

THE CHANNEL MARKER

A Publication of the
ELIZABETH RIVER DISTRICT
Virginia Conference United Methodist Church

December 2013 / January 2014



From our DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Most of us have bucket lists of places we want to see or things we want to do before we die. I have had the privilege of visiting a lot of places in my life. But there are still several more places I would like to see that are on my bucket list. Australia and New Zealand are on my list. Also, there is a longing to go to a place where I might observe the Aurora Borealis: those northern lights of many rich colors that streak across the sky in the far northern part of our hemisphere. I have seen pictures of these lights and I have even watched a video of these lights on You Tube, but it isn't the same as being there and seeing them in person. They must be awesome.

What is also awesome is that, believe it or not, we will be very soon into the Advent and then Christmas season. As I am writing this, it is 76 degrees outside so it doesn't feel like Christmas, but the calendar is telling us otherwise. As I think of the aurora borealis, and how stunning they must be I am reminded of the Christmas story when the shepherds were visited by the angels and a very bright star lit up the sky. How frightening and yet how awesome that must have been. As I have a deep longing to fulfill my bucket list of places and events, the season of Advent and Christmas with those special stories and grand events also bring to us a deep longing.

As we think of the Advent story perhaps we have a deep longing for peace in the world which seems so evasive right now. Perhaps we think of the Advent and Christmas stories as comforting because they never change from year to year and that is important to us in a time of fast changing events all around us. Perhaps, however, the Advent stories do change for us each year as they take on new and fresh meaning in our quest for a hopeful future. We can see new ideas and gain fresh inspiration.

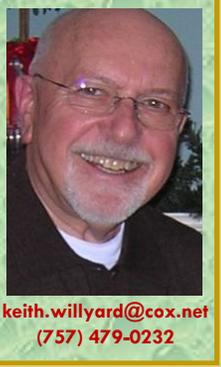
Let me encourage all of us not to see the wonderful Advent and Christmas stories in the same old way this year, but ask the questions for each of us, "Where is God in these stories?", and "How might these old and familiar stories speak to each of us in a new and fresh way?"

Kay and I want to wish for each of you a very Merry Christmas and a most blessed 2014. May you find newness of hope in this most special of seasons.

Love,

Brad





FROM OUR DISTRICT LAY LEADER

I think that one of the most vivid and beloved passages in the Bible is the one where the heavens themselves seemed to explode with joy on the night when Christ was born. Mary and Joseph had come from Galilee to Bethlehem to be taxed. "And there were in the same country," St. Luke says, "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). If we had been with those shepherds, sitting around their campfire, staring into the midnight sky, what would we have seen and heard?

First, there must have been a radiant burst of light as "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them" (Luke 2:9). Surely they were terror-stricken, but once again the angel spoke his reassuring words: "Fear not." Then he gave them the "good tidings of great joy" that have been at the heart of Christmas ever since. And suddenly, St. Luke tells us, "There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God" (Luke 2:13).

What a spectacular sight that must have been! According to tradition and studies based on Scripture, there is a whole hierarchy of angels, their rank determined by their closeness to God's throne. The nine orders are seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels and angels. If all these shining creatures were in the heavenly host that the shepherds saw, no wonder they were spell bound.

But the shepherds weren't content just to be told about the Savior's birth. They wanted to experience Him for themselves, and that is what they did, coming "with haste" to the manger where the baby lay (Luke 2-16).

Is there a message for us here? I think there is, and it is this: Don't be satisfied to hear about Jesus. Go and seek Him yourself. Go in search of Him "with haste" until you stand in His presence, and then when you have found Him, tell others about your discovery, just as the shepherds did.



*Heavenly Father, at this holy time,
we thank You for the gift of Your Son,
And the message of love that
He brought to the world.*

Shalom,

Merry Christmas

and Happy New Year!

Keith

Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless Shelter



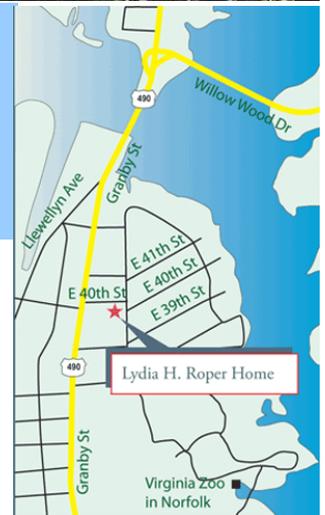
© Can Stock Photo - csp0712116

West End UMC will be the host church for Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless Shelter the week of December 22–28, 2013. If your church would be interested in helping with the activities of the week, we would be glad to have you join us. We are planning a "Gift Room" where our guests can pick a present for a loved one. We are going to supply wrapping paper, boxes, bows and tape. If anyone has small gifts under \$10.00 that they would like to donate for the "Gift Room", that would be great. We are also having a Clothes Closet where our guests can get an outfit. Clothing that is in good wearable condition would be appreciated; we have more men than women. Each night we need two men and one woman to spend the night, so if there is anyone in your congregation that would like to join us for the night, let us know. If there is anything else your congregation would volunteer to do during the week, please give us a call. Points of contact are Sidney Goldblatt – 757-560-8206, Nancy Clark – 757-393-6876 or Iverson Garrison – 757-484-3141.

WEST END UMC to host December 22-28, 2013



Lydia Roper Home
Open House
DECEMBER 8th, 2:30-4:30 pm



Virginia United
 Methodist Homes, Inc.

The mission of Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. is to provide facilities, services and programs to enhance the quality of life for older persons.

Come see how the
 Lydia Roper Home is

Making a Difference

127 E. 40th Street, Norfolk 23504



Ellen Clements

DISTRICT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

There was a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm at the third annual Elizabeth River District Conference and Training Event this past weekend. Participants had an opportunity to meet new people, attend a variety of workshops, find out important information and learn new ideas to equip them for ministry in the year ahead. Thank you to everyone who participated. We appreciate the folks from the Conference and members of our district churches who led the workshops. We extend a special thank you to Pastors David Drinkard and Stephanie Kimec, Debbie Armistead and all the members of New Creation who opened their hearts and their doors to welcome everyone with such gracious hospitality.

December is UMFS Month



I am filled with limitless potential

December, the season of Advent, is a perfect time of year to reach out and extend our hospitality to friends, family and strangers. It is a time to remember those who are in need, spiritually, physically and emotionally. The Virginia Annual Conference has designated December as United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) month. Contributions to this special offering assist UMFS to serve the more than 7,500 individuals each year who have been abused, neglected, or experienced some crisis in their lives. UMFS provides programs and services that heal, educate and empower children, youth and their families to restore them and set them on

the right course. For resources that can be used in Advent, go to <http://www.umfs.org/church-relations>.

Christmas is a season of wonder and hope. A story that I am learning by heart this year is called "Angels and Other Strangers" from a book entitled *A Stubborn Sweetness and Other Stories for the Christmas Season*, by Katherine Paterson. The little boy Kevin recognizes a stranger in the story as an angel while the adults see only the outside of the person and feel fear. There is one line where the little boy is excited about the prospect of the stranger coming to their church, "Oh goody!" cried Kevin. "Then you can go to church with us! We never had a real angel in our church before." I hope that you will experience the wonder of a child this Christmas. Perhaps an angel will visit your church this Christmas or God will call you to be an angel to someone else. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Shalom, Ellen eclements@elizabethriverdistrict.org



2014 VBS Kits
on order!

Check district website
in January for VBS Preview Dates!



An On-line Micro-donation Tool to Create Contributions at No Cost



By downloading the UMCmarket browser application to your computer, you will be able to create micro-donations to your home church every time you shop on-line. This is done at no cost to the church or to its members.

Take a few minutes to check it out and then share the link with your church membership.

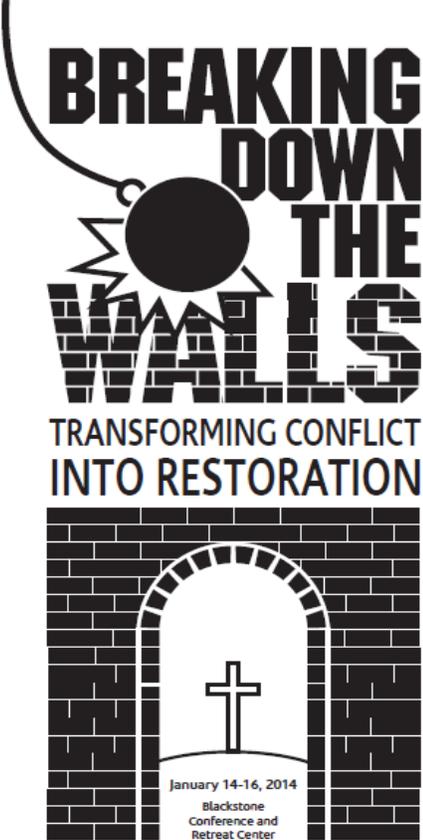
<http://www.umcmarket.org/contents/howitworks>

Note: I have successfully logged in to UMCMarket and shopped online at Amazon.com. Donations have been sent to my local church. All of the United Methodist Churches are already listed on the UMCMarket website. ~Ellen Clements



UNITED
METHODIST
umy
YOUTH
MINISTRY

**ELIZABETH RIVER
DISTRICT YOUTH**
meeting at Oak Grove
this year!
Second Monday each month
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
See you there!
(427 N Battlefield Blvd, Chesapeake)

**BREAKING
DOWN
THE
WALLS**
TRANSFORMING CONFLICT
INTO RESTORATION

For all clergy, diaconal ministers, and professional church staff in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church

Ministers' Convocation

January 14-16, 2014
Blackstone
Conference and
Retreat Center

Annual Continuing Education Event for clergy and church professionals in the Virginia Conference. The theme is "Breaking Down the Walls: Transforming Conflict into Restoration."

Keynote Speakers:
Dr. Ellen Ott Marshall
&
Thomas W. Porter, Jr.

The preacher for the convocation is Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer. Bishop Young Jin Cho will preach at the opening service of Word and Table.

For more information or to register online, go to <https://www.vaumc.org/pages/events/2014ministersconvocation>.

January 14-16, 2014
Blackstone Conference & Retreat Center

CHURCH POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PIANIST/ORGANIST [Heritage UMC, Virginia Beach]

Currently seeking a part-time pianist/organist. The candidate is currently expected to play for a weekly Wednesday evening rehearsal (mid-August through mid-July) and play for one Sunday morning worship service and other special occasions (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Christmas Eve and Easter services, etc.). Candidates should have proficient keyboard skills, a working knowledge of a variety of music styles, genre and repertoire with a willingness to try new things as appropriate for worship experiences in a changing congregational environment. Please send your resume and a letter of interest to: Heritage United Methodist Church, 815 Baker Road, Virginia Beach, 23462, att: Dr. Don Krudop. For more information, call Dr. Krudop, Director of Music, at (757- 635-0905), or email him at: dkrudop@mac.com Thanks! In harmony, Don.

More job opportunities go to Conference website www.vaumc.org/jobs



www.elizabethrivermen.org



Above picture taken at the Men's retreat in Blackstone Nov. 1-3, 2013. Over 25 men from the Elizabeth River District attended. There were 165 men and nearly 450 Boy Scouts for the annual event. The Rev. Tom Berlin from Floris UMC was our speaker.

Storytelling Workshop: Making Bible Stories Come Alive

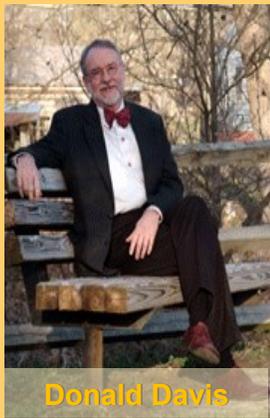
Saturday, January 18 ~ 10:00a.m. — Noon

Virginia Beach U.M.C.

212 19th Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Workshop Fee: \$25

Special rates for groups of 5 or more



Donald Davis

Master storyteller and teacher of storytellers, Donald Davis will help you bring Bible stories alive for the children, youth and adults you teach. Donald Davis, graduate of Duke University Divinity School, retired United Methodist Minister and internationally celebrated storyteller will help you help your students discover the fullness and depth of the stories of the Bible. Discover, as Donald Davis did, "that in a

story, I can safely dream any dream, hope any hope, go anywhere I please, fight any foe, win or lose, live or die."

Workshop registration forms are available at vbumc.org
Or contact Martha Jo Wilson (757) 340-8689.



Elizabeth River District
United Methodist Men



Annual Winter Banquet

Honoring Pastors & Life Members

January 14th, 6:30 p.m.



See author David Murrow's (*Why Men Hate Going to Church*) video, "*Amazing Grace: a Church for Men*" about Dr. Wilson's last Church: <http://vimeo.com/37779171>

- The Rev. Dr. Jen Wilson
 - Fight (for what you believe in)
- Men's District Chorus
- Recognition of Pastors & Life Members

Dinner: \$15- each Methodist man may bring a guest at no extra charge. *Please consider sponsoring pastors and their spouses as well as life members and their wives as a token of your appreciation for their service to UMMen.*

Menu: Grilled pork chops, green beans, parsley potatoes, salad, fruit cup, roll, beverage, dessert.

Hickory UMC: 2708 S. Battlefield Blvd., Chesapeake, VA

Make reservations by e-mail to andrew.kissell@cardnotec.com or call or text 757-839-0790



December 7th ~ 9am to 2pm

Contact: Ruthann Sulik

757-468-5240

ruliamau@yahoo.com

to be a vendor -- limited spaces

Crafts, Food, Fun!!!

Supports UMW missions!!

3396 Stoneshore Rd, Va Beach ~ 757-468-3511

SAVE THESE DATES

SAVE THE DATE!!!
February 14th-16th

E. R.

**ELIZABETH RIVER
DISTRICT YOUTH**

"A Lifeline to Jesus"

We are going back to.....
BLACKSTONE!!
More info to follow soon.

Community
United Methodist Church
1072 Old Kempsville Rd,
VIRGINIA BEACH 23464

ADVENT SERVICES

CANTATA
"Appalachian Winter"
December 15 @ 8:30am & 11am

CAROLING
December 15 @ 5:30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE
5:30, 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 pm

WWW.CUMCVB.ORG

Elizabeth River District
Board of Missions
Annual Dinner

February 9, 2014

Wesley Memorial UMC

**More info to follow*

JUNE 8, 2014

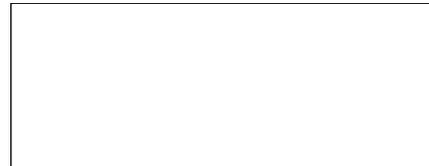
We will bid FAREWELL to the
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT
(Details to follow)



In the Virginia Conference
 United Methodist Church
 P.O. Box 12654
 Norfolk, VA 23541-0654

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VA Conference Bishop Young Jin Cho
 District Superintendent Bradford L. Phillips
 District Office Manager Deborah L. Hanson
 District Finance Secretary Tammy A. Waters
 District Program Coordinator Ellen J. Clements
 District Treasurer Mary R. Stroh
 District Lay Leader Keith E. Willyard
 District Associate Lay Leader Gary Denette
 District Webmaster ... Dominica "Dee" Guagliardo

DISTRICT CALENDAR

Send your request to
ElizabethRiverDistrict@vaumc.org
 Newsletter Articles **Deadline**
 is the **15th** of every month
 All articles should be submitted
 BY EMAIL
 to address below.



- 1 ADVENT begins
- 2 Committee on Ministry, 10am
- 5 Historical Society, *Lynnhaven* 6:30pm
- 7 UMW Breakfast, *New Creation*, 9am
- 9 District Youth, *Oak Grove*, 7pm
- 11 CLERGY Christmas Lunch, *Red Lobster (Ches)* 11:30am
- 24-31 **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY** –Office Closed

Job Announcements should be 60-words or less.
 Events 100-words or less or 1/4 page flyer-format
 District Officers try to limit to a half-page



ElizabethRiverDistrict@vaumc.org

- 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY – Office Closed
- 11 Trustees, *district parsonage*, 10am
- 13 District Youth, *Oak Grove*, 7pm
- 14-16 Ministers' Convocation *Blackstone*
- 22 Clergy Assoc, *Community-VB*, 8:30am
- 25 (Sat) UMW Prayer Breakfast & Officer Training, *Oak Grove*
- 28 District Board of Discipleship, *district office*, 10am
- 28 District Committee on Finance, *district office* 4pm



Office Location: 815 Baker Rd. Suite 301, Virginia Beach
 Phone: 757.473.1592 Fax: 757.473.1790
 Email: ElizabethRiverDistrict@vaumc.org
 District Website: ElizabethRiverDistrict.org
 Conference Website: vaumc.org