

Common Table for Church Vitality Minutes

The scheduled meeting of the Common Table for Church Vitality was held on Thursday, February 15th, 2024, at 6:30 P.M on Zoom.

Attendees:

O	Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson (Resident Bishop of Richmond Episcopal Area)	O	Rev. Steve Summers (Assistant to the Bishop)
O	Mr. Dwayne Stinson (Director of Connectional Ministries for Discipleship and Congregational Vitality)	O	Rev. Jonathan Page (Director of Connectional Ministries for Creativity and Innovation)
O	Ms. Martha Stokes (Conference Lay Leader)	O	Rev. Doug Forrester (Cabinet Representative)
O	Mr. David Domnisse (Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer)	O	Ms. Katie Mueller (Executive Administrator in the Office of Connectional Ministries)
O	Rev. Amanda Garber, Director of Missional Engagement	O	Rev. Ryan LaRock (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries)
	Mr. Lester Kurtz (Co-Chair) (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy)		Rev. Eduardo Carrillo (Co-Chair) (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy)
O	Ms. Terry Bain (Lay Member 2024)	O	Rev. Don Jamison (Clergy 2024)
	Lay Member Vacant (2025)		Clergy Member Vacant (2025)
O	Dr. Carlos Liceaga (Lay Member 2026)		Clergy Member Vacant (2026)
O	Rev. Joshua King (Annual Conference Secretary, without vote)		x – in person o – online blank – not present

Greeting and Prayer, Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader

Ms. Martha Stokes began the meeting at 6:32 PM with a word of prayer.

Approval of the Minutes of January 9th, 2024

The minutes were approved by consensus with no corrections.

Lay Leader Report, Ms. Martha Stokes

Ms. Martha Stokes shared the joy that she has heard from laity who are excited to be asked to serve through our new nominations process. She further shared that we have a good response for the Lay Servant Academy. At the Lay Servant Academy, we have also had good response to the Roots, Race and Discipleship Course that is being offered.

Mr. Stinson asked Ms. Stokes to share what the new process looks like. Ms. Stokes shared how they asked all the clergy and church lay leaders to submit names of people they would encourage to serve on the conference committees. By email, they notified those who were named to watch a video and ask them to discern their ministry. And then they could submit a form of interest. At this time, we have received 22 forms with profiles that we likely would not have had before.

Cabinet Report, District Superintendent Rev. Doug Forrester

Rev. Forrester reports that cabinet is working in concert with Bishop Sue to diligently project appointments. A lot of energy is being focused on this currently. Rev. Forrester shared the update that the Just Compensation Task Force has just met again this week and has one more meeting to go and they believe their work will be done and ready to unveil to the Annual Conference. The cabinet is also delighted with this the new nomination process as well and believes it will be very fruitful.

Rev. LaRock asked if there would be any information about the findings from the Just Compensation Task Force. Rev. Forrester stated there would be a report in the Book of Reports with this information available. He believes that there may be time for a presentation from the platform will happen as well.

Bishop's Report, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

Bishop Sue stated that she is grateful for the participation for the members of Common Table at the Extended Extended Cabinet meetings. She shared the heart of the work that is being done is bringing up new leaders, lay and clergy alike; and to make Annual Conference more efficient than before.

Director of Connectional Ministries for Discipleship and Congregational Vitality Report, Mr. Dwayne Stinson

Mr. Stinson shared that the Young Adult Council has met, and now also too a Youth Council has met. They had a planning retreat where they put together a Conference Retreat for this fall that is focused on youth leadership development for youth in their local churches and communities. Mr. Stinson also shared he and Ms. Hannah Bryn is getting certified in the Growing Young Process through Fuller Seminary to help local churches offer spaces welcoming to young leaders and disciples.

Mr. Stinson also shared the Older Adult Council is active as they met general church staff in older adult ministries this week.

The Rules Committee has almost finalized the rules for the bringing back of the Resolutions as was requested at the 2023 Annual Conference.

Director of Connectional Ministries for Creativity and Innovation Report, Rev. Jonathan Page

Rev. Page shared that the Annual Conference Planning for 2024 is moving forward. Today an outlined agenda was released today beginning with a Juneteenth Celebration the night before Conference begins. Rev. Page shared that the attitude for Annual Conference should be a space for celebration and equipping. This year, most of our business sessions will be sharing some teaching, this will include panels of specialists. A continued practice will be evenings free from business. Guest speakers will include Bishop Sue and Bishop Tom Berlin.

In addition to Annual Conference, the Church Development Team sponsored a group to the Fresh Expressions National Gathering in Charlotte North Carolina. We had about 50 people from the Virginia Conference in attendance. Rev. Page further shared how much of this year he has been in conversation with people and the questions of how do we get people into community development and community action? He shared this past week that he and other leadership of the conference were able to meet with DART, a community organizing effort in the Richmond and Charlottesville areas (these are the local office of this national organization). They are about how we are seeking community transformation especially with our marginalized communities. Rev. Page concluded with speaking about how we are to be incarnate in our ministry and how we are present in relationship with the community he believes will be more of our future and would like to emphasize as such.

Ministry Incubators Grant Writing, Rev. Jonathan Page

Rev. Page shared that there are currently many different options to be able to seek grants at this time in the Virginia Conference. The question posed is what it would look like to have one place for grants to be requested from the Virginia Annual Conference. In working with Ministry Incubators, the Directors of Connectional Ministries requested for them to come up with a plan for what this could look like. The people of Ministry Incubators put together a proposal for Common Table to consider. See attached Appendix A.

Discussion ensued. It was clarified that this will both seek additional grants and create a structure through which all our conference grants would be applied for. The ministry incubators consultant team would meet with all of those within our conference who gives grants to better structure the decision-making body.

Rev. Jamison made the motion to allot \$10,000.00 to seek the consultants from Ministry Incubators for this work. The motion was seconded and approved.

Reflections on January Extended Extended Cabinet Meeting, Rev. Jonathan Page & Mr. Dwayne Stinson

Rev. Page shared that this first meeting was a time to look at ourselves and seek what our core principles are and what we as a conference aspire to become. Rev. Page opened the floor for reflections from Common Table. Hope was a common theme for how this day was experienced. Hope connected with truth telling and doing so at the right time. It was also encouraging to have such a diverse leadership around the table at the Extended Extended Cabinet meeting.

Bishop Sue shared about the upcoming Nehemiah Action opportunity that we will have at our March Extended Extended Cabinet meeting. She shared that one of the earliest influences in her ministry that she treasured and has been really seeking to reconnect with is with the Direct Action and Research Training (DART) Center out of Miami. They are community organizers, and they lead churches ecumenically. They come together to identify issues in the community by going door to door, grassroots, asking a community what the biggest problems are here and then empowering the community to take action systemically in government, in law enforcement, whatever the problems are. And how this works is the members of churches work on this and then they work with usually the politicians to come to some sort of agreement. After hearing the demands, usually the leaders publicly agree to address these things and come to a commitment with dollars and energy. And so, following our Extended Cabinet Meeting that Monday, the invitation will be to join them in downtown Richmond or again the following day in Charlottesville. The local DART group is called RISK in Richmond and Impact in Charlottesville and there's a community organizer for each of these groups. She concluded by saying if you want to put faith into action and you want to see systemic results, this would be a great time to do so and hopes everyone will participate.

Rev. Page shared that we would spend more time with aspirational values and prioritization.

Open Business

Rev. Amanda Garber shared that the Camp and Retreat Center Taskforce has met for the first time and should have a proposal to the April Common Table meeting.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment Bishop Sue

Bishop Sue closed the meeting in prayer at 7:27 PM

Upcoming Extended Extended Cabinet Meeting time/dates:

Monday, February 19th – 9:00 AM -3:00 PM

Tuesday, March 19th – 11:00 AM – 5:00 (ish) to get together at 6:30 for the DART event

Monday, April 8th - 9:00 AM -3:00 PM

Monday, May 13th - 9:00 AM -3:00 PM

Upcoming Common Table Meeting times/dates:

- Thursday, March 14th at 10AM
- Thursday, April 11th at 10AM
- Thursday May 9th at 10AM
- Thursday, August 22nd at 10AM
- Thursday, September 19th at 6:30 PM - Virtual Only
- Thursday, October 17th at 6:30 PM - Virtual Only
- Thursday, November 14th at 10AM

Rev. Joshua King, Secretary

Virginia Conference Strategic Grant Seeking

January 4th, 2024

This proposal is valid for 30 days from today's date.

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Needs Overview

Leadership within the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church recognizes the potential impact and sustainability associated with grant-based income streams. However, the Conference is also cognizant of the ways mission creep and exhaustion can undermine an organization that chases grant opportunities without a thoughtful strategy.

With these realities in mind, it is the hope of the Virginia Conference that leaders and representatives across the pastorate, Conference office, and the Virginia United Methodist Foundation can strategize an aligned plan for leveraging grants to support a cohesive overall mission for the Conference.

Ministry Incubators is proud to partner with the Virginia Conference to offer support in executing this important undertaking. The following pages outline a series of deliverables to that end.

This option of support begins in January of 2024 and includes the total expenses for all consultants involved.

Ideal Investment Option

January 2024 – July 2024

Ministry Incubators will complete the following for the Virginia Conference:

A three-day listening assessment to identify the current financial priorities of divisions and leaders across the conference resulting in an initial findings report and four-month timeline for designing an integrated Conference grant-finding and obtaining strategy

A full research process through our partnership with the experts at GrantScape, resulting in:

- The identification of 2-4 strategic funding areas that fall within the Conference's mission and strategic priorities
- A research process to identify relevant grantors with funding priorities that align with the Conference's mission and strategic priorities (typically yields 7-10 substantive leads)
- A summary report of relevant leads and suggested priorities
- An outline of next steps regarding each grant

Up to five grant-finding job descriptions for the individuals or teams who will ultimately be charged with executing the Conference grant strategy

Three grant applications driven by Ministry Incubators' staff in cooperation with key Conference leadership

Six months of project management support to implement the recommendations of the assessment timeline

Three leadership alignment calls to ensure key decision-makers are informed and influencing the project's progress

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Ideal Investment Option

6-month Investment: \$ 42,828

First month's payment: \$ 10,828

**Remaining monthly payment
(for 5 months): \$** 6,400

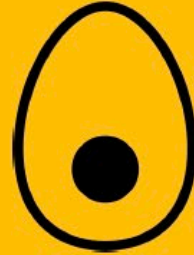
*All travel expenses fully included



Proposal for Virginia Conference

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