

Common Table for Church Vitality Minutes

The scheduled meeting of the Common Table for Church Vitality was held on Tuesday, January 9th, 2024, at 5:00 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)
	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)
	Rev. Ryan LaRock (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries)	O	Mr. Lester Kurtz (Co-Chair) Rev. Eduardo Carrillo (Co-Chair) (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy)
	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, Rev. Jonathan Page & Mr. Dwayne Stinson

At 5:02 PM Mr. Dwayne Stinson called the meeting to order and opened with a word of prayer.

Approval of the Minutes of November 16th, 2023,

The minutes were approved by consensus with no corrections.

Bishop's Report, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

Bishop Sue shared a word of the New Year, "Incarnation." She believes this is a time that we take our leadership serious with incarnation and encouraged the leadership of the church to be present to our local churches incarnationally. This is a part of why she has invited Common Table to the extended cabinet meeting in a hope to build relationships, for everyone to be on the same page, and to start deconstructing some of the silos in the Virginia Conference. She believes her goal is to move us from hierarchy to connection. She shared that she hopes to help getting us all to row in a common direction. The conversation that the extended cabinet, representative from the Board of Ordained Ministry, and Common Table will be about are "what is the culture we want to live and work in, what are the strengths of the Annual Conference, what should our priorities be, and how should do we work together to row in the same direction."

Cabinet Report, District Superintendent Rev. Doug Forrester

Rev. Forrester expressed his immense satisfaction with the efforts of the Just Compensation Workgroup. He happily noted that the ideas put forth by the Cabinet, the Equitable Compensation Commission, and the Workgroup have been aligning beautifully, which he believes is a testament to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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

Mr. Stinson gave an update on where Discipleship ministries is heading. He shared that we had our first Young Adult Meeting to his recollection. The focus of this conversations was to ask Young Adults what type of Church do they want to be a part of? A lot of their focus is going to more on how to equip young people to be in ministry in their local church. There is some excitement about age level ministries being formed again, not only for young adults, but for youth and children as well.

In addition, Nominations has met once this year. They have taken a new approach this year as they are identifying leaders with their gifts and strengths by other leaders and strategically placing those members on boards/committees that are needed currently. He gave the example that CFA may not necessarily need more finance people, but rather they may need people that are more creative.

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

Rev. Page shared that our new Director of Missional Engagement, Rev. Amanda Garber, began this week. She is remaining 50% at RISE in Harrisonburg while taking on this new position half time.

He further shared that Communications has been actively working towards General Conference. Rev. Page stated that he and Bishop Sue even today has recorded a podcast called the Before Conference Conference (BCC). Connectional Ministries hope is that Conference Communications plans to try and keep our Annual Conference as educated and informed as we can ahead of time so that there are no surprises at the upcoming General Conference for the

members of the United Methodist Church in the Virginia Conference. They intend to do this through a series of podcasts with members of the Virginia Delegation on the 14 legislative committees of the General Conference.

Mr. Stinson shared that Mrs. Madeline Pillow-White, Director of Communications, is on maternity leave at this time, but others at the Conference Office have been stepping up to cover her time off.

Mr. Carlos Liceaga requested more information about the new Director of Missional Engagement. Rev. Page shared that this office is about equipping the local church for missional engagement in our communities. He also stated that he would look to see if that job description is available on the conference website, and if not to be able to provide that job description later. Later in the meeting he shared the webpage about our Missions Engagement ministry: <https://vaumc.org/missions/>

Grants Update

Mr. Stinson expressed his gratitude for Common Tables dedicated efforts in voting on the Grants via email since the last meeting. Furthermore, Mr. Stinson shared how he has been incredibly open and transparent throughout the process of relaying the Grant Requests. He has ensured that both the recipients of the Grants and those who may not have received funding are well-informed about the situation. As there were an overwhelming number of requests and limited available funds, it was a challenging task to accommodate everyone's needs.

Mr. Stinson thanked the Common Table for their work in voting over email for the Grants since our last meeting. He further shared that he was very transparent with those receiving the Grants and those who may not have received funding as there were much more requests than there were available funds.

Travel Trip with Ordinands, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson,

Bishop Sue shared that normally she would take the ordinands on a trip to the Holy Lands, but with the current situation this would not be possible. And so, Bishop Sue will be offering to take the last three-year classes of ordinands on a "Travels of Paul" cruise the end of this September.

In addition, she will be taking a trip with Rev. Michael Beck looking at "Fresh Expressions" across England. She expects this to be a smaller group of those who are interested in forming innovative faith communities.

Bishop Sue responded to a question about funding for the ordinands. She spoke looking for potential donors to endow a fund to make this ordinand trip a regular occurrence. She further spoke about the idea of requesting the use from the Bishop's Foundation, a fund to assist with education of clergy, to help offset the funds as well.

An idea was brought forth that a cap of \$75,000 be encouraged from Common Table to the Bishop's Foundation for use to offset some of the costs for the Ordinands going on the Journey with Paul trip. It was approved by the Common Table that a letter would be sent from Common Table to the Bishop's Foundation to request funds to be used for this purpose.

Purpose and Goals, Rev. Jonathan Page & Mr. Dwayne Stinson

Rev. Page shared that the purpose of the Common Table is uphold and promote the vision of the Annual Conference. He shared his reflection of what he has experienced of Common Table that that it seems our purpose has been about approval of things, like grants and such. He shared though that he sees that this board could be used as the leadership team of the Conference. In response, Rev. Page asked for us to have some conversations about envisioning the future purpose of Common Table. Conversation and reflection ensued about the current make up of Common Table and who was missing from the Annual Conference.

Open Floor

A request for evening meetings to begin at 6:30 PM was heard and without any objection was approved by consensus.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment Bishop Sue

Bishop Sue closed the meeting in prayer at 5:55 PM

Upcoming Meeting times/dates:

- Thursday, February 15th at 6:30 PM - Virtual Only
- 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