



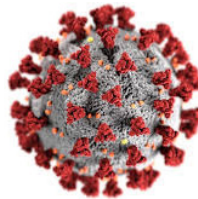
THE RICHMOND DISTRICT DISPATCH

A Newsletter of The Richmond District • Virginia Conference • The United Methodist Church
May 2020

Richmond District COVID-19 Resources

There are an abundance of resources available to local churches pursuing ministry during this time of Coronavirus. Here are but a few:

- ◆ VAUMC New Website has great resources for you and your church. Check them out here: <https://vaumc.org/coronavirusresources/>. Check out the Webinars called Crucial Crisis Conversations at the end of the page link
- ◆ Online Worship Attendance Guidelines: http://doc.vaumc.org/Cabinet/OnlineWorshipAttendanceGuidelines.pdf?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=e-advocate-april-7-2020_9
- ◆ The Spark Mill (Free Strategy Sessions, Webinars and Blogs): <https://www.thesparkmill.com/covid19>
- ◆ UNSTUCK GROUP (weekly Blogs, Podcasts and Webinars): <https://theunstuckgroup.com/coronavirus/> and <https://tonymorganlive.com/author/tony/> (7 shifts churches need to make because of COVID-19)
- ◆ Barna Church Pulse Weekly with David Kinnaman and Carey Nieuwhof (Webinars, Podcasts and Blogs): <http://churchpulseweekly.org/> and <https://stateofthechurch.com/churchpulseweekly> (Free Church tool kit to help during COVID-19)
- ◆ Excellence in Ministry Coaching (emc3): <https://emc3coaching.com/blog/>
- ◆ Fresh Expressions US (Webinars, Audio/Videos, Blogs): <https://freshexpressionsus.org/> ◆



COVID-19 Cancellations and Changes

- ◆ The VAUMC Conference Center is closed indefinitely.
- ◆ General Conference scheduled to begin May 5, has been postponed until 2021.
- ◆ VA PAUMCS Spring Event planned for May 27 at the VAUMC Center will be rescheduled.
- ◆ Annual Conference scheduled for June 18-20 in Roanoke is being moved to September 18-19.
- ◆ The Lay Servant Academy scheduled July 17-19 at Randolph-Macon College has been canceled.
- ◆ Mission Encounter scheduled for July 24-26 at Smith Mountain Lake has been canceled.
- ◆ Jurisdictional Conference scheduled for July, has been postponed until further notice. ◆

New COVID-19 Season Conversation

Examine our Wesleyan theology and faith in light of the current pandemic with "COVID Season Conversations" from the Director of Connectional Ministries. New conversations will be posted at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays every two weeks featuring a theologian or other faith specialist on issues related to staying connected in the COVID-19 pandemic with a brief presentation and time for discussion and questions. On April 29, 2020 at 10 a.m., Dr. Philip Wingeier-Rayo, Wesley Theological Seminary, Professor of Wesleyan Studies and Missiology, will speak about Mission Ministry through the COVID Season. Join Zoom Meeting at <https://zoom.us/j/95541151161> or call 1-301-715-8592 with Meeting ID: 955 4115 1161. ◆

Connectional Resources during COVID-19 Survey

The Richmond District is home to a number of amazing mission ministries that reach out to our local community and help those who are most vulnerable. Unfortunately, many of these ministries are staffed by older members who are no longer able to volunteer. In addition, there are many churches whose local missions do not fit with social distancing requirements (ex. ESOL tutoring) and have put their mission on pause, but have resources to share with those who need it.

We are a connectional church! Let's connect our needs with our gifts so we can be the church throughout the Richmond District.

Please see RichmondDistrictUMC.org for a survey to indicate your church's community ministries, the needs of those ministries, and resources your church may have to offer to assist in others' ministries.

If you have questions please contact Rev. Katie Gooch, 405/301-6215. ◆

UM Center Closing

The VAUMC Conference Center and the Richmond District Office will be closed until at least June 10 due to the Coronavirus outbreak. We are working from home, answering emails, and returning phone calls. ◆

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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) 521-1175 • RichmondDistrict@vaumc.org

May 2020

Friends,

For the last couple of weeks, I have had the privilege of serving with several (9 or less) other folks on Friday mornings at the Belmont Food Pantry. My job is not incredibly hard. I direct traffic. I stand in the parking lot, greet folks as they drive in and try to offer some semblance of welcome and organization to the myriad of cars and people waiting in line for food. There are typically at least 20 vehicles waiting to pick up their prepackaged food for most of the three to four hours that the pantry is open.

Many of you are doing similar work and this description will not be foreign to you. All God's children are there looking for food. Some drive very nice cars, most do not, turning the engine off at every waiting moment to save gas. In fact, the majority of the cars look like they won't make it to the front of that line. But more important are the faces. We try to welcome folks in with a kind smile, but most don't want to look at you. Perhaps it is shame or embarrassment. Most find it hard to say thank you but it doesn't matter. It is clear that the church, as so many of you, are ministering to all God's children in such a time as this.

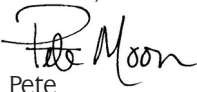
I am holding on to that image: a full parking lot, a line of cars waiting to get into that church. Even in good seasons, a full parking lot on Sunday morning is rare. Even more so, a line of folks waiting to get in.

And yet here, on a Friday morning, the parking lot is full, with a line of impatient people trying to get to the church. The image offers a welcome challenge. For several weeks, I have been speaking to clergy and laity about the devil's temptation to all of us in this Covid-19 crisis. The shadow sides of our souls would like to find a safe place to hunker down and wait it out. We would like to emotionally shelter in place. We would like to not deal with the multiple variables in this contemporary equation and instead seek one place where things seem firm and linear. Some of that is understandable, but as I have said many times, right now we are writing a story. When I see the multitudes of people needing the church on Friday mornings, I am reminded that this is the time to engage, not to retreat.

It may be that things seem so confusing that we may not know where to even enter into the fray. If that is the case, let me offer a challenge. Ask God where you can engage. I am not a spiritual expert, but it is my experience that when you and I say to God, "Here I am, send me..." God seems to answer that prayer very quickly. Prayers for healing and circumstantial relief may take some time, but when you step up to serve the kingdom, God may immediately pick up that call instead of letting it go to voice mail. We may not know to do when we suddenly find ourselves speaking to a live person on the other end of the line.

Let me say clearly that I know that so many of you are doing exactly this. I read your stories and your incredible ministries that you offer when things are so very hard and resources are so strained. So many have stepped up. But like Peter and the disciples of long ago, it is tempting in the face of disappointment to go back to that safe place and simply say, "I'm going fishing..." I know I fight that temptation every day and I invite you to join me in engaging this world and its contemporary challenges in this very confusing time. See you out there and thank you for all you do!

In Christ,


Pete

Clergy Facebook Group

District clergy people are invited to join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/625932661327796/>.

This group is dedicated to our Richmond District Clergy. We want to help keep our clergy resourced and encouraged! Please use this page to share valuable resources that help you in your ministry so that others can also benefit! If you have any specific questions for our Richmond DS, please email him directly at [<RichmondDS@vaumc.org>](mailto:RichmondDS@vaumc.org). ♦

New Conference Website Unveiled

You may have noticed a new conference website was quietly launched late last week. The Conference Communications staff is thrilled to release this new resource and the new possibilities it allows for future communications and resources.

Look around the website at www.vaumc.org to familiarize yourself with the new features and the new layout. You will notice the magnifying glass icon at the top right of the website which will allow you to search the website for anything you might need.

Unfortunately, all the internal and external links had to be changed with the move to a new platform and host. Please be aware of this if you have shared documents from the conference website. You will need to redo links you have shared in the past.

If you have questions, please email communications@vaumc.org.

Please know that we are working speedily and diligently on any questions or concerns you may have. Please be patient with us during this process as we are continuing to update content and to process the technical aspects of the website. For questions call 521-1116. ♦

Prayers for...

- ♦ The family of Rev. James W. Draper, retired, who passed away April 22. He served Lakeside UMC, 1993-1997.
- ♦ Rev. G. Dean Pittman, retired, and wife Janet on celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on March 11.
- ♦ Rev. Al Horton, retired, who is home from the hospital recovering from an apparent TIA. ♦

What is All God's ChildreCamp?

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.



The leadership of All God's Children Camp made the decision to cancel the camp for the week of June 14-19. However, the other two weeks of July 26-31 at Occohannock on the Bay and August 9-14 at Camp Chanco will remain on the schedule. Please consider mentoring with the organization this summer. This summer more than ever, our kids need camp to help bring back some normalcy in their lives!

◆ July 26-31 @ Occohannock on the Bay (Eastern Shore)

◆ August 9-14 @ Camp Chanco on the James (Richmond area)

Mentors Needed for All God's Children Camp

All God's Children Camp will be here before you know it and we are in need of mentors next summer. We will need 90 mentors total, 30 for each camp, both male and female. Please consider giving a week of your time and mentor a camper whose mother or father is incarcerated. You will get a chance to just pour out some love on your camper, engage with them during bible, arts and crafts and worship. You can also encourage them through the week as they learn new activities the camp has to offer. For more information, please contact Lori Smith at lttlelori@gmail.com or 571-245-9591. ◆

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:

Our usual preaching sites-- Beth Shalom, University Park and Elmcroft--are closed to outside visitors for the COVID-19 Crisis. We look forward to resuming our visits soon. ◆



DISTRICT DISPATCH

Richmond District
Virginia Conference
The United Methodist Church
10330 Staples Mill Road
P.O. Box 5606
Glen Allen, Virginia 23058
Phone: (804)521-1124
FAX: 521-1175
Email: RichmondDistrict@vaumc.org

Sharma D. Lewis	Area Bishop
Peter M. Moon	District Superintendent
Susan Petrey	Administrative Assistant, Web Administrator
Maria Maxwell	Coordinator, Next Level Innovations
Tina Gudgel	District Treasurer
Ron White	District Lay Leader
Scotty Doyle	District President, UMW
Dann Ladd	District President, UMM
Bill Chaffin	District Ministry of Scouting Coord.
Bessie Owens	Director, Lay Servant Ministries

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

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

District Opportunities

All Richmond District events have been
canceled through June 10.

- ◆ May 5-15 - General Conference 2020, Minneapolis, MN, 521-1110.
- ◆ May 27 - VA PAUMCS, Experience Your Conference Connection: Church Office Safety, VAUMC Ctr., 521-1124.
- ◆ June 2 - Annual Conference Orientation, Good Shepherd UMC, 521-1124.
- ◆ June 14-19 - All God's Children Camp, 245-9591.
- ◆ June 18-20 - Annual Conference, Roanoke, 521-1124.
- ◆ July 17-19 - Lay Servant Academy, Randolph-Macon College, 521-1155.
- ◆ July 24-26 - Mission Encounter, Smith Mountain Lake, 521-1155.
- ◆ July 26-31 - All God's Children Camp, 245-9591.
- ◆ August 9-14 - All God's Children Camp, 245-9591.
- ◆ September 18-19 - VAUMC Annual Conference, Roanoke, 521-1124. ◆

