



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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Sharma D. Lewis
RESIDENT BISHOP

Cabinet
OF THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

RENEWAL/SABBATH LEAVE FOR OUR LAY WORKERS

April 21, 2021

Dear Virginia Annual Conference —

I, together with the Virginia Conference Cabinet, want to reiterate our encouragement to clergy for your work in your ministry setting during this season of COVID.

We would be remiss if we did not also recognize our laity who are serving at the conference, district, and local church levels.

Just as clergy are called to their ministries, our laity are called as well. They bring their gifts, graces, and talents in our combined efforts to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Over this last year, our laity have also experienced pain, grief, exhaustion, and an overall toll on their mental, physical, and spiritual selves.

We affirm God's call on their lives and the ways they have remained one in the Body of Christ and tireless in their support and aid to their local church communities over the past year.

As a result, the Virginia Conference Cabinet and I are encouraging our Virginia Conference leaders, who supervise others, to recognize these faithful servants and give their lay church workers from the conference, districts, and local churches time off with pay between now and September 2021. We are encouraging that these days would not be considered vacation time, but rather a specific time away for Renewal/Sabbath.

May God continue to sustain and bless us all as we continue in ministry with one another.

Peace and Blessings,

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

The Virginia Conference Cabinet