



THE ACADEMY DISCIPLER

NEWSLETTER FOR TEACHERS AND FACILITATORS

December 2011

Dear Teachers and Facilitators,

As we experience the season of Advent, I pray that you are ever reminded that "the Lord is Near." Our Advent theme is assurance that the Lord is near to those who call on God (Psalm 145:18), the Lord is near to the broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18), and because the Lord is near, we can rejoice (Phil. 4:4-5). Click [here](#) for my reflections on our Advent theme published in a recent *Witness*. In our classes and small groups, let us remind our fellow disciples that in the midst of this busy season, the Lord is near.

May the blessings of God's presence surround you during this season and always.

Please read below for more information on the following:

- ❖ Dec 18 "Reflections on the First Christmas" by Burnett Thompson
- ❖ Spring Announcing Lenten Study 2012

Also, save the dates for these upcoming events

- ❖ Dec 18 Submissions Due for Academy Spring Update
- ❖ Jan 7, 2012 Bi-District Training Day
- ❖ Jan 8 Visioning and Planning Meeting
- ❖ Jan 29 Small Group Ministry Presentation and Training
- ❖ Feb 19 Lenten Study Begins
- ❖ Feb 26 Fifth Anniversary Speaker Series: Bishop Charlene Kammerer
- ❖ Mar 4 Fifth Anniversary Speaker Series: Dean Samuel Wells,
Dean of Chapel and Professor, Duke Divinity School

As always, you can find news and other information on the [Academy web page](#).

Blessings,
Cynthia

ACADEMY OF DISCIPLESHIP presents
"In the Fullness of Time: Reflections on the First Christmas"



Led by Burnett Thompson
Sunday, Dec 18 at 9:45am in the Sanctuary.

On the heels of our annual Christmas pageant, this special adult Sunday school presentation will take a closer look at the gospel accounts of Jesus birth. This class will remind us of the challenging nature of the birth narratives for their first century audience and for us today. Burnett Thompson has been teaching the AUMC Bible Fellowship class for over 40 years. He has a degree in Bible with a minor in Greek, and brings years of biblical wisdom and insight to his interpretation of biblical passages. All are invited to join us for this discipleship event.

This presentation is especially designed to attract those who may not regularly attend Sunday school. Other classes are invited to join this session or to continue with their regularly scheduled class.

ANNOUNCING LENTEN STUDY 2012

When Bad Things Happen to Good People by Harold Kushner
Feb 19 – Apr 8, 2011

For our fifth annual Lenten Study, we are pleased to announce that Lenten Study 2012 will be the now classic, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* by Harold Kushner. Known as theodicy, theories of evil and suffering in the world have vexed theologians, philosophers, and ordinary people for centuries. As a Lenten study, this book will provide timely guidance for those troubled by the occurrence of tragedy, natural disaster, economic crisis, illness, death, and other suffering in the world.

"Rarely does a book come along that tackles a perennially difficult human issue with such clarity and intelligence. Harold Kushner, a Jewish rabbi facing his own child's fatal illness, deftly guides us through the inadequacies of the traditional answers to the problem of evil, then provides a uniquely practical and compassionate answer that has appealed to millions of readers across all religious creeds. Remarkable for its intensely relevant real-life examples and its fluid prose, this book cannot go unread by anyone who has ever been troubled by the question, 'Why me?'" (Amazon.com Review)

In keeping with our Lenten Study tradition, there will be a sermon series, book study, small groups, and other opportunities to reflect on this topic.

To consider leading a Lenten Study group, please see the following:

Sample Chapter: http://www.amazon.com/When-Things-Happen-Good-People/dp/1400034728/ref=tmm_pap_title_0/184-9962488-6061928

Discussion Guide: <http://www.cokesbury.com/PDF/TeachableBooks/WhenBad.pdf>

To request an advance copy of the book, e-mail cjohnsonoliver@annandale-umc.org

ACADEMY – SPRING 2012

Planning is underway for the Spring 2012 semester of the Academy of Discipleship. To request a class or small group, or to lead a group, please contact Rev. Johnson-Oliver. **Class submissions are due on Dec 18, 2011.**

Still looking for a study? Stop by and discuss the options. The following studies, and many others, are available for preview in the church office:

Marcus Borg, [*The Heart of Christianity*](#)

Anne Crumpler, [*The World-Shattering Ministry of Jesus*](#)

Adam Hamilton, [*Christianity and World Religions*](#)

Adam Hamilton, [*Confronting the Controversies*](#)

Adam Hamilton, [*Making Love Last a Lifetime*](#)

Bill Hybels, [*Just Walk Across the Room*](#)

Timothy Keller, [*The Prodigal God*](#)

John Ortberg, [*If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got to Get out of the Boat*](#)

[Disciple Short-Term Studies](#)

Invitation to John

Invitation to the New Testament

Invitation to Psalms

Invitation to Romans

[Companions in Christ](#) (long- and short- term studies)

SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

BI-DISTRICT TRAINING DAY

Saturday, January 7, 2012; 9:00am-3:30pm

Bi-District Training Day is an opportunity for all United Methodists in northern Virginia to come together to learn, grow as disciples, and develop more effective churches.

Workshops of interest to adult teaches and leaders include

- Creating Small Groups With Big Draws

- Small Group Ministries
- Turbo Charge Adult Faith: Going on to Perfection
- Turbo Charge Adult Faith: The Group that Notices

[Click here for registration and more information.](#)

VISIONING AND PLANNING MEETING

Sunday, January 8, 2011 at 12:30-2pm

This session is especially for coaches and others who desire to help formulate the vision for small group ministry at AUMC. Having studied the *Coaching* and *Leading* curricula, the next step is to develop a vision and plan for small group ministry in our context.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AT AUMC

Sunday, January 29, 2011 at 12:30-3:30pm

All adult teachers and leaders are encouraged to attend this presentation and training as we present a new vision for small group ministry at AUMC. We will provide an overview of a shepherding model for small group ministry that shifts from primarily informational to formational and transformational. We will also overview the new coaching structure for AUMC's small group ministry. Please save the date and plan to attend this event. Lunch will be provided.

LENTEN STUDY 2012

Save the Date! Lenten Study 2012 begins Sunday, Feb 19, 2012

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SPEAKER SERIES – SAVE THE DATE!



Bishop Charlene Kammerer
Virginia Conference, United Methodist Church
Sunday, Feb 26 at 11:00am



Dean Samuel Wells
Dean of Chapel, Duke University
Professor, Duke Divinity School
Sunday, Mar 4 at 3:00pm

Look for updates in the "For Teachers" section on the [Academy web page](#).



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