree with the decision, but perhaps, we can finally walk forward with some clarity that "this is the deal." We may agree or disagree with who we are and who we are becoming, but at least we will be at the beginning of some clarity around our self-identity.

I think of Joshua and the people of Israel as they were completing their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The crossing of the Jordan was a time of moving from a season of wandering to a Kairos moment that defined the beginning of a settled reality. The people, after that season of wandering knew with more clarity who they were and who they were called to be. The power of the promised land was not just the geography. It was also knowing with more clarity who they were and who they were called to be. The power of the promised land was not just the geography. It was also knowing with more clarity who they were and what they were called to do.

It is an absolute stretch to call the coming years the Promised Land. When the people of Israel crossed the river, there were still many battles in front of them. But they were a different people from those who had passed through the Red Sea. The wanderings, the mistakes, and the battles all had a shaping role. They were not perfect in the new land but at least they knew who they were.

I pray that this General Conference, no matter what is decided, will offer a similar clarity for us. We are all weary of wandering in the wilderness. There are battles ahead surely in this place of greater clarity, but at least we will know who we are in this beginning of settled reality.

In Christ,

Pete
UMW Spiritual Life Retreat
Join Reveille’s United Methodist Women for a Spiritual Life Retreat featuring author Maria Leonard Olsen, Saturday, February 23, 9:00 a.m.-noon. The theme is “Breaking Free: How to Find Your Peace on Earth.” We will examine how to make space for God by examining our preoccupation with earthly concerns such as addictions to substances and harmful habits, comparisons, perfectionism, and anger, and learn how we can claim God’s “peace which passes all understanding.” The retreat leader, Maria Leonard Olsen, is the mother of two children, a lawyer, journalist, and author. Her most recent book, 50 After 50-How to Reframe the Next Chapter of Your Life, was published in 2018. Reveille member Anne Poarch will also share selections from her book of poetry, Flight. To register, visit <www.reveilleumc.org/study>. Reveille UMC is located at 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. For more information call 359-6041.

All God’s Children Camp 2019
What is All God’s Children Camp? Children, ages 7 to 12, with an incarcerated mother or father, spend a week at camp, participating in activities such as boating, swimming, hiking, archery, music, crafts, Bible study, and conflict resolution. Partnering with Virginia United Methodist camps, All God’s Children Camp provides a week of sanctuary for children who face so many challenges in their lives: economic poverty; temporary living conditions; loneliness; low self-esteem; violence; and drugs. Download the mentor application at <www.vaumc.org/AGC>, and send it to the address found on the form.

◆ June 16-20 @ Camp Chanco on the James (Richmond area)
◆ July 28-August 2 @ Occhannock on the Bay (Eastern Shore)
◆ August 11-16 @ Camp Chanco on the James (Richmond area)

Please contact Lori Smith at <ltitelori@gmail.com> or (571)245-9591 for an application or more information.

Branch House Comes Alive
The historic mansion at the corner of N. Davis and Monument Avenues was completed in 1919. Steve Coor will discuss the history of this unique Richmond landmark, Tuesday, February 19, at 11 a.m. at Reveille UMC, 4200 Cary Street Road. Learn more at <www.reveilleumc.org/leisure-club> or call 359-6041.

Westview Names Director
The Westview Board of Stewards has selected Bobby Boyd as the new camp director for Westview on the James, located in Goochland, Virginia.

Bobby earned a B.S. in Business Management from Asbury College and a M.A. in Christian Formation in Ministry from Wheaton College. His experience includes having served as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at Warwick Memorial UMC, Newport News, as the Program Director at Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, and most recently as the Director of Waukaway Springs Christian Retreat Center. Bobby is married and he and his wife, Jenny, have two beautiful daughters. The family will reside at Westview.

Rev. Jessie Colwell, the Pastor of Rappahannock Charge UMC, who worked with Bobby when he was a youth pastor, wrote that Bobby “combined his love of the outdoors with his passion for Jesus Christ. He loved to teach the youth about God’s love for them.” She said that Bobby “would be a wonderful addition to the Westview family.”

Bobby will join Westview on February 4. He is excited to work with the staff to promote Westview’s mission of “Creating a place apart to grow with God in every season.” The Westview Board believes that in hiring Bobby, it has found an experienced Camp Director, with a passion for outdoor ministry, to provide leadership and direction for the camp and assure that Westview achieves its Vision of “Playing outdoors. Building community. Transforming lives.”

Bobby follows Pete Albert, who stepped down in November 2018 for health reasons. The Board of Stewards is incredibly grateful to Pete for the leadership he provided.

Contact Westview at (804) 457-4210.

2019 District Apportionments
The Conference Treasurers Office will include your Richmond District Apportionments on your Conference Apportionment Statement starting with your January 2019 statement. Local church treasurers will no longer need to remit separate checks to the District and to the Conference. One check should be made out to the Virginia United Methodist Conference that includes all apportionments (conference and district). The conference will electronically transfer the funds to the district to ensure the administration, ministries, and missions of the Richmond District are supported. This will relieve the responsibility of the district for the daily processing and accounting for District Apportionments.

This also means that treasurer will be able to use the conference’s PayApp website to submit their conference and district apportionment payments. If your church does not already use the PayApp website, please visit <VAUMCPayApp.org> to view online statements and register to start making your apportionment payments online.

Any questions, please contact my office, 521-1109.

Sincerely,
David Dommisse, Treasurer

Everglades–Big Cypress Clergy Retreat in February
Clergy are invited to participate in a unique outdoor learning and reflection event that will take place in southern Florida in February 2019. This event will be an opportunity to experience and learn about the changing ecosystems of the Everglades National Park and the Big Cypress National Preserve, and to reflect upon possible parallels to the changes in church and other cultural systems. The event will be active and experiential; clergy will camp, hike, and kayak in addition to learning and reflection.

This event will take place Monday, February 25 through Saturday, March 2, and is being organized by Rev. Janine Howard and Rev. Steve Jones. The event is limited to 15 participants; priority will be given to clergy currently serving in local churches. Previous camping experience is not required, participants need to be able to take part in physical outdoor activities. CEU’s are available. For further information, contact Steve Jones at <stevejones@vaumc.org>.

Contact Westview at (804) 457-4210.
**Available On Demand Training Events:**

- "Lay Ministry in Worship" led by the Rev. Nathan Decker
- "Leading Prayer" led by the Rev. Norman Ramsey
- "United Methodist Church Polity" led by the Rev. Teresa Keezel and the Rev. Andrew Ware
- "Spiritual Gifts" led by MaryKaye Cochran
- "Praying" led by the Rev. Jonathan Page of Fieldstone UMC
- "UMC Heritage" led by Martha Stokes


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**District Opportunities**

- **February 2–Bible Boot Camp, Reveille UMC, 359-6041.**
- **February 15-17–Richmond District Youth Retreat, Eagle Eyrie, 521-1124.**
- **February 19–Branch House Comes Alive, Reveille, 359-6041.**
- **February 23–UMW Spiritual Life Retreat, Reveille UMC, 359-6041.**
- **February 23-26–Called General Conference, St. Louis.**
- **February 25-March 2–Everglades-Big Cypress Clergy Retreat, 804/929-2491.**
- **March 27–Goodson Academy of Preaching, Trinity UMC, 540/335-5175.**
- **May 18–Bishop Lewis’ Chat and Chew, Richmond District, 521-1124.**
- **June 4–Richmond District Annual Conference Orientation, location TBD, 521-1124.**
- **June 16-20–All God’s Children Camp–Camp Chanco, 571/245-9591.**
- **June 20-22–Annual Conference, Roanoke.**
- **July 28-August 2–All God’s Children Camp–Occohannock on the Bay, 571/245-9591.**
- **August 11-16–All God’s Children Camp–Camp Chanco, 571/245-9591.**

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**Plan for Bishop Lewis’ “Chat and Chews 3.0”**

Bishop Lewis will be holding her Chat and Chew sessions around the conference with clergy and laity once again in 2019. This year there will be four regional dates. More information will be forthcoming.

- **Saturday, May 18, 2019:**
  - Northern Group (Richmond, Rappahannock River, Arlington, Alexandria) Location: TBD.