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**July/August
Upper Room
Devotionals are
available outside
the keypad door.**

**THE
UPPER
ROOM**
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

2022 Annual Conference Update

One of the primary metaphors that the apostle Paul uses in the New Testament to describe the nature and the mission of the church is that of followers of Jesus being the “body of Christ.” Within this body, Christ is the head and all of us are individual members working together to continue the healing and redemptive work of Jesus in the world. Our polity in the United Methodist Church, or our structures of being church, seeks to embody this metaphor by being “connectional” in nature. For example, though we are individual local churches, we are part of a District (we were part of the Richmond District, now we are the Three Notch’d District—more on that later) which is part of an Annual Conference (the Virginia Annual Conference), of which there are 54 in the United States, which is part of the larger General Conference (a worldwide communion). While no structure is perfect, we have sought to organize ourselves as interdependent upon one another and ultimately dependent upon Jesus Christ as Lord.

One of the major decisions that occurred at Annual Conference 2022, which was held at the Hampton Convention Center from June 16th-18th, was to reduce the number of Districts in our Annual Conference from 16 to 8. This also lessens the number of District Superintendents, who supervise clergy and churches in these areas, by the same number. The Richmond District, of which we have historically been a part, has merged with what was the Charlottesville District, and the new name is the Three Notch’d District. The name is based upon a historic road that unites the two regions.

The rationale behind this move was to shift resources and focus to local churches on the District level. There is also the projection that, over time, this will be a cost reduction measure. We do not anticipate this change immediately impacting our day to day and week to week ministry at River Road UMC, but I am hopeful that it will allow for even more collaborative ministry efforts in our region. The plan is that we will look more to our Districts for ministry support as we make disciples for Jesus, rather than the larger Annual Conference, although we are all praying and working towards the same goals.

The Annual Conference also included a number of reports from groups such as the Council on Finance and Administration and the Virginia Methodist Pensions and Related Benefits. There were also motions and votes on the floor that occurred, including asking the Judicial Council to make a ruling called a Declaratory Decision on the process of clergy complaint. Worship punctuated the entire Annual Conference, including the opening of every session, honoring those clergy and lay leaders who have died, celebrating those headed towards retirement, and conducting the service of ordering for those who were licensed, commissioned, or ordained. The Annual Conference also officially endorsed Rev. Tom Berlin as our episcopal nominee (candidate for Bishop) that will be decided at the Jurisdictional Conference in November of this year.

We are the body of Christ and though at times we misstep or stumble, the Holy Spirit is keeping us striding forward as an Annual Conference so that we can make disciples for Jesus Christ and transform the world to look more like the kingdom!

Peace,
Pastor Darcey

Upcoming Worship Series:

Things the Bible Never Said

June 26—God Will Never Give You More Than You Can Handle

July 3—God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

July 10—Hate The Sin, Love The Sinner

In the Beginning: A Fresh Look at Genesis

July 17—Creation Accounts, Both of Them

July 24—Enter Stage Right and Left, Sin Brings the Drama

July 31—Tower of Babel: When Communication Goes Sideways

July Birthdays

July 1

Sterling Dameron

July 2

Conley Kemp

July 3

Connie Whetstine
Blair McLarin

July 4

Julia Messer

July 6

Mark Forberg

July 7

Lauren Potts

July 9

Mandy McLarin
Joanna Thompson

July 10

Robin Ely
Ashley Barrett

July 11

Ann Hodges

July 13

Horace Payne Jr.
Courtney Barrack

July 14

Mike Cosby
Josh Busscher

July 16

Debby Waters

July 17

Melissa Conner

July 18

Brenda Vaughan
Kim Cosby
Steven Ebert

July 19

Fay Seay
Alicia Hotinger
Ruben Blevins

July 20

Stacie Cornett

July 21

Sam Kemp
Greg Bowles

July 22

Karl Bren

July 23

Pearcy Flippen

July 24

Martha Mullen

July 25

Katie Ely

July 26

Beth Wilson
Mary York
Ashlyn Cosby

July 28

Jaimey Honea
Elizabeth York
Ryan Stuckey
Trey Gayne

July 31

Trent Keith





Check out these great opportunities to get engaged at River Road in July!

CONNECT

Busch Gardens (all ages)

Thursday, July 7

Meet at the church at 8:30am to carpool/caravan to the park. Tickets are \$79 for adults and \$39 for ages 18 and younger. Tickets include a meal voucher. Email Tom to sign up: tom@riverroadumc.org

Spark Studios Vacation Bible School (ages 3 and up)

Monday, July 18 – Friday, July 22, 9:15am-12:15pm

Kids ages 3-5th grade will discover the beautiful truth that they are God's workmanship. Adult and student volunteers are needed. Click here to register your kids or to sign up to volunteer: [VBS Registration](#)

River of Lifers (adults 50+): Movie & Snacks at RRUMC

Tuesday, July 26, 10:00am

Bring a snack to share and watch an inspirational movie in the fellowship hall.

Friday Fun Night (all ages): Splash Night + Classic Games

Friday, July 29, 5:30-7:30pm

Loads of outdoor water fun for kids, plus indoor classic games (Scrabble, dominos, Yahtzee, etc.) for those who prefer to stay dry. Sign up here: [Friday Fun Night](#) or call the church office.

SERVE

Volunteer as a Greeter/Usher for the 9:00 or 11:00 worship service, welcoming worshippers to church and collecting the offering.

Join the Meals Ministry team. Make homemade meals or pick up pre-made meals for church members dealing with illness, death, hospitalization, or other hardships.

Help with maintaining the church grounds including weeding, trimming, spraying, planting, mulching, and other outdoor jobs.

For more information or to sign up or volunteer, contact Eva at eva@riverroadumc.org or 740-7061.

Confirmation Sunday is always a wonderful time. Your presence, prayers and support will continue to uplift our five confirmands this year and for their rest of their lives. Please keep these young church members in your prayers:

Lindwee Manning

Isabella Benson

Charlie Dameron

Grace Johnson

Noah Benson

Youth continue to meet throughout the summer. We have Busch Gardens Day on July 7th and Shalom Farms Mission Support on August 3rd. Keep your eye on our church app, our calendar and announcements for the latest updates. Check out this group that navigated an Escape Room **successfully** this past month!



Adult Discipleship

The spirit of small groups is alive and well. A continued thanks to small group leaders, who play a key role in keeping a group connected through communication. If you have an interest or passion for a group, let me know and we can pull a group together.

Over the past few months we have had some wonderful groups talking about two different topics: grief and entrepreneurship. Taking a faith based approach with others is a great way to continue to live with the Holy Spirit. July will see us launch a new family group.

Reach out with other ideas and we will work to get these life and interest groups together and flourishing here at River Road UMC! Contact Tom (tom@riverroadumc.org or 804.517.2350) if interested, and we will make a small group happen.

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing”

- I Thessalonians 5:11.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Join us Sunday mornings! River Road Kids Discipleship Hour will be at 9 AM in the Sunday School wing and Children's Church will be held at 11 AM in the Sunday School wing.

Save the date:

- July 18th - 21st from 9:15 - 12:15 for VBS!
- July 29th Friday Fun Night from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- August 26th Friday Fun Night from 5:30 - 7:00 PM



Preschool Discipleship For June:

Last month, we began teaching preschoolers that they can make waves that can change the world! July brings even more stories to teach our preschoolers how they can make waves with the help of Jesus.

This month we will learn about kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Yes, these can be tough to choose, but when Jesus is my friend forever, Jesus can help me do everything. That is what we want our preschoolers to know. And, when they do choose love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, our preschoolers will make waves that can change the world!

K-5 Discipleship For June:

We were created in God's image. God sent Jesus to show us the best way to be human. But God knew we'd need help. That's why God sent us the Holy Spirit. With the power of the Spirit, we can produce fruit that points others to Jesus. Every month, kids discover something about God's character and how they can reflect or respond to that character because they are created in God's image. You could call them character traits or virtues, but we call them Life Apps: something that God is doing in you to change the world around you. In other words, we show the world what God is like when we demonstrate these ideas. We're helping kids and preteens discover what the Apostle Paul called the Fruit of the Spirit throughout June and July. When we show the Fruit of the Spirit, we make waves and show others who Jesus is.



SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Through Labor Day, the office will be open from 7:30am—5:30pm Monday—Thursday. Eva will be working four ten-hour days. **The office will be closed on Fridays.**

FRANCES ALLEN/ALICE WEED CIRCLE

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next Circle meeting on September 13th at 10:00 AM. Have a great summer!

BOOK CLUB

Book Club for July falls on the fourth, so we decided to take a break in July and meet again August 1, 7PM, Ann York's home. If you are interested, call Ann York, 907-748-0446. August 1 we will discuss Violeta by Isobel Allende. In September we will discuss Adriana Trigiani's new book, The Good Left Undone. Plenty of time to read both books, so come join us!!



United
Women
in Faith

CREATION CARE

Things to be thankful for: 1) "Britain implemented a tax on packaging made from non-recycled plastic...and Iceland Foods...a frozen-food focused grocer that has roughly 1000 stores across the U.K....races to meet a self-imposed target of scrapping single-use plastic" (WSJ, 6/18-19, p. B 6); 2) Julie Bargmann "a landscape architect and founder of DIRT Studio in Charlottesville . . . [who] revitalizes contaminated and neglected urban and industrial sites . . . dedicating her practice to addressing social and environmental justice...has earned . . . nicknames Toxic Avenger and Queen of Slag" (NYT, 6/10, p. C12); and 3) "A generous gift by Truman Seamans of his family's historic Hobby Horse Farm in Virginia's Bath County [to the Nature Conservancy] . . . [is] becoming a landscape-wide hub for implementing climate-resilient solutions. . .and modeling effective conservation" (Nature Conservancy, Summer 2022).

Key concerns include: 1) "Fisheries can be a renewable source of food and jobs, but only if the fish are harvested in a sustainable manner. The UN Food & Agriculture Organization estimates that 34% of the world's ocean stocks . . . are already fished to the point of being biologically unsustainable" (NYT, 6/14, p. A23); 2) "Flood Disaster At Yellowstone Is Just the Start. . . [S]cientists are raising the alarm that . . . destruction related to climate change will reach nearly all 423 national parks" (NYT, 6/16, p. A1); and 3) "Study finds higher density of gas leaks where people of color live" (RTD, 5/23, p. C1);

Things we can do include: 1) Trading single-use coffee pods for a reusable K-Cup; 2) Consider "pee-cycling" as it saves water and "human urine has the very nutrients that plants need"; (NYT, 6/19, p. 12); 3) Speaking up, advocating and voting (not only at the ballot box but by what we buy and how we spend); 4) Embracing the 7 R's of "shrinking our [personal] footprint": *Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rent (or borrow), Recycle & Rot*; and 5) Joining and/or supporting one (or several!) of the many non-profits dedicated to creating a more sustainable world (e.g. The Nature Conservancy; Greenpeace; EDF; Ducks Unlimited; Sierra Club; Audubon Society; WWF, Wild Virginia, Amazon Watch, etc.).

Amen....Respectfully submitted, Michael j Wriston, Chair, Earth Advocacy Committee, RRUMC

THANK YOU

Kits for Conference – We collected and assembled 37 hygiene kits for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) for distribution to people that have been forced to leave their homes due to human conflict or natural disaster. Thanks to all who donated items to prepare the kits. We appreciate Karen Carter’s leadership of this mission and Charlotte Allred’s support in assembling the kits.

JUNE MISSIONS WORK

All God’s Children Camp – A ministry of the Virginia Annual Conference, All God’s Children Camp is a week-long overnight camp for children ages 7 to 12, with an incarcerated parent. We were blessed by the opportunity to transport children to and from this camp. Thanks to Tom York and Tony and Jean Barnette for driving vans and to the Trustees for their financial support. We also appreciate the loan of a van by Discovery United Methodist Church, as our church van was not operable.

Safe Harbor – Tony and Jean Barnette attended a fundraiser for Safe Harbor, which provides the support that survivors of sexual and domestic violence and human trafficking need to overcome their crisis and to transform their lives. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to make a financial contribution to this worthwhile organization. We are also providing one meal per quarter to the Safe Harbor residents with the support of the RRUMC youth group, United Women in Faith, and the Contemporary Christian Sunday School class.

Little Hands -- We continue to deliver donated diapers and wipes to Little Hands, which provides essentials and love to babies and families in need. All sizes are needed but especially sizes 4, 5 and 6. Thanks for your donations.

ONGOING NEEDS - FOOD PANTRIES

We are grateful for continued contributions of food for the pantries and Safe Harbor. Thanks to your generous contributions, we continue to supply the food pantries at Ginter Park United Methodist Church, Belmont United Methodist Church and St. Paul’s Catholic Church and residents of the shelter at Safe Harbor. Most-needed items remain peanut butter; tomato sauce in 15 oz. cans; 1 lb. spaghetti noodles; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; ravioli/spaghettios; boxed cereal; oatmeal; non-refrigerated microwave meals; and diapers and wipes. Standard sizes are appreciated for packing purposes and no glass containers. Watch for weekly updates regarding particular needs.

MICAH

Be on the lookout for an email with a link for the Amazon wish list to help support Oak Grove K-1st school supplies.

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35.

Thanks be to God for leading us to love our neighbors. For more missions information, contact Ann Hodges, ahodges@richmond.edu or 804-339-9440.



**RIVER ROAD
UNITED METHODIST**
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

**8800 River Road
Henrico VA 23229
Phone: 804-740-7061
Fax: 804-740-3367
Preschool: 754-0227**

July 2022

**Articles for the
August 2022
Connections are due
July 20, 2022.**



**We're on the web at
www.riverroadumc.org**

Spark Studios VBS

Get ready for Community Outreach and Engagement. SPARK STUDIOS VBS is coming to River Road UMC from July 18 - July 22 from 9:30-12:30 daily. Children who turn 4 by September 30, 2022 through rising 6th graders are eligible to participate. Children will learn they are "Created, Designed, and Empowered" by God to do his works. VBS is a weeklong investment with eternal significance. There are several ways to get involved. You can pray for the VBS participants. Daily prayer sheets are available in the Welcome Center. You can volunteer to help for a day or the whole week, you can donate supplies from the Amazon Wish List or the donation board in the Welcome Center, or you can come to the Pizza and Decorating party immediately after the 11:00 service on July 17. To register a child or to volunteer, visit riverroadumc.org or the Welcome Center. If you have any questions, please contact Missy Markey at missymarkey@gmail.com.



[Click here](#) to access the Amazon wish list.

Open Arms Christian Preschool



Summer Camp is off to a great start at OACP! We've had some great visitors for our Camp program so far including Animals Unlimited who came with all their farm animals and pony rides, Jonathan the Juggler who put on a great show, and a bounce house on our first day of camp! The camp program began on June 6th and will end on August 25th. Families have the option of enrolling in the full Summer Camp Program (June, July, and August) or signing up for weeks that are available. Our Camp program is currently full but if you, or your family or friends are interested in attending OACP for the 2022-2023 school year

please reach out to Nora Hamlet, 804-754-0227
openarms@riverroadumc.org.



**OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL**

Helping children grow with open hearts, open minds and open arms.