

STAUNTON DISTRICT VOICE



Staunton District United Methodist Churches

January-February 2017

Register Today Bishop Sharma Lewis



January 21

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

Bishop Lewis wants to hear from you.
Take this opportunity to be in conversation with
our Bishop about
how she and the VA Conference can best
support your church.

Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The Family of Mrs. Marilyn Staley. Mrs. Staley was the widow of Rev. Paul Staley who served several churches on the Staunton District.

The Family of Mrs. Louise Monroe. Mrs. Monroe was the widow of Rev. Ralph Monroe who served Randolph Street UMC and the West Staunton Charge on the Staunton District.

Dates to Remember:

January:
17-19 DS at Cabinet
21 Bishop Lewis comes to the our District
23 Clergy Conferences
24 Clergy Conferences

February:
6 Finance Committee, 6:30 p.m., District Office
20-22 DS at Cabinet
25 Leadership Workshop (See page 3)

March:
2 District Board of Missions, 10:00 a.m., District Office
10 District Banquet
13-16 DS at Cabinet



From the District Superintendent

It's almost certainly an apocryphal story. Many of us will have heard it, and allowing for some variation it goes like this:

A young man hopes more than anything for a sports car on his graduation from school. When that day comes, his dad awaits him in the living room, proud and beaming, a shiny, black leather Bible in his hands. "*Son, all you want can be found in these pages.*" The son, in an indignant huff, storms out and leaves both Dad and Bible behind. Months later, the young man hears his father has died.

Returning, he happens to discover the abandoned Bible; lo, to his great shame and dismay, tucked within it is a check for the full cost of that sporty car. The implied moral: "*if he had just listened to his dad about the Bible, he'd have got just what he wanted.*"

Something about that little parable has always bothered me; does it niggle at you, too? The book in the tale, inert yet somehow magical, holds a latent promise - after all, all that the young man most wanted was in its pages. But what if the young man's loves were misplaced, and his desires disordered? If he *had* found and extracted the check, and still abandoned his father (like a more famous wayward son), would the story be any less sad?

You know, there are a great many things one might want from a Bible. In different seasons, a person might want wisdom, comfort, distraction, redirection, familiarity, warning - and limitless other things. But the Tale of the Prodigal, Camaro-Loving Son takes its cues from a uniquely Protestant perspective: the Bible has all you need; you only have to open it and get reading...right?

Well, no.

Unless you recognize what you most need is a *relationship with the Living God*, you are likely in for some level of disappointment. After all, what a life spent immersed in Holy Scripture offers is God. Anything less is seizing the wrapper and throwing away the (Christmas) gift. In becoming a people of the Book we meet Jesus! That's why the Bible is essential to the Christian life.

But it is not self-interpreting. We can be wrong about what we take from it, and there have been times when a great many Christians have extracted wrong-headed, even ungodly notions from it. It is not merely "a road-map to salvation" nor a "little instruction book for life." Such images demean the power of the Church's Book. It's the Story we live within, not the atlas we keep on hand in case we get lost. Apart from God, we are lost.

That's why study of the Bible is not only homework for us Christians, but *shared* work. By this I mean: reading the Bible *faithfully and fruitfully* is a tradecraft, like carpentry. Some will learn to do it well, others will just hack at it - but the fact is, apprenticeship is key. In the disciplined community, we experience the Scriptures - in dedicated Bible study, in worship, on retreat or through quiet time with other believers - and we reflect and pray on how the text breathes the awakening Spirit of God into us. We even believe that the *living Christ is present* as the community reads, prays and experiences sanctification - a claim that as far as I know is far beyond what other great religions make about their sacred texts.

Beneath all this is a deep thirst to know God, and to experience the transformed life that knowing God makes possible! This is why Christians will indeed read the Bible at work and at home, after breakfast or before bed, on the coffee table or off the smartphone. We read on our own time, in the midst of life and in secluded places, and we find our discipleship sharpened and enriched in so doing.

As a recent bishop called us all to develop habits of daily prayer, our current bishop has offered to every Virginia Conference United Methodist a **challenge: to join her in reading the Bible each day for the present year.** (Some will recall that our District Lay Leaders and I used the 2015 Charge Conferences to do just that - and I was delighted to hear from some at last year's Conferences that many took us up on it!) I encourage you to read with our Bishop in 2017, together with me and countless others, these ancient words that are higher than our hopes, deeper than our dreams, more current than our newspapers, and more powerful than a news search-engine. To do so is to enrich our lives and our life together as the Body of Christ, the Church. Whether that was what we first wanted or not, it *is* what our proud and loving Father wants for us.



Rev. Dave Rochford, D.S.

Coming Soon!

District Leadership

Training Day

February 25th

2 locations

Same Great Workshops

10:00-11:30 a.m.

Granberry Memorial
UMC—Covington

1:30-3:00 p.m.

Christ UMC—Staunton

Fiduciary Faithfulness:
Managing Your Church's
Money - Bring your questions
because our conference
treasurer is ready to help you
navigate the way to healthy
financial management. David
Dommesse

Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations:
Creating a Team that Works
Rev. Dave Rochford,
Superintendent

Connect! Creating a Culture of
Relationships that Matter
A biblical and proven approach
to outreach. Beth Christian

Trustees' Toolbox: An Approach
that Works

Finding the Leaders We Wish
We Had: Key Strategies for Lay
Leadership Recruitment and
Development



From Congregational Resources Director

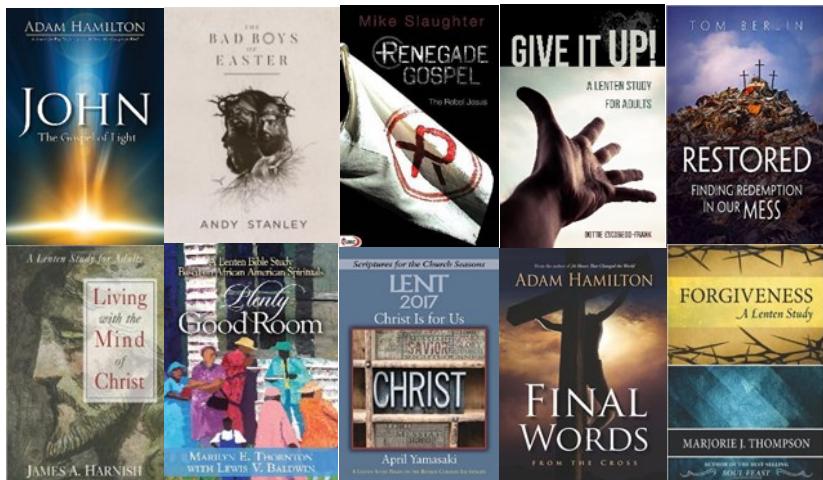
Many years ago I was setting in a job interview and the owner of the company asked me how I stayed organized. He wanted to see my 'planner/daytimer'. At that time I lived by lists and notes which seemed to serve me well but I did immediately go out and buy a pocket calendar. Looking back I wonder how I kept it all together in my pre-planner life. My level of dependence on this little book has risen to the point that I refer to it as my brain.

Planning ahead in ministry is important. When we plan well in advance we have a better chance of offering excellence to our congregation and guests. This is easier when the whole team is on board and so it is up to the leaders to keep everyone looking forward. Right now as you are catching your breath from Advent and Christmas I hope you are thinking about Lent and Easter which is roughly six weeks away.

Here are a few statistics (from Pew Research Center) about Easter when it comes to church.

- 1) Easter is the highest attended Worship service of the year. (Christmas comes in second.)
- 2) More people search for a church during the Easter season than any other time of year. This fact alone is a great reason to set up and refresh a church website and Facebook page. 87% of Americans use the internet as their primary tool for information.
- 3) 20% of our population are undecided about attending an Easter services. This number includes non-churched Christians. A personal invitation could make all the difference in the world for someone's decision to attend church on Easter Sunday. Now would be a good time to start talking within the church about how we will personally invite friends and acquaintances to worship. Here is a link to a great resource for many Lent and Easter ideas. More are available on the district website. <http://www.umc.org/topics/topic-lent-and-easter>

We also have many great Lenten studies available in the district library. Here are a few that we offer:



Beth Christian

bethchristian@vaumc.org





From the
Bishop

Read the Bible in 2017!

I think you would agree with me that every New Year there are individuals who decide to make a New Year's resolution. I googled "New Year's resolution" to discover that there are several articles written on this popular subject. All of us have made New Year's resolutions ranging anywhere from losing 10-20 unwanted pounds, starting a new exercise program, paying off our credit cards and giving up a bad habit.

I've always found it interesting that people will go to great lengths to make a New Year's resolution - throwing away food that tempts their cravings, buying expensive exercise equipment with a voice-activated trainer or being the first person to join the gym. Unfortunately, it has been proven that New Year's gym resolutions are normally broken in 90 days, and the gym equipment becomes the new and latest clothes rack in our homes.

I've always wondered when individuals are making resolutions if they ever considered making a "Christian resolution." For example, resolving to pray daily for your church, to become an active agent in inviting people to your church or to increase their participation in a ministry in their local church.

As your new bishop, I would like to challenge you to look at this yearly tradition from another perspective.

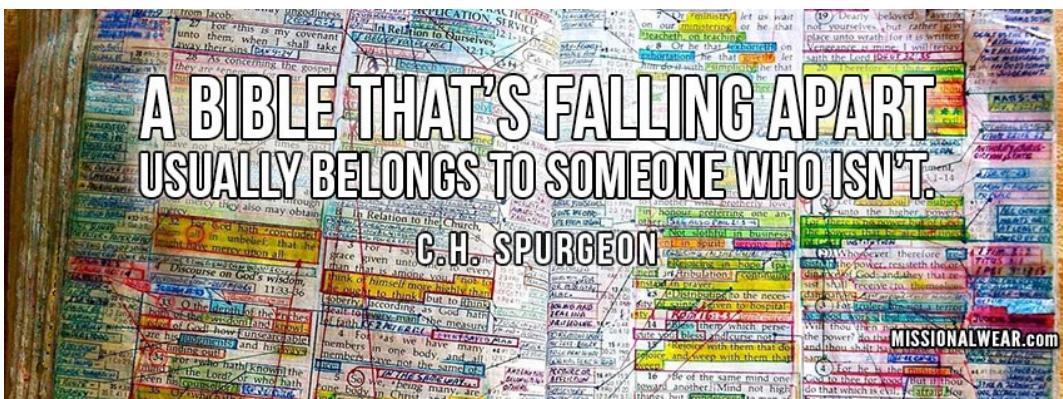
Let's make a "Christian resolution" by joining me in reading the Bible together this year:

- * Choose your own translation to make this experience engaging and exciting.
- * Invite others to join you on this journey.
- * Commit to sticking to the outlined plan at this link: <http://backtothebible.org/reading-guide/15/1>

January's outline is at the right.

Let's become Bible scholars in 2017.

Peace and Blessings,
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis



Readings for January:

- January 1 Genesis 1-3
- January 2 Genesis 4-7
- January 3 Genesis 8-11
- January 4 Genesis 12-15
- January 5 Genesis 16-18
- January 6 Genesis 19-21
- January 7 Genesis 22-24
- January 8 Genesis 25-26
- January 9 Genesis 27-29
- January 10 Genesis 30-31
- January 11 Genesis 32-34
- January 12 Genesis 35-37
- January 13 Genesis 38-40
- January 14 Genesis 41-42
- January 15 Genesis 43-45
- January 16 Genesis 46-47
- January 17 Genesis 48-50
- January 18 Exodus 1-3
- January 19 Exodus 4-6
- January 20 Exodus 7-9
- January 21 Exodus 10-12
- January 22 Exodus 13-15
- January 23 Exodus 16-18
- January 24 Exodus 19-21
- January 25 Exodus 22-24
- January 26 Exodus 25-27
- January 27 Exodus 28-29
- January 28 Exodus 30-32
- January 29 Exodus 33-35
- January 30 Exodus 36-38

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Training

As we begin to build a Staunton District Mission Team we look forward to offering this training to all who want to be better equipped for disaster response and mission trips.

Team Leader Training is required for all first time United Methodist Volunteers In Mission team leaders, but all interested persons are welcome to attend

April 25, 2017
(Tuesday), 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Greenville UMC, 126 Main St, Greenville, VA 24440

To Register please contact the District Office.
540-932-1055



From your District Director of Lay Servant Ministries

Happy New Year! I want to update you on a few things happening in Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) including some changes coming from the General Conference last year. The most significant change from General Conference last year is bringing training and parts of certification for Certified Lay Ministers under LSM in partnership with the District Board of Ordained Ministry. This gives us 3 certifications under LSM, Certified Lay Servant, Certified Lay Speaker and Certified Lay Minister. For a chart on these certification requirements and ministries please go to vaumc.org and follow the Laity link under the "Inclusivity & Center for Lay Leadership Excellence".

Your District Committee on LSM continues to look for new ways to serve you, the laity, as you step out to serve in your local churches, neighborhoods, workplaces and beyond. We continue to seek new classes and better ways to offer training to equip you to serve. Training is not just about certifications, though we certainly encourage it. Our focus is to offer classes that will give you the tools you need to be successful in whatever ministry you are called, whether it is as a Certified Lay Minister, Certified Lay Speaker, Certified Lay Servant, or you just want to be better educated as you serve in a particular ministry within your local church. If you have any questions about Lay Servant Ministries on the Staunton District, please do not hesitate to contact me at layservantministriesstaunton@gmail.com or by phone 757-871-2809. The District Committee on LSM looks forward to a great 2017 on the Staunton District.

Blessings, *Marge Sharp*, CLS ~ District Director of Lay Servant Ministries

LOOK at this RATE!

Start off the New Year Right!

2.017% INTEREST RATE



- ✓ Minimum Deposit for this offer is \$25,000. New funds only
- ✓ The funds must be committed until June 30, 2017
- ✓ Early withdrawal would mean a relinquishing of earnings - not loss of principal
- ✓ Renews to a Savings Certificate on June 30, 2017

VIRGINIA
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DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY, LLC

804.521.1150
www.vaumdevco.org
email: devco@vaumc.org

Look for new class titles coming this year beginning with
**the Conference Lay Servant Academy March 31 to April 2 at
the 4H Educational Conference Center in Wirtz, VA. (for more
information go to vaumc.org/layservanttraining).**

Conference Grant for Youth Initiatives—Applications Are Now Being Accepted

YSF (Youth Service Fund) Grants (<http://vaumc.org/YSF>).

NOTE: Deadline for all applications to be received is Monday February 27, 2017, at 5:00 p.m. via email to beckytate@vaumc.org. Please contact the Office of Ministries with Young People with questions by emailing beckytate@vaumc.org or calling (804-521-1139).

Special note: ONLY COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED. Please do not submit incomplete applications. A link to a webpage does not take the place of a brochure or organization information as internet is not available as applications are reviewed.



Secret Boutique ready to expand to second location

Four hours—it's not a lot of time to change the world, but that's exactly what's happening each month because of your support of Secret Boutique.

It's happening in the lives of area middle- and high-school students like Amanda*, an eighth-grader who, with her sixth-grade sister, rarely knows where her mother will find for them to sleep. Because of the support of individuals and churches across the Staunton District, Amanda and her sister have discovered a place where they can get clothes, school supplies, personal care products and -- most importantly -- unconditional love and acceptance from peers and adults.

They're not alone. **Since opening our first Secret Boutique location in September, the ministry has reached more than 50 students and their families, providing more than 500 articles of clothing, three dozen pairs of shoes, two dozen coats, 150 personal care products, and nearly 100 school supply items such as pens, pencils, packs of notebook paper, and binders.**

But it doesn't stop there. In late December, we held our first Mother's Night, where our students' mothers were invited to Basic UMC to select clothing deemed to be not necessarily "in style" for teens. In January, our friends at Wayne Hills UMC began serving homemade cookies and hot cocoa to students and their families.

Each month, this circle of care grows -- because of you. Now, we're ready to stretch this circle even wider. **Thanks to a grant from the Staunton District Board of Missions, we have purchased the store fixtures needed to open our Staunton location. Now, we need volunteers to make it happen.** With most of the painting complete, we need help touching up, cleaning up, and setting up. There are dozens of clothing waiting to be sorted, thousands of hangers waiting to be filed, and a mountain of clothing, personal care products, and school supplies yet to be collected.

But most of all there are hundreds of students waiting to be wrapped in prayer and, through you, the unconditional love of their Creator. Won't you help?

If you or your church is up for the challenge, contact Jenelle Watson: jenellewatson@gmail.com or (540) 649-7149. Financial donations are also urgently needed. Checks should be made out to Basic UMC, earmarked for "Secret Boutique" and mailed to: Secret Boutique, c/o Jenelle Watson, 77 Hampshire Way, Fishersville, VA 22939



3014 Camp Overlook Lane
Keezletown, VA 22832



Become a fan on Facebook:

Overlook Retreat & Camp Ministries Rev. Tommy Crosby, Director 540 2MY-CAMP CampOverlook@gmail.com www.CampOverlook.org

Valentine's Banquet



When was the last time you treated your spouse to a romantic Valentine's meal and enjoyed one another's company? Overlook will host a special dinner on Saturday, February 11th, complete with entertainment AND childcare!

The evening will begin with Hors d'oeuvres at 5pm.
Dinner will follow around 5:45-
Salad
Soup Dejour
Lasagna (meat and veggie)
Bread
Tiramisu

After dinner there will be a short devotion and some Valentine's games.

We will also provide childcare in the lower level of the lodge from 5-8pm. Kids will enjoy a pizza dinner and snacks during their stay.

Dinner for two: \$40
Childcare: \$10 per child



Confirmation Camp April 7-8. 2017

If your church will be confirming youth next year, be sure to utilize this awesome weekend. There is no better way to understand the connectional nature of the United Methodist church than by sharing a confirmation experience with youth from our tri-district area and sometimes beyond! Save the date!

Men's/Women's

Emmaus

4th Day Renewals

Jan 27-28 (M) &
Feb. 17-18 (W), 2017



For women and men who have previously participated in the 72 hour "Walk to Emmaus", how have your Fourth Days been? Have you had some "ups" and "downs"? Could you use a little "shot in the arm" to remind you of, and renew you for, following God's call? Most of us do, and this weekend is just for you...and for God!

The retreat will capture some of the elements of your Emmaus walk. There will be three new talks on life in Christian Action by lay persons who have previously shared talks on an Emmaus weekend. Spiritual Directors will lead you in creative and inspiring worship, and there will be plenty of music to let your hearts and voices soar. But, most powerful of all, as we fellowship together and spend time in prayer, we will be fellowshipping with God!

***NOTE - The first weekend is for men Only, the second for the women Only!**

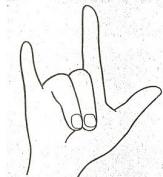
\$65 per person. Register by Dec. 29th and save \$10!
Final registration deadlines:
Men- January 13th
Women - February 3rd



All God's Children Are Part of God's Family!

At our All God's Children Camp (for children of incarcerated parents) in November, our special guest, Kim Koeppen, talked with the children about the importance of avoiding gang activity and association. After sharing that many people join a gang to find a sense of family, Kim helped the kids understand that we already belong to a family - GOD'S FAMILY! That is a family that will never ask us to break laws, harm others, or do things to harm ourselves.

Many gangs have hand signs that help people identify them as a member of a particular group. Our campers learned a hand sign that they can do as part of God's family - "I LOVE YOU" in sign language!



Below is a photo of the children, in front of the Agape Hill cross, with their "family signs" shown high in the air! A touching memory of a spectacular and powerful weekend.

We could not have done it without our volunteer mentors, support staff, and nurse: Lisa Jennings, Rachel Jennings, Sarah Jennings, Emily Crawford, Megan Breeden, Laura Butcher, Andrew Selby, David Bates, Nathan Strother, and Eric Humphries.



We were also blessed with generous donors, drivers, supplies, and more! Many thanks to everyone who played a part in AGC 2016! If you'd like to help with next year's event, donate online at any time (www.campoverlook.org) and earmark your gift for All God's Children.

Staunton District UMC

P.O. Box 1048

Fishersville, VA 22939

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CASA de Amistad ~ "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." Mark 9:36-37

Casa de Amistad is an official Staunton District ministry to Hispanic pre-K through middle-school children, housed and embraced by Basic UMC - Waynesboro. CASA is in need of volunteers, particularly for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Once the homework is complete it's fun time playing games, making crafts and mentoring. You don't need to be able to speak Spanish and you also don't need any teaching experience! For more information, contact Jennifer (info below).

Prefer another way to serve? The Saturday Supply Closet (at Basic UMC) also could use your help. Every year over 10,000 personal care and household items are distributed to families in need through this ministry. Diapers, laundry soap, shampoo, toothpaste are just a few of the items we place into the hands of those in great need. This is such an easy way to make a difference in the lives of local families struggling financially - after all, most of us will shop in the course of a week. How easy is it to simply drop an extra bar of soap or two into your grocery cart? Consider making the Saturday Supply Closet a mission project of your church or group for one month in 2017. Choose a month and contact Jennifer Strother at cdajenn@comcast.net or call 540-946-7958.

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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Fishersville, VA 22939

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(540) 932-1055
staundistrict@vaumc.org

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