



The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

July 2010

Old & New . . . God Is with Us

We can get so busy that the only time we pause to pay attention to God is on Sunday morning in worship. There are even times on Sunday morning when it is hard to pay attention to God because we are so distracted by what is going on in our lives at home, at work, and in the world. But God is communicating with us all the time, and longs for us to be aware of Him, to listen to Him and to receive His love. Listening to God is a way to let God know you love Him. I encourage you to pause during the day to be attentive to God's work in your life, even if it is just for a few moments. You can ask:

- When is God most real for me?
- How am I aware of God's presence in my daily life?
- What helps me hear God's voice?
- What reminds me of God's goodness and blessing?

Sometimes, if the "old" spiritual practices have become a little stale, "new" practices can help us be present with God in a fresh way: a "new" way to approach Scripture reading, a different way to pray, or even a "new" way to worship. I say "old" and "new" because there really are no new practices, only ancient practices that have been forgotten and now have resurfaced in the life of the church. So certain practices may be new for us, but they are grounded in the life of Jesus, in Scripture and in early Christian practice.

One old/new practice is silence. Hearing a scripture passage read several times while we sit

in silence—letting the words speak to us, identifying particular phrases or ideas that connect with our spirits—is one way that God speaks to our hearts and reveals God's guidance for our lives.

In July and August, (on the first and third Wednesday evenings at 7:30) we will have the opportunity to engage in a "new" form of worship called Taizé worship. This form draws from ancient practices, but has been used more recently in a Christian community in Taizé, France. The pattern is listening to Scripture being read, followed by times of silence. Silence is often followed by singing of prayers, choruses, and hymns. There is no preaching; this is a time for you to be still before God's Word and listen.

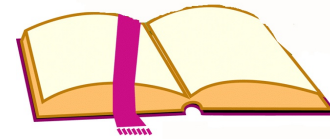


There will be a time of intercessory prayer, when persons are free to pray out loud as the Spirit leads. Toward the end of the service, there will be a time for those who wish

to come to the front of the sanctuary, where a large cross will be lying on the floor. Persons may stand or kneel by the cross to pray, light a candle to place on the cross, and then, when they are ready, return to their seats, while the congregation prays and sings.

We invite you to enter into this "new" worship experience expectantly, trusting that God will be present. Please let me know if you have questions. And so in addition to Sunday mornings, I look forward to worshipping with you on July 7 and 21, and August 4 and 18—come and experience that God is with us.

In Christ,
Pastor Stephanie



Lectionary Readings

July 4

2 Kings 5:1-14
Psalm 30 (UMH 762)
Galatians 6:(1-6) 7-16
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

July 11

Amos 7:7-17
Psalm 82 (UMH 804)
Colossians 1:1-14
Luke 10:25-37

July 18

Amos 8:1-12
Psalm 82 (UMH 804)
Colossians 1:15-28
Luke 10:38-42

July 25

Hosea 1:2-10
Psalm 85 (UMH 806)
Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)
Luke 11:1-13

Birthing and Health Kits for Conference

The Mission/Outreach Committee wants to extend a huge thank you to the congregation for your generosity, and support of our recent mission project. Enough supplies were donated to prepare almost one hundred birthing and health kits, which Esther and Hunter Mabry delivered to Annual Conference. These kits will be donated to needy people throughout the world, including those still in need in Haiti. In addition to the items that were donated, we also received over \$150 in donations which will help with the purchase of toothpaste for the kits, and for shipping.

A special thank you is given to those who stood in the hot sun in the church parking lot on June 12 assembling the kits. Of course, listening to Dan Purdom and his gospel bluegrass group, Heartland, made the work so much easier. Once again Central has shown a desire to serve and a willingness to help those in need!

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverley Streets, Staunton, VA.

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The Central Connection Editor: Agnes Campbell

IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
Resident Bishop Charlene Payne Kammerer
District Superintendent D. Michael Houff
Pastor Stephanie M. Sault
Pastoral Assistant Daniel K. Purdom
Retired Missionary Professor Hunter P. Mabry
Professor MBC Kenneth A. Beals
Minister of Music/Organist Sherry von Oeyen
Church Secretary Agnes Campbell
Custodian Janet Nuckoles



Children's Choir New Schedule

Day: Sundays

Time: 10:00 a.m.

**Location: Children's Sunday
School Room**

**Children's Choir is now meeting as the
first part of the Sunday School session.**

All children are invited!



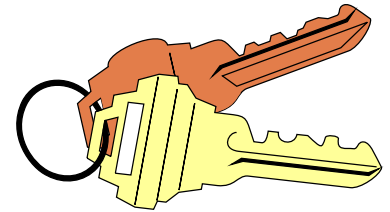
ATTENTION:

Chairpersons & Leaders

Begin planning now for 2011...

Since we don't yet know if our Charge Conference will be early or late in the Fall, we are **requesting that committees meet during July/August to begin preliminary planning for 2011 Ministry Initiatives and any Spending Plan requests.** This will give us a head start for an early Church Council planning session in case we're assigned a very early Charge Conference date. Thanks!

KEYS, LOCKS, & DOORS



Due to a recent attempted break-in and some missing keys (some stolen, one lost), and on the recommendation of our insurance carrier, the Trustees have had our exterior locks and several interior locks re-keyed. This was done at considerable expense, but was necessary for rudimentary security of our facility.

The Trustees have these requests/comments:

1. **PROTECT!** If you have (new) church key(s) or obtain them in the future, please use all due diligence to keep them secure.
2. **NO HIDING!** No "hiding" keys in an inconspicuous nook. Yes, it may be a bit inconvenient to wait for someone to lock/unlock; but if you can think of a place to hide it, an unscrupulous person can figure out the same place to find it.
3. **SECURE!** Groups that use the facility **MUST** have a designated person to make sure **ALL** doors are securely locked when you leave (and turn off the lights while you're at it, or course!).
4. **CHECK IT!** When you lock a door, make sure it closes tightly—pull to see if it opens. If it has the thumb-latch handle, press the thumb-latch and pull the door to see if you can open it.
5. **THANK YOU** for understanding our concern and assisting in the stewardship of this amazing facility!

One final note: **Most** of the time, keys **are** secure, doors **are** properly locked, and the facility **is** as secure as we can reasonably make it; **but**

1 lost exterior key

or

1 door left unlocked

= an entire facility at risk!

So we really appreciate your help with this!



**Leading by
Following
Jesus**

**Disciples:
Nurtured and
Transformed**

VA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2010

By: Anita Jackson, Lay Leader

When one hears the words “Annual Conference” one’s eyes might glaze over. If we stop and think—we are Methodists and that is what we do, conference that is. Next year the Annual Conference will be in Roanoke. You are encouraged to take a ride to Roanoke for the day to observe or just to remind yourself of what we are all about.

This year’s Conference was inspirational, busy and quite frustrating. Central Church was present in and through our generosity. More than 43,443 kits (25,137 health kits 10,155 school kits, 4,856 birthing kits, 1,154 sewing kits, 1,734 layette kits and 30 flood buckets) were given by members of the Virginia Conference, along with cash donations of \$73,523; the approximate total value is more than \$600,000. The Conference Offering totaled \$180,500 as of the Tuesday dinner break. A total of 102,000 meals were packed for Stop Hunger Now. Finally the total giving by the Virginia Conference to relief efforts in Haiti is up to \$1.6 million. We have been a part of this.

There were four resolutions passed. The two which are the most salient are the “Coping with Crime” and the “Tobacco policy in Virginia” resolutions. Then there were recommendations for approval after they have been studied by an appointed group.

Frankly most attendees would have probably guessed that the most contentious issue would be the study and resulting recommendation that had to do with the number of districts. The 2009

Conference directed that the group should offer a vision of no more than 16 Districts. There are obviously financial implications involved in this plan. Benham Black was an integral part of the group that handled that study and recommendation. The study was approved with no problem. The new Districts will be put into place after the 2011 Virginia Conference.

The most controversial and admittedly entertaining issues came from the Site Selection Committee. While the Annual Conference is scheduled for 2011 and 2012 in Roanoke, it is also scheduled for 2013 and 2014 in Hampton. Information was presented that indicated that Hampton was better suited to host the convention. Rev Steve Hundley , District Superintendent of Roanoke District, objected with contrasting information and presented an amendment to the report which was approved.

The other controversial part of the report was the change of the days of the Conference to Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

There was spirited inspiration provided by Rev. Vance Ross who preaches with power and authority. He is the Deputy Secretary for External Connectional Relations and Strategic Initiatives for the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville. In total contrasting style Rev. Jim Gulley shared his story of survival in the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti. He is mindful of the fact that while he survived, two fellow United Methodist pastors, Revs. Sam Dixon and Clint Rabb, as well as 230,000 Haitians, lost their lives; and he is alive by grace only.

While there were some who retired, 19 persons were ordained as Elders, one had orders recognized as Elder, three were ordained as Deacons and 23 were commissioned as Provisional Members.

This is Methodism, our faith and our works. I wonder what John Wesley would say. “Well done , just done or do over”?

For additional info: [vaumc.org / 2010 Annual Conference Information] Issues referenced may be located in 2010 Book of Reports, starting on page 101. See “Click here to Read Annual Conference Daily News” for discussion and action taken.

GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS

By: Luz M. de Tablan

When I was growing up, I began to wonder why God gives us an opportunity to be His co-workers though He doesn't need our help, because He is the Creator of man and everything in the universe. He calls each one of us to "come and follow Him" and participate in what He has been doing here on earth. He wants us to spend time in His presence which makes fellowship, relationship and intimacy possible. He designs a working condition with Himself as our companion as well as other people. He placed us believers in churches which Scriptures calls the "body of Christ," in the community with special people "the least" and even sends us to places we have not been so we can work interdependently. He endows us with Spiritual gifts for the tasks to which He called us. He creates in us the love and joy of service. He promised to walk with us in everything we do, holding us through any pain and trouble. He will not smooth out everything the way we want it, but He will hold our worries as we place every one of them in His hands. He encourages us, teaching us a joyful obedience and dependence along the work and journey. God wants us to carry our work with faith, and in our doubts and limitations He told us to hold on to these truths: "The things that are impossible with people are

He endows us with Spiritual gifts for the tasks to which He called us. He creates in us the love and joy of service.

possible with God." (Luke 18:27), and "we can do all things through Christ, who is our strength." He empowers us through His Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8),



providing guidance, wisdom and strength to accomplish His will.

I was fifteen years old when I was asked to lead the United Methodist Youth Fellowship in our local church. At a young age and not enough experience to lead except a two-day training conducted by group of three United Methodist Young Adults, I found myself with the

responsibility to lead. My ardent desire to know more about God and being involved in the church helped me understand who God is. I learned that life is to be lived with the awareness of the gracious love of God and to realize there is more to reality than immediately meets the eye. Though I was aware of my limitations, I accepted the challenge God had given me. I considered it an opportunity to work alongside God in what He has been doing here on earth. God has called me into fellowship with Him

God did not call people with extraordinary talents, but called "ordinary people" to work alongside Him in building His kingdom here on earth

and to accomplish His purpose for other's life and mine. From the Scriptures I learned that we should not be afraid when God calls us to serve, because He will go before us, not leave us or fail us (John 14:15-21). He encourages us through the passage from Jeremiah 29:11: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." He told us not even be dismayed, for He will provide us the talents and spiritual gifts to use in the fulfillment of His commission and purpose for our lives. God did not call people with extraordinary talents, but called "ordinary people"

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God's Fellow Workers, continued

to work alongside Him in building His kingdom here on earth. Have you also wondered about the amazing truth that God calls us to "follow Him?"

Members of the UMW are called to be "God's Fellow Workers." In all the works they do for children, youth and women, they also do them for Him. God sends them into "mission fields." They are summoned to fulfill God's commission and to carry His works to all parts of the world, both

...we must be ready to say,
"Here I am, Lord, send me."

familiar places and unknown. Each member has been given the gifts of service and accountability, teaching them to use the resources He has placed at their disposal. Each member is commissioned to bring hope and encouragement to everyone to keep living fully for the Lord. God is not constrained by our boundaries, but He wants us to be and to do all that He has planned; for God's power is "perfected in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9). The UMW is aware that everything must be done for the Lord rather than for people; served faithfully; caring for people; restoring broken spirits and bodies; being the voice and strength for the voiceless and powerless especially the children; bringing Christ to all nations by way of the Scriptures; strengthening faith; paving the way for people to have complete dependence upon Him. God loves it when we throw ourselves upon His mercy, because then His power can be released in its fullness. They accomplish God's works and goals His way.

With the help of the Scriptures I don't wonder anymore why He calls us. For those who are called don't live their lives for themselves but for others. Anyone can be God's "Fellow-Worker" and serve in any capacity, we must just be ready to say: "HERE I AM, LORD, SEND ME."

APPORTIONMENTS 101:

AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND – *What is it?*



A graduate at Africa University.

United Methodist support of Africa University (AU) makes seemingly impossible dreams come true.

Mukanyanga Muzyamba dreamed of becoming a doctor as she grew up in an impoverished village in a remote part of Zambia. She walked 12 miles round trip to school, where she excelled. In fact, she was the only person in her village to continue to eighth grade and beyond. College seemed an impossible goal until members of Mullins UMC in Memphis, Tenn., learned about her. The church had a ministry in Mukanyanga's home village, building classrooms. Not only did they encourage her, they also began to sponsor her. After starting college at the University of Zambia, where no slots remained in the pre-med program, she learned of AU and its Health Services Management degree.

On June 12, Mukanyanga received a bachelor's degree in health services management. She hopes to attend graduate school in Memphis, and eventually to run her own medical center in Zambia.

Mukanyanga is one of many AU students with a dream to improve life in their countries. This June, nearly 400 students from 24 countries students received their degrees on campus. United Methodist support through the Africa University Fund enabled Mukanyanga to earn her degree. In the 2009/2010 school year, 300 qualified students were unable to enroll because annual conferences did not meet their apportionment commitments.

Every United Methodist is connected to Africa University and to each of the students. Africa University relies on our denominational apportionment system to survive. Central's 2010 Apportionment Request was \$171.00.

NEWS FROM DONNA

By Donna Huffer

You may have wondered what's happened to Steve and me since I last wrote. The answer is traveling! In March we completed a ten-day trip to Australia. We flew to Perth (capital of the Western Territory), which is located on the Black Swan River and the Indian Ocean.. March was the Australian autumn, with temperatures in the 60's (hard on me because it's 90° every day in Singapore). Luckily I had a jacket and blue jeans to see me through! On the ferry ride to the 1826 town of Fremantle (think 1880's Old West in the U.S.) we saw native swans and fresh water dolphins. We visited a maritime museum; and I was amazed at all the ship wrecks that have taken place on that coast.

The next day we flew to Adelaide (capital of the Southern Territory), which has a Mediterranean climate; and once again I was in shorts. It was Easter and everywhere they sold the chocolate Bilby (rabbit is a bad word there). I was introduced to rugby, Australian pizza, and aboriginal art. We took a tram out to the beach and enjoyed sticking our feet in the Indian Ocean. People were selling camel rides on the beach. We visited the zoo, botanical gardens, local museums, and did some opal shopping.

From there we flew to Alice Springs and then into Uluru, the large red rock in the center of Australia. It had rained and the scrub of the outback was a beautiful green. Unfortunately rain means flies in the outback. Warned in Alice Springs, we purchased our fly nets in that airport so were prepared for the millions we encountered. For the next four days we hiked around Uluru Rock, went on sunrise and sunsets tours, visited the observatory, learned where the Southern Cross is, ate a kangaroo dinner out in the desert, and watched a dingo run alongside the tour bus. We learned about the aborigine culture, watched them paint, observed their rock paintings on Uluru, and heard their music.

Then back to Alice Springs on the one highway that goes from the north to the south of Australia where we watched the desert change into cattle farms and salt lakes. There were windmills, ostrich farms, and camels. Did you know there is no spring in Alice Springs? Turns out it was a mud hole. Also, Alice



never made it there. Her piano made it though and is still at the telegraph station that we visited.

Unfortunately I never got to see a single wild kangaroo there. I understand that because of the rain, they had plenty of water. Usually they come into town to lick the air conditioners. We enjoyed kangaroo steak, emu, and crocodile (tastes like chicken). Parakeets are native birds there.

We were very tired when we got back but I had only a couple of days to do the laundry before heading to Shanghai where Steve works one week out of each month. The Expo was due to open the following week and a lot of the sights were closed for revamping. They were desperately trying to pick up all the trash, repaint buildings, relocate homeless people and mental patients, and present the best face possible to the world. While Steve worked, I saw several Buddhist temples (with modern monks), the People's Museum, the National Art Museum, and ride many bus tours around the city. I rode the elevator to the 87th floor of the tallest building in Shanghai, walked along the Bund, and visited several historical houses. Lost and looking for a taxi one day, a lady and her aged mother stopped me for a photo. Noone spoke English but I hugged the mother and smiled for the picture.

My impression of Shanghai was that they were trying too hard. The number of people pressing you on the street, fighting for space, is mind boggling. One day I counted the number of children I saw on

(Continued on next page)

News from Donna, continued

the street and all day I saw thirty. Baby carriages numbered two. This is a huge town of adults. Traffic was unreal and I witnessed many an angry exchange on the street, in the taxis, at the museums, on the tours, and at the hotel. Nothing works. No one stops at the lights, police make people cross at the crosswalks with threats, the water isn't safe to drink (they had to install special fountains at the Expo so they wouldn't get sick), and fear and mistrust is rampant. There is a huge difference between the haves and have nots. I was told they bulldozed thousands of people's homes to put up the Expo. The people weren't reimbursed, their protests ignored, and some still live in tents because they have no money to rent an apartment.

While no country is perfect, I think I still prefer Singapore as my home base. In a couple of weeks we are off to Thailand (not Bangkok!), then Bali, and finally Cambodia before we return to the US in August. Meanwhile, I continue to grow and stretch myself here in this foreign land. I have made friends, tried Thai food, and practiced my painting here.

Until I see you again, God Bless.

Donna Huffer



VOICES OF YOUTH IN CONCERT

Friday, July 9, 7:00 p.m.

**St. Paul's UMC
2000 Shutterlee Mill Road**

Elizabeth Hard, a recent graduate of Riverheads High School, is a member of the 2010 Voices of Youth, which will have only one concert in the Staunton area. The congregation of St. Paul's UMC warmly invites everyone to support this talented, committed group of young people.

Info from Voices of Youth website: For two and a half decades, youth from all over the Virginia Conference (and beyond) have been traveling across the world experiencing mission in order to come back and educate our local congregations on their mission experiences through music, service, and testimony. This special (25th Anniversary Choir) tour will spend time doing mission work at Summer Project Youth (SPY) in Christiansburg and offering concerts in each of the 18 districts within the Virginia Conference.



**NEW DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT
APPOINTED**

We look forward to meeting the Reverend D. Michael Houff who has been appointed Superintendent to the Staunton District effective July 1. He and his wife Joy are both Staunton natives who grew up in the St Paul's congregation.

The Rev. Kathleen Overby Webster remarked, "You will be blessed by Mike's leadership...I know you will warmly welcome (Mike and Joy) to this new ministry!"

Rev. Webster has been appointed as pastor of Asbury UMC in Harrisonburg.

A TIMELY PRAYER

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in you can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under your care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Excerpted from the *Book of Common Prayer* 1979



RENEWED CREATION

**Thursdays,
10:00—11:30**

**Connections
Classroom**

The new small group dealing with the Bible and social issues will meet on Thursdays during July, 10:00 am - 11:30 am, in the Connections Room.

The group is studying significant new materials prepared by the United Methodist Council of Bishops, *God's Renewed Creation: A Call to Hope and Action*. These materials, being studied throughout the UMC, take an in depth look at three interrelated threats to peace, people and our planet earth:

- Pandemic poverty and disease
- Environmental degradation
- Proliferation of weapons and violence

Anyone wishing to join the group will be welcome at its July 1st meeting and should contact either of the leaders, Esther or Hunter Mabry, or Dan Purdom for a copy of the study book.

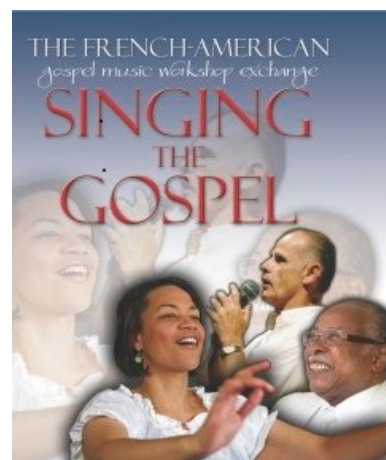


Dan Purdom, our Assistant to the Pastor, recently graduated from Eastern Mennonite Seminary. God has made it possible for Dan to have a “full-time” job by continuing in ministry here at Central about 15 hours a week, while

adding about 30 hours a week at St. Paul’s UMC. He will continue to focus on visitation and Christian education here at Central, and at St. Paul’s he will focus on children’s and youth ministries. In the future, we may be exploring shared ministries between Central and St. Paul’s in the areas of children, youth or adult education opportunities, like VBS and Disciple Bible Study.

We thank God for the gifts Dan has brought to our congregation and for his continued ministry among us.

Pastor Stephanie Sault



FRENCH-AMERICAN GOSPEL MUSIC WORKSHOP EXCHANGE

Sunday, July 11

7:00 p.m.

Robert E. Lee High School

Singers from Virginia will perform with 65 French Musical Ambassadors in the first of 7 concerts celebrating the 7th Anniversary of French-American Gospel Music Exchanges. When the French choir was in Staunton in August 2005, they rehearsed at Central UMC and enjoyed a dinner prepared and served by the UMM. This year some members of Central will be hosting French guests in their homes.

Advance tickets (\$7 each) are available at Blue Mountain Coffees, Bookworks, and Celebrate!

You are also invited to welcome the French gospel singers to Staunton at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 10, in front of City Hall when the street will be closed to traffic for appearances by “Woodrow Wilson,” Uncle Sam, City Officials, the Stonewall Jackson Brigade Band, and more.

After Staunton, the 2010 7th Anniversary Tour proceeds to Charlottesville, Washington DC, Besançon and Paris. For more information please call Louisa Dixon at 294-2474.



Central United Methodist Church

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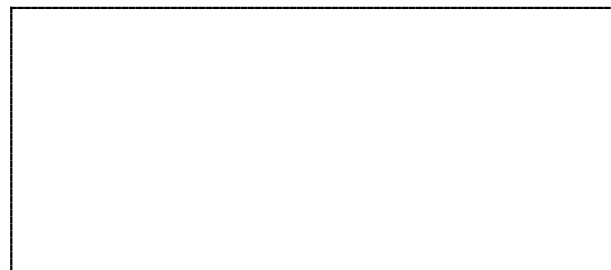
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July
2010



Return Service Requested



Virginia Conference

School of Christian Mission

July 22-25 or July 26-29

(VUMAC in Blackstone)



Sponsored by the Conference Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women, this year's theme is "Faith, Hope, Love in Action."

The three adult studies will be

- *The Beauty and Courage of Sudan*
- *For the Love of God – John's Letters*
- *Joy to the World: Mission in an Age of Global Christianity*

The children's study will be *Hugging the World* led by Harley Gaston and Rebecca Parsons; the youth study will be *Enriching the World* led by Bettina Butler and Tim Craft.

Register early to receive your class choice. Deadline to register is July 10. For more information and to register visit <www.vaumw.org>.