

Missionary Service

Missionaries witness and serve in different locations and cultures (local and global) and engage in a range of professions and activities. They are a tangible connection between The United Methodist Church and mission. These commissioned persons serve as pastors, teachers, doctors, nurses (or in other healing ministries), social workers, church planters, evangelists, and in a variety of other ways through ministries. Missionaries serve God's mission and share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and in deed, both internationally as well as in rural and urban areas in the United States.

Elizabeth "Lisa" Nichols; Rocky Mount, VA

Lisa Nichols is Harmony's missionary to whom we provide financial, spiritual, and emotional support. Lisa is a deaconess serving as a Church and Community Worker as Executive Director of the Henry Fork Service Center in Rocky Mount, Virginia. This center provides Christian education, educational enrichment, recreation, and experiences in the arts to more than 100 students throughout the year, ages 2-14. The mission of the center is to make God's love visible in our community. Lisa says, "I have seen the staff and students work together to share God's love through words and actions. As the students learn the history of God's people, they are called to respond to God's love and invite others to join the journey." "To me, Henry Fork Center is a glimpse of the Kingdom of God," explains Lisa. "Our students represent different ages, racial backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. We come together every weekday to learn about and from one another, and to learn about the God who loves us and calls us into community through Jesus Christ."

Henry Fork works with volunteers from Ferrum College and mission teams from across the southeast. The teams share Vacation Bible School with elementary and middle school students and work on building repairs and lawn care. Work teams are welcome for a day, a weekend, or a week.

Lisa previously served as the director of programs for the St. Andrews Center and executive director of the St. Elmo/Alton Park Partners, both in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In those positions she directed afterschool programs for Cub Scouts, ESOL high school students, and elementary students at the St. Andrews Center and South Chattanooga Recreation Center.

Lisa enjoys reading, cross-stitching, hiking, and biking. She uses art and outdoor activities to teach children and youth about God's creation and about God's love and care for all creation. A native of Bristol, Tennessee, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education in 1980 from Emory and Henry College in Emory, Virginia. Lisa and husband Gary Nichols have two daughters, Sara and Jessica.

A message from Lisa Nichols, Henry Fork Service Center, October 2018

2018 has been a very good year for Henry Fork Service Center. Thanks to the support of churches, UMW units, Board members, and individuals, the Center has paid off the mortgage owed on the Pennel and Activity Buildings, purchased a 2017 15 passenger van, and led successful Afterschool and summer programming. We were also blessed with monies from the 100+ Women Who Care and the Smith Mountain Lake Charity Home Tour. Thank you!

The Afterschool program is going well with 63 students registered in 4 grade level classes. We have almost full classes in Pre-K – 1, 2nd & 3rd, 4th & 5th, and Middle School with one full time teacher and five part time teachers. We are still seeking a Middle School teacher and hope that the position will be filled soon. Students receive a nutritious snack, then spend time in Christian Education, help with homework, and indoor and outdoor recreation. We received a Sustaining Program grant from the VA Conference UMC for Christian Education in both 2018 and 2019.

The summer went by quickly! Our students hiked and swam once a week at county and State parks, cooked using the suggested fruit for the week, learned about the fruits of the Spirit, participated in Vacation Bible School sponsored by Trinity UMC, and enjoyed hot breakfasts and lunches through the VA Department of Education Summer Feeding Program. The students also met new friends, and shared crafts, games, and academic enrichment in their grade-based classes.

Camperships allowed seven of the Henry Fork Center students to attend Children's Bible Camp east of Danville, and all of the students to participate in additional activities. Students learned how to kayak, canoe, and paddle board at Smith Mountain Lake and Fairystone State Park. Younger students enjoyed new swimming pools at Henry Fork Center and hiking around the area. 12 Middle School students spent four days in Washington, DC learning about our Capitol and our nation's history, visiting the museums and Memorials, and spending time with each other at the hotel swimming pool and on the AmTrak train.

Thank you for your continued support of Henry Fork Service Center in so many different ways. We appreciate the paper goods, birthday gifts, school supplies, and monetary gifts. We appreciate the volunteers who read and work with homework with our students, the Rocky Mount UMM who mow the campus once each month, and those who work on special projects. Please let us know if we can better interpret the ministry with the children, youth, and adults in our community, including speaking at your church or UMW unit meeting. Thank you for making our mission of "making God's love visible in the Henry Fork community" a reality.

Lisa Nichols, Director

