

# RICHMOND DISTRICT DISPATCH



## CENTRAL UMC ON THE MOVE

By Central UMC Leaders



The Apostle Paul was one of the most prolific and successful church planters there has ever been. However, he didn't do all the work himself. He had an extensive list of people who were his partners in ministry, including Barnabas, Lydia, Priscilla and Aquila, and Silas. If Paul relied on the support of others, why do we think we can grow ministries ourselves? We Methodists say we're well connected, but we don't always live that out. Central UMC was at a crossroads. It was time to move forward, yet our direction was uncertain. To revitalize required commitment, prayer, and creating a long- range vision. A core group of faithful members have worked for months on this visioning process. We started our revitalization with prayer. We began this journey using Sue Nilson Kibbey's book, *Ultimate Reliance*, as a guide. One thing was clear: in order to be a mission outpost for the Manchester community, we had to make our space safe and usable again. Many repairs to our 120-year-old structure had been put off for a long time. With limited manpower, we discovered the necessity of developing community partnerships. God provided help with moving furniture, patching walls, and painting from Bon Air and New Life UMCs. Members from Reveille and Trinity have provided consultations and helped with ministry. We are grateful for the (continued on page two)

## CENTRAL UMC ON THE MOVE (continued)

support of these congregations. Along with building repairs, decluttering of broken and impractical furniture was needed. Some furniture was sold, enabling us to raise \$1,000. This was a godsend when we found a floor joist had rotted and needed replacing. The amount of the repair bill? \$1,000. As we downsized, we put items out at our busy, inner city, street corner. Sixty sets of foldable bench chairs quickly disappeared. A homeless lady with her shopping cart stopped and commented that our "Free" sign seemed wrong. She wanted to sit and pray. As a result, a Prayer Bench is at the corner-encouraging those walking by to Rest, Think, and Pray. The church website and Facebook information are on the seat. This once unused bench is now a resting spot for dog walkers and others passing by. Partnering with community organizations has proven to benefit us and the larger community. A one-time meeting for community leaders to assess our mission options, has turned into a quarterly forum. Starting in January 2022, we look forward to being a special blessing to Richmond and Petersburg residents, through a large non-profit organization with connections to local school systems. We will have foot traffic in church during the week, giving us opportunity to connect with diverse groups and share Christ's love. This new partnership will increase avenues to invite unchurched folks to ministry events. It will also be nice to have support in meeting the expenses of such a large building.

We have been in revitalization for less than a year. In this brief time, we're seeing dividends. Besides having our space in decent shape, we're also seeing rebirth in our ministry. Our worship attendance has increased nearly 20% from the second half of 2020. Our intentional revitalization has allowed more people to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. An online ministry was initiated in 2020 due to COVID, which has continued, creating a different means to reach new people. Visitors have returned in person. A new constituent plans to join Central as a member in December. Our regular offering has gone up 30% from last year, with two months left in the year. Our urban children's ministry, Kid's Club, has reached new children. We're taking risks and trying new things, like sponsoring a concert. These might seem like small steps, but we praise God for the growth. Most churches are declining these days. We can't complete our update to you without thanking Maria Maxwell and our D.S. Rev. Hyo Lee. They have been instrumental in guiding and supporting our revitalization efforts. May God bless all of your ministries during these challenging times.



## DISTRICT CONFERENCE REPORT

On Sun. Nov. 21, about 130 people gathered virtually and in person at Aldersgate UMC for the District Conference for the Charlottesville and Richmond Districts. The Aldersgate Praise Team opened the Conference with two wonderful songs. We were welcomed by Richmond District Lay Leader Elizabeth Farrell. Richmond District Lay Leader Susan Custer opened with prayer and Charlottesville District Lay Leader Linda Stead shared the scripture reading from Matthew 9:17. The Rev. Hyo Lee shared a message on "New Wine." Several churches presented their highlights from this past year: Aldersgate, Corinth, First, Mt. Hermon, and Salem. The Revs. Ed Rigg and Sarah Sealand reported on their respective District Committee on Ministry. Frank Osburn (Charlottesville layperson) presented a report of the New District Task Force. Due to technical difficulties, we were unable to vote for each district's at-large members to Annual Conference. Charlottesville District Lay Leader Bill Stead closed us in prayer. In the spring, we plan to have a special District Conference to vote on at-large members as well as to approve nomination slates for combined DCOM, Trustees, and Board of Church Building and Location. All other district leaders are asked to serve through June 2022, unless their term is expiring or they are rotating off. This will assist us as we move to simplify the committee and board structure for the two districts.





## DISTRICT ADMIN TRAINING SUN. JAN. 9

District Training for church administrative leaders will be held via Zoom on Sun. Jan. 9. Please sign up to attend the training as noted below:

2:00-3:30pm - Finances with Ms. Carol Draper

2:00-3:30pm - Lay Leaders with Ms. Martha Stokes

4:00-5:30pm - SPRC with D.S. Hyo Lee

4:00-5:30pm - Trustees with Rev. Bill James

A Zoom link will be shared upon registering.

Registration for all training events is available at:

[www.richmonddistrictumc.org/events/](http://www.richmonddistrictumc.org/events/)

## DISTRICT TRAINING JAN. - MAR. 2022

All laity and clergy are invited to participate in District Training on "New Faces in New Spaces". If you are interested in learning ways to reach new people in your community, then this training will be invaluable to you and your church.

**Part One** will be hosted by the Alexandria & Arlington Districts on **Sat. Jan. 15** (see graphic below).

**Part Two: Sun. Feb. 27, 3-5pm**, Charlottesville & Richmond Districts will host a panel of churches with Fresh Expressions via Zoom webinar with livestreaming at Gum Spring and Aldersgate churches.

**Part Three: Sun. Mar. 27, 3-5pm**, churches discerning next steps with Fresh Expressions are invited to this Zoom meeting.

*Please note that you are welcome to participate in any or all three parts!*

## NEW DISTRICT TASK FORCE

In November, a task force began meeting for the Charlottesville and Richmond districts to develop a plan for a new district. The task force consists of the following individuals:

### Charlottesville:

Bob Forrest, laity  
John Glass, laity  
Alex Joyner, elder  
Frank Osburn, laity  
Hu Shaffer, laity  
Ed Rigg, elder  
Sharon Wray, laity

### Richmond:

Matt Bates, elder  
Jimmy Lee, laity  
Elizabeth Farrell, laity  
Jim Mallon, laity  
Pete Moon, elder  
Claudia Stallings, elder  
Sarah Sealand, elder

The task force has divided into three subgroups and is working on:

- 1) WHY we are doing this
- 2) NAME for the new district
- 3) STRUCTURE and tentative budget

Details will be shared as we have clarity on these issues.

NOTE: Suggestions for names for the new district may be emailed to [mallonj1313@gmail.com](mailto:mallonj1313@gmail.com) by 4pm Dec. 5.

## BI-DISTRICT TRAINING DAY

January 15, 2022

**FEATURING:**  
Michael Beck

Director of Re-Missioning: Fresh Expressions

Author of **Contextual Intelligence: Unlocking the Ancient Secret to Mission on the Front Lines**



Bi-District Training Day will take place **online** on January 15, 2022.

**REGISTRATION OPENS IN DECEMBER: [BDTD2022.HEYSUMMIT.COM](http://BDTD2022.HEYSUMMIT.COM)**



## CALLING 21 PROGRAM FOR SUMMER 2022

Intern and Host Church Applications for the Calling 21 Intern program are now available at <https://vaumc.org/calling21/>. This program helps young people discern their gifts and skills and consider a vocation in Christian ministry. Churches who host a Calling 21 Intern have the opportunity to mentor a young person, share the gospel in new ways, and help strengthen the culture of call in the Virginia Conference. If you have questions, please contact Meghan Roth Clayton, [meghanclayton@vaumc.org](mailto:meghanclayton@vaumc.org), or Crystal R. Sygeel, [crystalsygeel@vaumc.org](mailto:crystalsygeel@vaumc.org).

## ADVENT GREETINGS FROM D.S. LEE

*"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)*

*Dear Laity and Clergy of Charlottesville and Richmond Districts:*

*I am thankful for each of you as we quickly approach the celebration of Christ's birth. I continue to pray for you and your churches amidst all your Advent and Christmas preparations. We have many opportunities before us - our time is consumed with planning for a new district, Boy Scouts of America issues, and looking towards some pastoral transitions in 2022. Yet we are a people of hope as our God is a God of hope. May the hope, joy, peace and love of Advent be with you as you faithfully serve the Lord in these fast and challenging times. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

*With Christ's hope,  
Rev. Hyo Lee*

*NOTE: The Richmond District Office will be closed Dec. 24 -31.*



## VIRTUAL CANDIDACY SUMMIT

The Candidacy Summit is for considering or admitted candidates for ministry in the Virginia Conference. The Summit provides opportunities for vocational discernment, connection with others exploring God's call in their lives, and deeper understanding about the VAUMC journey towards certified, licensed and ordained ministry. You must be a high school graduate and 18 years of age to participate. Participation in one Candidacy Summit is required before one can become a certified candidate for ministry in the VAUMC. The event begins Fri. Jan. 14 and concludes mid-day on Sat. Jan. 15. More details can be found at [www.vaumc.org/CandidacySummit/](http://www.vaumc.org/CandidacySummit/) or for questions, contact Crystal Sygeel at 804.521.1141.

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## RICHMOND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Sharma D. Lewis - Area Bishop  
Hyo J. Lee - District Superintendent  
MaryKaye Cochran - Executive Administrator  
Maria Maxwell - Church Revitalizer  
Tina Gudgel - District Treasurer  
Susan Custer, Elizabeth Farrell - District Lay Leaders  
Linda Porter - District Missions Coordinator & District UMW President  
Gilbert Ingram Jr. - District UMM Coordinator  
Pamela Anderson - Coord. District Scouting Ministry  
Bessie Owens - District Director Lay Servant Min.  
Pam Hill - District Youth Coordinator