

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

April 2003

Issue 4

Dates To Remember



April 2 at 9:30 a.m.
Bishop's Teaching Day
Calvary UMC, Stuarts Draft

April 4-5
"Awakening"
(Conference Youth Event)
Virginia Wesleyan College

April 20
Easter
(Conference and District Offices closed on Friday,
April 18)

April 21-26
Cabinet Meeting

April 26
Staunton District UMM Board Meeting
District Office, Fishersville

May 2-4
The Conference UMW Spiritual Life Retreat
VUMAC.

June 1 at 3:00 p.m.
Annual Conference Orientation
St. John's UMC, Staunton

June 8 at 3:00 p.m.
A Service of Farewell
(Celebrating the ministry of our District
Superintendent, Dr. Alton M. Washington, who will
be retiring in June.)
Fishersville UMC

June 15-19
Virginia Annual Conference – Roanoke, Virginia

June 25
Pastor's Moving Day

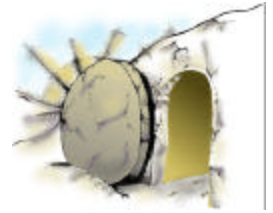
From The District Superintendent:

Resurrection Witness

The gospel of John (20:1-18) shares in a dramatic way, Mary's witness to the resurrected Christ. She stood outside the tomb weeping; she peered inside hoping against hope to see him in her sorrowful moments. She saw two angels who started a conversation with her, asking, "Woman, why are you weeping?" One can feel the hurt, grief and sorrow in Mary's reply: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him." When she said this she turned around and saw Jesus, but she was so filled with pain, emotions and tears that she did not recognize him. How often are we so consumed by our emotions that we fail to see Jesus, even when we are searching for him? Jesus likewise asked: "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She took Jesus to be the gardener and said: "Sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Then Jesus called her by name, "Mary," and she immediately recognized him. What a joyful time this must have been for her to witness the fact that Jesus was alive! She then carried the good news to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and told them what he had spoken to her.

Later that evening, while the disciples were fearfully huddled behind closed doors in the Upper Room, Jesus came and stood in their midst and offered the warm Jewish greeting, "Peace be with you." He was not angry over their having deserted him three days earlier, an indication of the power of forgiving grace through the resurrected Savior. He showed them his pierced hands and side as proof that he was the same Christ. He spoke the words of peace to them again; breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." All of the fear, gloom and sadness had turned into Easter joy. Jesus was alive; they had seen him and heard him.

This was Mary's and the disciples' witness of the risen Christ. What experience, what proof, what certainty do we in the 21st Century have of the resurrected Christ? Like Paul explains in First Corinthians 15:3-11, we were not around when Jesus



rose from the dead. He explains that he knows the resurrection is true because of the many testimonies of several witnesses to this amazing event. Then Paul gives his personal witness in verse eight: "Then last of all he was seen by me also, as one born out of due time." This was more than a witness of others; Paul had seen Jesus for himself. Like Paul, we were born out of due time; we were not around when Jesus was resurrected, yet we can experience a personal witness of the risen Savior. Whenever we feel the guilty burden of sin lifted from our soul, it is none other than God's grace in the risen Christ who removes it. The joy which follows sadness; the healing which follows pain; the still small voice which says, "I am with you" during fearful, uncertain moments are evidences of the resurrected Savior in our lives. When a certain urgency compels us to perform particular ministries or services, it is the resurrected Spirit of Jesus Christ calling us to be a witness to God's people in his name. The empty tomb is undoubtedly a witness of Jesus' victory over sin and death; but even more so is our personal experience and witness. May God bless all of us to be Easter people, and keep the Spirit of Jesus Christ alive. Amen.

Peace and Grace,
Alton



Note To Lay Members and District At Large Members of

Annual Conference: If for any reason you cannot attend Annual Conference, please notify the District Office **IMMEDIATELY**. Forms have been distributed to all pastors to report any changes of lay persons to Annual Conference. You may contact the District Office for additional forms: 540-932-1055. **IT IS MOST ESSENTIAL TO ATTEND TO THIS PROMPTLY IN ORDER FOR ALTERNATE DELEGATES TO BE REGISTERED, AND RECEIVE ALL IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING ANNUAL CONFERENCE.** Thank you.

Attention: Pastors and Spouses
Please get birthdays of your children up through college age to Christy Gresham so she can remember their birthdays. You can reach Christy at P. O. Box 190, Selma, VA 24474; Phone: 540-862-2735; email: gods_child@ntelos.net.



***It is only by forgetting ourselves that we can draw near to God.**



From The Conference Office:
First Stockton Academy of Evangelism – The first Stockton Academy of Evangelism will be held at Blackstone on May 5-7. Rev. Michael Slaughter is the

keynote speaker. Cost is \$130 per person or \$100 per person with two or more from the same church. \$100 scholarship is available for each District Superintendent to give to a lay person. Registration deadline is April 21. A registration form is available on the web page or from the District Office.

Denman Award in Evangelism – Nominations for the Denman Award in Evangelism are now being accepted. Forms are available on the web page or by contacting Anna Workman at the Conference center. Deadline is extended to April 30. These awards are made to both a clergy and lay person each year.

Vocational Education School – The Virginia United Methodist Churches, through the offering taken at Annual Conference, provided the funds for the Vocational Education School to be built. The school was dedicated to Bishop Pennel. The President of the Country along with the Bishop Machado of Mozambique presided over the dedication. Go to the following Web page for more pictures and stories about the Vocational School and the Elementary School at Tinga Tinga.

<http://www.vaumc.org/mission/CambineSchool.htm>

Middle East Crisis: First Hand Perspectives From the Holy Land – April 8, 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd UMC in Richmond. Rev. Alex Awad, a missionary from Bethlehem, and Mr. Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, will be the speakers. Contact Jean Sharp in the Conference Office for further details and/or to register.

District Youth News

(web site: stauntondistrict.tripod.com)

Staunton District Youth Retreat – 135 attendees had a great time at the Staunton District Youth Retreat held at Camp Overlook on March 14-16. The number of attendees was up from 80 last year. Fifteen churches from throughout the Staunton District were represented at the Retreat! Keynote speaker, Kelly Alvis, led us through a Mural Project that challenged each one of us to ponder how we could serve God. Praise band, Refuge, led us in praise and worship times throughout the weekend. Our theme "The World is Thirsty, The Water is Good" was intertwined into messages and songs throughout the weekend. A great



big Hug and Thank you to all the youth and adults who helped facilitate the Workshops and Family Group times. \$145 was collected for YSF (Youth Service Fund) during fundraising times. Thanks, praise, glory and honor to our strong and mighty God.

Youth Service Fund – A Big Thanks! A special thanks goes to all who participated in last year's YSF (Youth Service Fund) offerings. We (Virginia Conference) raised the largest amount ever (\$49, 821) and surpassed last year's record. Because of the concentrated efforts of your YSF Committee and CCYM (Conference Council on Youth Ministry) to educate our purpose and the availability of these funds at all our events, we have received a record number of grant requests from Virginia Conference local church youth groups who are involved in mission to other youth. From: Waverly "Smitty" Smith, Conference Youth Director.

Awakening 2003 – "Awakening 2003," at Virginia Wesleyan College, Norfolk, VA, April 4-5, will begin at 6:00 p.m. A two day event for all youth, adult workers, pastors and young adults featuring contemporary Christian bands: "PFR," "7 Sons," "Justin McRoberts," "Out of Eden," "Refuge," Comedy by "Coy LaSone," Keynote Speaker: Laurie Polich and much more. Join thousands of youth from throughout the Virginia Conference in praise, worship and fun. Need a registration form? Contact: Steve Joplin at 886-9367 or email: steve.joplin@hollister.com

Adult Youth Workers' Retreat – May 30–June 1. This will be a time for sharing ideas and concerns, Bible Study and Praise times with Jeff Williams and Joe Torrence. New 2003 ministry ideas will be introduced. Location: Cavalier Inn, Charlottesville, Cost: \$76 (includes lodging and all meals). Contact: Waverly "Smitty" Smith at Conference Youth office 800-768-6040 #135

VUMDYLA – Virginia United Methodist District Youth Leaders Assembly at Blackstone, VA, July 10-12, will be an AWESOME EVENT. We would like to have 2–3 Youth (leaders or potential leaders) along with an adult from each church in the district attend this event. This is where we plan our district youth events for the upcoming year. It is also a great opportunity to glean new ideas from other districts and to experience inspiring worship and music by Celia Whitley. Ron Whitley will lead an Adult leadership forum. Come also to learn more about CCYM opportunities for youth in leadership. The district pays for 17 to go. If we have more, then the cost is divided so that all will pay a little. Cost in the past is \$20 each.

Contact Steve Joplin at 886-9367 or email: steve.joplin@hollister.com

2002-2003SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 18:4-6* 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. ⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."

Dear Lord please melt us, mold us and use us to serve you

Steve Joplin

★ EXTRA! EXTRA! ★
Men's News

April 26 – Staunton District UMMen Board Meeting will be held at the Staunton District Office in Fishersville. Coffee

at 9:30 a.m., meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. The meeting is open to all men across the District. Please have a representative from your church attend.

May 2-4 – Southeast Jurisdiction United Methodist Men Regional Conference. Epworth By the Sea. St. Simons Island, Georgia. Featured Speakers: Rev. Jimmy Buskirk and Rev. Chris Buskirk. Topic: "Sons of the Father." At this time we have seven people planning to attend. If you need registration information, contact any of the District officers.

May 30 – 31 – Tri-District Retreat at Camp Overlook. Dr. Gene Thomas will be our featured speaker. He is currently serving as Pastor for Thalia United Methodist Church in Virginia Beach. Gene has a wonderful sense of humor and shares insights and gifted, dramatic portrayals of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. Harrisonburg District will be sponsoring a golf tournament starting at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon following the Retreat to benefit Camp Overlook. See your UMMen President for registrations forms for both of these events.

June 17 – Annual Conference UMMen Breakfast at Thrasher UMC. Breakfast will be served at 6:30 a.m. For tickets contact Earl Cash 540-464-1496, email earlc@cfw.com. Tickets are \$8.00

September 25 – Staunton District Fall Rally will be held at Fishersville UMC. Dan Tatum will be our guest.

Earl Cash, District President

The word got out

Easter. Despite the bribes paid the Roman guards and an elaborate cover-up conspiracy, word got out. A glimmer of faith took hold, and takes hold still.

--Philip Yancey



Transitions In The District

Rev. Dr. Alton Washington has announced his retirement which we will celebrate on Sunday, June 8, from 3:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m. This is time to give thanks for and to honor the Washington's 35 years in ministry.

This celebration will take place at the Fishersville United Methodist Church. Please mark that date on your calendar as we take this opportunity to give Alton and Kathleen a send off to their new journey, which is a continuation of their ministry.

Rev. Kathleen Webster of McGaheysville, VA has been appointed the new District Superintendent. Rev Webster and her husband, Rev Harold Webster will join us from the Harrisonburg District. The District will welcome the Websters in a service on Sunday, July 8th, at Granbery Memorial United Methodist Church in Covington. Please mark that date on your calendar. The exact time will be published later.

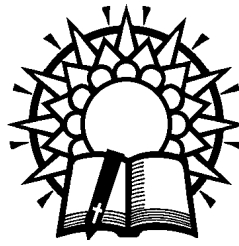
You will receive more specific details for both of these celebrations in upcoming articles of the **District Voice**.

Living Christ

The early Christians did not believe in the Resurrection because they could not find his dead body. They believed because they did find a living Christ.
--Clarence Tucker Craig

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

Return Service Requested



**Virginia Annual Conference
Spring Laity Spiritual Growth
Retreat**

April 5-6 – VUMAC

The Retreat begins at 10:00 a.m. on April 5th and ends at 12:30 p.m. with Lunch/Sending Forth. The

Retreat Leader will be Dr. John Holbert. Dr. Holbert is now the Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology. He is also the author of five books and numerous articles and has been the Bible study teacher for the past two Virginia Annual Conferences. Bishop Joe E. Pennel, Jr., Resident Bishop of the Richmond Area as well as our spiritual leader, will be the Worship Leader. Please call VUMAC at 804-292-5308 for further information or to register.

Come to a **Bluegrass Gospel Concert** at Calvary United Methodist Church in Stuarts Draft at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 5.



The concert will feature Harmony Hill, Dixie Sunrise and Stained Glass Bluegrass. A love offering will be taken for the UMVIM team going to Ketchikan, Alaska in June. Calvary is located at 2179 Stuarts Draft Highway (Rt 340) in Stuarts Draft. Call the church at 337-2980 for more information.

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