



## From Your District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez



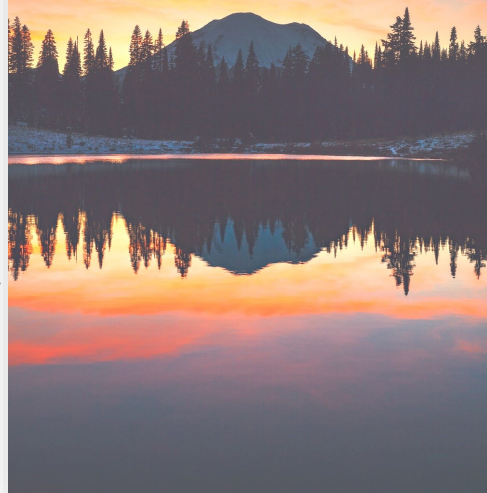
*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.* — John 4:1-4 NIV

Today, I write these words as my heart aches, and I dedicate them to our beloved brothers and sisters, 500,000 of them, who passed away in the last year from COVID complications. Today, we grieve the loss of our brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors. We will miss them. We will miss their smiles. We will miss their physical presence. We will miss their hugs. We will miss a word of comfort from them. We will miss so many things. We will miss them!

Many of them have touched so many of us in so many ways, but as I write these words, I also come to celebrate their lives as they have crossed our paths in one way or another. Today, we remember them as they are dear to us and now they are in the presence of our beloved God, our Creator. Today, we recognize them as they left a very special legacy in our communities. Today, we thank God for their lives who live and dwell in Jesus Christ.

The passage from John 4:1-4 reminds us that everyone who is born into this world will also have to leave it, and for most people, their deepest instincts and convictions tell them that there is something beyond the grave. It is a life of wholeness in Jesus Christ; a fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. For each of us a time is coming when we will step from this lifetime into eternity. Today, we celebrate the lives of 500,000 beloved brothers and sisters who took that step and will always be remembered.

*In my Father's house are  
many rooms. ....I am  
going there to prepare  
a place for you..*



### IN THIS ISSUE:

Annual Conference Update—P. 9  
Bible Challenge—P. 6  
CALENDAR—P. 3  
Clergy Ethics Training—P. 9  
DAT (District Alignment Team) Update—P. 8  
Director of C. Vitality Article—P. 2  
District Library Article—P. 5  
General Conference Update—P. 5  
In Sympathy—P. 3  
Kingsway Article—P. 6  
Lay Servant Article—P. 4  
Mission Central—P. 7  
PiM (Partners in Ministry)—P. 3  
PPP Loan Info—P. 5 and 10  
Race Relations Videos—P. 10  
TAM (Technical Assistant Manual) Update—P. 8  
UMM Zoom Meeting—P. 9  
UMW News—P. 4

I know sometimes it is hard to rejoice in the loss of a loved one. I know because my brother-in-law and friend passed away at a very young age, but we should rejoice in our souls that they are now in the presence of God. We should rejoice that they now know God perfectly, to behold the glory of God's presence and to thank God for saving us and bringing us safely home. This is something we should all remember as we look to the days ahead. The grief we feel and all the emotions that go with that grief should draw us closer to Christ. God knows about every breath we take, every pain we endure, and every groan we utter. To God be the glory! Amen.

In God's Service,

Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez

## From Your District Director of Congregational Vitality - Rev. Gordon Meriwether



### SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU LOVE GOD...JUST A SUNDAY SHARE

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as I pen this meditation, we have missed worship (in person and in parking lot) for four consecutive Sundays due to snow and ice in the Valley. The good news is this pause gives us more sacred time for self-reflection and prayer, and from that mystical time came this Sunday Share.

This past Sunday in my morning devotional time, I read the daily entry from Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest* (February 21<sup>st</sup>).

**Scripture (Mark 14: 3-6)** *"While he [Jesus] was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, 'Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.' And they rebuked her harshly. 'Leave her alone,' said Jesus. 'Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.'"*

**Chambers Questions:** "Have you ever been driven to do something for God not because you felt that it was useful, or your duty to do so, or that there was anything in it for you, but simply because you love him [God]?"

**My Meditation:** Okay...this is not how I was trained as a child, nor, for that matter, as an adult, nor a seminary student....all of life is transactional. I give and I get rewarded...I do good and benefits unfold in goodness....but of course that's not guaranteed, is it?

As a child brought up in the Roman Catholic tradition, I was taught to do good for points...indulgences, if you will. I was convinced that at my very best case, my first days in the after-life would be spent in place called Purgatory working off those countless venial sins I carried into death. The more indulgences I collected in life, the less time I would have to spend in Purgatory. All of my earthly life would be spent sinning, confessing, and doing good to collect those indulgences to gain entry to heaven sooner than later.

I am reminded of the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 who had done everything right and came to Jesus with a question *"Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"* "And Jesus answered, *'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, and follow me.'*" Everything this young man had done in life was to accumulate personal wealth and a tally of good deeds to gain eternal bliss...to a point that he could trade these good deeds for respect, admiration, and hopefully salvation. But no, Jesus knew that this young ruler was only doing this good for himself and to attain the rewards for himself, not for the love of God.

Do we fall into this transactional love trap? Doing stuff because it is the right thing to do? Because you know God is watching and expects you to perform accordingly? Or collecting indulgences to lower the price of admission to heaven?

Somehow this is all about us, isn't it? And more often than not, evil and hurt show up on our righteous doorstep as unwanted, unexpected guests and we cry out to the heavens... "Lord, this is not right! I deserve better! Look at all I have done for you and your people. Why, then, am I rewarded with this pain and agony?"

And so the message of the morning comes to me,... "Gordon, do something just because you love me!" This changes everything and is not at all transactional....Give to God out of my love of God. There is no expectation other than God loves me in ways I cannot fathom or understand, and I know that I AM LOVED.

Lord, I will give from my heart this day simply because I love you.

So Be It.

Your Brother in Christ, Gordon



## HARRISONBURG DISTRICT PIM (PARTNERS IN MINISTRY) ZOOM MEETING, TUESDAY, MARCH 2ND—9:30 A.M. GUEST SPEAKER: DR. DAVE BRUBAKER

*The zoom link will be sent out closer to the date*



Our next speaker is **Dr. Dave Brubaker, Dean of Social Sciences and Professions at Eastern Mennonite University.** Dave was also faculty at CJP (Center of Justice and Peace) prior to accepting his current position in Administration. At CJP, Dave was and is one of Gordon Meriwether's favorite instructors. Using his practical approach to conflict resolution, Dave has written a number of books on congregational conflict, including his most recent

**"When the Center Does not Hold: Leading in an Age of Polarization"**, which is a fascinating and timely text....and the subject of his talk on **March 2nd from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00a.m.** We will get a zoom link out to everyone in the near future.

FYI, Victor has invited our brothers and sisters in ministry of the Winchester District that he oversees to attend as well.

**Other News** Carl Stauffer of Eastern Mennonite's Center of Justice and Peace-building (CJP), who was our last in-person (before Pandemic) Partners in Ministry (PIM) speaker at John Wesley UMC, has been invited to join the staff of the US Institute of Peace (USIP) in DC. As you remember, Carl spoke to us on Restorative Justice. We were so privileged to have Carl share his call and his gifts with us. Now he has been recognized among the world leaders at USIP. Congratulations, Carl!

## SYMPATHIES TO.....



*Debbie Harris, wife of Rev. Jim Harris, pastor at Weyers Cave UMC, on the loss of her step-mother, Patricia E. Bright, 84, on January 28th.*

*Richard L. Custer, former District UMM President and District Lay Servant, died on January 30, 2021. He was a member of Mount Horeb UMC.*

*Juan Trejo died on February 15<sup>th</sup> in Mexico from COVID complications. Mr. Trejo was the father of Rev. Victor Gómez's late brother-in-law, Raúl Trejo, who died on December 4<sup>th</sup>.*

*Ronald Mayes, Sr., died on February 17th. His wife, Margie Mayes, was the District Lay Leader on the Harrisonburg District from 1991—1996. Mr. Mayes was a member of Port Republic UMC.*

## DISTRICT CALENDAR

**March 2 (Tuesday)** District PiM Zoom Meeting 9:30 a.m.\*

**March 4 (Thursday)** UMW Executive Zoom Meeting 7:00 p.m.\*

**March 5 (Friday)** World Day of Prayer\*

**March 11 (Thursday)** Clergy Ethics Training via Zoom (must register)\*

**March 13 (Saturday)** - UMW District Spiritual Life Retreat via Zoom\*

*(Invitation Included with newsletter attachments)*

**March 14 (Sunday)** Daylight Savings Time Begins

- UMCOR Special Sunday

**March 16 (Tuesday)** UMM Zoom forum on Dismantling Racism, 6:30 p.m.\*

**March 17 (Wednesday)** Clergy Ethics Training via Zoom (must register)\*

**March 18 (Thursday)** District Committee on the Ordained Ministry Interviews, beginning at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom

**March 20 (Saturday)** Lay Servant Basic Course - taught by Linda Conrad 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. via Zoom\*

**March 20 (Saturday)** Lay Servant Spiritual Gift Course - taught by Rev. Bertrand Griffin 9:00 am - 4:00 pm via Zoom\*

**March 25 (Thursday)** Lay Servant Polity Class - taught by Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom\*

**April 2 (Friday)** VUMCenter & Harrisonburg District Office closed for Good Friday

**April 4 (Sunday)** EASTER SUNDAY

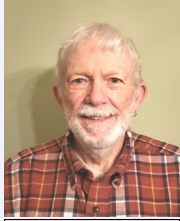
**June 18 - 19 (Friday-Saturday)** - Virginia Annual Conference via Zoom\*

*All events are subject to change.*

*\* Denotes related article*



## A Message From the District Director of Lay Servant Ministries - Pastor Joe Amend



**All laity are  
Lay Servants**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to provide Lay Servant training in March and September, 2020. The Virginia Conference Lay Servant Committee has extended an extra year of "grace" for the Lay Servant renewal requirements. For example, if your current renewal expired in 2020, it has automatically been extended to 2021.

We have rescheduled the March, 2020 training to this March, 2021. If you signed up for any of the three classes originally scheduled - Basic Class, Spiritual Gifts and United Methodist Polity, you are automatically signed up for this year's class. **You must reconfirm your desire to participate in the March, 2021 classes.** Some of you all have already responded; no need to do it again.

The books are already on hand, so all I need is for you to confirm your attendance and I'll get the book to you. The fee remains at \$20.00 (which covers the cost of the books).

**Please mail your monies to Debbie Creech, Executive Administrative Assistant, at the District Office (40 South Gate Court, Suite 101, Harrisonburg, VA 22801).**

**Please note "Lay Servant Training" on the check.** Scholarships are available; please contact me.

**If you didn't sign up last year, but want to participate, it's not too late! Contact me as all of the classes still have vacancies.**

The **Basic Class** will be taught by **Mrs. Linda Conrad** (Laity, Otterbein UMC) and **Spiritual Gifts** class will be taught by **Rev. Bertrand Griffin** (Pastor of the Mt. Crawford Charge). **Both classes will be presented via Zoom on March 20, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

The **Polity Class** will be taught by **Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez** (District Superintendent) on **March 25, April 1, April 8, via Zoom.** Each class is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**The expectation for all three classes is that you have read the book before the class date.**

If you have any questions, please contact me. Please go gently and safely thru your week,

Joe Amend <><  
Harrisonburg District Lay Servant Committee  
Cell: (310) 741-7633  
joeamend@vaumc.org

## UMW NEWS:



Enlightenment is the word I use for this past month. Through Zoom, I became enlightened to what other units are doing across the nation. They face just what we do in this area; how do we stay connected during this pandemic? The Leadership Development Webinar offered training for District Officers as well as fellowship and discussion. Yes, Zoom meetings are catching on. With a favorite drink, comfy chair and casual wear, women share new ideas and plans in their units. We are all on a new path, diverse, but we are determined to journey together and stay focused. The Creative Justice Advocacy Webinar was also very factual and offered ways we can diligently care for God's creation. These ideas will be shared with officers and units.

Our next **Executive meeting** is **March 4, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom.** We stand together, loving Christ, learning and reaching out to others.

Registration for **UMW Spiritual Life Retreat**, "Where We Begin to Understand Jesus," is **attached to this newsletter**. The event will be held **Saturday, March 13, 2021 - 9:00 am via Zoom.** The Presenter will be Melissa White, UMW Conference Vice President. **Don't forget to have your juice and bread available for the "virtual" communion!**

Barbara Phillips, District UMW President  
([grammybp@gmail.com](mailto:grammybp@gmail.com))  
Cell 383-9972 / Home 896-7664



*From Sue MacTavish, District Librarian*

March 2021 featured item:

## Sunday School Curriculum Samples. Free for the taking!!!

**The District receives a box of curriculum material samples from Cokesbury quarterly. You can find these in a Cokesbury shipping box (approximately 2' x 1.5' x 4") in the Library – just ask Debbie to show you. These are here in the Library for folks to review.**

**So Come and take a look – you may discover something really exciting that you can order for your church.**

**AND we would love for some Church / Congregation to come, take, and use them.**

**Free Curriculum – You can't beat that!!**



**Stop by the District Office and “check out” the Library. Please remember to check out library items by signing the book card in pocket with your name and church and date – you may keep as long as you need – but remember to return when finished so that others may borrow. Thanks, Sue**



**GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 2022:** Meeting on February 20, the Commission on the General Conference made a decision to further **postpone the 2020 General Conference until August 29 – September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis, Minn.** as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the safety of mass gatherings and travel.

It is the Commission's responsibility to select the site and set the dates of General Conference. Further, the Book of Discipline requires the Commission on the General Conference to "take necessary measures to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates." The Commission concluded that mandate was not achievable by means of either an in-person meeting in 2021 or a virtual meeting.

**FAQ's about the General Conference postponement are attached to this newsletter.**



Great news! The final PPP Loan Forgiveness Form has finally been released. Our patience has paid off since this 'easy version' now accommodates loans up to as much as \$150,000.

Your church or organization can now obtain the fillable form and instructions by hitting “Ctrl” and Click on the RED icon on the right to take you to the Credit Union Website and the applications.



**PPP Loan  
Forgiveness**

**Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach** still struggles to keep up with demands of those re-entering society from prison. As a result of COVID, the overwhelming demand for housing is burdensome. If the persons are housed at Oxford House, a sober living house, the cost is \$360.00 for the first two weeks and \$130.00 each week following. If they secure housing in a motel, the cheapest we have found is \$1,000.00 a month. One man, who had funds when he was released, went to a cheap motel and was charged \$400 a week, but was only making \$8.00 an hour with a job he found and he was not working a 40 hour work week. Please let us know if you are aware of any available housing. Keep in mind most citizens don't have transportation and will need to be near a bus route.



Kingsway's mailing costs continue to be high as we are not allowed back in the prisons. Keep us in mind as your churches prepare for Lent and Easter and consider a monetary donation for stamps as we send devotions and Easter cards to the inmates. We recently sent Valentine cards to over 1,600 persons.

Check out our website at [kingswayoutreach.org](http://kingswayoutreach.org) and save the date for the "Great Community Give" April 21, 2021. You can order online thru Amazon Smile and list "Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach" as your charity and Amazon will donate a percentage of what you spend without added cost to you. For more information, contact us at [info@kingswayoutreach.org](mailto:info@kingswayoutreach.org) or leave a message at 540-433-5658 if after hours. Someone is in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Louise Jennings

The Harrisonburg District Office will follow the Harrisonburg City School closings for inclement weather this winter.



If the Harrisonburg City Schools are closed, the Harrisonburg District Office will also be closed.

The District Superintendent may be contacted at 202-285-5767 in the event of an emergency.



## A CHALLENGE TO READ THE BIBLE IN 2021

### Bible Readings for March 2021

Bishop Lewis has been encouraging the clergy and laity of the Virginia Conference to read the Bible in a year since

2017. Each year has featured a different way of reading.

From the Bishop  
 March 1 Deuteronomy 5-7  
 March 2 Deuteronomy 8-10  
 March 3 Deuteronomy 11-13  
 March 4 Deuteronomy 14-16  
 March 5 Deuteronomy 17-20  
 March 6 Deuteronomy 21-23  
 March 7 Deuteronomy 24-27  
 March 8 Deuteronomy 28-29  
 March 9 Deuteronomy 30-31  
 March 10 Deuteronomy 32-34  
 March 11 Joshua 1-4  
 March 12 Joshua 5-8  
 March 13 Joshua 9-11  
 March 14 Joshua 12-15  
 March 15 Joshua 16-18  
 March 16 Joshua 19-21  
 March 17 Joshua 22-24  
 March 18 Judges 1-2  
 March 19 Judges 3-5  
 March 20 Judges 6-7  
 March 21 Judges 8-9  
 March 22 Judges 10-12  
 March 23 Judges 13-15  
 March 24 Judges 16-18  
 March 25 Judges 19-21  
 March 26 Ruth 1-4  
 March 27 1 Samuel 1-3  
 March 28 1 Samuel 4-8  
 March 29 1 Samuel 9-12  
 March 30 1 Samuel 13-14  
 March 31 1 Samuel 15-17

#### Tips on reading the Bible daily:

- Start reading the Bible today.
- Set aside a specific time and place each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it.
- Mornings are great, but feel free to use any time that works consistently in your schedule.
- Get a good study Bible to help illuminate the meaning of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek text
- Choose a translation to use during your reading.
- Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding.
- Dive in and enjoy the richness of God's Word! Apply God's Word to your life.

Bible study should be practiced and applicable. These seven steps will help you begin a journey to becoming a "lifelong learner" of God's Word.

Join in 2021 and commit to reading the Bible all the way through Genesis-Revelation in one year. You can access the daily readings by [clicking here](#) → [conference website](http://www.vaumc.org/pages/bishop-Lewis/biblechallenge) or [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com).

[resource: <http://www.vaumc.org/pages/bishop-Lewis/biblechallenge>]





## HARRISONBURG DISTRICT MISSION CENTRAL

Physical location: 1704 Smithland Road,

Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Mailing address: Post Office Box 2026,

Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Website: <http://missioncentralharrisonburgva.com/mission-central/>

### Mission Central Children's Clothes Closet

### Clothes Closet



Our first open day in February brought us 6 new client families, with a total of 12 new children to serve, so the word continues to get out around our community that we are a place that can help. We have seen lots of new moms in the past year who are so appreciative of our diapers, baby clothes and baby equipment that we may have in our inventory. Our local Methodist churches have continued to bless us with wonderful donations, most recently clothes, socks and underwear, diapers and beautiful hand-crocheted blankets. Bridgewater Retirement Community chose us as this year's fund-raiser, and brought us EIGHT bins of gorgeous new or gently used clothing – pressed and hung on hangers! (See photos). We are so touched and grateful for the outpouring of generosity we experience.



If you or your church community are interested in donating, we are currently in need of these items: Boys' sleepers (one-piece PJs with feet) in sizes 18 months and 24 months only; boys' briefs, size 6; boys' shirts, sizes 6 and 7; and boys long pants or jeans, sizes 6, 7, and 8.

Thank you so much for your service, prayers and gifts. You are the reason Mission Central succeeds in being God's hands and feet in Harrisonburg. God bless you and stay safe and warm this winter – Spring is on its way!

**The facility is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month and also open on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Donna Tinsley 703-472-8101



### Equipment for Caring at Mission Central

Equipment for Caring at Mission Central continues to provide needed medical equipment to persons within our local community. We serve Harrisonburg, and the counties of Rockingham, Page, Shenandoah and Augusta. Persons who have medical needs requiring the use of wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, bedside commodes and other medical equipment can receive these from our loaner closet. We also have disposable items such as adult diapers, pullups, bed pads, ostomy, oxygen and wound care supplies. We are open with volunteers on **Mondays, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and Thursdays, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**, unless we have inclement weather. Our schedule goes with the Rockingham County School closures and in February we have had several days when we have not been able to be open due to weather. Hopefully, March will be a better month. I want to say thank you to Jerry Roy who has faithfully been plowing our parking lot and driveway when we have had snowy days. We continue to be blessed with donations from the community which help to make this mission possible as well as faithful volunteers. It is amazing to watch how the needs are met and I feel God's hand is present in this.

If you have questions about donations or would like to volunteer, please contact me.

Delores Reid 540-383-6112



Check us out on Facebook or our website.

[www.missioncentralharrisonburgva.com](http://www.missioncentralharrisonburgva.com)

[www.Harrisonburgdistrict.org/ministries](http://www.Harrisonburgdistrict.org/ministries)



## March 5th

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service.

[Click here for information about this event on March 5th](#)

## RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP UPDATE AS OF 02-24-21

In releasing this TAM (Technical Assistance Manual) revision, the Mission and Ministry work group considers the Annual Conference to be at Stage 2.2, with Stage 3 representing the point at which a 'new normal' has arrived. The work group will continue to monitor and make modifications as the conference moves to that stage. The new update takes into account new research and best practices and provides new guidance in the following areas. [Churches that update their plans as a result of these changes should resubmit their plans to the District Superintendent.](#)



Be sure to read the latest update on the Technical Assistance Manual (TAM) - updated February 24, 2021 by clicking here: [Technical Assistance Manual for Local Churches—02-24-21](#) (PDF) or visit [Return to In-Person Worship page](#)

To see the latest updates on:  
[Easter Egg Hunts](#), [Mission Trips](#),  
[Vacation Bible School](#), [Non-Worship Gatherings of 10 or less](#),  
click here to visit the conference website at <https://vaumc.org/mm/>

Check out this new video titled "COVID Connection." This video series will seek to educate and inform as well as share positivity as the pandemic continues. In this video, the Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor, Lynchburg District Revitalization Coordinator, shares a reminder to wash your hands for 20 seconds, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taylor is joined in song by Yusang Chung, Jeongseung Lee and their daughters, Eva and Esther, as well as Maegan Mitchell and her daughter, Madilynne, to help demonstrate. [Watch video...](#)

## DISTRICT ALIGNMENT UPDATE

Dear Brethren on the Harrisonburg District,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. On Monday evening, February 1st, Bishop Lewis released a video and information on the District Alignment Team where she announced that as of July 1, 2021, I will serve as District Superintendent both the Winchester and the Harrisonburg Districts.

To read more information, click here [District Realignment Team \(DAT\) - VAUMC](#) (A copy of the FAQ's – Frequently Asked Questions, is also attached with this newsletter.)



DISTRICT ALIGNMENT UPDATE

I want to thank you for all the kind words I have already received, especially those words of concern for the workload. I would lie to you and to myself, if I did not acknowledge the challenge ahead. Of course it will be a challenge. But we are so blessed for the staff both districts have and facilitate the work and ministry of the Districts. I am reminded of Moses. When God called him to face pharaoh, he acknowledged the challenge ahead. The only thing he had in his hand was a rod, nothing else. God pointed out to Moses to use what he had in his hand. Of course we know that the power was not in the rod. The source of power came from God, but God used a simple rod, God used the only thing Moses had in his hand.

As clergy and laity of the Winchester and the Harrisonburg Districts, we partner together to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We will have challenges ahead of us, but when we use the little we have in our hand, even a simple rod, when we put our whole trust in God, we will overcome any challenges. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to mold us and to guide us.

In the near future I will invite you with specific instructions to join me in prayer as we move forward. I am so blessed to be part of these two wonderful districts. Let us take the rod and trust in God. *In God's Service, Victor*



## UMM ZOOM FORUM

### MARCH 16TH - 6:30 P.M. "DISMANTLING RACISM"



On the day of the violent events in the nation's capitol, January 6, the Council of Bishops endorsed a letter from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling of the Baltimore-Washington Conference (<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/umc-bishops-condemn-violence-at-u-s-capitol-14929776>). Andrew Kissell, jurisdictional president of United Methodist Men (UMM) and a lay member of the Virginia Conference, said one of the speakers at this jurisdictional event, the Rev. Alex Shanks from the office of the Florida Annual Conference, later shared with him how the UMM can help. He encouraged the UMM, especially older white men like Andrew, to help by boldly promoting dialog on race; by becoming allies for change; and by recognizing that as lifelong learners we may be of much greater help when we actively listen to the victims' stories of hate and exclusion.

To this end, the Virginia Conference UMM is sponsoring a Zoom Forum on March 16, at 6:30 p.m. that will be moderated by Kissell.

Guest speakers will include:

Rev. Reason Chandler, Jackson St. UMC, Lynchburg  
Rev. Larry Jent, Grace UMC (Hartwood), Fredericksburg

Rev. Brenda Laws, Greenbackville Charge, New Church  
Rev. Jeff Mickle, Alexandria District Superintendent

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89824607164> Meeting ID: 898 2460 7164

Fellowships across the Commonwealth are also using a Virginia Conference video and curriculum series on Race Relations to explore the injustices of systemic, institutional racism available at <https://vaumc.org/racerelationsvideos/>

## THE MINISTER AS MORAL THEOLOGIAN – CLERGY ETHICS TRAINING

In light of on-going gathering restrictions, the Quadrennial Clergy Ethics Training, "The Minister as Moral Theologian," has been adapted into a series of asynchronous and synchronous video sessions.

Participants will register for the live training date that is most convenient and will complete the asynchronous portions prior to attending that session. Clergy now have the opportunity to participate without the restriction of travel. If you were Licensed for Pastoral Ministry, or otherwise received your first appointment in Virginia, beginning July 1, 2017 - your participation in the Basic Ethics 101 and 102 courses exempts you from this required training. You are most welcome and we encourage you to attend if you are able.

**Registration is open** for the following live training dates. Four days prior to the live event, prerecorded video segments and resources will be emailed to you. This asynchronous work is required prior to attending the live training.

Zoom Live Training events begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, March 11, 2021**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2021**

**Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

**Thursday, April 22, 2021**

**Attendance is required only once a quadrennium.**

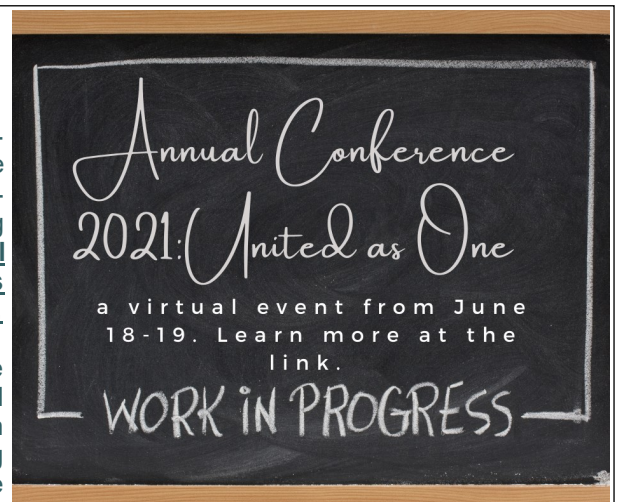
Details and registration are available from <https://na.eventscloud.com/ehome/269796>  
This is mandatory for Clergy.

## VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### JUNE 18-19, 2021 VIRTUAL

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, together with the Annual Conference Planning Team, announced the **2021 Virginia Annual Conference** will be a virtual event held **June 18-19** with the Lumi platform. The Annual Conference theme for 2021 is "**United as One**" with the guiding Scripture of John 17:20-23 (NRSV). **The business of the Annual Conference will be limited to Friday, June 18. Worship services and other opportunities will be conducted on Saturday, June 19.**

Annual Conference members should let the district know if they have concerns about their ability to connect and interact in a virtual Annual Conference session. With this advance notice, districts, together with the conference office, can best assist members in the coming months. Members can expect practice sessions closer to the June session to test their devices and learn about the Lumi platform.



# BRIGHT SPOTS

## VIDEO SERIES

'Bright Spots' is a video series that highlights where God is working in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. You can view the videos on the [conference Facebook page](#) or on the conference [YouTube page](#). So far, the video has covered a church helping their members make their home sacred places, a 'Hope tree' that is an uplifting spot for the entire community, and a long-term care facility that just received its first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Email [com-munciations@vaumc.org](mailto:com-munciations@vaumc.org) if you have a 'Bright Spot' we should feature. [View the video series...](#)

## VIDEO SERIES CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON RACE RELATIONS

*This is a video series designed to engage clergy and laity in authentic conversations about race and reconciliation. Learn more and access curriculum and videos at [www.vaumc.org/racerelations](http://www.vaumc.org/racerelations).*



*Videos available for viewing to date are:*

- Video 1: Old and New World Roots - Larry Jent
- Video 2: New World Slavery - Judy Ledbetter
- Video 3: Early Black Methodism - Kim Young
- Video 4: The Bible of Nat Turner - Mark Person
- Video 5: Civil War/Lost Cause - Ben Campbell
- Video 6: Jim Crow/ Women's Suffrage - Barbara Batson

The Virginia Roots, Race, and Discipleship curriculum is a first step to address racism in the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. This series includes participant's guide, facilitator's notes, a one-minute introductory video for each episode. The small group study encourages participants to listen, learn, and engage in healthy dialogue about history, race, and discipleship. The goal is for all clergy and laity to acknowledge racism as a sin and take action to dismantle racism in our families, houses of worship, our community, and the workplace.

## PPP LOAN INFORMATION

The SBA (Small Business Administration) has announced that PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) applications for employers of 20 or fewer employees (i.e. all of the churches we serve), will be given **preferential processing treatment until March 10**. If you have not already submitted a PPP application for either a first or second draw, this is a great time to do so. The overall program is slated to end March 30, so applications will need to be submitted over the next several weeks in any event - so take advantage of this opportunity as soon as possible. If you need help getting started, please use our online application resources found at the button below.

If you have any other questions about the program, we invite you to call Jim Eads (our CEO), at (804) 672-0200, or email him at [jeads@tumcu.org](mailto:jeads@tumcu.org).

Hit "Ctrl" and Click on the RED icon to the right to take you to the Credit Union Website.



 **Apply For A PPP Loan**

The Harrisonburg District  
Virginia Annual Conference  
of the United Methodist Church



40 South Gate Court Suite 101  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

540.433.2382 office phone  
202.285.5767 DS: call/text

Office Hours: Monday - Friday  
900 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez  
District Superintendent  
[HarrisonburgDS@vaumc.org](mailto:HarrisonburgDS@vaumc.org)

Rev. Gordon K. Meriwether  
District Director of Congregational Vitality  
[GordonMeriwether@vaumc.org](mailto:GordonMeriwether@vaumc.org)

Deborah F. Creech  
Executive Administrative Assistant  
[harrisonburgdistrict@vaumc.org](mailto:harrisonburgdistrict@vaumc.org)

Harrisonburg District on the web at  
[www.harrisonburgdistrictumc.org](http://www.harrisonburgdistrictumc.org)

Harrisonburg District on Facebook at  
[Harrisonburg District of VaUMC](https://www.facebook.com/HarrisonburgDistrictofVaUMC)

Virginia Conference on the web at  
[www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org)

## YOUTH AT SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY

**Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute SUYTI: on campus at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA, July 18 - 31, 2021.** Is there a high schooler (rising sophomore through high school '21 graduate) who is ready to learn about how their faith in Jesus Christ calls them to live and seek justice, all while earning college credit that they can carry with them wherever they go after high school? Thanks to a Lilly Endowment grant, students will have (room and board, program expenses, and three college credits) for only \$200. This will be our final session, so apply now! Contact Ian Urriola, Director at (540) 665-5453 or emailing [iurriola@su.edu](mailto:iurriola@su.edu)

