

IX. REPORTS OF CONFERENCE BOARDS AND AGENCIES

[Editor's Note: The following reports are reprinted from the *2015 Book of Reports*. To find actions taken or changes made in the reports, refer to Section IV. DAILY PROCEEDINGS of this *Journal*. The report from the Council on Finance and Administration will be found in Section VIII. FINANCIAL REPORTS of this *Journal*.]

COMMITTEE ON RULES

The main focus of the work of the Rules Committee this year has been the improvement of the process for electronic voting for General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates, in light of the historically low number of ballots cast at the last annual conference. Interviews with the head tellers and a representative from the technology company overseeing the electronic voting process brought several concerns to light which slowed down the voting process: validating nominations from the floor on Friday afternoon; alternating voting between clergy and lay ballots; the requirement for reading or distribution of the names and votes received for three times the number of delegates remaining to be elected, which was cumbersome and did not lend itself to the electronic voting process. A task force was appointed to address these issues. After reviewing the electronic voting processes of the Great Rivers, Mississippi, and Florida Annual Conferences, the task force presented a series of recommended changes to the voting process. It is recommended that nominations from the floor only be received during the Clergy and Lay Sessions, and Nomination Forms must be submitted to the Head Tellers and reviewed by the Clergy and Lay Nomination Review Committees. To facilitate this process, it is recommended that the Director of Clergy Excellence be a member of the Clergy Nomination Review Committee. The Clergy Nomination Form will only require the name of one eligible clergy to be nominated unless nominating self. Both the Clergy and Lay Nomination Forms will include a box to be checked stating, "Nominee is aware of nomination and agrees to serve if elected," and a line for the signature of the nominee. With regard to the reporting of votes, it is recommended that on the first ballot for General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates, the names of all those voted for and votes received be read/displayed. For all subsequent ballots only the top 25 names and votes received will be read/displayed. Finally, it is recommended that the Virginia Conference move to block voting for General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates, with clergy and laity meeting in separate rooms simultaneously to vote and allowing up to five hours for voting. This will require the assistance of a retired bishop to preside at one of the sessions. Block voting will allow laity and clergy to focus on the central task of electing delegates without being confused by alternating between clergy and laity ballots or by conference business interspersed between ballots. The Rules Committee approved these recommendations and recommends them to the Annual Conference.

In other business, the Rules Committee recommends that the annual conference expenses of chairs of boards and agencies who are also local church clergy or lay delegates be paid by the local church or charge. Under the organization of the Board of Discipleship, it is recommended that the number of regional networks be reduced from 5 to 4.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended changes to the Standing Rules are:

paragraph I.C.5. Insert "Unless otherwise covered by a local charge," at the beginning of the section.

paragraphs III.B.4., III.B.5., III.B.5.c. Strike "or write-in candidate".

paragraph III.C.2.a. In the sentence that begins, "The form shall include the names of at least two clergy ..." substitute "The form shall include the name of one clergy who is eligible to vote who is making the nomination." In the sentence beginning, "All nominations shall include the nominee's name, ..." add after "2 1/2" "(unless nominated at Clergy Session)"; after "church, district and" add "should include". At the end of that sentence add a new sentence: "There shall be a box to be checked stating: "Nominee is aware of nomination and agrees to serve if elected.", and a line for the signature of the nominee."

paragraph III.C.2.b. Insert and renumber: "Clergy Session Nominations. Nominations for clergy delegates may be made at the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference by submitting a clergy nomination form to the Head Clergy Teller which shall be made available upon request."

paragraph III. C.2.c. Clergy Nomination Review Committee. After the first sentence, insert: "The Director of Clergy Excellence shall serve as an ex-officio member." At the end of the paragraph add: "This committee will also be responsible for reviewing and validating any nomination forms submitted at the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference."

paragraph III.D. LAY NOMINATIONS. Strike the words "FROM DISTRICTS AND AGENCIES"

paragraph III.D.1. Lay Nominations. Add the words "from Districts." In second section strike "2. Number of Persons to be Nominated." and renumber.

paragraph III.D.4. Nomination Forms. In first sentence after "2 1/2" insert: "(unless nominated at Laity Session)"; after "church, district and" add "should include". At the end of that sentence add a new sentence: "There shall be a box to be checked stating: "Nominee is aware of nomination and agrees to serve if elected.", and a line for the signature of the nominee."

Add new section III.D.5. "Laity Session Nomination. Nominations for lay delegates may be made at the Laity Session of the Annual Conference by submitting a lay nomination form to the Head Lay Teller which shall be made available upon request."

paragraph III.E.2. At the end of the section add: "This committee will also be responsible for reviewing and validating any nomination forms submitted at the Laity Session of the Annual Conference."

paragraph III.E.3. In the first sentence, place a period after "forms" and strike the rest.

paragraph III.F. BALLOTING PROCEDURES. Add a new section and renumber: "1. Separate Voting Areas. Following the convening of Annual Conference, clergy and laity will separate to elect General and Jurisdictional delegates and alternates, allowing five (5) hours to complete the process."

paragraph III.F.2. Ballots shall be Counted Electronically. Strike the last sentence.

paragraph III.F.4. Voting Area. Replace the first sentence with: "The presiding officer shall designate the areas of the Lay and Clergy Sessions where members shall be seated during balloting." In the second sentence, add an "s" to "area".

paragraph III.F.7. Reading or Distributing Names. In the first sentence, replace "distribute" with "display". In the second sentence, replace "three times the number of General Conference delegates remaining to be elected" with "the 25 nominees receiving the highest number of votes", and replace

“distributed” with “displayed”.

paragraph V.A.4.c. Discipleship. In the fourth sentence, which begins, “The Directing Board will consist of ...”, change “ten (10) members” to “nine (9) members” and “five (5) Regional Network Leads” to “four (4) Regional Network Leads”.

As this was the last meeting of the quadrennium, the committee expressed appreciation to departing members Steve Bray, Sue Lewis, and Bart Weakley and elected as new officers for the next quadrennium: Chair – Joshua King, Vice-Chair – Terry Bain, and Secretary – Jim Smith.

Stephen G. Bray, Chair

CABINET

The Virginia Conference Cabinet under the spiritual leadership of Bishop Cho seeks to equip the clergy and laity to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It is hard to believe that it has been almost four years since Bishop Cho began his episcopal leadership leading to change our culture of prayer. The culture of prayer is changing and will continue in the coming years as we seek to move ourselves into the presence of God. As a Cabinet we continue to move beyond our comfort zones to guide our conference in becoming more effective and vital in making disciples of Jesus.

The sixteen district superintendents continue to live into our role as the chief missional strategists. Vitality and fruitfulness are happening throughout our districts:

The Alexandria District: launched a new faith community last Christmas Eve. The Potomac campus of Spirit and Life Church is a multi-site new church plant, creating a bilingual worship community in a diverse area of Prince William County. Ghana Wesley Church set the standard for the district with 80 professions of faith in 2015. Christ Church moved into a major new facility last August, and has grown to an average worship attendance of well over 800. Last September, the Alexandria District conference became a 75th anniversary celebration of the district’s history, with participation from every church and sermons from Dr. Raymond Wrenn, former executive secretary of the Alexandria District Board of Missions, and Bishop Young Jin Cho. We look forward to building on the legacy we have received as we plan for more new church multi-site starts.

The Arlington District: experienced exciting movement of the Holy Spirit through: Graham Road UMC making the bold decision to open their building for Vine Church to plant a second site; Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church initiating a satellite campus, called “Impact” at the site of their preschool, seeking to reach young families in their community; and 9 churches in the District completing an intensive 12-month learning and coaching process for church revitalization called “Shift.”

The Charlottesville District: The district missions team sponsored a bowling fundraiser, and the district vision team sponsored three shows for Christian comedian, Michael Joiner. Proceeds from these fundraisers went towards the Heart Havens Charlottesville Apt. Project. We are raising \$400k for an apartment building for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The Lay Servant ministry work area is planning a training event this fall.

The Danville District: District churches are recognizing the transformative possibilities of our ongoing emphasis on the issue of poverty, especially as it affects children. We are committed to exercising faithful stewardship of the Annual Conference (2015) offering allocated for this purpose. As home to some of the most economically-depressed and most generous communities in Virginia, we have a clear sense of our particular mission, relying on prayerful discernment to provide a “holy intervention” in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors.

The Eastern Shore District: a new district mission plan was received that envisions the Shore as “a place where clergy, congregations, and communities are freed for edge-walking action on behalf of the gospel of Jesus.” Recognizing our location at the margins of the land, we want to live out a ministry that meets people who are also living on the margins of security and acceptance — something that happens through our district Una Familia program, in which 5 churches (UM & Episcopal) are tutoring primarily Latino/a children, and through the Agape Christian Children’s Community Center in Horntown. We also envision ministries that help us walk to the edge of our faith through growth in discipleship and trust in the God of big visions, a belief that motivates a new church transition team working with local churches on revitalization and discernment of new paths in ministry.

The Elizabeth River District: is working hard to equip the laity and clergy to reach new people by getting out into the community. We have provided excellent training events with Jim Griffin, Tom Bandy and our District Training Event. Many churches are experiencing new vitality in their congregation especially as they reach out into their communities and get to know new people.

The Farmville District celebrates meeting and going beyond our INM goal of saving 4,156 lives, a total of 4,662 lives saved with 74 of 108 churches participating. The district continues to live into our new reality of 13 Connectional (geographical) Circles focusing on fellowship, training and charge conferences, and this new reality allows the district superintendent to be more involved in the churches. Two of our smallest churches: Union Chapel and Rehoboth (Boynton) have a seen 30% increase in average worship attendance in the last 3 years. Vitality and fruitfulness is evident in church throughout the district.

The Fredericksburg District: will celebrate our fifth birthday on July 9, 2016. At our chartering event we set in place a four-part ministry strategy of unity, empowering laity, spiritual growth, and reaching neighbors near and far. This vision has remained at the forefront of our focus, programs, and training opportunities. Through discernment and prayer, we have also been able to transform a vacant lot into a vibrant ministry location for outdoor ministry. The outdoor ministry is a 501.c.3 organization called “The Heartwood Center,” with the primary goals of serving children and teens who live in poverty as well as the ministry of creating a regional Mission Training Center. To date, ministries of The Heartwood Center include a summer backpack lunch serving more than 250 children, a summer teen day camp, school season backpack meals, and vacation bible school. We are blessed to provide these ministries through the support of our UM congregations, our clergy, and many community partners.

The Harrisonburg District: has had another great year. We have started “Mission Central”, which is the District Mission Center. We are utilizing Cedar Grove UMC. This church was on the downswing, and they have opened up their doors to let the district have a district-wide mission center arise. In six months we have served over 1,000 children who did not have adequate clothing. We have already established a medical equipment room where folks can check out what they need. The long range plan is to build a large building to house a food closet, adult clothes closet and have a social service person to help families get the help they need. We have also established Aisle 7 at Verona United Methodist Church. This will be a second site

ministry for Verona UMC and it will establish the Verona Community Center for the whole Community.

The James River District: The vision for the James River District is, “Disciples Making Disciples.” To this end we are focusing on the revitalization of existing churches and the formation of new faith communities. We work toward revitalization by sponsoring “Reach New People” events, the “Ten Brave Churches Initiative,” and “Hope for the Small Church” rallies. Two new faith communities are “The Flow” at Ettrick and “Dante’s Inferno” (worship in a diner) at Highland UMC. Two more new communities are currently being envisioned. We are engaged in many missions including VIM teams and covenanting with the UMC in Hungary. We praise God that 96% of our churches are Prayer Covenant congregations and we exceeded the conference’s goal of \$10 per worshipping member for the Imagine No Malaria Campaign!

The Lynchburg District: The 89 churches that represent the Lynchburg District continue to be excited about the growth of Park View Community Mission which now provides more than 600 families per month with at least 2 weeks’ worth of groceries. They also provide a free health clinic, counseling for young addicts, internet access for the poor and the branch offices of United Methodist Family Services. The Lynchburg District is also excited to welcome the Rev. Scott Davis as our new district superintendent.

The Richmond District: We continue to seek God’s kingdom in ministry settings from urban to suburban to rural. God is good in multiple places in our district. Our ministries at Shalom Farms continues to grow, providing more fresh food to more of God’s special people. Our camps and our campus ministries continue to seek new disciples in diverse settings. God has more in store in the coming year and we look forward to seeking the kingdom together!

The Roanoke District: Equipping clergy and laity for ministry in their community context centered the Roanoke District’s work this year. The Clergy Summit focused on changing realities in the appointment process and welcomed Cheryl Edley-Worford to introduce Discipleship Circles. In partnership with the Danville, Lynchburg, and Staunton Districts, the Church and Society Team sponsored a day with Shane Claiborne on “Breaking Down the Walls”. Youths and young adults were well-represented among the 100 participants. Church secretaries and administrative assistants were welcomed to the district office for breakfast fellowship, learning more about the EVC system, and peer support.

The Staunton District: As part of the conference Imagine No Malaria initiative in 2015, 71 of the 82 churches of the Staunton District took part in sending our DS “down the river and off the district” in his kayak — and blessing 3,900 lives along the way. 2016 has seen the beginning of a new ministry partnership in the Waynesboro area, conceived to reach and engage lower-income youths, and district leadership is encouraged by the prospect of replicating this model elsewhere. Staunton’s laity and clergy greet Bishop Cho’s retirement this year with a measure of sadness, as his many visits to us and sustained emphasis on prayer have sharpened our focus on becoming disciples who make disciples; to God be the glory.

The Winchester District: The Winchester District Committee on Congregational Excellence focused on reaching youths and young adults in April by cosponsoring with Shenandoah University an event featuring Shane Claiborne and Lisa Sharon Harper; it was a two-day event of mission and social justice. *Thy Kingdom Come: Where Our Mission in the commonwealth of God is Justice* was an event for senior high youths, young adults, local church leaders and pastors. The event included a sleepover on the football field, SHN event and an emphasis on learning about and raising funds for INM. In October the Winchester District hosted a “Reaching New People” seminar with 22 churches/charges participating, 20 of which are continuing a year’s coaching with Jim Griffith prayerfully expecting a new level of fruitfulness. The WD Change the World fall event at the Clark County Fairgrounds in October emphasized INM, World Service kits, and 100,000 SHN meals. The WD sent three UMVIM teams to La Gonave, Haiti as a part of our 4-year commitment.”

The York River District: is celebrating its fifth year as a new district by embracing challenges as well as hope for a new future. The District Board of Missions has continued partnering with the churches and agencies to support their local, regional or national missions. The District Ministry Excellence Team has coordinated various trainings and workshops for clergy and laity to enhance their spiritual development and ministry excellence. Clergy peer learning groups have been formed to cultivate mutual support and accountability. 18 churches have become Prayer Covenant Congregations. In 2015, the people of the YRD welcomed 545 new members, including 237 by profession of faith; gave over 2.4 million dollars through apportionments; and saved 6,946 lives through INM campaign!

The district superintendents remain grateful to our Extended Cabinet members: the Rev. Marc Brown, Warren Harper, the Rev. Mark Ogren, David Domnisse, and the Rev. Meredith McNabb for their valuable ministry and guidance. This year after 8 years of service the Rev. Larry & Mell Davies will be returning to the local church and we are grateful for his ministry among us. We welcome the Rev. Scott & Laurie Davis as the new DS of the Lynchburg District. We are grateful to the ministry and spiritual leadership of our bishop, Young Jin Cho. Bishop Cho and his wife, the Rev. Kiok Cho will be retiring on August 31 and pray for a blessed retirement.

Bob Parks, Dean of the Cabinet

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The Equitable Compensation Commission continues to provide financial aid to those churches requiring supplementation to strengthen their ministries in the communities in which they are located and to provide minimum salary or salary supplementation for the pastors. Equitable Compensation support in the amount of \$222,495 was provided to 43 charges in 2015. A schedule of salary supplementation appropriations for 2015 has been provided to the conference secretary for publication in the *Journal*.

There were 18 charges receiving salary and pension supplementation in 2014 that did not require salary support for all or part of 2015. These are Andrew Chapel (Fredericksburg), Basic UMC (Staunton), Bassett Memorial UMC (Danville), Brucetown UMC (Winchester), Christ Community Fellowship/Fairview (Lynchburg), Epworth UMC (Staunton), First Vietnamese (Arlington), Fort Grove UMC Sussex Charge (James River), Glossbrenner UMC (Staunton), Heathsville UMC (Fredericksburg), Iron Gate Charge (Staunton), Leemont Charge (Eastern Shore), McKendree UMC (Elizabeth River), Parnassus UMC (Harrisonburg), Salem UMC (Danville), Welltown UMC (Winchester), Wesley Chapel UMC (Elizabeth River), and West End UMC (Roanoke). These charges and their superintendents are commended for their success in providing a ministry in the communities they serve that has enabled them to grow spiritually in their stewardship.

District Superintendents and charges setting salaries for 2017 that may require supplementation are advised that the “floor” must come from sources other than the Commission on Equitable Compensation.

The Conference Average Compensation (CAC) for 2017 is \$63,086 which is an increase of 1% percent from 2016. The Commission considered Minimum Compensation and the Floor Schedule for 2017 and recommends the changes as outlined below.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Equitable Compensation Fund apportionment for 2017 be \$350,000.
2. The Minimum Compensation Schedule for 2017 proposed to be:

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Current</u>
a. Full Connection Pastors	\$41,500	\$41,000
b. Provisional and Associate Members	\$38,000	\$37,500
c. Local Pastors	\$35,500	\$35,000

3. The Floor Schedule for 2017 proposed no change to be:

a. Full Connection Pastors	\$28,000	\$28,000
b. Provisional and Associate Members	\$25,600	\$25,600
c. Local Pastors	\$24,000	\$24,000

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION FINANCIAL REPORT

	Year Ending 2013	Year Ending 2014	Year Ending 2015
Apportioned	550,000	500,000	500,000
Uncollected Apportionment	58,798	56,252	76,908
Apportionment Income	491,202	443,748	423,092
<i>Percent Collected</i>	<i>89.31%</i>	<i>88.75%</i>	<i>84.62%</i>
Grants	425,721	325,061	222,495
Meeting Expense & Other	449	1,727	1,030
Total Expenses	426,170	326,788	223,526
Receipts Over (Under) Expenses	65,031	116,960	199,566

Tom Nealley, Chair

VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HERITAGE, a publication of the Virginia Conference Historical Society, continues to publish articles of both timely and historical significance to Virginia United Methodists, with bulletins which appear in the spring and in the fall. Annual subscription fees are print edition: \$10.00; online edition: \$7.00, and both: \$12.00. Contact: Virginia United Methodist HERITAGE, P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058 (visit table in display area). Of particular note was the passing of Patti Russell in late 2014, following many years of service as Conference Archivist. Her husband Jack followed her in death in January of 2015. Both were founding members of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation. Patti is remembered through the Patti Russell Endowment, which provides funds to help support the salary of part-time Conference Archivist Stephanie Davis. At the October meeting of the Historical Society, the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation presented a memorial plaque, which was subsequently placed within the Archives Office, to recognize Patti and Jack's outstanding leadership over a span of many years.

The Historical Society will present its work in a new format this year, a short, yet informative video that tells the story of the Society in words and images. It is our hope that this presentation will encourage churches and districts to do all they can to preserve their history and to share it widely for new generations to strengthen appreciation of Methodism's rich heritage within the Commonwealth and to continue building upon the strong foundation laid by that great stream of witnesses, namely, our Wesleyan forebears!

The following persons are presented to the Annual Conference for election as clergy and lay trustees of the Conference Historical Society for 2016-2017. CLERGY: Paul A. Beighley, Jr., Stephen E. Bradley, Jr., Michael Browder, Carlton Casey, Robert T. Casey, Alexis Fathbruckner, William R. Freeman, Daniel L. Garrett, Myrtle F. Hatcher, H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr., James M. John, *Alexander B. Joyner*, *Kirk C. Mariner*, John T. Martin, Jr., Reginald H. Potts, III, Lee B. Sheaffer, Carl O. Stewart, James M. Tongue, *Margaret A. Turbyfill*, Kenneth B. Walco, Roy P. White, J. Brooke Willson, Gary Ziegler; LAITY: Marcella Bullock, Thelma Crowder, *Betty Duley*, Jesse Fanshaw, Queen Green, Margaret Kidd, Mark Leep, Audrey Lewis, Myra P. Lindsey, L. Boyd Lucas, Stephen S. Mansfield, *Marianne R. Martin*, Harold "Rockie" McKee, *Sam McKelvey*, Margaret Mock, Catherine D. Mock, Brenda NeSmith, William A. Olson, Laurie Preston, Leona Salter, Ann P. Shappell, William Stead, Charles Williams [*Italics - new to position*]

John T. Martin, Jr., President

The Old Stone Church Foundation

The Old Stone Church Foundation is responsible for the care and preservation of Methodism's Old Stone Church site in Leesburg, the first Methodist-owned property in America. Members of the Foundation help support this mission. We are grateful for those who maintain their membership in the Old Stone Church Foundation year after year. Our Brick Prayer Garden is continuing to grow. Individuals and churches can purchase bricks to add to the garden.

The Annual Meeting was held at Leesburg, UMC on September 15, 2015. Board members elected were: Charles Williams, Lou Legard, Shirlita West, John Creamer, Dennis Hanrahan, Dr. Michael Browder, James Roberts and Ralph Carver. Three ad-hoc members were elected from the floor; Chuck Reavis, Jack King and David Meyer. The next Annual Meeting for the Foundation will be held the Saturday, September 10th, 2016 at the Old Stone Church site where we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the site. Membership in the Old Stone Church Foundation is open to all who share its purposes and who make tax-deductible contributions for the care and preservation of the Old Stone Church site.

Ralph Carver, President

William Watters Foundation

The William Watters Foundation was established by the Virginia Conference Historical Society in 1996 to protect and preserve the the small Adams-Wren-Watters Cemetery in McLean, VA. William Watters, the first American-born itinerant Methodist minister, and his wife are buried there. The cemetery is a circular plot 90 feet in diameter and one-quarter acre in area located at 6430 Linway Terrace (off Old Dominion Drive) in McLean. It has been registered as the United Methodist Historical Site #7 since 1970.

A Fairfax County Historical Marker commemorating William Watters was dedicated on April 19, 2015. The marker reads as follows: William Watters (1751-1827) was appointed to a circuit at the first American Methodist Conference in Philadelphia in 1773, making him the first officially appointed American-born Methodist itinerant circuit rider. During the Revolutionary War American Methodism, a movement within the Church of England, grew, although most English-born Methodist ministers left the country. In 1780 Watters helped avert a division between northern Methodist societies and those farther south over preachers performing the ordinances of communion and baptism. Following American independence, the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed and American preachers were ordained. Watters, who served circuits in Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey, is buried nearby. The Fairfax County History Commission, 2014. The marker was provided by Bill Olson and researched by Myra Lindsey. For additional information write: The William Watters Foundation, P.O. Box 6144, McLean, Virginia 22106-6144.

E. Jean Balcom, President

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization, has been active in preserving and enhancing the historic properties that we own, which include the Edward Dromgoole House, the only existing circuit rider home in the Conference, and the original site of Randolph-Macon College, which later became the Boydton Institute after R-MC moved to Ashland. The OBCF also has responsibility for the care of the Ebenezer Academy site, the first Methodist school in America.

The Dromgoole house has been stabilized and the exterior wrapped to help preserve the existing structure. The College of William & Mary's Department of Archaeology recently conducted a site survey and partial dig, providing a footprint of the buildings that existed on the property, as well as some artifacts dating to its earliest use. The OBCF has developed a master plan to make the property into a destination where visitors can come and learn more of our pioneering Methodist heritage and the culture of the late 1700s. This plan includes building a caretaker cottage, establishing walking trails and information on sites along Virginia's portion of the Francis Asbury Trail. Efforts have been made in fundraising with some favorable results, including a matching grant from the Titmus Foundation.

The Ebenezer Academy site near Warfield is open for day visitors to take self-guided tours. The R-MC project is pending.

These are long-term projects that require persistence, financial support and encouragement from our Conference and all interested friends. We are grateful for the strong support of the Conference Historical Society and our able Board of Directors that meet at least four times annually. Membership in the OBCF is open: Dues \$25; Family \$40. Contact: Jim Mott, P.O. Box 385, Lawrenceville, VA 23868-0385; web: www.oldbrunswick.org

Jim Mott, President

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST PENSIONS, INC.

Section I: Reports

Report 1: Role & Responsibilities of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church directs each annual conference to establish a conference board of pension, auxiliary to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church (GBOPHB), to have charge of the interests and work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance, and pensioning of clergy and their families, other church workers, and lay employees of the United Methodist Church, its institutions, organizations, and agencies within each annual conference except as otherwise provided for by the GBOPHB.

On June 22, 1965, the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (VAUMC) established and incorporated the Virginia Methodist Pensions, Incorporation, (subsequently renamed on February 2, 1971 to Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc., or "VUMPI,") as its conference board of pension.

VUMPI, in conjunction with the GBOPHB, develops and administers the numerous employee pension and benefit plans sponsored by the Virginia Conference. Some plans are employer-paid, while others are voluntary and 100 percent participant-paid:

<u>VUMPI Plans</u>
Health
Prescription
Dental
Supplemental Life
Voluntary Life
Long Term Care
Healthcare Flexible Spending Account
Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account

<u>GBOPHB Plans</u>
Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (Pre-82)
Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)
Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Benefit (CRSP-DB)
Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Contribution (CRSP-DC)
United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)
Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

Report 2: Virginia Conference-Sponsored Health Plans

VUMPI administers health plans for full time clergy of the Virginia Conference, as well as retired clergy who meet eligibility requirements based on years of ministry in the Virginia Conference. Details of the Conference-sponsored health plans follow:

Active Clergy Health Plans

Health plans made available to clergy serving in full time appointments in the Virginia Conference include a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan, a Health Maintenance Organization Point of Service (HMO) plan, and the Clergy Managed Care Plan (CMCP), which pairs a plan with a relatively higher deductible with a Health Reimbursement Account that is funded by VUMPI.

The majority of the cost of the health plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the plans is funded by participant contributions, as described in Recommendation 2.

Retired Clergy Health Plans

VUMPI administers health plans for eligible retired clergy of the Virginia Conference. The eligibility requirements include a minimum of ten consecutive years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference immediately prior to retirement. As is detailed in recommendation 2, clergy having ten or more consecutive years of ministry who go on approved leave or are appointed to an Extension Ministry may freeze their years of service by paying the Retiree Health Plan Monthly Access Fee.

Plans made available to eligible retirees are coordinated with Medicare eligibility. Specific plans for retirees who are not yet eligible for Medicare and the program for Medicare-eligible clergy are described below:

Conference-sponsored health plan for pre-Medicare-eligible retirees: retirees who are eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored retired clergy health plan but who are not yet eligible to enroll in Medicare may enroll in the self funded PPO plan administered by VUMPI. Pre-Medicare-eligible retirees may also enroll in the self funded dental insurance program made available to active clergy. The majority of the cost of the health plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the plans is funded by participant contributions, as described in Recommendation 2.

Conference-sponsored health plan for Medicare-eligible retirees: retirees who are eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored retired clergy health plan and who are also enrolled in Medicare have two options for retiree medical coverage.

The first option is the Group Plan, which is a group Medicare Advantage plan created specifically for Virginia Conference retirees. The Group Plan integrates the retiree's Medicare benefit and includes prescription drug coverage. The majority of the cost of the Group Plan is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the plans is funded by participant contributions, as described in Recommendation 2.

The second option made available to eligible retirees who are enrolled in Medicare is the Connector option. Under the Connector option, Medicare-eligible retirees are able to select any Medicare Supplement plan or Medicare Advantage plan, and any Part D prescription drug plan, offered by United Healthcare. The Conference will provide funding through a Retiree Reimbursement Account ("RRA"), and those funds can be used to partially or fully offset the cost of the coverage elected through the Connector. The RRA funding made available to retirees who elect coverage through the Connector option is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the elected health plan coverage, if any, is paid by the retiree directly to United Healthcare.

Report 3: Pension Plan Structure

There are four components to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP):

IX. REPORTS OF CONFERENCE BOARDS AND AGENCIES

- A. Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (Pre-82) for service and benefits accrued on and/or prior to December 31, 1981.
- B. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2006.
- C. Clergy Retirement Security Program - Defined Benefit Plan (CRSP-DB) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 2007.
- D. Clergy Retirement Security Program - Defined Contribution Plan (CRSP-DC) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 2007.

The GBOPHB refers to plans A-C above as defined benefit (“DB”) pension plans. That is, each year an eligible clergy member of the Virginia Conference served/serves and received/receives pension credit, the applicable plan will pay a certain benefit, or “defined” monthly income during retirement. Hence, the term “defined benefit.” Defined benefit plans do not maintain participant account balances since the employer, or in our case, the GBOPHB, has the responsibility to manage the funds in a manner sufficient to pay the monthly defined benefit.

Simultaneous to the GBOPHB calculating each participant’s defined benefit, it calculates each annual conference’s cost to provide these defined benefits. The GBOPHB bills each annual conference the amount due. Each annual conference, or in our case, VUMPI, then in-turn bills and apportions our local churches for the cost of these plans.

In addition to these defined benefit plans, annual conferences provide their clergy pension benefits from the CRSP-DC, a defined contribution (“DC”) plan. Each year an eligible clergy member of the Virginia Conference serves and receives pension credit, the Virginia Conference determines how much pension contribution each clergy participant will receive in his/her pension account. Hence, the term defined contribution. VUMPI bills local churches for the required amount of pension contribution, then in-turn, makes monthly contributions into the clergy CRSP-DC accounts.

Report 4: Welfare Plans Structure

The welfare plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy include the Comprehensive Protection Plan (“CPP”) sponsored by the GBOPHB, as well as supplemental benefits sponsored independently by VUMPI. The CPP disability benefits are as follows:

- For Clergy disabled on or after Jan. 1, 2002, the CPP disability benefit equals 70 percent of Plan Compensation, with compensation capped at 200 percent of the DAC.
- For Clergy disabled prior to Jan. 1, 2002, they will continue to receive the same CPP disability benefit per the plan document in-force at the time their disability claim originated.

The GBOPHB has recommended a change in the eligibility rules for the CPP. That recommendation is being addressed at General Conference in 2016. The recommended change in eligibility rules allow for annual conferences to maintain a degree of discretion over specific eligibility rules, and VUMPI is recommending eligibility guidelines to become effective in 2017 that will match the current eligibility guidelines as closely as possible. VUMPI’s recommended CPP eligibility rules are included in Recommendation 4.

The following generally describes the death benefit amounts payable under the CPP to eligible participants and their beneficiaries:

Active Participant Death Benefits: payable upon the death of an eligible active CPP participant, as follows:

- Participant: \$50,000, payable in 12 monthly installments or one lump sum
- Spouse of active participant: 20% of DAC in the year of death
- Surviving spouse of active participant: 15% of DAC in the year of death
- Child of active participant: 10% of DAC in the year of death
- Annual surviving spouse annuity benefit of 20% of DAC, less the annuity benefit payable from CRSP and other Church-related sources
- Annual surviving child benefit of 10% of DAC, payable in 12 monthly installments (for those age 17 and younger; benefits are paid through the month in which the child attains age 18)
- Annual surviving child educational benefit up to 20% of DAC, payable in equal installments (for those age 18 through 24 and attending school full-time)

Retired Participant Death Benefits: to be eligible for death benefits in retirement, a clergyperson must have been covered in CPP for a specified number of years. The 2012 General Conference approved a change to the CPP program which increases the length of service requirement for retirees. Retirees with 25 or more years of enrollment in CPP are eligible for the death benefits in retirement, and the eligibility criteria for those with fewer than 25 years in CPP is phased in with one-year increments, as detailed in the table below:

Retirement Year	CPP Enrollment Requirement for Death Benefit Eligibility
2013	6 of last 10 years
2014	7 of last 10 years
2015	8 of last 11 years
2016	9 of last 12 years
2017	10 of last 13 years
2018	11 of last 14 years
2019+	12 of last 15 years

The death benefit amounts associated with retired participants are detailed in the table on the next page:

Plan Provision	Clergy Who Retired Before Jan. 1, 2013	Clergy Who Retire Jan. 1, 2013 or Later
Death of retired participant	30% of DAC in the year of death	\$20,000
Death of retiree's spouse	20% of DAC in the year of death	\$15,000
Death of retiree's surviving spouse	15% of DAC in the year of death	\$10,000
Death of retiree's child	10% of DAC in the year of death	\$8,000
Annual surviving child benefit, payable in 12 monthly installments	10% of DAC	10% of DAC
Annual surviving child educational benefit, payable in installments	20% of DAC	20% of DAC

The Conference Supplemental Death Benefit for all active full-time clergy under episcopal appointment, and who are enrolled in CPP, is \$25,000. This Conference Supplemental Death Benefit is payable in addition to the CPP death benefit. During retirement, a \$5,000 Conference Supplemental Death Benefit will be payable to CPP participants, in addition to the CPP death benefit. The beneficiary will receive the Conference Supplemental Death Benefit payable in one lump sum. The Conference pays the entire cost of this Supplemental Death Benefit.

In combination, the CPP and Conference Supplemental Death Benefit provide total death benefits as follows:

- \$75,000 to beneficiaries of active clergy participants
- 30% of the DAC + \$5,000 (or \$25,000 for those retiring January 1, 2013 or later) to beneficiaries of retired clergy participants

Gift Benefit

VUMPI currently elects to provide a one time \$1,500 gift at the time of retirement or disability (once awarded disability benefits under the Comprehensive Protection Plan) to each clergyperson who has served at least ten years of service in a full-time Virginia Annual Conference episcopal appointment in the Virginia Conference with pension credit. Further, a gift to the family of each clergyperson meeting the eligibility criteria above who dies in active service is paid in the same amount as the gift to retired or disabled clergypersons.

Report 5: Denominational Average Compensation

Several of the pension and welfare plans incorporate the Denominational Average Compensation ("DAC") into the formula for determining the plan benefit. The formula VUMPI uses for funding those plans relies on the DAC, as well.

As reported by the GBOPHB, the DAC is projected to increase from 2016 to 2017 as follows:

Denominational Average Compensation	
2016	\$67,333
2017	\$68,876

Report 6: VUMPI Financial Reserve Strategy

The health benefit plans administered by VUMPI for the benefit of active clergy in the Virginia Conference are self-funded health plans. Because VUMPI assumes the financial liability associated with payment of medical claims under the terms of those plans, VUMPI maintains a financial reserve recognizing the potential for claims which exceed the funding made available through apportionments and participant contributions. VUMPI's financial reserve also supports the projected financial liability associated with the health plan made available to retired Virginia Conference clergy, as well as pension funding and other financial obligations.

In 2014, the VUMPI Board of Directors approved a financial reserve strategy that is primarily intended to mitigate the burden of clergy benefits apportionments on Virginia Conference churches. Under the terms of the strategy, the VUMPI Board of Directors identified a portion of VUMPI's financial reserve that has been dedicated to partial reduction of the Pre-82 pension apportionment. Reserve funds that have been dedicated under this strategy for the 2017 through 2021 period amount to over \$4.2 million.

Section II: Recommendations for Annual Conference Approval

Recommendation 1: 2017 Pension and Health Plan Apportionment Recommendations

For 2017, VUMPI recommends a total Clergy Benefit Apportionment of \$16,770,000. This total includes funding for the Pre-82 pension, the Active Clergy Health Plan (which includes health care coverage for eligible clergy on medical leave and widowed spouses of active clergy) and the Retired Clergy Health Plan. The apportionment total is allocated among these components as follows:

Clergy Benefits Apportionment Recommendations - 2017	
Active Clergy Health	\$ 9,710,000
Retired Clergy Health	6,060,000
Pension Liability Assessment – Pre-82	1,000,000
Total Clergy Benefit Apportionments	\$ 16,770,000

VUMPI recommends the above Active Clergy Health and Retired Clergy Health apportionments as part of its broad strategy focused on maintaining adequate health plans for Virginia Conference active and retired clergy, while moderating the financial impact on local churches and individual participants to the extent possible.

VUMPI will continue to bill Conference-responsible salary-paying-units (such as Extension Ministries) in 2017. The amount billed will be \$11,671 for each eligible clergyperson, plus their applicable Participant Contributions for active clergy as noted in Recommendation 2: 2017 Participant Contribution Recommendations.

The Pension Liability Assessment associated with the Pre-1982 pension program is calculated by the GBOPHB, and is partially based on the projected funding liability that VUMPI is required to meet in 2017. Changes in each year's assessment are driven by multiple factors, including actual and projected investment earnings on pension assets held on behalf of the Virginia Conference at the GBOPHB. Based on input from multiple entities, including the Virginia Conference Treasurer and the Virginia Conference Council on Finance & Administration, the recommended Pre-82 pension apportionment in 2017 is \$1 million. This amount is estimated to approximate the expected annual funding obligation through 2021, at which point all conferences are expected to have attained a fully funded status in the Pre-82 pension program.

Recommendation 2: 2017 Participant Contribution Recommendations

As part of its strategy to ensure the long-term viability of adequate and affordable health care plans, VUMPI is recommending no increase in participant contributions, resulting in the following monthly participant contribution rates for 2017:

Active Clergy:

Medical			
	HMO	PPO	CMCP
Individual	\$113	\$102	\$90
Family	\$351	\$318	\$294

Note: active clergy have the opportunity to earn a \$15 reduction in Individual contribution rate or \$30 reduction in Family contribution rate through participation in the Virginia Conference wellness program.

Clergy on Voluntary Leave and Sabbatical:

Medical		
	HMO	PPO
Individual	\$687	\$626
Family	\$1,852	\$1,659

Clergy on Medical Leave with CPP Benefits & Under Age 65 Surviving Spouses of Clergy

Medical (\$500 deductible)	
	PPO
Individual	\$112
Family	\$180

Clergy Retired Under ¶358.2.a (With Twenty Years of Service) or ¶358.3 (Prior to Age 62 With Fewer Than Thirty Years of Service)

Medical \$1000 deductible	
	PPO
Individual	\$626
Family	\$1659

Retired Clergy Under Age 65 – Retired Under ¶358.1, ¶358.2b, ¶358.2c, or ¶358.3

Individual Tier - Personal Monthly Contributions			
Years of Service	PPO	Dental Core	Dental Major
10-14	\$698	\$31	\$60
15-19	\$567	\$31	\$60
20-24	\$433	\$31	\$60
25-29	\$301	\$31	\$60
30+	\$167	\$31	\$60

Family Tier - Personal Monthly Contributions			
Years of Service	PPO	Dental Core	Dental Major
10-14	\$1,607	\$58	\$131
15-19	\$1,301	\$58	\$131
20-24	\$995	\$58	\$131
25-29	\$690	\$58	\$131
30+	\$381	\$58	\$131

Retired Clergy Age 65 or Over – Retired Under ¶358.1, ¶358.2b, ¶358.2c, or ¶358.3

Under the Conference-sponsored medical plan for Medicare-eligible retirees of the Virginia Conference, there will continue to be two coverage options, as described below.

Group Plan Option: The group plan is a group Medicare Advantage plan. The group plan has a required participant contribution based on full time years of service in the Virginia Conference. The recommended 2017 participant contributions for the group plan coverage option are as follows:

Medicare-eligible Retirees - Monthly Personal Contributions		
Years of Service	Individual	Family
10-14	\$375	\$750
15-19	\$310	\$620
20-24	\$245	\$490
25-29	\$180	\$360
30+	\$115	\$230

Connector Option: The Connector option allows qualifying clergy to select any available Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage plan, and any Part D prescription drug plan, offered by United Healthcare. Retirees electing coverage through this option receive Retiree Reimbursement Account (“RRA”) funding, which can be used to offset the cost of the selected coverage. VUMPI recommends 2017 monthly RRA funding based on qualifying years of Virginia Conference service as follows:

Connector Option - Monthly RRA Funding		
Years of Service	Retiree Only	Retiree and Spouse
20-24	\$150	\$300
25-29	\$200	\$400
30+	\$250	\$500

The monthly RRA funding amounts will be prorated for qualifying retirees and/or spouses of qualifying retirees who gain Medicare eligibility or otherwise gain eligibility for retiree coverage within a calendar year. Any RRA funds remaining at the end of a calendar year will roll over into the subsequent year for use by the enrolled retiree and/or spouse for qualifying medical expenses.

General Virginia Conference Health Plan Information

Virginia Conference clergy members earn a year of service towards his or her Total Years of VAUMC Service as indicated in the coverage options above for each year that Virginia Annual Conference health plan eligibility is met.

For participants enrolled in the Anthem health plans, either as active clergy or as a retiree not yet eligible for Medicare, plan selections will be made during the open enrollment period in the fall of 2016. If an eligible clergyperson does not elect coverage options during the annual open enrollment period, the default enrollment option is the prior year’s plan selections (except for Flexible Spending Account or Dependent Care Spending Account contributions), and enrollees will be subject to the associated individual personal contribution rates.

If not selected during the open enrollment period, no Flexible Spending Account contributions can be made during 2017, in accordance with federal laws.

All who are eligible to enroll in a Virginia Conference health plan are strongly encouraged to participate in online open enrollment in the fall of 2016. Details will be distributed through normal annual open enrollment means.

Eligibility for the Conference-sponsored retiree medical plans requires a minimum of ten consecutive years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference immediately prior to retirement. Virginia Conference clergy on approved leave or serving in an Extension Ministry appointment do not earn additional years of service toward retiree health plan eligibility while on approved leave or appointed to the Extension Ministry, and such leave or Extension Ministry appointment would reflect an interruption of the consecutive years of full time ministry required for retiree health plan eligibility. However, clergy having at least ten consecutive years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference prior to going on approved leave or taking an Extension Ministry appointment are able to “freeze” their years of service until they retire or until they return to an appointment within the Virginia Conference. Clergy desiring to freeze their years of service under this provision are required to pay a Clergy Retiree Health Plan Monthly

Access Fee, which will be billed monthly by the VUMPI office. As part of the recommended participant contributions for 2017, VUMPI recommends that the Clergy Retiree Health Plan Monthly Access Fee remain at \$20 per month for 2017.

Recommendation 3: 2017 Pre-82 Pension Past Service Rate

The Pre-82 pension provides a benefit to all eligible clergy who have served in the Virginia Conference prior to 1982. This program pays the greater of the following:

- An annual benefit equal to the Past Service Rate (PSR) times years of pre-1982 service, or
- An annuity amount based upon the participant's cash balance in his or her Defined Benefit Service Money Account

The Virginia Annual Conference establishes the PSR each year. For 2017, VUMPI recommends that the PSR be increased from \$563 to \$564.

Recommendation 4: Eligibility Guidelines for the Comprehensive Protection Plan

The GBOPHB has recommended changes in the eligibility rules under the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP). The General Board's recommendation is being considered at General Conference, and for the purposes of VUMPI's Recommendation 4 is assumed to have been adopted in advance of the 2016 session of the Virginia Annual Conference.

The recommended eligibility guidelines for the CPP beginning January 1, 2017 have been designed to match the current eligibility guidelines as closely as possible. Under the revised general eligibility guidelines, full time Elders, Deacons and Local Pastors will be eligible for CPP benefits. VUMPI recommends that the Virginia Conference approve the eligibility of Elders and Deacons appointed to 75% appointments. VUMPI recommends that clergy on medical leave maintain eligibility to remain enrolled in CPP. In addition, VUMPI recommends that Virginia Conference clergy on sabbatical leave and voluntary leave maintain eligibility to remain enrolled in CPP for up to one year.

Under the revised eligibility guidelines recommended by the GBOPHB, annual conferences do not have the ability to extend CPP coverage to Deacons and Elders in 50% appointments. Accordingly, the CPP eligibility guidelines being recommended will result in the loss of coverage for Deacons and Elders appointed to 50% appointments. VUMPI will work with District Superintendents and local churches to evaluate the potential for alternative strategies to secure disability insurance coverage for those clergy who lose eligibility for CPP benefits under the revised eligibility guidelines.

Recommendation 5: 2017 CRSP/CPP/Supplemental Plan Funding Recommendations

Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

The 2017 CRSP Contribution from the local churches and/or salary-paying-units for each appointed eligible clergy member under episcopal appointment at that location shall be:

- For the Defined Contribution component of CRSP: Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service), times 3%.
- For the Defined Benefit component of CRSP: Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service, up to 135% of the Denominational Average Compensation ("DAC")) times 9%.

Local churches and salary-paying units are to make their monthly CRSP payments to VUMPI.

Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

The 2017 CPP contribution from the local churches and/or salary-paying-units for each appointed eligible full time clergy member under episcopal appointment at that location shall be:

Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service, up to 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation) times 4.4%.

Local churches and salary-paying units are to make their monthly CPP payments to VUMPI.

Clergy on voluntary leave who elect to enroll in CPP are responsible for payment of CPP premium, which will be calculated as 4.4% of plan compensation immediately preceding the leave of absence. As indicated in Recommendation 4 above, clergy on voluntary leave may remain enrolled in CPP for up to one year.

If, for any reason, CPP contributions are more than 30 days in arrears, participation in the CPP is suspended. If contributions are more than six consecutive months in arrears, participation in the CPP is terminated. For terminated participants, readmission into the CPP requires payment of seven months of contributions and submission of medical statement of good health.

Erroneously enrolled clergy who are ineligible to participate in the CPP have no right to benefits under the CPP. Eligible clergy who have not been properly enrolled in the CPP have no rights under the CPP until after proper enrollment.

Recommendation 6: 2017 Comprehensive Funding Plan

The 2012 *Book of Discipline* ¶ 1506.6 requires that each annual conference develop, adopt and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan shall be submitted annually to the GBOPHB for review and be approved annually by the Annual Conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from the GBOPHB. This document is only a summary of the information contained in the actual signed funding plan and does not contain all the information required for a comprehensive view of the Virginia Conference's benefit obligations. You may request the full contents of the 2017 comprehensive benefit funding plan from the VUMPI office.

CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PROGRAM (CRSP)

Program overview:

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve as clergy of The United Methodist Church. The program is designed to provide participants with one portion of their overall retirement benefits. CRSP replaced the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 2007, which had previously replaced the Pre-82 Plan for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982. CRSP consists of both a defined benefit (DB) plan, which provides a monthly benefit at retirement based upon years of credited service to The United Methodist Church, and a defined contribution (DC) plan, which provides a retirement account balance established and funded by the annual conferences.

Current funding plan information:

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP-DB) annuities total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$1.271 billion, while total plan assets are \$1.407 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 111%. The Virginia Conference portion of the liability is 4.0454% and the 2017 contribution is \$4,687,087. VUMPI anticipates that the amount will be funded by direct billing to local churches in accordance with the billing methodology detailed in Recommendation 5 above. Additionally, General Conference 2012 approved a change to CRSP that provides each annual conference the discretion to determine whether to cover three-quarter and/or half-time clergy. The Virginia Conference has elected to cover clergy serving 50%+ under CRSP effective January 1, 2017.

Effective January 1, 2014 the CRSP-DC plan was reduced from a 3% to a 2% of plan compensation non-matching contribution. Clergy have the opportunity to earn up to an additional 1% CRSP-DC contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to UMPIP; therefore, if a participant contributes at least 1% of plan compensation to UMPIP, the individual will receive a contribution of 3%, which is unchanged from 2013. The 2017 CRSP-DC contribution is anticipated to be \$1,055,531 and will be funded by direct billing to local churches in accordance with the billing methodology detailed in Recommendation 5 above.

MINISTERIAL PENSION PLAN (MPP)

Plan overview:

Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP), provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. MPP is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement plan. Effective January 1, 2014, exactly 65% of the account balance must be annuitized when the funds are to be distributed. The remainder may be rolled over to UMPIP, into an IRA or another qualified plan, or it may be paid out as a lump sum.

Current funding plan information:

The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities' total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$3.122 billion, while total plan assets are \$3.509 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 112% and no required contribution for 2017. The Virginia Conference's share of the total liability is 3.2532%. Future MPP annuitants have a total account balance of \$4.145 billion and the Virginia Conference's portion of that balance is \$152,020,913 or 3.67% of the total.

PRE-1982 PLAN

Plan overview:

Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Pre-1982 Plan, provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church prior to 1982. The Pre-1982 Plan was replaced by MPP effective January 1, 1982. If a clergy person retires within the Conference (and does not terminate), the minimum benefit payable is based on two factors: 1) years of service with pension credit and 2) the Conference pension rate. Years of service with pension credit are approved by each Conference in accordance with plan provisions and *The Book of Discipline*. The pension rate, also called the Past Service Rate (PSR), is the dollar amount chosen by the Conference as the amount payable for each approved year of service with pension credit. The pension rate may change from year to year. The number of years of service with pension credit is multiplied by the pension rate, and the product is the minimum annual benefit payable to those clergy eligible for Pre-1982 Plan benefits. In certain situations, the benefit received from the Pre-1982 plan may vary based on the applicability of what is referred to as Defined Benefit Service Money (DBSM), which is the defined contribution feature of the Pre-1982 Plan. At the time that a participant retires, the DBSM account is converted to a life based benefit and, at that point, the clergy's benefit is the greater of the PSR or DBSM benefit. If the conference increases the PSR, the clergy's benefit is recalculated, but the DBSM based benefit does not change.

Current funding plan information:

The 2017 PSR recommended to the Virginia Conference is \$564, as described in Recommendation 3 above. VUMPI expects future increases to be recommended in a manner that recognizes the reality of inflation while demonstrating appropriate stewardship of the Conference's financial resources. The contingent annuitant percentage is recommended to remain at the 70% level.

ACTIVE HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM

Program Overview:

The Virginia Conference offers a self funded health benefit plan to its active eligible participants.

Current funding plan information:

The program will be funded in 2017 by apportionments and participant contributions.

Claims Incurred But Not Reported:

The Virginia Conference provides a self funded health benefit plan to its eligible participants. As of December 31, 2015, the estimated incurred but not reported ("IBNR") claims total is \$1,875,056. It is anticipated that increases for future years will average 5.0%, based on the expectation that underlying health trends will continue to be mitigated by plan design adjustments. It is anticipated that the IBNR claims, if applicable, will be funded through apportionments.

POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFIT PROGRAM (PRM)**Program Overview:**

The Virginia Conference post-retirement medical program includes a self funded health benefits plan for eligible retirees who are not yet enrolled in Medicare, and the choice between a fully insured group Medicare Advantage plan and individual market plans with Retiree Reimbursement Account funding for eligible retirees who are enrolled in Medicare.

Current funding plan information:

The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$7,140,694, which will be funded by apportionments and participant contributions. Based on the most recent PRM valuation dated January 1, 2015, the following is the funded position of the post-retirement medical benefits:

1. Expected Post Retirement Obligation (EPBO) or net conference cost
\$143,370,033
2. Accumulated Post Retirement Obligation (APBO) or net conference cost
\$113,970,895
3. Assets designated for PRM
\$8,000,000
4. Service Cost (SC) or net conference cost
\$2,113,452

As a preview of the 2018 CBFP requirement, a new PRM Funding Contribution requirement will be mandatory for conferences requesting a full favorable CBFP opinion. This year the calculation for informational purposes only is as follows:

5. Unfunded APBO, [2. – 3.]	\$105,970,895
6. Number of Annual Payments	20
7. Portion of Unfunded APBO, [5. / 6.]	\$5,298,545
8. PRM Funding Contribution, Informational purposes only [4. + 7.]	\$7,411,997

These values are based on a 4.40% long term discount rate, a 7.0% long-term expected rate of return, and a current increase trend of 8.0% with an ultimate medical increase of 5.0%, beginning in 2024.

COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)**Plan Overview:**

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides death, long-term disability and other welfare benefits for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church and their families. It is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) “church plan” funded by plan sponsor insurance premiums.

Current funding plan information:

For 2017, the Virginia Conference has an expected required contribution to the Comprehensive Protection Plan of \$1,759,219, which is anticipated to be funded by direct billing to churches. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be approximately 2.0% per year, consistent with the expected rate of increase in overall compensation.

UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP) FOR LAY AND CLERGY**Plan Overview:**

The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) defined contribution retirement savings plan for clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Participants may make before-tax and/or after-tax contributions through payroll deductions. Participant contributions, various optional plan sponsor contributions and investment earnings comprise the individual’s retirement account balance.

Current funding plan information:

Contributions to UMPIP are funded via contributions from participating clergy and local churches.

OTHER CONFERENCE BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS: DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) TYPE

Plan Overview: The Virginia Conference currently offers a supplemental life insurance benefit for eligible clergy in the conference.

CONCLUSION

The 2017 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan and the above Summary document incorporates, to the best of our understanding, the Virginia Conference’s obligations and funding requirements of the benefits provided to the clergy and laity of the Virginia Conference.

Recommendation 7: 2017 Housing Allowance/Exclusion

**Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled,
or Former Clergypersons of the Virginia Conference**

The Virginia Conference (the “Conference”) adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the “Church”), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (“Clergypersons”);

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as an appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church (the “*Discipline*”), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (“GBOPHB”), during the period January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the *Discipline*, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such an active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergyperson’s pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson’s gross income in any year for federal (and, in most cases, state) income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2), and regulations thereunder, to the least of: (a) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson’s employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (b) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (c) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. Each clergyperson or former clergyperson is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

Robert G. Sanford, Jr., Chair

COMMON TABLE FOR CHURCH VITALITY

In 2008, the Virginia Annual Conference approved a strategic direction identified as All Things New: Fruitful and Multiplying – The Virginia Conference with the identified goal of changing the culture of the Virginia Conference to fruitfulness and multiplication. This desired goal was undergirded by a focus on leadership development as expressed in beginning 250 new faith communities in 30 years and increasing the vitality of existing congregations. For the past eight years, the Common Table for Church Vitality has been guided by All Things New as it has fulfilled its chartered purpose “to coordinate and prioritize the ministries and resources of the Virginia Conference.” As the Virginia Conference prepares to enter its ninth year under the same strategic direction, it is good to be reminded of what has happened since the approval of All Things New.

- 1) Thirty-seven new faith communities have begun. Included in this total are 19 Anglo faith communities and 18 faith communities from other demographic backgrounds. While some of these new faith communities have begun through the initiative of the annual conference, the majority are the result of existing congregations living into the strategic direction of fruitfulness and multiplication by accepting the vision of launching new faith communities. It is good to note that two of the new faith communities begun since 2008 (The Vine, Spirit and Faith) have now launched new faith communities as part of their ministry.
- 2) Conference ministries have focused on leadership development as a foundational objective. Since the approval of All Things New some of the new ministries that have begun in the area of leadership development are:
 - The 5 Talent Academy that is livestreamed semi-annually across the conference with an average participation of 450+.
 - How to Reach New People workshops that have been conducted in all 16 districts and have included over 300 congregations. Many of these congregations have chosen to be part of a year-long process that includes coaching.
 - Large, mid-size, and small church ministry training groups.
 - Just-in-Time Training for pastors who are being appointed to large, midsize, and small membership congregations.
 - Church Leadership Institute for both laity and clergy in helping congregations to live into ministry in a new day.
 - Clergy Leadership Initiative for identified clergy who are early in their ministry.
 - Continuing implementation of Discipleship Circles seeking to engage laity and clergy together in the practice of spiritual disciplines and growth of congregational vitality.
 - Bishop’s Convocation on Prayer
 - Launching in 2016 of accelerator ministry model for ministries receiving conference grants that are beyond their current resources. The purpose of the accelerator is to provide assistance in strategic development and ongoing ministry support.

IX. REPORTS OF CONFERENCE BOARDS AND AGENCIES

- Launching in 2016 of Young People's Ministry discernment group through Spiritual Leadership, Inc.
- Launching in 2016 of online Lay Servant training.

3) In 2017, the share of the annual conference budget for which Common Table has responsibility has been reduced by over \$800,000 from 2008.

Reports from Common Table affiliated agencies are included in the *Book of Reports* and provide information about the ministries that are amenable to Common Table. The names of these conference agencies are Board of Church and Society, Board of Communications, Church Development Team, Board of Discipleship, Missional Ministries, Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries, Board of Laity, Commission on Disabilities, Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy, and Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

One new staff member was added to the Connectional Ministries staff since the last annual conference year as Paulo Lopes assumed the position of Director of Ministries with Young People. Common Table expresses appreciation to the faithful ministry of all the Connectional Ministries staff for their tireless work in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve the following recommendation by the following boards:

By the Board of Discipleship regarding the observance and special offering for Christian Education Sunday;

By the Board of Discipleship regarding the recommendation and endorsement of Gregory B. West as a General Evangelist according to the standards set by the General Board of Discipleship;

By Missional Ministries regarding the continuation of Conference Relationship Agreements;

By Missional Ministries regarding special offerings for Heart Havens, United Methodist Family Services, and Virginia United Methodist Homes.

By Missional Ministries regarding Advance Special Offerings.

Marc Brown, VAUMC Director of Connectional Ministries

The following reports, from page 145 to page 159, fall under the umbrella of the Common Table for Church Vitality.

BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* (§629) specifies the purpose of the Conference Board of Church and Society. The Conference Board is to help the conference, districts and local congregations employ our Social Principles to connect our faith communities to the world around us. This work is both individual and societal. We are called to invite faithful disciples to lead the church prayerfully into the world of Christ.

We have organized our board to follow the issues raised by our United Methodist Bishop's letter: "God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action." In this 2009 letter, our bishops raised virtually the same issues, as did Catholic Pope Francis this past year, namely that the world is awash in 1. Violence, 2. Environmental Destruction, and 3. Poverty. Following the need to address these three interconnected disasters, we have organized three work areas: 1. Peace and Non-Violence, 2. Caretakers of God's Creation, and 3. Eradicating Poverty. We include Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries now under the Eradicating Poverty work area.

The Conference Board promotes the Peace with Justice Sunday Special Offering, one of the six Church-wide offerings that The United Methodist General Conference asks of each local church. In 2015, only 106 of our churches gave to this Special Offering, but their giving has allowed the conference to fund key ministries within the conference. Of particular note were the following:

1. Scholarships for participants to join the Conference Board of Church and Society study trip to Israel and Palestine. We co-sponsored this trip jointly with Jewish Voices for Peace.
2. Remember and Recommit: A program of racial reconciliation and study of race relations by two Richmond churches.

The deadline for conference Peace with Justice grant proposals for next year is Jan. 30, 2017.

The Board Caretakers of God's Creation ministry has begun a program of district workshops to help churches become "Green Churches". The Caretakers are also working to help congregations divest of stocks of thermal coal companies as required by the resolution voted by the conference in 2015. They are promoting <http://fossilfreefunds.org/> a project of As You Sow, a corporate responsibility program. The fossilfreefunds.org tool makes it very easy to evaluate your portfolio for all kinds of fossil fuel investments.

The Peace and Non-violence Work Area is giving continued leadership to persons interested in peace in the Middle East.

The Eradicating Poverty Work Area will be leading our board work in mentoring youths and in banning the "box" which allows prospective employers to discriminate against persons who have served their time for crimes and are now trying to become employed.

Each year, United Methodist Day at the General Assembly is held on the first Thursday in February. We hold this event jointly with the United Methodist Women and the Conference Legislative Network. We are pleased that every year of his tenure, Bishop Cho has been a key participant in this event. Next year will be the 25th anniversary of United Methodist Day at the General Assembly. We hope every church will plan to send participants to this exciting day in the life of the conference.

Jaydee Hanson, Chair, Board of Church and Society

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Church Development Team has been working hard to fulfill its mission to assist in creating New Faith Communities and support the work of vitality in existing churches under the All Things New plan. Below you will find CDT's activities toward this work.

The Five Talent Academy continues to offer training opportunities related to worship, financial stewardship, discipleship, evangelism and ministry with the poor. We also continue to offer these events via web-based simulcast to regional locations throughout Virginia. Recent events have included leadership by Shane Claiborne, Jim Harnish and Barbara Day Miller.

The Equipping Planter team directs the invitation, discernment and training of planters of new faith communities for the Virginia Conference. Those who are interested in planting engage in a process of discernment as to each person's gifts for this unique ministry. The first stage is the Church Leadership Institute, which is held annually each fall. We had more than 50 participants this past October. Some who attend this event decide that they wish to explore this call more deeply. These prepare a self-reflective paper and are interviewed by members of our Church Development Team. Summaries of these interviews are given to the cabinet to help inform their appointment of planters of new faith communities. Once appointed, church planters attend a boot camp during the summer of their appointment, and coaches are assigned to help guide their ministry.

The New Faith Community subgroup of the CDT continues to help create a culture of excellence, fruitfulness and vitality in the area of new faith community development in our conference. This year we have continued to resource and encourage recently-initiated new faith communities, local churches, district Boards of Mission and their equivalents, the Cabinet and others in our conference to live out the "All Things New" strategy through the planting of new faith communities. In addition to resourcing our conference in the area of new faith community development, the New Faith Community subgroup also receives, reviews and makes recommendations to the CDT and the Common Table regarding funding for new faith community development proposals. This year we received multiple proposals that were reviewed and given careful consideration. We remain prayerful and excited about the future of new faith community development within our conference.

The CDT deeply appreciates our working partnerships with the Cabinet and conference Finance and Administration as we have negotiated conference policy regarding legacy congregations, adoptions and church planting mergers.

The Church Development Team partners with the Large, Medium and Small Church leadership teams. These teams offer training events both for pastors who have just moved (Just in Time trainings) as well as training for clergy and laity in order to increase vitality. In 2015 we brought Gil Rendle to speak to large church pastors and Lew Parks to speak with small membership churches. Phil Maynard was scheduled to speak to the Mid-Size church but was unable to be with us due to a weather event. These teams are working to schedule Just In Time trainings for pastors as well as fall training events for each size church.

We would like to thank Mark Ogren, Kim Johnson and Pat Hickman for their efforts that help make All Things New in the Virginia Conference.

Melissa Dunlap, CDT Chair

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

The mission of Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc. is to assist faith communities in communications and related technologies, empowering their mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Over the past year, we have carried out our mission through several different projects. We created a tips sheet for local churches searching for a church database management system. Working with Brenda Capen, our conference webmaster, we increased access to more United Methodist-related logos and graphics making them available to local churches through the conference website. Maintaining our commitment to increase communication training, board members participated in district training events and will be hosting a brand new communication training event at our 2016 Annual Conference. Recognizing the need to provide support for local church communicators around the conference, we have set out to establish a local church communicators fellowship, and to date, have over 90 interested participants. Our board members are also working to create a Church Communication Self-Assessment tool for local churches to use to discern what kind of communications assistance they are seeking and to match those desires with resources and information. Finally, our board also heavily supports the operation of Annual Conference by providing camera operators, helping on the tech desk, producing conference communication and photography and developing a display to provide resources to attendees of Conference including the availability to order Conference DVDs and subscribe to the *Advocate* magazine.

The board feels it is vital to support our Communications staff and for staff and the board to work together in supporting the growth of communication ministry throughout the conference. This year, we welcomed Madeline Pillow to the conference communications staff as *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* editor and news associate. We also were excited to bring Nick Ruxton from part-time to full-time videographer.

The Virginia Conference Communications staff won six awards at the denomination-wide communications/media awards contest held during the annual meeting of United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC), Jan. 19-20 in Portland, Ore.

Madeline Pillow, *Advocate* editor, won first place in the portrait category of the photography class for her photo of Bishop Young Jin Cho and Maria Maxwell celebrating when they learned that the Virginia Conference had raised more than \$1 million for Imagine No Malaria, exceeding the conference goal.

The *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* won a third place award in the magazine category of the print publications class.

Nick Ruxton, conference videographer, won four awards for his videos, including sweeping all the awards in one category. "District Sends D.S. Down River," a video of the Rev. David Rochford's canoe trip to raise money for Imagine No Malaria, won first place in the promotion category of the video production class. "Imagine No Malaria: Sipping Lemonade to Save Lives" won second place in the same category, and "Called 2015: Youth Retreat Promo Series" won third place. "United Methodist Day at Virginia's General Assembly" won third place in the video news story category.

The Board of Communications continues to look for new ways to support the work of our local churches. Please feel free to reach out to us either through the conference staff or through the conference website.

Keri L. B. Marston, President

BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

The directing board of the Board of Discipleship has been working diligently to focus the efforts of the board on becoming the resource center for the Virginia Annual Conference concerning all aspects of discipleship, church vitality, and discipleship circles. As such we are moving to align our regional directors in line with the organization of the Cabinet in regions that will allow us to work more closely with district superintendents and district lay leaders. Recognizing that this type of change takes time, we are moving forward. Our directing board is working at training, definition and a compilation of resources to become a "one stop center" where local churches can find assistance with local discipleship and church vitality. In addition we continue to support the Bishop's initiatives for spirituality by working closely with host churches for the Bishop's Convocation on Prayer.

Shortly we will have available a website center with "best practices" in the area of discipleship. Local churches will be able to find resources including books, programs and consulting sources to assist them in their efforts to be fruitful. Regional directors are compiling lists of clergy and laity in areas of

Vital Congregations, Five Practices, etc. so that local churches will have consulting resources without the prohibitive cost that generally keeps smaller to mid-size churches from these resources. We are working closely with the Cabinet to develop our own leaders through training and agreement with top name organizations with proven records of transformation. Areas will include church assessment, From Membership to Discipleship, Vital Congregation areas, etc.

The Board of Discipleship, working closely with the Bishop's steering committee is devoted to promoting, teaching and guiding local churches and small groups in Discipleship Circles. Discipleship Circle facilitators are available through the regional directors to come and assist groups in the formation of spiritual discernment where we open ourselves to God as we enter into discussion, transformation and activity. Discipleship Circles is not a program, but a tool of spiritual discernment and formation that transforms a small group from a task force to a Holy Spirit-driven cluster of voices.

Donald Jamison, Chair

Discipleship Circles

Discipleship Circles exist to help leaders throughout the Virginia Conference grow in openness to God and establish trusting, collaborative relationships while working together to lead our churches to increased fruitfulness through God's transforming power. A total of three Discipleship Circles facilitator training events resulted in 90 people receiving training to assist in the implementation of Discipleship Circles throughout the Virginia Conference. Trained facilitators now represent every district. Refresher training events are planned for each of four regions with the first event occurring on Friday, March 18 for the 20 trained facilitators from southwest region districts (Danville, Farmville, Lynchburg, and Roanoke). District lay leaders are invited to the refresher training events in their region. The purpose of the refresher training is to offer facilitators additional training, practice of spiritual disciplines together, opportunities for facilitators to get to know one another, peer problem-solving, gathering and responding to feedback, an adjustment of focus and opportunity for forming district Discipleship Circles among trained facilitators. The Eastern Shore Discipleship Circle continues to meet with impressive results around the challenging and critical topic of "race relations." As Discipleship Circles continue to form throughout the Virginia Conference, please join us in prayer that our lives, churches, communities and world might be transformed as we work to become more spirit-led, connected and accountable.

Cheryl Edley-Worford, Director of Inclusivity and Lay Leadership Excellence

Older Adult Council

The Older Adult Council has begun a strategic effort to provide resources to the district and local church level to encourage and equip older adults in their personal faith development and in reaching out into the world to serve older adults, those age 55 and older. We endeavor to equip those, who serve older adults to encourage discipleship.

We recognize ageism, often unrecognized, may interfere with our goals. Such statements as, "Why would we spend money and waste energy on programs for our seniors, when we all know the future of our church is our children and youth?" fail to appreciate the wealth of resource of older disciples, their continued need for faith development, and their gifts and graces to serve the community. We recognize intergenerational programming may be challenging, but important to the building of the kingdom. As older adults share their faith experiences, they are an integral part of making and growing disciples.

Programs on Experiencing God, How Faith Shapes Us, Leaving a Legacy of Faith, and liturgical dance are offered upon request by members of the Council. An Old Time Revival, cosponsored last year with Shady Grove UMC, Mechanicsville, was well received and will be repeated this year at Centreville UMC. For 2016, the Council partnered with Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. to develop and distribute worship suggestions for Older Adult Recognition Sunday which is recognized within our Annual Conference on the first Sunday in May. Members of the Conference Council continue to serve as representatives on the board for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Association of Older Adults (SEJAOA). The major event sponsored by the SEJAOA is the annual Festival of Wisdom and Grace which will be held on August 1 – 4, 2016, at the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center.

Suzanne Spencer, Chair

Conference Council on Youth Ministries

Grace and peace to you from the Virginia Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM)! Our Council just finished our spring meeting and are looking forward to gathering again September 9-11, 2016. March 3-5, 2017 will be our next spring meeting.

This year we learned that multiple local colleges and universities have received grants to put "institutes" that will likely address many similar issues to our LEAD program. While we intended to run LEAD again in Summer 2016, it no longer seems like an area of need. The council will take time to evaluate if the program should still exist and if not, what area of opportunity exists that we can fill.

In partnership with the office of Ministries with Young People, our 2015 Fall Retreats featured Keith Elgin (a nationally recognized artist and worship leader at Vine Church in the Virginia Conference). Keith was asked to support General Conference 2016 as a worship leader, so having him at our fall retreats links us in a small way to the global gathering of the UMC. Paulo Lopes, our new director of Ministries with Young People, served as our speaker. We were fortunate to partner with UMFS to collect items that would support their Bridges Out of Poverty program in Lynchburg, Virginia. Hearing directly from a graduate of that program was powerful and provided a direct connection to those who benefit from the in-kind offerings from our youths.

Efforts to increase marketing have continued. Please like *VAUMC Youth* on Facebook or follow *vaumcyouth* on Twitter and/or Instagram.

CCYM relies on districts to provide names and contact information for council membership. Please encourage your district to be in touch and send members to the council meetings. Members' names should be submitted from district offices to alisonmalloy@vaumc.org

On March 5, 2016, our incoming co-chairs were elected: Hannah Hale from Fairview UMC in Danville and Sarah Williams from Floris UMC in Arlington. We look forward to their leadership as we thank Ethan Adams from Bonsack UMC in Roanoke and Katie Wax from Oak Grove UMC in Elizabeth River for their service!

Alison Malloy, adult chair

CONFERENCE MISSIONAL MINISTRIES BOARD

"Engaging, connecting and equipping clergy and laity of the Virginia Conference for God's mission" is the base for the new structure of the board. Facilitating the board's function are two teams: Missional Discipleship and Engagement and Missional Connections. Through these two teams, we have

been exploring and discerning new ways to be in mission partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.

The Missional Discipleship and Engagement team includes the inter-related work of several conference committees: Disaster Response, Initiatives of Hope, Volunteers in Mission and Voices of Youth.

Disaster Response is coordinated by Rev. Bob Pihlcrantz. Disaster Response provides conference-wide alerts, training and coordination of volunteer response teams.

Initiatives of Hope (IOH), chaired by Rev. Judy Fender, has a mission to increase awareness of and generate increased participation in partnership-in-mission opportunities in identified countries or local and national missional ministries. Our overseas connections are currently with Mozambique, Brazil, and Cambodia.

The Rev. Glenn Rowley and Erin McKenney attended the Mozambique Consultation. Our primary ministry in Mozambique is supporting lay and clergy leadership and training. Discussions continue on how we continue to be in mutual relationship as funding decreases. The Bishop of Mozambique who is the Episcopal Leader for South Africa has asked that we explore developing relationships with the UMC in South Africa and that has begun. Rev. Glenn Rowley and the Rev. Haley Mills dos Santos attended the 15th anniversary celebration of the Shade and Fresh Water Project (for at-risk children) in Brazil. VAUMC partnership was recounted and celebrated, and a strong desire to continue our relationship with the Shade and Fresh Project and the Amazon Medical Boat was voiced. The Rev. David Vaughn chairs the Brazilian Initiative. Juanita Csontos chairs the Cambodian Initiative. Two VIM teams traveled there in 2015. The United Methodist Church continues to grow and values their mutual relationship with Virginia United Methodists. In February, Rowley traveled to Cambodia to discuss our goals and continuing our relationship beyond 2016. Plans are underway to send 1-2 VIM teams there in 2017. Rowley will also visit Vietnam where the UMC is rapidly growing. Volunteer in Mission teams are a vital means of keeping relationships alive, and our goal is to ensure at least 2 teams travel to designated countries. We are exploring new initiatives and relationships with Native Americans, recognizing we have much to learn from them and share with local churches.

United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM), coordinated by Forrest White, offered four team leader trainings in 2015, with 29 persons trained; and three re-certification events with 27 persons. There have already been three training events in 2016 with 50 persons. The Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaUMVIM>) continues to be a place for inspiration, information and connection. Team leaders are invited to share the specifics about their trip (i.e. church or district sending the team, location and ministry project particulars) by e-mailing the conference UMVIM coordinator who will post to the Facebook page. Others are invited to pray for the team and those they'll be serving. Teams looking for additional information are invited to "recruit" via the Facebook page. Our prayer is that we truly embrace and live the UMVIM mission statement based on 1 John 3:18 — "Christian Love In Action."

Voices of Youth (VOY), coordinated by the Rev. Rebecca Minor, has as its mission statement: "Fill your mind with truth, your heart with love, your life with service." We are a group of youths and adults who have a passion for music and mission and combine those two gifts into a unique service experience. This summer we will spend three weeks in July giving of ourselves in service to the high population of homeless in Hawaii — a group that is avoided, overlooked and forgotten. We will be in ministry with the homeless in Honolulu, and then again in Hilo on the Big Island. We will also be working in construction at the only United Methodist Camp in Hawaii, Camp Mekokiko.

The Missional Connections Team includes the work of mission contexts and relationships; mission education, interpretation and resources; and health and relief connections.

Mrs. Anne Klotz, Missionary Itineration Coordinator, has facilitated connections and visits for many missionaries with their covenant churches during the past year. Under the new Global Mission Fellows program to engage young persons in short-term mission ministry, Christina Trager, a US2, is serving at Henry Fork and Ferrum College. We anticipate additional placement sites being created within the Virginia Conference.

Mission Encounter, is a cooperative school offered by the Conference Missional Ministries Board and the United Methodist Women to help us understand God's work in our world and our involvement as United Methodists. Mission Encounter 2016 will be offered July 29-31 at the Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center (VUMAC). The studies focus on three areas: Social Issue — *Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action*; Spiritual Formation — *The Bible and Human Sexuality: Claiming God's Good Gift*; and the Geographical Study — *Latin America: People of Faith*. There will be a Korean Study on *Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action*, and a Children's Class – *God's Extravagant Garden: A Children's Study on Climate Justice*.

The Conference Committee on Mission Personnel (CMMP), chaired by the Rev. Joanne Maughlin, guides and mentors interested persons through the application and discernment process for mission service. Applicants can access the Personnel Information Form (PIF–Application for Missionary Service) and other application materials from the Virginia Conference website under Ministries > Center for Justice and Missional Excellence > Committee on Mission Personnel (CCMP) > Related Documentation. All completed application materials should be sent to the Virginia Conference Committee on Mission Personnel, The Virginia Conference Center for Justice and Missional Excellence, P. O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058, NOT to the General Board of Global Ministries.

Verónica G. Barrell, CMMP Chair

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

Heart Havens

Throughout 2015, Heart Havens continued to further its mission of empowering adults with intellectual disabilities to live and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. We continued to operate eleven (11) group homes throughout the conference, but Heart Havens is about so much more than a roof and a bed. This year, people we support participated in sports leagues and community theater, gave back to their communities through pet food drives and other service projects, attended festivals, planted gardens, and so much more. We are so thankful for the support of our VAUMC friends that make this empowerment possible.

In 2015, we continued to hold the Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity Seal and Guidestar Gold. In addition to the generous support of our brothers and sisters throughout the Conference, we also received over \$126,000 in grants to help us pursue our mission. Some highlights are:

- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, \$57,955 (vans for the Macleigh-Holland home in Virginia Beach and the Mary Beth Graff home in Richmond)

- Knights of Virginia (KOVAR), \$20,000 (towards new vans and replacement furniture at the Winchester, Colonial Beach, and Garber Morris homes)
- The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, \$25,000 (towards home maintenance, including new roofs at the Bonnie home in Stuarts Draft and the Mary Beth Graff home in Richmond)
- Richmond Memorial Health Foundation, \$10,780 (year two of a three year grant to build a career ladder for Direct Support Professionals)
- Commission on Disabilities, \$430 (towards modifications to make the Kilmarnock home more accessible)

We continued to strengthen our connections with congregations and small groups throughout the Conference. We were pleased to share our message of empowerment at 55 different churches, small groups, and events around the conference. Additionally, we welcomed many volunteers from local churches, including youth and UMM groups. These volunteers blessed us by raking leaves, painting, or simply having fellowship with the people we support. We were proud to announce that our 2015 Manwiller Award recipient was Jim Butts of the Elizabeth River District. Jim has been a tireless advocate for Heart Havens from the very beginning, and has been very involved with our Tidewater area homes. He comes up with fun and inclusive activities for the people we support, and he builds meaningful relationships with both residents and staff.

Looking forward, the Charlottesville District is currently raising funds with us to build an integrated community. We also know that many of the people we support are aging, and we are exploring ways to support people with intellectual disabilities throughout the aging process, including the possibility of bringing on a nursing coordinator.

With your continued support, Heart Havens can continue to empower people with intellectual disabilities to live vibrant lives with as much independence as possible. We invite you as the Church to be an advocate for Heart Havens and for people with intellectual disabilities. After all, “we are one body in this one Lord!”

Jennifer Boyden, Chief Executive Officer

United Methodist Family Services of Virginia (UMFS)

As a faith-based nonprofit social service organization, we do whatever it takes to empower high-risk children, their families and communities throughout Virginia. From addressing behavioral and emotional issues to finding foster and adoptive homes, UMFS never gives up. UMFS is an unwavering champion for high risk children and families, collaborating with communities to help them reach their full potential.

We provided services in 2015 to over 9000 children and families throughout Virginia. With regional centers in Richmond, Northern Virginia, Tidewater, Fredericksburg, South Hill and Lynchburg; intensive treatment centers in Richmond and Centreville; and offices in Farmville, Charlottesville, Roanoke, Tazewell, and Loudon counties, our reach is across the Conference. We are dedicated to creating a world where caring, opportunity and generosity are passed on from generation to generation. Through our five core values of collaboration multiplies impact, relationships are our building blocks, relentlessly pursue solutions, passion unleashes greatness and starting with strengths; we are transforming lives of children and families across the commonwealth.

Since 1900 the United Methodist Church has partnered with us to be an advocate for those most at risk. With the help of the Church Partnership Program we have made a concerted effort to engage youth, parents, community groups, business partners and the faith community in providing resources, expertise and support so that all families can thrive. Our 60 church partners are ministering in their communities by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families; serving as mentors and tutors; conducting work projects and special events; providing transportation for children and families; and hosting the prom for Charterhouse School. UMFS and the Lynchburg District partner together at the Park View mission by hosting the “Bridges out of Poverty” class and “What every church member should know about poverty” class. This is in an effort to help our brothers and sisters break the cycle of poverty by partnering the local church with UMFS staff and resources through a hand up rather than a hand out approach. Church partners are making a huge impact across the Conference for high risk children and families in your communities.

Alongside our church partners our Child Champion Councils (CCCs) are a critical resource to our children and UMFS. The CCCs are a collection of church partners that grow in ministry together by combining their efforts and energy on multiple fronts. The Child Champion Councils exist in Northern Virginia, Tidewater, Edinburg, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg/Roanoke and South Hill, and are advocates for our ministry on their districts and local churches. Our relationship with the United Methodist church is vital for us to achieve our mission of serving and loving the most vulnerable children in Virginia. We have 87 new foster /adoptive families approved and more than 1,495 volunteers last year, a large percentage of which were church affiliated.

We ask you as the Church to be the champion for at risk youth and their families and also help UMFS to find forever homes for the thousands of youth who are in the Virginia foster care system. Become a partner church with UMFS, or a local church ambassador of UMFS. We value our Virginia Annual Conference connection and feel privileged to be a part of the ministry of the United Methodist Church and want to invite you and your congregation to join forces with us. Together we can make a difference.

Margaret Hardy, Chair, UMFS Board of Directors and Greg Peters, Chief Executive Officer

Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.

Reflecting on this past conference year, I am amazed by all that has taken place at Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. (VUMH). Today there are nearly 1,300 residents who call one of our seven VUMH communities home, and overall occupancy has grown to 1,065 occupied residences. We have nearly 1,000 full time and part time team members who work 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, to enhance the lives of those residents. In 2015, our dedicated board and countless volunteers provided over 33,300 hours of service in our seven communities – an average of more than 91 volunteer hours each and every day!

We realize that to be successful in today’s senior living market, we need to grow the services and programs we offer. With the help of a dedicated group of professionals, our team members have embraced culture change efforts, a movement of transformation that shapes relationships, organizational structure, and physical settings to create a genuine sense of “home” and greater opportunity for elders to direct their own lives. Although much work remains to be done, the stories our team members share are amazing! We have worked collectively with our residents, board, consultants and team members as part of this process to develop new ideas for Cedarfield and WindsorMeade. Those planning efforts will continue throughout 2016 and into 2017 with new construction starting at WindsorMeade soon and at Cedarfield shortly thereafter. Our board is committed to maintaining and upgrading all of our communities, and to that end we have seen significant improvements in all of our physical plants.

Transformation in an organizational context can be defined as a process of profound change that orients an organization in a new direction and takes it to higher level of effectiveness. As our efforts toward culture change bring about this type of profound change we are led toward new ways of communicating this person-centered focus while lifting up our Wesleyan heritage. A new branding initiative will assist us in describing this transformation to the broader community.

In our culture change and branding efforts, VUMH is called to acknowledge and honor both the new and innovative work that guides us toward the future and the history and faith connection that are the roots of our mission. It has been the tradition of VUMH that we recognize the ten local congregations across the Virginia Annual Conference with the highest level of giving each year to the Samaritan Program. Provided since 1948, benevolent assistance to residents through this program is at the heart of the mission of VUMH. During 2015, we were honored to recognize the following churches with the Samaritan Award for their support of the Samaritan Program:

- Reveille (Richmond District)
- Westover Hills (Richmond)
- Saint Stephens (Alexandria)
- Fairmount (Richmond)
- Sydenstricker (Alexandria)
- Trinity (Richmond)
- Burke (Alexandria)
- Fairfax (Alexandria)
- Williamsburg (York River)
- Greene Memorial (Roanoke)

Community Guilds also recognized the tremendous contributions of the following churches with the Innkeeper Award. This award honors and offers appreciation to congregations in the Virginia Annual Conference for exemplary support of the mission of VUMH with older adults. It recognizes both the stewardship and volunteer service of members of the congregation:

- Cokesbury (Alexandria District)
- Messiah (Elizabeth River)
- Greene Memorial (Roanoke)
- Shady Grove – Mechanicsville (Richmond)

We are deeply appreciative of the prayers, gifts, and volunteer service that come from our Conference churches and organizations. VUMH is proud to be carrying on the tradition of advocacy and support for older adults that the Methodists of Virginia began discussing at Annual Conferences in the early 1940s. We hope that United Methodists of the Virginia Conference today consider VUMH a valuable resource and extension of local church ministries with older adults.

Christopher P. Henderson, President and CEO

Wesley Housing Development Corporation

Wesley Housing's mission is to preserve, develop, own, and operate affordable housing and sustain quality communities for low- and moderate-income families and individuals who might otherwise face homelessness. Since 1974, we have served over 25,000 residents in Northern Virginia. We currently manage 19 properties (serving more than 2,100 residents) in Alexandria, Arlington County, Manassas, and Fairfax County. We also manage four Community Resource Centers and five special needs Resident Services Centers that offer a full range of programs and services to support children, adults, seniors, people with chronic disease, and people with disabilities.

Real Estate Development Projects

- Lewinsville Senior Residences (McLean): Wesley Housing has been chosen to renovate and expand the McLean property from 22 to 82 units of affordable, independent housing for low-income seniors. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with Wesley Housing. Construction will begin this year and finish in 2017.
- Lynhaven Apartments (Alexandria) and William Watters Apartments (Arlington): The combined 49 units are being fully renovated to include energy efficient upgrades and new interiors. Renovation work is nearing completion.
- Wexford Manor Apartments (Falls Church/Fairfax County): In 2016, critically needed renovations will begin on 74 apartments. The project will preserve the community as affordable for 30 years and the Community Resource Center will triple in size.
- Culpepper Garden (Arlington): Wesley Housing will lead the renovation of this landmark seniors' community. We will work with the owners to preserve 204 affordable units.
- Union on Queen, formerly Pierce Queen Apartments (Arlington): This Metro-accessible Arlington County project will incorporate two of Pierce Queen's garden apartment buildings and construct a new 12-story residential tower, resulting in a total of 193 total units with 78 affordable apartments. The mixed-income project will preserve affordability for 60 years.

Resident Services & Volunteers

- Housing Stability Initiative: Every month, approximately 200 adults take advantage of housing stability and eviction prevention programs such as resume and job search skills training, computer training, crisis intervention, referrals to community resources, and financial literacy and household budgeting. In 2015, 754 households accessed our services, including 249 children in youth programs and 52 adults who found first-time or better employment.
- Thirty-two Wesley Housing families, including 155 children, enjoyed a special holiday because of hundreds of volunteers who participated in our 2015 Adopt-A-Family program. St. John's UMC again donated space for volunteers who worked to sort and wrap Adopt-A-Family gifts as well as the donations from Toys for Tots. During the holiday season, Wesley distributed quality food items to 400 families, as well as sponsored a flu shot clinic.
- In 2015, 540 volunteers served Wesley Housing and its residents.

Shelley S. Murphy, President/CEO

Advance Specials 2016 -2017**INTERNATIONAL**

Mozambique: Chicique Rural Hospital, Advance #09734A
 Mozambique: Cambine Agriculture Program, Advance #3020561
 Congo: North Katanga Wings of the Morning, Advance #08597A
 Chile: Methodist Construction Projects, Advance #3020485
 Liberia: Ganta United Methodist Hospital, Advance #15080N
 Haiti: Haiti Emergency Projects, Advance #418325
 Cambodia: Mission Initiative, Advance #00230A
 Cambodia: Street Children Ministry, Advance #14921A
 Macedonia: Macedonia in Mission Together, Advance #00220A
 Brazil: Ministry with Children, Shade and Fresh Water Project, Advance #11580A
 Israel: Bethlehem Bible College, Advance #12017A
 Russia: Russia Mission Initiative, Ukraine, Moldova, Advance #14053A
 Sierra Leone: Child Rescue Program, Advance #14377A
 Sudan: Sudan Emergency, Advance #184385
 Global: Anti-Human Trafficking, Advance #333615
 Global: The Medicine Box, Advance #982630
 Global: Sustainable Agriculture, Advance #982188
 Guatemala: Highland Support Project, Advance #15022A
 Mexico: Give Ye Them To Eat, Advance #07629A
 Mozambique: Evangelization and Church Expansion Ministry, Advance #12580A

NATIONAL

Mississippi: Choctaw United Methodist Mission, Advance #761544
 USA: Project Crossroads, Advance #781380
 District of Columbia: Christ House, Advance #381215
 Kentucky: Red Bird Mission, Inc., Beverly, Advance #773726
 Kentucky: Henderson Settlement, Frakes, Advance #773365
 Florida: Cornerstone Family Ministries, Advance #751202
 South Dakota: Tree of Life Ministry, Advance #123615
 Tennessee: Jubilee Project, Inc., Sneedville, Advance #781350
 USA: Justice for Our Neighbors Immigration Ministry, Advance #901285
 USA: Volunteers in Mission, Southeastern Jurisdiction, Advance #901875
 USA: Society of St. Andrew, Advance #801600
 USA: Response and Recovery to Natural Disaster, Advance #901670

VIRGINIA

Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, #5043
 Shalom Zone: Grace Ministries, #5046
 Tuesday's Table, #5024
 Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries of Virginia, #5029
 Henry Fork Service Center, #5008
 United Methodist Community Outreach Program of Roanoke, #5004
 Virginia Conference Disaster Response and Recovery, #5037
 Agape Christian Children's Community Center, Inc, #5020
 GRACE Ministries of The United Methodist Church, #5035
 ESL and Immigrant Ministries Childcare Support, #5036
 Teens Opposing Poverty, Inc. (TOPS), #5010
 Heart Havens, #6442
 Wesley Community Center, #5025
 Helping Hands Mission Camp, #5026
 Just Neighbors Ministry, Advance #803002
 Pathways Virginia Advance #5045
 Caretakers of God's Creation #5016

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES

As stated in previous reports, campus ministry in the Virginia Conference strives to be “a dynamic, diverse demonstration of God’s creative and inviting love” expressed through the ministries of seven Wesley Foundations, six ecumenical campus ministries and six chaplains at United Methodist educational institutions in Virginia. These campus ministries touch the lives of tens of thousands of students (most between the ages of 19 and 30) with invitations and opportunities “to explore, engage and embody an active faith in God.” In varied ways appropriate to each campus ministry context, God is worshipped, faith is explored, communities and people are served and lives are changed — all in the name and through the power of Jesus Christ. I trust you will read the stories shared by each of our campus ministries.

The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries is in place to provide oversight, policies and resources for fruitful ministry with college students. This year BHECM has been focused on moving toward a grant-based funding system for each ministry, establishing standards to determine the grant levels and providing resources and training for local campus ministry boards. The board is grateful to John Dunning for his exceptional and dedicated work on these initiatives. BHECM has continued to work to develop and improve its Campus Ministry System of data collection and reporting. Though this has been a continuing frustration for many we are still hopeful that a “more perfect” system can be developed. We are grateful to Josh Blakely for his continued work on this. We are also grateful to Bill Pike for his expertise and consistent efforts to address all the maintenance and improvements on our Wesley Foundation facilities. An understanding of the responsibilities of the local boards and those of BHECM/Wesley Foundation, Inc. in maintaining the facilities has been more clearly established. We are making great strides. Additionally, local boards at each of the Wesley Foundation were asked to assess their building and facility needs and whether their current building was meeting those needs effectively. One ministry, RISE at JMU, after making this assessment determined that the Wesley House at JMU was no longer meeting their needs. So in consultation with Wesley Inc. and the conference trustees, the facility at JMU was sold. Proceeds will be used to support campus ministry facilities and program needs across the Conference.

Following a year or more of transitions and challenges with the campus ministry at VCU, the BHECM decided in November to suspend the ministry at VCU for one year — and relaunch the ministry in 2017. A new minister director for this new ministry at VCU has been selected and will begin in July. We are excited about the new possibilities God is opening at VCU.

This year we welcomed a new chaplain at Randolph Macon College, Kendra Grimes; a new minister director at our ecumenical ministry at CNU, Donna DeSarro-Raynal; and a new director of Ministries with Young People, Paulo Lopes. We look forward to welcoming a new minister director for our ministry at George Mason this July.

Students and young adults are hungry, yearning and desire the love, mercy and good news of Jesus Christ. It is a great mission field. Thank you, VA Conference for your continued prayers and support of your campus ministries in Virginia.

Herb Brynildsen, president

Arise Campus Ministry, George Mason University

What a year it has been with the students at George Mason and Arise Campus Ministry! If there was one word to describe it, it would be transitions. About four years ago, Arise rebranded and part of that involved the tagline, “Explore Faith, Discover Grace”. When I came on board in July, this is the phrase that I prayed over and based the projections for the semester. I felt that this would be a strong foundation for how our students would experience one another in community and reach out to other students on the campus of George Mason.

Arise is supported by two program staff and myself. Amy Cox, is a worship leader at a local United Methodist Congregation and lends her energy and gifts to Arise on a weekly basis. This year we brought on a new team member, Michelle Cashwell, as the administrative assistant. A lot of things would not happen at Arise without their creativity, support, attention to details and passion for ministry with students!

The biggest transition was in the essence of our weekly gatherings from the fall semester to the spring semester. Once the fall rolled around, I was carrying out the calendar of weekly worship, small groups and mission opportunities as had been previously laid out. This included two small groups and a Stop Hunger Now event where we packaged 20,000 meals. We were meeting new students—transfers, freshmen, and upperclassmen—but the weekly programming was becoming static. There was a disconnect between the students and what was happening. But perhaps more importantly, there were not varied opportunities to truly “Explore faith, Discover grace”. By the end of the fall semester, we had a “town meeting” of sorts for students to reflect on the past semester (or two), dream about what could happen next (without any limitations), and articulate how Arise could connect with the greater Mason population. From that fruitful discussion a comment came from Andrew Miller, a sophomore, and he said, “I believe that if people really knew that Arise is ‘come as you are’ and that we aren’t just saying that, they would find a real community.” This resonated with me along with the comments of wanting informal gatherings and missional opportunities.

With prayer and brainstorming with Amy as well as students we presented a new “model” for the spring semester. Basically, we worked through a rotation of Worship, Social Action (Mission), and social events. Worship is modern and laid back; social action is an opportunity for students to learn about a local mission effort and then put their hands to work. This semester we partnered with a local church to package meals for a local elementary school; we prepared and served dinner at a hypothermia shelter and prepared Health kits for United Methodist Committee on Relief. Finally, the main social event was hosting Trivia nights on campus. This rotation has given balance to the community as well as attracted new students.

In regards to organization and structure, one new endeavor has been to meet weekly with a Student Leadership Team. It functions with all the elements such as the accountability of a small group, planning of a team and learning from a bible study. This has allowed students to really get to know one another and has encouraged them to take ownership in the ministry versus coming solely from the campus minister. I am thankful to Noelle, Will, Ruth, Allie, and Kyle for saying yes to something new and challenging.

We also continue to be supported by an ecumenical board that has welcomed several new members this year. The board seeks to spread the word of Arise’s mission and ministry to the local community. We have found new local churches to partner with and individuals who are extremely passionate about being in ministry with students.

Finally, after what has been an enriching year, it is difficult to transition away from the Arise Community. However, I feel confident in the students, the student leadership team and the incoming Campus minister to continue serving the campus of George Mason. I am eager to see how the Spirit rushes through the community and connects students with one another and to our God. We are thankful to God for inspiring us as a community and thankful to the many members in the body of Christ for their support.

Lindsey M. Baynham

The Campus Christian Community (CCC)

The Campus Christian Community (CCC) is an ecumenical campus ministry serving the campus of the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg. It is supported by the Presbyterians, United Methodists, Episcopalians, and Lutherans. The mission of the CCC is: "Welcoming all people, The Campus Christian Community witnesses to the love and power of God in Jesus Christ. The CCC ministers with students, faculty, and staff of the University of Mary Washington and the surrounding community through worship, study, fellowship, and service, and provides a forum to explore and question issues of faith and life."

This mission statement is something that we strive to live into every day at the CCC. This year we have spent time re-evaluating our programs and the life at the CCC to see how this statement represents us. As a result, we have increased the amount of mission work and outreach that we have been doing in our community. Our leadership retreat expanded from a one-day event to two, so that we would have more time to do leadership development and dig into the different areas we were discussing. Gathering together at table is an important part of our ministry. Our largest event continues to be our Thursday evening program. We are grateful for the area churches that continue to support us with this event by bringing us meals for students. In addition to the meals, we have a program portion as well. Some of the favorites this year were Pastor's Panels, where local clergy were asked any questions the students could come up with, spirituality centers, and a conversation on privilege. The students also cook for each other on Tuesday night for a time of fellowship. On Wednesday's we gather for a Bible study. This is giving more students a chance to delve deeper into scripture and practice sharing where they find meaning in it. Some highlights from our year include completing a large fundraiser to replace the roof of our building, a mission trip to help with the lasting effects of Super Storm Sandy, and our retreats.

We invite you to check out our website www.campuschristiancommunity.com to see what we have been up to and to keep up to date with our ministry.

Shannon Waite

RISE: A United Methodist Faith Community

My name is Alexis Ward, and I am the Coordinator of College Outreach at RISE. I am also a graduating senior at James Madison University. Four years ago I began my career at JMU, I was searching and wandering, an eighteen-year-old girl trying to find herself. Four years later I am twenty-two, I am still at JMU, I am still at RISE, and I am still trying to find myself. The difference between the girl from four years ago and the woman I am now is that I have grown and changed, and I have had the opportunity to do this alongside the incredible community called RISE. Over the past year this community has fed the hungry and clothed the naked, we have journeyed with those suffering from mental illness and addiction. This community has grieved and struggled, we have laughed and loved with a passion beyond imagination. Most of all, this community has asked the hard questions and pushed past the boundaries that our society has set as the limitation of what any organized group of people should be able to accomplish. We do not have all of the answers, and I don't think we ever will, but we have faith that God will help guide us along our journey and point us in the direction of those who need a community to call their own.

Alexis Ward, JMU Junior, RISE Worship Coordinator

IGNITE United Methodist Church (formerly Tidewater Wesley Foundation)

Our year began with a question: How can you start a church until you know what one is?

After several hours of praying and discerning the direction God wanted for IGNITE. This was the question that lingered, that ate at me day and night. We had received clear confirmation that ours was not to be a typical church. We weren't going to worship every Sunday. We weren't going to have a band or sermons - at least not for the present.

But if not that, then what?

What evolved of the next few months was an entirely new idea of church for us. In many ways, it was church in reverse. Instead of starting our church with worship and moving towards disci-pleship and missions, we were going to start with missions. We were going to connect with the students of ODU in the area where they seemed most passionate: serving others. If the hall-mark of the millennial generation was a desire to make a difference with their lives, we were go-ing to offer it to them, while also introducing them to the one who would make the greatest difference in their lives: Jesus.

Within a few months, it became clear that this was clearly the path to which God was calling us. Our number of volunteers surged. Our Bible studies filled up. And suddenly we had more people than we could even handle at the events we were hosting.

As a result, we began to expand our outreach in the community. Each month, we fed over 300 hungry people through a local community supper. We worked with several dozen children whose families were homeless through a ministry called Hot Meals and Homework. We adopted a third grade class, building relationships with the students, their parents, and their teacher. And in each of these, we found ourselves being introduced to dozens of new students each month who were curious about this new vision of church we were forming.

Before long, we realized that God was providing opportunities for us to not only serve those in need in the community, but also those on the campus itself. We began to work with the univer-sity to research a possible situation of food insecurity among students. We learned that while around 18% of people went hungry each day in the city of Norfolk, the need was even greater on campus. Many students were without enough food to eat each day, and there was nothing in place to address it. As a result, we have begun to build a partnership with the university to form a student food pantry that will provide food resources to students, faculty, and staff on a weekly basis. Not only will this allow us to serve students in need, it will allow us to engage an untold number of students who have already signed up to volunteer at the food pantry.

Most important, though, have been our efforts in the area of discipleship. Were it not for these, we might risk becoming little more than a service organization. Therefore, we formed what we call Missional Communities. They are small groups that meet weekly with the intention of building fellowship, fostering service, and nurturing discipleship. They are a place where we begin to bond and grow as the body of Christ, helping one another to wrestle with the question of "how is it with your soul" and dreaming together of the ways in which we can continue to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." More than anywhere, this is where lives change and disciples are made.

What I have realized over the past year is that in pursuing this vision of a new kind of church and campus ministry, we are not so much paving new ground as returning to our roots. We are embodying the image of the church in Acts, a church not defined solely by worship, but by shar-ing in communion, eating together, discipling one another, and offering such generosity that no one in their community had need. And we are returning to the beginnings of our Methodist heritage, a movement begun by feeding the hungry, working in schools, and meeting in small groups.

Throughout my ministry, I have scarcely felt as much excitement as I do for the untold possibilities of what lay ahead. The path God has laid before us,

though evident, is far from clear. And perhaps that is the way it should be. For such mystery demands faith and requires obedience. Why would we desire to do anything else?

Brandon Robb

Wesley-Westminster Foundation at Norfolk State University

The Wesley-Westminster Foundation at Norfolk is an ecumenical ministry of the United Methodist and Presbyterian (USA) Churches seeking to impact the College, the Community, and the Current Culture with Christian Principles, Open Hearts and Open Minds. It is our mission to provide a safe place to explore and to experience one's faith, while offering a respectful and non-threatening environment of love, service to others and learning. Friendship, fellowship and faith are enhanced at The Foundation House. Students enjoy a space where they can learn, grow and develop their faith. Bible Study, Prayer, Small Groups, one-on-one conversations and weekly meals are offered. We worship and work together. As a family, we support one another and seek to strengthen our Christian walk.

This summer three from our ministry traveled with the other young adults in the Virginia Conference to Cambodia for a two-week mission trip. We taught youth and young adults during a week long Christian Camp. This was a memorable event that has changed the way we see missions. We then traveled to Milwaukee to experience street ministry first hand. This week-long intensive afforded us the privilege to serve in soup kitchens, meet Franciscan monks and provide food to several homeless populations while learning the essentials of initiating viable ministries for outreach.

Students come to The Foundation House to study, to relax and to just have fun. We have hosted game nights, Super Bowl Parties, Movie Nights and even a Christian House Party. Reaching out to help others is vital to our vision for Campus Ministry. During our Back to School Campus and Community Cookout we welcomed more than 200 students, staff and community members. On several occasions we have provided over 200 lunches to homeless men and women through our street ministry (#Lunchbag). Students gather to pray, pack lunches and then distribute them in three specified locations. When we arrive at the destinations, we give out lunches, offer prayer, sing songs of praise and encourage those present. In the future, we hope to provide coats, gloves and hats while serving lunch during the winter months. This will be a continuous outreach for us. Additionally, we have adopted a second grade classroom at James Monroe Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia. Both our board members and our students participate in ministry to these young people by helping to host holiday parties, provide activities and engage them in arts and crafts as a way of demonstrating care and concern and encouraging them to be the best students they can be.

Every year our students look forward to our Faith Enhancement Retreat. We enjoy traveling to Still Waters Retreat Center and basking two days in spirit filled worship, devotion, prayer, and introspection. Rev. Lisa Johnson is an amazing retreat facilitator. This year Thirsty Thursdays has consisted of Life Support, a series addressing the daily life of the believer. About 20 of us gather each week for this Bible Study. Additionally, the students meet for a student led Bible Study on Wednesday nights and small groups throughout the week. This year we hosted our very first Campus Ministry Week offering several opportunities for worship, outreach and fun. More than 75 students attended our worship services during this week. We also hosted our first Benefit Banquet.

We have been invited to more than ten churches to lead worship and to offer the morning message. As a family we attended the movie Woodlawn and hosted a discussion on Race Matters. During No Strings Attached (NSA) Bible Study we have given out over 400 tokens of our appreciation to faculty and staff including flowers for breast cancer awareness, you were "mint" to touch lives candy bags and let your light shine tea light candles. The students have been intentional about spreading the gospel and led several prayer walks throughout campus. The Great Hunt is always a success and offers the students a chance to be children again by hunting for Easter eggs filled with candy and scriptures. We hide hundreds of filled plastic eggs and give away prizes.

Students and their parents attended Family Weekend and enjoyed music and the message during the worship service we hosted. In efforts to make disciples we always march in the Homecoming parade giving out literature and candy, of course. One of our students was even asked to pray for one young lady as we passed. We have joined with other Christian organizations on campus to develop what we have coined as the Coalition of Christian Organizations (C.O.C.O.). Together we are working to raise at least \$1000 to donate to CHKD a Children's hospital during our Dance Marathon.

Joy Denise Carrington

Pace Campus Ministry (Wesley Foundation @ VCU)

This has been an exciting year at Pace United Methodist Campus Ministries! We offer weekly worship and fellowship opportunities to the students at VCU, and have been blessed to see students growing in their faith, and developing relationships with others as well.

This year we began a new partnership with UKirk, the Presbyterian Church (USA) campus ministry at VCU. This offers the students an opportunity to grow spiritually in an ecumenical environment. It has been a great joy to work with Rev. Aaron Houghton of UKirk.

The Pace Center also joined the Interfaith Campus Ministries Association of VCU, and has been able to network with other faith groups here on campus. We continue to see our role grow within the broader VCU community.

We are home to many other groups ministering to the campus and community. This year two more ministries have come to call Pace home, and we rejoice in the work they are doing to live out God's love in this area of Richmond. Whenever we can, we work together to offer the love of Christ to all of our neighbors.

Pace is grateful for the work of our Board, as well as the support of the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry. Together, Pace will forge ahead into God's future for the ministry, making disciples for the transformation of the world.

Michael Lee Nelson, Director

United Campus Ministries at Virginia State University Home of FLOW: Faith, Love, Outreach & Worship!!!

UCM FLOW is a new faith community partnership on the James River District that developed when the Ettrick United Methodist Church graciously opened its doors to United Campus Ministries at Virginia State University. The Lord Jesus Christ has blessed this relationship mightily resulting in a number of new opportunities for ministry in the village of Ettrick!! The church now hosts weekly worship services at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the sanctuary with a number of members who attend both!! Highlights from this new day for ministry include the following opportunities:

- A church cleanup project in basement and on the grounds outdoors on Holy Saturday, April 4, 2015, consisting of 15 VSU student volunteers.
- The use of drums during the 11 a.m. Sunday service, as a FLOW student and new member of the Ettrick UMC family began playing in the

summer of 2015.

- A Village of Ettrick “Love Thy Neighbor” Fair on Saturday, September 12, 2015, consisting of free food, kids bounce equipment, door prizes, school supply giveaways, and more. In attendance to interact with the community were members of the local police force, fire department, and community service providers. More than 50 VSU student volunteers were present to help including UCM FLOW members, Oikonomia student leaders, and the VSU Women’s Basketball Team. The fair was made possible by a \$5,000.00 grant given by the Ettrick Neighborhood and Business Foundation which was written by Mr. James Barber, a VSU FLOW student intern and member of Ettrick UMC.
- The development of the Concerned Citizens of Ettrick (CCE), a gathering of local business owners, pastors, former educators, public servants, and people of good will who meet weekly at the church to address the issues which challenge our community. This CCE has adopted the issue of maintaining the existence of the Amtrak Train Station in the village as it is an asset to the students at Virginia State University and other locals as a means to travel to and from the village. A relocation at any other site would hinder student access to campus as the station is currently walking distance away from the university.
- A couple of students have joined the Ettrick United Methodist Church as members with others having been baptized for the first time in life as members of FLOW.
- A visit to the 2 p.m. worship service by Bishop Young Jin Cho on Sunday, October 11, 2016. During his visit, Bishop Cho shared the story of his healing of a severe illness and his call to ministry during the worship service’s period of Witness and Testimony. Our students were moved by the generosity of his time, talent, and resources.
- A new relationship with the Chesterfield County Food Bank wherein students and members of both services volunteer on the third Saturday of each month to assist with the food distribution at the Ettrick Elementary School. The Rev. Bob Lamb, senior pastor of Ettrick UMC delivers a gospel message each week to a gathering of 95 to 145 citizens per month.

In addition to aforementioned areas of growth and development, our existing ministries have continued to progress in their very own way!! We host Soul Food Bible Study on Wednesday nights on the second floor of Jones Dining Hall at 6:00 pm. We have been blessed by the stability and faithfulness of the Avodah music ministry, the Chara performing arts ministry, Girlz at the Gate intercessory prayer ministry, and the Oikonomia missions’ ministry. We have also been graced to develop a couple of new ministries including the Synados hospitality and usher ministry, the Naomi’s Girls Youth Mentoring Program, and the revitalized Men of Troy Men’s Mentoring Program which is now a full-fledged men’s ministry. Each of these groups meets at least once a week and reaches out to the campus of Virginia State University, the village of Ettrick and the city of Petersburg to make a difference in the world for Jesus Christ!!

In closing, we would simply like to give a shout out to the Virginia Conference, the James River District, and the Ettrick UMC for aiding us in taking our ministry to the next level!! We could not be a home of Faith, Love, Outreach, and Worship with you!! May God continue to bless every ministry of the Virginia Conference!!

Blessings,

Delano Douglas, Director

The William and Mary Wesley Foundation

This year has been another amazing year of ministry at Wesley. The numbers of students, their passionate commitment to following Jesus, as well as our mission and ministry, are all strong. Our campus ministry community continues to lead the way, as our vision statement says, “Through following Jesus, we embrace God’s radical hospitality towards all.” Not only are the students involved in Wesley aware of the grace and love that is embodied here, other students and the college recognize it as well. The students are following Jesus and leading the way.

Speaking of leading the way, our new Leadership Team took office in January. They are Sadie Meadows, President; Emily Crawford, Devotions; Allison Harkness, Discipleship; Erica West, Communications; and Jen Peek and Erin Kitchens, Fellowship. This group of dedicated, passionate students leads the way in the focus and direction to our entire ministry. This spring semester, we are building on the momentum from our powerful winter break Civil Rights and Faith trip. On that trip, we not only did meaningful service work with Urban Ministries in their urban garden and home painting ministries, we also volunteered with Highlands UMC’s ministry with persons who are homeless, and also at the food co-op at Woodlawn UMC. We also visited the Civil Rights Museum and Institute and 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, and the Martin Luther King National Monument and Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Furthermore, we discussed with veterans of the Civil Rights movement and persons who are continuing the work today about how their faith continues to empower them. This spring semester we are utilizing the Ten Commandments of Nonviolence as our guiding theme. Thus, each Sunday night Large Group focuses on a different commandment, as well as our Bible Study is focused upon the commandment, “Meditate daily on the life and teachings of Jesus.”

Students are coordinating our partnerships with local churches in mission and ministry, as our connections with Williamsburg, Wellspring, and New Town UMC continue to be strong. Nothing exemplifies this better than the Exam Break that we have at the end of each semester, led by the Williamsburg UMC United Methodist Men. We have over 200 students coming to the Wesley House to share in over 450 cookies, gallons of hot chocolate, water, coffee, and lemonade. In addition, we have folks from all three churches and the community bring 8-10 dogs to help relieve the stress of finals. In addition, we are also partnering with Williamsburg UMC in their respite and homeless shelter ministries and with WindsorMeade UMC retirement community in leading worship, hymn sings, and bingo.

In addition to our Bible Study and Java and Jesus weekly meetings, we continue to partner with other campus ministries and student groups in events, service, mission, and ministry. Already this year, Wesley has partnered with the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Episcopal campus ministries, as well as the Muslim Student Association from hosting speakers, to partnering in events, to joining together in mission projects. Furthermore, Wesley continues meet the very real needs of students in crisis on campus. Finally, Wesley continues each semester to coordinate a service day at Shalom Farms for the entire campus community.

Wesley students also led workshops on how to develop and implement a vision for ministry at the Summer Institute for the United Methodist Campus Ministers Association. It continues to be a joy and a privilege to serve with the students and board of The Wesley Foundation, as the students actively follow Jesus on campus, locally, regionally, and beyond.

Max Blalock, Campus Minister

Wesley at Virginia Tech

*Holy Spirit, You are welcome here. Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere.
Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for; to be overcome by Your presence, Lord.
Let us become more aware of Your presence. Let us experience the glory of Your goodness.*

These words from Francesca Battistelli's song, "Holy Spirit," are guiding words for our ministry over the past year at Wesley. Our desire to follow the Spirit's movement in all of our ministries has produced amazing fruits! We have felt the Spirit's presence in mighty ways through our many ministries of outreach, fellowship, worship, discipleship, and mission.

This past fall our "Welcome Week" activities were a tangible expression of how the Spirit's presence is overcoming our ministry! Having over 400 students attending a welcome cookout, over 300 attending our life-sized game night, and Wesley being a more visible presence on campus has enabled our students to embody a spirit of hospitality and evangelism.

Our continued ministry of leading youth retreats is a manifestation of the Spirit's movement to youth in our conference. During one of our welcome events the first week of classes a new student was asked, "What was it that brought you to Wesley?" She remarked that she had been coming to the Youth Weekends that Wesley puts on for the Roanoke District and that not only is that why she is at Wesley, but that is the reason she is at Virginia Tech! This story is one of so many this past year where youth from our Conference are getting connected in campus ministry primarily because of our Wesley students' impact of leading youth retreats across the Conference over the past four years. The fruits of this ministry are just beginning to be seen, but it is so very exciting to see how the Spirit's movement is enabling us to reach so many more youth and keeping them connected to our Church.

The Spirit's overwhelming presence is being felt in our student food pantry, 209 Manna Ministries, as well. This past year has seen the ministry grow from one day a week and around 20 students to now being open for three days each week and seeing over 60 students coming through our doors to receive emergency food support. Student after student that comes through the pantry remark that this ministry has been vital to their ability to be nourished while in school at Tech.

We had 45 students spend their Spring Break in Edenton, NC, to help NC UVMIM with tornado recovery. Our students see this as one of the best moments of our year! The missional mindset of our community is witnessed in their passion for being in ministry WITH others. They see their mission as one of building relationships and sharing the love of Jesus. Whether that is doing recovery work on Spring Break, handing out 350 hot dogs downtown on a Friday night, tutoring youth at a local trailer park, collecting cake mixes for a community Christmas store, or packing Operation Christmas Child boxes with a local youth group, our students desire to "Love Out Loud" in all they do!

Our third year of our new worship service is another way that the Spirit is leading us to grow in our ministry. We have seen the fruits of this part of our ministry through growing numbers in worship, a passion for making worship a primary aspect of our ministry, and students leading in a number of ways to enhance our service. Students are aware of the Spirit's presence and we are seeing the glory of God's goodness in the many opportunities for worship.

Our small group ministry "Communities of Grace" is also witnessing the power of the Spirit's presence. We have increased how many "CoGs" we have and our students are seeking new ways to enhance this area of ministry. Students are becoming more and more engaged in the ministries of Wesley through this small group ministry.

A very exciting Spirit led experience happened with college students across the Conference with an event called "RE3: Rethink, Reclaim, Renew." This event was geared towards college-aged students in Virginia with an emphasis on how to think about the future of the Church. We brought in speaker Sarah Bessey and had different ministries provide opportunities for worship.

As we "become more aware" of the Spirit's presence among our ministries it is exciting to see how campus ministry at Virginia Tech is providing a space for students' to explore, engage, and embody an active faith in God.

"I've seen and felt the Spirit this year at Wesley through the intentional ways people care for each other and desire to grow together. Being a senior, I've seen a lot and can truly say this has been the most lively and fruitful year of ministry in which I've been a part. I'm constantly thankful for both the joy and the times of confusion that we get to walk through together in community."

Michelle Hettmann, Student Campus Minister

The Wesley Foundation at UVA

Our Conference's commitment to campus ministry is a statement of faith, that our Church is committed to being an engaged conversation partner on college campuses, sending clergy and funds to support young people in a vulnerable and fruitful time of personal, professional, and spiritual development, with the hope and expectation that their young lives are part of the way God's Spirit is moving in and transforming the world.

Here's what this looks like "on the ground" at UVA this year: Spending Thursday nights enjoying home-cooked meals from churches throughout the Charlottesville District, while exploring topics as varied as the Syrian refugee crisis, the Black Lives Matter movement at UVA, listening for the Holy Spirit in "secular" music, learning about General Conference with delegates Meredith McNabb and Alex Joyner, and a fun-filled Q&A conversation with our District Superintendent. We also gathered for a "Refresh Your Spirit" retreat at Wintergreen, visited the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women to help lead worship, slowed down for special weekly worship services in Advent and Lent, and partnered with Wesley Memorial to welcome the PACEM men's shelter. We spent a weekend baking 200 dozen cookies to help support our interfaith spring break service trip to Tuba City, Arizona, where we stayed on a reservation, serving and learning from the Navajo people, alongside our Jewish friends from the University's Hillel group.

In March, we welcomed Lutheran pastor, writer, and speaker Nadia Bolz-Weber, who led a vespers worship service, gave a public talk as part of the Festival of the Book, reflecting on "Finding God in All the Wrong People," and spent time in a small group setting with students from Wesley and other campus ministries, exploring how God's radical grace is liberating and convicting good news for college students.

As you know, we have also been engaged in our Building a Foundation for the Future capital campaign, which has raised \$785,000 in gifts and pledges so far! In the fall we began work on a limited "phase one," as we continue to work towards our total fundraising goal. It's not too late to make or increase a contribution to support this effort – or to view our video: wesleyatuva.org/ccvideo.

We are thankful for and inspired by the ways our students choose to answer God's call. Once again, Wesley at UVA has two students who will serve as Calling 21 interns this summer, and alumnus Ryan LaRock is being commissioned as a provisional elder at this Annual Conference. The faithful work that begins on campus, one student at a time, ripples out into the life of the Church and the world, thanks be to God!

Deborah Lewis, Campus Minister & Director

Community College Ministries

Community College Ministries is your campus ministry with community colleges in southwestern and central Virginia where over 50,000 students deal with faith, family, classes, and careers every single day! Colleges in the Virginia Conference include Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, Dabney Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge, Central Virginia Community College in Lynchburg, Danville Community College in Danville, New River Community College in Dublin, and Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville. Denominational partners are the Presbyterian Church USA and the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. Community College Ministries sponsors Alliance for Excellence involving hundreds of students in a partnership of community colleges with African American congregations! Launched with support from the GBGM EMLC and the United Methodist Self-Development Fund in 1986, Alliance for Excellence (www.allianceforexcellence.org) sponsors fellowships, seminars, opportunities for students to participate in gospel choirs, and scholarships. Patrick Henry Community College has sponsored a virtual mission program in which students provide tutoring overseas via the internet. For the 7th year in 2016, Community College Ministries (www.facebook.com/communitycollegeministries) will sponsor the “Rally in the Valley” bringing community college students of faith together from across the entire Commonwealth! The rally is organized in cooperation with the Blue Ridge Christian Fellowship under the leadership of Jim Wright and is held each year in April. CCM launched a global service program in 1989 called Peacework (www.peacework.org) where student groups serve overseas in projects involving poverty housing, education, school renovations, gardens, and other community partnerships. Your campus minister is the Reverend Stephen Darr (steve@peacework.org). The office is at 620 N. Main St., Blacksburg, VA 24060, and the phone number is (540) 230-8581. Sandy Saunders of Danville Community College is board president. Alliance staff members are Jean Wilson in Martinsville and Jamesia Harrison in Lynchburg. The virtual mission advisor is Susan Christian. We welcome your involvement in this exciting ministry with community colleges!

Stephen Darr

United Campus Ministries at Christopher Newport University

I took the position of UCM Campus Minister for United Campus Ministries at Christopher Newport University in August 2016, following the retirement of Rev. Suzy Cothran. Thus, I spent the first month or so, meeting the current student leadership, familiarizing myself with the history of UCM at CNU and the campus environment, meeting other religious organization's leaders on campus, introducing myself to administration, staff, and faculty, and beginning activities for the new academic year. The following are things we have accomplished and enjoyed throughout this year:

- We hold weekly fellowship/discussion ministry group on Mondays at 8:30 p.m. in the Student Union at CNU, and have dinner once a month. About 5-6 students regularly attend the group.
- We offered support for the annual CROP Walk in October, providing water to walkers, as they walked on campus, an annual tradition for UCM; this event provides a way to reach-out to the community and have students volunteer for an important mission.
- We held our annual Festival of Church Music in November, which is our large fundraising event, in which 8 area churches performed pieces individually and together as one choir in the lovely setting of Pope Chapel on campus. We raised over \$2,500 for our ministry.
- The students also created a Christmas card and greeting to send to donors and constituents in December and that garnered more donations before the end-of-the-year.
- During exams, 9 local churches came to campus and provided “exam snacks” for the community throughout the week, serving over 2000 people in that time. It was wonderful to have them provide support and a little sustenance to the students during the stressful time of exams. This is a tradition in both the fall and spring for UCM at CNU.
- Two students and I went to the Annual College Conference at Montreat Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC, with five others from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia in January, where the keynote speakers were Jason Brown of NC (former NFL star who now runs a social outreach farm) and Nadia Bolz Weber (Lutheran pastor, public theologian, and writer). The conference included worship, workshops, and discussion groups on a variety of topics, as well.
- We held the annual Potato Drop on February 20. We bagged and helped distribute 45,500 pounds of potatoes. The event involved two volunteer days – one in which the students tied the bags to be prepared for bagging the potatoes when they arrived, and two, the day the potatoes came, and we bagged them and helped the food banks, agencies, and churches load them up to take to distribute to the folks in need. It was a wonderful mission to be a part of together. We had about two dozen student volunteers for the first event and about four dozen for the second. It was tremendous!
- We offered an open opportunity on campus for students to make Valentine cards that UCM participants would take to the Hidenwood retirement center to share with the residents there, as an outreach ministry of goodwill and fun.
- Beginning in November, we began collaborating with the Lutheran Ministries of Reformation Lutheran Church (Warwick Blvd.), who have about ½ dozen students attending CNU, to offer a worship, Chapel service on campus on Thursday evenings. The service includes singing, prayers, reading Scripture, and reflection on the Word. We promote this worship opportunity for all in the campus community.

Donna DeSarro-Raynal

BOARD OF LAITY

The Board of Laity continues in 2016 to create a culture of call by engaging, equipping, and empowering laity to effectively partner with each other and our clergy to live out God's call upon our lives.

Associate Conference Lay Leader, Larry Creamer (S) leads a team of the board for Engaging (Holistic Stewardship) and is developing a culture of call for all laity focusing on prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness identifying networking and learning opportunities for District Lay Leaders and Local Church Lay Leaders, establishing and giving oversight to various means of communication between members of the Board of Laity (i.e. email groups, articles for *The Advocate* and other print communications, website.) Additionally developing and offering communications alternatives for meetings of teams.

Associate Conference Lay Leader Joyce Duncan (L) leads Equipping (Leadership Excellence) This office is responsible for developing and offering training to new District Lay Leaders overseeing Lay Servant/Speaking Ministries, developing resources for District and Local Church Lay Leaders, and resourcing Local Church Leadership Development and Nominations Committees.

Associate Conference Lay Leader, Johnnie Morris (F) leads a team of the board for Empowering advocating for the laity and promoting Laity Sunday, encouraging the presence of the District Lay Leaders, Associate District Lay Leaders, or other laity involved in District ministries at all local church Charge Conferences and the assessment of needs of District and Local Church Lay Leaders in order to better support their service.

Lay Servant Ministries, led by David Bailey have had a year of fruitful ministry. David and the District Directors continue to implement our new structure and the courses reflective of *The Discipline* 2012 requirements. In an effort to spread our teaching abilities, with a grant from the Bishop's Foundation the team has created "On Demand Learning for Laity" concentrating on the six courses required for the Lay Speaking track. This is an exciting time for our ministry.

The Lay Servant Academy led by Beth Christian and her dedicated team created a weekend of learning and fellowship at Blackstone with nearly 200 attending in February.

We have celebrated the leadership of two District Lay Leaders whose terms have ended on the board. Dan Dietze (Fr) and Larry Scheuble have greatly enhanced their respective district ministries. We thank them both. In addition we have celebrated new faces joining the board. We welcome Debbie Dietrich (Fr) Lay Leader; Gerry Fuss, (Jr) Co-Lay Leader; Sue Mayo, (F) Co-Lay Leader; Mira Suddreth, (C) Co-Lay Leader; and Joe Amend, (H) Associate Lay Leader.

We thank the Rev. Danny Kesner, for being our Cabinet representative. We continue to thank Cheryl Edley-Worford, the Director of Inclusivity and Lay Leadership Excellence for much needed guidance. Thanks to Cindy Ingroff, Administrative Assistant for invaluable assistance and gifted wisdom always. Bishop Young Jin Cho has been our spiritual guide to all the laity and clergy of the Annual Conference. Personally, I cannot believe it has been almost four years since we welcomed Bishop Cho. On behalf of you, the laity, I thank Bishop Cho for his ministry among us, may the Spirit of the living God be with you always.

Warren R. Harper, Conference Lay Leader

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Although declining slightly, The United Methodist Men of the Virginia Conference continue to lead the nation in fellowship charters with eighty-seven. The charter represents the connectional link binding all men in our local fellowships together across the conference with all men in other annual conferences of the United Methodist Church. We finished second in "Meals a Million," a hunger relief competition across the nation. The men support a variety of service ministries including Heart Havens, Prison Ministry, Hunger Relief, Scouting, Wesleyan Building Brothers Leadership Training, Camp Rainbow, and the Upper Room Prayer Line, just to name a few. We publish a monthly newsletter, the Beacon, distributed to over 2,000 men. We conduct an annual Spiritual Advance weekend each fall and leadership training each spring to equip our men for service. Our Spiritual Advance has shown a steady increase in first-time attendees for the past two years.

For next year we have planned a visioning and goal-setting retreat for conference officers and District Presidents. We plan to increase the number of chartered units and promote District-level leadership, while supporting conference efforts to reach new people. We recognize that mentoring our replacements is an essential quality of servant leaders. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ...but encouraging one another—and all the more..." Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV). In response to the closure of our retreat center in Blackstone, we are already making plans to enhance the experience in 2017, still focusing on attracting first timers and featuring a more in-depth look each year at one of our key ministries. Next year's focus will be on Hunger Relief. We have also begun collaborating with the Virginia Conference UMW to plan a project for addressing domestic violence, a joint initiative from the General Commission in Nashville.

Please join the Methodist Men for breakfast during Annual Conference on Saturday, June 18 at Thrasher Memorial UMC in Vinton and hear more about what God is doing through us!

Andrew Kissell, President

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women is the women's mission organization of The United Methodist Church, putting faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youths in the United States and internationally. We are a creative, supportive community of women organized around the purpose, which is "to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ" and "to expand concepts of mission by participation in the global ministries of the church."

Throughout our nearly 150-year history, United Methodist Women and its predecessor organizations brought women together in small groups to grow in faith, learn about their own needs and potential, learn about others and organize and raise funds so that we could reach out to marginalized neighbors in our local communities and around the world.

One of our Church's best kept secrets is its Mission Encounter event held each summer at the Virginia Conference and Retreat Center in Blackstone. This is an event shared by Virginia United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women and is for everyone — clergy, laity, youths and children. Topics for 2016 are: Latin America; Climate Justice, and the Bible & Human Sexuality. The Reverend Pat Watkins will teach Climate Justice. The dates are July 29-31, 2016 — it is not too late to register.

In May 2015 we were given a unique opportunity to attend a cross-Jurisdictional Charter for Racial Justice Seminar. The theme was *Making Racial Justice Happen* and we made plans to further the mission of the Charter for Racial Justice. As part of Virginia's plan, each delegate to General Conference was given a copy of the charter.

Young Women's Retreat in September was a great opportunity for 31 young women. The theme *Being Enough* was played out through worship, music, sharing and crafts. This year's retreat will be September 16-17, 2016, at Blackstone with the Rev. Beth Anderson as retreat leader.

Annual Meeting in October was a time of celebration. We dedicated the Wicker Room with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, presented a plaque honoring all conference United Methodist Women, honored Ethel Born who suggested the giving of Dimes and Dollars for Blackstone and included a Legacy Auction which raised money for the continued legacy of United Methodist Women for the next 150 years. Sunday morning included a panel which focused on attracting new women, which made it an educational and fun weekend.

We invite all women to join in this great ministry. Check us out on VAUMW.com.

Joyce Winston, President

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The Commission on Disabilities has restructured the commission, developed three committees and rewritten their Standing Rules. These changes were made to get the committee refocused and to make us more effective and efficient.

The committees are: Grants, Finance and Monitoring, Education, Programs and Accessibility, and Advocacy and Collaboration and Nominations.

The main focus of the commission over the next two years is education and awareness. We have pushed hard since the inception of COD to make our buildings and parsonages accessible, but there seems to be some apathy that has developed and it needs to be overcome. Education will overcome this as it not a major problem. The education will start with the trustees and building committee representatives on the conference level and then at the district level. Help we will need from the conference toward this goal is making it mandatory to attend.

The ultimate goal of the training and awareness is to heighten the level of acceptance and understanding of disabilities by the majority of the conference members to the point that people with disabilities are not seen as “less than” or “people with special needs” — rather people just like anyone else.

People are not handicapped; they are handicapped by the environments they are forced to work, live and worship in. When the barriers to accessibility are removed, the handicaps will go away!

Shaun Smith, COD Chairperson

COMMISSION ON ETHNIC MINORITY CONCERNS AND ADVOCACY

This has been a year of reflection and evaluation for the Commission. We are in the process of reorganization for the commission. The commission has continued in its mission: to serve as a prophetic voice for the full and equal participation of ethnic and racial constituents into the total life and mission of the Virginia Annual Conference (its churches, boards and agencies, and institutional and connectional structures) by educating, advocating, and holding to account God's church to inclusivity as God's intended design for all structures and processes, towards the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in word and deed. We are indebted to the following ethnic agencies:

- African-American Ministries
- Hispanic/Latino Ministries
- Immigration Work Group
- Asian-American Ministries
- Native American Ministries
- Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), Inc.
- Strengthening the Black Church

for the work these groups are doing within our conference. With their help, your prayers and support, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we look forward to continuing the work of living more fully into this vision.

Gary Miller, Chair

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) encourages participation of women in the full life of The United Methodist Church. To further this mission, COSROW collects data on the participation of women, minorities, youths and young adults, and persons with disabilities in the leadership roles of the church. Data collection will continue at Annual Conference 2016.

Data collection at Annual Conference 2015 continues to suggest women are encouraged to participate, yet we still have work to do. During the planned worship services, men and women are both involved at a relatively equal rate. This modelling of women in leadership has a massive impact, encouraging our congregants to recognize women have an important and active role in the church.

Further challenges remain in the plenary and business portions of the annual conference. Womens' level of active participation continues to be lower than mens' level of active participation. Likewise, the same pattern emerges for racial and ethnic minority participation compared to that of those of Caucasian descent, and youths and young adults relative to adults. The proportion of persons of disability participating is negligible.

We who serve the Virginia Conference still have work to do. We need to encourage women, racial and ethnic minorities, young people and persons with disabilities to be active stakeholders in the life of The United Methodist Church. Our churches must welcome all God's children in the leadership of their churches. This includes, but is not limited to, welcoming women as pastors in all churches in the Virginia Conference, encouraging women to be lead pastors in large membership churches and encouraging women to serve as leaders in committees, such as Finance and Trustees. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, young people, and persons with disabilities have gifts and talents. They have and continue to make significant contributions to the life of the church. Any artificial limits on these persons deny the church body the blessings that God has bestowed on this conference.

We are called to go forth and make disciples of all nations. To make all feel welcome, all need to be visible and active in the life of the church. Let us strive to become the church for and of all persons.

Shan Sixbey, Lay Chair and Mary Dadisman, Clergy Chair



*The following six reports are from agencies that have been awarded
Conference Benevolence Grants:*

DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH MINISTRIES OF VIRGINIA

Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) of Virginia began in Virginia in 2011. There were 39 prisons and juvenile detention centers identified as sites to take the *Disciple Bible Study* and *Rings of Fellowship* for the youthful offenders ministry into. Since then, with the help of volunteers and contributions, DBOM has been able to take the study to ten prisons and one juvenile detention center. Three of those prisons are now studying *Disciple II* in addition to *Disciple I* studies they had already completed. In 2015 one of the prisons started the *Disciple III* study. Once the studies are started in an institution, they usually continue as there is a turnover of participants at each institution. The motto of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries is

“Transforming lives in prisons and pews.” Because we are trying to encourage as many people as possible to study the Word of God, we also provided the necessary materials for a small rural church which asked for help. It is our goal to eventually reach all the prisons in Virginia.

Gene Mims, President

GRACEINSIDE (FORMERLY CHAPLAIN SERVICE PRISON MINISTRY OF VIRGINIA)

Grace is a gift you share over and over again. Within Virginia’s prisons, your impact is being felt more now than ever before! Your hand of grace is extending to our incarcerated brothers and sisters to help heal deeply-broken wounds. Through grace, you are following the teaching of Jesus Christ to “visit those in prison,” and you are restoring people, families and communities.

Unique among all of the states, the chaplains in Virginia’s state prisons are NOT state employees. They are OUR employees, supported by “the people in the pews.” Currently, we have 32 chaplains serving in 35 state prisons. As members of our GraceInside family, you ensure that those in prison have the opportunity to attend worship, participate in spiritually based classes (Bible study, grief group, baptism class, etc.) and spend one-on-one time with a chaplain. These chaplains serve as Christian pastors inside the prisons, seeking to tend the sheep in their care. They coordinate, organize and lead religious services and activities for all seeking hope. In the words of one ex-offender: “*If it hadn’t been for you, I would never have made it. You saved me. You really saved me.*”

In 2015, GraceInside increased our impact by adding more ministry service hours for the chaplains serving in our unique mission field. More men and women moved toward healing. And with your help, we’ve come to see that the more grace you give away, the more grace there is! More than 30,000 men and women had the opportunity to interact with a chaplain because of YOUR support and care. As many as 14,000 inmates are released each year back into our communities. You make the prisons and our commonwealth a safer place in which to live and work.

We know we still have much work to do. For example, at Augusta Correctional Center, our part-time chaplain (a United Methodist minister) serves 1,350 men! Everyone from the warden to the religious volunteers to the inmates want and need their chaplain to be full-time. (The American Correctional Association says that there should be a full-time chaplain for every 500 inmates, warranting almost THREE full-time chaplains for Augusta alone!) Our goal is to find support for our chaplains to minister full-time so that more lives can experience the gift of grace. Currently, six major facilities need full-time chaplains — right now! Men and women are waiting to hear that they matter to God.

It starts with one heart in prison, impacted by grace...overflowing to others...to families...to neighborhoods...to churches...to communities...to our commonwealth. One heart changed because YOU believe in the value of GraceInside.

Thank you.

Together, lives are changed forever. Every. Single. Day.

J. Randy Myers, President

INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL MINISTRIES

The November 2015 *Advocate* cover stated, “LIVES OF SERVICE, Ministries Outside the Church Wall.” This is good description of our volunteer ICM Chaplains as they make their visits in many different workplace settings each week.

ICM Chaplains are “a caring presence” reaching many who are unchurched and not knowing that God cares about them and loves them.

Our ICM Chaplains, many who are United Methodist, receive initial training and continued training through seminars which cover: Theology of Industrial Ministry, Becoming A ICM Chaplain, Listening & Communication, Referrals, Addictions, Dealing with Conflict, The Chaplain at Work & What Management Expects.

The VA Conference of United Methodist Church has since 1972 been of tremendous help to ICM, through financial help, allowing us to hold many of our ICM Training Seminars in their churches and their prayers. The need is great, but ICM is determined with God’s help and yours to continue to grow, in chaplains and meeting the needs of our fellow men and women in the workplace.

Want to know more? Visit our website icmAmerica.org or give us a phone call at (540)432-1919 or email icmmin@aol.com.

We ask for your support and prayers as we continue to minister outside the church’s walls as did our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Wayne Wright, ICM Executive Director

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW

Society of St. Andrew (SOSA) continues to be a national leader in feeding the hungry while demonstrating superior stewardship of all resources and creation. Begun by the Virginia Conference 37 years ago, SoSA has become the most successful and effective ministry of its kind in the nation.

As a ministry that “puts faith into action,” the vast SoSA network of farmers, volunteers, feeding agencies and partners has blessed millions of people during the last 12 months. This ministry network consists of thousands of farmers in all 48 contiguous states, tens of thousands of volunteers, and thousands of vital feeding programs across the country. Thousands of churches and individuals in all 50 states partner with SoSA to “be the blessing” that helps make it all possible.

SoSA continues to receive national recognition as an innovative and successful nonprofit on the subject of food waste and hunger. Religious and secular national forums on these subjects continue to ask for SoSA representation and presentations to help increase awareness among the nation in general. In July of 2015 SoSA played a prominent role in the bi-annual General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination.

Through good stewardship of creation SoSA provides millions of pounds of the highly-nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables so important in any diet. For many of the poor in America, SoSA is their only source of fresh produce. As always, SoSA continues to accomplish much:

- All three programs — the Potato and Produce Project, the Gleaning Network, and Harvest of Hope — experienced excellent program performance during the past 12 months.
- SoSA saved and distributed 28.4 million pounds of fresh produce. All of this food would have otherwise gone to waste!
- The Potato Project distributed more than 11.9 million pounds of produce all across the country.
- The Gleaning Network saved and distributed more than 16.5 million pounds of healthful food.
- Over 32,454 volunteers put their faith into action by volunteering in SoSA’s Gleaning Network and using the biblical practice of gleaning to help feed the hungry.

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- More than 4,900 separate gleaning events were conducted throughout the country providing hands-on opportunities for people to be involved in the ministry.
- Food was distributed nationwide, including in every county in the Virginia Conference.
- The ministry touched the lives of millions of people all across the country.
- Hundreds of churches across the country joined in SoSA's ministry for the very first time and thousands of churches, of all denominations, continued their partnership.
- SoSA's influence has played a key role in national associations such as the Alliance to End Hunger, NAHO (National Anti-Hunger Organizations) and others.
- SoSA was invited to present at two national food waste forums.
- SoSA's Harvest of Hope program had nearly 500 participants in a dozen work/study/mission retreats in five states.
- SoSA's seasonal devotion programs focused on Advent, Lent, and VBS demonstrated explosive growth, reaching thousands of congregations and individuals in all 50 states.
- SoSA hosted a Virginia "Day of Gleaning" on behalf of the governor and first lady of Virginia and gleaning events were held all across the commonwealth on a single day.
- Over 85.3 million highly-nutritious servings of fresh produce were provided at a cost of about two cents a serving!
- Our belief in good stewardship of all resources resulted in a total overhead of less than 3%!

We are called to love "in deed and in truth," and that has been SoSA's ministry for over 37 years. That ministry happens because many others take that calling to heart. Volunteers, churches, individuals, farmers, feeding agencies, transporters, board members, staff and financial partners all comprise a thriving network to feed the hungry in our land. The leadership demonstrated by the Virginia Conference continues to be a blessing to this ministry and to all those in need of food for the body and the Spirit.

Steven M. Waldmann, Executive Director

VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*"At a time like this, when a large part of the world is in turmoil, the work of a council of churches becomes more significant than ever."
The Rev Henry Lee Robison, Jr, 1st Executive Secretary VCC 1945*

These words of Rev. Henry Robison seem even more prophetic today as we face challenges on all fronts. Even as we face tight economic times, your council remains strong, albeit on very fragile financial footing. During our Annual Meeting in 2015 our president, the Rev. Dr. John Myers, of the Eastern Association, Southern Conference, UCC continued to roll out his action plan for renewal of the Council. The Rev. Jenee' Gilchrist(BGC) finished her term as vice president after assisting in representing the council at various strategic meetings in Washington, DC, with the NCCCUSA and various denominational gatherings augmenting the work of the staff, as well as having planned the November 6, 2015 Annual Gathering of the Council featuring the Rev. Dr. James Forbes Jr. We elected the Rev. Lauren Cogswell Ramseur, pastor of the Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Church UCC in Virginia Beach as our new vice president.

In April and May, the council worked closely with our Armenian Orthodox brothers and sister on special commemorations of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. There were special services held at St. James Armenian Church in Richmond and later at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. Over the course of the year we have worked closely with the Virginia Synod ELCA and Bishop Mauney in efforts to reduce childhood hunger within the commonwealth. In 2015 we began a new initiative with our first Ecumenical Young Clergy Summit on September 2-3. This meeting planned by and for young clergy (under the age of 40) took a look at the future of the church and the vocation of ministry. The council continues to support LARCUM, the National Workshop on Christian Unity, and The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and other expressions of ecumenism within the commonwealth. Rev John Myers' challenge to the denominations is bringing renewal, excitement and technology to the way the council relates and functions. This challenge has brought new excitement and energy to the council as we discern God's call in the 21st Century. We also play an enlarging role in Interfaith Dialogues, including our long-standing dialogue in Richmond involving five of our judicatory executives, including Bishop Cho, three Rabbis and two Imams.

We continue to stand with our Native American brothers and sisters of the six Virginia tribes as they continue to seek federal recognition now in our 15th year of this effort. The council joined with other religious leaders in providing testimony for the second Congressional Hearing on Solitary Confinement in February. Our partnership with the VICPP and the Virginia Catholic Conference helps give voice to our shared concerns for justice on the floor of the General Assembly. Our Rural Family Development Program continues to serve children in Caroline County through the Head Start Program.

Jesus prayed "that all may be one so that the world may believe" (John 17). The Apostle Paul reminds us we may not all look alike, but we need each other, and together we comprise one body. When we come together through the Virginia Council of Churches, we provide a common voice that becomes believable in the midst of turmoil and change that the Lord God is one.

The Rev. Dr. John Myers – president
The Rev. Lauren Ramseur – vice president
Ms. Cathy Griffin – Treasurer
Vacant – Secretary

For further information, contact Virginia Council of Churches, 1214 West Graham Rd., Richmond, VA 23220-1409, (804) 321-3300, FAX (804) 329-5066. The website at www.vacouncilofchurches.org has information about the council and links with member denominations at national and Virginia levels.

Jonathan M. Barton, General Minister

VIRGINIA INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY (VICPP)

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) is a strong resource for advocacy on social justice issues that are in line with the Social Principles and the Va. Conference Board of Church and Society. We work closely with the Conference Legislative Network in planning for the annual UM Day at the General Assembly, providing planning and material to assist in understanding the issues and in ways to advocate these issues to the legislators of the Virginia General Assembly. During the course of 2015, we spoke one evening to the Mission Encounter at VUMAC in Blackstone to give a report on issues and to help familiarize with the services that we can provide. We also were prepared to present a series of regional training sessions on what advocacy is about, how UM's can interact before, during, and after a General Assembly with legislators over topics of concern.

VICPP had an annual meeting at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, featuring Michael Cassidy, the Executive Director of The Commonwealth Institute. We awarded the "Legislator of the Year" to Senator John Watkins for his outstanding service and his ability to work with all legislators on both sides of the aisle. This year he showed a profile in courage to take some stands that kept the legislature from becoming gridlocked.

VICPP also for the first time gave a "Beacon of Light" award to the Virginia Poverty Law Center for their sustained efforts to improve the quality of life in childhood hunger, predatory lending, and healthcare for all Virginians. The Executive Director, Jay Speer, a United Methodist layman from Reveille UMC, received the award on their behalf.

The Center hosted an annual Day for All People at Virginia Union University on Jan. 20, 2016. The theme was "Racism, Beyond the Confederate Flag." Our keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Pastor Emeritus of Riverside Church, NYC, reminded us that the devil's most effective tool that once it gets in the human heart is powerfully successful. That tool is the "wedge of discouragement." An interfaith panel responded to Dr. Forbes with insightful perceptions of racism in our society today. His message is on video at www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

VICPP provided support in briefings and preparation for the Feb. 4, 2016 UM Day at the General Assembly. With an energetic group of over 100 people, led by Bishop Young Jin Cho, we visited legislators to present the concerns on immigration, healthcare, criminal justice

VICPP grew out of the Virginia Council of Churches in 1982 to become an Abrahamic expression of combined forces to speak from an interfaith community perspective about the important issues that impact our world and connect with our shared faith values. We are the only inclusive multi-faith group that has this capacity across the Commonwealth. We have been privileged to have the leadership of many UM clergy and laity. As an example, a former Executive Director was Dr. Dow Chamberlain. Currently, Rev. Charles Swadley had been the Interim CEO/President during from April 2015-February 2016, when a new permanent Executive Director was hired. Mr. Warrant Hottle, Rev. Scott Hopkins, and Dr. John Copenhaver (Vice-Chair) currently serve on the Board of Directors.

This new Executive Director is Kim Bobo, who comes to Virginia from 18 years of service and the Executive Director of Interfaith Workers Justice in Chicago, IL, having achieved national recognition for her work. She also has led workshops and training events and has written five books.

We are grateful to provide service to the Virginia Conference of the UMC. Now, also for the first time we have an online learning module to tutor on the General Assembly legislative process and on the ways to be effective in advocacy. We also look forward to the joining the 25th year celebration of the Conference Legislative Network in 2017. Congratulations to the Virginia Conference on this remarkable journey of faith in action.

Charles Swadley



CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Chairpersons:

Marc Brown, *Director of Connectional Ministries*

Warren Harper, *Conference Lay Leader*

District Representatives:

Alexandria – Burton Robinson	Harrisonburg – David M. Burch
Arlington – Karen McElfish	James River – Jim O'Quinn
Charlottesville – Robert Forrest	Lynchburg – Jan Klahn
Danville – vacant	Richmond – Lisa Sykes
Eastern Shore – Tampa Miller	Roanoke – N.L. Bisho
Elizabeth River – Christa Springstead	Staunton – Won Un
Farmville – Mike Davis	Winchester – Kathy Lutman
Fredericksburg – Carolyn Nelson	York River District – Doug Gestwick

NOMINATIONS

Director of Connectional Ministries

Marc Brown

Common Table for Church Vitality

CLDDT Nominee:

Jonathan Page

Board of Church and Society

Clergy:

Yunho Eo

Anita Mays

Dan Kim

Emily Moore-Diamond

Jim O'Quinn

Lay:

Roger Pendergrass

Teresa Reiter

IX. REPORTS OF CONFERENCE BOARDS AND AGENCIES

Church Development Team

Janet Bracey
Greg Duncan
Chad Herndon

Board of Discipleship

Larry Lehman
Matthew Sergent
Jeffrey Smith
George Warner

Youth Council

Jennifer Coffey

Young Adult Council

Kathleen Royston

Older Adult Council

M. Quentin Haynie
Annie Leigh Pierce

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries

Jennifer Braaten
Bret Gresham
Kamesha Miller-Waters

Missional Ministries Board

Clergy:
Drew Colby
Nancy Robinson

Lay:
Katie St. Germain
Jessie Swann
Melinda Thornton
Emily Turner
Mary Fulton

Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.

Clergy:
Lynda Moore

Lay:
Joon Shin

Commission on Disabilities

Clergy:
Ashley Allen
Timothy Barth

Lay:
Faye Godbey

Equitable Compensation Commission

Thomas Nealley

Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy

Clergy:
Janet Grissett
Les Kurtz
Harold White, Jr.

Lay:
Patricia Schang

Council on Finance and Administration

Clergy:
Will White

Lay:
Ray Ergenbright
Cecelia Pike

United Methodist Foundation

Robert Billingsley
Wayne Rickman
Malcolm White

Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.

Clergy:
Steve Bray
Myrtle Hatcher
Larry House
Gretchen Simpson Nelson
Sue Ann Salmon

Lay:
Stacey Anthony
Stuart Blankenship
Gale Kennon
Mark Leep
Sally McGrath
Jim Pearman
Kevin Sheppard
Ann Taylor

Committee on Rules

Clergy:
Rosemary Welch
Sung Woon Yoo

Lay:
Scott Diamond
Mary Brett Wright

Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Lay:
Janae House
Suzanne Joyner

Conference Trustees

Clergy:
Sandra Benton Plasters

Lay:
Carl Moravitz

Committee on Resolutions

N.L. Bishop
Mochelle Morris
Lynda Moore
Craig Newman
Linda Porter

Site Selection Committee

Clergy:
Elizabeth Lutz

Lay:
Neal Wise

Virginia United Methodist Housing Corporation

Larry Dickenson
Willard Douglas
Steven Wanye Greer
Elizabeth Honea
Julius Malinowski

Society of St. Andrew

Harriet Bryan
David Moseley
Robert Spencer

Randolph College

Elizabeth A. Grimm
Elizabeth A. Maffey
Dixie Nash Sakolosky
Randall J. Watts
Katherine Clay Willis

Randolph-Macon Academy

Conrad E. Koneczny
John D. Simar

Randolph-Macon College

Philip G. Emerson
Anne Cabell Birdsong Pearce
Susan P. Quinn
Mary Lynn Reed
R. Douglas White

Virginia Wesleyan College

Nancy DeFord

COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

The Committee on Episcopacy (COE) is responsible for the review and evaluation of the resident bishop as required by the *Discipline*. The COE completed this work in the fall of 2015 and submitted the report to the SEJ Committee on Episcopacy in December. I would like to thank the colleagues of our Bishop who came to participate in the discussion on particular segments of the evaluation tool. We had very open and honest discussions.

I would like to express appreciation to the committee for their commitment to this process and for their support of Bishop Cho. I especially want to thank Ron Hardman for his many years of dedicated service to the committee and for serving as our secretary for the past eight years. Ron will rotate off the committee after annual conference.

I am so grateful for the opportunity of working with Bishop Cho. He has been such an inspiration to me and to so many others. He is truly living his faith and is a role model for us all. I appreciate his spiritual leadership in our annual conference.

Shirley Cauffman, Chair

Episcopal Residence Committee

The Episcopal Residence Committee completed the annual inspection of the Episcopal Residence in September and found it to be in good condition. In the summer, we will be preparing the residence for a new Episcopal family.

Shirley Cauffman, Chair

Carl Moravitz, President, Conference Board of Trustees

Steven Summers, President, Council on Finance and Administration

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Board of Ordained Ministry enables disciples of Jesus Christ to become effective clergy and certified lay professionals. To this end, the board assists these persons in the areas of call, development and collegial support. Our full report on changes in conference relationship has been reported to the clergy executive session for its action.

While the board has structured processes in place for much of its work, we are constantly trying to improve upon the ways we carry out these processes. In addition, we have made strong progress on the three priorities established at the beginning of the quadrennium:

1. Creating a culture of excellence among clergy leaders
2. More candidates being recommended their first time applying for provisional
3. Stronger clarity about the diversity of gifts for ministry that are needed within the bounds of the conference

This year we have acted upon reaching “more people, more young people and more diverse people” by creating a new position in the Center for Clergy Excellence — the associate director of Call, Candidacy and Discernment. The Reverend Lindsey Baynham will be appointed to this position effective July 1 of this year. We believe she will usher in a new era for our conference’s capacity to more intentionally help persons discern a call to all forms of ministry and also to recruit effective clergy candidates for the future of our conference.

This past fall saw the second cohort of clergy participating in the Virginia Clergy Leadership Program. This program which Bishop Cho has supported so faithfully identifies gifted clergy and helps them grow deeper in their spiritual maturity, excel in the areas of interpersonal and leadership skills, bring out the missional potential in their faith communities and strengthen their disciple-making abilities. We are grateful for the funding for this program, provided by the Center for Congregational Excellence, the Bishop’s Foundation, the Virginia United Methodist Foundation and the Council for Finance and Administration.

The Calling 21 program places interns in local churches so they may experience the intersection of their gifts with the life of a congregation. This summer there will be eight Calling 21 interns serving: Leila Soulen at Worship and Praise (Rd), Alex Carney at Belmont (Rd), Sarah Patnaude at Fairlington (A), Amy Robertson at Braddock Street (W), Tim Hares at Culpeper (C), Zach Hubbard at Lane Memorial (L), Katie Bagley at St. Luke’s (YR), Mary Elder at Franktown (ES); and three Connection 21 interns at the conference center but also relating to: Minoka Gunsekera at Boulevard (Rd), JoAnn Batteiger at Welborne (Rd), Emily Clark at Reveille (Rd).

While this report is written prior to General Conference, the outcomes of that Conference may have an impact upon our theology of ordination, education of local pastors and clergy formation beyond ordination. Acting upon these proposals will be a large part of the board’s work in the new quadrennium.

The work of the board continues sponsoring the annual Licensing School for all first-time appointments, supporting the gathering of the Orders of Deacon and Elders and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, examining persons seeking credentialing as ministers, interviewing those of United Methodist and other denominations who wish to transfer to the Virginia Conference, holding two Candidacy Summits for those embarking upon the candidacy process, interviewing those seeking retirement, reviewing requests for extension appointments, visiting students — those from Virginia and those interested in coming to Virginia — at eight seminaries, awarding scholarships and service loans to seminary students, training district Committees on Ordained Ministry, providing continuing education assistance to clergy, guiding provisional members on their journey, promoting lay professional certification, providing ongoing ethics training, assisting those on clergy medical leave and attending to conference relationship matters.

Before my term as chair of the board ends at this annual conference, I want to express my deepest appreciation for the support provided by the Center for Clergy Excellence and the members of the board who give tirelessly to the board’s work.

Ed Walker, chair

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The conference Board of Trustees met for their regularly-scheduled meetings in September and March, with conference calls as necessary during the year.

The conference Board of Trustees approved amended bylaws at their March 2016 meeting in order to align themselves better with the *Book of Discipline* and make their operations more efficient.

In the Spring of 2015, the conference trustees began to work with the conference staff to repurpose the conference center building to reflect the

current needs and methods of ministry. We are happy to report that this process has been completed. The original mailroom, which was needed for a time when postal mail was the primary method of communication, has been repurposed to make room for the Common Table ministries to be consolidated into one area. The Cabinet Room was relocated to a larger space for meetings and trainings, and a new meeting room was created and supplied with communication equipment to facilitate the use of remote meetings and webinars with the intention of reducing the cost of meetings and the time commitment of our faithful volunteers. The Foundation expanded their space to allow for growth in their staff and meeting space with the creation of the Virginia United Methodist Development Company LLC. The total cost of the renovation was \$210,000.00 and was funded through rents and the long-term maintenance fund. We believe these changes will serve the church well into the 21st century.

The Board of Trustees would like to extend its appreciation to Sallye E.H. Bowen for her exceptional and dedicated service as president of the Virginia Conference Board of Trustees from March 2007 through July 2015, bringing strong and effective leadership to the Board of Trustees during her tenure as president.

The board continues to be expertly supported by Benham Black, our attorney and counsel, on board and conference matters.

This past year, a major family emergency drew me away from some of the management work needed to lead the board. The board extends a special thank you to our vice president, Kathy Lutman, who stepped in so effectively to help me out during this time.

Carl L. Moravitz, President

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE 2016

By previous Annual Conference action, the following dates have been approved for the site of Annual Conference:

Hampton	June 16-18, 2017
Hampton	June 15-17, 2018
Roanoke	June 21-23, 2019
Roanoke	June 19-21, 2020

The Site Selection Committee is charged with finding a location for Annual Conference which is set five (5) years in advance. The Committee recommends that Annual Conference be held at the:

Hampton Convention Center	June 18-20, 2021
Hampton Convention Center	June 17-19, 2022

We are often asked about holding Conference at other facilities. The Committee, along with the Conference Planner and the Conference Chair of the Common Table, continue to review other potential locations across the Commonwealth and have found they either do not meet the stated requirements or are not available during the month of June.

By way of reminder, we have the following requirements:

- Meeting space and restaurants for 4,000 people;
- Parking spaces for 2,000 to 3,000 cars;
- 1,500 hotel rooms;
- Meeting space for Clergy Executive Session for 1,500 people;
- Meeting space for Laity Session for 1,500 people;
- Two banquet areas each holding 500 people;
- Break-out areas and display area of 30,000 square feet; and
- Ease of moving participants between the various areas.

Doug Geeting, President

THE BISHOPS' FOUNDATION

The Bishops' Foundation provides for leadership development of both laity and clergy in the areas of evangelism and preaching. In 2011, by conference action, three predecessor organizations — the Goodson Foundation for Preaching, the Stockton Endowment for Evangelism, and the Pennel Wesleyan Heritage Foundation — merged and formed the assets of the Bishops' Foundation into a corporation. The foundation is led by a board of directors (five clergy and four laity) nominated by the Cabinet. Endowment funds are invested with the Virginia UM Foundation. In 2014, the foundation was dissolved as a corporation and is now a board reporting to the annual conference.

We are an event-sponsoring or co-sponsoring organization that supports the training of both laity and clergy. During 2013-2016, the foundation supported the following events: the Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 Five-Talent Academy, the Virginia Clergy Leadership Program, the 2015 Goodson Academy for Preaching and the Lay Servant Academy, 2016.

Preparations are underway for a second Goodson Academy for Preaching at Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center on Sept. 25-28, 2016. Dr. Lucy Lind Hogan, professor of homiletics at Wesley Theological Seminary, is the guest presenter.

The board remains interested in addressing any gaps that may exist in current conference ministry programming to foster opportunities for young adult laity and clergy to help the church in reaching all generations. Grant application forms can be found on the conference website under the tab for the Bishop. See "The Bishops' Foundation".

GOODSON PREACHING ACADEMY

David A. Rash, Co-Chair

In 2015 the Goodson Preaching Academy was restored as an opportunity for those preachers who desired to be more effective in the craft of vital preaching. For four days 29 participants and eight small group leaders and staff met at the Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center and in a spirit of

The guest presenter was Dr. Paul Scott Wilson, Ph.D., professor of preaching at Emmanuel College, Toronto. The theme was “Craft and Creativity: Preaching in the Context of a Rapidly Evolving World”. Dr. Wilson gave five lectures and the sermon at the closing worship service. It was supported generously by the Bishops’ Foundation.

Each participant preached twice to the assigned small group and received feedback designed to strengthen the sermon. This model comes from the now defunct College of Preachers which was the premier national preaching event at the Washington Cathedral for many years. The Virginia Conference first adopted this plan from 1999-2009 in the Goodson Academy for Preaching.

This event is open to all preachers who are willing to expose themselves to new insights and to renew their own spirit in completing this vital task. This event can open even the most experienced preacher to a new more powerful engagement with the scripture and the congregation. The desire is necessary.

The 2016 event plans, however, has been disrupted due to the closing of BCRC, and we are looking to 2017 for the next academy. In all likelihood, Dr. Lucy Lind Hogan, Elderdice Professor of Preaching and Worship at Wesley Seminary, will be the guest presenter.

There is a possibility of some one-day preparation for preaching events that will be tied to lectionary-liturgical seasons and these will be publicized through conference channels.

Co-chairs: Charlene Beethoven, David A. Rash

UNITED METHODIST-RELATED SCHOOLS

Ferrum College

All of us at Ferrum College are grateful for the ongoing support of The Virginia Annual Conference and continue to thank all of you for your financial, spiritual, and leadership support. While many small rural colleges in the country continue to face challenges related to enrollment and rising costs, Ferrum continues to hold true to its mission while expanding opportunity, excellence and success for “students of promise.” While we have a myriad of activities and new academic and athletic initiatives, this year’s report will highlight the reflections from Dean of the Chapel, Dr. Jan Nicholson Angle.

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” - Romans 8:28 NLT

We believe that God has placed a call upon Ferrum College to nurture the current generation of students, physically, mentally, and spiritually while preparing to receive future generations with the same ideals of our founding mission. Like the pruning of a fruitful tree, we acknowledge there will be ministries that are pruned in order that new ministries may emerge. Our vision for Spiritual Life in the 2015/16 academic year has been growing our roots deeper.

The Fall Semester 2015 saw an increase in new faces in Spiritual Life opportunities. During the Fall of 2014 we received a one year NetVue Professional Development Grant which allowed a small group of faculty and administration to study Ferrum College’s Methodist roots, and the connection between vocation and call. In direct response to this group’s work, a Net-Vue Program Grant was written and awarded allowing for an e-term to be offered 2016 Spring Semester. The e-term, titled *The Spirit of Adventure*, was a two-part course focused on vocation, calling, and practice in the Methodist tradition combined with opportunities for students to explore their vocation as related to their spiritual and physical wellness.

We were blessed and very excited to provide for and welcome US2 Global Mission Fellow, Christina Trager. Christina is from Delaware and is assigned for two years by The United Methodist General Board of Global Missions to Ferrum College and to the Henry Fork Center. Her mission is to increase awareness and deepen connections between Ferrum College, Henry Fork, and the needs of our surrounding community.

Intentional spiritual formation is at the heart of maturing in faith. *Journey to the Table*, a spiritual formation weekend experience, was held in January. Ferrum College was one of five colleges to pilot this program for the Upper Room Ministries located in Nashville, TN. The *Journey to the Table* team, included students, faculty, administration, and staff who grew deeper in their relationship with God through the experience.

Other spiritual formation opportunities offered during the 2015/16 academic year included: Winter Jam in which 30+ students traveled to hear various popular Christian artists perform and share their testimony, Thursday morning prayer and communion services, spiritual gift studies, mission/outreach opportunities such as Wood for Warmth, Operation Christmas Child, volunteer opportunities at local shelters and food banks, and a General Board of Church and Society Seminar through which a small group of students, who chose an alternative Spring Break to DC, learned and deepened their awareness surrounding education, poverty and human trafficking.

A capstone event for the year was the “Rev. Dr. Wasena F. Wright Jr ’60 and Mrs. Patricia G. Wright Endowed Lecture Series” which is a biennial event that honors former Ferrum College Board member, Rev. Buddy Wright. This year, Rev. Dr. J. Denise Honeycutt, Deputy General Secretary of UMCOR, spoke on Global Issues and Disaster Relief, and Mrs. Pat Wright served as the special guest.

We continue to embrace our community connections such as: Praise on the Patio (14 churches participate), Tuesday chapel services, small group studies, and fellowship opportunities.

As we reflect on how God is at work in the Spiritual Life at Ferrum College, we see and believe God is working all things for good. We thank you for your support as we continue to stay focused on Christ, seek discernment, and live into God’s purpose.

Jennifer L. Braaten, President, Ferrum College

Randolph College

During 2016, Randolph College will celebrate its rich history as Randolph-Macon Woman’s College while looking forward to the vibrant promises of tomorrow. In 1891, William Waugh Smith chose Lynchburg, Virginia as the home for his vision—“a college where our young women may obtain an education equal to that given in our best colleges for young men and under environments in harmony with the highest ideals of womanhood.”

Today, 125 years later, much has changed at the College. But the heart of the institution remains its close-knit community of faculty, staff, alumnae and alumni, and students, who are dedicated to pursuing a broader understanding of the world. More importantly, Randolph College is still committed to providing women—and now men—a strong, liberal arts education that prepares them to live the “life more abundant.”

2015 was a great year for the College. Our enrollment was approximately 700 students and giving by alumnae, alumni, and friends, such as the Conference, remained strong. We continue to make a number of improvements to our campus. As you might imagine, with a 125-year-old institution comes challenges with an aging physical plant. A focus of my administration has been improving the campus infrastructure. Last summer, we began to

replace our electrical system on campus and that project will conclude by the fall of 2016. We also have developed a plan to replace our central boiler with satellite boilers for each building over the next four years. So far, we have raised \$3.1 million from very generous donors for these efforts. Students are overwhelming enthusiastic about the recently opened Wright Hall, a residence hall that received a complete renovation, combining historic charm with modern amenities. The students love the old features such as vaulted ceilings and hard wood floors as well as the new elevator, laundry facilities, beautiful study lounges and kitchens, impressive bathrooms, and air conditioning.

While I believe that one should never put too much stock in College rankings, various publications continue to be kind to us. U.S. News and World Report, Forbes, The Princeton Review, and The Washington Monthly, among others, continue to name Randolph a “best college.” We are particularly pleased that College Factual has ranked the College as #11 in the nation and #1 in Virginia for “Best Colleges for the Money.” These accolades are due, no doubt, to the outstanding faculty who engage our students in and out of the classroom and the generous institutional grants the College provides to students, totaling over \$13.5 million last year. Randolph remains steadfast in its desire to provide an outstanding, affordable education.

We at Randolph are thankful for the strong relationship that exists between the College and the Conference. We continue to strengthen the opportunities for spiritual development of our students and continue to expand the programs offered by our campus chaplain. We are particularly thankful for the leadership that Rev. John Peters provides as our connection to the Conference. I conclude by thanking the Conference for its ongoing support of our mission. Your contributions help us to prepare students to engage the world critically and creatively, live and work honorably, and experience life abundantly.

Bradley W. Bateman, President

Randolph-Macon Academy

In 2015 Randolph-Macon Academy was blessed with another stellar graduating class as our 61 graduates received 248 college acceptances to 140 different colleges. The class collectively was offered over \$6.6 million in college scholarships. As I joined the R-MA family in March of 2015, the Lord's presence on this campus, evident throughout the graduation events and accomplishments of our students, were quite the sight to behold through new eyes. The longer I am on this campus, the more thankful I am every day for the wonderful staff and faculty who work with our students, day in and day out, helping them to grow into young men and women of character. This year, we matriculated 339 students into our school, surpassing the budget number set as well as our own expectations. I am sure that your prayers for our school played no small part in this.

We hold a unique position in our industry, as we are a college-prep United Methodist school with an Air Force JROTC program. Our chaplain, Joshua Orndorff, has challenged our school to be a “city on a hill” in all that we do. The R-MA family rose to that challenge, as our students finished the 2014-15 school year with 14,419.25 hours of community service. Projects ranged from helping in school offices or completing recycling collections, to performing roadside clean-ups and holding a staff/faculty vs. students basketball game that benefited Imagine No Malaria.

Under Chaplain Orndorff's guidance, the spiritual life of our school has grown tremendously over the last 18 months. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes Bible study takes place at the Middle School (grades 6-8), and the Upper School (grades 9-12) Bible study, called The Beacon, both meet once each week. There is frequently a student praise band in chapel services, allowing a more contemporary worship to take place, to which many of our students relate well. Our weekly chapel services are mandatory for all students, with separate services for the Middle School and Upper School, and getting students to actively participate or learn through music is very important.

Other activities this year have included an ice cream social for students to meet various religious leaders from the community, and Kelsey's Big Give, which was held in cooperation with Riverton United Methodist Church. The “Snowed-In” (a 24-hour lock-in) event complete with speakers and music groups took place on the R-MA campus in January 2016. This was a joint effort with youth groups in the local area, and we had more than 50 youths participate.

This past fall we had our five-year interim accreditation visit with the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS) and I am pleased to report that we continue to be fully accredited. We are thankful to God for his provision and blessings, and you for your prayers and financial support. We continue to use your gifts to help fund our chapel programs as well as scholarships for United Methodist students, many of whom could not attend R-MA without the kindness you have shown. Every day your gifts make a difference to our students.

I invite you to visit our campus. I think you will fall in love with the natural beauty, the students, and the faculty and staff, just as I have. And you will walk away knowing that God is touching the lives of young people on this campus. Please keep us in your prayers, and may God bless you.

David C. Wesley, USAF, retired president

Randolph-Macon College

Randolph-Macon is a selective, co-educational, nationally ranked liberal arts college located in Ashland, Virginia, just minutes north of Richmond and 90 miles south of Washington, D.C. The college achieves its mission of “developing the minds and character of its students” by balancing a demanding academic program with individualized attention between its exceptional faculty and students. The student-faculty ratio is 11:1 and the average class size is 15 students. The college has an outstanding reputation for its national and international internships, study abroad programs and undergraduate research opportunities.

Randolph-Macon College integrates an exceptional, individualized education with a comprehensive, personalized four-year program called *The Edge*, which is focused on preparing our students for careers and post graduate success. Faculty serve as mentors and offer important advising, while providing a valuable liberal arts education, important career success strategies and life skills in the classroom. *The Edge*, offers our students the tools they need to lead the pack and have a “competitive advantage” after graduation. This success of this program is reflected in the college's tagline, *Building Extraordinary Futures*.

The Edge offers Boot Camp, a signature two-day, off-campus immersion program where students learn to identify their career passions, tell their story and hone their interview and communication skills to prepare for success after college. The weekend is devoted to helping students develop their own elevator speech and “brand,” learn how to communicate with confidence, and identify their strengths and capabilities—all with the help of top-notch speakers, interviewers and mentors, including R-MC alumni.

R-MC offers a Four-Year Degree Guarantee, which pledges in writing that freshmen who meet all necessary requirements will graduate within four calendar years. If not, Randolph-Macon will waive tuition costs for R-MC courses needed to complete the degree. Currently, 95 percent of Randolph-Macon graduates complete their degrees in four years or fewer.

The 2014-2015 academic year began with a total enrollment of 1,394 students. The college also welcomed the largest freshman class in its history.

The Class of 2018 represents 16 states, the District of Columbia, and three foreign countries; 42% of the students are male and 58% are female. In addition, 22% of the 425 students are minorities, and 37% are Presidential Scholars, R-MC's signature scholarship that recognizes students who demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement and leadership.

Randolph-Macon's *Building Extraordinary* campaign reached its \$100 million goal in 2014—a full 19 months ahead of schedule. The Campaign, which launched in April 2011, was designed to build or renovate residential, academic, athletic and student-centered facilities, support greater opportunities for faculty and students in and out of the classroom, scholarship assistance, and programs that support growth and the continued improvement of student outcomes through career and graduate school preparation. The goals for the campaign were set forth by the college's strategic and master plans. Because of its early success, the campaign goal was extended to \$115 million to include building a new science building. At the end of December 2015, the total raised for the campaign was an historic \$125 million. Alumni support for their alma mater is at an all-time high with 40% of alumni making a gift to the college. This ranks R-MC's alumni participation 16th in the nation of all private and public colleges, and first in Virginia for alumni participation.

In September 2014, Birdsong Hall, a residence for upperclassmen was dedicated and includes 30 apartments, plus common areas, study rooms and a two-story 3,280-square-foot multipurpose room, the Lindgren Pavilion. Birdsong Hall, which borders the football/lacrosse field, is named for Constance and Thomas Birdsong '49 and The Birdsong Corporation; construction was made possible through their \$2 million gift.

The new science building will connect to the Copley Science Center on the northwest side. This three-story, 2,700-square-foot facility, with state-of-the-art teaching laboratories, plus classrooms, faculty offices, and the Office of Pre-Health Advising, will also house the biology, environmental science/geology, and chemistry departments. Additionally, a new observatory will be constructed to replace the existing Keeble observatory. This facility is scheduled to break ground in spring 2016.

The 2014-15 academic year marked the 50th anniversary of international education at R-MC, whose January Term (J-term) study-travel classes began in 1964 with one faculty member and nine students visiting Germany. In January 2015, R-MC sent 136 students to 14 countries across five continents. Randolph-Macon's semester-long study abroad programs began in the mid-1980s in four countries: the UK, France, Spain, and Germany. In the 2014-15 academic year, 23 students studied abroad in such diverse places as Chile, Costa Rica, Thailand, South Korea, Morocco, Poland, Russia, and the Czech Republic. In total, 720 students have studied in 36 different countries during January or during a regular semester in the last five years.

R-MC's January Term is a four-week session in which students can immerse themselves in other cultures, conduct a regional, national or international internship or take an on-campus course in a specific area of interest. In January 2015, 1,279 students participated in J-term. January term internships that provide unique opportunities for our students would not be possible without the support of Randolph-Macon alumni who offer students one-of-a-kind experiences. Students gained experience interning at companies such as the Virginia Water Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey, Inc., the Virginia Commonwealth University Pauley Heart Center, Pennsylvania Steel and the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland, to name a few.

The Schapiro Undergraduate Research Fellowship program (SURF) is an endowment to support scholarly undergraduate research by students in all disciplines. SURF allows students the opportunity to conduct original research, under the guidance of a faculty member, and to be paid a stipend. Many students present their findings at academic and professional conferences both nationally and internationally.

The A. Purnell Bailey Pre-Ministerial Scholarship Program, designed to support students who express an interest in a Christian vocation in ordained ministry, established in 2004, continues to flourish. A limited number of select students are awarded this scholarship each year and receive half-tuition for the first two years and full tuition for the junior and senior years; mentoring; and assistance in fulfilling the requirements needed for acceptance into seminary in The United Methodist Church. Two internships in a ministry setting are also mandatory during the students' college careers.

Student outreach through community service continues to be an important aspect of a Randolph-Macon College education. The SERVE program (Students Engaged in Responsible Volunteer Experiences), in the Office of Student Life, is an integral part of Randolph-Macon's community engagement and leadership initiatives. R-MC coordinates dynamic opportunities for service and service-learning to help students explore the root causes and contexts of social needs through connections with the greater community. Students are actively engaged in Habitat for Humanity and the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, and in April, students volunteer for Macon a Difference Day, which is held annually in conjunction with Earth Day. This campus-wide community-service initiative brings together the college's clubs, organizations and academic and administrative departments to volunteer their time and energy for environmental projects and other needs in the surrounding communities.

At Randolph-Macon College, students bond with their peers, faculty mentors and alumni to build meaningful relationships that last a lifetime.

Alan B. Rashkind, chairman, Randolph-Macon College

Shenandoah University

What an exciting year for Shenandoah University! In December, the Office of Spiritual Life was notified it had received a \$600,000 Lilly Endowment, Inc. grant to create a youth theology institute at Shenandoah University. In partnership with the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Wesley Theological Seminary, the Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute (SUYTI) will open in July 2017. The search has begun for an SUYTI director, who will begin work in July 2016. I challenge you to identify rising high-school sophomores, juniors and seniors who will benefit from a two-week youth theology institute, learning from Shenandoah University and Wesley Theological Seminary faculty, participating in small groups and exploring faith and vocation in rural and urban environments. Please send the names of prospective students to spirituallife@su.edu, and we will work to help these students strengthen their knowledge, faith and leadership.

Calling21 interns from your local congregations were at Annual Conference this year. This is the tenth year Calling21 interns have explored their calling while working in our Virginia Conference churches. More than 80 college students have attended Annual Conference, explored God's call upon their lives, and discerned their life in ministry through Calling21. Many of those Calling21 interns are now certified candidates for ministry, attend seminary, serve local churches and are in the ordination process. Many more are lay leaders in local congregations, teachers at our schools, and non-profit leaders. Calling21 is another great partnership between Shenandoah University, Wesley Theological Seminary, the Fund for Theological Education and the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

In May 2016, Shenandoah University will take 12 students from its Faith Seeking Justice Christian Leadership Program to General Conference in Portland, Oregon, to observe and participate in the process that organizes our denomination. Additionally, Shenandoah's Harambee Gospel Choir auditioned and was accepted to sing at two events at General Conference. The student-led Harambee Gospel Choir is comprised of more than 20 students. In total, about 35 Shenandoah students will participate and lead our denomination at General Conference this May.

Shenandoah University hosted the RE-3 Intercollegiate Conference in September 2015 in partnership with the Wesley Foundations at Virginia Tech, William & Mary, and University of Virginia as well as the spiritual life programs at Ferrum and Randolph-Macon. RE-3 — rethink, reclaim, renew — was a two-day event with worship and informational sessions led by students from participating campus ministries. Sarah Bessey, author of *Jesus Feminist*, was the guest speaker. Funding for this event was a partnership between the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the Winchester and Roanoke Districts and the campus ministries that came together for the opportunity.

Finally, I want to highlight our January 2016 trip to the Trinity Institute in New York City. This year's theme was "Listen for a Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice." Shenandoah was represented at the Institute by eight students from diverse ethnic backgrounds as well as its Spiritual Life Coordinator and Vice President for Student Life Rhonda VanDyke Colby. The Trinity Institute was a unique and wonderful opportunity to talk about the racial climate in our country and on our college campuses. It opened lines of communication, inspired students to explore what they can do to work for racial justice and encouraged students to look at what the church can do to lead our country to social justice.

We have exceptional leaders at Shenandoah University who are moving us forward as an institution and as the church universal. The future of Shenandoah University and our United Methodist Church is bright because of these strong faculty, staff and student leaders. Thank you for working with us to educate and inspire our students to be leaders for tomorrow's church and world.

Tracy Fitzsimmons, Ph.D., President

Virginia Wesleyan College

Virginia Wesleyan College (www.vwc.edu) is Coastal Virginia's premier private, national liberal arts college. The College values its rich heritage and strong affiliation with the United Methodist Church, offering our 1,400 students experiential learning opportunities that empower them to grow as principled scholars and community leaders.

Virginia Wesleyan's 300-acre wooded campus provides an ideal setting for living and learning. This year we added a new synthetic turf field, Birdsong Field. The forthcoming Greer Environmental Sciences Center, scheduled for completion in summer 2017, will provide state-of-the-art instructional and laboratory facilities and a signature program in environmental science.

The Lighthouse Center for Exploration and Discovery is a one-stop shop for experiential learning, study away, internships and undergraduate research. The College's partnerships throughout the Hampton Roads region, such as The Chrysler Museum of Art and the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, extend our students' experiences. In addition, Virginia Wesleyan's robust collaboration with The YMCA will bring another new joint-use facility to our campus next year.

Students at Virginia Wesleyan choose from 33 majors, 30 minors, and seven pre-professional programs. More than 90 percent of them are employed or in graduate school within one year of graduation. The College's most popular majors are biology and business; our average class size is approximately 13 students. In addition, about 25 percent of our students compete in 19 NCAA Division III intercollegiate sports.

The Jane P. Batten Student Center is the hub of activity for 70 clubs and organizations and a thriving ministry and community service program. Nearly half of our students engage in service to others. Our winter homeless shelter, hosted on our campus each January, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2016, to our knowledge, the only shelter on a college campus.

Marlin Ministries

The Rev. Greg West leads a vibrant campus ministry, offering 20 different opportunities every week for students to gather in worship, Bible study, fellowship, and prayer.

Eight students are enrolled in our 'Methodism' course this spring which Chaplain West is teaching with VWC's C. S. Lewis Endowed Chair of Communication and Christian Thought, Dr. Terry Lindvall. Professor of Religious Studies and the Joan P. and Macon F. Brock, Jr. Director of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, Dr. Craig Wansink, and Chaplain West created a class called "Servant Leadership," a step toward re-establishing the pre-ministerial track.

In May Dr. Lindvall, Dr. Wansink and Chaplain West will lead a pilgrimage to England and Scotland to explore the methodology and theology of the early Methodist movement and the Scottish reformation.

We have sent numerous students to seminary over the last few years. We have renamed our annual clergy **Continuing Education Seminar the Robert F. Boyd Institute**, in honor of our only living founding Trustee. Our speaker for the spring of 2016 (scheduled for March 28-29) is Bishop Timothy Whitaker, speaking on "The Future Mission and Identity of the Church."

The Center for the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan addresses complex social problems and through discussion, lectures, events, and training seeks to equip individuals to be agents of reconciliation in society.

The Center for Sacred Music (CSM) continues its mission to live the words of John Wesley by "training minds and warming hearts." The Center's **Church Music Certificate program** and **Sacred Music Summer Conference** shape students, pastors, and practicing musicians through dynamic teaching and engaged worship as preparation for service. During 2015-16, 34 adult students took part in online and classroom instruction for their Church Music Certificate.

As the nation prepares to commemorate the 400th anniversary of enslaved Africans in America in 2019, the College undertook an advance exploration of the legacies of slavery through "**Entangled Identities: Legacies of 1619.**" The Center joined with the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom and the College's History Department to develop programming for this year-long series.

My first year as president of Virginia Wesleyan College has been one filled with discovery, innovation, and excitement, as well as a deep commitment to this impressive institution. I look forward to increasing our vital connectedness to our United Methodist roots.

Scott D. Miller, Ph.D., President, Virginia Wesleyan College

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED MINISTERS AND SPOUSES (ARMS)

ARMS is an association of retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses in the Virginia Conference that promotes fellowship, encouragement, support, learning and sharing. ARMS provides a voice for retirees by facilitating vital connections with each other and the church. All retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses are members of ARMS.

In April, 2015, ARMS sponsored its first-ever series of regional meetings in partnership with the conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. The main topic for these gatherings was the change in retiree health care plans subsequently passed by the Annual Conference in June. Feedback from

these gatherings was overwhelmingly positive with many expressing their appreciation that they were able to attend without traveling great distances or staying overnight. The ARMS Board will consider sponsoring additional gatherings in the future.

The main ARMS event has traditionally been an annual fall retreat. The keynote speaker for our 2015 retreat was Joe Eldridge who spent more than 25 years working in the public policy arena as an advocate and analyst on international human rights and humanitarian issues. As usual, the retreat also featured great worship, inspiring music and wonderful fellowship.

Bishop Tim Whitaker will be our main speaker at this year's retreat on Oct 12-13. Leigh Anne Taylor, minister of music at Blacksburg UMC, will lead a highly-participatory music program at the retreat. Retreat brochures will be available at the ARMS display table, the retiree banquet, and from VUMAC.

Retired clergy and spouses are encouraged to stay in touch through the ARMS newsletter *To Arms* and electronically through the conference Retiree Net.

Harry & Gale Kennon, co-presidents

PREACHERS' RELIEF SOCIETY

The Preacher's Relief Society during 2015 provided grants to five clergy families and/or widows of clergy to assist each of them in meeting financial emergencies. Expenses incurred because of health or medical issues were significant contributing factors to the needs experienced by each of the grant recipients. This year the recipients came from five different districts. As in every case, the requests and recommendations for aid were conveyed to the society by the superintendent of the district in which the recipient lives or is appointed. The society is grateful for the opportunity to provide aid. Its ability to do so is made possible primarily by income received from returns on investments. The society of course also very much welcomes gifts and bequests from persons interested in its mission.

Robert T. Casey, president

RETIRED CLERGY HOUSING CORPORATION

After 22 years, this is my final report to you. This organization was established by our conference in 1932 and for many years was known as the Home Corporation. Board members were the district superintendents plus an equal number of laypersons. As the years progressed, there were a number of changes that came about. A long-range planning committee was formed that visited each home trusted to our care. During that trip, a number of older homes that were built in the 1940s with only one bathroom and steep stairs leading to the second floor were slated to be sold. There were other concerns, such as faulty wiring and plumbing that did not meet the present codes but were considered safe under the "old grandfather clause". This committee was asked to develop plans for providing homes that were up to modern standards and gave older persons freedoms that are conducive to retirement living. About three years ago a new long-range planning committee made the same trip, again determining homes we should sell when they became vacant, plus determining if we were adhering to the plans developed by the first committee.

Changes were in order also concerning the name and membership of the board. The name changed to The Retired Clergy Housing Corporation with only 24 board members, 18 of which shall be laypersons and 6 clergy — one to be appointed by the Bishop from the Cabinet. All changes had to be approved by the Virginia State Corporation and the IRS which is also annually approved through the board's attorney and auditors. Today's board is divided into three areas of concern: the Admissions committee, the Finance committee and the Sites and Construction committee.

I have had the privilege of working with some of the finest laypersons and clergy one can experience. The chairpersons, both lay and clergy, have been outstanding individuals. Those who have served as officers or committee chairpersons have faithfully provided the highest qualities of leadership. None are paid. Their love for those who have served our conference and retired is a determining factor.

I, however, have to share with you my partner all these years. She is Nancy, my wife, who provided the leadership for our financial obligations. For many years she has received all financial contributions and oversaw every disbursement. Without her, we would have suffered in many areas.

I am hopeful that more and more individuals will become "covenantors" which is one of the life lines of our corporation. By joining, you assure the on-going care for needy retired clergy of the Virginia Conference. This membership is open for clergy and Laity.

God's best to the new leadership.

Thomas L. Coffman, President

VIRGINIA CHAPTER PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SECRETARIES

The purpose of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) is to provide a supportive base for the unity and fellowship of its members in order to provide individual growth, professional development, continuous education and spiritual enrichment. PAUMCS promotes and encourages the training and support of United Methodist church secretaries; serves as an advocate for emerging concerns that affect church secretaries; encourages and assists in the establishment of chapters of church secretaries and staff, within or across jurisdictional and annual conference boundaries; and assists in coordinating the program and work of these chapters.

Legislation was adopted at the 1988 General Conference which states that the General Conference of Finance and Administration (GCFA) has the authority and responsibility to provide guidance and consultation for continuing education of church secretaries, including establishment of professional standards, training and certification programs and to provide assistance to PAUMCS (2012 *Book of Discipline*, ¶807.19).

The Virginia Chapter of PAUMCS sponsors two meetings each year: a one-day fall training event and a two-day spring spiritual growth retreat. Members are persons presently or previously, full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer, engaged in administrative work in any local church or agency of The United Methodist Church.

Highlights of Virginia PAUMCS activities in 2015-2016 include a six-page mailing sent to the administrative staff of the 1,200 charges of the Virginia Conference and the fall "Experience Your Conference Connection" event held in October. This gathering featured Linda Rhodes, director of Communications for the Virginia Conference, who led us in a session on church communications for today, "I Love to Tell the Story." Wayne Rhodes, director of communications for the General Board of Church and Society explained how the United Methodist Social Principles are an expression of our discipleship and calling to spread scriptural holiness through local churches.

Our spring training/spiritual growth retreat in May at Camp Overlook was led by Sandy Gramling, a tenured associate professor in Clinical Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Sandy shared with us ways for church administrators to reduce stresses not found in secular settings and how to maintain spiritual health, along with information about physical health and nutrition. Attendees also valued the networking and spiritual component of this time together.

If you have administrative staff in your church, either paid or volunteer, we encourage you to help them become a part of Virginia PAUMCS for their professional growth, to the benefit of your church!

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST CREDIT UNION

Our goal is to be a primary resource for encouraging sound stewardship principles and helping Virginia United Methodist churches, individuals and institutions. Our objective is to help our members “to earn all they can and save all they can so they can give all they can” as servants of Christ in the world.

We are a full-service financial institution and we operate solely to serve the financial needs of our member owners. Our all-volunteer board of directors is comprised of a cross section of laity and clergy. We help our members by providing quality financial products and services, including savings and checking accounts, loans, Visa rewards credit cards, online services and resources to assist our members with personal financial management. We offer SnapLoan, an educational line of credit for college and seminary students. We have partnered with several conference churches to establish Jubilee Assistance Funds (JAF), a program that assists churches with short-term loans to help their church members who may be experiencing a financial emergency. We recently partnered with a financial services firm that can assist our members with college planning/529s, annuities, long-term care and saving for retirement.

Our church loan program helps conference churches with the refinance of current loans, loans for parsonages, renovations, and vans and buses. We also offer project loans (up to \$50,000 unsecured) and Visa rewards credit cards for church business.

John Wesley was among the first to organize financial cooperatives among the faithful in the Methodist movement, and it is in the spirit of Wesley that in 1952 the Virginia Conference established our credit union to help pastors pool their resources to help each other. As we celebrate 64 years of service in 2016, our membership has grown to include United Methodist churches, church members, clergy, organizations, agencies and institutions within the Virginia Annual Conference.

Alvin J. Horton, Chair

THE VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION

“Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in every situation.” – I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Have you ever skipped a stone across a lake to watch the impact it makes? And then marveled at the ripple effect? Every year, names come and go ... people emerge onto the scene. Their lives leave an imprint on others around them. The impact is often not planned or anticipated. But, like a smooth stone skipping across the lake, those people create ripples that intersect with others to leave a lasting legacy of connection. We all desire significance — to lead fulfilled lives and leave a lasting impact on those around us!

Over the past year, the Virginia United Methodist Foundation was blessed by several people whose story may not make the front page of any newspaper, but the ripple effect for lasting impact will intersect many more people for years to come. Here are a few, and I am grateful for each one:

- A long-term seminary professor with a deep sense of heritage and appreciation for his home church created a beneficiary plan with his retirement assets to provide an endowment for his home church to expand and re-envision ministry for the future.
- A business couple who has worked with their church through a major building project made a significant gift of highly-appreciated stock to fulfill a pledge commitment for the capital campaign in their local church.
- A retiree invested personal funds with the Development Company to provide increased fixed income to meet their monthly expenses. They also named their church as the beneficiary of those funds upon their decease as a lasting legacy.
- A church received a sizeable bequest. The Foundation staff assisted church leadership to discern and strategize what God was calling the church to do in mission — and how these new resources could be effective in opening doors and extending ministry.
- A grant from the Foundation helped provide support for the Parkview Mission in Lynchburg as a community outreach center in providing services to needy and disadvantaged in their community.
- A couple who shares a missional alignment with a social service agency created a charitable gift annuity to benefit that UM charitable ministry in Virginia — while providing income for their lifetime.
- One district worked through the process of re-purposing and selling a church property to another congregation. Following the sale, they sought counsel from the Foundation staff on how to manage those funds to develop and fund new ministry initiatives in their district.
- A local church sold its parsonage and invested those funds with the Foundation. They now draw earnings from those funds to provide a housing allowance for their pastor.
- A legacy ministry program in a local church unearthed several members whose planning is in place to make an impact and ensure the church’s ministry for generations to come.

Each of these leave testimonies of sacrifice and service with a goal to make an imprint on others through their planning and giving. Each of us should consider and plan ahead for what legacy we will create with the resources God has entrusted to our care. The Virginia United Methodist Foundation exists to helping congregants understand that they may make the largest giving impact of their lives through effective planning that can provide the much needed boost to resource a vision for future outreach into their community.

Foundation assets continue to grow as services and staff expand to meet the needs of donors and churches. Since 2011, we have increased the number of churches and ministries we serve from 148 to 217 — more than 50% growth! Assets managed have doubled over that time!

As Of: 12/31/2015

Account Type	Count	Value as of 12/31/2015
Church	217	\$ 35,584,663
Endowment	86	7,927,125
Agency	31	10,198,165
CGA	45	641,484
Total	380	\$ 55,236,952

Our call is to continue “helping you create lasting ministries into the future” through strategic planning, continuing education, capital campaigns and effective stewardship. The role of the Foundation is to educate and elevate the importance of charitable gift planning in endowing the church’s vision into the future. Our commitment is to live out our Core Values with a vision for relevant ministry that leaves a lasting legacy for generations to come. I am grateful for each fund — large and small — and each church relationship — urban or rural — where we serve as a fiduciary and assist in fulfilling their mission and vision.

Never underestimate the power of one person or one church — like a stone skipping across the lake — to create ripples that intersect and impact others. Each person, family or ministry can create a legacy imprint to accomplish the purpose for which God has called and equipped us. The Foundation remains available to assist individuals and churches throughout the conference to pursue God’s unique calling to an enduring legacy of vital ministry that changes lives and touches souls.

Capture the potential for impact...catch the imprint of generosity! Give thanks with me for God’s good provision and the open hearts of God’s people to plant seeds for coming harvest.

Stephen B. Clark, President

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, LLC

Re-envisioning Ministry for the Future

Thanks to more than 80 churches, agencies and individuals who have become investors in the Development Company over the last year, we have been able to make a difference in 15 local churches by helping them with church extension loan financing! These churches have saved more than \$214,000 in debt service, increasing their operational cash flow and enabling them to expand their local ministry outreach!

Our impact can be seen with:

- A construction loan for a new ministry facility and sanctuary in the Winchester District.
- Re-financing for a parsonage loan in the Charlottesville District.
- Equipping a church in the Arlington District to re-launch a capital campaign to expand and improve their building space.
- Helping a church in Richmond with their ministry strategy as they purchase adjoining property to expand ministry options.
- Coupling a re-finance and remodeling project into one loan for a church in the Alexandria District.

These are just a few of the examples of how your investments touched the lives of more than 12,000 Methodists last year. There are many benefits to partnering with the Development Company. As a connectional ministry, we provide consulting service to the local church as they look at expansion or facility improvement. We understand the challenges involved with financing, as well as the requirements of the United Methodist Church. Our ministry goals include simplifying the process, offering lower costs, advantageous terms and extremely competitive interest rates while serving as your advisor from start to finish. Each loan has a story which adds to the ripple effect of impacting lives and extending mission and ministry in their community as the hands and feet of Christ.

The Development Company offers construction loans with terms normally less than one year. Permanent loans with terms of 5 years and amortization up to 30 years are also available. Our goal is to help local churches become effective stewards of the resources entrusted — both building and budget — and re-envision their impact in mission and ministry in their local community.

The Development Fund is a registered Offering with the Commonwealth of Virginia. Although investments are not insured, they are safeguarded through strict investment and lending policies, strong board leadership and competent staff. Our purpose is to enable United Methodist investors to fund church capital improvement loans. Initial deposits have been encouraging though not sufficient to meet the loan demand. Our continuing prayer for the coming year is increased participation in the deposits to help meet the loan demand! Thereby, our motto: United Methodists Investing to Impact Virginia!

In 2015, the Development Company realized significant growth in investments and loans. As of December 31:

2015 Deposits	\$9,417,638
2015 Total Assets	\$10,908,920
2015 Outstanding Loans	\$6, 178,686
2015 Loan Commitments to Churches for future loans	\$5,016,876

The overarching goal for the Development Company remains: Strengthening the local church to expand ministry in its community through effective planning and ongoing consultation as we manage assets and provide support to fulfill its enduring local mission!

Stephen B. Clark, President

*Resolutions and Petitions are ordered alphabetically by title.
This does not indicate the order in which they will be considered.*

RESOLUTION 1

Ban the Box

Whereas Scripture teaches us to provide a refuge for the outcasts and that in welcoming a stranger we welcome Christ into our midst;¹

Whereas our Social Principles “affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God” and support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to employment;²

Whereas the majority of the over 325,000 ex-felons in Virginia who have completed all court-imposed punishment find it almost impossible to obtain gainful employment because most employers use a check box on their job applications to ask if the applicant has a felony conviction/arrest record – and then pass over applicants who check that box, even though the vast majority of such offenses were nonviolent and the ex-offenders have since tried to turned their lives around;

Whereas the inability to obtain employment makes it impossible for ex-offenders to support themselves and their families, and thereby contributes to a vicious cycle of higher unemployment, increased crime, more recidivism and higher taxes to support imprisonment;

Whereas this vicious cycle begins early in life for a large segment of our population – as revealed by recent studies which have found that by age 23, half of all black males and 40 percent of all white males have been arrested – and thereby virtually destroying the lives of such persons and depriving our nation of contributions they could make to our society;³

Whereas these trends affect not only men but also women, with the number of women in prison nationally “increasing at a rate fifty percent higher for women than for men since 1980,” and among all persons incarcerated in Virginia over eight percent are women – with such women who are the head of a single parent household facing especially daunting challenges upon their release;⁴

Whereas 14 states and at least 96 cities and counties (including 13 cities and counties in Virginia) have enacted “ban the box” policies to eliminate questions about an applicant’s criminal history from the initial employment application so that selection of persons to be interviewed will be based on skills and qualifications for a specific job position;⁵

Whereas several major corporations, including three of the nation’s top retailers – Home Depot, Target, and Walmart – have enacted ban the box policies by removing questions about criminal history from their job applications, thereby joining several other employers who have taken steps to end hiring exclusions that make it nearly impossible for anyone with a criminal record to get a job, even if that offense be in the distant past;⁶

Whereas deferring questions about any criminal history or conducting a criminal background check until after an applicant is selected for an interview, given a conditional offer of employment or found otherwise qualified for the job will provide an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their qualifications and enable employers to select the most qualified applicants;

Whereas jobs relating to public safety, handling finances or requiring contact with vulnerable populations such as working with children and the elderly will continue under law to require full criminal background checks prior to employment, and

Whereas, as some perceptive members of the clergy have pointed out, while banning the box is about fairness for people with records, it is also good for the “economy and for the safety of our communities to ensure we’re maximizing job opportunities for everyone.”⁷

Be it hereby resolved by this 234th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church that:

1. We commend the states, municipalities and private employers who have eliminated questions about past criminal history from their initial job applications in order to provide all job applicants an opportunity to be considered on the basis of their qualifications for a specific job.

2. We call upon our Virginia state legislators to enact legislation banning questions about criminal history from the initial job application for public and private employment so that questions about criminal history or conducting a criminal background check can be deferred until after an applicant has been selected for an interview, given a conditional offer of employment or otherwise found qualified for a specific job.

3. We urge private employers to follow the example of those private employers who have already banned the box from their employment applications.

4. We urge our clergy and lay members to contact their state legislators, urging support of a ban the box policy for Virginia.

5. We authorize the Board of Church and Society to join with other like-minded groups in a campaign to ban the box in Virginia and request that it keep the Conference updated on progress toward this goal.

Submitted by Dot Ivey on behalf of the Board of Church and Society

1. Isaiah 16:4; Matthew 25:31-46.

2. *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church 2013-2016*, ¶162.

3. “Study: Half of all black males, 40 percent of all white males arrested by age 23,” Press Release, University of South Carolina, 6 Jan 2014, accessed 8 Feb 2014, http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-01/uosc-sho010314.php.

4. “Fact Sheet: Trends in U.S. Corrections,” The Sentencing Project, www.sentencingproject.org; “Annual Report of the Quarterly Report of Demographic, Offense and Health Information of Offenders Incarcerated in VADOC Facilities - CY2014,” Virginia Department of Corrections, 2015, accessed 11 Feb 2015, <http://leg2.state.va.us>.

5. The 14 states that have enacted ‘ban the box’ policies are: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico and Rhode Island. In Virginia, Alexandria, Arlington County, Charlottesville, Danville, Fairfax County, Fredericksburg, Harrisonburg, Martinsville, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach have enacted ban the box policies. Nationally, other cities that have enacted this ban include Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Durham, Memphis, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC. <http://bantheboxcampaign.org/>; “Advancing a Federal Fair Chance Hiring Agenda,” National Employment Law Project, accessed 11 Feb 2015, <http://www.nelp.org/>; “Victory! Georgia becomes the first state in the South to ‘ban the box’ on state employment applications,” Georgia Justice Project, accessed 24 Feb 2015, www.gjp.org.

6. “Advancing a Federal Fair Chance Hiring Agenda,” National Employment Law Project, accessed 11 Feb 2015, <http://www.nelp.org>.

7. Father Gregory Boyle and Rev. Joseph Clopton, “Fair hiring policy gets an unfair rap,” *The Sacramento Bee*, accessed 8 Feb 2014, <http://www.sacbee.com/2013/09/10/5721634/another-view-fair-hiring-policy.html>.

RESOLUTION 2**Establish a Mentoring Ministry for Adolescents in the Community that It Serves**

Whereas, educational success is frequently the essential element in achieving economic opportunity and social advancement; and

Whereas, the American educational system has fallen short of its goal of promoting economic and social mobility; and

Whereas, a recent landmark report on American education, entitled “Separate and Unequal,” found that the likelihood of children exceeding their parents’ educational level is “lower in the United States than in any other advanced nation”; and

Whereas, the federal Title I educational program, including No Child Left Behind, whose goal has been to improve the academic performance of economically disadvantaged children, has done little to improve student performance; and

Whereas, successful student performance results from significant investment by the student, of time and effort to learn; and

Whereas, many students being raised in poor families are performing worse than any other group because they are the least motivated to put in the time and effort to be successful; and

Whereas, in Virginia, nearly 20 per cent more students from middle to high income families graduate from high school than students from low-income families; and

Whereas, the situation in Virginia is most desperate and unjust for African-American young men, where about 40% of these students are not graduating from high school while only 20% of white males are not graduating from high school; and

Whereas, in responding to the commandment of Jesus to love others as Jesus has loved us, Christian men and women have been given clear direction to provide guidance and encouragement to those underperforming adolescents living in their communities; and

Whereas, included in the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church is the declaration: “We believe that every person has the right to education. We also believe that the responsibility for education of the young rests with the family, faith communities, and the government”; and

Whereas, because United Methodists believe that “quality education opens doors of hope and possibility”, the church has declared that serving others by advancing their education is a priority of the transformational process called “Rethink Church”.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on each congregation to establish a ministry to adolescents who are not reaching their full academic potential, where congregation members would provide these adolescents in their community with the guidance and encouragement that they so desperately need to be successful in school, thereby giving these students a greater chance for social and economic advancement and justice.

And be it further resolved that the Board of Church and Society of the Virginia Conference will offer information and support to any local church that seeks assistance in developing a mentoring program in its community.

Submitted by Dave Stegmaier on behalf of the Board of Church and Society

RESOLUTION 3**Responding to Requests from Christians in the Holy Land**

Whereas it is God’s will that all people enjoy peace/shalom/salaam, i.e. peace, security, prosperity, and right relationships with one another and the earth.

Whereas the psalmists calls us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122.6), and to “seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34:14)

Whereas we affirm Israel’s right to permanent, recognized and secure borders, and Palestinians’ rights to self-determination and formation of a viable state; and,

Whereas the 2012 *Book of Resolution* states “we seek for all people in the Middle East region an end to military occupation, freedom from violence, and full respect for the human rights of all under international law.” Resolution #6073, 2008 *Book of Resolutions*, amended and readopted in 2012

Whereas “The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a ‘Greater Israel’ that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings (Resolution 6111: “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land.” 2012 *Book of Resolutions*); and,

Whereas we are called to support members of Christ’s church around the world, including Palestinian Christians who are being forced to leave the Holy Land due to Israel’s confiscation of their property and the severe hardships of living under occupation; and,

Whereas the Palestinian Christian community, through the Kairos Palestine document, has requested the support of the wider Church; (Kairos Palestine. “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering” <http://www.kairos-palestine.ps/content/kairos-document> Web. December 2009); and,

Whereas Palestinian Christian leaders have specifically requested the support of the United Methodist Church; (Letter to the United Methodist Church from Rifat Odeh Kassir, General Coordinator, Kairos Palestine, November 28, 2014 https://www.kairosresponse.org/Rifat_Kassis.html. Web. January 2015); and,

Whereas the 2012 General Conference reiterated the call to end the occupation, through boycotts of goods produced in the occupied territories (Resolution 6111: “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land.” 2012 *Book of Resolutions*); and,

Whereas all UMC missionaries serving in the Holy Land over the last 25 years support concrete actions by our denomination to show our support of Palestinian rights. (United Methodist Missionaries Support Divestment from the Israeli Occupation, https://www.kairosresponse.org/UMC_Missionaries_Divestment.html. Web. January 2015),

Therefore, be it resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference shall create a diverse and representative task force to review and research actions that can be taken to respond to these requests by our UMC missionaries and our Palestinian sisters and brothers in Christ, and formulate recommendations for the 2017 annual conference; and,

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on the U.S. government, the government of Israel, and the elected Palestinian leadership to work for diplomatic and nonviolent solutions to the problems of the region, to respect the equality and dignity of all the region’s people, and to forge solutions based on the principles of international law and human rights.

Submitted by John Copenhaver for the Board of Church and Society, 2016