

THE STAUNTON DISTRICT VOICE

“Called To Love and Serve”

**The Staunton District is part of The Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church
P. O. Box 1048, Fishersville, VA 22939; Phone: 932-1055**

December 2001

Dates To Remember



December 14 at 6:00 p.m.
District Clergy and Spouses
Meeting
Fishersville UMC

December 24-26
Merry Christmas!
Conference and District Offices Closed



From the District Superintendent:

In the home and church community of my boyhood, this glorious season was not referred to as Advent. Instead, it was a period of “getting ready for Christmas.” I have vivid memories of my dad painting and putting up new wallpaper where it was needed. Every year a new piece of linoleum was placed on the dining room floor; it was always slick and shiny. No matter how cold the temperature was outside, mom would send us out with a bucket of warm, soapy water, cloths and newspaper to wash the windows. All the furniture was polished. In the midst of all of these activities, we had to learn our parts for the Christmas play sponsored by the Sunday school. We did all of these chores diligently because we had to be “good” in order to receive a visit from Santa Claus. These and many other activities were set forth in anticipation of celebrating the blessed event of Christmas.

While these fond memories still give me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside, I have an even deeper appreciation of the fact that my parents taught me the real meaning of Christmas. Dad would always read the story of the birth of Jesus each Christmas morning while we gathered around the breakfast table. He would then explain the purpose of Jesus’ birth and the impact of God’s love and grace upon our lives through the gift of His Son. This home nurturing was continued through the teachings of the church because our parents carried us to Sunday school, and participated in its activities.

Getting ready for Christmas (Advent, preparation) has now become much more than a seasonal celebration for me. Yes, I fully enjoy all of the seasonal celebrations and festivities—the cards, cantatas, and social gatherings. They serve to remind me of how special an event Christmas

really is. But living the Christmas experience each day brings joy and hope to my life. I seek to live each day in preparedness for and expectation of the presence of Jesus Christ. I expect Emmanuel; I expect God to be with me each day of my life. I need God’s presence and power to guide me through moments of human weakness and fear, as well as in times of gladness and joyful celebrations.

Kathy and I trust and pray that each of you will find great joy in getting ready for Christmas this year, and that the spirit of Christmas will continue to bring hope and happiness to you and your family throughout the New Year.

In Christ,
Alton M. Washington

A Letter From Bishop Joe E. Pennel, Jr.

Dear Friends in Christ:

As I returned from the Council of Bishops’ meeting, I sadly discovered that certain parts of the mass media have described the pastoral letter of the Council of Bishops as a criticism of President Bush. These reports, as you will see in the enclosed letter, are not accurate.

The bishops wrote and supported a pastoral/theological letter, which was not intended to be a political statement. We earnestly wanted to speak a healing word to a population in deep grief. As you will see, the letter calls for prayer and study while giving thanks for those who have made immeasurable sacrifices. There was no effort on the part of the bishops representing fifty countries to either criticize or justify the war on terrorism. Rather, we joined with bishops from many parts of the world in praying for an ultimate and complete end of war, terrorism and violence. I would like to encourage you to read the official position of The United Methodist Church as contained in *The Book of Discipline* and *The 2000 Book of Resolutions*. I would also hope that all of us would study the teachings of the Prince of Peace as contained in the New Testament.

You also need to know that the enclosed news release was sent to 31 newspapers in the state of Virginia.

In closing, I want to thank you once again for the pastoral care that you are giving to your congregations and the larger communities where you live and serve. Hundreds of reports have come to my office about how you have been Christ to others. I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for the way you are being used to offer comfort and hope to persons who are in deep and abiding pain.

In Christ,
Joe E. Pennel, Jr.





work toward alleviating the root causes of poverty and the other social conditions that are exploited by terrorists.”

The Conference Council on Ministries is the main program agency serving 340,000 United Methodists in Virginia.



Drivers Needed!!! Individuals or couples are needed to provide transportation for cancer patients to Rockingham Memorial Hospital (RMH)— mileage reimbursement available. Anyone interested in this very important ministry can get further details from Ms. Judy Coffman at 1-540-434-3360 or Toll Free voice mail at 1-800-416-8847. Please call and help out.

Remember those who are less fortunate.



Mission News

At the District Conference November 18, 2001 we had an announcement about the continued need in Scott and Wise Counties from the flooding of the summer 2001.

Therefore you and your congregation are asked to be in prayer for our neighbors in these two counties; also please take a special offering and send it to the Staunton District Treasurer clearly identified for Scott/Wise Counties. Also collect XL, XXL, XXXL, and XXXXL good clean used clothing for delivery in early 2002. Please have your offering in before December 10, 2001.

These are some of the most needy people in Virginia and it is our blessing to do this act of mercy in the name of Jesus Christ our loving Lord.

--Rev. John H. Carrier,
District Mission Secretary

A Child at Christmas

Jesus was born to a poor family in difficult circumstances. Some people noticed that. Others did not. The children in our care at United Methodist Family Services are the kind that come to us in unusual or difficult circumstances. They've been on the streets, they've lived in rough neighborhoods, and they've been abused. Still, at Christmas, they want to be part of the celebration. They want a real family to belong to. They want to feel joy. They want to know they can finish high school. They want a new life. We know this is what God wants, too. We try to help them find that.

As you give to the December Offering for Children this year, remember the blessings you have been given and double them for a child at UMFS. UMFS has doubled in staff, number of children, and budget in the last 5 years. Now, we need you to help us keep up with our expanded growth. We hope to fulfill our 2001 theme, "Double the Blessing!" with a two-fold increase in our offering this year. Join us in doubling the blessings that a child can receive this Christmas.



Let us DONATE a fresh cut CHRISTMAS TREE to your church (This is the 2nd year offering this program) 12 ft. and larger (may be reduced to desired size) – we cut and you haul. PINEDALE

FARM – White Pine Christmas Trees – Wholesale and Choose and Cut also available. Virginia's oldest Christmas Tree Farm – Growing Since 1953 – 540-939-4565; e-mail: pinedale@mgwnet.com, 732 Bear Wallow Flat Lane, West Augusta, VA 24485 – J. Walter Hodge, owner, Bob Hodge, manager. Please contact us for details and to let us know you are coming. Thank you.

Retired Ministers and Spouses

The Roanoke District Retired Ministers and Mates invite our brother and sister retired clergy and mates from the Staunton District to join in a gathering for fellowship and to explore the possibility of planning an overnight retreat in 2003. The Gathering will take place on April 24th, 2002, at Camp Alta Mons from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The cost of the gathering and lunch is \$10.00 per person.

Camp Alta Mons is located at Shawsville on the Roanoke District about 25 minutes south of Salem. The Camp is in a beautiful rustic setting. Maps will be provided to interested persons.

Please respond to: Roy and Louise Miller, 1917 Avon Road, SW, Roanoke, VA 24015-2705, phone: 540-343-7529, email: rolmiller@juno.com for further information and directions.

***Perhaps the best Yuletide decoration is being wreathed in smiles.**



District Youth News

Youth Report On UN Seminar – The week of October 16 – 21, I went to New York City with other Youth from our Conference. We were there for a United Nations Seminar on Peace and Justice. The experiences I had over the course of the week left me with a completely different outlook on life and a new perspective of the world around me. We listened to speakers from many different backgrounds and perspectives during the day and then in the evening we toured the city. These experiences proved to be very educational and brought me to many new realizations about life. I've learned to really appreciate everything that I have because there are millions of people that do without even their basic needs. I've also found new reasons in why I believe in everything that I believe in—God, nonviolent resistance, and pacifism. All in all it was a wonderful experience and I would encourage everyone to go next year. --Star Lilley, Marquis Memorial.

District Youth Lock-In and Mission Project - Thanks to all who helped to make the District Lock-In and Mission Project a big success. Lock-In—We had about 37 radical Christians at the Lock-In on Friday night. Thanks so much to the district youth leaders for preparing and leading us in the fun and preparing the greeting cards for the nursing home residents. What creative young folks we are blessed with. How about Kathy Bowers arriving with the Covington contingent about midnight! Thanks to Jerry and Connie Morgan for the hilarious movie. A big thanks to Fishersville for hosting the District Youth and their gracious hospitality extended by Marcy Baker, Marie Weiss and others. Special thanks goes to Pastor Jim and the Ibergs who arrived early Saturday morning with several others to help prepare breakfast. Mission Project—We had 30 servants on Saturday to help the Abundant Life Family Center in Charlottesville. Their Director, Rydell Payne, was so thankful for everyone pitching in to: Help get their newsletter copied, folded and ready for mailing (special thanks to Marie Weiss for her gifts of office management); Cleaning of the library and bathroom area; Painting the office and generally reorganizing the office area; Removing the overgrown dirt and grass from and cleaning the basketball court outside.

Lock-In/Mission Project...

I attended the Lock-In at Fishersville. It was wonderful to see lots of new faces from our district. I had a lot of fun making cards for the patients at the nursing home. On Saturday we went to Charlottesville for our mission project. Yeah I know what you're thinking they stayed up all night and then they go work but it turned out really good. I signed up to paint; it was great. I think the whole thing went perfectly and I would love it if we could have another one of these. --Debbie Harris, Fishersville

I had fun at the Mission Project in Charlottesville. I wish I would've gotten to stay for more of the lock-in, but the little time I was there, I enjoyed it. I liked working with everyone and getting to talk to them again. It felt good to help dig up



the basketball court that was under a lot of dirt and grass. It would be good to do more things like this; it feels good to help people out. --Jerome Johnson, South Covington
 I had a wonderful day at our Mission Project. I guess one of the best parts for me was watching the uncovering of the basketball court. The children were so excited about having a place to play ball. To see even the little ones helping, just renewed my spirit. I think that our LORD wants us to help there. With what we did last year and this year, I feel we were a big help. Would do again anytime. 4 CHRIST, Kathy Bowers, South Covington
 Youth are the Church of today, not tomorrow...

New Web Site For Staunton District Youth – Check out the new Web Site for Staunton District Youth (stauntondistrict.trigon.com). Thank you Jerry Morgan, Granbery, for creating our web site. Check it often for District Youth happenings. Email Jerry at mobjack68@excite.com with anything you would like to add to the site such as youth group pictures, activities, calendar, etc.

Staunton District Youth R & R –February 8, 2002 District Youth R & R at Solid Rock Café, Waynesboro. Hosted by Youth of Calvary UMC. Staunton District Youth Retreat – New Date for Retreat at Camp Overlook is April 5–7, 2002. (Goal 130). Work Shop Leaders needed for Retreat. Contact: Steve Joplin at 886-9367 or steve.joplin@hollister.com. Awakening 2002 – Williamsburg, VA, April 26-27, 2002.

The YOUTH of the Staunton District are the greatest! God has such good plans for you. Thanks again for being BOLD, REAL and HONEST for JESUS.

Steve Joplin

God's picture of Glory

An Alaskan girl was found by her teacher, admiring a beautiful sunset. When the teacher suggested that she try to put the scene on canvas, she replied: "Oh, I can't draw

Christmas is God's picture of glory.

We at the Staunton District Office wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a most Blessed of New Years!!

*The Staunton District United Methodist Church
 P. O. Box 1048
 Fishersville, VA 22939*



Workshops Postponed

Many of you have attended the workshops sponsored by the District Council on Ministries (DCOM) usually held in January to assist new church committee persons as they begin their duties. For several years, we have used the same model to bring information to you about the various committees in the UMC.

The Staunton DCOM has decided rather than continue in the same fashion, we would utilize our time and efforts to evaluate what type of training our new and continuing church leaders need most. For those of you that are new church committee members and chairpersons, do not think we have abandoned you. Rather, we would prefer to provide support in an effective manner. If you are a new church leader and wish to receive training in your area, the Staunton DCOM is ready to assist you.

Our training this year will come in more focused ways, and probably in a more intimate setting. The District Office will work with you, your pastor and a wealth of leadership throughout the area to assist you in your new tasks. This may come in the form of our District Superintendent leading a familiar session on Staff-Parish Relations training, or some one-on-one with a knowledgeable person on Finance or Council/Board Leadership. It may come in a small 2-3 person training seminar for you and similarly placed leaders from one end or the other of our district.

As the DCOM works to determine the best vehicle for ongoing training of our valued church leadership, we will endeavor to make a variety of training opportunities available during 2002. We would encourage you to give the District Superintendent, or me feedback on what you feel would best suit your ongoing needs for training. Don't hesitate to ask your pastor to point you in the direction of resources and resource persons—we want to assist you and help you feel comfortable in your leadership role. Help us help you—tell us what you want to have in the way of training. The Staunton District is building a list of resource persons that we can make available to anyone wishing training or guidance. Just give Donna Desper a call in the District Office, or talk to your pastor to get the ball rolling.

--Dave Leatherwood, Chair, District Council on Ministries

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