

Common Table of Church Vitality Minutes – September 23, 2021

The scheduled meeting of the Common Table of Church Vitality was held on Thursday, September 23, 2021, at 10:00 A.M., at the United Methodist Center, with three persons on Zoom Conference.

For the record those present are as follows: Rev. Steven Summers (Director of Connectional Ministries and Chair), Ms. Martha Stokes (Conference Lay Leader), Bev Myers (Executive Assistant in the office of Connectional Ministries), Ms. Carol Draper (Treasurer Representative), Rev Douglas Forrester (Cabinet Representative), Eduardo Carrillo (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy Representative), Rev. Ryan LaRock (Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries), Rev. Aaron Fitch (2025), Rev. Megan Saucier (2023), Ms. Kimberly Young (2023), Ms. Terry Bain (2024), Rev. Don Jamison (2024), Rev. Joshua King (Annual Conference Secretary, without vote)

Those who were unable to attend: Mr. David Dommissie (Conference Treasurer), Bishop Sharma Lewis (Resident Bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area)

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Bev Myers on behalf of Rev. Steven Summers sent out an email requesting Common Table to approve the Grants Proposal as follows:

The Grants committee reached consensus on the Benevolence and Special Project Grants. I am asking for Common Table approval on behalf of Steve who is on Sabbatical at this time. These grants are significantly past due at this point.

Wesley - \$ 15,000
VA Interfaith - \$ 10,000
SOSA - \$ 8,000
Retired Clergy - \$ 10,000
Joy House - \$ 15,000
Grace Inside - \$ 102,000

2 voted for this motion via email. **Due to some missed proposals, this motion was rescinded and there will be a revised report presented in today's meeting.**

Rev. Summers called the Common Table to order at 10:00 AM and opened us with a word of prayer.

Rev. Summers asked us to introduce ourselves and each member offered their own introduction and position.

A devotion was offered by Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader. Ms. Stokes shared a story by Barbara Anne Taylor from her book "Learning to Walk in the Dark" about a loggerhead sea turtle being saved that was on its back in the sand and how when life is upside down it

difficult to know whether you are being killed or saved. She though reminded us that we are held in the hands of God. She then led us in a prayer to begin our meeting.

Words from Cabinet Representative, Rev. Doug Forrester

Rev. Forrester shared that the cabinet was working on some new things and is excited about the work that is being done, though it is not yet ready to be shared yet. Rev. Forrester thanked Rev. Steve Summers for his work and the work of Mr. David Dommissé that is being done regarding the Boy Scouts of America filing for bankruptcy and its impact on the United Methodist Church.

Rev. Steve Summers presented the minutes that were attached to the agenda.

The minutes were passed unanimously with one correction offered by Rev. Joshua King regarding a discrepancy in what time the meeting had begun.

Personnel Committee, Ms. Kimberly Young (via Zoom)

Prior to the meeting, an email was sent recognizing the resignation of Glenda Blackwell, Administrative Assistant to Associate Director of Serving. While recruitment for this position is underway, under the recommendation of the Associate Director of Serving Ministries, the Director of Connectional Ministries, and our HR Consultant, there will be an interim temporary assistant hired.

Ms. Young shared verbally that this position is open and actively recruiting. Also, she and Rev. Summers are in constant contact with GCFA, our Human Relations Consultants regarding this position. Rev. Summers shared the reason for Ms. Blackwell's departure as it was a celebration of her taking a position in ministry.

Ms. Young mentioned that she is still seeking one more to serve on the Personnel Committee.

Chair of the Grants Committee, Chair Rev. Don Jamison

Rev. Don Jamison presented the following as the Conference Benevolence Grants. Discussion ensued.

CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCE GRANTS						
GRANT REQUESTS FOR 2021 FUNDS						
	2019	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022
	APPROVED	APPROVED	Requests	Approved	Request	Revised Recommendation
GraceInside	\$ 167,000.00	\$ 167,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 112,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 91,000.00
Society of St. Andrew	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Wesley Community Service Center			\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Rise Against Hunger			\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP)					\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Retired Clergy Housing (NEW)					\$ 35,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Joy House RVA (NEW)					\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Embrace					\$ 25,000.00	\$ 13,000.00
Camp Rainbow					\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
TOTAL			\$ 173,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 275,000.00	\$ 160,000.00
	TOTAL AVAILABLE TO GRANT			\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	

This proposal was accepted by consensus.

Rev. Summers spoke about the hope for the future of the Foundation, Common Table, and the business office of the Annual Conference to work together to offer a unified group offering grants. At this time, they are still just beginning to form and figure out who all will be included in the decision process.

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries (BHECM), Rev. Ryan LaRock (Chair)

Rev. LaRock gave a verbal report regarding the ministries under the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries. His report lifted the difficult year that many of our campus and collegiate ministries have had due to personal loss and loss as a result due to COVID. Though he also mentioned the resiliency of our campus ministers as they have led ministries of feeding the hungry, creating mental health support groups, and relaunching regular activities (Outdoor movie nights, retreats, and worship).

Rev. LaRock also lifted Rev. Dr. Justin Allen who earlier this fall received the Francis Asbury award for his work with Shenandoah University. Rev. Allen also was instrumental in working with Calling 21, a program that has raised up new leadership in the Church.

Rev. LaRock announced that he is currently working with Rev. Nickie Moreno to revise the handbook for the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries.

Regarding the buildings, Rev. LaRock reported that most of our building funds are going to support the Farmville Wesley Foundation with some HVAC repairs. He also reported some flood damage that has taken place at Virginia Tech.

Rev. LaRock also updated Common Table on the relaunch of Old Dominion University Wesley foundation under the leadership of Rev. Joshua McCauley. Rev. LaRock's report stated that things are progressing well as Rev. McCauley has already re-built a 7-person board. In addition, Rev. McCauley is fundraising for this ministry by selling tickets for parking spots at football games.

Rev. LaRock also shared about the revitalized relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) specifically mentioning Virginia State University and Norfolk State University. These are ecumenical ministries that we support.

The next meeting for the BHECM will be focused on grant allocation and the way we assess our local boards. The ministry and funding for Christopher Newport University (CNU) is also going to be rediscussed as they have seen improvement at CNU.

Rev. LaRock finished his report asking Common Table for ideas to help re-write the narrative of this committee's work as he believes some in our conference may view this ministry as just another older youth group. Rather, this ministry is more so about how we equip both young clergy and fresh lay leadership in our church.

Some ideas were discussed about how to re-write this narrative (Ex. Glory Sightings, telling the stories of what these students are doing).

Partnering with the local churches who are already partnering with some of our community colleges, such as some in NOVA who are putting together food pantries with Northern Virginia Community Colleges.

Conference Treasurer, Ms. Carol Draper (Representative)

Ms. Draper shared the written report (Appendix A).

Board of Laity, Ms. Martha Stokes (Conference Lay Leader)

Ms. Stokes shared the news of a successful Lay Servant Academy in August. For the first time, the conference also hosted Certified Lay Supply orientations to help people understand this valued ministry. The planning committee is looking at having another training in March and August of next year.

Ms. Stokes also shared the work that is being done on the handbook for Lay Leaders. It is being organized with different sections for Local Church Lay Leaders, District Lay Leaders, and Conference Lay Leader. This handbook should be ready within the next month or two.

In conclusion, Ms. Stokes reported that on October 16th via Zoom, the Conference is having their first cabinet and district lay leader retreat. The hope is that this will lead to regular meetings with the Bishop and our District Lay Leaders.

Committee Assignments, Rev. Steven Summers

Rev. Summers presented the following assignments. Rev. Ryan LaRock agreed to serve on the Personnel Committee.

	Last	First	Personnel	Grants	
1	Bain	Terry		✓	
2	Carrillo	Eduardo		✓	
3	Dommissie	David			
4	Fitch	Aaron	✓		
5	Forrester	Doud			
6	Jamison	Don	✓	✓	Chair
7	King	Joshua			
8	LaRock	Ryan	✓		
9	Lewis	Bishop			
10	Saucier	Megan		✓	
11	Stokes	Martha		✓	
12	Summers	Steve	✓	✓	
13	Young	Kim	✓		Chair

Update on Boy Scouts of America (BSA), Rev. Steve Summers (Director of Connectional Ministries)

Rev. Summers gave an update on the Boy Scouts of America. Ms. Stokes offered that if Local Churches have concerns or questions, to reach out to your District Superintendent for clarification first.

Other Items

Rev. Jamison raised a question as to the consolidation of districts and the work of the Implementation District Alignment Team continuing as though this work will happen one way or another. Rev. Forrester responded by saying later today there should be more information released in relation to this question.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01 pm with Rev. Doug Forrester closing us in prayer.

Joshua King, Secretary

Appendix A
Handouts from Treasurer's Report
July 8, 2021

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT REPORT
August 31, 2021
Virginia Conference

Apportioned Funds	YTD 8/31/2021	YTD 8/31/2020	Increase (Decrease)	Pct. Inc./Dec.	Total 2021 Apport.	Total 2020 Apport.	Pct. Pd 2021	Pct. Pd 2020
Conference Apportionments								
421 Priority 1	13,051,467	13,651,989	(600,102)	-4.40%	22,871,928	22,885,000	56.98%	59.57%
422 Priority 2	116,962	187,105	(70,143)	-37.49%	4,963,032	8,965,000	2.36%	2.18%
Total Apportioned Funds	13,148,428	13,818,674	(670,246)	-4.85%	27,834,960	31,450,000	47.24%	43.94%
Non-Apportionment Receipts								
Advance Specials								
GBOM	505,655	255,300	70,355	29.89%				
Va. Conference Advance Specials	48,090	40,486	7,604	18.78%				
Special Days								
Human Relations	5,863	6,112	(2,249)	-36.80%				
One Great Hour of Sharing	20,697	2,669	18,028	675.44%				
Native American Ministries	8,701	5,482	1,219	22.24%				
Peace with Justice	3,656	2,696	960	35.99%				
World Communion	2,262	3,211	(949)	-29.56%				
UM Student	1,517	1,775	(258)	-14.52%				
Other Funds								
Youth Service	100	50	50	100.00%				
Samaritan Fund - Pinnacle Living	16,786	5,470	11,316	206.87%				
UMPS	28,763	34,023	(5,260)	-15.46%				
Comm. on Disab./Camp Rainbow	5,225	4,446	779	17.52%				
Annual Conference Offering	76,716	5,425	71,291	1314.33%				
Other	25,987	59,320	(15,333)	-39.00%				
Total Non-Apportioned Funds	543,997	386,465	157,532	40.76%				
Total Church Receipts	13,692,425	14,205,139	(512,714)	35.91%				
Comparison to Last Year								
		2021	2020	Diff.				
August		47.24%	43.94%	3.30%				
July		41.25%	38.34%	2.91%				
June		34.84%	32.24%	2.60%				
May		28.23%	26.54%	1.69%				
April		22.09%	20.74%	1.35%				
March		15.80%	15.98%	-0.18%				

Year	YTD	Year End
2021	47.24%	
2020	43.94%	74.22%
2019	43.94%	84.39%
2018	46.27%	88.13%
2017	46.38%	89.91%
2016	45.03%	87.03%
2015	44.15%	85.89%
2014	45.98%	87.70%
2013	45.19%	88.57%
2012	43.91%	87.26%
2011	44.54%	86.82%
2010	43.96%	84.40%
2009	45.20%	85.92%
2008	48.14%	90.08%
2007	48.96%	92.05%
2006	50.11%	93.16%
2005	50.89%	93.87%
2004	51.56%	94.79%
2003	51.91%	95.58%
2002	52.78%	97.08%
2001	51.21%	96.33%
2000	51.66%	96.43%
1999	50.86%	94.92%
1998	49.76%	93.51%
1997	43.72%	90.64%
1996	45.09%	89.20%
1995	44.93%	86.11%
1994	43.76%	89.83%