



HAGERSTOWN AREA RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

Annual  
REPORT  
2021  
*our 75th year*



**HARC75**

Hagerstown Area Religious Council  
we can do more TOGETHER

75th Anniversary ● 1946-2021

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### **Cover photos:**

- ◆ Juneteenth Unity Walk in Hagerstown, Md.
- ◆ Photo by Andrew Coop, courtesy of Unsplash
- ◆ Micah's Backpack volunteers loading food into a vehicle for distribution.

## ***Message from the president...***

One of my first experiences as a pastor in Hagerstown was planning and hosting the HARC Thanksgiving service. I confess, I accepted the responsibility but I wasn't interested in becoming a part of HARC, much less becoming a Board member. My experience with multi-faith organizations was mixed, and I had plenty of responsibilities within my own congregation.

Three and a half years later, I stepped into the role I have now as President of the Board, grateful to have become involved in HARC. I was as prepared as I thought I could be for the year ahead. As we all know now, none of us was really prepared for a global pandemic. Add to that a major leadership shift and 2020 was one of the most challenging experiences I could imagine for HARC.

As much as the theme of 2020 might have been about challenge, the theme of 2021 has been about resilience. 2021 was, in my opinion, as positive and successful as 2020 had been challenging.

There are not enough words to say how grateful I am for the membership of HARC, those who support HARC, and those who volunteer, lead and direct within HARC. With particular gratitude for the Board, which navigated a difficult 2020 and a hope-filled 2021, this entire HARC community has risen to the occasion to make a positive impact in Washington County and to lay the foundation to continue to do so.

As I look back on 2021, I am able to see very intentional progress. We accomplished our mission while also affirming and updating that mission to better reflect our values and address the needs of our communities. We have retained experienced leadership while engaging new leaders and new volunteers. We have seen the fruits of new energy and vision in established initiatives and in new ones. We are financially stable. We are building new relationships and strengthening existing ones. We are making a positive impact in Washington County and making way for deeper, lasting impacts in the future.

The details of all of this change and progress are laid out in the pages of this annual report. I invite you to be energized as you read it - by what has been accomplished in this year and by the ways we have prepared for the next one. I invite you to see yourself as a part of the work that has been done, and consider how you might engage in the work we have before us. I invite you to read our belief statements out loud and imagine who else might believe those things, too, and be willing to join us in our work.

I am so grateful for HARC, for its place in our communities, for its work with the members of those communities and for the rich history of the past 75 years that has brought us to this place of accomplishment, awareness and hope. I am grateful for a year of resilience, recovery and growth. I am grateful for every partner and participant who has been a part of it all.

Thank you, and may we continue to embody mercy, justice and love - together.

*Elizabeth*

Rev. Elizabeth Jackson  
President, HARC Board of Directors



**Rev. Elizabeth Jackson**

Otterbein United  
Methodist Church  
Hagerstown, Md.

*HARC's mission is to embody mercy, justice and love as diverse faith partners in Washington County, Maryland.*

***We believe in the power of faith communities working together.***

We strive to listen when God is speaking, and act boldly together to make a difference in our community. We build collaborations across boundaries of religious differences, as well as with community organizations, to do the work we are called to do.

***We believe in nurturing the unlimited potential of every child.***

We focus our collaborative efforts on building supports around and creating opportunities for children and families.

***We believe all people have equal value and are loved by God.***

We seek justice for those who are not treated equally or given equal value by our broken world. We strive to lift up the unique gifts and abilities of people and empower them to be who they were made to be.

***We believe in equipping one another to create stronger houses of worship.***

We build relationships among clergy and people of faith, and support and encourage one another. We provide information, resources, and connections to enhance the work of congregations, ministries, and community organizations.

*“All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”*

— Archbishop Desmond Tutu





# HARC welcomes new Board members

HARC is grateful for the gifts and talents these three new members bring to our board of directors. We look forward to working with them to foster the important work of our faith partners.



## Tania Anderson

Member, St. John's Episcopal Church  
HARC Racial Justice Team Leader

Tania Anderson joined the HARC board in April 2021 and jumped in with both feet as co-leader of HARC's new Racial Justice Team. "I have always been passionate about giving back to the community and having God guide my steps in that effort," she shared. "I feel that HARC's mission in doing that is what appeals to me the most. I look forward, as co-lead of the Racial Justice Team, to using my talents and gifts to bring about positive changes within the Washington County, Maryland community." Tanya has her MBA and is a professional STEM and diversity advocate. Originally from New York and Baltimore, she and her family have lived in Washington County for almost nine years. Tania loves to travel, is a "foodie," and enjoys learning about other cultures.



## Rachel Nichols

Member, Congregation B'nai Abraham

Rachel Nichols has been an active member of Congregation B'nai Abraham since moving from the Washington, D.C., area in 1991. Her professional career has included work in development/grants, communications and publishing. She's eager to use her skills to enhance HARC's mission, especially in the area of fostering a community of equality and justice. Rachel currently serves as the Washington County Associate and Newcomer House Visitors Center Manager for the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area. She works at Homewood Retirement Center in Williamsport as a problem solver, aka Community Receptionist. She has one son who lives in nearby Pennsylvania. She credits her "critters" for getting her through the pandemic and enjoys living in downtown Hagerstown with cats Marcel and Marceau, and Mandy, the collie.



## Rev. Christopher Serufusa

Pastor, St. Andrew's United Methodist Church

Rev. Christopher Serufusa has been a pastor for 26 years in the United Methodist Church of the Baltimore/Washington Conference. He moved to Washington County three years ago with his wife, Elizabeth, and two sons, Mukisa age 16, and Mugabi age 14. Pastor Chris loves to listen to classic Christian hymns and songs. He joined the HARC board in July 2021. "I appreciate [HARC's] mission of caring and helping the needy. My prayer is to be a bridge," he said. "I want to close the gap of racism that separates people. We are one people in the Lord."

## Micah's Backpack

2021 started out with continued challenges of children who were still engaged in distance learning due to COVID. Sponsoring churches and organizations were handing out bags to any child who asked for one outside of select schools in order to reach as many as they could, but we knew we weren't reaching all the kids who needed it. Many children returned to school in March, and Micah's Backpack was able to return to a more normal model, with numbers growing to 950 children served.

An abbreviated end-of-school-year survey of school coordinators for Micah's Backpack was done with the following results:

- ◆ 80% of liaisons felt "attendance was improved for students who receive a bag."
- ◆ 97% believe "the food has helped students become more engaged in learning."



### Updates from the 2021-2022 school year:

- ◆ Serving 958 children in 33 schools with weekly food., expected to reach 1050 by Spring 2022.
- ◆ Providing 32 bags of food each month for Pupil Personnel Workers, who give them to homeless/transitional children as needed in their home visitations.
- ◆ Four new sponsoring churches/organizations have joined the program for a total of 48.
- ◆ Western Heights Middle School joins Micah's in January.
- ◆ Kiwanis Club members continue to help with bulk food distributions.

Volunteers load food into a vehicle for distribution. It takes a small army of dedicated staff and volunteers to make the Micah's Backpack program run successfully.



## Mercy in action

Kim Rishell, who coordinates Micah's Backpack for her church, works at one of the schools in the area. She hands out Micah's bags as part of her job. She described a child who is "in crisis and she can be difficult." The child asked if she could get one of the Micah's bags, saying, "I really want one of those bags. I got one in my other school." She kept asking and after a few weeks, Kim was able to give her one. Kim said the look on her face was priceless. "The looks on children's faces, when they really need it, is priceless."

Donna Sevcovic of Ringgold Church says: "I was in line at Walmart with a cart piled high with food, looking around because there weren't any staff around to help. An employee spotted the cart and asked what all the food was for, so I told him about Micah's Backpack. 'I was one of those kids,' he said, 'and I want you to know it made a difference in my life.'"



***Thank you to the following sponsoring churches and organizations, who did the bulk of the day-to-day work of providing food for children through Micah's Backpack in 2021:***

Bethel United Methodist Church  
Brownsville Church of the Brethren  
Concordia Lutheran Church  
Crossroads Church  
Emmanuel United Methodist Church  
Evangel Baptist Church  
First Christian Church  
Grace United Methodist Church  
Hagerstown Church of the Brethren  
Hagerstown Church of the Nazarene  
Haven Lutheran Church  
Hilltop Fellowship Church  
Hollowell Brethren in Christ  
Interfaith Service Coalition (supported by Hancock area churches)  
John Wesley United Methodist Church  
Marsha Green & Family  
Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church  
Otterbein United Methodist Church  
Paramount Brethren in Christ  
Presbyterian Church of Hagerstown  
Redeeming Grace Church  
Rehoboth United Methodist Church  
Ringgold Church  
Salem Lutheran Church

Shiloh United Methodist Church  
Smithsburg Valley Church  
South Washington County Food Pantry (supported by churches in South Washington County)  
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
St. Ann Catholic Church  
St. James School  
St. John's Episcopal Church  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
St. Joseph Catholic Church & America's Hauling for Hope  
St. Maria Goretti High School  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Smithsburg  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hagerstown  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Smithsburg  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
Valley Grace Brethren Church  
Williamsport United Methodist Church  
Zion Lutheran Church  
Zion Reformed United Church of Christ



# Carol Brashears receives People's Choice Award

HARC nominated Carol Brashears for the Community Foundation of Washington County's 2021 People's Choice Award for her leadership of Micah's Backpack and years of service to the community through numerous organizations. We are pleased that Carol won this much-deserved award!



Carol Brashears

It is because of Carol's caring and initiative that we have a Micah's Backpack program in Washington County. Trinity Lutheran Church of Hagerstown brought the idea here from a church in Blacksburg, Virginia. Carol ran with the idea, engaging volunteers in her church and partnering with two elementary schools. She then began inviting a other churches to participate.

In 2012, the Superintendent of Washington County Public Schools said he wanted Micah's Backpack in *every elementary school in Washington County*. Carol then reached out to HARC to ask for our help expanding the program, and to Maryland Food Bank to obtain more food at a lower cost.

Together, we recruited more churches and organizations to sponsor schools. By the time school began in September 2012, every elementary school had at least one sponsoring church or organization. Carol still leads the Micah's Backpack Steering Team. She is a blessing to Micah's Backpack, HARC, and the community through her dedicated leadership and service, and we are thrilled that she was recognized with this award.

The award included \$5,000 endowment fund, which Carol naturally named for Micah's Backpack. Donations can be made through the Community Foundation of Washington County MD, Inc.

Members of the Micah's Backpack Steering Team at the Community Foundation of Washington County's People's Choice Award celebration. From left: Chelsey White (WCPS), Linda McCarty, Melinda Golden, Carol Brashears, Kathy Powderly, Brenda Horsch.





# Food Resource Collaborative

HARC maintains a list of Washington County food and clothing resources that is shared with and distributed by houses of worship and local agencies to people in need. For the most up-to-date copy of the list, visit the HARC website:

[www.harccoalition.org/resources/food-and-clothing/](http://www.harccoalition.org/resources/food-and-clothing/)

## Winter coat drive for Afghan refugees

From November 28 through December 19, 2021, area congregations participated in a regional effort to collect winter clothing for Afghan refugees. This effort was a partnership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, HARC and Catholic Charities of Harrisburg, PA. The collection was a HUGE success with an outpouring of support from the community! Here's what we collected:

1,383 coats

736 hats

596 gloves

444 scarves

1,585 socks

Other items also collected: blankets, sleepers, robes, snowsuits, vests and shoes.

All items together totaled over 4,850!

Thanks to all who participated in this effort, including:

The Churches of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Hagerstown, Cumberland, and Hancock, MD, as well as in Chambersburg and McConnellsburg, PA; and in Berkley Springs and Keyser, WV.

Covenant Life Church

Rehoboth United Methodist Church

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Salvation Army

Girl Scout Troop 15081

St. John's Episcopal Church

Haven Lutheran Church

Trinity Reformed UCC of Boonsboro

Hebron Mennonite Church

Unitarian Universalist Church of Hagerstown

Otterbein United Methodist Church

Some of the warm clothing collected for Afghan refugees at Hebron Mennonite Church in Hagerstown, Md.



## Enough for our Children

HARC seeks to harness the faith community’s efforts to ensure every child in Washington County has enough to succeed and thrive — enough food, love, educational opportunities and supports. Much of our work focused on children and families went on hold due to the pandemic. As activities resumed, we realized we needed updated information on the *most current* needs of children in our area. So at the October HARC meeting, we welcomed leaders from the Judy Center/WCPS, Bester Community of Hope, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Robert W. Johnson Community Center to share what they believe are currently the greatest needs of children and families, and how we can help.

Visit HARC’s YouTube channel to view the recorded program. Below are highlights:

### Needs and ways the faith community can help:

- ◆ Transportation to access services.
- ◆ Quality and affordable childcare, and childcare for second and third shift workers.
- ◆ Connections for children to adult role models/mentors: Mentor a child through a program like Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). Group mentorship opportunities are also available.
- ◆ Connections for adults to get tools to support parenting: Host Learning Parties or Parent Cafes.
- ◆ After school programs: Plug into an existing program or provide a new one at a local school.
- ◆ Trauma education (a.k.a. Adverse Childhood Experiences – ACEs) for the community.
- ◆ Shelter for families: Open another family shelter with a model similar to St. John’s Episcopal.
- ◆ Plug into volunteer opportunities with Bester Community of Hope.

We’ve begun connecting congregations to help with these needs. Please let us know if you are interested.

*“Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept.”*

— Rabbi Joachim Prinz



# 9th Annual Community Book Drive

After a year of hiatus due to COVID, the annual Community Book Drive came back strong in 2021, bringing in more than 13,300 books for children's literacy efforts even amid continued COVID challenges! More than 48 collection sites participated throughout Washington County, including 22 houses of worship. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hagerstown again hosted the Day of Caring book sorting in their gym. Thanks to all who participated!

Books are distributed to vulnerable children through the Community Book Warehouse, where schools and organizations serving children in need and individuals can go to get books. Over the past nine years of collections, the book drive has collected and distributed more than 113,000 books for children's literacy efforts.

The Community Book Drive is a partnership of HARC, The United Way of Washington County, The Washington County Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), The Hagerstown Rotary Club, The Judy Center, and Bester Community of Hope as part of the United Way's Day of Caring. HARC is a lead partner and initiator of the book drive. Thanks to Terri Gwizdala for her coordination of this effort!



As part of the United Way's Day of Caring, volunteers sort and categorize thousands of donated books in the gym of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hagerstown. The 2021 book drive brought in more than 13,300 books.



# ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and Building Resilience

ACEs (a.k.a. childhood trauma) are common and present one of the greatest health crises of our time. There is a clear and scientifically proven cause and effect relationship between ACEs and many health and social problems, including mental illness, suicide, substance abuse, heart disease, lung disease, obesity, and more.

A child who suffers from ACEs and who doesn't have a strong relationship with a healthy adult can actually sustain changes to their brain. The part of the brain most affected is the part that regulates logic, impulse control and decision-making. These changes can lead to lifelong difficulties.

As shared by our speakers at the October HARC meeting, these types of crises have increased throughout the pandemic. Child abuse and death by abuse has increased in the county, the homeless crisis has grown, the opioid epidemic is worse, and the mental health needs of children and adults have ballooned.

Love, healing, and resilience are intrinsic to all of our faith traditions, and the faith community is uniquely positioned to provide hope and healing. So we are once again teaching about ACEs and encouraging congregations and the community to participate in prevention and healing of childhood trauma.

## Planned and completed programs include:

- ◆ Partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Family Center to provide ACEs and Resilience workshops. The first was held in December 2021 for parents, mentors, and staff of these two organizations.
- ◆ HARC will host an "ACEs & Resilience" workshop for our March 8 meeting.

Kathy Powderly is certified as an ACE Master Trainer. She is happy to provide a workshop for your congregation or organization. ACEs information and resources are also available on the HARC website at [www.harccoalition.org](http://www.harccoalition.org) under the "Resources" tab.



*Love, healing and resilience are intrinsic to all of our faith traditions, and the faith community is uniquely positioned to provide hope and healing.*

# Racial Justice

HARC formed a Racial Justice Team in May 2021 to seek equity, opportunities, and uplift the myriad of gifts of people of color in Washington County, Maryland. This very active team developed goals and has been working toward them with great energy and enthusiasm.

The HARC board and this team are committed to long-term, challenging work, knowing it is what God has called us to do in this place and time. We believe it will not only serve people of color, but will bless our entire community as we learn to embrace the gifts of all people and cultures in love and unity.

## Goals include:

- ◆ Start a Washington County Black Professionals Network for the purpose of connection, support, safety, belonging, and economic prosperity.
- ◆ Advocate for an increase of educators in Washington County who are from underrepresented ethnic groups and support retention efforts.
  - ◇ Help recruit/refer teachers of color to apply to Washington County Public Schools (WCPS)
  - ◇ Be a part of WCPS new teacher orientation – join in community sessions.
  - ◇ Partner with the WCPS Education Foundation to set up a scholarship fund for teaching degrees based on equity.
- ◆ Advocate for transportation for students in WCPS to special school programs.
- ◆ Educate People of faith and the community at large on white privilege and systemic racism.

## 2021 programs and activities included:

### May HARC Meeting: Rev. Don Marbury

Rev. Marbury spoke candidly about being Black in America and in Hagerstown, and about our obligations as people of God to overcome racism and divisions in our community. Rev. Marbury is the senior pastor of Ebenezer AME Church in Hagerstown and author of the acclaimed book “MY PEOPLE, MY PEOPLE, MY GOD!”



Rev. Don Marbury

**June HARC Meeting: Racial Bias** – Three members of our Racial Justice Team spoke about their personal experiences with racial bias in Washington County. This was followed by small group discussions. A small group of participants, led by Rev. Doug Hoffman, was inspired to continue the conversation, meeting for lunch to dive deeper into this topic.

**Juneteenth Unity Walk** — HARC members joined in a Believers Unity Walk on June 19th led by Troy Gandy of Asbury United Methodist Church and Pastor Les McIntosh of Impact Ministries. This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Juneteenth and our faith unity.



**November HARC Meeting: “Beyond Diversity”** —Participants viewed the Barna Group’s “Beyond Diversity” videos, exploring diversity and the Church, followed by small group discussions after each video. The purpose was to get a better understanding of the latest opportunities and challenges impacting racial justice in the faith community per the data presented.

Explored going deeper with education and relationship building with **“People’s Suppers”** — The United Methodist Church has committed to bringing this program to our community at no cost.

**Began building relationships**

with Washington County Public Schools personnel — Racial Justice Team members have met with staff and board members to learn the challenges and opportunities and develop a plan to reach our mutual goals of racial equity and opportunity for students, and to advocate for specific changes to advance equity in the school system. We are blessed to have WCPS personnel partnering with the faith community.



Juneteenth Unity Walk in Hagerstown.

**Active members of HARC’s Racial Justice Team include:**

Team Leader: Tania Anderson, HARC Board Member

Co-Leaders: Cindy Brown, Kathy Powderly

Alaijah Gilliam, Ann Culey, Deacon Brian Russell, Ed Bass, Kelly Conrad, Rev. Les McIntosh, Rev. Kyle Powderly, Rev. Mary Jane Norville, Richard Willson, HARC Board Member, Samuel Key (President, NAACP of Washington County), Sommer Gilliam, Tonya Maeser



*“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”*

— Nelson Mandela



# Interfaith Coalition of Washington County

Although Interfaith Coalition activities during the pandemic have been limited, the following are activities the coalition has offered to the public.

**A winter retreat** was held in early February 2021, led by spiritual director Leah Rampy on Zoom. The retreat, titled “Spiritual Writing,” gathered a number of participants who shared an afternoon of reading, silent reflection and creative writing. Participants were invited into times of silence, writing and sharing together. Using prompts, all were encouraged to engage in silence, written response, contemplation and shared discussion.



*Interfaith  
Coalition*  
of WASHINGTON COUNTY  
*Promoting  
peace, respect,  
& compassion*

**A weekly email of interfaith prayers** was offered to coalition participants and others who were interested. Two different faith prayer offerings were chosen each week, followed by an interfaith prayer based on words and understandings of the two unrelated selections.

**A weekly email of Interfaith activities, information** was sent out by Sandy Boyer.

Ed Poling provided a **calendar of weekly holy days** and activities of different faiths.

In September, an in-person outdoor celebration of the **International Day of World Peace** was held. Interfaith music was provided, car trunks were decorated in tribute to the idea that Interfaith connections encourage acceptance. The event closed with the creation of a flower mandala, prayer and an interfaith blessing.



The Interfaith Coalition celebrated the International Day of World Peace in September.

*Planned so far for 2022:*

**Interfaith Retreat: “May Awake People Stay Awake.”** – In this long pandemic it is easy to “follow the wrong god home” and be caught in the despair and weariness so prevalent in our culture. Our faith and spiritual practices invite us to be awake and stay awake for our sake and the sake of the world. In this day of retreat, we will: Reflect on what we have experienced these months, release what needs to be let go, renew our spirits, and reimagine our world and our place in it. Originally scheduled for February 2022, this has been postponed until we can meet safely in person. Information will be shared on the HARC website and News Flash or contact Ed Poling at [elpoling1@gmail.com](mailto:elpoling1@gmail.com) or 301-766-9005.

**HARC February meeting: Celebrating 20 years of the Interfaith Coalition** – Tuesday, February 8 at Otterbein United Methodist Church. The Interfaith Coalition of Washington County was formed in February 2002 with representatives from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faiths to provide a forum for interfaith dialogue in our community following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. This program will highlight history, present, and look to the future of interfaith relations in Washington County. Your input is wanted to discuss the relevancy of interfaith education/events and ways our interfaith work can continue to be a positive force in the community. See the HARC website under “Events” for more information and to sign up.

### **Interested in learning more about the Interfaith Coalition?**

- ◆ HARC website: <http://harccoalition.org/interfaith-coalition/>
- ◆ Facebook: search Interfaith Coalition of Washington County
- ◆ Contact Valerie Wills, coordinator, at [vtwills@aol.com](mailto:vtwills@aol.com) or phone 301-745-6576

Planning Team: Rev. Valerie Wills, Coordinator; Rev. Ed Poling, Vice Coordinator; Salih Yumlu, Treasurer; Sandy Boyer, Publicity; At-large members: Paula Myers, Dr. Abdul Waheed, Shonin Temm Bikle, Gwen Skrabak *Additional team members wanted! Help us re-envision our interfaith work in Washington County.*

## **Washington Goes Purple**

In September each year, Washington County “goes purple” to raise awareness of the opioid/addictions epidemic and foster action to support those in crisis and prevent others from this terrible disease. At our September HARC meeting, we welcomed Clarence Horst of Celebration Ministries and Celebrate Recovery, and Laura Sheffield-Bishop and Kelly Marquart of the Washington County Health Department.



Clarence Horst  
of Celebration Ministries  
and Celebrate Recovery

The program focused on how the faith community can support people who are in recovery or struggling with addiction. We also heard current Washington County data and learned helpful tips for how to handle the challenges of those in or around our churches who are in the throes of addiction.

Following the main meeting, a smaller group discussion was held to dive deeper into challenges our houses of worship are facing and work together to find solutions. Staff from Reach, Police Chief Paul Kifer and two other police officers helped lead this discussion.

Washington County Health Department shared a number of resources that were sent out by email to the faith community following the meeting, along with information on the Celebration Ministries program.

## Public Witness

**Good Friday Virtual Cross Walk** – Due to the ongoing global pandemic we offered the Walk as an individual experience. This year, along with a Prayer Walk booklet, we offered an audio file on which sisters and brothers in faith read the scripture and meditation for each stop. Participants could walk the traditional route in City Park using a map provided, or walk any place of their choosing. Many thanks to the Good Friday Walk Planning Team: Angie Scheerer, author of the meditations; Ed Poling, coordinator; Kyle Powderly, audio production; and Gwen Skrabak.



**Interfaith Thanksgiving Videos** – As a pandemic alternative to our annual Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service, we instead offered short videos that highlighted different traditions of Thanksgiving and giving thanks, grounded in faith and from a variety of perspectives. The seven videos are each just a few minutes in length and can be found on HARC's website or YouTube channel.

## Clergy fellowship & support

Opportunities continue to be offered for clergy and other ministry professionals to engage in fellowship, learning, and spiritual growth:

**Monthly HARC Meetings** – Typically held on the second Tuesday of each month. During the pandemic, we are not offering lunch and have changed the time to 1 p.m. to allow participants to eat before they come. Zoom or live-stream options are offered when possible as well as in-person.

**Pastor's Bible Study** - Mondays at 9 a.m. at JPMino Cafe, 431 Dual Highway, Hagerstown (in the APM Inn & Suites). Bible study for Christian faith leaders. Typically follows the Lectionary, so it also can help you prepare your sermons a week ahead if you follow the Lectionary cycle. If interested, contact Rev. Kyle Powderly at acts2024@gmail.com or 301-991-5526, or just show up.

**Clergy Trivia Team** - Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at TGI Fridays, 17840 Garland Groh Blvd, Hagerstown. Have a lot of odd facts in your head? Or just enjoy playing games and connecting with other clergy? This is a great opportunity to laugh and be yourself. If interested, contact Kathy Powderly or Rev. Elizabeth Jackson (see Get Connected on page 19 for contact info).



## HARC Hike for Hunger & Hope

On September 11, 2021 more than 100 people came out to hike 4K, 10K or half-marathon distances on the C&O Canal Towpath to support HARC and Micah's Backpack. It was a beautiful day with great fellowship, exploration of nature, and delicious food.

Another group of hardy individuals hiked 20 miles on the Appalachian Trail on September 25 for our **Challenge Hike** and raised funds to support HARC and Micah's Backpack. The Challenge Hike took a good 10 hours of dedicated hiking on this rugged trail. Participants ended tired, but empowered by the accomplishment and joyful from a day of camaraderie and good spirits.

A third small group joined in our **Virtual Hike**, making a donation and/or raising funds to support HARC and Micah's Backpack, while hiking or walking on their own. What a blessing!

All who participated helped to make this year's event our most successful ever with more than \$25,000 in proceeds – thank you!

### Thank you to our amazing HARC Hike Planning Team:

Hike Leader: Ed Poling; Butch Eigenbrode, Antietam Radio Association; Beth Johnston; Bill Pike; Chris Horsch; Deacon Sue Wert; Ed Maloy; Kathy Powderly; Kelly Conrad

### Thank you to our top fundraisers

**(more than \$500):** Arleen Shuster, David & Diana Armstrong, Ed Maloy, Ed Poling, Karen Owen, Kathy Powderly, Patricia O'Brien, Sue Wert

Mark your calendar for the  
2022 HARC Hike!

◆ **Main hike: Saturday, June 4**  
at Shepherd's Spring  
Outdoor Retreat Center and  
the C&O Canal Towpath.

◆ **Challenge hike:**  
Saturday, June 11 on the  
Appalachian Trail in Maryland.



Hikers Rhoda Keener, Ed Poling, Bob Keener, and Richard Willson on the beautiful C&O Canal Towpath.

# GET CONNECTED

**News Flash** – HARC produces a weekly e-newsletter with news and information of interest to the faith community. Houses of faith throughout the county submit events and information to be included in the News Flash, as do other organizations with information of interest to the faith community. Sign up on the home page of our website or contact [harcnewsflash@gmail.com](mailto:harcnewsflash@gmail.com). Submit news via the same email address or through our website submission form. Many thanks to volunteer Barbara Hamilton for compiling the News Flash each week.

**Website: [www.harccoalition.org](http://www.harccoalition.org)** — HARC's website is kept up to date with events, news, and resources. Many thanks to volunteer Charlotte Trout for her help.

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/harccoalition](http://www.facebook.com/harccoalition)** — Like our page! Thanks to volunteer Kelly Conrad for maintaining our Facebook page with news, events, and posts of interest.



**YouTube:** Go to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for Hagerstown Area Religious Council. Videos of special programs can be found here as well as the Thanksgiving videos. More to come!



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