

**The Virginia Conference  
The United Methodist Church**



**THE VALLEY RIDGE DISTRICT  
VALLEY RIDGE DISTRICT DAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2024**

## 2024 CHARGE CONFERENCES

### WELCOME

Rev. Doug Forrester, District Superintendent

### CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 95:1-6)

Rev. Alan Combs, Senior Pastor First UMC, Salem

One: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**Many: Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.**

One: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

**Many: In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.**

One: The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

**All: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!**

### \*OPENING HYMN

*Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone*

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### CENTERING PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Dale White, Director of Congregational Excellence

Ah, Lord God, holy Lover of my soul, when you come into my soul, all that is within me will rejoice. You are my glory and the exultation of my heart. You are my hope and refuge in the day of my trouble. Set me free from all evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections, cure and cleanse me within, that I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere.

**Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth; because love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. Let me love you more than myself and love myself except for you; and in you all that truly love you, as the law of love commands, shining out from yourself.**

**Amen.**

(THOMAS A. KEMPIS, GERMANY, 1380-1471)

## THE CHARGE CONFERENCES

### THE WORK OF THE CHARGE CONFERENCE

Election of Charge Conference Secretary

Action Items

Election of Church Lay Leaders and Ministry Leaders

Lay Servants and Lay Speakers

Candidates for Ministry

Clergy Compensation

Base Salary/Housing Allowance

Accountable Reimbursement

Parsonage/Housing Exclusion

Member Removal (Paragraph 228.b2-4)

Naming the Saints

Conclusion of Charge Conferences

### \*HYMN

*Revelation Song*

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# THE WORK OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Election of District Conference Secretary

Attendance: Please complete the **District Conference** attendance found in your pews

Approval of Minutes of the 2023 District Conference

Introduction of District Staff

2025 District Budget (Pages 25-26) – Approved by District Leadership Board (August 29, 2024)

## **Celebration of District Ministries**

Election of District Leadership (Page 24)

Election of 2025 Annual Conference At-Large District Lay Members (Pages 27-32)

Conclusion of District Conference

**HYMN**

*How Great is Our God/How Great Thou Art*

pg. 32

**MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

**Matthew 16:13-20**

**MESSAGE FOR MINISTRY**

**Don't Dream It's Over**

**Rev. Douglas Forrester**

## **A COVENANT PRAYER IN THE WESLEYAN TRADITION**

**“I am no longer my own, but thine.**

**Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.**

**Put me to doing, put me to suffering.**

**Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee.**

**Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.**

**Let me be full, let me be empty.**

**Let me have all things, let me have nothing.**

**I freely and heartily yield all things**

**To thy pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, O glorious and blessed God,**

**Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,**

**thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.**

**And the covenant which I have made on earth,**

**Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”**

**OFFERING** *Today's Offering will bless Undue Medical Debt, a ministry of the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church*

**\*DOXOLOGY #94**

**\*COMMISSION**

**Matthew 28:16-20**

**Larry Dickenson**

**Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. And Jesus came to them, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**

**\*BENEDICTION (Numbers 6:24-26)**

**Rev. Douglas Forrester**

**The Lord bless you and keep you**

**The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.**

**The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.**

**\*THE PEACE** *As you depart, share the peace of Christ with one another.*

Thank you to Rev. Alan Combs and Rev. Jeff Dorsey and all the staff and the congregation of  
First UMC, Salem for their hospitality

Gratitude to the First UMC Genesis Praise Band: Sarah Gayle, Don, Bill, Blaine, and their  
Director Allan Davidson and to Aaron Garber, Organist and Director of Adult Choir, for their  
musical contributions

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT REV. J. DOUGLAS FORRESTER



New Wineskins: The Missional Church Versus the Attractional Church

In the broadest sense, churches tend to situate themselves into one of two categories regarding how they understand themselves and their relationship to the world around them. Those models are known as the Attractional Model and the Missional Model. To be clear, that there is no purely attractional church just as there is no purely missional church. Every church, regardless of doctrine, has elements of both. Still, churches also tend to lean more in one in one direction than the other, and I am speaking to that reality.

The self-image of the Attractional Church trends this way: our predominant purpose is to “bring people in,” and we do this through elements such as beautiful, relevant (sometimes entertaining) worship, lovely facilities, and large, attractive, popular programs. “If we can offer these,” Attractional Churches believe, “people will come, and the house of God ‘will be filled,’” to use an image of the Lord’s found in Luke 14.

The Attractional Church understands its primary mission to bring people *in*.

By contrast, the Missional Church understands its purpose to be sending people *out*. It asks questions that attempt to locate the pain, need, and injustice in their community and world. These churches often like to quote the Epistle of James, chapter two when they say, “Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead,” as well as “By my works I will show you my faith.”

For most of its history, American mainline Protestant congregations very often tilted on the side of the Attractional Model. These churches lived in a world that valued Christianity. The church had enormous cultural influence. Churches had nearly free reign of how people scheduled their Sundays, and in many cases, their Wednesday nights. Many, if not most communities even supported this reality through things like the blue laws that closed businesses on Sundays.

During this era, when churches did something grand and people came, they felt successful.

In a previous appointment, I served an Attractional Church. In fact, it was in many ways the very prototype for the attractional church. Their history was one of beauty: beautiful architecture, beautiful music, and beautiful liturgy. It was where that city’s beautiful people attended worship. And it paid off. For decades, the church grew and grew, or at least it grew numerically.

This congregation was slow, however, in embracing its sense of mission, Christ’s mission, to seek and serve the least, the last, and the lost. “Help me understand,” a key leader once asked me, “how our ministry in one of the city’s poorest communities gets people to sit in our pews?” Others asked, “Why are you so often preaching about the responsibilities of Christian disciples in regard to the community and world around us?” After challenging sermons, I would receive requests to stop being “prophetic.”

In Matthew 11, John the Baptist is in prison for speaking out against King Herod and he sends messengers to ask Jesus, in essence, if he is indeed the Messiah, or if they should wait for someone else. Jesus’ reply is telling when he says, “Go and tell John what you hear and

see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.”

Jesus envisions an active, visible faith that transforms lives and communities as God utilizes them for nothing less than the salvation of the world.

I am convicted that a largely attractional church can survive for a season without being very missional. However, there is little more “attractional” than a truly missional church. This is true because when we are visible in the world into which God sends us, when we are living what we believe, resembling the love of the one who saves us, we reveal the living Christ living in *us*.

Throughout my life I have met many, many people who gave up on God for any number of reasons. However, I have yet to meet anyone who lost their faith because of the grace, acceptance, compassion, mercy and love of Christ. To be like Jesus, and to prioritize in our life what was most important to him, is to be attractional.

It is how, in a world full of doubt, we will earn once more the right to be heard.

When he was serving the Virginia Conference, Bishop Joe E. Pennel, Jr. was fond of telling the congregations under his care “Find the hurt in your community and locate yourself there, and you will be a church in mission.”

All that I have seen and heard in my four and a half years traversing the thousands of miles of highways and rural mountain roads of the fourteen counties and eight cities and towns of this wonderful Valley Ridge District has cemented in my spirit a conviction, a conviction is that Christ is still sending his disciples to be his church in the world. This conviction is that that church’s future will reward creativity in our mission and a willingness to go deep in our personal piety, our life together in Christian community, and in our visible witness to the world through our embodiment of God’s grace. In so doing, we will, in time draw others to Christ by prioritizing the people and the situations that are so evidently important to his ministry here on earth. This ministry will always have intrinsic value because it is rooted and grounded in God’s great dream for this world, a dream Christ calls the Kingdom of God.

In a world full of so much pain and doubt, thank God for the Valley Ridge District. Thank God for the church. Thank God for *your church* and thank God for *you*. The world is not without hope, for the world has the love of God, a love revealed supremely in our love for one another and for the world Christ died to save.

In all that is to come, I give thanks for this opportunity to walk together with each of you.

Grace and peace,

Doug



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DISTRICT LAY LEADER MR. LARRY DICKENSON

*“In that day Egypt and Assyria will be connected by a highway...and a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness...you who are left in Judah, who have escaped the ravages of the siege, will put roots down in your own soil and grow up and flourish. For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem, a group of survivors from Mount Zion. The passionate commitment [zeal] of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!”*

In the name of Jesus Christ, greetings to all the laity and clergy of the Valley Ridge District!! Thank you again for your trust in electing me as District Lay Leader for 2024! I hope you will extend that trust for another year.

Reading in the Book of Isaiah this past month, the words of the prophet seem very close at hand. Isaiah was speaking into a time and place where God’s chosen people had been under siege, dispersed and in exile, wondering if there would ever be a time for them to thrive again. In many ways the congregations of our Valley Ridge District have been experiencing similar feelings through disaffiliation, Covid, church closings, long time members leaving, leaders stepping aside, and the numbers of visitors and new members reduced to a trickle. The United Methodist connection has not been broken but has been sorely tested!

But through Isaiah’s words I hear the message of hope. Not for some distant future but for now. A hope that is audacious! Enemies reconnected via a Highway of Holiness with God’s people in the middle. God’s people reinvigorated by the Holy Spirit, digging into a new future of deep-rooted discipleship, experiencing and sharing the fruits of the grace of Jesus in new ways (and old ways!). Congregations flowing outside the walls to share love and caring in their communities. Congregations reclaiming their rightful identity as outposts of grace and sanctuaries for all people by offering insistent acceptance, hospitality, and stories of life-change!

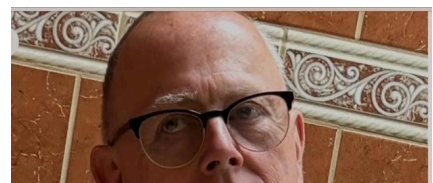
I have this hope for God to act with signs and wonders again among the congregations and communities of the Valley Ridge District because I have been blessed to see it happening!! The zeal of the Lord is among us!

- ❖ Pastors organized into small, localized groups (guilds) began meeting in 2024 to share small “wins” and ward off isolation. I look forward to doing the same in 2025 with our local church lay leaders!
- ❖ New mission groups being sent to many places, including the first mission group to the country of North Macedonia!
- ❖ Congregations stepping up by faith to fully pay apportionments before year-end!
- ❖ A new generation of local church Lay Servants, Lay Speakers and Lay Ministers being trained, with Genesis Church stepping forward to be a central training hub.
- ❖ Embrace of Waynesboro continuing to expand its ministry in Waynesboro, with plans to expand to Covington in 2025.

Thanks be to God!

Larry Dickenson, Valley Ridge District Lay Leader  
[ValleyRidgeLayLeader@gmail.com](mailto:ValleyRidgeLayLeader@gmail.com)

**A MESSAGE FROM**



# DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL EXCELLENCE REV. DR. DALE WHITE

This has been a very busy and productive year in the Valley Ridge District. Last year in my report I laid out what my role is as the Director of Congregational Excellence is. This year I will highlight the “major accomplishments” that I’ve undertaken this year.

1. **Lay Servant/Lay Speaker development:** The District Lay Servant Ministry Team has worked hard in 2024, certifying three new Lay Speakers, and conducting Lay Servant Academies in Churchville, Roanoke, and Christiansburg to recertify or newly certify a total of 35 Lay Servants. The LSM Team is comprised of the following members, who deserve recognition for their hard work: Larry Dickenson (District Lay Leader), Larry Creamer (Greenville), Lori Valentine (Oak Hill), Cathy Halterman (Blue Grass), Mark White (Genesis), Tom Bell (St Paul Christiansburg), Tom Rose (Churchville St James), Gary Riley (McKinley), Becky Grandle (Main Street Waynesboro), and Jeannie Hearn (McKinley). 2024 Instructors include Becky Grandle, Tom Rose, Robin Barge, Lori Valentine, and Dale White. Plans for late 2024 include a special course on Autism and the Church as well as a course on Racism and the Church. In 2025, our plan is to hold one large single Lay Servant Academy at Genesis Roanoke.

2. **Simplified Accountable Structure:** As the certified SAS coach for the Valley Ridge District, I am charged with taking churches through the orientation, discernment, equipping, and implantation phases of SAS. This is no small feat, as each church is at a different phase of the process. The following chart illustrates the progress of Calvary Stuarts Draft, Granbery Memorial, Pleasant View, Asbury Christiansburg, Rockingham Court, and Central Salem. These churches and their leadership have worked hard to realign their meetings to focus on generative ministry to the community. Great job.

Valley Ridge District Simplified Accountable  
Structure Coach Tracker  
Rev Dale White, rev 8/5/2024

Church	Interim Request to Director	Initial Coach to Council	Home Request to Council	Visit to Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council	Open Date with Council
Calvary Stuarts Draft	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Central Salem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Meet with Asbury
Pleasant View Waynesboro	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asbury Christiansburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Granbery Memorial Christiansburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rockingham Court	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3. **Strategic Planning:** Organizations that fail to plan, plan to fail. That includes churches. This year, I have supported Brian Boettcher and Granbery Memorial, and Peter Choi and Fishersville, in full phased Strategic Planning. This includes demographic research, Mission Insite, SWOT Analysis, Institutional Self Analysis, Mission/Vision development, Goal setting/implementation, and evaluation. I have “consulted” with many other churches and pastors on strategic ideas well short of full phased strategic planning, including Locust Grove Salem, Oak Hill Waynesboro, Marvin Buena Vista, Parrish Chapel, and Lawrence Memorial.

4. **Embrace:** Although the heavy lifting and implementation of this expanding ministry is on the shoulders of Rev. Jenelle Watson and now Greg Kropff in Covington, my role across the district is to highlight Embrace as a model, encourage local churches to partner with Embrace, and see first-hand what this exciting district ministry is doing. Additionally, I serve on the current Board of Directors. This ministry model is so innovative, I have gone so far as to share this model with Michael Beck of UM Fresh Expressions, as well as leadership in the New York Annual Conference. This district is blessed to have this innovative and successful ministry model in our midst, now in TWO locations.



5. **30 on Thursday**: This 30-minute zoom call series gives pastors and laity an opportunity to share best practices of what is going on in their ministries with other churches. This year we highlighted many ministries, including best practices at Genesis, Main Street Waynesboro, South Roanoke, Marvin Buena Vista, Trinity Lexington, Fincastle, Blacksburg, Wesley Foundation, and unique Made for Grace art ministries with Melanie Reuter.
  
6. **Autism and the Church**: I have recently developed a training manual based on the book/research by Dr. Grant Macaskill on “**Autism and the Church**.” His groundbreaking work delves into both church theology and practice, highlighting pitfalls and making recommendations for how the church can be more welcoming and inviting to persons with Autism. I augment his work with that of Alexandra Jackman, who produced “Teens Guide to Autism,” and Joni Earickson Tada’s short series on the Church and Autism. Clergy Excellence has approved it as a .5 CEU course for clergy, and the conference Lay Servant Team at this writing is reviewing for it to be an advanced Lay Servant/Speak Course. Additionally, I am working with Alexandra Jackman to possibly come to Virginia to speak on her advocacy work with those with Autism.

**A MESSAGE FROM  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNICATIONS AND PROGRAMMING,  
REV. ROBIN BARGE**



Stepping into the role of Director of Communications and Programming for the Valley Ridge District in 2024 has been both a rewarding and learning experience. My primary focus has been on building meaningful relationships among clergy and laity, with the hope of offering the resources and support they need to make disciples and grow in their ministries.

Throughout this year, I've had the privilege of working alongside many dedicated individuals and congregations. In January, we held a district-wide leadership training event, where clergy and lay leaders gathered to exchange ideas and strengthen their ministry skills. It was encouraging to see the energy and commitment that everyone brought to the table. In March, the God Unbound Day of Learning, with Dr. Elaine Heath, brought together both clergy and laity for a time of reflection and innovation. The event encouraged participants to think creatively about how we engage in ministry in today's world, and it was inspiring to witness the depth of conversation and passion that arose from this shared learning experience.

Supporting laity development has been an ongoing focus this year. We held Lay Servant Ministry trainings in April, June, and August. It's been heartening to see the dedication of those stepping into leadership roles, and it is a powerful witness for the United Methodist connection. April, May, and June were full of information, webinars, lectures, and communications, as we aimed to connect our laity and clergy with resources for General and Annual Conferences.

Alongside these specific events, much of my focus has been on the specifics of the district's communications. Through the bi-monthly newsletters, clergy news, and email announcements, my goal has been to keep congregations and pastors engaged at the local and conference levels. Sharing stories that highlight the good work being done in our churches has been especially meaningful, as it brings to light the impact we're making together. Our website and social media presence has been another area of attention. We've worked to utilize these platforms, knowing how vital they are in keeping us all connected and informed.

Looking back on 2024, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. As we move into the future, my hope is to continue offering meaningful resources and support, always striving to strengthen the United Methodist connections within the Valley Ridge District.

## **REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY**



The District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) serves to shepherd those who are discerning God's call on their lives by supporting Licensed Local Pastors and Lay Supply as well as guiding candidates in the credentialing process as they move towards commissioning and ordination as deacons and elders. The

DCOM works with the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Virginia Conference Center for Clergy Excellence to care for these individuals as they pursue various forms of ministry. The Valley Ridge DCOM functions in two subgroups—Northern and Southern—to provide candidates and ministers with more local support.

The DCOM is comprised of:

**North:**

Rev. Rev. Jonathan Greer, Co-Chair, Vice Chair Rev. Peter Choi, Secretary, Rev. David Vaughan, BOM Representative, Tom Davis, Rev. Eileen Gilmer, Rev. HungSu Lim, Anne Grimmer, Leigh Iberg, Karen Davis

**South:**

Marion Sortore, Rev. John Hemming, Registrar, Charlotte Kagey, Secretary  
Rev. Craig Newman, BOM Representative, Rev. Doug Paysour, Mentor Coordinator, Rev. Hyeon Ho Lee, Brenda Brooks, Rev. Tim Craft, Rev. Jeff Wilson

The Rev. Doug Forrester serves as a part of both subgroups.

**Core Values**

**Whole Person:** In working with candidates and clergy, the whole person is considered, including theological knowledge, emotional intelligence, practical skill and cultural competency.

**A Changing World:** Effective ministry leadership is needed in the pulpit and far beyond it: Christ is present—and our witness is needed—in and for a rapidly changing world.

**Spiritual Discernment:** The Holy Spirit is at work in our practice of discernment; being prepared, being prayerful, and being healthy all help the Spirit to move among us.

**REPORT OF THE DISTRICT LAY SERVANT MINISTRY (LSM) TEAM**



We continue to have as a priority to train and certify at least one Lay Servant/Lay Speaker in every church in the Valley Ridge District. We are moving forward in this effort. In this report you will see a list of all Lay Servants/Lay Speakers, three of which are Certified Lay Ministers (CLM) who serve on the Lay Servant Ministry Team. You will also see a list of those who attended training this year on their way to certification or renewal of certification.

The Lay Servant Ministry Team members work hard to provide leadership to our Lay Servants/Speakers. They have rotated during the year, but the following have served at some point in 2024: Becky Grandle, Larry Dickenson, Larry Creamer, Earl David Cash, Cathy Halterman, Tom Bell, Mark White, Tom Rose, Lori Valentine, Jeannie Hearn, Dale White and Gary Riley.

Three Lay Servant/Speaker Academies were held in 2024, hosted by St. James UMC (Churchville), Genesis UMC (Roanoke), and St. Paul UMC (Christiansburg). A total of 31 Lay Servants/Speakers attended these three academies (some attended, but did not register), which provide basis courses for initial certification, or advanced courses for renewal of certification of initial certification. The following attended training this year:

Basic Course	Preaching	Polity	Worship	Spiritual Gifts
Laura Cox (Ebenezer)	Paul Creasey (Central, CF)	James Cole (White Mem)	Tom Simpson (Windsor Hills)	Jeremiah Fines (Genesis)
Mark Hale (3 Oaks)	Larry Dickenson (Raleigh Ct)	Larry Dickenson (Raleigh Ct)	Melanie Wiseman (SRd)	Richard Hensley (GM)
Greg Journey (St Paul)	Megan Doney (Asbury)	Tom Simpson (Wdsr Hill)		Daniel Lovern (Central,CF)
Kathy Redman (Plst View)	Lisa Doss (3 Oaks)			Keith Moore (Northview)
Elaine Barr (Mint Spring)	Bill Hogg (NMO)			Helen Watson (Northview)
Ashleigh Houff (St James)	Kathy Redman (Pleasant View)			
Doug Proctor (Calvary)				
Robert Anderson (Cave Spring)				
Megan Doney (Asbury)				
Lisa Doss (3 Oaks)				
Brian Smith (Trinity, Lex)				
Aretha Henderson (Plst View)				
William Teague (McDowell)				

The following is a list of our Lay Servants and Lay Speakers based on Unity reports from churches. If there is a Lay Servant/Lay Speaker whose name is missing, please notify Dale White at the District Office.

### **Valley Ridge District Lay Servants and Lay Speakers**

Gary Armstrong  
Janie Barnette

Sherri Givens  
Becky Grandle

Montie Orr, Sr.  
Denise Pappa

Tom Bell  
 NL Bishop  
 James Blagg  
 George Bowman  
 Shirley Brown  
 Patricia Carter  
 William Case  
 Robin Claris  
 James Cole  
 Rodney Collins  
 Larry Creamer  
 Alice Crowder  
 David B. Davis  
 Karen Davis  
 Larry Dickenson (Lay Leader)  
 Stephanie Dickenson  
 Charles Dorsey  
 George "Ronnie" Earhart  
 Jeremiah Fines  
 Todd Fitch

David Grimm  
 Deborah Grimm  
 Mary Ellen Gross  
 Leonard Gunter  
 Cathy Halterman  
 Bobbie Hanby  
 Nancy Harvey  
 Jeannie Hearn (CLM – Lay Supply)  
 Richard Hensley  
 Marsha Hicks  
 Teddy Humphries  
 Alan Johnson  
 Frank Johnson (Lay Supply)  
 Mike Lambert  
 Patsy Lambert  
 Dan Lovern  
 Cindy Martin  
 Bob MacLeod  
 Keith Moore  
 Mary Mullins

Jennifer Propst  
 Gary Riley (CLM)  
 Linda Roberson  
 Rhonda Rogers  
 Tom Rose (CLM)  
 Nancy Sasser  
 John Shockley  
 Tom Simpson  
 Terri Urquhart  
 Michael W. Thompson  
 Helen Watson  
 Mark White  
 Royce Wickham  
 James D. Williams  
 Sabrina Wood  
 Karen Wright  
 Luci Wright

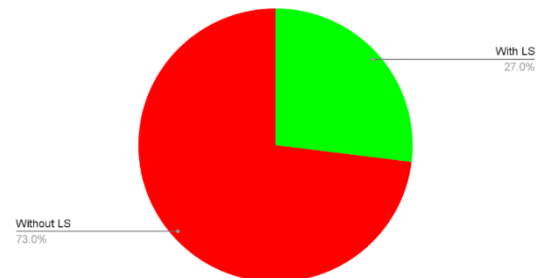
**Our goal is to have a certified Lay Speaker in every church. Of our 115 churches, the following 31 churches have one or more certified Lay Servants/Lay Speakers. Next year we are aiming to move closer to 115!!**

Asbury UMC (Christiansburg)  
 Blue Grass UMC  
 Central UMC (Salem)  
 Floyd Parish: Stonewall  
 Genesis UMC  
 Granbery Memorial UMC  
 Greenville UMC  
 McKinley UMC  
 Mount Tabor UMC  
 Northview UMC  
 Raleigh Court UMC  
 Saint Mark's UMC (Daleville)  
 Three Oaks Fellowship UMC  
 White Memorial UMC

Asbury UMC (Monterey)  
 Cave Spring UMC  
 Epworth UMC  
 Floyd Parish: Havens  
 Glovier Memorial UMC  
 Greene Memorial UMC  
 Main Street UMC  
 Mint Spring UMC  
 Newport-Mount Olivet UMC  
 Potts Valley: Pinnell UMC  
 Saint James UMC  
 Saint Paul UMC (C'burg)  
 West Augusta UMC  
 Windsor Hills UMC

Ashwood UMC  
 Central UMC (Clifton Forge)  
 First UMC (Salem)  
 Foothills Charge

Valley Ridge Certified Lay Servants/Speakers



## EMBRACE – A CENTER FOR COMMUNITY

Anna serving communion. One of the youngest members of The Gatherings at Embrace congregation helps serve communion. Anna and her family relocated to Waynesboro from Ukraine following the Russian invasion of their country.



(Gathering at Sunset Park) The Gathering at Embrace Waynesboro meets weekly to share a meal and worship. Here they gather at Waynesboro's Sunset Park.



(Gathering Moves) Members of the gathering help a new family move from a hotel into stable housing.

(Woven Together First Group) Woven Together is The Gathering's first official small group ministry, with participants crocheting prayer shawls. Beginners are welcome and instruction is more than 100 stitches is provided.



Congratulations Valley Ridge District: You've expanded your Embrace!

Thanks to your generous support, Embrace has officially become Embrace CENTERS for Community! Through this mission laboratory and ministry incubator, you've now embraced a second community, contributed more than \$1 million in economic impact in the Valley Ridge District, and planted a new worshipping congregation.

**GET YOUR DAILY EMBRACE:** Stay up to date at our new website: [EmbraceCenters.com](https://EmbraceCenters.com).

### **Embracing the Alleghany Highlands**

In June 2024, Rev. Greg Kropff joined Embrace as the part-time director of Embrace Alleghany Highlands. Located in the former Christ United Methodist Church facility in Covington, this new center is dedicated to helping the community, in line with the congregation's last request. Greg, also serving as pastor at Parish Court UMC, has completed 80 hours of training to become a Certified Community Health Worker. This will enable him to lead a team of resource navigators at the Community Assistance Network (CAN) office, where compassionate, trauma-informed professionals will support individuals in need as they transition from crisis to stability and resilience.

### **Community Assistance Network (CAN)**

The CAN initiative was launched at Embrace Waynesboro this year with the financial support of The Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge. CAN is a community help desk that provides assistance to people in need by connecting them to available resources. This model empowers embraced communities to say, "we CAN help," instead of turning people away.

### **Asset-Based Community-Driven Development**

Greg also received training in the ABCD model, which focuses on deep community listening, strategic visioning, and collaborative facilitation. Alongside Embrace Centers Executive Director Jenelle Watson, Greg will lead teams in Covington and Alleghany County to engage residents, understand their dreams, discover their talents, and form action teams. This approach has been essential in developing Embrace Waynesboro and will guide future Embrace locations.

### **Embracing Waynesboro**

With the grand opening of the Waynesboro CAN office, Embrace Waynesboro expanded its team to include three Community Health Workers. Since April, Waynesboro CAN has supported over 70 individuals. By October, Embrace Waynesboro and its 40+ partners:

- ❖ provided 900+ free medical appointments;
- ❖ distributed over 5,800 pounds of produce, 20,000+ pounds of food, and 10,000+ items of clothing and supplies;



- ❖ offered over 5,500 hours of educational and health services;
- ❖ contributed 2,500+ volunteer hours.

By year-end, these and other efforts will grow \$133,000 in donations into more than \$1 million in economic impact in Staunton/Augusta County/Waynesboro.

### **The Gatherings at Embrace**

After gathering monthly to share a meal and dive into scripture together, this (currently) 10-family group of Jesus followers voted to come together each week as a Dinner Church congregation. Meal prep begins at 5, with dinner served at 6 followed by time in the Word and planning missional engagement for the coming week. All are welcome to join in at 932 Fir Street, Waynesboro.

### **Join the “High-Five” Support Team!**

Support Embrace with a \$5 weekly contribution to help keep our lights on and doors open.

Our 2025 fundraising goal is \$200,000, covering basic operations in both Waynesboro and Covington. We can reach this goal if just 7 people from each VRD congregation pledge \$5 per week (\$260/year). Pledge today by emailing [iEmbraceGiving@gmail.com](mailto:iEmbraceGiving@gmail.com) to securely arrange your contribution.



## **CAMP ALTA MONS**

2842 Crockett Springs Road, Shawsville, VA 24162 - 540.268.2409  
Fax: 540.268.9503; Email: [office@altamons.org](mailto:office@altamons.org) [www.altamons.org](http://www.altamons.org)

Dear Valley Ridge District Members,

Thank you for your continued support of Alta Mons. Over the course of this past year, we have been able to accomplish many things. We are grateful for all of the opportunities that we've had to bless and be blessed by you. As we close out 2024, we reflect on an impactful and meaningful year here on these 850 acres of holy land.

Summer Camp 2024 was a huge success! With lots of planning, preparation, and training we were able to happily and safely serve 235 campers this past summer— slightly less than last year. Alan Combs, Taylor Mertins, Lance Presly and Joe Klotz each did an amazing job of presenting our summer theme “Beloved Community” to campers and staff. We thank them for serving as camp chaplains. Planning has already begun for Summer Camp 2025, and Winter Camp 2024



(December 13-15) is just around the corner. If you know a child or youth who could benefit from a camp experience, please send them to Alta Mons! We would love to have them. Our summer staff had a meaningful experience working with children, living life immersed in nature, developing leadership skills, and growing in their faith this summer. Lots of bonding, memories, and laughs were had by all! If you know someone who might enjoy working here, tell them to apply now. We will be receiving applications for the summer of 2025 in the very near future. Applications will be available on our website, along with job descriptions for all our seasonal positions. This includes summer intern staff and other positions like kitchen help.

Remember, we are open all year for church retreats and meetings, family reunions, and special events. Give our office a call or check out our website for more details and information. We have a wide variety of heated facilities for large and small groups, as well as more rustic accommodations for others. We would love to help you plan a retreat, event, or gathering here at Alta Mons. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the churches of the District, we have been able to replace flooring in the Burrows Retreat Center, a new 3 door upright freezer as well as dead tree removal and water line repairs.

This year we were able to partner with other nonprofits and professionals in the tourism industry. One of the non-profits is Friends of the Blue Ridge and they have come out and done painting in some of the facilities as well as developed a monarch garden in front of the main office.

This July the district leadership board created an appointment at Alta Mons and will fund this development position for three years. Paige Swain Presley will be the development coordinator and will be helping with fundraising and marketing. We are excited to have Paige join our staff.



The Annual Meeting of Alta Mons will be held Sunday November 17, 2024 at 3:00 PM at Alta Mons in the Burrows Retreat Center Conference Room. Everyone is welcome to attend! The presence of Valley Ridge District Clergy, Alta Mons Representatives, Alta Mons Board Members, and Lay Leaders is greatly appreciated. Contact the Alta Mons Office with any questions. Once again, THANK YOU for your support! Alta Mons is a truly beautiful place, and we are so

blessed to have the support of the Valley Ridge District to keep providing outdoor Christian experiences for all generations! We hope you will visit soon.



## WESLEY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Over this past year, I was reminded several times about the strong sense of connection that Wesley has always modeled. Whether it was in a text conversation with alum that was looking for students interested in engineering, at



our Wesley Weekend for alums, students, and parents hearing about alums that are still in meaningful relationships with one another, a graduate talking with an alum about a possible future job, a Spring Break stay at Grace UMC in Wilmington, NC, or our graduates testimonies during our Senior Sendoff Worship, Wesley exhibits a unique ability to connect across varying generations, college experiences, and life situations.

This is one of the things about Wesley that continues to give me hope for the Church and its witness in the world. Wesley continues to be an affirming, grace-filled community that develops and sends out disciples rooted in faith. Embedded in this vision is a deep desire to be connectional in all that we do in our ministry. That means as a part of the United Methodist Church, with those in ministry at Wesley together, and with our amazing alumni across the world. Because Wesley is such a loving community, this connection is vital while students are in school and when they leave school. I have hope, in part, due to Wesley's incredible witness as a part of this connection, but also because our students and alumni live it out faithfully as members of the Body of Christ.

Wesley continues to be very active as a ministry through our ministries of fellowship, worship, discipleship, outreach, and missions. Each year this looks similar in some ways, but each student leader can make their ministry area their own. Being a team-based ministry allows all our students to use their gifts in the ways they feel most comfortable. Our students run our ministry, with the support of our staff and Board of Directors, and they do a phenomenal job.

26 students traveled to Wilmington, NC on their spring break to work on homes, with the underserved in the community, and at a food bank. We held the Annual Valley Ridge District Youth Retreat at Wesley again this past year and we hope to continue getting more churches to be a part of that as well. This year it will be held on February 7-9, 2025. Our outreach team planned 13 Welcome Week events over 15 days to meet new students and connect them to our ministry. We had a welcome cookout, movie night, classroom quest (we tabled on campus and helped new students find their classes), tie dye, worship and s'mores, game night on the quad, and much more! Weekly our students participate in our CoGs (Communities of Grace) and this semester we have 10 CoGs! We hold worship every Wednesday night, a tutoring ministry at a local mobile home park, our food pantry for college students, mission days, family dinners every Sunday night, intramurals, and times of fellowship.

We desire to equip and train faithful leaders for our United Methodist Church and send them back into our local churches so they can lead as lay and clergy. We had 3 students attend Exploration in Orlando this past year with the Virginia Annual Conference as they discern a call into ministry! Wesley would like to thank our wonderful District for all your support! Without you we would not be able to "Love Out Loud" on our campus, in our community, and around the world. You are truly a blessing. Please follow us on our amazing social media channels; @vtwesley on Instagram and Facebook!

Local Members of Wesley are: Emily Turner, Alumni; Matt Beeken, Alumni and Blacksburg UMC Member; Leonard Bell, Alumni; Anna Bosco, Alumni; David Burke, Alumni and edges UMC Member; Glenn Cooper, Alumni; Rev. Brad Dulaney, Pastor of Blacksburg UMC; Lori Eggleston,

Alumni; Jason Forsyth, Alumni; Matthew Shealy, Alumni; Fred Gibson, Parent of Alumni and

Board Chair; Rev. Brett Gresham, Campus Minister; Rebecca Gullickson,



Alumni; Brian Henshaw, Alumni; Melissa Rhyne, Alumni; Stephen Magnuson, Alumni; Tim Owen, Alumni; Jenny Orzolek, Blacksburg UMC Member and Advancement Office at VT; Josh Peters, Alumni; David Riggan, Former Board Member and Pearisburg UMC Member; Davey Winyall, Alumni; Kelly Wiseman, Director of Finance and Administration at Wesley; Jonas Collins, Sophomore Student; Nathan Michaelson, Student Campus Minister; Josh Hansell, Senior Student; Morgan Peterson, Junior Student; and Adam Gillespie, Graduate Student.

Rev. Bret Gresham, Director



## YOUTH MINISTRY

In February 2024, the Valley Ridge District, in collaboration with the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech and Alta Mons, hosted a district-wide retreat. This was a weekend of worship, small group discussion, fun and fellowship led by the students at Wesley. Represented at the retreat were 6 churches and about 40 youth. 25 students from Wesley volunteered to lead the retreat.

The retreat was themed “Construction Zone: A Work in Progress”. Participants explored different zones—Comfort, Fear, Learning, and Growth—connected to the UMC understanding of Sanctifying Grace, across four worship services and small groups. Large Legos were used, with youth writing on them to reflect each worship theme. During the first service, they built a wall representing comfort zones, followed by a doorway for fear zones, a garden and river for learning zones, and finally, pieces from a Lego cross with inspirational words symbolized the growth zones.

Services and small groups were held at Wesley, though the weekend ended with a gathering in the dining hall at Camp Alta Mons.

Tom and Brenda Simpson, Youth Ministry Leaders at Windsor Hills UMC, have a passion for connecting youth groups in the Valley Ridge District for worship, fellowship, and fun. In 2024, Tom has partnered with St. Mark’s in Daleville and South Roanoke for collaborative youth ministry, and he would love to connect with more churches. Contact Tom or Brenda [arsontps@msn.com](mailto:arsontps@msn.com) to begin a conversation about Youth Ministry and how the connections of the Valley Ridge District and the Virginia Conference can bless your church’s Youth Ministry.

## CHILDREN’S MINISTRY: SAFE SANCTUARIES REPORT

### SAFER SANCTUARIES REPORT

Safer Sanctuaries is the updated version of the original Safe Sanctuaries book established in 1998. This version builds on the past resources and encourages churches in preparing for the work of the future. It is our hope that every church has a copy of this new version and more importantly, to actively follow the Safe Sanctuary practices.


Safer Sanctuary training is a vital part of your ministry in your church. This provides you with the essentials in the development of policies and procedures and more importantly how to educate and train your members to carry out the policies and procedures. This is for all members of your congregations regardless of if you have children/youth in your congregations. Adults are vulnerable as is your church in relation to your community. Be the safe haven for all those around you.

We strive to provide Safer Sanctuary district training sessions twice a year. Churches who prefer to have one on one training for their church, we will gladly assist with that as well as a small cluster of churches that are located close together. We are committed to providing this training for the safety and well-being of your church and its members.

We had the opportunity this past year to go to Kansas for a 3-day intensive training for Safer Sanctuaries. We are committed to providing you with the latest information and policies/procedures.

The next Safer Sanctuaries training will be held Saturday, February 8, from 10:00 until noon in the Fishersville/Waynesboro area. Location is being finalized.

Contact: Debbie Brown ([DebbieB@gmumc.org](mailto:DebbieB@gmumc.org)) or Tina Yates ([tinayates@vaumc.org](mailto:tinayates@vaumc.org))

**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH (UWF)**  
**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
President: Betty Brossy  
Vice President: Angela Sills  
Secretary: VACANT  
Treasurer: VACANT

Spiritual Growth Coordinators: Shirley Brown and Rita Watkins

Education and Interpretation Coordinators: Karen Dinkins and Carolyn Manspile

Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator: Betsy Daughtrey

Social Action Coordinator: Luz de Tablan

Program Resources Coordinator: Ramona Tolley

Communication Coordinators: Betty Hairfield and Cindy Martin

Nominations: Debbie Finney



**VALLEY RIDGE DISTRICT UNITED  
METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION  
(UMVIM) -- CUBA (by Ann Klotz)**

Valley District Members go to Cuba with UMVIM Team, August 2024 Ann and Joe Klotz of Main Street UMC, Waynesboro and Betsy Daughtrey of People United in Christ in Buena Vista have returned from an UMVIM trip to Cuba spiritually energized from their experiences over the 10 days they were there. Twelve team members from the Virginia Conference together took 25 duffel

bags and two boxes (speakers) with them of material goods that were given for the ministries of the Methodist Church of Cuba.

These items included over the counter vitamins, pain, allergy, digestive and other medicines. Medical supplies included bandages, syringes and three nebulizers (donated by H.E.L.P., a non-profit in Churchville, VA that repurposes used and donated medical equipment – see <https://medicalcloset.org/>). Clothes for children and adults, linens, school supplies, Bibles, tools, hygiene items and items for puppet and clowning ministries. We saw ALL these items put to use! Both city and rural churches in Cuba are thriving! The church is a safe place where all ages can serve to the glory of God – through creative use of music, dance, drama, handcrafts, sharing of food and inspired preaching. We were thrilled to meet the mother of one of the children needing a new nebulizer. Dr. Anita (a volunteer professional) explained how she distributes “blessing bags” of medicine and hygiene items to churches throughout the conference. Every church has a medical ministry, and these leaders know the “blessings” are not only for church members, but items the church can use to bless their neighbors in their communities. “Tylenol evangelism”, anyone?

The destination of the team was to join church members in a three-day work project of replacing a 1958 roof on a church in Holguin, Cuba, over 450 miles from Havana. Although the work had been started before we arrived, (and would be completed after we left), and most of the heavy work was done by the men of the church, it was evident that it was all possible because of the financial support we brought with us. Thank you, Valley Ridge District. YOU were on a mission with us, and we carried with us your support and prayers. Every opportunity to “practice English”, to sing praises together, to appreciate their hospitality and culinary creativity, to hear their stories and share family pictures together: this was fellowship, this was building up of the Body of Christ for service.

Traveling across Cuba was part of the full mission experience. We traveled in a comfortable 24 passenger touring van owned by the Methodist church of Cuba. Our conference staff driver, Miguel, was superb on all kinds of roads, and sharing the roads with every type of transportation imaginable: horse or oxen drawn carts, old and new cars, bicycles, motorcycles, three wheelers, pedestrians...whether in cities or countryside, Miguel was cautious and courteous. For travel “pit-stops” we stopped at travel stops and in small Methodist churches (where our “thank you donations were “answers to prayer” and we could be sure they would be well-used.) Our conference staff team translator, Alba, was our constant companion and guide regarding acceptable snacks and drinks, always ready to share the realities of life in Cuba with humor and sensitivity. We experienced these realities in small ways: electrical blackouts, no bread for sandwiches, observing the needs for transportation: these realities were small inconveniences for us, but made us aware of how they are magnified as daily challenges for individuals of all status in Cuba. What we observed is that it is the Christians who face these challenges with hope and faith in the knowledge of Christ’s saving grace and ultimate presence in all things.

I pray that these experiences will make each of us more willing to listen to the needs and hopes of others, eager to share the hope of the faith that is within us, and able to replicate the hospitality and generosity which we received in abundance from our Christian brothers and sisters in Cuba.

**VALLEY RIDGE DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION  
(UMVIM) -- NORTH CAROLINA**

The Valley/Ridge UMVIM Team just returned from their mission trip to Windsor, NC where they had a safe and successful week repairing two family homes. The team worked in partnership with the Carolina Rebuilding Ministries (CRM) organization. We are enclosing a check to the district for \$645.62. This is the unused money given to the team by the district for expenses.



The team brought back a substantial portion of the money because of the generosity of many people. The volunteers not only donate their time and talents but they also self-finance many of the expenses. They had generous help from family, friends, and their churches who provided casseroles, cakes, cookies, breakfast muffins, snacks, apples, and other items for the week.

The team is extremely grateful for our district's support and would like to make a special request. Please seriously consider earmarking this money for Hurricane Helene relief, preferably in Southwest Virginia. We are acutely aware of the damage done by the hurricane and the needs of thousands of people. It would be wonderful if the funds could be used by future UMVIM teams. Many of us will be ready to go wherever arrangements can be made and whenever the suffering families are ready for the rebuilding process.

Again, we thank you for your continued support of UMVIM activities and we give thanks to God for watching over our team last week.

Sincerely,

Mission Team



## **HERMITAGE ROANOKE**

**1009 Old Country Club Road  
Roanoke, VA 24017  
540-767-6800**

[www.hermitageroanoke.org](http://www.hermitageroanoke.org)

Hermitage Roanoke, a part of Pinnacle Living, Inc., is a continuing care retirement community with the senior population at heart that is located adjacent to the Roanoke Country Club and situated on 10 acres of beauty, peacefulness and serenity. For almost 60 years, Hermitage Roanoke has cared for the senior populations in our community! Hermitage Roanoke offers independent living, assisted living and nursing care to seniors aged 62 and older.



## Hermitage Community Guild

The Hermitage Guild was organized in 1969 to communicate the mission of Pinnacle Living, formerly Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. to local churches. The Guild has three primary objectives.

1. To emphasize service to the Pinnacle Living communities and to the residents of these communities in cooperation with the Executive Directors and /or designated staff persons.
2. To assist with the interpretation and promotion of the Samaritan Program Offering of Pinnacle Living within the local churches of the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.
3. To promote a close relationship between the Hermitage Community Guild and local churches through communication of the mission of Pinnacle Living and sharing the stories of the specific communities.

At the Hermitage Guild, our year has been a success through the following impactful projects and initiatives. Through the Brick Fundraiser, individuals purchased engraved bricks in memory or in honor of loved ones. These bricks will soon be displayed in the walkway leading up to our front door, and the campaign successfully raised \$8,500.

We are proud to have refurbished our therapy gym patio, creating a more inviting and comfortable outdoor space for residents to enjoy as part of their rehabilitation and wellness activities.

During Thankful Thursday 2023, held the Thursday before Thanksgiving, the Guild distributed Kroger gift cards to team members to assist with their family dinners, providing a total of \$2,100. In addition, we purchased beautiful Christmas light displays for our Festival of Lights, paid to have our pianos professionally tuned, and brought in a talented balloon artist for our annual Family Reunion event. These efforts have brought immense joy to the lives of our residents, brightening their celebrations and creating unforgettable moments throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we are excited about upcoming projects, including Thankful Thursday 2024 and assisting with funding updates to our resident-managed Rose Garden

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE MINISTRIES IN THE VALLEY RIDGE DISTRICT

Over 21,000 students are studying a wide variety of health sciences, business management, technology, and industrial training courses at Virginia Western, Patrick & Henry, New River, and other community colleges within the bounds of the Valley Ridge District of the United Methodist Church. Community College Ministries is your campus ministry with those students. “Be transformed by the renewal of your minds...” (Romans 12.2) is our refrain.

We seek to meet the most pressing needs of students and support their hopes and dreams for the future. One amazing example is Alliance for Excellence that serves African American students by supporting their educational pursuits,



offering opportunities for service, and recognizing hundreds annually for academic excellence and leadership. Others serve with at-risk youth and inspire discipleship and leadership among the next generation. Young people still struggle with the pandemic's isolation and return to the classroom. They face challenges such as shifting economic opportunities and mental health needs. We can make a difference because we, the church, bring a solid foundation of faith while we, the community colleges, offer the most affordable and accessible entry point to higher education and beyond. We can demonstrate the power of the Gospel message even in the most difficult circumstances. We can change lives. We can do that, but we can't do it alone. We need you. Students are not only the rising generation in our society; they are the rising generation of new disciples.

Students visited the International Civil Rights Center in July 2024, built a garden for the Salvation Army as their service project (top photo), participate in programs at the Duke Center for Racial Healing (bottom photo), host volunteer teams at the Binns-Counts Center in the coal fields and provide outdoor recreation ministries for group that want to float the spectacular New River (opposite photo). Other programs are motivational seminars, gatherings with area ministers, counseling, and a recent visit by the mission recruiter of the UMC GBGM. We sponsored outreach to at-risk youth in collaboration with Rural Empowerment, an Arlington-based nonprofit.



Sandy Saunders of Danville is president of the board of directors. Retired community college president Muriel Mickles serves as vice president and Cheryl Hilton of Virginia Western Community College is the treasurer. The Reverend Doris Morrison of the Cherrystone Missionary Baptist Association is president of the gang intervention program. Muriel also leads Alliance for Excellence.

Want to know more? We'd love to share our story at your church. Help us build and repair houses in Appalachia, support students with urgent needs, meet with us about the challenges facing students today. May the grace of God and love of our Lord Jesus accompany our youth into the future as disciples of a new generation. The Reverend Steve Darr is campus minister ([stevedarr@vaumc.org](mailto:stevedarr@vaumc.org) and 540-230-2645).

## **MINUTES - 2023 District Conference**

### **The Valley Ridge District Conference November 18, at 10:30 p.m. at First UMC, Salem**

The Valley Ridge United Methodist Church District Conference was held on Saturday, November 18, 2023, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, Salem. Rev. Doug Forrester, District Superintendent, presiding.

Rev. Forrester opened the District Conference. Donna Desper was elected as secretary. Doug requested that everyone sign the attendance sheets that were in the pews. He then asked the congregation to turn to page 19 in the Book of Reports (BOR), the Minutes of the last District

Conference and asked that they be reviewed. A motion was made, seconded, and approved that the Minutes be approved as presented. Doug then thanked his District Staff for all their hard work in preparing for the District Conference.

Rev. Forrester asked the congregation to review the 2024 District Budget in the BOR. He stated that the overall budget had been reduced by 4%. The budget was previously approved by the District Stewards at the August 2023 meeting.

Rev. Forrester highlighted the wonderful Ministries that are happening on the Valley Ridge District, one of which is Embrace, a Center for Community. He thanked everyone for their support of Embrace with the gloves, socks and handwarmers that were donated today as part of our mission focus.

Rev. Forrester asked the congregation to look at the District Leadership listed in the BOR (page 21). He thanked Hannah Doty Rochford who will be stepping down from the District Leadership Board (DLB) as she continues her studies at Duke Seminary. He also welcomed Jessica Dodson who is a member of Edges Blacksburg UMC and was a part of the leadership team at the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech. Nominees for the DLB were voted on and unanimously approved. Doug informed the congregation that the District Board of Church Location and Building and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry were voted on and approved at the Virginia Annual Conference in June 2023.

Rev. Forrester then asked that the congregation look over the Nominees to be District At Large Members to the 2024 Annual Conference found in the BOR. He then asked for any Nominees from the floor. Bryan Marazzi (Shiloh UMC, Eagle Rock Charge), Susan Marazzi (Shiloh UMC, Eagle Rock Charge), Edward Pickett (Central UMC, Staunton), Robert Segovia Valentine (Main Street UMC), and Andree Brooks (West End UMC) were nominated and accepted. Since the District limit for Nominees to Annual Conference was not met, all Nominees were eligible to attend. Doug asked that they be approved with an Amen. It was approved unanimously.

This ended the business part of the District Conference. The worship began with the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy", Rev. Forrester then introduced our District Lay Leader, Larry Dickenson, who read the scripture from Hebrews and spoke on the topic "The Cloud of Witnesses". Lily Valentine Segovia, a District Youth, led an Affirmation of Faith and Unity. Members of the youth group from First UMC, Salem collected an offering that will go to Embrace, one of our District Missions.

After the offering Rev. Ray Sandifer (Eagle Rock Charge) asked for a word of privilege. He and other pastors, including a former District Superintendent, Rev. Steve Hundley, gave testimony of their working relationships with Cindy Martin, former Roanoke District Administrative Assistant and now Valley Ridge District Communications Director, upon her retirement in December. Gifts were then given to Cindy for her retirement.

Rev. Tina Yates (Parrish Capel UMC) gave the Commission and Rev. Forrester gave the Benediction.

Donna Desper, Secretary



## **Called District Conference and Leadership Training Tuesday, February 6, 2024, by Zoom**

Rev. Doug Forrester, District Superintendent, gave welcome and thanked everyone for attending. He informed those present of the Leadership Classes and Leaders. Those are:

- ❖ SPRC: Rev. Douglas Forrester, District Superintendent
- ❖ SAS: Rev. Dr. Dale White, Director of Congregational Excellence
- ❖ Lay Leaders: Mr. Larry Dickenson, Valley Ridge District Lay Leader
- ❖ Treasurer/Finance: Ms. Carol Draper, VAUMC Controller

Doug thanked the District Staff for all their work in putting everything together. He also thanked Cindy Martin, former Communications Director, for her help with the electronics part of the meeting. He asked Robin Barge, Communications Director, to explain how the sessions will work this evening. Robin informed those present that they would go to a breakout room for the Called District Conference and then come back and go into breakout rooms for the Leadership Classes.

Doug opened the District Conference with a word of prayer. He explained that the purpose of the Called District Conference was to approve the nomination of District At Large Members to the Virginia Annual Conference in June. These nominations came in after the vote at the District Conference in November. Doug reminded everyone that only the laity could vote for the Lay Members to Annual Conference. He asked Robin to share her screen on the Nominees to be voted on. They are: Anne Thomas (First UMC, Salem), Stephanie Dickenson (Raleigh Court UMC), Linda Roberson (Glovier Memorial UMC) and Lynn Copeland Buckles (Central UMC, Salem). The Nominees were voted on and approved.

Doug announced a District Event scheduled for Saturday, March 16, at Trinity UMC in Lexington from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Elaine Heath will speak on what ancient practices can teach us about ministry in uncertain and changing times. It is a time of healing and hope in the Valley Ridge.

Everyone then went to their breakout sessions.

Donna Desper, Secretary

### **NOMINATIONS**



### **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP BOARD 2024 (DLB)**

*Lay Leader:* Larry Dickenson (Raleigh Court UMC)

Dr. Nathaniel L. Bishop (Asbury UMC)

Jessica Dodson (edges UMC)

Betty Brossy (District UMW President/Calvary UMC)

Rev. Elizabeth Foss (Main Street UMC)

Rev. Bret Gresham (Wesley at VT)

David Grimm (Greenville UMC)

Rev. Anita Mays Lucord (Trinity UMC)

Rev. Won Un (Central UMC)

Rev. Tina Yates (Parrish Chapel UMC)

## **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP BOARD NOMINATIONS FOR THE CAMP ALTA MONS BOARD**

Amy Frary (Thrasher Memorial UMC)

George Dickenson (Raleigh Court UMC)

### **2025 Valley Ridge District Budget**

#### **Campus Ministry**

VMI/W&L Campus Ministry	\$ 1,500.00
Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>

**Total Campus Ministry \$ 21,500.00**

#### **District Ministries**

Leadership Development	\$ 7,500.00
Youth and Children Ministry	\$ 10,000.00
Lay Servant Ministry	\$ 4,000.00
UMVIM	\$ 3,000.00
Disaster Response	\$ 500.00
Emerging Ministries/Resources	\$ 3,400.00
Embrace (Clergy Support)	\$ 0.00

Alta Mons (Development Support) \$ 0.00

<b>Embrace Clergy Support: \$44,000</b>	<b>Alta Mons Development Support: \$35,000</b>
<b>Use of Reserves: <u>-\$44,000</u></b>	<b>Use of Reserve: <u>-\$35,000</u></b>
<b>Net Budget: \$ 0</b>	<b>Net Budget: \$ 0</b>

**Total District Ministries \$ 28,400.00**

**Missions: District Church Location and Building \$ 70,000.00**  
**(This figure is reduced to \$43,000 with \$27,000 coming from reserves)**

**Annual Conference Expense \$ 10,000.00**

**Personnel**

**Director of Congregational Excellence**

Salary	\$ 60,000.00
Housing	\$ 25,000.00
Health Insurance	\$ 700.00
Retirement	\$ 11,808.00
Travel	\$ 5,000.00
Continuing Education	\$ <u>750.00</u>
<b>Total Director of Congregational Excellence</b>	<b>\$ 103,258.00</b>

**Administrative Assistant**

Salary	\$ 56,842.00
FICA	\$ 4,348.48
Health Insurance	\$ 8,400.00
Retirement	\$ 3,410.52
Travel	\$ 1,000.00
Continuing Education	\$ <u>750.00</u>
<b>Total Administrative Assistant</b>	<b>\$ 74,751.00</b>

**Director of Communications and Programming**

Salary	\$ 26,000.00
Housing	\$ 11,500.00
FICA	\$ 0.00
Health Insurance	\$ 2,750.00
Retirement	\$ 5,904.00
Travel	\$ 2,000.00
Continuing Education	\$ <u>750.00</u>
<b>Total Director of Communications &amp; Programming</b>	<b>\$ 48,904.00</b>

**Treasurer**

Salary	\$ 14,000.00
FICA	\$ <u>1,071.00</u>
<b>Total Treasurer</b>	<b>\$ 15,071.00</b>

**Total Personnel \$ 241,984.00**

<b>District Office</b>		
Rent	\$	8,100.00
Utilities	\$	4,500.00
Telephone and Internet	\$	9,000.00
Office Supplies (postage, printing, other supplies)	\$	10,000.00
Equipment Service Contracts	\$	12,600.00
Property Maintenance and Repairs	\$	4,000.00
Office Equipment	\$	3,000.00
Financial Audit	\$	12,500.00
Insurance	\$	11,000.00
Website	\$	500.00
Hospitality/Lay Travel	\$	2,500.00
District Conference Expenses	\$	<u>750.00</u>
<b>Total District Office</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>78,450.00</b>
<b>District Superintendent</b>		
Housing Allowance	\$	23,000.00
<i>(This figure will be \$0. The \$23,000 will come from parsonage sale investment income)</i>		
Moving Expense Escrow	\$	1,000.00
DS Fund	\$	20,000.00
Cell Phone Reimbursement	\$	<u>600.00</u>
<b>Total District Superintendent</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>44,600.00</b>
<b>Contingencies</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,500.00</b>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION BUDGET</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>444,934.00</b>

### Valley Ridge District Budget Overview Fiscal Year 2025

The Valley Ridge District Leadership Board worked alongside the Valley Ridge District Superintendent and staff to create budget recommendations for 2025 that reflect the priorities of the Valley Ridge District while being good stewards of resources to do the work of making disciples for God’s Kingdom. The results are a slight overall reduction in the budget and apportionment for 2025.

#### Campus Ministry

The Valley Ridge District is committed to the spiritual development of college students who will lead our churches now and in the future. Funds are budgeted for support of campus ministry Virginia Military Institute, Washington & Lee University, and the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech. The District Leadership Board approved that \$29,500 be included in the Valley Ridge District budget for Campus Ministry. This represents a reduction of \$8,000 from the previous year. This reduction results from the removal of small donations to Eastern Mennonite University

and Shenandoah University.

### **District Ministries**

Priorities for the Valley Ridge District in 2025 include developing and equipping clergy and laity leaders. Leadership Development and Lay Servant Ministry will be funded to support these efforts. Continued commitment to the spiritual development of children and youth is also supported by the budget.

The District Leadership Board approved that \$28,400 be included in the budget which This represents an increase of \$7,900 from the previous year.

### **Missions**

The Valley Ridge District supports missional programs in local churches and community partners through grants and loans. The District Leadership Board recommends that \$53,000 to support the grant process of the Valley Ridge District be included in the budget. This represents no change from prior year.

### **Annual Conference Expenses**

The Valley Ridge District will continue to send Lay members to represent the District at Annual Conference. The number of members is expected to remain similar to 2024. The District Leadership Board approved \$10,000 to be added to the other funds available for this use. This represents an increase of \$1,000 from the prior year.

### **Personnel**

The Valley Ridge District will see changes to its current staff with the transfer of bookkeeping responsibilities to the Conference Treasurer's office, resulting in the elimination of David Mawyer's position on the District. The scope of staff responsibilities will continue to evolve as they work to serve the clergy and laity throughout the District. Funds for continuing education have been included, setting the expectation of ongoing professional development. Travel employees has been included in this category. The District Leadership Board approved budgeted Personnel expenses in the amount of \$241,984 representing an increase of \$11,261 from the prior year. These changes reflect the work of the District Leadership Board to help bring full-time staff salaries in line with other districts in the Conference.

### **District Offices**

The Valley Ridge District owns an office building in Fishersville, VA. Beginning in August 2023 the Roanoke office moved to less expensive space in the city of Roanoke, VA. To best serve the churches in our large demographic area of almost 5,000 square miles we expect, for the time being, to continue to work from these two spaces. The Valley Ridge District will equip its staff with the equipment and supplies necessary to support the churches and ministries of the district and have adequate insurance and financial audits as recommended by the UMC. The District Leadership Board approved \$78,450 in the budget for District Office-related expenses. This represents an increase of \$7,000 from the previous year. This increase is largely due to an increase in the District's insurance line-item.

### **District Superintendent**

The Valley Ridge District owns no parsonage. Proceeds from the sale of the Roanoke and Staunton parsonages have been invested. Investment earnings supplement the Housing Allowance of the District Superintendent. Funds are set aside each year for the moving

expenses of future District Superintendents. Throughout the year, the District Superintendent is called upon to financially assist in emergencies or unforeseen situations that arise in the Valley Ridge District. The DS Fund allows him to use these funds at his discretion to address these situations promptly, providing essential support to clergy and congregations. The Leadership Board and Finance Committee approved keeping the DS Housing Allowance at \$23,000, representing no change from prior year, to be fully covered by the investment income of the two parsonage proceeds. The DS Fund recommendation of \$20,000 represents no change from the previous year. Escrowed DS moving expenses of \$500 increased to \$1,000, a \$500 change from the previous year.

### **Contingencies**

While all attempts have been made to anticipate expenses in 2025, we know all financial circumstances cannot be predicted. The District Leadership Board approved \$2,500 in the budget for contingencies. This represents no change from previous year.

## **Additional Explanations**

### **Camp Ministry**

Alta Mons in Shawsville (Valley Ridge District) had traditionally been supported by the Roanoke District. Camp Overlook in Keezletown (Shenandoah River District) had traditionally been supported by the Winchester, Harrisonburg, and Staunton Districts. The Valley Ridge District values camp ministries for providing a natural setting for children and adults to experience God through their outdoor ministry, hospitality, and programs.

Camp Ministry support changed in 2023 as it moved from apportionment to an asking- meaning that local church support for Camp Ministry will be based on membership and removed from the District Apportionment and presented as an asking of each local church. In 2025, the local church asking was removed from local church apportionment sheets, although local congregations are still encouraged to support Camp Alta Mons as they can. Starting in 2025, the Valley Ridge District will no longer support Camp Overlook since it is located on the Shenandoah River District.

In 2024, The District Leadership Board made a \$35,000 per year three-year commitment to Camp Alta Mons to fund a part-time development position to help the camp create new and innovative fundraising strategies to support the work of Alta Mons. The Rev. Paige Swaim-Presley started in this role on July 1, 2024, and her position is funded via District reserves. In addition to this, the DLB has nominated two representatives from the District to sit on the board of Camp Alta Mons.

## **Summary and Comparison of District Apportionments**

The fully apportioned and distributed budget for 2024 was \$453,773.

The District Leadership Board approved the following for 2025:

- A budget of \$444,934 has been apportioned and distributed to the Valley Ridge District local churches using the Virginia Conference decimal formula. This represents an almost 2% decrease from 2024.

## **NOMINEES FOR DISTRICT AT-LARGE MEMBERS TO 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**



### **Emma Anderson (Blacksburg UMC)**

Currently, I serve as a youth group leader with BUMC. This is my 3rd year working with this program, but I was also in the youth group growing up. During my time in college, I have been attending Wesley at Virginia Tech. Through Wesley and Blacksburg United Methodist Church, I help run a program called FUN143. This program works with children/families that live in lower income housing. My group provides dinners for the children, tutoring for their schoolwork, and mentoring. I feel as if this would be something good for me to be part of because I am so involved in the BUMC, and I also have a call to youth ministry.



**Nathaniel Bishop (Asbury UMC, Christiansburg)**

As a lifelong United Methodist with service and leadership experience at the local, district, annual conference, Jurisdictional and General Conference levels, I would be pleased to serve again as a 2025 Annual Conference Lay Member at Large.



**Brenda Brooks (Bonsack UMC, Roanoke)**

I have served the district for many years and as a Roanoke District Lay Leader, I feel that I have an idea about the churches that are in the conference. I believe that I could look at the big pictures facing our Denomination and vote according to what is best for all.



**Sam Coates (Blacksburg UMC)**

At Blacksburg United Methodist Church, I am the vice president of our youth group, active in local and regional service projects, and a part of our church youth band where I mentor young musicians. I am also an aspiring pastor.



**Laura Cox (Ebenezer UMC, Troutville)**

I am currently the Sunday School teacher, SPRC chair and admin council chair at Ebenezer in Troutville. I have also attended Annual Conference the last 3 summers as our lay delegate. With the 2025 Annual Conference being held in Roanoke, we have another person who can fill our lay delegate position. This allows me to represent the Valley Ridge district at Annual Conference.



**Thomas Davis (Central UMC, Staunton)**

In the district, I serve as a member of DCOM. At Central UMC, I am chair of the Council and a member of the Finance Committee.



**Donna Desper (St. Mark's UMC, Waynesboro)**

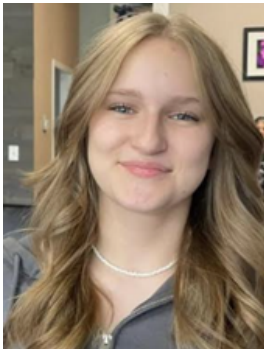
I serve as the Staff Pastor Parish Chairperson for my church and as the Administrative Assistant for the District. I love the people of my church and my District and want to be able to serve them.





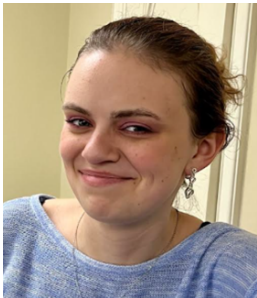
**Stephanie Dickenson (Raleigh Court UMC, Roanoke)**

I serve on the RCUMC Executive Council. I am Worship Committee Chair, lead Small Groups and Adult Sunday School. Children's Sharing Time Volunteer. Lay Servant, Sing in the Chancel Choir and for our Contemporary Worship band.



**Claire Forrester (Cave Spring)**

I am a student at Northside High School in Roanoke, and was recently selected to be a member of the Virginia Conference United Methodist Youth Council. I have been a part of children's and youth choirs in United Methodist churches across the Conference as well as a Valley Ridge District lay member of Annual Conference in 2023. At my local church I am a nursery volunteer and serve as a member of the school backpack ministry.



**Ellen Forrester (Cave Spring)**

I am a college student and a graduate of Douglas S. Freeman High School in Henrico County, Virginia. I have served in both children's and youth choirs, mission teams, and as a volunteer in church nurseries and Vacation Bible Schools. I have been a liturgist and an administrative volunteer in local churches, and previously served as a Valley Ridge District lay member of Annual Conference.



**Tracy Forrester (Cave Spring)**

A graduate of Emory & Henry College (B.A.) and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (M.S.) A career educator, I have taught children in elementary schools across the Commonwealth of Virginia. I have served in mission teams including the Appalachia Service Project (ASP), Habitat for Humanity, and Impact Richmond. She has served as a vocalist in various United Methodist church choirs and praise bands and as a leader of vacation bible schools and Sunday School classes.



**Phyllis Geoghegan (Blacksburg UMC)**

Minister's wife, UMW officer for four districts and Conference, UWF Social Action Coordinator for Valley Ridge District, Social Action Coordinator for VA Conference UWF, Dean for Mission Encounter for 2 years. I served on the Board of Missions for Roanoke District and the Board of Directors for Henry Fork Service Center. I am an advocate for Christ's leadership in all aspects of the UMC's programs, policies and opportunities.



**Gayle Graves (St. Paul UMC, Roanoke)**

Attending annual conference gives me a sense of connectedness in regard to my Christian walk. It's a good way for me to keep up with what is going on in our denomination, and what the expectations are for us as members of our denomination. I learn from others.



**Kristina Elaine (Laney) Greer (Cherryvale UMC, Staunton)**

I'm a pastor's wife and mother of 2 (5 and 3). I'm Director of Children's ministries (Planning Children's Church, Kids' Club, VBS, etc.), on leadership team as Director of Children's Ministries, I have helped with missions, I'm in the choir, I help with planning church events, etc.



**David Grimm (Greenville UMC)**

I am a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church serving the local church, as well as District, Annual Conference, and Jurisdictional Conference positions. My expertise includes teaching, leading, mentoring, and finances. I love the Lord and want to still serve our Church.



**Ann Klotz (Main St. UMC, Waynesboro)**

I am passionate about engaging individuals and churches in discipleship-developing mission service experiences. I serve as Mission Team facilitator and adult Sunday School teacher in my local church, and am on the Virginia Conference Partnerships of Hope Team (Vietnam). I volunteer with Embrace Center for Community, Waynesboro.



**Cindy Martin (Cave Spring UMC, Roanoke)**

Active in local church Benevolence Committee, Backpack ministry, and Lay Servant; in the District on the District Board of Church Location and Building and UWF Board; in the Conference on the Council on Finance and Administration and Board of Communications. I look forward to seeing where God leads our Church and serving again in this way.



**Edward Pickett (Central UMC, Staunton)**

Church Council Chair for 2025. Historically, choir member and weed puller, at large Council member. I have been SPRC chair and Finance Chair, Mission and Outreach chair as well as members of those committees. Altar guild. Basically if you have a need for prayer, reflection, and discernment let me know if I can help.



**Morris Reece (First UMC, Salem)**

I am a member Salem First UMC. My interest in serving as a Lay Member at the Conference is in order to better understand UMC polity and to learn more about current and future plans for the conference, particularly in light of the current changes, challenges, and opportunities.



**Hannah Doty Rochford (Calvary, Stuarts Draft)**

I have been the Co-Coordinator for Youth Cohort of the VA Annual Conference for the past two years and plan on serving again in that role this summer. I have also served as a member of the District Leadership Board last year!



**Rhonda Rogers (Asbury UMC, Christiansburg)**

I serve as Lay Leader at Asbury, in the choir, attend all required meetings as my role of Lay Leader requires, secretary for our Women in Faith group, etc.



**E. Lily Segovia (Main St. UMC, Waynesboro)**

I have served as youth at-large for four years. I enjoy the fellowship at annual conference. I am on local church council, youth group, and was a confirmation co-mentor in 2024. Alta Mons is my second home. I observed at General Conference this year. I would like to serve.



**Robert Segovia Valentine (Main Street UMC, Waynesboro)**

I participate in church youth group, scouts, district events (especially Alta Mons where I was baptized), and last May I was



Confirmed at Main Street UMC (Waynesboro). I was an annual conference youth delegate last year and would like to serve again this year.



**Roger Watson (Calvary, Stuarts Draft)**

I serve as a volunteer at Embrace, A Center for Community



**Helen Watson (Northview UMC, Roanoke)**

Lay Servant at Northview, UWF President at Northview and Sunday School Teacher of Adult Sunday School Class at Northview. Serving Northview as District Delegate for upcoming District Conference. Nov. 9. Feel called to serve Dist. At Annual Conference because believe Conf, is vital to conduct business and further beliefs on UMC. I want to do my part as a UMC Member.



**Linda White (St. James UMC, Churchville)**

I serve with Embrace Outreach Ministry, and I support district staff through various means.

## BALLOT

- 1. Emma Anderson (Blacksburg UMC)
- 2. Nathaniel Bishop (Asbury UMC, Christiansburg)
- 3. Brenda Brooks (Bonsack UMC, Roanoke)
- 4. Sam Coates (Blacksburg UMC)
- 5. Laura Cox (EbenezerUMC, Troutville)
- 6. Thomas Davis (Central UMC, Staunton)
- 7. Donna Desper (St. Mark's UMC, Waynesboro)
- 8. Stephanie Dickenson (Raleigh Court UMC, Roanoke)
- 9. Claire Forrester (Cave Spring)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Ellen Forrester (Cave Spring)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Tracy Forrester (Cave Spring)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Phyllis Geoghegan (Blacksburg UMC)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Gayle Graves (St. Paul UMC, Roanoke)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Kristina Elaine (Laney) Greer (Cherryvale UMC, Staunton)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. David Grimm (Greenville UMC)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Ann Klotz (Main St. UMC, Waynesboro)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Cindy Martin (Cave Spring UMC, Roanoke)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Edward Pickett (Central UMC, Staunton)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Morris Reece (First UMC, Salem)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Rhonda Rogers (Asbury UMC, Christiansburg)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. E. Lily Segovia (Main St. UMC, Waynesboro)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Robert Segovia Valentine (Main Street UMC, Waynesboro)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Helen Watson (Northview UMC, Roanoke)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Linda White (St. James UMC, Churchville)

**My Chains are Gone**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
 That saved a wretch like me  
 I once was lost, but now I'm found  
 Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
 And grace my fears relieved  
 How precious did that grace appear  
 The hour I first believed

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
 My God, my Savior has ransomed me  
 And like a flood His mercy reigns  
 Unending love  
 Amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me  
 His word my hope secures  
 He will my shield and portion be  
 As long as life endures

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
 My God, my Savior has ransomed me

And like a flood His mercy reigns  
 Unending love  
 Amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
 The sun forbear to shine  
 But God, who called me here below  
 Will be forever mine, will be forever mine  
 You are forever mine

**Revelation Song**  
*(Revelation 14:3)*

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain Holy, holy  
 is He

Sing a new song to Him who sits on  
Heaven's mercy seat

(Chorus)

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty  
Who was and is and is to come  
With all creation I sing  
praise to the King of kings  
You are my everything and I will adore You

Clothed in rainbows of living color  
Flashes of lightning rolls of thunder  
Blessing and honor strength and glory and  
power be  
To You the only wise King (Chorus)

Filled with wonder awestruck wonder  
At the mention of Your name  
Jesus Your name is power,  
breath and living water  
Such a marvelous mystery (Chorus)

He wraps himself in light and darkness tries  
to hide  
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His  
voice

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God and all will see  
How great, how great is our God...

Age to age He stands and time is in His  
hands  
Beginning and the end, beginning and the  
end  
The Godhead Three in one, Father Spirit,  
Son  
The Lion and the Lamb, lion and the lamb

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God and all will see  
How great, how great is our God...

Name above all names, worthy of all praise  
My heart will sing, how great is our God...

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee,  
How great thou art, how great thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee,  
How great thou art, how great thou art

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God and all will see  
How great, how great is our God

## **How Great Is Our God**

The splendor of a king, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice, let all the earth  
rejoice