



May 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.

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.

Rev. Dr. Susan Garrett will make a power-point presentation on the 32 amendments to the church constitution that were approved by the 2008 General Conference.

In order for the amendments to become church law, they must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the members of all the annual conferences. A yes or no vote will be taken on each amendment during the Annual Conference session.

Three key issues have emerged among the proposed amendments:

- Voting rights for local pastors
- Regional conferences world-wide
- The definition of inclusiveness.

To preview the text of the constitutional amendments, and to read articles summarizing reasons for and against each amendment visit: www.vaumc.org/index.cfm/fa/cal.view.htm.

'From Ordinary to Extraordinary Leadership' workshops

This is an opportunity for new church leaders to learn more about being effective leaders in the 21st century and to learn about the role of laity in church ministry. The two remaining events, led by the Rev. Glen Langston a consultant with Four Seasons Ministry, are scheduled for the dates and locations as follows:

- * May 16 – Verona UMC, Verona
- * May 30 – Ebenezer UMC, Stafford

For a brochure and to register online, visit the Web at www.vaumc.org, click on "Events" and then the dates. You may also get a brochure from the conference office of Lay Life and Work at 1-800-768-6040, ext. 153, or (804) 521- 1153; or your district lay leader.

"4 Cans 4 Conference"

When the United Methodists gather for Annual Conference from the far reaches of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we have a long, missional tradition of bringing conference kits for those in need around the world. This year, in addition to the kits, each Clergy and Lay Member is being asked to bring "4 Cans for Conference." This initiative is endorsed by the Conference Planning Committee, our Bishop, and Common Table leadership.

A large truck will be parked across St. Paul's Blvd. from the Scope, and there will be several drop-off locations inside the arena for your donations. On the last day of conference, the "4 Cans" of food (meat, vegetable, soup, and pop-top) will go to the Southeastern Virginia Food Bank, located only a few blocks from the Scope. The food bank has already fed more than a quarter million meals this year – more than in all of 2008! In short, the demand/need is up; the supplies are down.

We can help make a difference long after conference has concluded! If everyone who attends will bring just 4 cans of food to Conference, we will be able to deliver 10,000+ cans to the SEVA Food Bank. But if you're inspired and the Spirit leads, you might want to bring 4 cases of cans - one filled with each type of food! It could be an outrageous gift to the food bank and to those in greater Norfolk who are hungry!

The 4 Can groups are:

- * **Meat /Protein-** beef, chicken, fish, pasta, tamales, ravioli, hash, etc.
- * **Veggies/Fruits** - corn, beans, peas, mixed veggies, potatoes, sauces, fruit, etc.
- * **Soup / Stew** - beef stew, hearty soups, meatless soup, brunswick stew, etc.
- * **Pop-Tops** - with a variety of contents that can be opened without a can opener and eaten directly from the can, for those without access to kitchen facilities

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A word from the District Superintendent...

The Winchester Star has shrunk! For those of you who live outside the immediate Winchester-Frederick County area, I should perhaps explain that as of a few weeks ago our local newspaper here has gotten physically smaller by a few inches. It now feels very strange in your hands—as if something is missing—as, indeed, it is. Apparently, these are tough times for the newspaper business: I gather that both readership and advertising revenue are down. Newspapers all over the country are cutting back or shutting down.

So far *The Washington Post* hasn't gotten smaller in the width of its pages, but it has dropped some popular sections—including (to my astonished dismay, I must confess) the Sunday "Book World" section. Apparently, most people (at least those younger and less gray than I) get their news nowadays from online sources or TV or some other medium that does not involve cutting down trees to produce.

As an old-fashioned newspaper reader (I always like to read the whole thing—very slowly, I might add—much to the annoyance of my long-suffering bride, Nancy), this business of the newspaper's going the way of the dinosaur makes me sad. Oh well, nothing lasts forever in this world—not even General Motors, apparently.

But in case you're one of the dwindling few who still reads newspapers, you may have seen an interesting column in the Sunday, April 26, 2009 *Washington Post Magazine* written by a woman who returned to church after many years away, after the break-up of her marriage. She couldn't stop crying, she said, as she visited church after church—finally settling on an Episcopal one, evidently—after visiting a Methodist Church, among others. She seemed to find some solace for her pain in the church—even after years as an avowed atheist.

Her story is a good lesson for those of us in the church. Experts tell us (and my own experience as a pastor confirms) that people often return to church after major crises in their lives. We need to expect hurting people to come through the doors of our churches every Sunday: you just never know who may turn up or what they're going through.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of that "radical hospitality" that Bishop Schnase talks about in his book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. Is your church truly prepared to welcome the widow, the orphan, the sojourner who appear at your gates—as the Bible puts it?

Remember that hurting person has a name: the name is Jesus.

Thanks for all you do in Jesus' name.

David Forrest

Harmony UMC takes Intergenerational Mission Team to Camp Overlook

Harmony UMC took a team of 16 people of all ages to Camp Overlook during Spring Break week (4/5 to 4/9, 2009) to help with clean up and restoration around the camp.

What a great week we had! The weather was cold but our spirits were high! We stayed together in one of Camp Overlook's retreat houses working during the day and enjoying fellowship, games and camp fires with 's'mores at night!

Some of the work we did was cleaning up brush, removing graffiti from Noah's Ark (one of the cabin areas children stay in during camp), poly-urethaning the Ark, fixing plumbing issues, making crosses out of nails for a summer craft project and more.

We accomplished a lot and it was great having an intergenerational group as we learned from each other and sparked an interest in future mission trips.



cont. from front page

Are there other food/supply needs? Boxed food items, such as hot and cold cereals, pasta, grits/cream of wheat, bread, dried beans, powdered milk/drink mixes, and money (cash and checks payable to SEVA Food Bank).

DO NOT BRING: Expired date items, dented/rusty cans, home-canned goods, soft drinks, alcohol-/tobacco-content items, perishable items, OTC medications, pantry left-overs, glass jars/bottles, condiments, or novelty items. Think of the recipients – and let their needs guide your choices.

How might I learn more about the SEVA Food Bank? See their website: www.foodbankonline.org. The SEVA Food Bank is a non-profit organization, one of many across Virginia, that helps feed those in need, both directly and through many partner agencies in local neighborhoods.

Who can participate in "4 Cans for Conference"? YOU! Individuals, Sunday School classes, entire congregations, youth groups, friends, Clergy (active and retired), Boy/Girl Scouts, families, Mission Teams, and ANYONE who cares about the hungry in Tidewater.

For more information about, or to help with the logistics of, the "4 Cans for Conference" collection, please contact: Jim Earley (revsrus@comcast.net) or Walker Chapel UMC (4102 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22207; 703-538-5200).

**YES, YOU "CAN" MAKE
A DIFFERENCE!
4 CANS 4 CONFERENCE!**

UMCOR Kits for Conference

The 2009 Virginia Conference kit collection is being conducted to replenish the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) supply. UMCOR's Sager Brown Depot reports there is a need for all types of kits. Local churches are encouraged to collect items for any of the following most requested UMCOR kits and bring them to Annual Conference for delivery:

- ◆ **Birth Kit:** Place these items inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag. 1 hotel-size bar of soap (1 oz. and up); 1 pair of clean latex gloves; 1 square yard of clear 4 mil plastic sheeting; 3 pieces of clean string each 12" long; 1 clean single use razor blade (carefully wrap the blade in paper or plastic to protect it and keep it from causing injury); 2 flannelette receiving blankets, each 1 square yard. All items included in kits must be NEW items.
- ◆ **Health Kits:** 1 hand towel (15"x25" up to 17"x27", no kitchen towels); 1 washcloth; 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized); 1 metal nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers); 1 bath-sized bar of soap (3 oz. and up); 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, no child-size brushes); 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages (Band-Aids). (NOTE: DO NOT INCLUDE TOOTHPASTE! UMCOR Sager Brown is now purchasing toothpaste in bulk to be added to health kits before shipping to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.) Seal all items in a 1-gallon plastic bag.
- ◆ **School Kits:** 1 pair blunt scissors (rounded tip); 3 pads (or loose leaf) of 8½"x11" ruled paper (approx. 250 sheets total); 1 30-centimeter ruler; 1 hand-held pencil sharpener; 6 unsharpened pencils with erasers; 1 large eraser, 2½"; 1 box of 24 crayons (only 24). Prepare a 14"x16" (finished size) cloth bag with handles and one of these three closures (Velcro, snap or button) and place items in the bag. (A pattern for making cloth bags is available from the UMCOR Web site at <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/schoolbagpattern>).
- ◆ **Baby/Layette Kits:** 6 cloth diapers; 2 shirts or 2 one-piece body suits; 2 baby washcloths; 2 gowns or sleepers; 2 diaper pins; 1 sweater open in the front; 2 receiving blankets. Bundle the items inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with the diaper pins.
- ◆ **Sewing Kits:** 3 yards of cotton or cotton-blend, solid color or print fabric (must be 3 yards of uncut fabric); 1 pair sewing scissors; 1 package of needles; 1 spool of thread; 5-8 matching buttons. Wrap sewing notions in the fabric and place in a sealed one-gallon plastic bag.

IMPORTANT Packing Instructions: All items included in kits must be NEW items. All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

Do NOT include any personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits. These things must be removed and will delay the shipment. Kits should be packed in boxes with only one type of kit in each box, with the contents clearly written on the outside of the box.

Please include \$1 per kit for processing and shipping; \$1 per health kit for UMCOR to purchase toothpaste.

Include ALL monetary donations on one check, payable to "Virginia Conference UMC," earmarked for "Kits" and brought to the collection site. Do not place checks inside the boxes. Kits may be brought to the Norfolk Scope and dropped off at the trailer location (TBD). Receiving station hours are: Sunday, 3-7:30 p.m.; Monday, 7:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m.



DISTRICT CORE

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Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

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!



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 2009 logo was created by Linda Rhodes, conference Director of Communications.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

- ◆ May 1 - District Office closed for Apple Blossom
- ◆ May 1-3 - UMW Spiritual Life Retreat, Blackstone
- ◆ May 6 - Comm. on Superintendency, District Office - 10 a.m.
- ◆ May 12 - Clergy Exec. Committee, District Office - 9:30 a.m.
- ◆ May 19 - Cabinet meets in Richmond
- ◆ May 22 - District Office closes at 1 p.m.
- ◆ May 25 - District Office closed for Memorial Day
- ◆ May 26 - DCOM, Braddock St. UMC - 10 a.m.
- ◆ May 27 - DCOOM, Macedonia UMC - 9 a.m.
- ◆ May 29 - Clergy Farewell Banquet, Crums UMC - 6-8 p.m.
- ◆ June 4 - District Finance Committee, 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.
- ◆ UMW Day Apart, Randolph-Macon Academy, 9:30 a.m.



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