



March 2009

DISTRICT DISPATCH

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

We envision churches where all God's people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.

Single but Not Separate: River Road Building Connections

About three years ago, single adults of River Road UMC shared with me how difficult it was for them to sit alone for worship in a sea of couples and families. A number of single adults were sprinkled throughout the congregation, but those persons did not know each other. So, I invited them to a Christmas luncheon and conversation.

We asked: "How can the church better meet you where you are?" The resounding answer was to build connections within the congregation so that single adults of all ages could know each other and build friendships. The goal was to offer community to persons who seemed to feel lost in the family-oriented language and direction of the church.



Many churches are unaware of how language and programming continue to presume a population of two-parent families and lengthy marriages. Population shifts in the U.S. demand the necessity for a shift in language and the outdated image of a single adult only as someone who is twenty-something. When language (e.g. "family" events) and illustrations continue to omit the single parent and adult, those persons feel less welcome in a congregation. The majority of U.S. households are now single adult households, and most children are now born to single mothers. If the church continues to market ministries to couples and two-parent families, we will continue to fail to reach this majority.

The River Road UMC single adult group began building community with fellowship: cookouts and luncheons in members' homes and gatherings at restaurants, movie theaters and concerts. Fellowship gradually evolved into a steady monthly Sunday lunch. We would like to add a service component at some point, but fellowship remains the primary objective since the church ministries provide many other outlets for study, mission and growth.

To maintain communication with our ever-changing group, we find email the best way to stay in touch with each other and to publicize events. We advertise the group through the church newsletter, Web site, and bulletins. Our group is a wide mix of persons. Ages range from people in their 30s to 60s. Some are single parents; some are grandparents. Some are divorced, and some have not been married. Some are widows and widowers. In single groups, attendees tend to come and go; having a larger base from which to draw seems to help build a stronger core.

We also have encouraged a shift in church language. We requested that anecdotal sermon material include occasional examples of single parents and single adults. During a recent sermon series on marriage, we included at least one Sunday with a focus on singleness, single parenting, and relationships. Most sermon illustrations are of families with two parents and assume longterm marriages. Most sermon illustrations of single adults assume that those adults are twenty-somethings or teenagers. We have raised awareness that many single adults are much older and often have children and a range of life experiences.

Raising awareness will continue to encourage a broader range of pulpit examples and programming variations, validating and welcoming the single adult as a full part of the congregation. We are, after all, called to love one another and reach out to one another as we all are. The more fully we include the single adult within the congregation, the more fully inclusive becomes the body of Christ.

--Emily Moore is director of Discipleship and Program Ministries at River Road UMC.

Article reprinted with permission from the Virginia United Methodist Advocate/January 2009.

District UMW Breakfast

The Richmond District United Methodist Women will hold their Annual Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, March 28 at Trinity UMC, 903 Forest Avenue. The theme of the event is Jesus at the Table. Participants may register beginning at 8:30 a.m. Breakfast will be served at 9 a.m. followed by the program and worship. The guest speaker will be the Rev. Ben Campbell, Pastoral Director of Richmond Hill. Rev. Campbell is also the Co-Founder of the Micah Initiative, a partnership program between Richmond Public Schools and churches, synagogues, mosques and other communities of faith in Metropolitan Richmond, for the purpose of supporting the education and the nurture of the children of Richmond. The Mission Emphasis for the event will be the Micah Initiative, for which a monetary offering will be received. The cost of the breakfast is \$7 per person and the reservation deadline is March 14. Reservations should be sent to Mary Jo Whipple, District Treasurer, 1753 Raintree Commons Drive, Henrico, Va. 23238-4222. For information, call 323-9134. ♦

Golf Tournament

Golfers are invited to reserve your spot at Providence UMC's annual Golf Tournament to be held Friday, April 17, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Providence Golf Course, 1160 S. Providence Road. Half of the proceeds will go to support United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond (UMUMR) and its 2009 primary focus, Shalom Farm at Camp Westview on the James. The other half will support Upward Soccer. The cost per golfer is \$65. A picnic will follow the tournament at the Providence UMC picnic shelter, 901 S. Providence Road. Call 745-3182 for registration information. ♦

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Richmond District

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March 2009

A Word from the Superintendent:

A few years ago – in the midst of a marathon run – we reached the point of the race that is often called “hitting the wall.” The “wall” is that point when your body feels as though it has gone as far as it can and there are no more resources to be used; it usually hits you, rather than you hitting it. So – that day - as runners slowed in pain and exhaustion and some runners even collapsed on the curb to rest, someone had posted a large sign that read:

ARE YOU GOING TO FINISH THE RACE
OR SPEND THE NIGHT HERE ON THE SIDEWALK?

I remember that sign and think about it when I am in circumstances in life that are the equivalent of “hitting the wall.” For my choices are usually about the same; do I “finish” what I have been called to be and do, or do I settle for the equivalent of “spending the night on the sidewalk” – possibly uncomfortable, unhappy, alone, and defeated.

The good news is that when I choose to “finish the race” and seek to live faithfully, I don’t have to do it alone. I have a God who strengthens me and goes with me.

May we individually and together as churches choose to run the race we have before us – even in these difficult and discouraging days – and may we find the strength of God to do so.

In Christ,

Steven R. Jones

In the Richmond District and Virginia Conference in February Steve Jones...

- ◆ Attended worship at Asbury UMC– Church Hill, Mt. Pisgah UMC, and Ginter Park UMC.
- ◆ Consulted and met with clergy, leaders and members of Richmond District churches.
- ◆ Attended and/or led various conference and district board, agency and committee meetings.
- ◆ Hosted the Richmond District Clergy for their monthly meeting. ◆

VIM to Russia

Volunteers in Mission Team to Pyatigorsk, Russia is scheduled for July 10-26. This is a wonderful opportunity to be in mission and enjoy a time of touring and shopping. This will be our 10th year with a VIM work team to this area where work has been supported by the Virginia Conference. This is an opportunity to help in the rehabilitation of the Boarding School and fellowship with the members of the local United Methodist Church in Pyatigorsk. Call Rev. Sam NeSmith for information at 323-9134. ◆

Chicken or Pig?

The Richmond District Youth held their annual retreat, “Are You Afraid of the Dark,” February 20-22, at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg. The retreat was attended by 234 youth and adults representing 12 of the district churches. Rev. Derrick Parson of Asbury Memorial UMC was the keynote speaker and delivered a message that showed God’s love during hard and troubling times. A special presentation was performed after the message on Saturday night by one of the areas youth, using his talent and love for art, a blank canvas and paint brought the spirit to life. Logan Jones, a Richmond area band performed the weekend praise and worship music.

Here’s a question for those who were unable to attend: Are you the Chicken or the Pig? Not sure of the answer? Contact one of the youth who attended the retreat. For more information about Richmond District Youth call Rick Vance at 512-9725. ◆

Making History

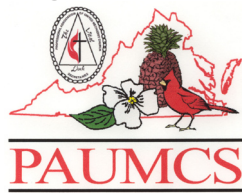
The Richmond District Historical Society of the United Methodist Church will meet at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17 at Ramsey Memorial UMC, 5900 Hull Street Road. Sarah Gerring, Ramsey’s historian, will give a presentation on their church’s 100 year history. The outreach going on at Ramsey is amazing, so bring a friend and learn all about it. The United Methodist Women will provide lunch for \$8 each. Make your reservation by calling 272-7055. ◆

Prayers for...

- ◆ Rev. Al Horton on the death of his foster brother Kieth Fogelman on February 18.
- ◆ Rev. David Carl on the death of his mother, Berleine Carl, on February 17.
- ◆ Rev. Ben Hadley-Goggin who had surgery on February 25 for pain management.
- ◆ The family of Rev. Wilbur Thomas, retired, who passed away January 29.
- ◆ The family of Rev. R. Beverly Watkins, retired, who died January 22.
- ◆ Rev. Joe Winfree and daughter Jennifer who is recovering from January surgery.
- ◆ Pheath Ram, Conference IT/Video Production, and wife on the birth of their first child, daughter Mayrinee, on January 26. ◆

PAUMCS Spring Retreat

The Virginia Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries



(PAUMCS) will host their spring retreat, Explore the Art of Practicing the Presence, March 29-30, at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center, Blackstone. Rev. Myrtle Frances Hatcher, Peninsula District Superintendent, who is known for her wonderful worship experiences, will be the speaker for the event. Rev. Hatcher will lead the group in a time of learning about how they can intentionally experience God's presence in their hectic work environments as they seek to be the face and hands of Jesus to those they encounter in their day-to-day tasks. The event is open to all church administrative staff, full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer, including but not limited to administrative assistants, financial secretaries, office managers and newsletter editors. Cost is \$75 for PAUMCS members, \$90 for non-members, which includes room on Sunday evening and breakfast and lunch on Monday. To register go to <www.vaumc.org>>ministries>>PAUMCS> or call 521-1124. ♦

Oberammergau 2010

The "once every decade" performance of the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany is just 15 months away! We want to invite you to join Bishop Kammerer and us for this inspiring experience as we witness faith in action by a community, demonstrated through music and drama for more than 370 years. Departure date is June 22, 2010, and the costs start at \$2998. We look forward to serving as the Richmond District Coordinators for this Education Opportunities Tours (EO) trip, as well as to meeting you and sharing more about this trip. Questions? Call us at 359-1044 (Brookland UMC), or email <neillcaldwell@vaumc.org>.

Rev. Lynne Caldwell
Pastor, Brookland UMC and
Neill Caldwell,
Editor, Virginia Advocate

New Scouting Supportive Relationship

2009 will see the beginning of a fantastic, new supportive ministry in the Richmond District. Superintendent Steve Jones has established a charter for a chapter of the National Association of United Methodist Scouters (NAUMS). This association works in affiliation with the Global Commission of Youth Ministries aiding youth programs in our churches such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister and 4-H.

All in our District churches are invited to join as charter members of the Richmond District Chapter of NAUMS. The rewards are abundant. The United Methodist Book of Discipline says that we "shall support youth ministries such as the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts USA." Other chapters around the nation have recruited and sponsored chaplains for local Boy Scout camps, provided Bibles for boys and girls attending summer camp chapel programs, present and run Duty to God youth programs, as well as many other programs. Many chapters plan retreats or camping weekends for God & Country. Several chapters sponsor a Ten Commandment Hike that can serve all the youth; not just those involved in Scouting programs. This will also enable us to begin to provide scholarships for an array of training from United Methodist Scouters Workshop week at Philmont, the Boy Scout National Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico to many local and regional Scouting leadership training events. There is the potential to develop chapels at the area Scouting camps as well.

The cost is \$30 a year of which half stays in the District. The other half is used at the national level to support the vast array of programs run by NAUMS. Your support and membership are valuable. Send a check to Richmond District Ministry of Scouting, memo: NAUMS Chapter dues, to 2413 Grey Oak Drive Richmond, Va. 23236.

The possibilities are limitless and those benefiting are many. The national outdoor program has the motto "Leave No Trace" regarding our Lord's great outdoors. Let's paraphrase that for our efforts with our youth. Let's "Leave A Trace" of our Lord and our involvement with them and their Scouting programs. Call Bill Chaffin, 674-6075, for more information. Join the Richmond District Chapter today! ♦

Pals Recreation Outreach

Shining Light Community Outreach Foundation, a 501(c)3 created to further the ministries of Woodlake UMC, is excited to announce our first season of PALS Recreation. Children with special needs are invited to our Hampton Park campus to enjoy playing soccer and other recreational opportunities. The program will begin Sunday, March 15, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. and will continue at that time on Sunday afternoons until Sunday, May 17 (excluding Easter Sunday, April 12 and Mother's Day, May 10). Children ages 4 - 12 with a range of physical, emotional and social difficulties are welcome to this program that will use trained youth helpers and adults to meet each child's special needs while providing a supportive, nurturing environment that promotes physical activity and cooperative play. These activities are open to the public. A donation of \$25 is appreciated, but not required. To register or to determine if this program is right for your child, visit <www.woodlakeumc.org> (look for PALS Recreation) or contact Rev. Donna Holder at <dholder@woodlakeumc.org> or call 739-4535 ex. 32. ♦

True North

Virginia Conference director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries Angie Williams will be the



keynote speaker at the May 1-3 True North: A Confirmation Retreat at Westview on the James. The Steve Kropp Band from Fredericksburg will provide worship leadership. True North is a retreat from Claim the Name and is specifically for middle school students. This is a retreat designed to supplement the local church confirmation training. For more information or a registration brochure go to <www.westviewonthejames.org> or call Cat Holbert Rudys at 457-4210. ♦

Holiday Closings

The Richmond District Office and the Virginia United Methodist Conference Center will close at 1 p.m., Holy Thursday, April 9, and will remain closed Good Friday, April 10, for the Easter weekend. ♦

March Lay Speaking Schedule

Dann Ladd (672-1855) and Larry Brayton (539-2122), Co-Directors, Lay Speaking Ministries.

Date	Place	Speaker
3/1	Beth Shalom	Dann Ladd
3/1	Guardian Place	Jack Anderson
3/8	Elmcroft	R&A Arnold
3/8	University Park	Cindy Butler
3/15	Chippendale	R&A Arnold
3/15	Guardian Place	Russell Busch
3/22	Elmcroft	Larry Brayton

Safe Sanctuaries

Basic Safe Sanctuaries Training will be held Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at the Virginia United Methodist Center, 10330 Staples Mill Road. Workshop leaders will define types of child abuse and neglect, highlight the abuser's profile, identify areas of vulnerability, and discuss policies and procedures to reduce child abuse and neglect. The cost is \$25 per person. Call 521-1138 to register. ♦

District Opportunities

- ◆ March 5-7—Clergy Spouses Retreat, VUMAC, (434)292-5308.
- ◆ March 10-9:30 a.m., District Clergy Meeting, Shady Grove UMC, 521-1124.
- ◆ March 14—Basic "Safe Sanctuaries" Training, VUMCC, 521-1128.
- ◆ March 15—Pals Recreation, Woodlake UMC, 739-4535.
- ◆ March 17—Historical Society, Ramsey Memorial UMC, 272-7055.
- ◆ March 21—Advanced "Safe Sanctuaries" Training, Williamsburg UMC, 521-1128.
- ◆ March 27-28—Restless Hearts: Where Do I Go Now, God?, Williamsburg, 521-1135.
- ◆ March 28—District UMW Breakfast, Trinity UMC, 323-9134.
- ◆ March 29-30—VA PAUMCS, Spring Retreat, Explore the Art of Practicing the Presence, VUMAC, 521-1124.
- ◆ April 14-9:30 a.m., Tri-District Clergy Meeting, Shady Grove/Mechanicsville, 521-1124.
- ◆ April 17—UMUMR Golf Tournament, Providence Golf Course, 745-3182.
- ◆ April 25—Responding to Family Violence-Radical Hospitality: Risk-Taking Mission, UMFS, 521-11143.
- ◆ April 28-30—Wesleyan Building Brothers Men's Ministry Male Leadership Experience, VUMAC, 453-4004.
- ◆ May 1-3—Confirmation Retreat, Westview on the James, 457-4210.
- ◆ May 15-6:00 p.m., District Clergy Farewell Banquet, St. Matthew's UMC, 521-1124.
- ◆ June 14-17—Annual Conference, Norfolk, 521-1124.
- ◆ July 10-26—VIM to Pyatigorsk, Russia, 323-9134. ♦



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Virginia Conference**

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Bill Davis *Chair, Parish Development*

Donna Patterson *District President, UMW*

Roth Sykes *District President, UMM*

Bill Chaffin *District Ministry of Scouting Coord.*

D. Ladd/L. Brayton *Co-Directors, Lay Speaking*

We're on the web at:

[http://gbgmchurches.gbgm-umc.org/
RichmondDistVA](http://gbgmchurches.gbgm-umc.org/RichmondDistVA)

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

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