

STAUNTON DISTRICT VOICE



Staunton District United Methodist Churches

December 2016

Don't Forget to Register

A DAY APART *with*

Bishop Sharma Lewis



January 21, 2017

- 8:30-9:30 Continental Breakfast for Clergy
- 9:30-11:30 Clergy Session
- 11:30-12:15 Worship (Clergy and Laity)
- 12:30-2:00 Lunch Bunch (Clergy and Laity)
- 2:15-4:15 Laity Session

St. Paul's UMC 2000 Shutterlee Mill Rd. Staunton

Reserve your space today by contacting the Staunton District Office

Phone 540-932-1055

email stauntondistrict@vaumc.org

Questions for Clergy:

What are the biggest challenges that the Annual Conference is facing or will face in the near future?

What are our promising, untapped, growth opportunities?

What are your most creative ideas of taking advantage of our untapped growth opportunities?

If you were the Bishop, what would you focus your attention on?

Questions for Laity:

What would you like to know about your new Bishop?

What do you desire from the leadership of your new Bishop?

***Bishop Lewis will take 5-7 minutes to encourage the laity to be actively involved in the life of the Virginia Conference

How might we reach more laity in the Virginia Conference to be involved in their Local Church/District Level/Conference Level/General Church Level?

If you were the Bishop, what would you focus your attention on?

The Mission of the Virginia Annual Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

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- A Thought from Beth
- Dates to Remember



From the DS

In the Season Called Advent, I Remember a Dodge Omni

Upgrade. The word has a pleasant, serendipitous ring to it - but the music may not last, as I learned in the summer of 1990. In July, I landed in Austin TX to find a place to live for a couple years while I worked on a graduate degree. I'd made arrangements with Dollar Rent-a-Car - whose rates appealed to jobless grad students at the time. The easy-going and unhurried woman behind the counter said, "We got a Chrysler LeBaron awl ready for yew." But I knew immediately that the Corinthian-leather luxury of the LeBaron was WAY above the bottom-rung class I aspired to - so I questioned it. "Darlin'," said the Dollar agent, "I reckon yew done got upgraded."

And for a moment it was as if sunlight had broken upon us. I had an image of my escape from Austin, sailing through the Texas hill country to a soundtrack of New Wave music from a bona fide tape-cassette player. *Upgraded.* I actually considered asking: "do you have that in a convertible, ma'am?" The delusion lasted nearly two minutes, until she frowned. "Hold on there, darlin.' Yew know what? The computer must have caught its mistake. We got yew in that subcompact after all. We'll gitcheu on yer way!" And so I was - in a brick-red Dodge Omni.



Now here is the funny thing. The little-remembered Omni wasn't such a bad little car. It was brand new - and I'd never driven a new car up to that time. It was tightly made, parked easily and had cold air - I was not used to that, either, and it was something like 140 degrees outside. (The convertible would have been just awful.) But day after day, toodling by pedestrians, I still felt like rolling down the window and yelling "You see this, darlin'? I got DOWNGRADED to Dodge Omni!"

If you've stayed with me this far, bless you. I share this tale to admit that for far too many Christmases past, I have felt a mild sense of *downgrade*. As in, when does the magic happen? Why can't I see the Star? I know It's a Wonderful Life and all, but I wonder that come December 26, little is going to have changed for *me*. Somehow, it just seemed to me that I should be able to celebrate Jesus' birthday with an open-topped sense of *joy*, rather than plodding ahead in my ordinary, 62-horsepower life.

But what if Christmas, despite what we have heard, is *NOT primarily about celebrating Jesus' birthday*? What if the Nativity is in fact about **God coming to us**? What if its power comes not from seasonal magic, but from the fundamental reality that God HAS come, in Christ, and that for those who live resolved to be his people, *God keeps on coming*. Because that's no fragile feeling, friend - that's a new dwelling place for the present, a revolutionary hope in the future, and a walk beyond the manger with the bloody triumph of the Cross in view.

Many of us know the wistfulness of wanting for the otherworldly magic of Christmas. But it's not that we got downgraded from the Christmas we deserve - it's that Emmanuel raises the prospect of an upgrade we almost cannot believe. Advent says it is the righteous and holy God for whom we wait; there can be no other. Thus it isn't heavenly words, shimmering starlight, nor the strains of beloved music that bring God to us. *God comes to us*. We wait for God to come again *and again*, invading our lives, incarnate in us, smuggled into the world *by even the likes of us* - as He was by Mary that first, expectant advent.

For this reason we wait as resolved action, as an act of will - in expectancy and hope, as those who refuse to settle for any nostalgic or lesser comfort, until God comes for the last and endless time - a day for which we seek to live ready.

Maybe, at least for some of us, that's why the news of Advent is exactly the gift we need.



Rev. Dave Rochford, D.S.

Prayers for one another:

Congratulations to....

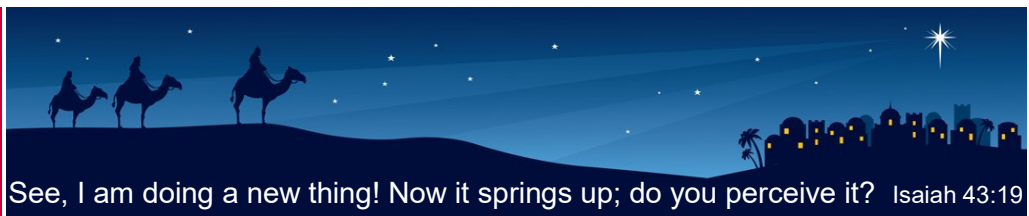
Congratulations to The Rev. Ryan and Mrs. Erin Schaeffer at the joyous birth of their daughter, Maggie. She joins big sister Mariah. Maggie was born November 17 at 6 pounds, 19.75 in. Ryan serves Glover Memorial UMC. Their address is 701 Highland Ave, Waynesboro, VA 22980

With Deepest Sympathy to.....

Please remember in your prayers Rev. Bill Hinton and his family at the death of his wife Mrs. Jeanne Hinton. Rev. Hinton is a retired clergy on our District. His address is 1800 South Talbott Place, Waynesboro, VA 22980.

Please remember in your prayers Rev. Won and Mrs. Diana Un and their family on the death of his mother, Aeh Sun Kim-Un. Rev. Un serves Central UMC in Staunton. Their address is 888 Preston Drive, Staunton, VA 24401.

Please remember in your prayers Mrs. Delores Hemskey and her family on the death of her husband Rev. Jack Hemskey. Jack was a Retired Clergy on our District. Her address is 38 Rosette Lane, #104, Fishersville, VA 22939.



See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you perceive it? Isaiah 43:19

From Congregational Resources Director

I hate numbers but I love data. I know that doesn't make much sense but if someone else can do the math I can work with the final number. On my desk I have a note that reminds me that **by the year 2020 Generation Z (Centennials) will make up 40% of the U.S.**

Population. What really bothers me about that statistic is that as the church we haven't even figured out how to reach Millennials and Gen-Xers yet, let alone their children.

One thing that hasn't changed for many generations is that children influence family decisions. The needs and desires of children determine how families spend free time, what activities the family is involved in, how money is spent, where a family lives, what the family eats, watches, listens to, and the list goes on.

The Church basically missed a whole generation of people because it wouldn't adapt to changing needs and cultural shifts. I spend time with young mothers once a month and I also have daughters with young children. They crave connection and spiritual growth but are not compelled to connect to a church for that support. For years, books, articles and experts have said the church needs to 'be relevant' but we never really talk about what that means. In listening to these young mothers I have begun to understand what they seek in a church that is relevant and that understands them.

1) 11:00 Sunday is not a good time for families with very young children to go to church. As a matter of fact, Sunday is a problem for many families and alternative worship times are non-existent in most communities. I recently saw a Facebook post from a young parent looking for a church that had weekday worship times and in addition to 56 'likes' there were several comments that said 'me too'.

2) Today's young families want to be together. While they appreciate great kid spaces and programming, they also want options that include participation as a family unit. These include Bible studies and mission experiences. Family friendly worship includes elements of the service that appeal to everyone and that invites people of all ages to fill different roles. Children and Youth can join with adults in reading scripture, ushering, serving communion, and singing in the choir.

3) Nurseries and bathrooms still make the strongest impressions on parents. Friendly nursery attendants, clean and cheerful rooms, well stocked supplies and up to date toys tell parents that you value their children. Safety procedures are of highest importance to parents. They expect the worker will warmly greet their child and will ask for the parents name and phone number and any other important information about the child.

4) Communications can be a challenge. Young parents may not read church newsletters. They barely read email. Most churches today would really struggle to use Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or even create an app; but a good website and Facebook page will go a long way in the communication loop. Using these two tools regularly will greatly improve staying in touch with young families. Worship podcasts, electronic giving, and text messaging are also useful tools in staying connected.

As we begin a new calendar year I pray we can enter into some new ideas for ministry. We are surrounded by creative and energetic young people whom want to engage in Kingdom work. Let's listen and learn and try something new.

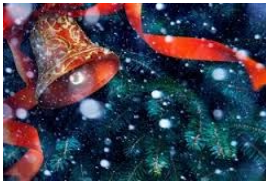
Beth Christian

Staunton District UMC

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May you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed and Happy New Year! From all of us at the District Office: Dave, Beth, David and Donna

Dates to Remember:



December:

- 14 DS will be meeting with Clergy ~ Trinity UMC
- 15 DS will be meeting with Clergy ~ District Office
- 16 Camp Overlook's Walk to the Manger
- 16-19 Camp Overlook's Winter Camp Soiree

January:

- 6-7 UMM Tri-District Rtreat ~ Camp Overlook**
- 11 DS will be meeting with Clergy ~ Central UMC (Clifton Forge)
- 17-19 DS will be at Cabinet
- 21 Snack and Chat with Bishop Lewis ~ Saint Paul's UMC (Staunton)
- 23 DS will be meeting with Clergy ~ District Office
- 24 DS will be meeting with Clergy ~ District Office

Contact Us

We are here to equip and encourage our churches as they strive to do ministry in their unique communities.

Staunton District UMC
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