

APRIL 2025

DISTRICT DISPATCH

Official Newsletter of the Three Notch'd District

Hope Through Ashes

BY REV. HYO J. LEE, PH.D., DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

On March 30, I attended the rededication service of Rose Park UMC in Madison, Virginia. The church had suffered an arson fire on January 25, 2023. The scene of ashes and burned remnants of the altar, altar rail, pews, and stained glass was heartbreaking. To add to the somber reality, the day my wife and I visited Rose Park, it was cold and raining.

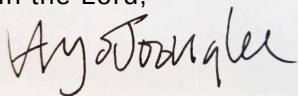
Moments like this—when tragedy strikes in the form of sudden illness, job loss, or the passing of a loved one—can feel overwhelming. The question is: In times of hardship, where do we find hope and strength?

Today Rose Park UMC is beautifully restored. The service of dedication was attended by dozens of children. This reminds me of Ezra 6:13-18 and its account of the joyful celebration of the second temple's dedication in Jerusalem. The people rejoiced with music and feasting, likely with dancing and even tears of gratitude. But their journey to this moment was not easy. Rebuilding the temple was met with fierce opposition—threats, bribery, and complaints lodged against them by their adversaries, Tattenai, Shethar-Boznai, and others. Moreover, some had endured forty-nine years of Babylonian exile, followed by nearly two decades of waiting and struggle. Yet, through it all, "the eye of their God was upon them" (Ezra 5:5, NRSV). God moved the heart of a pagan king, Darius, to ensure the temple's completion. What seemed impossible—what appeared lifeless—was brought back to life, much like the resurrection of Christ on the third day.

This is our good news today: No matter the challenges we face, God's eye is upon us. God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives and through our churches. His resurrection power is real, and His presence remains with us.

May the assurance of God's guidance and God's abiding presence be with you today and always.

In the Lord,



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2025 KITS FOR CONFERENCE

JUNE 12-14 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN ROANOKE

JUNE 7 KITS FOR CONFERENCE COLLECTION DATE



This year for Annual Conference, Cleaning kits (a.k.a., flood buckets, UMCOR Cleaning Kit - Global Ministries), Hygiene kits (UMCOR Hygiene Kit - Global Ministries) and Feminine hygiene kits (UMCOR Menstrual Hygiene Kit - Global Ministries) will be collected and stored until pickup for delivery to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg, PA. We will have two locations in the district for kit collection only on **Saturday, June 7:**

10:00am-2:00pm at Culpeper UMC, 1233 Oaklawn Drive, Culpeper - in the upper parking lot at the Pavilion

9:00am-12:00noon at Lakeside UMC, 2333 Hilliard Road, Richmond

How Should Local Churches and Individuals Cover the UMCOR Shipping Cost? (Please note that no money will be collected on June 7 and no kits should be brought to Annual Conference.)

1) Calculate Shipping Cost:

Hygiene Kits and Feminine Hygiene Kits are \$2.00 x Number of Kits Assembled = Total Amount in Shipping

Cleaning Kits are \$3.00 x Number of Kits Assembled = Total Amount in Shipping

NOTE: If doing a mixture of kinds of kits, one payment is needed for the total of kits assembled.

2) Payment options:

Pay online using this [link](#) and include "Kits for Conference" in the text box.

Pay via Check. Make checks payable to VAUMC with "Kits for Conference" in the memo line. Mail to: VA Annual Conference of the UMC Attn: Treasurer's Office 10330 Staples Mill Road Suite 100 Glen Allen, VA 23060 (Please note this is a new address.)

How can churches help?

- 1) Put kits together with your youth group, UWF/UMM, Sunday school or other small group.
- 2) Offer a blessing over the completed kits and the people who will receive them.
- 3) If your church needs to rent a vehicle to help transport kits from your church to a collection site (see above), please email Jo Ann at joannbatteiger@vaumc.org.
- 4) Celebrate what you've done! Take pictures, post on social media and share in the excitement of serving together.
- 5) If you are not able to make a kit, but would like to give financially to support this effort, you can give [online](#) or through a check and designate "Kits for Conference" in the donation or memo line.

Candle lighting ... meditation ... space to breathe ...
inspired by ancient Celtic worship

**Reflect ... Refresh ...
Renew**

5:55 - 6:35 p.m.

Thursdays March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10
Duncan Memorial UMC



LENTEN CELTIC WORSHIP

Do you need a personal, prayerful respite during the hectic activities of Lent? The Office of the Chaplain at Randolph-Macon College and Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church invite you to REFLECT, REFRESH, and RENEW in a weekly 40-minute gathering based on the ancient Celtic worship tradition of candle lighting, music, prayers, quiet reflection and space to breathe.

On Thursday, April 3, our reflection will be led by **Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson**. Services are 5:55 to 6:35 p.m. in the sanctuary of Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church, 201 Henry Street, Ashland, VA 23005. All are welcome.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Road, Henrico, will present a Tenebrae Service on Friday, April 18, 7:00pm. The service includes the extinguishing of candles as the passion of Jesus is boldly proclaimed through multiple voices. This service has been coordinated by Elizabeth Scribner, Director of Worship Arts, and will be in-person and live-streamed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 13 PASSION SUNDAY SERVICE

On Sunday, April 13, 4:00-5:00pm, there will be a Choral Evening Service for Passion Sunday at Trinity UMC, 903 Forest Avenue, Richmond. The service will feature Scripture, music and prayer to set the mood for Passion Week.

APRIL 27 SPRING FEST

Trinity UMC, 903 Forest Avenue, Richmond is hosting a Spring Fest on

Sunday, April 27, 3:00-5:00pm. It's been a long weekend and we are excited to celebrate the start of a new season and gather together. Spring Fest is designed with families in mind and will feature Jonathan Austin, a petting zoo, inflatables, fire truck and more. All are welcome!

Registration is recommended. Rain date is May 4.



MAY 2-4 SPIRITUAL LIFE RETREAT

The United Women in Faith are hosting a Spiritual Life Retreat,

“Soul Care”, May 2-4, at Massanetta Springs, Harrisonburg. Rev. Joanna Dietz will be the retreat leader. The cost for the weekend is \$195. Scholarships are available for first-time attendees. For more info, email Frances Ellis, vauwfsq@gmail.com. Registration is available [here](#).



United
Women
in Faith

JUNE 13 UMM BREAKFAST

The United Methodist Men will hold their Annual Meeting and Breakfast at Annual Conference, Friday, June 13, 7:00am, at Greene Memorial UMC, 402 Second Street, SW, Roanoke. Rev. Jay Carey, Living Waters District Superintendent will be the speaker. The election and installation of officers will also be held. All men and their spouses are welcome. Email Bob Longworth, dolral@aol.com, to register.



PIANO ACCOMPANIST NEEDED

Christ UMC in Henrico, VA is seeking a PT piano accompanist for our 10:00 am worship service. The accompanist would be responsible for supporting our small congregation in singing as well as sharing a prelude and postlude. Our small choir meets at 9:40 am to review unfamiliar hymns and sometimes a short choir response. The accompanist would also be expected to occasionally accompany soloists. Playing at a limited number of extra services, such as Maundy Thursday, would also be expected. Compensation would depend on experience, education, and proficiency. Please contact Pastor Shayne Estes with inquiries: 804-357-1107 (cell).



NEW DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE AVAILABLE

Our District Superintendent, Rev. Hyo Lee, Ph.D., has published his second book, *Pray This Way*. Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, along with Bishop Joe Pennel and Mrs. Martha Stokes, reviewed the book. Bishop Sue wrote, “If you want to reclaim devotional time and enhance your prayer life, I highly recommend Dr. Hyo Lee’s new book. Through his family heritage of prayer, his deep spirituality, and his academic acumen, Dr. Lee guides us in deep reflection on The Lord’s Prayer and encourages us to build our prayer lives around it. I am grateful for this re-introduction to The Lord’s Prayer and have found it to be a vital stimulus to my prayer life. I think this book will do the same for you.”

Both paperback and Kindle versions are available. You can search for *Pray This Way* Hyo Lee on Amazon or click [here](#).

This new resource may be useful in deepening our spiritual reflection and prayer life.

CELEBRATING CLUSTER MINISTRIES

The Greene Cluster held a joint Ash Wednesday Service on March 5. The churches that participated were Mountain View (Rev. Jair Serrano), Mount Vernon (Elaine Barnett), Restoration (Rev. Greg Miller), Westover (Rev. Benjamin Kent), and Stanardsville (Rev. Yun Goo Kang). These five pastors along with 52 persons from their churches came together to begin their Lenten journey with fellow Christians.



The Culpeper Cluster held a joint Rise Against Hunger event on March 22. This was a joint Lenten mission program. Many churches in the Cluster helped raise funds for the event. Thanks to their generous donations they met their goal for the event. 10,000 meals were packed and everyone was blessed by the time of service and fellowship.

The West End Cluster churches are partnering to host a combined Confirmation class for youth. The class is rotating churches and leaders. They are planning a combined Confirmation retreat to be held at the Wesley Foundation campus ministry at Longwood University.



Three Notch'd District Leadership

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Area Bishop - Rev. Sue Hauptert-Johnson
District Superintendent - Rev. Hyo J. Lee, Ph.D.
Innovation Coordinator - Rev. Jim Chandler
Vitality Coordinator - Rev. Pam Anderson
District Board of Church Location & Building
Chair & Property Manager - Jim Mallon
District Leadership Board Chair - Don Vaught
Executive Administrator - MaryKaye Cochran
Lay Leader - Elizabeth Farrell
Associate Lay Leaders - George Batten, Susan Custer
Treasurer - Tina Gudgel
Youth Coordinator (Richmond area) - TBS
Youth Coordinator (Charlottesville area) - Rebecca Wagner
UWF President - Linda Porter

FAITH SHARING TRAINING COMING SOON

As part of the District goals, Faith Sharing videos will be shared next month. All churches are encouraged to schedule time to share in this important resource. Questions? Contact Rev. Pam Anderson, pamelaanderson@vaumc.org.

2026 DIRECT BILL FOR CLERGY HEALTH BENEFITS

Beginning January 1, 2026, the Virginia Conference will change how the Conference-sponsored health benefits for active clergy are funded. Currently, the majority of the funding for the active clergy benefits comes from Apportionment #407 - Active Clergy Health. In 2026, the apportionment will be replaced by a flat amount that will be directly billed to churches **for each health-plan eligible clergyperson** (full-time appointed clergy). The plan is for the amount of \$1,660 to be billed on a monthly basis (\$19,920 for the year). This is similar to the process used for active clergy receiving pension benefits. Apportionment #408 - Retired Clergy Health will still be in effect. To calculate what a church's cost would be in 2025 if direct billing were being used, you can use this link: <https://unity.vaumc.org/ChurchHealthBillingComparison/>. Should you need additional information, please contact the District Office.