Shalom Farms Invites You
Shalom Farms is gearing up for their 10th season. Almost 30,000 plants are in the ground and volunteers are signing up in record numbers. With the help of over 6,000 volunteers last year Shalom Farms grew over 400,000 servings of produce that was distributed through innovative and collaborative food access and education programs. If the rain cooperates, they expect to do even more this year.

With Spring fully here and summer just around the corner, they are excited to invite everyone to their 3rd annual Summer Kickoff on May 18. Expect an afternoon of fun on the farm in Powhatan with amazing local food and live music! Enjoy an all-local BBQ lunch with Autumn Olive Farms pork and sides fresh from the fields. There will be art activities, honey bee demos, live music, and farm tours for all ages!

Registration is required so that they know how much to harvest! A suggested donation of $25 per adult and $10 per child is encouraged to help cover costs, but the event is open to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. Anyone who has volunteered in the past two years is especially encouraged to come for free. Volunteers are critical to Shalom Farms, and this year at the Summer Kickoff they will be celebrating their incredible volunteer force by giving out a first ever volunteer award! Reserve your spot today at <shalomfarms.org/summerkickoff>.

In other news, as part of their 10th Anniversary Shalom Farms will be hosting a series of listening and brainstorming sessions with churches. The hope is to explore new and existing ways to deepen the relationship between Shalom Farms and individual churches across Richmond. For more information or to participate email Dominic at <dominic@shalomfarms.org>.

Make Plans to Attend
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. No need to register, just come.

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

District AC Orientation, June 4, 7 p.m.
An orientation session for the Richmond District members of the 2019 Virginia Annual Conference will be held on Tuesday, June 4 at 7 p.m. at Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Road, Richmond. It is important that clergy, church lay members, and district lay members be present to be briefed on issues coming before the Conference. Questions? Call 521-1124.

Flower Sale!
Come explore a wide variety plants and student artwork at the UMFS plant sale benefiting the Charterhouse School. The sale runs Wednesday, May 8, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., and Thursday, May 9, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., at 3900 W. Broad Street, Richmond.

UM Center Closings
The District Office and the VAUMC Conference Center will close at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 24 and remain closed Monday, May 27 in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.
Pete

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May 2019

Friends,

“In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions...” —(1 Samuel 3:1)

“Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”—(John 20:29)

We are in the post Easter season. We have proclaimed the wonder of the resurrection and now live it out. At our best, we are vessels of hope where there seems none, we point to life in the lifeless, and our lives proclaim that Christ can conquer the worst that life can throw at us.

It is a season of victory celebration, but can also be the season of Thomas, especially for us as United Methodists. Thomas missed out on the first appearance of Jesus and initially followed the way of frustration and cynicism that is all too common for all of us; “Unless I see the nails and put my hand in his side, I will not believe.” It is not hard to go there right now in our division. We have many statements, comments, and articles on Facebook, but if you are like me, despite the many words, it feels like the days of Samuel’s childhood where: “In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions...”

But...with Jesus there is no such thing as a hopeless place. This is true even when we can’t find the risen Christ and within our contemporary scarcity of heavenly words. Jesus says that we are in a blessed place here even when it doesn’t feel blessed: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.”

The challenge is in the last two words: “yet believed.” Somehow, the blessing lies along those lines. To say our situation is a bit like Job is to overstate our struggles. Our challenges around human sexuality really are not on the same level as those of Job, the realities of the persecuted church around the world, and the very intense justice issues that developing countries are dealing with today. We are not fleeing gang related violence in Central America nor are we standing in massive lines for a portion of rice in a refugee camp. Perspective matters.

But the lesson of Job still applies when visions are rare and God seems silent. We are blessed when we yet believe in a risen Savior in whom there is always hope. When we can’t see, we reach. When we can’t find, we keep searching. Darkness doesn’t mean he isn’t there, it just means we can’t see him yet and we rally around the words of Job when he was reaching: “I know that my redeemer lives...yet in my flesh I will see God...”

And so in this post resurrection season where the word of the Lord seems rare and the temptation to be a Thomas arises, let’s instead follow the path of Job with the knowledge that even in these days the Lord is still there and we know that our Redeemer lives. It is in the persistent reach and in the holding on that blessing shines forth in and through the foggy seasons.

In Christ

Pete
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/green 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.  

Mental Health Awareness

May is mental health awareness month, so Lebanon UMC, 8492 Peaks Road, Hanover, is hosting a training for volunteers who work with children and youth about recognizing and addressing anxiety and depression in adolescents. The presenter will be Karla Allen, the Coordinator of Counseling Services for Hanover County Public Schools. The event is 6:30-8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29. Churches and individuals can register by emailing <SarahMForti@gmail.com>. For more information call 746-0980.  

Annual Conference Offering

The 2019 annual conference mission offering goal has been announced: The offering goal is $150,000 and recipients will be:

- Africa University Student Scholarships -- $40,000
- Cambodia Pastors Leadership Training -- $40,000
- Mozambique Lay Leadership Training -- $20,000
- Brazil “Shade and Fresh Water” children’s program -- $20,000
- Just Neighbors Matching Funds Grant for Immigrant Legal Counsel in four districts -- $30,000

For more information call 521-1105.  

Mission Benefit Concert

Reveille’s annual Mission Benefit Concert takes place Sunday, May 19, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. The concert will feature the Mass in G by Franz Schubert, Five Mystical Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and a Baroque piece, Domine ad adiuvandum me festina by Antonio Vivaldi. In addition to Reveille’s Chancel Choir, Reveille Ringers, and guest instrumentalists from the Richmond Symphony, there will be featured performers for the three choral pieces. Tom Bailey will play organ (Schubert) and harpsichord (Vivaldi), and Matt Nagi will play piano ( Vaughan Williams). Margaret Taylor Woods, will be a guest soprano soloist for both the Schubert and Vivaldi. Craig Smith will be a baritone soloist on the Vaughan Williams. Robert Phanord II and Reggie Potts IV will be the bass and tenor soloists, respectively, on the Schubert. This remarkable group of performers will make for quite a musical experience. The beneficiary for this year’s concert is Friends of the Homeless. This is a free concert and open to the public. For details, visit <www.reveilleumc.org/music-events>. Reveille UMC is located at 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond.

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.  

Highland Support Project

Are you or members of your church interested in serving this summer with families in the Guatemalan Highlands? Highland Support Project (HSP) has a team with open spaces, and we would love to have you join us. We will travel July 6-13 and assist its sister organization, Asociación de Mujeres del Altiplano (AMA), with stove or sweat bath construction helping families reduce firewood or water use. This is an opportunity to learn about Mayan culture, build relationships with global neighbors, learn more about yourself and others, support a nonprofit that supports local persons and their priorities, and so much more. Learn more about the mission of HSP at <http://highlandsupportproject.org/>.

This team will be made up of members of several different congregations, some who have volunteered with HSP in the past and others who have never traveled internationally. We will have youth and older team members. Rev. Kendra Grimes (who serves as Chaplain at Randolph-Macon College) will be the team leader and guide daily reflections and worship opportunities. Questions? Contact Kendra at <kendragrimes@vaumc.org> or 752-7374.

The cost is $750 for the flight (due to HSP by May 15) and $985 for food, lodging, activities, and project expenses (due June 6 to HSP). If you are interested in joining us, please sign up by emailing <hello@highlandpartners.org> by May 15.

Swansboro Children’s Concert

Hear the combined voices of the Swansboro Elementary School choir and Reveille children’s choirs on Wednesday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Reveille UMC. Donations benefit Reveille’s Swansboro Community Ministries. Before the concert, come to dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. For dinner reservations, visit <www.reveilleumc.org/dinner>. Reveille UMC is located at 4200 Cary Street Road, Richmond.
Available On Demand Training Events:
- "Layly Leading 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 Mary Kaye Cochran
- "Preaching" led by the Rev. Jonathan Page of Fieldstone UMC
- "UMC Heritage" led by Martha Stokes

Click <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=313596> to register for these events.

Questions? Contact David Bailey <dw>.

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

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

District Opportunities
- May 8–Swansboro Children’s Concert, Reveille UMC, 359-6041.
- May 9–UMW On the Road in Mission, Wesley Community Service Center, 744-3045.
- May 15–Encounter RVA, Boulevard UMC on Broad, 840-1921.
- May 18–Shalom Farms Summer Kickoff, call 592-6151.
- May 19–Mission Benefit Concert, Reveille UMC, 359-6041.
- May 29–Mental Health Awareness, Lebanon UMC, 746-0980.
- June 4–Richmond District Annual Conference Orientation, Good Shepherd 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–Annual Conference, Roanoke.
- June 22–30–Convergence, Randolph–Macon College, 752-8712.
- July 6–13–Highland Support Project, Guatemala, 752-7374.
- July 28–August 2–All God’s Children Camp–Occohannock on the Bay, 571/245-9591.
- August 1–2–Helping Hands, Woodlake 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.