

THE STAUNTON DISTRICT VOICE

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

(Virginia Conference Vision Statement)

P. O. Box 1048, Fishersville, VA 22939; Phone: 932-1055

December 2002

Issue 12

Dates To Remember

December 5
Ministers and Spouses
Christmas Dinner
Pleasant View UMC

January 6-9, 2003
Ministers' Convocation
VUMAC

January 11, 2003 6:00-10:00 p.m.
District Youth "R & R"
Solid Rock Café, Waynesboro

January 20, 2003 at 1:00 p.m.
District Council on Ministries
District Office

January 25, 2003
District UMM Board Meeting

February 4 at 9:30 a.m.
Ministers and Spouses Meeting

February 27-March 1, 2003
Ministers' Spouses Retreat
VUMAC

March 14-16, 2003
District Youth Retreat
Camp Overlook



From The District Superintendent:

It seems to start earlier each year—the Christmas shopping frenzy. A particular television commercial spotlights the place to purchase the “perfect” Christmas gift for everyone on your list. Yet on December 26th, many of those perfect gifts are returned or exchanged. Might it be true that the perfect gift cannot be purchased, but comes instead from thoughtful, caring hearts? The blessings of such gifts last far beyond the holiday season, because they touch people where they live. They are always the perfect size, age appropriate and go with any color; if they are exchanged or returned, much the better.

So along with the toys, the gadgets, and other material gifts let us consider gifts from the heart. What are they? One might be the gift of acceptance. The world as we know it can be a cold and lonely place for many people who think others are not interested in them; the employee whose skills have been outdated due to technology; new neighbors in the community who look different and speak a different language; someone who has made a mistake and needs forgiveness. Through acceptance of others we will be showing them a glimpse of the unconditional love God has for all of us. Let's wrap the gift of acceptance in a beautiful sense of encouragement and give it to someone who needs it. It is a perfect gift from the heart. Another such gift is self-confidence, which enables someone who is a self-doubter to believe in oneself, above the opinions and stereotypes of others. We do this by example, showing moral courage and inner fortitude built upon a steadfast faith. One never knows who is moved by the level of trust one portrays in overcoming difficulties in life. Imagine the amount of confidence Mary had to have when she discovered that the birth of the Savior of the world would take place through a poor peasant girl like her. We never know how God touches people, thus we must be careful how we criticize. While an angel assured Mary of God's accompanying power and presence Mary visited Elizabeth who also offered her personal encouragement, and shared in Mary's joy. Opportunities are abundant in our world wherein we



Our Deepest Sympathy Is Extended To: Dr. & Mrs. Alton Washington and their family on the death of Kathy's brother Ralph Shelman. The

Washingtons are our District Superintendent and his wife.

Rev. Douglas Gunsalus and his family on the death of his father, Dr. Rev. R. D. Gunsalus. Rev. Gunsalus served on the Staunton District, but now serves New Hope UMC.

Rev. & Mrs. Michael Copeland and their family on the death of his grandmother. The Copelands serve Granbery Memorial UMC.

can use our faith to encourage others to develop self-confidence and faith within themselves through the presence of God. We can help others through our witness to experience Emanuel—the presence of God. It is a gift from the heart!

Then there is the gift of opportunities. Church officials should give people opportunities to engage in missions and ministry. Individuals can give opportunities for others to grow by letting go of preconceived and prejudicial feelings toward others. Pre-assigned labels and roles are little more than burdensome nonsense. God gave humans dignity, not labels. As fellow human beings we need to give everyone equal opportunities to help them become all that God intends them to be. It is a gift from the heart.

Finally, we can offer the gift of ourselves. We cannot place a price tag on our worth to others: the witness of our personal Christian experience to someone who is struggling; the gift of listening for someone who needs to tell their story and share their concerns, the gifts of time and presence to minister to those in need, the gift of humor and laughter. We are God's eyes, ears, hands, feet and voice in the vast wilderness of human needs. As we are blessed, we can certainly offer ourselves to others; "a perfect gift" that needs to be exchanged. The gift of self is a gift from the heart.

When we give gifts from the heart we share in the peace and goodwill as well as the joy and love of the season. They are gifts of life.

May God's gift of goodness be with you always.

In Christ,

Alton M. Washington



**District
News**

Staunton District Conference News

The Staunton District Conference met on Saturday, November 16, 2002. Following are highlights of the Conference:

- Voted favorably to hire a District Program Director in 2003.
- Nominated the following persons to be candidates for General and Jurisdictional Conferences: Earl D. Cash, Janice Failes, Robin Powell, Sam Harris (youth), Rebekah Rigg (youth), Dorothy Ravenhorst, Jewell Marshall and David Leatherwood.
- Presented "All God's Children" Awards to churches which have completed the requirements thereof to: Calvary, St. James, Mint Spring, Mt. Olivet, St. John's (Staunton)

- Elected the following At Large-Members and Alternates to the 2003 Virginia Annual Conference: Beham Black, Marilyn Blagg, Pauline Carr, Frank Clinedinst, Larry Creamer, Heather Gordon, William Hepler, Raymond Holloway, David Irvine, Faye Kirkland, David Leatherwood, Lena Mahone, Jewell Marshall, Susan Obaugh, Patricia Pleasant, Dorothy Ravenhorst, Howard Taylor and Susan Wilk; Alternates: John Sayers, Janet Weller, Bob Price, Eileen Miller, Robert Wirt and Lloyd Stanley.
- Elected District Council on Ministries Officers and District Committees. These will be listed in the January VOICE.

To: Pastors and PPRC Chairpersons:

Re: Profile Information

Pastors have received information from the District Office concerning profiles for the pastor, church and community. The church and community profiles need to be shared with the PPRC (and others if necessary) to make sure that they are accurate. Pastors have the password for each church if new information is to be included. Accurate reporting is essential, especially if a pastoral change is anticipated. Pastors need also to make sure their profiles are updated and accurate. The deadline date for all profiles to be completed is January 20, 2003. Thank you.



Ministers' Spouses Retreat

When: February 27 - March 1, 2003

Where: VUMAC, Blackstone

Who: All Clergy Spouses
(male and female)

Theme: "Blessed...Less Stress"

Our resource leader this year is Dr. Vic Maloy. He is the administrator at the VIP Center in Richmond. We will be sending more information to all spouses at the beginning of the year but want everyone to put it on his/her calendar.

Making a difference

One hundred years from now, it won't matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child.





District Youth News

(web site: stauntondistrict.tripod.com)

Staunton District Youth R & R – 6:00–10:00 p.m., Saturday, January 11, 2003,

District Youth R & R (Recreation & Renewal) at Solid Rock Café, Waynesboro. Fun, Fellowship, Games, Praise and Worship, Music! Cost: \$5. We will have PIZZA for dinner. Bring a friend and a snack. (See Flyer enclosed)

Report on United Nations Seminar – The United Nations trip was one that was amazing, and one I will never forget. When I got onto the bus I didn't know anyone, but halfway through the week I had 40 new friends. The Seminars on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were really neat in the way that they displayed the message for peace. The topic we discussed was Faithful Actions in a Violent World. This topic dealt with terrorism a good deal of the time. The guest speakers gave their points of view on each topic, and how the topic was being discussed within the UN. It is amazing that the members of the UN dedicate their lives completely to help people around the world.

The trip wasn't all study though. We stayed at the Hotel Edison, which is half a block away from Times Square. We also visited the Empire State Building; went to see The Lion King on Broadway; visited Harlem and attended a church service; rode a ferry past the Statue of Liberty; and rode past Ground Zero. This trip was amazing and an eye opener to me, and I would recommend this trip to anyone who wants to see how to make a difference in the world! --Brian Sarbin, Calvary UMC.

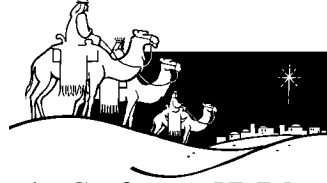
Report on Middle School Retreat – Staunton District Youth had a great weekend at the Middle School Retreat held November 8-10 at Blackstone. The Staunton District youth from Main Street, Christ-Staunton, Calvary and Greenville were in attendance. The praise band, "Waterproof Feat" was awesome! Speakers were great, offering thought provoking and challenging personal testimonies. Youth from throughout the conference gave a total of \$2,678 offering to YSF, which was made through fundraising activities.

Staunton District Conference – Thank you to the District Youth for coming to the Staunton District Conference Sunday, November 16, at Central-Staunton. The Youth received many compliments on their worship offering of songs and signing. Congratulations to Sam Harris and Rebekah Rigg for being nominated to attend General Conference 2004 from the Staunton District.

Staunton District Youth Retreat – Mark your calendar, March 14–16, 2003, Staunton District Youth Retreat. Praise Band "Refuge" will be with us all weekend at Camp Overlook. Cost: \$55. **Don't miss it! More details with Flyers coming next month.**

Jeremiah 18:4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Steve Joplin



United Methodist Men's News

Eight men from the Staunton District attended the Conference UMMen Spiritual Retreat at Blackstone November 1–3. Rev. Chris Buskirk opened the session with a sermon titled: "God's Gym." Saturday's sessions were "Love and Prefer One Another," "Accept and Greet One Another" and "Encourage, Comfort, and Bear the Burdens of One Another." Sunday's sermon was "Grace and Admonish One Another." The Retreat concluded with Worship and Communion.

Calvin Hughes and Frank Shultz captured a Trophy in the Team Horseshoe Pitching contest. Earl Cash received an award for Most Unusual Shot in the golf tournament.

Next year's Retreat will be November 7–9, 2003 with Dr. George E. Morris, Senior Professor of World Methodist Evangelism, The World Methodist Council, as guest speaker. Put this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

January 25, 2003 District UMMen Board meeting. Location is to be announced.

March 29, 2003 UMMen Leadership Development and Business meeting at Bon Air UMC, Richmond. Try to get all your men to attend.

Earl Cash, UMM President

United Methodist Women News

December 7th - We will have our annual Advent Breakfast and Officer Training at Fishersville UMC. This is the training for the Local Unit officers for next year. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the cost of the breakfast is \$5.00. If you did not pick up your Program Book at the Annual Meeting you may do so at this meeting.

God has Richly Blessed us and it is my prayer that He will continue to bless us and expand our borders, giving us new opportunities to be in mission to those around us.

Doris Hedrick, District President





Very special Christmas

This time of year should be a time of peace and joy, As we recall that special night and that baby boy Who was born in a manger

on that starry night.

For the shepherds and wise men, can you imagine the sight!

The love they shared could surely be felt

As one by one they came to the manger and knelt

Beside the babe all wrapped and quiet

On that very, very special Christmas night!

By his birth we are given a special love,

Sent from the Father who reigns above.

So enjoy the festivities, food and gifts, too,

But remember his birth was meant especially for you.

Make this Christmas special and share that peace and

joy

That came about by the birth of that baby boy.

--Myrna K. Orr

First United Methodist Church

Anderson, IN

Christmas

Christmas is the LIGHT that burns eternally. It is a glow that warms the hearts of people wherever the message of "Peace on earth to those of good will" is believed.

Christmas is PEACE in a world where people have been alienated from each other by hatred and jealousy.

Christmas is JOY of fellowship, of giving, of sharing, of lifting, of caring and of being what Christ wants us to be.

Christmas is FORGIVENESS, the time for fresh beginnings, a time to right the wrongs of yesterday.

Christmas is GIVING to those who cannot give to us. It is visiting the neglected, lifting the fallen, giving hope to the hopeless, assuring victory to the defeated, living the spirit of good will to all humankind.

Christmas is SURRENDER of one's life to Christ in renewed dedication, which makes Christ the Lord of our Lives.

**All of us at the District Office wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a most Blessed of New Years!!*



The Staunton District United Methodist Church
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*He shall
be great
and shall be
called the
Son of the
Highest.*

Luke 1:32