

The Virginia Christian



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In This Issue:

- 3 [News from Search & Call Team](#)
- 3 & 4 [Around the Old Dominion](#)
- 5 [Gifts offered by Euclid Christian Church](#)
- 6 [Clergy discuss civility](#)
- 7 [DW 2016-17 projects announced](#)
- 8 [Phillips University. Legacy Scholars](#)
- 9 [Fall Work Weekend](#)
- 9 [SOSA Pastor Retreat](#)
- 10 [Eddie Hammett seminar offered in Richmond](#)
- 11 [Christmout schedule](#)
- 11 [“Ears to Hear” Event offered in Roanoke](#)
- 12 [Craig Springs News](#)

Calendar

Fall Work Weekend at
Craig Springs - Oct 7-9
Retirement Reception for
Lee Parker – Nov. 12,
1-3 pm at Timberlake
CC, Lynchburg

Mental Illness and Ministry: Joy Shall Not Escape Us

At the recent Regional Assembly of the Christian Church in Virginia, there was an interest group titled “No, I’m Not Crazy! Affirming Those with Mental Health Issues.” I decided to attend, not because I thought I needed to learn how to affirm others, but because I wanted to feel affirmed.

Throughout my adult life, I have waged a battle with depression. I know the struggle that comes with feeling thoroughly overwhelmed in mind, body and soul by what seems like nearly insurmountable sadness. I understand what it is like to be nearly paralyzed by the weight of the darkness that engulfs someone suffering from depression. My battle with this form of mental illness has been costly in my life. I believe it was a contributing factor to the end of my first marriage. In addition, some colleagues could not understand the depth of my depression and thought I just needed to “snap out of it.” When I couldn’t do that, they decided I was not someone they should have in their life. What I heard was that “I bring them down.” Also, at one point, I had to take a year away from ministry. The depression had reached a point that I lost my voice to preach; my own sense of being spiritually lost made it very difficult to lead others in the journey of faith.

After the workshop, I told our Regional Minister, Lee Parker, how grateful I was for the church’s willingness to address this important matter. I also shared with him about my own personal battle with depression, along with a couple of articles I had written about my experience. He called the next day, after having read the articles, and asked if I would write something for *The Virginia Christian* about ministry with those who have mental illness.

The question for me became, do I write about my own journey or do I give some practical advice about how to be present with others who are going through this painful experience? I decided that sharing about my own personal struggle with depression was of primary importance because it would help to pull back the stigma and cover of secrecy that all too often accompanies mental illness. Out of fear of being judged by others, those suffering from mental illness often try to hide their struggles, which can lead to an even deeper private pain and a further sense of isolation. In my life I have become keenly aware that if I am to overcome this illness I have to be willing to address it head on and I need the support of friends and family who are willing to walk with me.

These are a few things I have learned in my journey. Though there will always be some people “who just don’t get it,” there are others who will have an understanding and compassionate response — some of them because it is their battle as well. I need to surround myself with such people when the darkness is deep. In my last period of a depressed state, it was the companionship of some former church members, a couple of friends from my seminary days, the presence of my children, and the tenacious love of my sister that brought light to me. Though loneliness was a struggle during that time, I was never completely alone. They walked with me, and in their presence I felt the presence of God. For that I am grateful.

I also have learned that with my form of depression the complex relationship between genetics and environment is not clear. Both play a role in my illness. So both medicines and talk therapy are vitally important in helping me maintain

a sense of well-being.

One reason I am able to face my illness directly is because I will not allow it to become the defining characteristic of who I am. Though my depression has gripped me fiercely at times, I live an abundantly fulfilled life. I love to laugh and spend time with my children. I enjoy exercise and running road races. I love the work I do as pastor. Congregational leadership has again become life giving to me.

Reading the book *Lincoln’s Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled his Greatness* allowed me to see that my own battle with depression does not by any means disqualify me from leadership. In fact, as a pastor, it has helped me to become more compassionate and understanding. And though I have lost some relationships because of my struggles, the door has opened for other relationships to begin. Again, I am grateful.

I will not live in fear and silence. Just as some people who journey with diabetes or Crohn’s disease or cancer must undergo medical treatment and receive various kinds of support, so do I with my illness. I hope that my willingness to share openly about my situation will help those who have similar battles realize that they are not alone. They need not fear what others might think or avoid asking for help.

The journey toward wholeness and well-being is a journey all human beings are on. It can, at times, be a difficult journey, but it is one that can lead to a full life if embraced with a courageous and honest spirit, an abiding faith and a community of support.

Dr. Mark E. Poindexter
West Side Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Portsmouth, Virginia

News from Regional Search & Call Team

Your Regional Search & Call Team had its first meeting on Saturday, August 27 at Lynchburg College. After devotion and prayer, we began the work as directed from the Board of Directors to identify an Interim Regional Minister by January of 2017 and a Regional Minister eventually.

Our concentration and discernment at this meeting was given to the creation of an Interim Regional Minister job description and a budget to support the search. These items were submitted to the Region's Board of Directors and approved at their teleconference meeting on September 21.

The Team is challenged and joyfully anticipates success in the great tasks of selection bestowed upon us. We are guided by the words of the Psalmist, "Many plans are in a person's mind, but the Lord's purpose will succeed." (19:21)

The next meeting of the Search & Call Team will be held on Saturday, November 5 at Randolph-Macon College. Please feel free to offer any suggestions or feedback and always keep this work in your prayers.

Kathryn A. Hull
khull@rmc.edu

Chairperson, Search & Call

You are invited to a retirement reception for Regional Minister Rev. G. Lee Parker on Saturday, November 12, 2016, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Timberlake Christian Church, 20261 Lynchburg Highway, Lynchburg, Virginia

Regrettably, the Region's 2016 Festival of Preaching, scheduled for September 24, has been cancelled due to low registration.

Ministerial Changes

Vanessa Falgoust resigned from her pastorate at Grafton CC, Yorktown, and is now a Chaplain in Pastoral Care at St. John's Hospital in Queens, NY.

Around the Old Dominion



Blacksburg—On Sunday, August 14, Blacksburg CC held its annual baptism event during which Pastor Gary McCoy baptized 9 people in the New River. About 100 people attended, enjoying a time of fellowship, supper, fishing and swimming.

Mechanicsville—On Sunday, August 14, 2016, five young people were baptized into the kingdom of God at Trinity Christian Church, Mechanicsville. (L. to r.) Hayden and Corrine Townsend, Emily Ashworth, and Krystin and Kenny Buchanan were immersed in the cleansing waters of baptism! What a great day of celebration as church family and friends gathered together to witness this blessing!



Richmond—Jackie Twedell was installed as pastor of Bethany CC in Richmond, VA, by Regional Minister Lee Parker on Sunday, September 11. Preaching for the service was Nathan Brown (left), the former pastor of Westside CC in Portsmouth and senior pastor at First Christian, Hopkinsville, KY, where Jackie served as associate pastor for five years.

Newport—Donna Webster was officially installed as senior pastor of First Christian Church Newport on September 18. Regional Minister Rev. Lee Parker, presided over the installation. Gina Rhea, Donna's mentor, delivered the sermon. Other participants in the service included: Jean Vincel, FCC Newport; Dale Jenkins, minister, FCC Newport; Roger Henderson, minister FCC Newport; Rev. Wendy Wilson, Unity Christian; Rev. Kevin McNeil, Mount Zion CC; Rev. Jonathan Webster, FCC Newport; Rev. Dennis Martin; Snowville Christian; Rev. Shirley

Larson, and Kathy Witt. Tom and Jennifer Larson served and gave the prayers for the bread and wine. Chloe and Stewart Scales, members of FCC Newport, provided special music with the cello and guitar. For the gospel reading Stewart read John 21: 15-19 in the English, and Chloe read the scripture in the Greek. Two of Donna's great-nieces, Hayleigh and Taylor, served as acolytes.

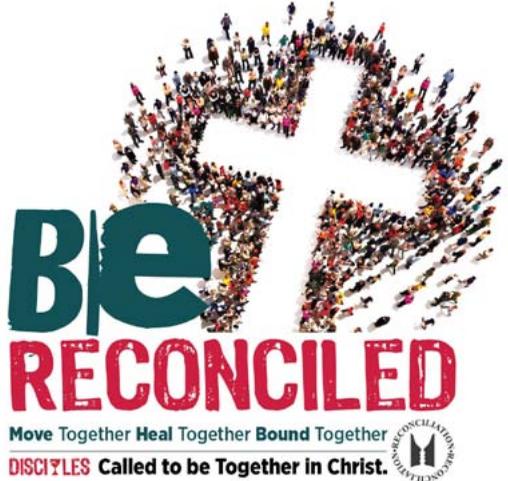
Donna serves the Region as Director of Women's Ministries and is working on her Masters of Divinity degree at Lexington Theological Seminary.

Gifts offered by Euclid Christian Church

Due to many factors, Euclid Christian Church, 2220 Memorial Ave., Lynchburg, Virginia, is preparing to end its long and distinguished ministry by December 31, 2016. The church is transitioning from a visible to an invisible ministry as our resources and tangible property are put into new service in our community, in churches or other 501(c)(3) organizations. Items in our tangible property are available to begin a new life of supporting worship and ministry.

If you know of a church or other non-profit organization that would like the gift(s) of the listed items, please call Susan Ohmart in the church office (434) 845-6889. Arrangements for picking up or shipment of items can be discussed at that time.

- 182 *Chalice Hymnal*, Chalice Press, 1995
- 58 *Favorite Hymns of Praise*, Tabernacle Publishing, 1981
- 36 *Hymnbook for Christian Worship*, Bethany Press, 1970
- 72 Church Pew Bibles (RSV, black hard cover)
- 32 Teal adult choir robes with 2 sets of stoles that are washable
- 16 Blue youth choir robes
- Floor model brass advent wreath and candlestick combination—slant top ring, oil burning candles, tall and elegant
- Brass candlelighter
- Floor model Christ candle, oil burning, wooden stand
- Set of nine (9) each of heavy plated silver communion service trays, all with tiered bases, bread, and offering plates; three (3) each of separate bases for stacking trays and cross topped covers
- Solid brass cross for altar or communion table with IHS in the center and three-step, tiered base, 18" tall
- Two (2) upright pianos



Be RECONCILED
 Move Together Heal Together Bound Together
 DISCIPLES Called to be Together in Christ.

The 2016 Reconciliation Offering will be received in congregations on September 25 and October 2

Recent events have reignited the conversation about human brokenness evidenced in the sin of racism and perpetuated in our institutional structures and systems. Your generous giving to Reconciliation Ministry is used to fund programs for leadership development, curriculum for dialogue and learning, and partnerships within the Church and our communities.

Clergy and spouses retreat for conversation and fellowship

A congenial group of Disciples clergy and spouses gathered in Williamsburg, Monday evening to Wednesday morning, September 5-7. The Reverends Stephen and Miriam Gentle led the group in three sessions of conversation on the topic of civility. With a recognition that the lack of civility in politics and public conversations is a significant problem, the Gentles proposed that church leaders can be

ambassadors for civil dialogue and set the tone for civil conversations in our congregations and communities “so that the light of Christ may shine into the world and it may be transformed.” The group explored the four virtues of civility as outlined by James Calvin Davis in his book *In Defense of Civility*: patience, integrity, humility and mutual respect. A three-session study by James Calvin Davis on this topic is available for download at a small cost at [The Thoughtful Christian](#).



Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle is the Senior Pastor of National City Christian Church in Washington, DC. Rev. Miriam Gentle is Pastor of Congregational Care for The Village Church at Greenspring in Springfield, VA.



At each session, the group was led in worship by Rev. Cyd Cowgill (FCC Lynchburg), with music by Rev. Mark Parkinson (Broad Street CC, Martinsville).

Disciples Women News

2016-2017 Local and Global Projects Announced

The August edition of *The Virginia Christian* announced the unanimous choice of Nature Camp as the 2016-2017 local project. Nature Camp provides an opportunity for at-risk children (ages 9-11) to experience a week of Christian camp at no cost to their families and an opportunity for high-school age counselors to develop skills for ministry and service. During this high-energy week, young campers learn about God, sing, swim, enjoy the peace of the mountains, play outdoors, participate in group activities, and are mentored one-on-one by a high school counselor. Counselors teach and model conflict resolution, participation, and cooperation while having fun.

For this year's global project, two organizations were selected by women that traveled to Israel and Palestine in the 2015 Woman to Woman Journey.

Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) is a unit of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). The DSPR provides services for Palestinian refugees, such as education, health services, improving water access and vocational training in Gaza, the West Bank, Nazareth, Jordan, and Lebanon.



The **Orthodox Initiative** was established in 2011 in response to the refugee crisis in Jordan. Currently over 80 percent of the Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Jordan are living outside of refugee camps, which often adds extra steps and hurdles to receiving assistance. The Orthodox Initiative is implementing and raising funds for a two-fold solution: providing direct emergency aid while also expanding long-term, sustainable projects that focus on education and community building.

For more details about the two organizations, check out [this link](#) at the Virginia Disciples Women website.

Collections should begin now during your Disciple Women circle meetings. More information will be forthcoming on how to remit your offerings by June 2017.

Vanessa Law, of Pembroke Christian Church, traveled to Israel and Palestine as Virginia's Representative. If your church has not yet invited Vanessa for a presentation on her journey, you are encouraged to do so. Vanessa's journey was made possible by donations from Virginia Disciples Women and by a generous scholarship from Global Ministries. You may reach Vanessa by email at vrlaw@vt.edu

Virginia Students Awarded Entrance in the Phillips University Legacy Scholars Program

Phillips University Legacy Foundation is pleased to announce two students in the Virginia region attending a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) college have been awarded entrance into the Phillips University Legacy Foundation Scholarship and Leadership Development Program for the 2016-2017 academic year. The undergraduate program is based on academic excellence and Christian leadership in the student's church, vocation and community.

The program grants annual awards of up to \$5,000 to full-time undergraduate students attending any of the 17 colleges or universities currently or historically affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Since the inception of the program in 2002, 154 students have received over \$1.3 million in scholarship assistance.

Legacy Scholars attending Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, VA, include Sydney Green, a junior and member of First Baptist Church in South Hill, VA, and Nyomi Tarpley, a senior and member of Charity Christian Church in Martinsville, VA.

The Foundation also provides specialized leadership development for the Legacy Scholars at an annual, all-expense-paid four-day leadership development conference which will be held from November 10-13, 2016 at the Heifer International Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas. At the conference, Sydney and Nyomi will interact with the other Legacy Scholars from across the nation, participate in the

team building exercises, personal challenges, a group volunteer service project and be mentored by top Leadership Development Coaches, Phillips University Alumni, Legacy Scholar Graduates, lay leaders and notable Christian Leaders. There are a total of 26 Legacy Scholars for 2016-2017. Legacy Scholars also perform an annual 40-hour volunteer service project.

For 91 years Phillips University, located in Enid, OK, was highly respected nationwide for its academic excellence and quality Christian education associated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The mission of the Phillips University Legacy Foundation is to follow the tradition of Phillips University by providing scholarships and opportunities to educate and develop leaders who embody Christian values in their lives, service and work.

For more information about the Phillips University Legacy Scholars program contact Kelly Coker, Executive Director or Tamela Harsha, Scholarship Administrator at (580) 237-4433, email scholarships@pulf.org or visit our website at www.pulf.org. To donate securely online go to <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/pulf>.





Craig Springs
Camp & Retreat Center
October 7-9, 2016

Work Weekend is a free event open to anyone. Food, indoor lodging, and friendly fellowship is provided in exchange for your labor, with tasks suitable for persons of all ages and abilities. Come alone, or with a group. We want YOU there! If you are a work weekend veteran, please recruit new volunteers!

It is essential that Work Weekend participants register in advance—even if coming for only one day—in order to avoid an embarrassing shortage or a wasteful surplus of food. All youth (18 years and under) must have adult supervision. Adult leaders should be prepared to work and lodge with their youth

[Download a registration form.](#)

Society of St. Andrew

(a partner with Week of Compassion & Disciples Volunteering) is offering a

Harvest of Hope Midweek Pastor/Staff Retreat

October 3–5

with optional stayover through October 6
at Camp Easter Seals, New Castle, VA

In the fall, church life gets pretty chaotic. You're settling into a new program year, heading into stewardship season, and planning for Advent. Take a step back from all that busy-ness for a few days this October, and breathe deeply. Remember why you got into ministry in the first place!

Come to the Society of St. Andrew's Harvest of Hope Pastor and Staff Retreat at Camp Easter Seals, October 3-5/6 for respite and renewal as you enjoy time outdoors, gleaning apples to share with neighbors in need.

Bring your whole staff, and make this a time for team-building, too!

If you have a food pantry or other feeding ministry in your community that can share the apples you glean with people who need good food, we encourage you to take them back with you.



Cost: \$75.00 per person for 2 nights + 6 meals
Optional Wednesday night stayover + 2 additional meals, \$25.00 per person more
(\$25.00 per person deposit due at sign-up; remainder due on arrival October 3)

More info at: <http://endhunger.org/hoh-staff-retreat/>

Reaching People Under 30 While Keeping People Over 60 Creating Community Across Generations

A Learning Experience & Coaching For Pastors & Key Leaders

by Eddie Hammett

Dates/Place

October 10, 2016 – Colonial Place Christian Church, 1200 N. Parham Rd. Richmond, VA 23229 Contact Brian Fleming at 804 201 7183.

Monday Seminar – 6-8pm - Review new material regarding reaching people under 30 while keeping people over 60, plus dialogue and Q & A. Reservations are required by October 5th. Seating is limited. Call 804-201-7183 or email cpccrva@verizon.net Cost: \$10/person or \$50 maximum/church.

Benefits for YOU if you participate in this learning experience:

1. **REVIEW OF 8 PRACTICAL AND PROVEN PRINCIPLES** of Reaching People Under 30 While Keeping People Over 60
2. **CLARIFY FOCUS & MOBILIZE SMALL CHURCHES** to accomplish your unique divine mission
3. **SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT AND NETWORKING** with others on a similar journey toward greater effectiveness

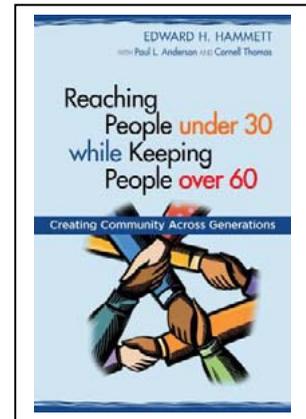
Eddie's books will be available for purchase at the learning experiences or can be purchased online in print or Kindle edition www.amazon.com

Learning Experiences by Author of a Best Selling Book for last 7 years.... *Reaching People Under 30 While Keeping People Over 60* Revised edition in 2015.

Eddie Hammett – President of Transforming Solutions

www.TransformingSolutions.org, author, Church & Clergy Coach for CBFNC.

Seasoned church minister, coach and consultant committed to transforming the church for more effective ministry in our 21st century world. Author of 8 books that speaks how culture impacts the way we do church today and tomorrow.





Fall is a perfect time for you to attend one of the many programs that appeal to a variety of ages from college students to senior adults. It is one of the most beautiful seasons in the North Carolina mountains...and at Christmount!

Scott Clergy Conference

"Values Reimagined"

October 3-5, 2016

with Rev. Erin Wathen

Post-College Retreat

"Our Neighbor"

October 7-9, 2016

with Rev. Jay Deskins

Fall Prayer Retreat

October 10-12, 2016

College Retreat

"Faith, Calling, and Vocation"

October 21-23, 2016 with Diane Bales

Chautauqua

Comes to Christmount

"Our Blue Ridge Heritage"

October 24-28, 2016

An Appalachian Advent

November 30-December 3

Includes area day trips, worship with Rev. Dr. Lea Slaton, other fun opportunities

More information at
www.christmount.org.

Westhampton Christian Church to sponsor "Ears to Hear: the Art of Recovering the Historical Jesus"

Jesus Seminar on the Road is partnering with Westhampton Christian Church to offer an alternative story of Christian origins based on biblical studies research rather than church tradition. This event will be led by guest scholars Joanna Dewey of the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts and Bernard Brandon Scott of Phillips Theological Seminary in Oklahoma.

The program, entitled "Ears to Hear: The Art of Recovering the Historical Jesus," begins with a lecture on Friday, October 21st, 7:30 - 9 pm, and continues on Saturday, October 22nd, with a series of daytime sessions 9:30 am - 4 pm. Beginning with a primer on how Christianity shifted from a focus on the teachings of Jesus to teachings about Jesus, Dewey and Scott will use the Gospel of Mark as a case study to examine the plurality and diversity in early Christian belief.

All events take place at Westhampton Christian Church, 2515 Grandin Rd SW, Roanoke, VA 24015. Prices are \$20 for the Friday evening lecture, \$30 for each morning and afternoon session on Saturday, or \$75 for the whole weekend (Pre-registration by October 7 is \$60). This event qualifies for Continuing Education Units for clergy and other educators. Registration is accepted online and at the door.

To read a program description and to register online, visit: westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/roanoke-2016/ or download a flyer and registration form from the Region's website here.

Craig Springs News

Numbers up for the 2016 camping program

The numbers of campers and staff were up this year. In 2015 there were 300 campers, and in 2016 we had 340. In 2015 there were 108 volunteer staff, and in 2016 there were 112. A lot of fun, fellowship, worship, and learning took place. With many of our churches experiencing smaller numbers of youth participating in local programs, an increase in camp attendance is a good sign.

Your church is encouraged to come up with creative ways to support the camping program at Craigs Springs, which has been so important to the spiritual growth of many through the years. Of course, the first is to encourage your church's youth to attend. Hold fundraisers during the year to provide scholarships—for your own youth or for others, if your church doesn't have youth. Or consider volunteering a week of time on staff. Craig Springs is a treasure for our Region.



Joint effort restores camp bell

The clapper on the bell at Craig Springs broke during Triple 1 camp. The creative solution for the rest of the week was to use a car alarm to call campers to meals, etc. Over the following weekend, the clapper was welded back by L. B. Fox, a student at VA Tech who attends Blacksburg CC, and the bell remounted Sunday night by Robert Sharp, in time to ring for Triple 2.

Regional Staff

Lee Parker, Regional Minister

Donna Webster, Director of Women's Ministries & Webmaster

Bill Moore, Director of Commissioned Ministry

Amy Moore, *The Virginia Christian* Editor & Regional Assembly Coordinator

Jason Good, Craig Springs Camp Manager

Rita Rodenbaugh, Administrative Assistant

Susan Gordon, Secretary

Melinda Floyd, Financial Secretary

Submit news articles and photos any time for the next edition of

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by mail to the Regional Office

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moore.amy.g@gmail.com.