



June 2009

THE DISTRICT CORE



A NEWSLETTER OF THE WINCHESTER 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.

Annual Conference 2009



The 2009 Virginia Annual Conference logo reflects the third phrase of the conference challenge and flows from the original 2007 logo created by the conference Communications staff. The Virginia Conference challenge is "Let's get growing! More people, more young people, more diverse people. All for Jesus!" The 2009 logo was created by Linda Rhodes, conference Director of Communications. It features the word "welcome" in four languages: English, Korean, Spanish and Cherokee.

Annual Conference Offering

BRAZIL – SHADE AND FRESH WATER: \$100,000

Brazil has the largest number of "street children" in the world. Millions of parents work long hours to earn enough money for food and shelter. Since children go to school for only four hours each day, most are left alone for long periods, fending for themselves. Many of them turn to life on the streets, gangs and drugs. The Shade and Fresh Water Project is a national network of centers developed by the Brazil Methodist Church to keep children off the streets by offering supervised activities and after-school programs for children between 6 and 14 years of age. Shade and Fresh Water centers have become safe havens — places where children can have fun and learn about the love of Jesus Christ. Your gift will help establish two new Shade and Fresh Water centers to reach underserved children.



tions to give students a quality education — enduring lack of current textbooks, too few desks for all the students, shortages of supplies and classrooms with leaking roofs. Your gift can help fund needed renovations, replace the roof, buy desks for faculty and students, purchase books and furniture for the library, establish a maintenance fund for the building and pay for teaching team exchanges between the Virginia Conference and the United Methodist Church in Mozambique.

VIRGINIA – PATHWAYS MINISTRIES: \$100,000

Pathways, an interfaith community development corporation, works to rebuild and strengthen the city of Petersburg and surrounding counties. Pathways rehabilitates older houses, builds new affordable single family homes, and offers free clinics with medical, dental and even special cardiac treatment for uninsured patients. Its YouthBuild program works with at-risk youths and young adults, providing them with basic education classes, job skills training, counseling, help in building assets, and experience in civic engagement. Your gift can help young people earn their GEDs, transform their lives and, at the same time, help the community by building safe, green, affordable houses for low- to moderate-income families.



MOZAMBIQUE – LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: \$100,000



The United Methodist Theological Seminary at Cambine Mission trains future clergy and laity leaders to serve the needs of the hundreds of new churches being established throughout this southeastern African nation. Seminary faculty members work hard under difficult condi-

Conference Goal \$300,000

A word from the District Superintendent...

I was really struck by an article in the Monday, May 18, 2009 edition of *The Washington Post*—so much so that I cut it out and had Sheryl Pifer, our administrative assistant, put it up on the district office bulletin board. The article was entitled, “Poor? Pay Up” and reminded those of us who aren’t, how expensive it is to be poor! That sounds counter-intuitive, but is really not, for poor people, often lacking transportation, frequently have to shop at small neighborhood stores that charge more than the big supermarkets in the suburbs—\$1.00 more for a gallon of milk, for example. They have to wash their clothes in Laundromats that require lots of quarters and may entail long bus rides and long waits for buses.

That’s one of the main consequences of being poor, according to the reporter who wrote the article, long waits for everything. One woman—one of the working poor—by way of example, takes the bus to work as a certified nursing assistant for which she earns \$15.00 an hour. Having no car, she must ride two buses to get to her job: what would be a ten minute trip by automobile takes her an hour each way by bus. She pays \$850 a month for a one-bedroom apartment and buys her clothes in thrift stores and is clearly not looking for hand-outs. Still, her life is not easy.

“The poor pay more for financial services,” the article quotes one Congressman as saying. “A lot of people who are ‘unbanked’ pay \$3 for a money order to pay their electric bill. They pay a 2 percent check-cashing fee because they don’t have bank services.” And if you need an advance on your next paycheck, the payday loan places charge an effective annual percentage rate of 806%! Who’d be crazy enough to go to those places?—poor people with no credit and no choice.

“There are social costs of being poor, though it is not clear where the cause and effect is,” the article quotes an expert as saying. “We know for a fact that on certain measures, people who are poor are often more depressed than people who are not. I don’t know if poverty made them depressed or the depression made them poor.”

As a pastor for many years, I’ve had experience in trying to help poor people, and I know that some people are hard to help—particularly when alcohol or drugs are involved. Yet, of course, Jesus calls us to strive to make a difference—a practical difference—in human lives during our brief sojourn on this earth. He didn’t say that it would be easy.

Having lived for a while in Africa, I’ve seen truly poor people—desperately poor people—and I always remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the poor beggar at his gate, whom he ignores (Luke 16:19-31), and it make me feel uncomfortable.

It is not easy being poor even in America—especially during a time of recession such as now—and it is a good thing—Jesus seems to say—for those of us who are not, to be reminded of that truth from time to time.

Thank you for all that you do in Jesus’ name.

David Forrest

PAUMCS to offer "Go Green" Name Badges

The Virginia Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries will be selling at their booth in the display area during Annual Conference "Go Green" name badges that you can use over and over again.

They hang on an adjustable strap, they are cloth with a place to slide your name badge into and a closeable pocket for room keys, credit cards or cash. They also have a pocket on the back for a small note pad and two pen holders.

The cost will be \$5 and the proceeds will go toward scholarship funding for the training of local church secretaries. Please plan to stop by during meal breaks and purchase one!

Constitutional Amendment Information

During the May 2008, session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, 32 amendments to the church’s Constitution were approved.

In order to become church law, the amendments require the approval of 2/3 of the total number of members voting at the 2009 Annual Conferences throughout the connection.

Constitutional amendments will be voted upon on Tuesday afternoon (June 16) at the Virginia Annual Conference.

More information is available at www.vaumc.org > Resources > 2009 Annual Conference Information > Constitutional Amendment Information.

4 Cans for 4 Conference Food Drive at Annual Conference

All local church congregations are being encouraged to support the Food Drive at Annual Conference: 4 Cans 4 Conference!

Please send, along with your Church's Lay Member(s) of Conference, a nominal 4 cans of food that we can convey to the South-Eastern Virginia Food Bank, located only a few blocks from our Conference Gathering Site.

Please think in terms of: a can of meat/fish; a can of veggies/fruit; a can of soup/stew; and a can with a Pop-Top, with any contents of your choosing.

There will be numerous receiving stations located around Scope, and a truck in the parking lot with a banner on it saying "Food Bank!"

Other items are acceptable, too, including powdered milk and/or drinks, pasta / spaghetti, hot & cold cereals, sugar, flour, sauces, etc.

Please do not bring glass jars, old or unlabeled cans, home-canned items, any items with alcohol or tobacco products, previously opened or partially used items, perishables (fresh fruit/veggies, as they are supplied by the USDA), soft drinks, punctured or bent cans, or novelty items.

We hope to receive 10,000 cans (4 cans from each of 2500 members), or about 10,000 pounds of food (aka, 5 tons!).

Youth groups, Sunday School classes, Choirs, UMW, UMM, and other groups are also encouraged to participate, and help feed the hungry of greater Norfolk.

'Let's Get Growing' (More Diverse People) Expo

The Virginia Conference will sponsor its third annual "Let's Get Growing!" Expo on Tuesday, June 16, in the Exhibit Hall of the Norfolk Scope during the 2009 Annual Conference. In 2007, the conference was given the challenge "Let's get growing; more people, more young people, more diverse people, all for Jesus!" The emphasis at this year's Expo will be on gathering *all* God's people into faith communities.

The Expo will provide resources for churches of all sizes; help churches identify and reach all people within the communities around our churches; provide examples of significant and successful local church ministries; and teach the responsibility of all of us as Christians to be in relationship with one another. Training opportunities will be available during meal breaks, and food will be for sale on site so that people may eat while listening to the training sessions. Vendors also will be present to provide resources to local churches.

The first conference ministry Expo was held at the 2007 Annual Conference with a focus on evangelism, the "reaching more people" part of the conference challenge. Last year, the focus was on youth and young adults. Hundreds of Annual Conference members and friends have visited the event and participated in the training that was offered in 2007 and 2008. Plan to join us this year to gather more tools for your ministry.

For more information, e-mail Linda Ray, chairperson of the Expo Committee, at lrays@umfs.org.

Volunteers needed for Potato Drop

The Conference Board of Global Ministries (BGM) and the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) are co-sponsoring a Potato Drop, Tuesday, June 16, at 5:30 a.m. The potatoes will provide 120,000-135,000 servings of food to the region's poor and hungry.

SoSA is delivering a tractor-trailer filled with more than 20 tons of donated sweet potatoes to the Norfolk area and BGM is helping to cover the cost of shipping. The truck will arrive in the predawn hours and the potatoes will be dumped at Ghent UMC, 531 Raleigh Ave. Volunteers are needed to help bag and load the potatoes for pickup by regional food banks, church pantries, soup kitchens, and other local feeding agencies. Bagging is expected to be completed before 7:30 a.m.

For more information about the national, nonprofit food salvage, hunger-relief work of SoSA, or about the Virginia Annual Conference Potato Drop, contact Sarah Ramey at 1-800-333-4597 or e-mail vaglean@endhunger.org.



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Annual Conference UMW Prayer Breakfast

The Conference UMW Prayer Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 7:00 AM, at the Norfolk Plaza Hotel, 700 Monticello Avenue, one block from the Scope. The cost is \$14.00 per ticket.

Please contact Nancy Walsh at walshpn@visuallink.com or 540-662-5055 for reservation information. Tickets will go fast, so don't delay!

Conference Orientation on Sunday, June 7

The Winchester District Orientation Session, in preparation for the 2009 Annual Conference, will be held on Sunday, June 7, 3-5 p.m., at Stephens City UMC in Stephens City.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

- ◆ June 4 - District Finance Comm., District Ofc. - 10 a.m.
- ◆ June 7 - Conference Orientation, Stephens City UMC - 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ June 9 - Clergy Exec. Committee, District Office - 9:30 a.m.
- ◆ June 13 - Cabinet meets in Norfolk
- ◆ June 14-17 - Annual Conference meets in Norfolk
- ◆ June 23 - DCOM, Braddock St. - 10 a.m.
- ◆ June 27 - UMW Day Apart, Randolph-Macon Academy - 9:30 a.m.
- ◆ July 1 - Pastors Moving Day
- ◆ July 2 - District Office Closes at 1 p.m.
- ◆ July 3 - District Office Closed
- ◆ July 6 - UMM Exec. Comm., District Office - 7 p.m.
- ◆ July 14 - Clergy Exec. Comm., District Office - 9:30 a.m.
- ◆ July 15 - Cabinet meets in Richmond
- ◆ July 16 - UMM at Camp Rainbow
- ◆ July 17 - Clergy Assoc. Welcoming Reception, Kernstown UMC - 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ July 24-26 - School of Christian Mission, Blackstone (weekend session)
- ◆ July 27 - 30 - School of Christian Mission, Blackstone (week-long session)
- ◆ July 28 - DCOM, Braddock Street UMC - 10 a.m.



"You shall each revere your mother and father..."
LEVITICUS 19:3, NRSV