

Common Table for Church Vitality Minutes

The scheduled meeting of the Common Table for Church Vitality was held on Thursday, March 30th, 2023, at 10:00 A.M in person and via Zoom.

For the record those present were as follows: Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson (Resident Bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area), Rev. Steven Summers, (Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries and Chair), Ms. Martha Stokes (Conference Lay Leader), Ms. Katie Mueller (Executive Administrator in the Office of Connectional Ministries), Mr. David Dommissé, (Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer), Mr. Dwayne Stinson (Influence Ministries), Mr. Lester Kurtz (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy Representative), Rev. Ryan LaRock (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries), Mr. Eduardo Carrillo (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy)*, Rev. Seungsoo “RJ” Jun (Serving Ministries), Ms. Kimberly Young (2023), Rev. Megan Saucier (2023), Ms. Terry Bain (2024), Rev. Don Jamison (2024), Rev. Aaron Fitch (2025), Rev. Joshua King (Annual Conference Secretary, without vote.

* - Those who met virtually

Those who were unable to attend: Rev. Douglas Forrester (Cabinet Representative), LAY MEMBER VACANT (2025)

Rev. Summers called the Common Table to order at 10:02 AM and opened us with a word of welcome.

Devotion, Rev. Don Jamison

Rev. Jamison gave a devotional based from a book, 365 Days Walking the Red Road, Feb. 15th. This reading is a Native American devotional book. The devotional reflected on “the Circle”. It mentioned that the circle has healing power, and all are equal. The sacred circle is designed to create unity, completeness of life. Rev. Jamison reflected on how God’s creation allows us to live in the circle if only we pay attention. To the native Americans, they understood this from the beginning. It is a reminder that God is always with us.

Rev. Jamison prayed asking that we have wisdom and see the circles of life before us.

Bishop’s Report, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

Bishop Sue reported that she continually is excited by the potential of the Virginia Conference. She is turning to joy, commitment, and joyful obedience. And so, she asks for our help to lead in life giving ways. And desires to lead those who want to be led. She shared

concern that the Virginia Annual Conference has not been focused, and longs for the Virginia Conference to be involved major things in the hurting world around us. She shared a personal story about a group in Florida that uses a vision called DART – Direct Action Research Training – And what they do is they go use faith communities to find the biggest concerns of the community. Bishop Sue attended what they call a Nehemiah gathering last week. This is where they met with governing officials to raise three issues, one of which was affordable housing. And in this event, they would receive commitments to address these issues. This was a way that the Church could hold government officials accountable. Bishop Sue asked, “What if our conference could be a group like this, that works for the most vulnerable, holding accountable those who promise to do for the those in need?” Bishop Sue concluded with her desire to focus on the things that matter, not the mundane.

Lay Leader’s Report, Ms. Martha Stokes

Ms. Stokes was excited to share the increase in the number of laity of the Annual Conference getting involved in lay ministry trainings. She specifically mentioned having 19 people taking a polity course recently. She was also joyful to report that so far there has been 40 people signed up for the Lay Leader course that is coming up just days after opening registration. She notes that there is a renewing energy that has begun to show itself recently.

Assistant to the Bishop/Director of Connectional Ministries Comments, Rev. Steven Summers

Rev. Summers reported on two things.

- 1) He notes that the Common Table for Church Vitality is feeling a new movement of excitement for ministry. The feedback he is getting is that we are productive and doing good work. While at the same time, he is feeling like there is a need for us to do more. He shared a personal reflection on the word, “Courageous” as this was a word shared with the cabinet by the Bishop Sue that has continued to stick with him during this time we find ourselves in. The need for Courage in strategic moves.
- 2) He then shared his second thought of a testimony, from an unnamed lay person at a mid-size church. He shared how they were concerned about a small pocket in their local church had been stirring up the congregation around disaffiliation. The misinformation that they were using to stir up the congregation was that if they did not take this opportunity now to take ownership of the church grounds, that after this deadline, they would have to pay for it in full. In response, this lay person told them they would purchase the grounds fully. After the straw vote, there was no need to continue discussing disaffiliation. Rev. Summers shared this as a testimony of the courage she showed, is the type of focus and clarity needed at this time.

Approval of the Minutes of January 12, 2023, Rev. Steve Summers

The minutes were approved by consensus with no corrections.

Youth and Children's Ministry, Mr. Dwayne Stinson

Mr. Stinson recalled for Common table that during Annual Conference in June of 2022, there was a motion seeking to raise funds to support new initiatives in children's and youth ministry at the conference level. He reported at this time there has been \$34,983.72 donated of the \$65,000 that was pledged. The proposal that Mr. Stinson brought before us today is that these funds be placed under the discretion of Conference Board of Discipleship for funds related to Children and Youth Ministries as this was unclear in the original motion at Annual Conference. Discussion and questions ensued about how these funds are used and who should be involved. It was moved by Rev. Ryan LaRock and seconded that these funds be given to the Conference Board of Discipleship to use for children and youth ministries. The motion was approved. For full proposal given to Common Table, please see Appendix A.

As a follow-up to this report a question was asked about youth involvement at 2023 Annual Conference. Mr. Stinson reported there is an increase in the youth cohort that is planned to be at Annual Conference this coming June.

Personnel Committee, Ms. Kimberly Young, Chair of the Personnel Committee

Rev. Summers reported on the reorganization proposal for Virginia Staff Reorganization. A handout was given to assist in visualizing these changes. (Appendix B). Rev. Summers gave some background about how the Conference came to our current need to hire and also to reorganize the staff. In this restructuring, Rev. Summers would be moving to full-time as Assistant to the Bishop. The Director of Connectional Ministries would be split out to two Directors: 1) Director of Connectional Ministries for Discipleship and Congregational Vitality, 2) Director of Connectional Ministries for Innovation and Creativity. The newer responsibility would be the Director of Connectional Ministries for Innovation and Creativity. This position would be on the cutting edge and bringing innovation to our local churches, District Superintendents, and Ministries. Currently, nothing changes in the staffing by this proposal, just the positions and job descriptions. There will be some new hires in the process and the staff are aware of these projected changes and are on board.

Bishop Sue reflected on this staff reorganization in stating that she did not like the linear of this model, but in viewing more of a cloud base leadership she named five of these positions as the core group: JEDI, DCM for Discipleship and Congregation Vitality, DCM for Innovation and Creativity, Director of Missional Engagement, and Director of Communications. Rev. Summers

further spoke about the Assistant Directors and their future work. Following this proposal, further conversation and questions ensued.

Following this conversation, Ms. Young spoke about the JEDI position and job description. She reported the need to still give an official name for the “JEDI” position. This is the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion personnel. At this time, they have begun to craft the job description for this position. In addition, the personnel committee has created job descriptions for the Administrative Assistant for Discipleship and Congregational Vitality, the Assistant Director of Missional Engagement, and the Administrative Assistant for Missional Engagement. These job descriptions have been approved by the personnel committee and will be emailed to Common Table for an online vote to approve. This hiring process will follow suit with previous hirings conference office has done.

The proposal for Staff Reorganization was approved unanimously.

Financial Update, Mr. David Dommissé (Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer)

Mr. Dommissé reported that the year is off to a normal average start to the year. Mr. Dommissé used this report to propose the Budget for 2024 (Appendix C). He started by sharing the plan to reduce the overall Conference Budget by 1.88%. Under this section, he highlighted the increase on Section 1, Proposed Line Item 403, as this increase is due to including the Assistant to the Bishop in this fund. In this same section, line item 404 has decreased. This was done in order better fund ministries that are doing well, rather than those struggling. Mr. Dommissé also highlighted line item 405 was decreased, not because we do not value their ministries, but because they have monies that are left over from previous years that is going to give them the monies, they need to do the work. In addition, the repayment of grant from disaffiliating churches will go into this fund. Mr. Dommissé shared that we have started to use the earnings off of funds we have collected when churches have paid into line item 408, “Funds Held for Future Benefits”. These are the disaffiliation payments representing the retiree pension and health liability that churches are paying before they leave. They are using those monies to reduce the clergy benefit apportionments.

In regard to Common Table, the salary changes in restricting the conference personnel are being reflected in Schedule A – Apportionment 401, Supporting Details for Line Items Above, A, items 4,5, and 6. All of the changes Common Table have just made has netted a changed in roughly \$20,000. The increase found in line 6, Information Technology, this increase is due to a change in our IT structure, taking on the Information Technology needs of our districts, enhancing our zoom capabilities for our conference, and digital security for our districts. Under Schedule A- Apportionment 401, Section 1, it has been recommended to have

Line E. changed to merge Campus Ministries and Virginia Education Funds to form “Ministries at Educational Institutions”. This fund included \$100,000 for a capital campaign.

A question was raised asking where, “Emerging Funds” would be placed in this budget. Mr. Dommissie stated that Emerging Funds has been rolled into Schedule A, Section 1.D. “Targeted Ministries”.

A motion was made to approve this specific change of merging Campus Ministries and Virginia Education Funds. This was approved by Common Table unanimously.

In conclusion, Mr. Dommissie reported that in this proposed budget, schedule B, line item 18, that the Legal fees are budgeted down from \$250,000 to \$90,000.

At 11:54 AM, Rev. Summers recessed the meeting until 12:30 for lunch.

At 12:30 PM, Rev. Summers called us back to order.

Proposal Mission Warehouse, Rev. David Magruder and Rev. Brian Posey

Rev. Magruder and Rev. Posey presented a proposal to have a Regional Year-Round Mission Collection Hubs in the Virginia Conference. This proposal today is asking for a task force to study the opportunities of establishing 4-5 Missional Collections Hubs in the Conference. This work will include a) identifying the existing collection sites in the conference (e.g., Central Virginia Mission Hub (Culpepper), Shenandoah River District Mission Central (Harrisonburg), etc.) and finding ways to collect the sites. b) identify needs (space, finance, organizational structure) of setting up new sites. The outcome/guidelines provided by the task force will allow us to invite more churches to be part of this mission.

Common Table responded with their blessing for them to move forward with this task force.

VAUMC Camp Ministry Board Chair Nomination, Rev. RJ Jun

Rev. Jun presented the idea for an official body to connect with Camp Rainbow, All God’s Children Camp, and the five Virginia United Methodist Camps (Alta Mons, Highroad, Overlook, Occohannock on the Bay, Westview on the James). This Board would cast vision, align the effort of the camps, encourage support for camps through advocating and grants, and provide accountability for two camp directors (All God’s Children’s Camp and Camp Rainbow Connection). This proposal seeks to form this Board and nominate a Board Chair.

After much conversation, it was requested that this be deferred to revisit this on the Cabinet since there was previous conversation about an ad-hoc task force to look into aligning the ministries of Camp Ministries with the Virginia Conference vision for ministry and then revisit this after more conversation and a plan to present to Common Table. Rev. Jun agreed to this plan and intends to come back after more conversation.

Grants Update, Rev. Don Jamison, Chair of Grants Committee

Rev. Jamison reported that we have four new Program Grant Proposals to discuss. These grant proposals have been approved by the Grants Committee. They are as followed:

Program Grant Proposals

Mission Encounter - Rev. Seungsoo Jun -\$ 5,000.00

Disaster Response - Rev. Seungsoo Jun - \$ 8,000.00

Belmont Breakfast Church - Larry Cochran - \$ 4,000.00

Campus Ministry Trauma Training Event - Dwayne Stinson – \$ 4,000.00

Proposals were approved unanimously.

Common Table Report for Book of Reports, Rev. Steve Summers

Rev. Summers shared that he will be sending out the report to be approved by Common Table. He specifically held onto this report as he was waiting to see how Common Table would handle the restructuring of staff at the Conference Office.

Other Items Discussion

Further concerns were shared regarding the oversight of our two ministry-based camps and their liabilities. Further conversation ensued about the both the five property camps and these two ministry camps.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

A closing prayer was offered by Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson at 1:17 PM.

Upcoming Meeting dates/times:

May 11, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. (Thursday)

July 20, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. (Thursday)

September 21, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. (Thursday)

November 16, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. (Thursday)

Rev. Joshua King, Secretary

Appendix A
Proposal to the Common Table
Regarding the Spontaneous Fundraising for Children's and Youth Ministry
at the June 2022 Annual Conference Session

Background

At the 2022 June session of the Virginia Annual Conference, the Holy Spirit moved the body to make pledges to establish a designated fund to support **new initiatives in children's and youth ministry at the conference level**. Rev. Joshua McCauley inspired the movement by offering an amendment to the budget that would designate \$50,000 currently allocated to the legal defense fund to establish a youth and children's ministry fund. As debate ensued, individuals, pastors, and district superintendents began to rise to pledge funds to establish such a fund. Nearly \$65,000 in pledges came in, of which the conference has received \$34,983.72. The reality is that the annual conference members, including those pledging funds, were not completely clear on the purpose of these funds, nor on the way in which these funds would fit within our funding systems. The original intent of Joshua McCauley's motion, and his subsequent clarification, is that these funds would support new children's and youth ministry initiatives at the conference level. (See *the Daily Proceedings* of the VAUMC 2022 June Session, <https://doc.vaumc.org/Journal2022/DailyProceedings2022.pdf>, 40-41).

Proposal

Oversight of these funds should fall to the bodies responsible for oversight of the ministry areas the funds support: children's ministry and youth ministry.

For funds related to children's ministry, **the Conference Board of Discipleship shall have responsibility for authorizing expenditures from the designated fund for new children's ministry initiatives**. The Board of Discipleship may, at its pleasure, authorize a subteam to focus specifically on children's ministry and to oversee expenditure of these funds, but ultimately the authority shall rest with the Board.

For funds related to youth ministry, **the Conference Council on Youth Ministry (or successor body) shall have responsibility for authorizing expenditures from the designated fund for new youth ministry initiatives**. During any period in which the CCYM (or successor body) is not functional, the Board of Discipleship shall exercise that authority on its behalf, or may designate a team focused specifically on youth ministry to oversee expenditure of funds.

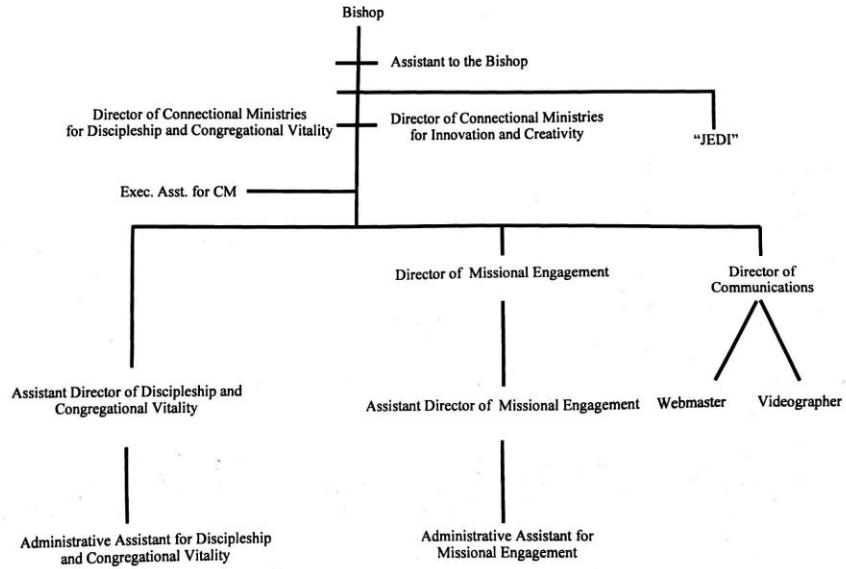
I submit this proposal to clarify the responsibility and to ensure accountability for these funds, according to the structures in place that support children's and youth ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Dwayne Stinson
Associate Director of Influencing Ministries

APPENDIX B

**Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church
Staff Reorganization Proposal for Common Table
3-12-2023**



Appendix C

Schedule A - Apportionment 401 - Conference Mission & Ministries						
SECTION I - Approved Conference Budget for 2023	2022	2023	2024	% of Budget	Inc./(Dec.)	% Chg
Common Table Directed Ministries						
A. Program & Board Administrative (see below)	1,341,000	1,417,000	1,506,000	5.47%	89,000	6.3%
B. Benevolence Grants	160,000	160,000	160,000	0.58%	-	0.0%
C. Special & Sustaining Grants	50,000	50,000	50,000	0.18%	-	0.0%
D. Targeted Ministries	80,000	80,000	80,000	0.29%	-	0.0%
E. Ministries at Educational Institutions	1,161,000	1,186,000	1,200,000	4.36%	14,000	1.2%
	2,792,000	2,893,000	2,996,000	10.89%	103,000	3.6%
Other Ministries						
Wesley Foundation Maintenance	85,000	85,000	85,000	0.31%	-	0.0%
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.07%	-	0.0%
Total Ministry Expenses	2,897,000	2,998,000	3,101,000	11.27%	103,000	3.4%
Contingency Funds - Budget Shortfall	119,000	135,000	136,000	0.49%	1,000	0.7%
Total 401 Apportionment	3,016,000	3,133,000	3,237,000	11.76%	104,000	3.3%
Supporting Details for Line Items Above						
A. Program & Board Administrative Expenses						
1. Common Table	3,000	3,000	3,000	0.01%	-	0.0%
2. Departmental Administration	50,000	58,000	50,000	0.18%	(8,000)	-13.8%
3. Agency Administration	38,000	42,000	25,000	0.09%	(17,000)	-40.5%
4. Personnel Costs	670,000	695,000	764,000	2.78%	69,000	9.9%
5. Communications	294,000	294,000	254,000	0.92%	(40,000)	-13.6%
6. Information Technology	266,000	300,000	385,000	1.40%	85,000	28.3%
7. Contingency	20,000	25,000	25,000	0.09%	-	0.0%
	1,341,000	1,417,000	1,506,000	5.47%	89,000	6.3%

Council on Finance and Administration							
Proposed Alternative Format							
SECTION I - Approved Conference Budget for 2024							
	Sch.	2022	2023	2024	% of Budget	Inc./(Dec.)	% Chg
Conference Apportionments							
401 - Conference Mission & Ministries	A	3,016,000	3,133,000	3,237,000	11.76%	104,000	3.32%
402 - Conference Services	B	1,889,000	1,992,000	1,920,000	6.98%	(72,000)	-3.61%
403 - Appointive Cabinet Fund	C	1,342,000	1,095,000	1,255,000	4.56%	160,000	14.61%
404 - Equitable Compensation		200,000	210,000	180,000	0.65%	(30,000)	-14.29%
405 - Church Extension & Development		900,000	900,000	600,000	2.18%	(300,000)	-33.33%
Total Conference Apportionments		7,347,000	7,330,000	7,192,000	26.14%	(138,000)	-1.88%
Clergy Benefits Apportionments							
407 - Active Clergy Health		10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	36.34%	-	0.00%
408 - Retired Clergy Health		6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	21.80%	-	0.00%
408 - Funds Held for Future Benefits		-	-	(75,000)	-0.27%	(75,000)	-
Total Clergy Benefit Apportionments		16,000,000	16,000,000	15,925,000	57.87%	(75,000)	-0.47%
General & Jurisdictional Apportionments							
410 - Episcopal Fund		865,000	865,000	865,000	3.14%	-	0.00%
411 - World Service		2,150,000	2,150,000	2,150,000	7.81%	-	0.00%
412 - General & Interdenominational Fund		325,000	325,000	325,000	1.18%	-	0.00%
413 - Ministerial Education		675,000	675,000	675,000	2.45%	-	0.00%
414 - Black College Fund		315,000	315,000	315,000	1.14%	-	0.00%
415 - Africa University Fund		70,000	70,000	70,000	0.25%	-	0.00%
Total General & Jurisdictional Apportionments		4,400,000	4,400,000	4,400,000	15.99%	-	0.00%
Total Apportionments		27,747,000	27,730,000	27,517,000	100.00%	(213,000)	-0.77%

Schedule B - Apportionment 402 - Conference Services

	2022	2023	2024	% of Budget	Inc./(Dec.)	% Chg
1. Board of Ordained Ministry (see below)	386,500	411,500	413,500	1.50%	2,000	0.49%
2. Annual Conference Session	245,000	245,000	280,000	1.02%	35,000	14.29%
3. Treasurer's Office	439,000	450,000	455,000	1.65%	5,000	1.11%
4. Human Resources	35,000	45,000	45,000	0.16%	-	0.00%
5. Computer Services	120,000	120,000	125,000	0.45%	5,000	4.17%
6. Episcopal Office Support	26,500	26,500	26,500	0.10%	-	0.00%
Episcopal Residence			5,000	0.02%	5,000	#DIV/0!
7. Pastor Relocation & Transition	7,500	7,500	7,500	0.03%	-	0.00%
8. Archives	20,000	20,000	26,000	0.09%	6,000	30.00%
9. Council on Finance and Administration	2,000	2,000	2,000	0.01%	-	0.00%
10. Historical Society	4,000	4,000	4,000	0.01%	-	0.00%
11. Board of Trustees	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.00%	-	0.00%
12. Telephone Service	10,000	10,000	22,000	0.08%	12,000	120.00%
13. Insurance	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.07%	-	0.00%
14. Postage & Printing	33,000	33,000	26,000	0.09%	(7,000)	-21.21%
15. Building Operations & Services	175,000	175,000	190,000	0.69%	15,000	8.57%
16. Conference Publications	7,500	7,500	7,500	0.03%	-	0.00%
17. Contingency Funds for Unforeseen Expenses	15,000	15,000	15,000	0.05%	-	0.00%
18. Legal	200,000	250,000	90,000	0.33%	(160,000)	-64.00%
19. Audit	45,000	52,000	55,000	0.20%	3,000	5.77%
20. Episcopal Committee	2,000	2,000	2,000	0.01%	-	0.00%
21. General Conference	-	-	10,000	0.04%	10,000	#DIV/0!
21. Contingency Funds - Budget Shortfall	95,000	95,000	92,000	0.33%	(3,000)	-3.16%
	1,889,000	1,992,000	1,920,000	6.98%	(72,000)	-3.61%

Board of Ordained Ministry						
1. Minister's Family Counseling	15,000	15,000	15,000	0.1%	-	0.00%
2. Candidates' Evaluation	15,000	15,000	15,000	0.05%	-	0.00%
3. Sexual Ethics Response Team	2,000	2,000	2,000	0.01%	-	0.00%
4. Conference Clergy Leadership Program	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.07%	-	0.00%
5. Center for Clergy Excellence	14,500	14,500	15,500	0.06%	1,000	6.90%
6. Personnel Costs	250,000	275,000	275,000	1.00%	-	0.00%
7. Board of Ordained Ministry Administration	70,000	70,000	71,000	0.26%	1,000	1.43%
	386,500	411,500	413,500	1.50%	2,000	0.49%

Schedule C - Apportionment 403 - Appointive Cabinet Fund

1. Salaries & Pension	1,222,000	925,000	1,085,000	3.9%	160,000	17.30%
2. Travel & Meetings	100,000	100,000	100,000	0.4%	-	0.00%
3. Continuing Education & Other	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.1%	-	0.00%
4. Contingency Funds - Conference Budget Shortfall	-	50,000	50,000	0.2%	-	0.00%
	1,342,000	1,095,000	1,255,000	4.56%	160,000	14.61%