

The Common Table for Church Vitality
The Virginia Annual Conference
November 24, 2020

The Common Table met on November 24, 2020 by Zoom. Members taking part in the meeting were:

Rev. Steven Summers (Director of Connectional Ministries and Chair)

Ms. Martha Stokes (Conference Lay Leader)

Mr. John Dunning (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries)

Mr. David Domnisse (Conference Treasurer)

Rev. Lyle Morton (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and
Advocacy Representative)

Dr. Carlos Liceaga (2021)

Rev. Harold White (2021)

Rev. Ashley Isernhagen (2022)

Rev. Megan Saucier (2023)

Ms. Kimberly Young (2023)

Rev. Don Jamison (2024)

Rev. Susan Reaves (Annual Conference Secretary, without vote)

Also present was Ms. Bev Myers, Executive Assistant in the office of Director of Connectional Ministries. Unable to attend were Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, Ms. Terry Bain and Ms. Susie Wolf.

Chairperson Steven Summers opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m. with a word of welcome. Conference Lay Leader, Ms. Martha Stokes shared a devotion. She spoke about her deep connection to church music and asked everyone to share the name of a favorite hymn as well as a sentence describing its significance. She then spoke about fashioning new words for new growth. She prayed over the group.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2020 meeting of the Common Table for Church Vitality as corrected. They were approved.

Mr. David Dommissé gave the financial report. Currently 72.6% of Priority 1 apportionments have been collected. Mr. Dommissé believes receipts should reach the range of 82 to 84% for Priority 1. The Common Table is over budget at the moment; however, it should come within 3% of its budget by the end of the year. Following the previous Common Table meeting, Mr. Dommissé asked the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) if the current financial situation made it feasible to send out the remainder of the funding to the recipients of this year's grants. They did approve and the funds were distributed. He also noted that the Board of Communications used funds left over from publishing the Advocate to supply additional money for the technology grants to local churches. CFA is considering prioritizing apportionments for next year but the issue still needs to go before CFA's executive committee.

Ms. Kimberly Young reported on the work of the Personnel Committee. The Conference Center will be fully staffed by January 1, 2021. All four vacant positions have been filled. She then discussed the responsibilities of each position. She noted that there will be overlap among the three associate director positions and there will be a time of adjustment at the start. As the team takes shape there will be a process of refining and working through of responsibilities. The staffing of the positions for the associate directors is still confidential as the appointive cabinet does its work.

Dr. Carlos Liceaga delivered the grants report. COVID-19 has had an effect on the programs supported by the grants. The Grant Committee proposes not counting this year as one of the three years in which special grants can be funded. Rev. Ashley Isernhagen asked to amend this to "not counting the years affected by COVID-19 restrictions as part of the three-year funding cap for special grants." Dr. Liceaga

accepted the amendment. The motion was approved. If a program is cancelled this year, the program won't receive funding but it also will not forfeit a year of eligibility for the three-year limit on qualifying for a Special Grant.

The applications for the three different grants have been combined into one application. If a proposal doesn't fit neatly into one category it could be funded from a different source. The Grant Committee is accepting grant applications at this time. Dr. Liceaga noted that special and sustaining grants are for programs and the benevolence grants are for connectional ministries beyond the local level and cover administrative expenses.

Mr. John Dunning reported on the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM). The Campus Ministry Association (CMA) now meets twice a month as a result of the pandemic. Despite cuts to BHECM's 2020 budget, the salaries for Campus Ministers were not cut. However, one part time ecumenical position was eliminated and local boards contributed from their operating budgets to make up the short-fall. Mr. Dunning noted going all virtual has saved costs. He reminded the Common Table that the financial support given to Campus ministries is performance based. United Campus Ministries at Christopher Newport University's, an ecumenical ministry, won't be funded because of low performance.

With the reduction of funds, the Campus Ministries are being encouraged to create partnerships. Self-sustainability for capital improvement funding is the goal. Mr. Dunning complimented the property boards for the work the individual Wesley Foundations have done.

The future work of the BHECM includes designating a team to work with the Wesley Foundation (IGNITE) Board at Old Dominion University and coordinating the appointive process for the Wesley Foundations with the Cabinet.

Ms. Bev Myers presented the Subcommittee Designations. Currently, Rev. Isernhagen, Rev. Summers, Ms. Young and Rev. Jamison are on the Personnel Committee. Dr. Liceaga, Ms. Bain, Rev. Morton, Rev. Saucier and Ms. Stokes make up the Grants Committee. The Visioning Subcommittee will likely take shape as the associate directors come on board.

Ms. Stokes spoke about the need to gather input about the revised Charter for the Common Table. She suggested using focus groups or other communications tools to introduce the revisions before Annual Conference 2021. She has received questions about why changes are being proposed to the Charter.

It was suggested that future Common Table meetings be recorded.

District Alignment Team (DAT) is hiring an outside communication firm to roll out the recommendations from the DAT. The Common Table may be able to utilize that resource in regard to presenting the Charter to the Conference. The DAT group will be making a presentation to the Common Table about their work.

The next meeting will take place Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. The dates are still being considered for the rest of the year. Dr. Liceaga mentioned the feasibility of scheduling times that work with the schedules of people working a more typical work week.

Rev. Isernhagen prayed for the work and people of the Common Table.

Rev. Summers adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.