

News From the Griffin District

A monthly publication of
The Griffin District of The United Methodist Church

Rev. Richard Winn
District Superintendent

June 2020

Isaiah 43:2

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

I have been thinking about you, praying for our congregations and for our country during these times of uncertainty. Like many of you, I have experienced the emotional highs and lows due to the virus, the economy, and the racial tensions in our land. All three of these unforeseen events will add to the new normal we will experience.

Let me review briefly these events:

1) The Virus – Covid 19 has inflicted pain and change throughout the world. The thousands of U.S. deaths, the quarantines, the social distancing and the masks all point to what life is developing to become. Our world was rocked with school closings, business closings, the readjustments to our world of sports and more.

The hospital front liners witnessed present day pools of Bethesda in our large hospitals. Doctors, nurses, house-cleaning personnel were all stretched to new limits while providing much needed services. Churches throughout the US and the world were closed, and to see the Vatican empty was challenging, but necessary.

Each of you will have your own legitimate stories and perspectives. Take a moment to think of them. Say a silent prayer.

2) The economy has taken a nosedive. Unemployment, the airline industry, Dow Jones and many others are still reeling from the effects of the virus. Congress has provided a real stimulus as we all try to stimulate the U.S. economy. Our grocery stores, our 401K's, and our personal financial futures have been blurred. Take a moment and think about any personal hit to your economy. Say a silent prayer.

3) Racial injustices have plagued our country for years. The present George Floyd issue has shone a light on them, and is producing a global outcry. The complexity of their matter far exceeds my present pen and paper. I do however, wish to say that any systematic injustice weakens the fabric of humanity and must be dealt with. Please think about any narrative of injustice you may know of. Say a silent prayer.

My goal is not to exhaust conversation, feelings or writings about these three matters. My goal is to say to the District that I love to work toward a more excellent way!

Finally, one of my go-to scriptures during times like this is Isaiah 43:2, “*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*”

So be it!

Much Love,

Richard

A Fond Farewell

The Griffin District bids a fond farewell to the following ministers who will be leaving the Griffin District:

Congratulations to Rev. Ed Swehla (County Line) and Lawrence Burge (Pleasant Hill) who will be retiring. We are grateful for your years of ministry in The United Methodist Church!

The following pastors will be moving to new appointments in other districts:

Rick Maeser	Forsyth
Andrew Covington	Griffin First, Associate
Michael Johns	Hanleiter
Teresa Lilja	Lovejoy/Mt. Carmel
Judson Barnes	Pomona

(We will recognize new appointments in the July newsletter)

Thank You to Richard Winn!



Rev. Richard D. Winn, Sr. has served as the Griffin District Superintendent for 7 years. He will be retiring at the end of this month. While we would love to have a large party to celebrate with Richard, that is, unfortunately, not possible at this time. We would invite you to **join us on Tuesday, June 9 at 2:00pm for a Facebook Live special presentation on the Griffin District NGUMC Facebook page.**

Below are some parting words from our District Lay Leader and Chair of the District Superintendency Committee:

“The Lord God’s spirit is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release for captives, and liberation for prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and a day of vindication for our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for Zion’s mourners, to give them a crown in place of ashes, oil of joy in place of mourning, a mantle of praise in place of discouragement.” Isaiah 61:1-3 (CEB)

I love Richard Winn. Everyone who knows me, knows I love him. I love his infectious laugh, his calm presence, his knowledge of scripture, his sense of justice, his ability to listen. I could list so many things that all of us in the Griffin District have come to love. BUT there is one thing I love most of all...the sheer joy in which he embraces life – all of life! Joy is woven into every fiber of Richard Winn’s being.



The scripture passage from Isaiah reminds me of Richard’s ministry, both in the local church and as District Superintendent. Richard has never forgotten that he is anointed to bring the good news. He brings the good news of Jesus Christ to all who encounter him, and his retirement will not change that one bit!

We will miss his presence, his booming voice, and those moments where he just bursts into song. I’ve been thinking about what Richard’s legacy will be here in the Griffin District. It won’t be long before new lines are drawn, and new appointments will be made. I hope that all of us in the current Griffin District, clergy and laity alike, will commit to our mission and ministry of bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to a world in desperate need of a Savior. Richard Winn’s example of leadership with love and joy should help us as we find our own way of telling the good news. His gift to us is his life, his example, his ability to show us through his own actions how to tell the good news.

The Psalmist said, “Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord! Bless his name! Share the news of his saving work every single day! Declare God’s glory among the nations; declare his wondrous works among all people because the Lord is great and so worthy of praise.” Psalm 96:1-4 (CEB)

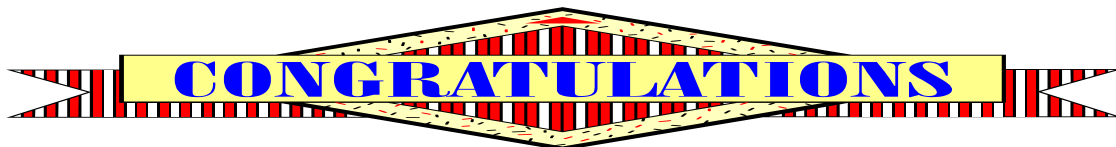
Share the news of God’s saving work EVERY SINGLE DAY. The Lord is great and so worthy of praise! Thank you, Richard, for your unwavering dedication to God Almighty and the wondrous story of Jesus Christ, as your Spirit filled life has richly blessed us all.

Blessings,
Debby Stikes
Griffin District Lay Leader

The Rev. Richard Winn, our Brother in Christ, will retire this month after 47+ years of faithful service. Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson has assigned the Rev. Susan Gary Landry to pick up the mantle of leadership. They, and we, can expect change. In fact, we Christians are agents of change. My belief, and all our prayers, is that many of the changes that took place during DS Winn's ministry among us have been beneficial and will be long lasting. I am delighted to have been a witness to so many innovative and exciting programs and ministries initiated by my friend and spiritual director, Richard. He has been a winsome and effective leader for us ("The best District in all of Methodism") during the past seven years. The most obvious aspect of his ministry style has been his interaction with us. This District is filled with wonderful people, God's people, who have benefited from many spiritual gifts launched our way by our **Super**intendent. Richard will leave a bit of God-inspired love behind. I am confident that the future is bright for this new and enlarged District because of the servant leaders who are in place to make it happen. The laity and clergy among us have been privileged to walk alongside him and experience the power of his preaching and the wisdom of his counsel. He leaves behind a strong and vibrant group of churches, pastors and laity who will give the same support, encouragement and love to DS Landry. May God bless them both in this next exciting phase of their lives! Jeremiah 29:11



The Rev. Dr. George Ross Freeman, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Superintendency



Congratulations to the following 3 people in the Griffin District who have just completed the North Georgia Licensing School:

Don Fry
Aydra Smith
Courtney Wallace



Don't Forget the many resources available on the Conference Website.

For information and resources regarding Covid 19: <https://www.ngumc.org/covid-19-response-resources>

For information on how to plan for a successful re-opening of your facility: <https://www.ngumc.org/relaunch-resource-hub>



SmartLunchSmartKid Kicks off on June 1, 2020!

Help end hunger for children this summer through Action Ministries Smart Lunch, Smart Kid program. This program is as important now as it has been for the last 8 years. Hunger has always devastated Georgia's most vulnerable communities; it has unfortunately been exasperated this year by the realities of school closures, job lay-offs and the much needed stay-at-home order. There are two ways you can maintain safe distancing and help us bring 7,000 smiles to 7,000local kids this summer.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Dates Set for Postponed General Conference and Jurisdictional Conferences

The Commission on the General Conference has announced new 2021 dates for our United Methodist General Conference. The event will take place August 29 - September 7, 2021, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Immediately following the announcement, the Council of Bishops set Jurisdictional Conference dates for November 10-12, 2021. The SEJ Conference will be held in Lake Junaluska, N.C. The SEJ also announced that [assignments will be extended for SEJ Bishops](#), including postponing retirements, until November 2021.



Happy Birthday to the following ministers in the Griffin District who are celebrating birthdays in June:

2 - Mike Johns

Teresa Lilja

11 - John Mattox

17 - Billy Beard

17 - Chris Shurtz

25 - Pamela Johnston

27 - George Freeman