



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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Dear Churches of The Virginia Conference,

We are delighted to announce Voices of Youth 2022. Voices of Youth (VOY) is a mission and ministry program of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church that gathers youth from across the conference to sing and serve. While we have not gathered in two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are planning for a trip in Fall 2022 when VOY will travel to Africa University. VOY will include current students and alumni of VOY from previous years. The trip will be in late September, early October of 2022. Final travel costs, logistics and arrangements will be determined based on the number of participants. The plan for this trip is to include opportunities to learn about Africa University, its students and impacts for the African continent, and special events to learn about Zimbabwe.

This trip to Africa University will also launch a four-year partnership between Africa University and the Virginia Conference called *Usahwira*. *Usahwira* (YOU-suh-we-rah) in the Shona language means a "beautiful friendship." *Usahwira* is an opportunity for local churches to support Africa University by making a four-year financial commitment to fund a student from enrollment to graduation. The tuition support is \$6,000 annually per church. Individuals, church groups, individual churches or groups of churches can work together to fund one or more students.

As we prepare to launch VOY 2022 and Usahwira we are inviting interested churches to join us for a Zoom interest meeting on **Wednesday, May 12 at 10 am** to learn more about this trip. Any questions about the trip may be directed to the Learning Ministries Office at learning@vaumc.org.

Blessings,

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, Resident Bishop of The VA United Methodist Conference

Rev. Nickie Moreno Howard, Associate Director of Learning Ministries for the VA Annual Conference

Rev. F. Lloyd Rollins, Consultant for Africa University