

THE COMMISSION ON ETHNIC MINORITY CONCERNS AND ADVOCACY (CEMCA)

The Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy (CEMCA), according to our stated mission, is called to advocate for the full and equal participation of all ethnic and racial constituents in the life and mission of the Virginia Annual Conference, to be a voice to the church for their concerns, and to guide the Conference in its fight against all forms of evil including racism.

In our meetings and ongoing work, we listen to and represent the voices of African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native-American Ministries. We continue to address our charge to voice the needs and concerns of ethnic clergy, laity, and local congregations, communicating them to the Conference and its leadership. We provide a forum for listening to ethnic minority concerns in our churches and our world, praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit to confront the sin of racism in the church, the nation, and the world.

The United Methodist Church in Virginia is uniquely positioned to catalyze consciousness and reconciliation, given its institutional resources and membership that crosses racial and cultural lines and includes grassroots and elites in its congregations. The Commission has prioritized improving our organization by creating steering and communications committees. We have met with Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson and are providing a voice for racial and ethnic concerns at the Common Table, the Conference Nominating Committee, and the General Conference Delegation. One priority has been to increase the participation of and support for ethnic members of our conference boards and agencies, where minorities are widely underrepresented.

We continue our Annual Conference monitoring efforts in collaboration with COSROW to assess the degree to which diverse voices are heard in our sessions. As you can see from the combined reports of monitors on Thursday and Friday afternoon, few ethnic minority voices are included in our common deliberations.

BUSINESS SESSION	ETHNICITY						STATUS		GENDER		AGE			
	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	LAY	CLERGY	Male	Female	Youth (under18)	Young Adult (18-35)	Adult (36-65)	Older Adult (65+)
Bishop	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Sign Language Interpreters	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Sound of Music Guy	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Laity Address	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Report of the Cabinet, Minute Questions	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	4	3	2	0	0	4	0
Discussion from floor	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Recognition of New Faith Communities	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	1	1	1	0	0	10	7	5	6	6	0	1	10	0

Table 1. 2023 Annual Conference Sessions - Thursday Afternoon

BUSINESS SESSION	ETHNICITY						STATUS		GENDER		AGE			
	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	LAY	CLERGY	Male	Female	Youth (under18)	Young Adult (18-35)	Adult (36-65)	Older Adult (65+)
Totals	2	6	1	0	0	34	22	21	26	17	6	1	31	5
Totals	2	6	1	0	0	34	22	21	26	17	6	1	31	5

Table 2. 2023 Annual Conference - Friday Afternoon

Our conference has many spiritual gifts from diverse heritages, and we are trying to share them. In addition to preparing Pentecost devotions, we have distributed Lenten devotions from a Native American perspective, crafted by the Rev. Larry Jent: [Forty Days with Jesus: A Vision Quest](#)

Our constituent ministries have made significant contributions this year:

[African American Ministries:](#)

[Asian-American Ministries:](#)

[Latino Ministries:](#) The Latino Caucus, formerly known as the Latino Clergy Caucus, convened for a memorable luncheon at the Virginia Conference 2023, which was both inspiring and co-hosted with CEMCA. Rev. Larry Jent imparted deep and meaningful insights, and the spirit of unity and purpose resonated throughout our time together. The Latino Caucus continues to plan and pray together over Zoom. As a significant milestone, in the last quarter of 2023, the Latino Clergy Caucus gathered to formally vote on and adopt its new name, the Latino Caucus, reflecting our formal inclusion of laity into our leadership and membership. We're excited how God is already working through our more inclusive vision for the future."

[Native American Ministries:](#)

Boarding School Memorials

Work continues on boarding school memorials. This initiative grew out of international gatherings hosted in person and online by Virginia Native American Ministries. Tribal elders and artisans are taking the lead in the design and scope of this multi-media project. Rev. Larry Jent, VNAM Chair, met with Tuscarora, Mohawk, and Cayuga artists in December 2023 to discuss the next steps.

Generational Trauma

The Boarding School Experience is part of Native American generational trauma, resulting in the highest rates of suicide, addiction, and violence of any ethnic group in America. We are currently planning a July event in Virginia to address these generational wounds with hope and healing. Leadership will be diverse and international.

We look forward to serving our ethnic minority communities as a listening space for ethnic and minority concerns and collaborating with the new Conference Commission on Religion and Race. We hope to share our diverse spiritual traditions with the Conference and serve local ethnic-minority, cross-racial, and cross-cultural churches, pastors, and laity.

- CEMCA co-chairs Eduardo Carrillo (Clergy, 703-967-4361) and Lester Kurtz (Laity, 202-894-1006)