



## Journey together

SYNOD — (συννοδία) — to journey with, a journey in company

June 2009

# The Bishop's Page

### A JULY SABBATICAL

I will be taking the month of July as a time of sabbatical for study, reading, preparation, and renewal. I will be studying the scriptures, just reading through books of the Bible for the joy of it, stopping at key words to see what they are in the Greek and Hebrew and seeing where those words are used elsewhere in scripture. It will be a month of concentration in the Book of Faith. It will be a month of reading the reports for the churchwide assembly and preparing comments for the anticipated conversations. It will be a month of staying home and not driving anywhere! It will be a month of home cooked meals and not one fast food stop!

The synod staff is beginning to look at the use of sabbaticals for renewal and learning, and my July time is as a lead off hitter in the lineup. We hope to have our synod staff taking sabbaticals right behind me. As we do so, we will continue to provide oversight and pastoral care for our congregations and rostered leaders working side by side with the Synod Council in the vision and mission of the Virginia Synod!

I want to thank the Synod Council for their encouragement and support of this time for sabbatical. I will receive it as a gracious gift and use it as an opportunity for deepening of faith, reflection, and return even more charged for the privilege of service to the synod!

### Financial Updates:

A review of congregational giving is a most heartening thing to see! I want to thank the vast majority of congregations who are 100% or greater in their on-going giving to the wider church. This has always been our tradition as the Virginia Synod!! Thank you so much for your leadership and the support for the whole church!

As of June 10<sup>th</sup>, I am pleased to report we have sent \$225,161.25 to the people of Slidell and for Gulf Coast Relief. Thank you for this continuous generous support.

We continue to meet our 50.6% giving of all we receive to churchwide and to meet our full proportional share for Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. For May, congregational giving to the wider church was short \$4,569 and for the year \$24,019.

Please be sure to check with your treasurer to make sure that you are on schedule and that remittances are being made to the wider church.

**We are Ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us!**

*II Corinthians 5:20*

## Pastors and Congregations

1. Any Virginia Synod pastor interested in being considered for an interview for any of the following vacancies should promptly notify a member of the synod staff:

BEALETON, St. Thomas (1/2 time)	Study/Interim
CROCKETT, United (3/4 time)	Interim
CULPEPER, St. Luke	Interim
FLOYD-WILLIS PARISH (3/4 time)	Interviewing
JEROME, St. Paul	Study
RADFORD, Christ	Study
ROANOKE, St. Mark	Study/Interim
VIRGINIA BEACH, Our Saviour	Study
WAYNESBORO, Bethlehem	Study
WINCHESTER, Bethel	Interviewing

2. **ROSTERED LEADERS:**

- The Rev. Scott Maxwell has resigned as Pastor of Leadership and Administration at Bethel, Winchester, effective May 31, 2009.
- The Rev. Robert Cosmas has resigned as Pastor at St. Michael, Virginia Beach, effective July 19, 2009.

*The Virginia Institute of Pastoral Care (VIPCare) is a counseling resource for Virginia Synod Rostered Leaders and their families. It is entirely confidential and may be used for individual, couple or family counseling. Call 804-282-8332 to set up an appointment with a counselor in your geographical area or to discuss finances. They will guide you in shared costs with the ELCA Board of Pensions, synodical support (no names/case # only) and your portion.*

## News & Notes about Our People

+ **Our sympathies are extended to:**

- The Rev. Fred and Gail Eichner and family following the death of Gail's mother, Lillian Margaret Bennett, on May 21, 2009.

+ **Prayers for continued recuperation, healing and the abiding presence of our Lord are requested for:**

- The Rev. Cecie Haxton's brother
- Jenny Troutman, wife of Pastor Barney Troutman
- The Rev. Sid Nelson
- Barbara Kingsbury, wife of Pastor Jack Kingsbury
- Joan Donahue, wife of Pastor Fred Donahoe
- Sarah Ann Lockhart, daughter of Pastor Sidney Nelson, and her son, Liam.
- The Rev. Cecil Bradfield
- Barbara Taylor, wife of Pastor John Taylor
- Janet Steele, wife of Pastor Duane Steele
- Charlotte Duncan, wife of Pastor Richard Duncan
- Teddi Nelson, wife of Pastor David Nelson
- The Rev. Doug Stowe
- Joy Stowe, wife of Pastor Doug Stowe

## News and Notes from Synod Staff and Extended Staff

### From Pastor Dave Delaney Synodical Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

There is still time for just-graduated high school seniors to register for this year's **Youth Ambassadors School**, held at Roanoke College July 5-9, 2009 (Sunday 6pm to Friday noon). This is an opportunity for these emerging young adults to gather with each other to spend time in a smaller group (about 15 participants) and take stock of where their faith lives have led them so far and to look ahead to the challenges and questions that face them in their next stage of life, whether that be the workforce, service or military, or college. The cost is only \$100 and for an additional \$50, participants can stay onsite for Power in the Spirit, which happens on the following 3 days. [Click here](#) for information and registration forms for Youth Ambassadors School.

There is still time for congregational groups to register for the **Junior High Servant Event**, August 2-7, 2009 at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke. This event for youth who have finished 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grades traces hunger related themes and issues all the way from food production to collection to distribution to engagement with people in need to trends and structures on a global scale. Youth register as a congregation. [Click here](#) for information and registration forms are available at the synod website.

Watch for an exciting upcoming new ministry from the Office of the Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. We are launching a synod youth ministry **podcast**, which we hope will be a weekly compendium of news and updates, reminders and suggestions, and a weekly discussion of the lessons for that upcoming Sunday worship. Podcasts are audio files that can be downloaded from a website onto any computer with an internet connection and listened to on the computer or loaded onto a portable mp3 player such as an iPod. Watch for information via email and [facebook](#) sites in the next few weeks as we begin this regular podcast ministry.

Our 2008-2009 Synodical [Youth-to-Youth Project](#) is the Rwanda School Project. In response to a presentation by the school's director, Robin Strickler, last year's Youth Assembly voted to increase our goal for this year to \$36,000 in order to provide a fuller level of participation in the school's work. We are encouraging youth groups to contribute \$300-400 each over the course of the year as we aim toward this goal.

**ELCA Region 9**, the cooperative mission structure of synods in the Southeast, continues to hold open an opportunity for an exciting upcoming event - [The "Walking Holy" Region 9 Holy Land Pilgrimage – Dec. 20, 2010-Jan.2, 2011](#). This will be for youth who will be in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades at the time of the event. Roughly 50 youth participants and their synodical advisors will spend these days in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and parts of Galilee studying with Dr. Lamontte Luker of Southern Seminary. Pastor Dave Delaney (Virginia Synod Youth Director) will be the adult from Virginia going along on this trip. There is an application process for this event and, although the deadline for applying has been extended, decisions on applications will be made

late this summer, so if you are interested, do not delay! [Here is the application](#), along with more information.

Here is the [schedule of events](#) for the 2009-2010 Synodical Youth Event cycle:

Aug. 2-7, 2009	-	Junior High Servant Event, Roanoke
Nov. 20-22, 2009	-	Lost and Found
Jan. 22-24, 2010	-	Winter Celebration I
Jan. 29-31, 2010	-	Winter Celebration II
Feb. 5-8, 2010	-	ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza
March 13-14, 2010	-	Seventh Day
March 20, 2010	-	Bishop's Day
June 4-6, 2010	-	Youth Assembly
July 27-July 2, 2010	-	Kairos
July 10-15, 2010	-	Youth Ambassadors School

As high school graduates move toward their next stages of life in the summer and fall, please inform Dave Delaney in the Synod Office ([Delaney@vasynod.org](mailto:Delaney@vasynod.org)) of where these young adults will be headed next. If they are going to school in a place that has Lutheran Campus Ministry, we can notify the local leadership there that a new student is on the way!

**From Pastor Chip Gunsten  
Assistant to the Bishop**

### **Church Vocations Conference - August 11-13, 2009**

The Virginia Synod Church Vocations Conference will be held at [Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg](#), August 11-13. The conference is designed for those seeking to discern God's call to rostered ministry within the church as an Associate in Ministry (AIM), Deaconess, Diaconal Minister, or Ordained Pastor, as well as those who are presently within the candidacy process. The conference provides participants with the opportunity to meet with candidacy committee members and other rostered leaders through informal conversation, presentations, and worship. The theme for this summer's gathering is *Ambassadors for Christ: Missional Leaders* - with leadership by The Rev. Dr. James Thomas, LTSS ... through our baptism, we are called to live and share our faith in daily life at home, school, workplace, neighborhood (local and global), in and through the church as missional leaders turned upside-down for service and inside-out for sharing (+) the Good News of Christ. In discerning a call to rostered leadership, one is called to equip the Saints for the work of ministry ... as a Missional Leader. For further information and registration please contact Chip Gunsten at the synod office: 540-389-1000 or [gunsten@vasynod.org](mailto:gunsten@vasynod.org) or Debbie Worley at [worley@vasynod.org](mailto:worley@vasynod.org).

**From Pastor Jean Bozeman  
Assistant to the Bishop**



# Calling all Parish Nurses

Please note that there is a special workshop for parish nurses at this year's Power in the Spirit. You are encouraged to attend Power in the Spirit for all the opportunities it provides as well as exchanging ideas with parish nurses across the synod. To register go to the Virginia Synod to register online or print out the registration form.

---

## Interested in expanding your ministry to and with young families?

Contact Jean Bozeman to plan a workshop in your parish, conference, or cluster of congregation.

You may contact Jean at [bozeman@vasynod.org](mailto:bozeman@vasynod.org) or 757-622-9421



---

## Leadership Convocation

### September 18-19, 2009

Please reserve the dates for the Fall Convocation on your calendars.  
Registration information will come out soon!

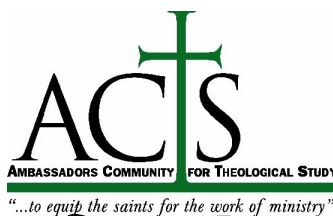
Committee Chairs: Please send an updated committee list with their contact information and term to Lenae Osmondson at [synodeast@vasynod.org](mailto:synodeast@vasynod.org)

---

## Clergy Spouse Retreat

November 6-8, 2009  
Massanetta Springs Conference Center

To register go to [www.vasynod.org](http://www.vasynod.org) and click on the tab 2009 Spouse Retreat. If you have any questions please contact Jean Bozeman at [bozeman@vasynod.org](mailto:bozeman@vasynod.org).



# Register Now for the Fall Course!

**Dr. Michael Root**  
from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary  
in Columbia South Carolina will lead  
**Lutheran Confessions**  
on  
**October 3 and November 14**  
at Grace Lutheran, Waynesboro

To register now contact Lenae Osmondson  
at [synodeast@vasynod.org](mailto:synodeast@vasynod.org) or 757-622-9421

*From Lisa Geiger*  
**Book of Faith Advocate**



By Lisa Geiger  
Virginia Synod Book of Faith Advocate

***Synod Assembly says:  
Yes Virginia, We are a Book of Faith Synod!***

I have just returned from Synod Assembly where many great things have occurred – not the least of which was the adoption of the Book of Faith Resolution by the Assembly! Thank you so much to all of you who helped draft, review, support, and pass this resolution. What a joy it was to have the Rev. Dr. Stan Olson with us at Assembly. I send many thanks to him for his insights and information on this initiative from the national perspective. This is an exciting time in the life of our Synod and many of you are taking the invitation to “Open Scripture” and “Join the Conversation”.

This “grass roots” movement started by the North Carolina Synod and adopted by the National Assembly in 2007 is taking root in Virginia and starting to grow. Take a look at our Book of Faith Congregations who have already started courses or have courses planned for this fall to encourage others to read and share scripture.

Apostles, Gloucester	Emmanuel, Virginia Beach	Good Shepherd, Virginia Beach
Grace, Winchester	Luther Memorial, Blacksburg	Messiah, Mechanicsville
Our Savior, Richmond	Our Savior, Norge	Pleasant View, Staunton
Resurrection, Fredericksburg	Rural Retreat Parish	St. Andrew, Portsmouth
St. Mark, Charlottesville	St. Michael, Virginia Beach	St. Jacobs-Spaders, Mt. Crawford
St. Paul, Strausburg	St. Philip, Roanoke	St. Stephen, Williamsburg
St. Timothy, Norfolk	Trinity, Roanoke	Trinity, Newport News
Trinity, Pulaski		

As part of the effort to promote awareness about the Book of Faith Initiative, the following Assembly attendees were the recipients of a new Lutheran Study Bible from Augsburg Fortress in the “Book of Faith Bible Bonanza Giveaway”:

Thomas Bosserman	Epiphany, Richmond
Bonnie Buckner	First English Lutheran, Richmond
Thomas Evans	Resurrection, Fredericksburg
Jim Helberg	Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Richmond
Charles Sansing	St. John, Abingdon
Judy Schwerdtfeger	Messiah, Mechanicsville

Congratulations to you all - I hope you all enjoy your new bible that incorporates the four methods of study, Literary, Historical, Lutheran Theological, and Devotional, used in the Book of Faith Initiative.

If you have not already registered for Power in the Spirit – now is the time to do so. You won’t want to miss our Keynote speaker and Bible Study leader, Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell. This year’s theme in support of our Book of Faith Initiative is “Power through Scripture: Fueling Our Faith”. **Bring your bible** and get ready for a great time of fellowship and faith renewal.

As always, I would love to hear how Book of Faith is going in your congregations, small groups, and personal faith lives. Please feel free to contact me at [ligeiger1@cox.net](mailto:ligeiger1@cox.net) or 757-468-5445.

## **News & Notes from Around the Synod**

### **Career Crossroads, October 16-18, 2009, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary**

Are you or is someone you know going through a career crisis? Do you need help finding work that fits your gifts and mission in life? Career Crossroads is a spiritual retreat that can help!

Please see the attached brochure for more information, or contact Sandra Holland, Associate Director for Ministry, Region 9 at 803-461-3263 or [sandrah@ltss.edu](mailto:sandrah@ltss.edu).

### **Registration Open for Institute for Church Leadership**

Registration is now open for the [Institute for Church Leadership](#), a new teaching ministry of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The program to earn a Certificate in Missional Leadership emphasizes lay leadership, but rostered leaders are strongly encouraged to attend to learn new ways to start or strengthen mission teams in congregations.

The certificate program enables current and future Church leaders to become more effective mission leaders in congregations, at work and school, at home, and in God's world. The courses will apply biblical and theological teachings in practical ways that participants can implement in their own lives.

The Institute provides a six-course curriculum, offered in locations throughout Region 9 of the ELCA. Each course requires two Saturday sessions led by seminary faculty, and a series of four small group sessions led by other trained rostered leaders in the synod.

Dates and locations have been announced for courses in Waynesboro on October 3 & November 14 (In conjunction with The Ambassadors Community for Theological Study). To register, please visit [www.getintheacts.org](http://www.getintheacts.org)

There is a tuition fee to cover the expenses of the courses, but a group discount is available for congregational teams that attend together. Start assembling your team today!

A descriptive brochure may be downloaded at [www.ltss.edu/churchleadership](http://www.ltss.edu/churchleadership) for reproduction. If you would like to know more about the Institute for Church Leadership, please contact the Sandra Holland, AIM, Associate Director for Ministry at [sandrah@ltss.edu](mailto:sandrah@ltss.edu) or (803) 461-3263.

Andrew Boozer, Director of Communications, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary;  
[www.ltss.edu](http://www.ltss.edu);

Phone: (803) 461-3296, Fax: (803) 461-3272; [AndrewBoozer@ltss.edu](mailto:AndrewBoozer@ltss.edu)

*From Pastor George Sims*  
**Mission Office for Planned Giving**

**JUNE 2009**

**VOL 8, No. 1**

## A Planned Gift Using Life Insurance

Ted and Alice, both 50, have been married for twenty-five years. Several years ago they learned how one can make charitable gifts using life insurance. Given a number of options they chose to purchase two new policies -- one for each of them. With this arrangement they immediately donated the policies to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and designated a number of ministries they wish to support. The gift, of course, will not be complete until their deaths.

In the meantime, Ted and Alice make premium payments (set up either quarterly, monthly or annually) for which they receive charitable deductions now. Following their deaths the face value of the policy (with any increased value through dividends) will be divided among selected ministries. At any time during their lives they may re-allocate the payout percentages and add or remove beneficiaries.

"This is a great way," noted Alice, "for us to make a large gift, even though it will be some time before that happens; and, we receive charitable deductions for the premium payments during our

lifetimes. It really becomes an additional offering. We like that."

Another option for a gift of life insurance is an outright gift (a gift now) of a paid-up policy. In this scenario, one receives a charitable deduction for the cash value. A third option requires a simple change of beneficiary designation. To this end, the owner requests a change of beneficiary form from the insurance provider, adds the charitable beneficiary and reallocates the percentages among the new and existing beneficiaries. Finally, a contingent beneficiary designation provides another way to give. This creates a charitable gift after the deaths of primary and secondary beneficiaries.

The same procedure would apply, as well, to other contracts which have beneficiary designations. In the case of married couples a spouse would be required to sign a waiver acknowledging the beneficiary designation change.

Life insurance can be used in other ways to creatively make gifts. You may wish to call us about those options, as well; particularly if you are in need of reducing the size

*continued next page*



### SPONSORING MINISTRIES

Campus Ministry

Caroline Furnace Lutheran  
Camp and Retreat Center

Chaplain Service of the  
Churches of Virginia

Evangelical Lutheran Church  
in America

Hungry Mother Lutheran  
Retreat Center

National Lutheran Home

Lutheran Council  
of Tidewater

Lutheran Family Services

Lutheran Theological  
Southern Seminary

Roanoke College

The Virginia Synod

Virginia Lutheran Homes

## God's Work. Our Hands.

Newly confirmed members of the church have recently responded to this question: *Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism: to live among God's faithful people, to hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?* (ELW 237)

Another way of expressing that is to say: Are you going to continue to be about God's Work? **God's Work. Your Hands.** It is, also, a vivid reminder to those of us who have faint memories of confirmation that God's work continues to be in our hands. More than that we are not alone. We're in this together; together we can do great things. **God's Work. Our Hands.**

We have the capacity and ability to work for God now; we, also, have the ability and opportunity to support God's Work even after our days on earth are ended through a gift in our wills. Imagine the possibilities. A gift from me, from you, from others ... soon add up to have a tremendous impact. Just as the old campfire song reminds us, "It only takes a spark to get a fire going;" it only takes a simple act to make a bequest, a gift in a will. That, too, is **God's Work. Our Hands.**

I am inviting you to do what I and a growing number of Virginia Lutherans have done. If you want more information about charitable gifts and joining others in this work, call me. I'd like to hear your story and share a bit of mine.

**God's Work. Our Hands.** *George Sims*

*continued from page 1.*

of your estate to lower or eliminate taxes. All in all, insurance offers a variety of ways to give; it's a great way to benefit others, including those you love.

For more information call toll free: **877-526-2448.**

## Is It Time?

When was the last time you took a look at your will? When you left your attorney with the document in your hand? How long ago was that?



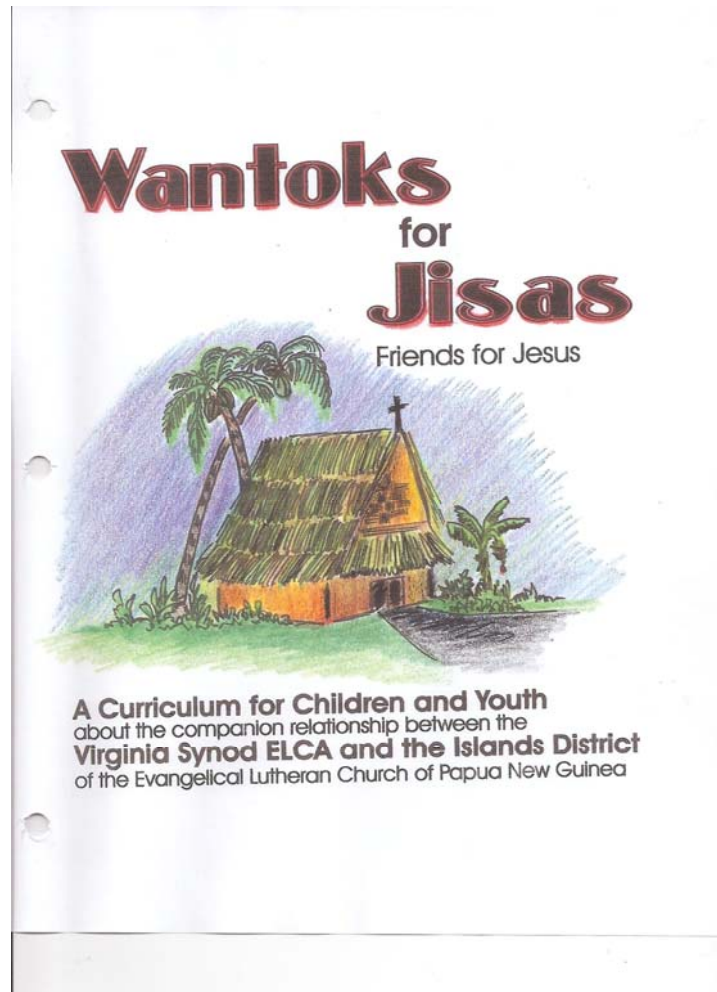
Taking a look at your will is a good thing to do, especially if there have been some changes in your life: your children's independence; the addition of grandchildren; different needs of a loved one; a death in the family; or, a move to or from another state.

If you have not considered charitable gifts in your earlier will, a new will would give you an opportunity to do so. The ministries you have supported during your life could greatly benefit from a final gift you may make through your will. There are many options to consider and we would be pleased to help you create a plan that addresses your needs, individuals you want to remember, as well as charitable causes that have become especially meaningful for you.

Is it time for you to pull your will from its safe place, reconsider what you have written and call us for a confidential conversation? Your call to us is toll free; and, our time is a gift of the church to you.

**Is God's Work in Your Will? God's Work. Our Hands.**

## IS YOUR CONGREGATION LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE VBS PROGRAM?



**“Wantoks for Jisas”, “Friends for Jesus”** is a comprehensive curriculum created for Children and Youth by the VA Synod Global Mission Committee. It is an excellent resource for either Vacation Bible School, several Sunday School lessons, Retreat, Lock-in or Youth Gathering that will familiarize the group with their Christian Companions in the New Guinea Islands District of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The project was spearheaded by Mary Short from the River of Life Ministries in Page Conference. The materials include; Facts, Maps, Schedule, Themes, Scripture Basis, Decorating, Costumes and Snack Ideas. There are genuine stories developed for all 5 sessions that represent PNG Life. The Titles for each Session are: 1) “God So Loved the World” 2) “Trust and Hope in God” 3) “The Power of Prayer” 4) Working in the Family of God” and 5) “Remember Me, Brothers and Sisters in Christ”. You will find a MUSIC CD with 16 PNG songs and a PICTURE DVD showing a wonderful representation of PNG scenery and its people. Lyrics for the songs and suggestions for Games and Crafts are also included.

**Limited Supply Available \*\*\*\*\* Order from the Synod Office \*\*\*\*\* Cost \$25**

## Lutherhostel

October 5-9, 2009

### *Into the Shenandoah Valley:*

**From Pennsylvania to Southwest Virginia**



## **The Lutheran Migration**



Follow the journey of the **Lutheran Church** as it spread across Pennsylvania and into the Shenandoah Valley. Together we will visit congregations that were begun during this time and are still active today. *Reverends George Handley and Bill Hall* will lead discussions regarding the paths and influence that brought about the migration. We will enjoy time for worship, Bible Study, a Lutheran **hymn fest** and even some wandering around Strasburg, VA and Shepherdstown, WV.

The retreat begins **Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** in the afternoon and concludes mid morning on **Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**. Housing is limited, so we encourage you to register early. Lodging, meals (except one lunch) and activity fees are included in the cost of the retreat.

[Click here to register for this event.](#) For more information visit our website at [www.CarolineFurnace.org](http://www.CarolineFurnace.org) or call 540-933-6266.



**Retreat Leaders:** *Rev. George Handley, Rev. Bill Hall, Rev. Judy Simonson, Rev. Dick Berry, Mrs. Ginny Berry and Rev. Wayne Shelor*

**Dates:** October 5-9, 2009

**Cost:** \$425pp

**Location:** Signal Knob Retreat Center, Strasburg, Virginia