

The Common Table for Church Vitality

The Virginia Annual Conference

The mission of the Virginia Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

The Common Table met on May 13, 2020 by Zoom teleconference to comply with Virginia's Executive Order Number Fifty-Three (2020). Members taking part in the meeting were:

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis (Bishop)

Rev. Ted Smith (Director of Connectional Ministries and Chair)

Mr. Warren Harper (Conference Lay Leader)

Rev. Kathleen Overby Webster (Cabinet Representative)

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

Mr. David Domnisse (Conference Treasurer)

Ms. Unsil Choi (2020)

Rev. Jonathan Page (2020)

Dr. Carlos Liceaga (2021)

Rev. Ashley Isernhagen (2022)

Ms. Susie Wolf (2022)

Rev. Meghan Saucier (2023)

Ms. Kimberly Young (2023)

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

Also present were Ms. Shirley Cauffman, Chair of the Common Table's Personnel Committee, and Rev. Tom Joyce, Assistant to the Bishop. Unable to attend were Rev. Lyle Morton and Rev. Harold White.

Bishop Lewis opened the meeting at 1:02 p.m. with a word of welcome. Rev. Jonathan Page led the group in prayer.

Bishop Lewis asked Rev. Susan Reaves to provide the minutes of the current meeting by Friday, May 15, 2020.

The Common Table was debriefed on the events following the May 8, 2020 meeting of the Common Table by Bishop Lewis, Rev. Ted Smith and Ms. Shirley Cauffman.

There was a brainstorming session about future actions the Common Table can take going forward to improve effectiveness.

Suggested actions included:

- Be careful not to fan the flames.
- Practice teambuilding in order to restore trust.
- Relationship building needs to happen.
- Explanation and clarification of roles within the Common Table.
- Give Common Table members a heads up before important decisions need to be made.
- Promote better internal communications.
- Revise the charter of the Common Table.
- Have the Annual Conference define the role of the Common Table.
- Foster collaboration between team members.
- Fully inform team members.
- Have written materials before the body ahead of time.
- Clarify process and understanding of how the different pieces of conference leadership fit together.
- Look at being more effective regarding personnel issues.

- Speak with one voice.
- There is a need for more information.
- Get questions answered about what is happening in other areas of Conference leadership.
- More and accurate information for Common Table.
- Replace vagueness and confusion with clarity.
- Especially bring clarity to the roles of both the Steering team and the Common Table.
- Provide more information about the roles of members of the Common Table.
- Look at the policy and process manual.
- Provide onboarding/orientation to new Common Table members and staff members.
- Work on Staffing process and life cycle.
- Have printed documents at the meetings.
- Have one person lead the meeting and someone else provide information to the group.
- Possibly have an executive team.

Bishop Lewis asked members of the Common Table to send her resources related to team building and fostering trust. Bishop Lewis will prayerfully consider everything that was discussed at this meeting and after reviewing her calendar call together the next meeting sometime during the week of May 25th.

The Bishop led the group in reciting the Lord's prayer and adjourned the meeting at 2:13 pm.