

March Events

The Messenger
March 2019

at
Williamsburg United Methodist Church



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Food for Thought

by Senior Pastor Bill Jones

What should we give up for Lent? The Faithful Followers Sunday School class at the Church of What's Happening Now was discussing the upcoming season of Lent. The congregation had never had such a discussion. This congregation prided itself on their core value of relevance. Adhering to ancient seasons such as Advent and Lent simply did not rise to that standard. Their church calendar had a softball schedule but no mention of Lent. Their new pastor, however, had suggested the congregation might find the rhythm of a traditional church calendar spiritually enriching. He said they might even find it relevant. The Faithful Followers Sunday School class was not convinced but wanted to be supportive of their new leader and decided to give it a try.

In the past few weeks, they had learned Lent is to be a time of preparation for Easter; a time of enhanced participation in worship, Bible study, prayer, and wrestling with the deeper questions of faith; a time to ready oneself to better experience the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. They also learned that it is customary during Lent that the faithful consider something to give up for this 40-day exercise in contrition.

Integral to spiritual preparation for Easter is to spend some time thinking about the obstacles faced daily that keep Christians from living the lives of faithful followers. Lenten self-reflection was never to be an end unto itself. Obstacles and temptations were not only to be identified, they were to be corrected.

Joyce, often the one to offer insightful observations, ventured a comment. "That must be where the idea of giving up something for Lent originated. We are to identify obstacles and temptation in our lives that have become stumbling blocks in our Christian walk. Then we are to eliminate them or, at the very least, refrain from them during Lent."

Bill, always ready to demonstrate his technological savvy, chimed in. "Did you know there are actually websites that make suggestions for what to give up during Lent? I wrote down some ideas. Give up favorite foods like cake, ice cream, pizza, fried chicken, soft drinks, or coffee. Curtail the time spent on favorite activities like television, golf, shopping, computer use, Facebook, Twitter, and endless back and forth texting with friends. There were even suggestions about eliminating a bad habit, such as excessive alcohol use, smoking, lying, gossip, road rage, procrastination, or foul language." John interrupted Bill before he finished his list. "Give up road rage for Lent? For me, that would be relevant. I commute an hour to work and an hour home every day. Traffic is always heavy. Sometimes the freeway resembles a long, narrow parking lot. I spend too much of the commute screaming at bad drivers, pounding the steering wheel when someone changes lanes without signaling, and expressing my displeasure with obscene gestures. My rage carries into the office in the morning and into my home in the evening. I need to stop it. I am going to work on giving up anger for Lent."

Other Faithful Followers in the class talked about excessive participation on social media. One admitted spending so many hours each day communicating with friends on Facebook that she was neglecting face-to-face communication with loved ones at home. Another in the class concurred, **"I think my wife, my children, and I need a serious sit down discussion about giving up social media for Lent."** By the end of Sunday school, the Faithful Followers came to understand that giving up something for Lent can be far more relevant than first assumed.

What should we give up for Lent? On the one hand that question is simple to answer. Give up something that keeps you from being the person God calls you to be. On the other hand, deciding precisely what that might be and how to give it up can require an enormous amount of study, prayer, and deep spiritual reflections. Of course, those are the practices at the heart of the Lenten preparation for Easter that begins on Ash Wednesday with the placing of ashes on the forehead, a day marked by repentance and soul searching, and even by fasting and ends with the **Easter service. May that be "food for thought" in your wrestling with the question of what to give up for Lent this year.**



On the Road: The Mark of a Disciple “A Life of Hospitality”

Each month, we will focus on a characteristic or mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Our characteristic for March is “A Life of Hospitality.”

Our church is in the processes of renovating the banner entrance area off the rear parking lot. When the dust finally settles (literally!), we will have a physical space that is designed and decorated to be welcoming to our members and visitors. We will also have specific areas set aside to provide information about our church to those who are interested. We are thankful to the staff persons and volunteers who were involved in this renovation process.

However, what nails and paint cannot provide are the interpersonal relationships that can only result from intentional hospitality. Intentional hospitality is more than the brief fellowship that occurs when handing someone a brochure or pointing a family in the direction of the nursery. Intentional hospitality is more than small talk around the coffee tables; it is learning about newcomers so as to build a relationship with them. What brought them to church? What are their needs and how might the church be helpful in fulfilling those needs? First-time guests are more likely to feel welcome when worship participants engage them in meaningful conversation and take the initial steps to model Christian love.

So how will you live your life of hospitality? Begin by offering your ear for listening and your heart for the stories of the stranger. Be ready with insight, support, recognition, and commitment to that person walking into our church for the first time.

Next Month:

“A Life of Hospitality: Sharing our Faith.”

Cindy Banek,
Director of Adult Discipleship



Interested in Being a Part of WUMC?

Periodically we have an introductory meet and greet, CONNECT 101, on Sunday morning in the Parlor from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. The next opportunity will be Sunday, March 31. Join us! Simply complete the blue card in the pew rack and place in the offering plate or contact the Church Office (229-1771).



Mark Your Calendar

Ash Wednesday Services

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a period of spiritual discipline, fasting and prayer, which leads to Easter. On Wednesday, March 6, you are invited to worship at 12:15 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The service will include the imposition of ashes, a reminder of our mortality and belonging to God, and communion. All are welcome.



Bereavement Support Group

The Bereavement Support Group has been moved from Wednesday, March 6 to Wednesday, March 13, due to the Ash Wednesday service on March 6. The meeting is held from 12-1pm in the Den at WUMC. It will resume to meeting on the first Wednesday of the month, in April.

Easter Lilies



You're invited to provide one or more Easter lilies in honor or in memory of a loved one. Return this form by March 31 with a check for \$20 payable to WUMC and write "Easter Lilies" on the memo line. Place my gift of Easter Lilies

In memory of (Print)

In honor of (Print)

Given by (Print)

Phone (Print)



Beneficiaries For Lenten Offering



GLOBAL OUTREACH

On your behalf the Global Outreach Team has chosen these three organizations to receive a portion of WUMC's Special Lenten Offering:

- UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing) — For more than 50 years, United Methodist congregations have been taking part in a special UMCOR Sunday offering, laying the foundation for United Methodist Committee on Relief's (UMCOR's) worldwide ministry of relief and hope when disaster strikes. This one offering during Lent will cover the operational and administrative costs associated with UMCOR's relief efforts, thus insuring that 100% of disaster donations go directly to relief.
- Abukloi . . . We Can! — Begun by one of the Lost Boys of Sudan and a group of friends, Abukloi's goal is to provide education for the children of South Sudan. Since the establishment of the school in 2014, two classes have graduated. Currently there are 364 students enrolled in a program that is educating future peaceful leaders of South Sudan. WUMC member Bob Parsons has been instrumental in the work of Abukloi.
- Methodist Border Friendship Commission (An UMCOR Advance Special, #107590) — Working to promote the presence of the Methodist Church along the Texas border, this ministry coordinates existing ministries within churches of the area and promotes friendship, fellowship, evangelism, and mission. In this border region, each day 350 – 600 immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers pass through on their way north. MBFC works to provide assistance within border churches, with the children and elderly in their communities, immigrant/refugees at the border, feeding ministries, housing improvements, and education.



Beneficiaries For Lenten Offering



LOCAL OUTREACH

On your behalf the Local Outreach Team has chosen these three organizations to receive a portion of WUMC's Special Lenten Offering:

● The Williamsburg House of Mercy — The Williamsburg House of Mercy is a social ministry headquartered at the St. Bede Catholic Church Richmond Road facility. House of Mercy provides quality compassionate human services to all people, especially the most vulnerable, regardless of faith. House of Mercy offers assistance in many areas. Here are four:

- Rapid Rehousing is designed to assist homeless individuals and families who are currently staying outside, in vehicles, or in local shelters.
- Assessment and Coordination of Care is the starting point for anyone who is homeless and in need of shelter, case management, and supportive services.
- The Mobile Food Pantry is a large-scale fresh food distribution in partnership with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank and USDA. Fresh food distribution is scheduled twice a month.
- House of Mercy staff coordinate with Colonial Community Corrections Probation and Parole and the mentors at Williamsburg Walk the Talk to address the particular challenges of re-entry for ex-offenders returning to the community.
- The Harbor Day Center for the Homeless and Grace Haven Family Shelter operate under the auspices of the House of Mercy.

● Literacy for Life (LFL) — Literacy for Life is a non-profit organization that promotes adult literacy in the Greater Williamsburg Area through free customized instruction for both native-born and non-native-born learners. LFL began in 1975 as the Rita Welsh Adult Literacy Program. Many Williamsburg UMC congregants have served as tutors in its 43-year history. Since 2000, approximately 1,100 tutors have contributed more than 40,000 hours of time and provided instruction for thousands of cli-

ents. **LFL's goal for 2019 is to support 800 learners.** The expanded programs of LFL are:

- Empowering Parent Program targets parents of elementary-age children who are seeking to improve their literacy skills to better support their children.
- EmployEd Program provides career development services to adults seeking to gain employment or advance in their careers.
- Reading, Writing and Math Adult Basic Education learners develop skills that support employment, parenting, health, or increased independence.
- English as a Second Language promotes the ability of foreign-born adults to participate more fully in American life.
- Thomas Nelson Community College Free Tutoring Program helps adults prepare for college entrance and placement exams.
- HEAL Classes for Adults & Heal Training for Medical Professionals promote a greater understanding of health issues and treatments.

● Summer Meals for Kids — Summer Meals for Kids, formally the Greater Williamsburg Summer Feeding Program, began its trial run in 2018, providing lunches to 50 children of one neighborhood and three local motels. The program began **as a response to Williamsburg James City County's** data on local elementary school children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs during the school year — 41% in 2018. Partners included Meals on Wheels who delivered the meals, From His Hands, United Way, Salvation Army, Erase the Need, and 14 local churches and social service organizations. Williamsburg UMC was one of five food preparation and packaging sites serving every Thursday for 11 weeks. Over the summer 2,589 meals were provided to 56 children. 275 volunteers from local churches participated, and William & Mary funded an intern to provide day-to-day program management. Based on the success of the 2018 trial, Summer Meals for Kids will be enlarged in 2019 to include more children who depend on meals at school during the 9-month school year.

Williamsburg United Methodist Women

March 2019 – UMW Circle Meetings

OLIVE CASEY CIRCLE — Monday, March 4 at 9:30 a.m. at the Respite Care Center. As a volunteer activity project, members will help clean and sort the activity materials.

CLARK/HERITAGE CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 5 at 9:45 a.m. in the Church Den. Linda Upshaw and Gwen Hamrick will present a program titled **"Gadgets in Your Life."**

JEAN CRAIG CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 5 at 1:30 p.m. at the Brookdale Retirement Center in the Activities Room.

SUSANNA WESLEY CIRCLE — Wednesday, March 6 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 309. Our speaker will be David Hindman. He will share his experiences in walking the Camino de Santiago (The Way of St. James).

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 12 at 10:30 a.m. in the Church Den. Ray Morgan will share the story of the Ossuary of Saint James. Please join us for an interesting piece of history; guests welcome.

CAROL SCOTT CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 12 at 1:00 p.m. in the Church Den. The Program will be facilitated by Mary Spence.

SISTERS-IN-FAITH CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 12 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 309. We will be assembling Kits for UMCOR and planning Easter Dinner for Wesley Students.

WILLIAMSBURG LANDING CIRCLE — Tuesday, March 19 at 10:30 a.m. at Williamsburg Landing, in the Main Building, 1st floor, next to Kitchen.

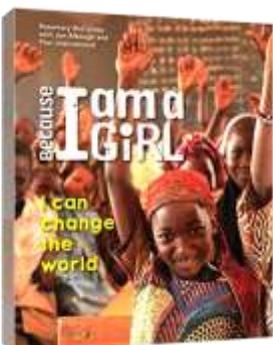
IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

WUMW Candle Burning Service — Saturday, March 2 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

150th Anniversary of the United Methodist Women — Saturday, March 23

United Methodist Women Sunday — March 24

WUMW Board Meeting — Monday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 309



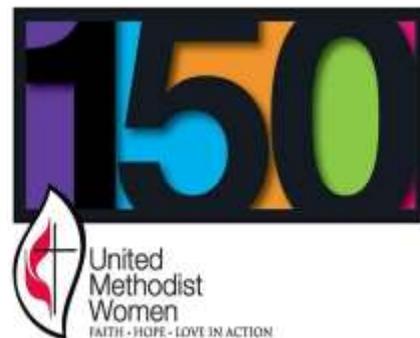
UMW Book Club

The UMW Book Club will meet on Monday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Susan Griffin (116 Heathery, in Ford's Colony). We will be reading and discussing, **"Because I am a Girl, I can Change the World,"** by Rosemary McCarney with Jen Albaugh and Plan International. It is in the Leadership Development category of the UMW Reading Program. All are welcome.

For more information, contact Carol Brinkley (258-0617) or cpbrinkley@aol.com.

United Methodist Women's Sunday

Please plan to participate with us as we observe **Williamsburg United Methodist Women's Sunday on March 24**. We are proud to welcome Rev. Nancy Robinson as our guest speaker for a service focused on the legacy of the United Methodist Women's 150-year history. Join us for a birthday celebration in the atrium after each service. Coffee and birthday cake will be served. We're 150 years old this year and proud of it!



United Methodist Women's Service Project – Blood Drive

In commemoration of the 150th birthday of United Methodist Women (UMW), our Williamsburg UMW unit is hosting a blood drive in cooperation with the American Red Cross on Saturday, March 30 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. To schedule an appointment, visit <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>, Sponsor Code: WilliamsburgUMC or sign up at the CrossRoads Table between services on Sunday, March 24. Our goal is 30 pints of blood. Your single donation can save up to 3 lives. Help us to reach our goal and be in service to our community!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawls are a wonderful gift our ministers can give to someone who is sick, lonely, or mourning the loss of a loved one. The hope is that the recipient will feel the warmth of God's loving arms wrapped around them when they wear the shawl and know they are not alone.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet on a Wednesday & Thursday each month in the Church Den from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. The next meeting dates will be: March 13 & 28, April 10 & 25, & May 8 & 23.

All are welcome – those who knit or crochet; beginners to experienced. Join us in the Den where we will knit/crochet and pray together. Yarn donations are welcome. Consider picking up a ball of two to help support this ministry. For questions, please contact Wendy Geiger (570-4656) or wendy.geiger@cox.net.





Messy Church in March

Tuesday, March 12 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Theme: "Dusty Drawing"

Our next Messy Church will be Tuesday, March 12 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Our theme for March is, "Dusty Drawing," based on a story found in **John 8:1-11** about forgiveness, kindness and friendship. Who is the kindest person you know? How can we follow the example of Jesus and reach out to others who are in need of a kind word or a friendly hand? And why was Jesus writing words in the sand?

Come to Messy Church, and we will learn more about this story through Messy crafts (using items from the trash!), Messy games (something very messy!) and of course, playing with sand! We will also enjoy our **usual delicious dinner and always unpredictable "Celebration Time."**

Messy Church is free and open to anyone! Any questions about Messy Church, please contact Cindy Banek (229-1771 ext. 258).

Silver Saints Luncheon

The next meeting of the Silver Saints will be on Wednesday, March 13 at noon in Fellowship Hall. Please bring \$1.00 for the fried chicken, a side dish or dessert to share and donations for FISH, our local food pantry.

The program will feature Scott Brubaker, from Apex Physical Therapy, who will discuss problems with balance that can be helped with physical therapy. He will **also discuss problems with dementia such as Alzheimer's Disease.** There will be plenty of time for questions after the presentation.

The Silver Saints is a fellowship group for those 50 plus years-old, and we enthusiastically welcome new people! If you have questions about the Silver Saints, please contact Eloy Villa (564-0083).



Confirmation 2019

Pastor Meghan and Youth Director Andy invite youth from 8th – 12th grade who have not been confirmed to participate in our 2019 Confirmation class.

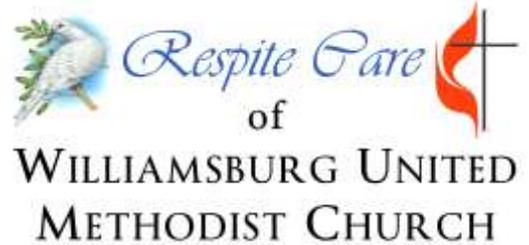
In the United Methodist Church, Confirmation is an opportunity for people to recognize God's work of grace in their lives and embrace being disciples of Jesus Christ. Pastor Meghan will hold an interest meeting on Sunday, March 17 from 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Confirmation sessions will be held May 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** Re-charge dinner will be provided at no cost to the participants. **Confirmation Sunday will be on Pentecost Sunday, June 9.** Questions? Please contact Pastor Meghan (229-1771 ext. 261) or mclayton@williamsburgumc.org or Youth Director Andy Glascott (229-1771 ext. 259) or aglascott@williamsburgumc.org.



MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS

The Alzheimer's Association sponsors a Caregiver Support Group at WUMC monthly, open to the entire community. These gatherings provide a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to:

- a) Develop a support system
- b) Exchange practical information on caregiving challenges and possible solutions
- c) Talk through issues and ways of coping
- d) Share feelings, needs and concerns
- e) Learn about community resources.



The meetings are held the second Thursday of each month from 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in Room 206. Complimentary care is available for loved ones at Respite during the meeting; however, pre-registration is required. Contact Carolyn Yowell, Respite Director (229-1771 ext. 354) or cyowell@williamsburgumc.org. Trained facilitators for this meeting include Kay Gardner and Cynthia Holloway.

Do you have an article for the Newsletter?

If you would like to submit an article for publication in the Messenger, the deadline for submittals is the 15th of the month. Articles submitted should be typed or neatly printed, limited to a 1/2 page in length and are subject to editing for grammar, spelling and content. Please submit by e-mail to Lianne Koch at lkoch@williamsburgumc.org. Questions? Please e-mail Lianne or call (229-1771 ext. 250).



Endowment Notes

Consider making a special gift – at year end, at Easter, in honor or memory of a loved one – to the Williamsburg United Methodist Church Endowment. Gifts of any size are welcome. Your gift to the Endowment provides enduring support for the ministry and mission of WUMC. Thank you.



Have you checked out our Website?

If you ever have a moment, stop by our website to see what's going on at our church. The address is www.williamsburgumc.org. Find out about all the ministries and other activities that you or your family may be interested in joining!! We have something for everyone!!

If you have any questions about something you see on our website, contact the church office (229-1771).

Get Ready for Kits for Conference!

In the last five years, folks at Williamsburg UMC have sent more than 5,600 Kits (School, Hygiene, and Cleaning Flood Buckets) to Annual Conference, for distribution to areas around the USA impacted by disasters or other special need. Altogether, those Kits have been valued at nearly \$70,000! Wow! Well done, saints!

Now it's time to begin preparing for our 2019 Kits for Conference drive! Because of your great generosity in the past, we have a new Challenge Goal of at least 1,175 Hygiene/Health Kits! We're trusting we can reach that by working together - United Methodist Women, Messy Church, Youth, United Methodist Men, Wesley Foundation, Sunday School classes and other small groups, individuals, neighbors, and friends. Many hands and loving hearts make great miracles, as well as light work!

We will be receiving needed items at the church during the month of May, but you can already begin gathering supplies now, especially as you see sales or do your regular shopping; simply keep them in a safe place at home until May.



Here's the list of items we'll be packing into each Hygiene/Health Kit:

- 1 Hand Towel
- 1 Wash Cloth
- 1 Bath Size Soap (no Ivory Soap, please . . . it dissolves too fast and too easily)
- 1 Toothbrush
- 1 Nail Clipper
- 10 Band-Aids
- 1 One Gallon Bag

Note: Too busy to shop for Kit items? Not to worry! Financial donations for shipping are most welcome, and a \$12 gift will purchase everything for one kit! It's that easy!

Here's an important Save the Date!

Saturday, June 8 from 10:00 a.m. – Noon

Celebratory and Fun Packing Party to put our Kits together to ship to Conference!

Watch future issues of The Messenger and weekly bulletins as plans develop. Let's Do This, and Make a Difference for Good in God's World!

Volunteer Opportunity with Literacy for Life

Literacy for Life has adult learners waiting for people like you!

- No previous teaching experience is needed – we provide training, materials, and ongoing support.
- Complete nine hours (3 x 3 – hour sessions) of initial tutor training.
- Available to tutor 1.5 hours per week for one year.
- Complete the online training registration form and select the training series that works best for your schedule at <https://literacyforlife.org/tutors/>.

For more information, please call (221-3325).



Why "DO" Lent? How Do I Start?

from LENT 101 by Rev. Penny Ford

Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, but not really living life with direction, purpose or passion? It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of classes, relationships, family, and work. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God.

Lent **is a great time to "repent"** — to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. **It's a 40 day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart.** You might try one of these practices for Lent:

FASTING:

Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, tv, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like worry **or reality tv to spend time outside enjoying God's creation.** **What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God?** What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do? [Learn more about or design a fast.](#)

SERVICE:

Some Christians take something on for Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend everyday of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

PRAYER:

Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

Christians from many different traditions celebrate Lent. How will you use the time to grow closer to God?

Pray about it!

For more information about our Prayer Ministry, contact Cindy Banek (229-1771 ext. 258) or cbanek@williamsburgumc.org.



Condolences

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who have passed away during the month of February:

Horace "Otis" Copley

Jerry Harrison

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Messenger
A Monthly Publication of
Williamsburg United Methodist Church
500 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23185
Church Office (757-229-1771)
www.williamsburgumc.org

Follow-Up to General Conference Dealing with Sexuality Issues

Sunday, March 3 at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

All are invited to hear Bishop Peter Weaver and Lay Delegate Warren Harper share their reflections and experiences at General Conference. They will answer questions and discuss, as best they can at that early date, the implications of the decisions of the Conference. This special called General Conference took place February 23-26 in St Louis. Delegates from around the world representing all United Methodists considered a number of legislative proposals concerning how the UMC might move forward despite our continued differences in perspective on issues related to sexuality, especially focusing on ordination and marriage rites for LGBTQ+ persons. As in many denominations, this issue has revealed significant differences in the way people interpret the Bible, understand God's purposes for human beings, and interpret our call to seek justice and mercy. Other differences include differing understandings of the UM Book of Discipline, the role of science, and the process of change. These differences exist within many congregations, including WUMC. Fundamentally, the General Conference considered whether we can live together, as congregations or as a denomination, with these differences or if these differences are significant enough to split us apart. For more information, visit <https://www.williamsburgumc.org/grow/a-way-forward>.

“State of the Church” Address

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis will hold an address “State of the Church: Where Do We Go from Here?” and time for questions and answers following the Special Session of General Conference on Monday, March 4. The event will be livestreamed at www.livestream.com/vaumc/stateofthechurch from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Williamsburg UMC will also livestream the address in Fellowship Hall and all are invited to attend. Questions for this Q & A period may be sent to wayforward@vaumc.org prior to and during the event. Questions from Williamsburg UMC? Please contact Cindy Banek (229-1771 ext. 258).