

Loving, Learning and Serving Together

TODAY (8:30 am) Worship at New Hope UMC
(10 am) Worship at Highland UMC
MONDAY Newsletter for September due to Pat Webb
(7 pm) UMW *Every 3rd Monday (No meetings Jan, Feb or July)*
August 24 (7 pm) Franklin County HS Football Game
August 25 (8 am) Kingdom Run 5K
August 28 (9 am) Community Breakfast at Maple Grove UMC *4th Tuesdays*
August 31 (7 pm) Franklin County HS Football Game
September 2 (7 pm) Community Celtic Worship at St. Peter's Episcopal
September 7 (7 pm) Movie Night at Highland UMC
September 8 (6 pm) Like the Moon followed by The Harwell Grice Band at
Antioch COB
September 9 (9 am) Donuts and Devotions in the Fellowship Hall *2nd Sundays*
Mini Mission Encounter at Smith Memorial UMC
(6 pm) Ice Cream Social at Antioch COB
September 16 (7:30am) Men's Breakfast at the Roanoker
September 19 (Noon) Community Lunch at Bethany *Every 3rd Wed. of month*
September 21-22 Piedmont Women's Retreat at Phoebe Needles
September 22 Pastor Amy in Richmond for VA Conference Cooperative
Praish Workshop
September 23 Pot Luck with Outdoor Games Hosted by the Youth
September 28 (7pm) Franklin County HS Football Game
September 30 Diabetes Walk
October 7 Council Meeting
October 5-7 Smith Mtn. Lake Charity Home Tour
October 14 (3 pm) Danville District UMC Annual Meeting Halesford UMC
October 19 (7 pm) Franklin County HS Football Game
October 20 (9:30-Noon) Charge Conference at Fairview UMC
October 24 Garden Club meets at Highland UMC
November 2 (7 pm) Franklin County HS Football Game
February 23-26, 2019 Called General Conference of the UMC

Get Your Cow Bell Out!

Its football season! Come ring your cow bell and support our youth! Other youth, playing other sports, let us know how we can support you, too!

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Antioch COB invites you to come September 9 at 6 pm for a Ice Cream Social in the fellowship hall. Eat some yummy treats, enjoy the sweet spirit of fellowship and be inspired by the witness of what God did this summer mission.

CARAVAN OF GRACE

Join in the Caravan to Danville!!!! October 20 Let us make our way to Danville for a wonderful experience! This year the the whole District is invited to come together for a day. After worship, we will break out into three groups. One group will take care of Charge Conference, the other group will learn more about the called General Conference, and the third group will learn more about how we can help our local congregations be disciples of Jesus Christ! This day will take place at Fairview UMC, 1013 Westover Drive, Danville. Martha Stokes, the lay leader of the VA Conference's delegation to the called Conference will come and share. Martha is a hometown girl—she was baptized and grew up in faith in Fieldstone! She is also an amazing person of grace and peace—she can share with us all what it means to be Jesus' disciples in this anxious time. Please let Amy know you will be part of the CARAVAN of GRACE!!!!

Women's Retreat

The women of Piedmont Presbyterian Church invites the ladies (18 and older) to a fall women's retreat September 21-22nd at Phoebe Needles. Guest speaker is Diane Hoffman, the wife of Senior Pastor Gary Hoffman of Faith Fellowship. Diane will speak on *Matthew 11: 28*, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (ESV). There will have worship, nature walks, Christian yoga, prayer stations and other fellowship opportunities, excellent meals. The cost is \$45/per person and registration will close on September 4th. (No price cut is given for those who choose not stay the night.) See the flier on the bulletin board. Register with Rev. Nadia Stropich at 483-2655.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Merciful God,
We have been foolish and immature people
who resist the holy wisdom you graciously offer.**

(Time for silent prayer)

We live a confused life;
we long for meaning in our lives.
We rush and act without prayer.
We are so full of ourselves, living as know it alls;
**help us want wisdom,
more than money or being in the know.**
We ignore and judge people;
**help us live the promise that
wisdom is given and received from all.**
Forgive us our sin, O God,
**and lead us to sincere repentance
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news:
James 1:5 says: “If any of you is lacking in wisdom,
ask God, who gives generously and ungrudgingly,
and it will be given to you.”

Thanks be to God! Amen.

(Adapted from Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion)

Lies We Tell Ourselves About Church Growth

from the Virginia Conference Sunday Advocate

Some churches grow, and others shrink. Unfortunately, we often soothe each other by ignoring facts about church growth and telling reassuring lies. Here are a few:

Friendly churches grow — Declining churches often marvel at how many visitors show up once and don’t return. “But we’re so friendly!” Like most lies we tell ourselves, this one has a grain of truth in it: a visitor who gets a friendly greeting is more likely to return. When people say, “Our church is friendly,” generally they mean, “My friends are here.” Visitors to “friendly” churches see backs of heads — heads gathered into tight, impenetrable groups of friends. Hospitality takes effort.

Growth is not about numbers — In periods of decline, clergy and lay leaders say, “We don’t play the numbers game” and “We are interested in quality, not quantity.” These attitudes are comforting and vaguely spiritual-sounding, but if what you are doing is worthwhile for 50 people, why wouldn’t it be twice as good to do it for 100? We pay attention to the things we measure, and a congregation that does not keep and regularly read and talk about its numbers is not likely to do what it must to keep those numbers healthy.

Our children are our future — Having a strong ministry with youth and children is important for your congregation’s growth, not because your children will grow up to join your church, but because a strong children’s program is the key to attracting your fair share of other people’s children. Congregations grow because they engage people now, not decades in the future.

Our church wants to grow — For established members, growth means taking away the church they love and replacing it with something that feels strange and alien. The only reason a sane person would want a church to grow is because they believe it has something of importance to offer other people. Church growth does not proceed from working harder or more diligently at what you are already doing. Growth means doing something new. And the first step toward doing something new is to quit kidding yourself about what you are doing now.

~ *Lewis Center for Church Leadership*

Commission on the Way Forward Update

The Commission on the Way Forward's report and recommendations has been released in different languages for this UM global church. Amy has printed it out this (200 plus page) report and will be trying to process it. This report is from over two years of prayerful discussion from the Commission. The plans are just proposals—suggestions. What's the next step? These possible plans will be considered by the United Methodist Church Judicial Council. (Like our U.S. government's Supreme Court, we have a Court.) This Judicial Council (our Court) will decide in a few months if these proposed plans are acceptable (okay by our book of Discipline). If they are “okay” (constitutional) then the plans go on to be voted on by the called General Conference in February, 2019. So, we continue to be in a “holding” pattern. We continue to wait and see. What can we do in the meantime? PRAY! Keep informed. There are hand outs on the table by the pastor's office. There are videos to watch. Attend Charge Conference on October 20 and hear more from leaders. Meet with Amy if you have questions or would like to know more. Once the Judicial Council rules on what will be going to the Called General Conference in February, 2019, Amy will hold an informal time of discussion if you have questions.

A Call for Prayer for the Called General Conference

*Pause and pray for our church's mission and way forward daily for four minutes from 2:23 through 2:26 a.m. or p.m. in their own time zone OR at another time. This is because the Special Session of General Conference will be held February 23 through February 26, 2019.

*Pray using a weekly prayer calendar that will be posted on the UMCPrays.org website from June 2, 2018, through the end of February 2019. The calendar will list a unique cluster of names each week. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, added: “We believe that the acts of weekly fasting and prayer will help us approach General Conference

both individually and corporately in a posture of humility and receptivity to one another and to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit.”
For more details, visit UMCPrays.org.