March 8, 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the name of the Savior who is our healer and hope, our guardian and guide!

Two days ago I was asked to serve as your interim Bishop for six months as Bishop Sharma Lewis moves through a journey of surgery and recovery. We thank God for her spiritual leadership and continue to pray for her health and wholeness.

Yesterday and today I have been meeting with our excellent Cabinet and fine Conference staff, as we team together to serve you and the world “God so loved.”

In this short time, I have been listening and learning. I have learned of the special gifts of spiritual vitality, mission, diversity, commitment to justice, and compassion that are a part of your witness. I have also felt the anxiety and pain that is being experienced by many in the wake of our recent General Conference. I have been listening to the questions we are asking, the harm that LGBTQ sisters and brothers are feeling and hearing the prayers of the faithful of all perspectives for Christ-like love as we move forward together.

I will look forward to hearing from you as we seek to follow God’s lead. When we worshipped and prayed in the Cabinet meeting today we shared our deep concerns and our hopeful longings. Find a place and persons with whom you can share also. And then we prayed for the fruit of Spirit: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” May the Spirit lead us all in living this prayer.

Grace and Peace,

Pete Weaver

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**Save the Date!**

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, May 11, 2-3:30. Bishop Peter Weaver has called for a Post General Conference/Jurisdictional Conference/Judicial Conference Conversation, to include clergy and laity of the Richmond and Rappahannock River Districts, to be held at Wrights Chapel UMC, 8063 Lady Smith Road, Ruther Glen. Watch for more information to follow in the next few days.

Additionally: the Chat and Chew scheduled with Bishop Lewis for May 18 has been cancelled.

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**Advocate to discontinue**

Advocate editor and conference director of Communications Madeline Pillow has announced that the Advocate magazine, the longtime flagship communication tool of the Virginia Conference, will cease production at the end of 2019. The decision was made by the Board of Communications and approved by Common Table. Direct questions to 521-1110.

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**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.
Friends,

Years ago, I remember watching a high powered NFL playoff game. Veteran tough guy Reggie White was playing in what would likely be his last game of an incredible career. His team lost and he picked up his helmet and was making his way off the field to the locker room in the wet snow and mud. Reporters gathered around him, asking him how he felt, given that this was a loss that kept them out of the Super Bowl and that this was likely his last game.

Reggie just looked at this (all male) gathering of reporters and laughed as he replied saying; "Boys...Jesus Christ is still Lord."

I think of those words, offered almost twenty five years ago. Right now we are in the mud and wet snow of General Conference. We have not spoken of much else during these days. But in Reggie White’s words, it is important to still maintain perspective. We are dealing with General Conference, but we can’t forget that we are in the season of Lent. We are still people who make our way to the cross as did our Lord. We are still people who turn to the cross as our hope and the hope of the world. And even more, we turn to our Lord who was and is risen from the messes of this world that we have made.

So friends, as we make our way to Holy Week and to Easter, let us remember to put away our phones and remember who we are. Ultimately, we will not find hope scrolling on our phones, looking for the latest update from the denomination or another Annual Conference. We will not find ultimate hope in any Facebook group.

In the end, Jesus is still Lord. No matter what, he is our hope, he is the way forward, and he still holds the future in those nail scarred hands. During this tumultuous season of Lent, 2019, let’s not forget that Jesus still died for us, that Jesus still is risen, and that Jesus Christ is still Lord.

I look forward to celebrating that truth with you in the glory of the coming Easter!

In Christ

[Signature]

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**Richmond District**

The Virginia Conference • United Methodist Church

P.O. Box 5606 • Glen Allen, Virginia 23058

Telephone (804) 521-1124 • Fax (804) 521-1176 • RichmondDistrict@vaumc.org

April 2019

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**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 @ Occohannock on the Bay (Eastern Shore)
- August 11-16 @ Camp Chanco on the James (Richmond area)

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

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**Helping Hands**

Helping Hands is a hands-on mission experience for rising 4th-6th graders. We have three host churches this year who invite your church to come and be a part of the fun, worship, and service.

- June 26-27 hosted at St. Paul’s UMC, Staunton. Contact is Chris Lyle <lyle.chris@gmail.com>.
- August 1-2 hosted at Woodlake UMC, Midlothian. Contact is Dianna Foster <dfoster@woodlakeumc.org>.
- August 1-2 hosted at Deep Creek UMC, Chesapeake. Contact is Keriann Craig <keriann.craig@deepcreekumc.org>.

Registration information is available at <www.vaumc.org/Events>.

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**Prayers for...**

- The family of John A. Edwards, longtime director of Westview on the James, who died March 30.
- Rev. Tom Brown, retired, who is recuperating at home following a March hospitalization.
- Bishop Sharma Lewis, who is in rehab following a March 7 hip surgery.
The Richmond District United Methodist Women will hold their Annual Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, April 6 at Shady Grove UMC, 8209 Shady Grove Road, Mechanicsville. Sign in at 8:30 a.m., breakfast and worship at 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Child Care will be provided.

We will welcome Renyetta Banks, Executive Director of Wesley Community Service Center, Portsmouth, who will bring us an update on WCSC as we are “Continuing to Celebrate through Missions.”

Pre-registration is needed. The cost is $8 per person. Make checks payable to: Richmond District UMW, notation “Prayer Breakfast.” Mail to Richmond District UMW Treasurer, Rosa Lewis, 829 Old Denny Street Richmond, VA 23231. Call to reserve your place, 744-3045.

Our “On the Road in Mission” bus trip to Wesley Community Service Center will be on Thursday, May 9. Watch for trip details to be emailed to units by mid-March.

Fresh Expressions

The Richmond and James River Districts, along with the VA Conference, are sponsoring a Fresh Expressions Roundtable on Saturday, June 8, 9 a.m.-12 noon, at Bon Air UMC, 1645 Buford Road, North Chesterfield. This event is FREE to individuals who attend and is an opportunity for churches who plan to pursue a Fresh Expression to ask in-depth questions about the fresh expression process and to envision the implications of fresh expressions for their congregation and community. This is a follow-up to a Fresh Expressions Vision Day, however, attendance at a prior Vision Day event is not required. If you are looking to take the next step in launching a fresh expression, this Roundtable is for you! Please visit <www.vaumc.org/events> to register. Questions? Contact Mark Ogren, director of Congregational Excellence, 521-1155.

Tee Up!

Westhampton Day School will sponsor a Golf Tournament Fundraiser on Thursday, May 16 at the Richmond Country Club. All proceeds will benefit programs and projects of WDS. Check-in/lunch time begins at 12 noon. Shotgun start is at 1 p.m. Awards will begin at 5 p.m. The cost per golfer is $135 or $525 for a foursome which includes cart/fee greens fees, lunch, two beverage tickets, and heavy hors d’oeuvres during awards. Registrations due by May 9. Contact <EDSGold@westhamptondayschool.org> or 282-7459 for registration information.

Rebuilding Together

Reveille UMC, 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond, is working with Rebuilding Together to organize a day of service in the community to help elderly homeowners repair and maintain their homes.

When: Saturday, April 27, 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m., with full and half day shifts available.

Who: 40-50 volunteers are needed. If you are age 10 or older, you can help work on our neighbors’ homes. Helpers under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Participants under 18 years old need a parent’s signature on the liability waiver to participate.

Where: The worksites will be located at 2112 2nd Avenue and 2412 3rd Avenue, Richmond.

To learn more and register for a shift, visit <www.reveilleumc.org/rebuildingtogether>. Call 359-6041 for more information.

Serving God in RVA

Kids Camp: Serving God in RVA will be held June 24-28 at Reveille UMC, 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond. This summer mission camp is free and open to all children in rising third to sixth grade. Children participate in special mission projects throughout the Richmond region each day. They will also enjoy music, crafts, games, and more! This year’s theme is “God Sent Joseph, God Sends Us.” Register at <www.reveilleumc.org/camps>. Call 359-6041 for more information.

A mission team from Shenandoah University, Winchester VA, just returned from a trip to Mozambique.

Dear Partners in Ministry

Greetings in the name and spirit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who came to stand with his disciples in the midst of the raging storm (Mt. 14: 24-27).

Recently a catastrophic tropical cyclone devastated Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Our conference, as you may be aware, has had a long term partnership with the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. In fact, a Virginia mission team from Shenandoah University has just returned from Mozambique. Bishop Nhanala reports two districts have been completely devastated including the city of Beira where the Mozambique North Conference office is located. The loss of life and property has been catastrophic.

I have been serving as your bishop less than two weeks but I already have become aware of the strong missional commitment of this conference and Bishop Lewis’ conference vision statement of “…influencing others to serve.”

I appeal to every church and individual in our conference to respond to the call of Christ to come, serve, and stand with our sisters and brothers in Mozambique in this painful and vulnerable time and “influence others” to do the same.

I invite you to do two things:

◆ PRAY for all our sisters and brothers in the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. Their church is strong and has already begun to mobilize to assist in this disaster recovery with the assistance of the UMCOR. Let us, the Body of Christ in Virginia, add our resources to this effort.

◆ RECEIVE a special offering, for Mozambique Cyclone Recovery. Send the offering to the Virginia Conference Treasurer, P O Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058.

Let us come together to stand with our Mozambican church family in this difficult time and pray they feel God’s comforting and healing hand holding them.

Grace and Peace,
Peter D. Weaver,
Interim Bishop
Lay Servant Training

The Richmond District Lay Servant Committee will hold a training event Friday, May 3–Saturday, May 4 at the Virginia United Methodist Conference Center, 10330 Staples Mill Road in Glen Allen. Classes include:

- Basic Course led by Rev. John Hall.
- Living Our United Methodist Beliefs (U.M. Heritage) led by Rev. Janine Howard.
- Teach Us to Prayer/Leading In Prayer led by Dann Ladd.
- Planning Worship led by Rev. Brian Lamb.

Call Carolyn Williams at 399-6612 for registration information.

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>4/7</td>
<td>Beth Sholom</td>
<td>A. Henderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>University Park</td>
<td>Bessie Owens</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Beth Sholom</td>
<td>A. Henderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Elmcroft</td>
<td>R. Stephens</td>
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Virginia Chapter Spring Event Experience Your Conference

Connection 2019

Wednesday, May 1

9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Virginia United Methodist Conference Center
10300 Staples Mill Road, Glen Allen VA 23058

John Fuller, executive director of VUMPI will give an overview of Virginia Conference health plans and Rev. Chris Bennett will lead us in a session called “Discipleship Through Volunteer Management”

Find brochure and registration information at <www.vaumc.org/paumcs>

District Opportunities

- April 5–UMUMR Geranium Sale, Bon Air UMC, 229-4277.
- April 6–District UMW Prayer Breakfast, Shady Grove UMC, Mechanicsville, 744-3034.
- April 17–UMFS Campus Tour, UMFS, 254-9463.
- May 3–4–Richmond District Lay Servant Training, VAUMC, 399-6612.
- May 9–UMW On the Road in Mission, Wesley Community Service Center, 744-3045.
- May 11–Post General Conference/Jurisdictional Conference, Richmond Chapel UMC, 521-1124.
- June 8–Fresh Expressions Roundtable, Bon Air UMC, 521-1155.
- June 16–20–All God’s Children Camp, Camp Chanco, 571/245-9591.
- June 20–22–Annual Conference, Roanoke.
- June 22–30–Convergence, Randolph-Macon College, 752-8712.
- July 28–August 2–All God’s Children Camp–Occohannock on the Bay, 571/245-9591.
- August 1–2–Helping Hands, Woodlade UMC, Midlothian, (540) 932-1055.
- August 1–2–Helping Hands, Deep Creek UMC, Chesapeake, (540) 932-1055.
- August 11–16–All God’s Children Camp, Camp Chanco, 571/245-9591.

We’re on the web at: www.richmonddistrictumc.org

The DEADLINE for the NEXT ISSUE is the 15th of the month.