



Grace Notes

July, 2026

Official Newsletter of Raleigh Shared Ministries, Raleigh County WV

Including Beckley Community, Mabscott and Sophia United Methodist Churches

2026 THE SUMMER OF MISSIONS

This summer has brought a plethora of great mission projects in our area! Pastor Don has been very busy coordinating two groups of Praying Pelicans, Volunteers in Mission and others coming to our area in Southern West Virginia.



The groups of Praying Pelicans worked at Beckley Community UMC, the New Vision Depot, Frank Warren's house, Welch, and other places doing repair work and clean up. One major accomplishment was organizing the tool and storage rooms at New Vision Depot. They also learned about drywall installation and repair at Frank Warren's house. No mission trip to WV is complete without a trip to Welch where flood recovery efforts are still underway as well as supplying water to residents who cannot use the water in McDowell County.

Praying Pelican Missions works with local church youth groups from all over the world to provide meaningful mission trips for young people to learn and grow in their faith. Our groups were from Tennessee.



OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

If you are looking for an opportunity to serve an area of mission, Scouting USA is partnering with Disaster Response Ministries to build 2500 cleaning buckets and 2500 feminine hygiene kits July 22 - 29. Disaster Response Ministries needs individuals to help store the new kits at New Vision Depot from 1 - 6 PM on July 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29. If you can assist with one or more of these days, please contact Scott Mayberry by email at newvisiondepot@wvumc.org.



DATES TO REMEMBER

July 16 - 5:00 pm Raleigh Parish United Methodist Men @ Beckley Community UMC

July 23 - August 7 - Pastor Don and Martha Wilkinson on mission trip with Volunteers in Mission to Alaska

July 25 - 5:00 pm Pancakes & Parables Beckley Community UMC

August 18 - United Women in Faith Annual Picnic - Little Beaver State Park

August 23 - 11:00 am - Raleigh Shared Ministries combined worship and picnic - New River Park Shelter #1

September 22 - 3:00 pm Beckley Community United Women in Faith meeting

August 29 - 5:00 pm Pancakes & Parables



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

The West Virginia Annual Conference convened June 10 at West Virginia Wesleyan College and wrapped up with the ordination service on Saturday. Besides the usual business of passing the budget and other routine business, the conference approved the resolution to reduce the number of districts in the conference from 7 to 6.

Activities during the conference included a 5k-3k run walk, a mission fair with all WV mission organizations represented, and an ice cream social fund raiser for the Conference Council on Youth Ministry. The youth reached their goal of over \$4,000!! Our new Interim Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Ellis Conley, was a good sport and "volunteered" to

DAY SPRING CAMP HOPE IN THE MOUNTAINS

For the fifth year, Hope in the Mountains has provided a day camp for kids in the Sopia area. This year seven children ranging in ages 6 through 11 enjoyed 4 fun filled days of learning about Queen Esther, making crowns and sceptors, tie dying t-shirts, playing outside, water activities and making new friends. As always, the adults had as much fun as the kids! We did have one guest on Thursday, however her mother came and took her home shortly after camp started.



ABOVE LEFT: Jazzleen shows off how her arrow actually hit the target! ABOVE RIGHT: Our Thursday visitor. We'll call her Baby Esther! BELOW: David Rumberg, Bill Eades and Lynda Eades make very technical preparations for camper activities.



become a human sundae when the goal was reached!!

The Raleigh Shared Ministries delegation, left to right, included Martha Wilkinson, Lynda Eades, Bill Eades, Lisa Stilgenbauer, Don Stilgenbauer, Jana Church and Laura Fytetakes.



MEET REV. DR. ELLIS CONLEY INTERIM DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT



By now, everyone should know that Chip Bennett, Southern District Superintendent, has been called to active duty with the West Virginia National Guard and will be deployed to the Middle East. His deployment is supposed to last 1 year. In his absence, Rev. Dr. Ellis Conley has been assigned to the Southern District as interim superintendent. Here is a letter from Ellis as published in the Southern District Newsletter.

It is an honor to serve as your interim superintendent for the next year while Rev. Bennett is fulfilling his obligation as a National Guard Chaplain. I look forward to meeting pastors, laity, visiting congregations, and hearing about the various ministries of the Southern District. I have scheduled a day in each co-operative parish to meet pastors and locate churches. Let me share with you some things about myself that you may find interesting.

Grace & freedom,
Ellis

1. I grew up in Point Pleasant and was a member of Trinity UMC along with my parents who were both public-school educators. Although when I entered ministry, my parents had moved to Lewisburg and that was Lewisburg UMC that recommended me for ministry.
2. I am an Eagle Scout.
3. My early jobs were in landscaping (mowing grass), media distribution (paper routes), and as a sports journalist (writing about midjet league football & basketball games for the Point Pleasant Register).
4. I attended West Virginia Wesleyan where I met Julie Montgomery. We have been married for 53 years.
5. While in seminary in Atlanta, I worked as a church custodian.
6. I have served churches in St. Albans, Wayne, Beckley, Buckhannon, Elkins, Mon Valley District Superintendent, Forrest Burdette, Hurricane, where I retired in 2019, and Hamlin UMC, where I just finished as an interim. I am an Associate Credentialed Coach through the International Coaching Federation and facilitate learning cohorts, private coaching sessions, On-Boardings, and Retirement zooms for conference pastors.
6. Julie was a high school art teacher, retiring in 2019. She sings in the choir and praise team at Forrest Burdette UMC. She is a volunteer art teacher each Friday at a local elementary school.
7. We have two adult married sons and three grandsons.
8. I have a Lionel train layout and am a member of the Appalachian Model Railroad Society that meets at Heritage Farm, Huntington. We organize the Model Railroad Show each Thanksgiving weekend at the Huntington Civic Center. Julie and I pick up donated meat each Thursday at the local Kroger's for the local food pantry. I have also been involved with Kairos Prison Ministries at Mount Olive Correctional Center and am a member of Putnam County Rotary.
9. Julie and I have hosted Educational Opportunities trips to Israel, Alaska, Italy, Scotland, Greece, and Turkey.
10. I enjoy playing golf, reading mystery novels, and baseball. I have been to 24 of the 30 Major League Baseball Stadiums and hope to visit 2 more this summer.