

IX. REPORTS OF CONFERENCE BOARDS AND AGENCIES

[Editor's Note: The following reports are reprinted from the 2018 *Book of Reports*. To find actions taken or changes made in the reports, refer to Section IV. DAILY PROCEEDINGS of this *Journal*. The report from the Council on Finance and Administration will be found in Section VIII. FINANCIAL REPORTS of this *Journal*.]

COMMITTEE ON RULES

The Rules Committee of the Virginia Annual Conference, as approved by 2017 Annual Conference, continued the work of placing information related to the Delegates of General and jurisdictional conference on the Virginia Conference Website (vaumc.org/GCSEJExpenses). In addition to placing information on the website, the Rules Committee continued this year looking at the nomination and election process of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference. The Rules Committee felt that it would be in the best of interest to align our rules with the potential changes of Constitutional Amendment III from 2016 General Conference, requiring a nomination from the floor. And so, the Rules Committee is recommending Standing Rules Section III.C.2. b. to read:

Clergy Nominations from the Floor.

After the convening of the Annual Conference session, prior to entering block voting, the presiding Bishop will ask for any nominations from the floor. Any nominations made from the floor must be made by eligible clergy (III.C.1.b.i) and the nominee must be present to accept or decline the nomination. Nominations from the floor shall be closed by the presiding Bishop.

And Section III. D.5., to read:

Lay Nominations from the Floor

After the convening of the Annual Conference session, prior to entering block voting, the presiding Bishop will ask for any nominations from the floor. Any nominations made from the floor must be made by lay members (III.D.3.) and the nominee must be present to accept or decline the nomination. Nominations from the floor shall be closed by the presiding Bishop.

In addition to working on our nomination and election process, the Rules Committee this year considered proposals from Board of Discipleship and Common Table (Resolutions Committee). Under the Board of Discipleship, the Rules Committee is recommending changing the Rules to adhere to their newly restructured Board. And also, with adherence to the Common Table's proposal on restructuring of the Resolutions Committee, to alter the Rules in section II to reflect the changes proposed by Common Table.

In general maintenance of the Rules, the Rules Committee is recommending all language in the Rules Committee in regards to "Alternative Structure/Equivalent Body" to read "Equivalent Body".

And in conclusion, the Rules Committee spoke extensively this year about the need for our members to become familiar with Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Rules Committee drafted a letter which was included in your Annual Conference packet.

– Joshua S. King, Chair

RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes Recommended by Rules Committee

Paragraph I.B.3.n. – strike all of n following "District Council on Ministries" and add "or equivalent body."

Paragraph I.B.3.u. – strike "Resolutions Committee;"

Paragraph I.B.5.b.ix – strike "ix. the chair of the Resolutions Committee" and renumber subsequent paragraph.

Paragraph I.D.14 – strike "14. Resolutions Committee." and renumber subsequent paragraph.

Paragraph II – Rename II. to "Reports, Presentations, Petitions, Proposals, and Consent Agenda"

Paragraph II.B – Strike II.B in whole and add

"II.B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Requests for inclusion of presentations for the annual conference agenda shall be submitted to the Director of Connectional Ministries by the due date for the publication of the Book of Reports. The author or originating agency must be identified if other than the submitter(s) of the proposal."

Paragraph II – Add a new sub-section "C" named Petitions to be read:

"II.C PETITIONS

1. An area designated by the annual conference planning committee shall be determined for receiving signatures for petitions.”

Paragraph II – Add a new sub-section “D” named Proposals. Add current language for II.C,D, and F as sub-sections II.D.1,2,3.

Paragraph III.B.5.b - strike the “;” between “budgets, proposals” and add the word “or”.

Paragraph III.B.5.b - after “proposals” strike “; or resolutions”

Paragraph III.B.5.b - strike the “;” between “petitions, amendments” and add the word “or”.

Paragraph III.B.5.b – after “amendments” strike “,or resolutions”.

Paragraph III.C.2.b – strike all “Clergy Session Nominations...” and replace with

“Clergy Nominations from the Floor.

After the convening of the Annual Conference session, prior to entering block voting, the presiding Bishop will ask for any nominations from the floor. Any nominations made from the floor must be made by eligible clergy (III.C.1.b.i) and the nominee must be present to accept or decline the nomination. Nominations from the floor shall be closed by the presiding Bishop”.

Paragraph III.D.5 – strike all “Laity Session Nomination...” and replace with

“Lay Nominations from the Floor

After the convening of the Annual Conference session, prior to entering block voting, the presiding Bishop will ask for any nominations from the floor. Any nominations made from the floor must be made by lay members (III.D.3.) and the nominee must be present to accept or decline the nomination. Nominations from the floor shall be closed by the presiding Bishop.

Paragraph III.F.1 – strike “Jurisdictional Delegates” and replace with “jurisdictional delegates”

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the second paragraph, strike “nine (9)” and replace with “eight (8)”

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the second paragraph strike “Best Practices Group, the chair of Connecting Group” and replace with “Disciple Resource Team”.

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the third paragraph strike both places it states “Conference Awareness Team” and add “Disciple Resource Team”

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the third paragraph strike “12” and replace with “eight (8)”

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the third paragraph strike “divided among two working groups: (1) Best Practices Group and (b) connecting Group.” and replace with “four classes of two, one laity and one clergy per class.”

Paragraph V.A.4.c – In the third paragraph strike the rest of the third paragraph following, “elected by the Annual Conference.”

Paragraph VI.C – after “chairperson of the church council” strike “or its equivalent body” and add “*”

Paragraph VI.C – In the second paragraph after “district Council on Ministries” strike “or equivalent body” and add “*”

– Joshua S. King, Chair

CABINET

With the powerful leadership of Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, the Cabinet has sought to equip and lead the clergy and laity of the Virginia Conference for the vision of making disciples of Jesus Christ who are lifelong learners, influencing others to serve. The 16 District Superintendents are formed as chief missional strategists by our worshiping together each day we meet and through the community forged in our cluster covenant groups. Appointment-making, a core task of the bishop and cabinet, is wrapped in prayer, shaped by a careful consultative process, and focused on fruitfulness. Across our conference each district is engaging in contextual ministry and mission.

The **Alexandria District** is grateful for a year of growth in both professions of faith and average worship attendance in 2017. Three new multi-site congregations are off to good starts, including a digital campus that reaches around the world. Numerous other churches are experimenting with new ways to reach people outside of the church walls, including dinner church, restaurant church and house churches.

Three churches in the **Arlington District** competed their Next Level Innovations weekends, approving innovations for greater vitality by 84% or more in congregational voting; three additional churches began this three year process of revitalization. Two new church plants began: Floris Online and Arlington Commons, both designed to reach more people in nontraditional ways. Clergy peer learning groups focused on becoming spiritually vital leaders; all clergy were introduced to Tod Bolsinger’s book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Unchartered Territory*.

The laity and clergy on the **Charlottesville District** are faithfully serving God in many different ways. Some of these ministries are to the poor; the homeless; speaking out against racism; those being released from prison; Central Virginia Mission HUB (Mission Central) and offering hope to the least of God’s children. We had Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Clark as our guest preacher from Eastern Mennonite Seminary at District Conference. We also packaged 20,088 meals for Haiti at District Conference with Rise Against

Hunger. The District still has a vision to have an apartment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We support camp ministry with children at Westview on the James and college students at the Wesley Foundation at UVA.

Danville District churches are learning to respond to changes in our local communities and our culture at large. Leaders are focused on support for flexible, creative experimentation in contextualized ministry. We continue to adapt in order to remain faithful to God's invitation to a spirit of "missional imagination", especially in the places of greatest pain and fear. We move forward in trust and with hope in our hearts.

Grants from the Ministry with the Poor Initiative on the **Eastern Shore District** have supported four ministries: the Agape Children's Christian Community Center's new summer program for low-income children, Epworth UMC's Meals for the Hungry, Una Familia—the district wide-program accompanying Latino families, and Manna Cafe—Christ UMC's community dinner program that feeds over 300 people each week. An ongoing capital campaign at beautiful Camp Occohannock on the Bay has resulted in upgraded bathhouses and cabin improvements to enhance a full summer program. A number of Eastern Shore churches have been working with coaching programs through the Church Transformation Team and Focus 2020 to reorient their mission for a new day.

The **Elizabeth River District** is striving to equip both lay and clergy to make disciples who are lifelong learners. Phil Maynard has been leading monthly meeting with laity and clergy helping them understand the "Shifts" we need to focus on to move persons from members to disciples. Next Level Innovations is starting this fall in partnership with the Richmond District to help churches move from good to great.

The **Farmville District** continues to live into our vision of "being passionate about leading, listening and loving all people to build up the Kingdom." We are slowly becoming more diverse in our church population. Our pastoral leadership includes one African American female, three Korean males, one Latino male, 15 Anglo females, and 43 Anglo males. One of our churches, Trinity, Amelia Charge, has a very diverse membership of Anglos and Latinos. We are committed to making disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. We were blessed to have Paulo Lopez, conference director of Next Generation Ministries, speak to our District Conference on "Discipleship Making and Cross Cultural Challenges.

The **Harrisonburg District** is alive and well. We are completing a Mission Central Building which is 4,200 square feet to distribute clothing and diapers to children and medical equipment to the community. Our UVMIM Teams are in Florida, West Virginia, North Carolina and Virginia helping rebuild and get folks back into homes.

The vision of the **James River District** continues to be, "Disciples Making Disciples." Through excellent clergy and lay leadership we have focused life-long learning and church vitality especially among our many small churches. We have seen four churches move from part-time to full time status and three churches have doubled in worship! Eight Branch Camp Meetings have brought our churches together for worship, mission and prayer through which 543 flood buckets were collected. We are blessed with the servant leadership of our staff, Tish Borden, Jim O'Quinn and Ronnika Davis. We are excited to welcome the Rev. Sylvia Meadows as our new District Superintendent.

The **Lynchburg District** has spent the past year discerning God's call to align our congregations, clergy, lay leadership and financial resources around the mission of making lifelong learners who influence others to serve. This has led to a new ministry structure and financial plan which focuses on revitalization, leadership development, emerging ministries, ministry with young people, reconciliation and conflict transformation and ministry with the poor. We are grateful to welcome the Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor who brings a wide array of gifts and graces to the newly created district staff position of Revitalization Coordinator as she helps us see and cooperate with the new things God is doing among us.

The **Rappahannock River District** continues to focus on making disciples. We continue to strive for vibrancy in our local churches, in our two special non-traditional ministries and in our equipping of laity and clergy. We have embraced the conference vision and are using Discipleship Ministries resources like "See All the People" to equip and undergird our disciple making effort. We take seriously the Bishop's challenge that every congregation will have an intentional disciple making process with detailed steps by 2020.

The **Richmond District** is celebrating another year of God's grace! From a freshly planted African American Church to the growing world of Hispanic ministry, God is doing many new things in Richmond. We are looking forward to several new opportunities in the coming year and are staying tuned for God's continuing work in our RVA community!

On the **Roanoke District** *Leading on the Edge* describes both a district event for clergy and laity focused on poverty and homelessness, faith and mental health, religion and race and human sexuality that grew out of holy conversations across several months at our District Common Table and visible witness in communities from Roanoke (*Reconciling Race: From Confession to Communion*) to Newport (*Giving Witness: Responding to Violation of Community and Creation*). The Board of Missions hosted its inaugural Ministry Accelerator for grant recipients to increase capacity and sustainability. The District Youth Retreat led by VT Wesley, the summer and winter camp programs at Alta Mons and COP's literacy program all showed fruitful increase.

The **Staunton District** took a prayerful approach to how we might "influence others to serve" Christ in our communities. For clergy, this focus included "Asset-Based Community Development" training, with an emphasis on developing missional relationships that are of mutual dignity and potential transformation for both parties. The Waynesboro Secret Boutique ministry, conceived to build relationships with lower-income families by providing a shopper-experience for teens who need fashionable clothing for

school, is now bridging over to Staunton. We launched a youth Mission Team which served on the Eastern Shore and a Disaster Relief crew of adults who rebuilt homes in Florida. The faith communities of our District increased in apportionment giving again this year, with four churches attending to their full share for the first time in many years.

The **Winchester District** enhanced its partnership between clergy and laity by hosting Martha Stokes and the five associate district lay leaders at the annual August clergy retreat at Camp Overlook. The district continued its UVMIM work in Haiti by sending three teams as well as sending a disaster relief team to Texas. The district continued to offer local churches the opportunity to be lifelong learners by hosting training events designed to support various mission and ministry endeavors. To God be the glory.

The **York River District** continues to celebrate God's faithfulness and the exciting movement of the Holy Spirit. During Charge Conference season, each congregation shared a gift with other congregations by presenting "A New Thing" that God was doing or was about to do with them. In 2017, the people of the YRD welcomed 517 new members, including 195 by profession of faith, and gave over \$2.6 million for the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

The Conference Lay Leader, the Conference Treasurer, the Director of Connectional Ministries, the Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence and the Director of the Center for Congregational Excellence serve as members of the **Extended Cabinet** to inform and provide a connection between the program and missional ministries of the annual conference and the work of the Cabinet.

We are exceedingly grateful to the Rev. Tom Joyce, Assistant to the Bishop, and Mrs. Terri Biggins, the Bishop's administrative assistant, for their dedicated support.

With thanksgiving for their strong leadership, we will say "farewell" to retiring colleagues the Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell, the Rev. Tommy Herndon and the Rev. Larry Thompson. We will warmly welcome the Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez, the Rev. Sylvia Meadows and the Rev. Dr. Steve Summers to the cabinet table.

Since the coming year is filled with both anticipated and unknown challenges and opportunities, we are blessed that the Cabinet Covenant shapes our life and leadership: *We, the Cabinet of the Virginia Conference, covenant with each other to be a Holy Table where Christ is our servant example and Lord; where we joyfully hold each other in disciplines of prayer, study, worship, service and physical self-care; where the truth is told and honored; where we support one another in the effort to maintain confidentiality, through words/action of grace and in the spirit of love; where trust is the rule, brokenness is received with mercy, pain is healed with grace and forgiveness is sought, given and accepted; where the health of the whole Body of Christ is desired over that of any one part; where we seek perfection in love for God and for each other.*

– Kathleen Overby Webster, Dean

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE

Beginning in 2019 and beyond, the Annual Conference will convene on Thursday and conclude on Saturday as set by Bishop Sharma D. Lewis. The Site Selection Committee is charged with identifying the location for the Virginia Annual Conference to meet and shall recommend a location five (5) years in advance. By previous Annual Conference action, the following locations have been approved for the site of the Annual Conference:

Roanoke	June 20-22, 2019
Roanoke	June 18-20, 2020
Hampton	June 17-19, 2021
Hampton	June 16-18, 2022

The Site Selection Committee recommends for 2023, Annual Conference be held in:

Roanoke	June 15-17, 2023
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The Committee, along with the Chair of the Common Table and with the assistance of the Conference meeting planner, continues to review other locations for holding Annual Conference across the Commonwealth. For your reference, we have the following requirements in evaluating potential Annual Conference sites:

- A venue to accommodate 3,500 people
- 1,500 hotel rooms in the area
- Parking for 2,500 cars
- Meeting space for the Clergy Session of 1,500 people
- Meeting space for the Laity Session of 1,500 people

- Additional meeting spaces adjacent to the Conference floor
- Two (2) banquet areas to accommodate 500 people each
- Additional banquet locations accessible to Conference
- Restaurants to accommodate 3,500 patrons within 1½ - 2 hour timeframe
- 10,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space

RECOMMENDATION:

The Site Selection Committee recommends that the 2023 Virginia Annual Conference be held at the Berglund Center in Roanoke June 15-17.

– Neal E. Wise, Chair

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The Equitable Compensation Commission continues to provide financial aid to those churches requiring supplementation to strengthen their ministries in the communities in which they are located and to provide minimum salary or salary supplementation for the pastors. Equitable Compensation support in the amount of \$175,506 was provided to 22 charges in 2017. A schedule of salary supplementation appropriations for 2017 has been provided to the conference secretary for publication in the Journal.

There were 11 charges receiving salary support in 2016 that did not require salary support in 2017. These are Blandford (James River), Brookneal (Lynchburg), Galloway (Arlington), Messiah (Alexandria), Montross (Rappahannock River), Oylers' Chapel-Rehoboth Cooperative Parish (Danville), Petersburg Cooperative Parish (James River), Southview (Roanoke), St Paul (Roanoke), Twin Lakes (Lynchburg), and Nottoway Lunenburg (Farmville). These charges and their superintendents are commended for their success in providing a ministry in the communities they serve that has enabled them to grow spiritually in their stewardship.

District Superintendents and charges setting salaries for 2019 that may require supplementation are advised that the "floor" must come from sources other than the Commission on Equitable Compensation.

The Conference Average Compensation (CAC) for 2019 is \$64,040, which is an increase of 1.3% percent from 2018. The Commission considered Minimum Compensation and the Floor Schedule for 2019 and recommends the schedules remain the same as 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	2019 Proposed	2018 Approved
1. The Minimum Compensation Schedule:		
a. Full Connection Pastors	\$42,000	\$42,000
b. Provisional and Associate Members	\$38,500	\$38,500
c. Local Pastors	\$36,000	\$36,000
3. The Floor Schedule:		
a. Full Connection Pastors	\$28,000	\$28,000
b. Provisional and Associate Members	\$25,600	\$25,600
c. Local Pastors	\$24,000	\$24,000

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION FINANCIAL REPORT

	Year Ending 2015	Year Ending 2016	Year Ending 2017
Apportioned	500,000	500,000	350,000
Uncollected Apportionment	76,908	61,170	36,432
Apportionment Income	423,092	438,830	313,568
<i>Percent Collected</i>	<i>84.62%</i>	<i>87.77%</i>	<i>89.59%</i>
Grants	222,495	193,646	175,506
Sustentation fund grant			6,513
Meeting Expense & Other	1,030	1,033	373
Total Expenses	223,526	194,679	182,391
Receipts Over (Under) Expenses	199,566	244,151	131,176

– Joseph T. Carson III, Chair

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST PENSIONS, INC.

Section I: Reports

■ **Report 1: Role & Responsibilities of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.**

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church directs each annual conference to establish a conference board of pension, auxiliary to Wespeth Benefits and Investments (Wespeth), to have charge of the interests and work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance and pensioning of: clergy and their families, other church workers, and lay employees of The United Methodist Church; its institutions; organizations; and agencies within each annual conference except as otherwise provided for by Wespeth.

On June 22, 1965, the Virginia Annual Conference established and incorporated the Virginia Methodist Pensions, Incorporation, (subsequently renamed on February 2, 1971 to Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc., or “VUMPI,”) as its conference board of pension.

VUMPI, in conjunction with Wespeth, develops and administers the various employee pension and benefit plans sponsored by the Virginia Conference. Some plans are employer-paid, while others are voluntary and 100 percent participant-paid:

<p><u>VUMPI Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Prescription Dental Supplemental Life Voluntary Life Long Term Care Healthcare Flexible Spending Account Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account 	<p><u>Wespeth Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (Pre-82) Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Benefit (CRSP-DB) Clergy Retirement Security Program – Defined Contribution (CRSP-DC) United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)
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■ **Report 2: Virginia Conference-Sponsored Health Plans for Active Clergy**

VUMPI administers health benefit plans for full time clergy of the Virginia Conference. In addition to clergy appointed full time, the plans are made available to clergy appointed to certain leave statuses, and also to clergy on medical leave and surviving spouses and children of clergy.

In the current Conference-sponsored health benefits program there are four health benefit plans which include prescription drug coverage, and two dental insurance plans. Three of the health benefits plans are offered to active clergy, and the fourth is offered only to clergy on medical leave with Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) disability benefits and surviving spouses and children of clergy.

The primary objective of VUMPI's health benefits program is to maintain sustainable health care plans that offer sufficient protection against the risk of financially catastrophic health care costs, while ensuring that the program is affordable both to health plan participants and to Virginia Conference churches. The majority of the health plan costs are paid by churches through the health plan apportionment, and plan participants contribute to the total cost through participant contributions which are based on the health plan selections.

VUMPI administers the health benefits program within an environment of rapidly changing legislative and regulatory requirements. In particular, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), signed into law in 2010, has resulted in significant changes to the health insurance marketplace, including new requirements applicable to health plans sponsored by employers for the benefit of employees and retirees. One element of ACA that is expected to have a meaningful impact on employer-sponsored health plans is the excise tax on high cost health plans, popularly known as the "Cadillac tax." This provision of ACA assesses a 40% excise tax on employer-sponsored plans that exceed specified cost thresholds for individuals and families enrolled in the plans. VUMPI, working with external actuarial consultants, has projected that the current Conference-sponsored health plans would likely exceed the Cadillac Tax thresholds either upon or soon after the tax's implementation unless plan changes are made. In such a scenario, VUMPI would be required to obtain additional revenue either through apportionments or participant contributions in order to pay the tax penalty. Accordingly, VUMPI has developed a health plan strategy that is designed to avoid becoming subject to the tax. That strategy includes the two following elements: new health plans to be offered in 2019 and expanded dependent enrollment tiers.

New Health Plans

VUMPI currently administers three health plans for full time Virginia Conference clergy. Plans currently offered include the following:

- **PPO:** the most popular plan by enrollment, with a \$1,000 individual deductible and 20% coinsurance
- **HMO-POS:** a plan with a higher level of benefits, including a \$500 individual deductible and generally using a copay structure, with higher participant contributions than the PPO
- **Clergy Managed Care Plan (CMCP):** a plan with a \$1,750 individual deductible and Conference contributions to an embedded Health Reimbursement Account (HRA), with lower participant contributions than the PPO

While the above plans offer sufficient protection against the risk of catastrophic health care costs and a range of options to allow plan selection based on participants' preferences, VUMPI has determined that a new set of health benefit plans can both preserve the desired protection against risks while also capitalizing on the opportunity to make improvements in the plans. As is noted in Recommendation 2 below, VUMPI is recommending the Virginia Conference's approval of three new health benefit plans for full time Virginia Conference clergy.

The new benefit plans have been designed to have greater consistency across the plans in order to reduce the confusion that can occur when switching from one plan to another. In addition, one of the plans has been designed to allow enrolled clergy to take advantage of the favorable tax treatment of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), which allow tax-free account contributions that can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses at any time with no federal tax liability. A high level summary of the health plans recommended for active clergy in 2019 follows:

- **PPO Core:** a plan designed to be similar to the current PPO plan, with a \$1,000 individual deductible and 20% coinsurance
- **PPO Buy-Up:** a plan offering a higher level of benefits, with a \$750 individual deductible and 20% coinsurance, with higher participant contributions than the PPO Core plan
- **HSA plan:** a plan with a higher deductible (\$2,250 individual deductible) as required by Internal Revenue Service rules for HSAs, a Conference contribution to the Health Savings Account (\$750 for individual tier enrollees), 20% coinsurance, and with lower participant contributions than the PPO Core plan

A fourth health plan which is currently offered, and which is made available only to clergy on medical leave with CPP disability benefits and surviving spouses and children of clergy, is recommended to continue to be offered in 2019 with no plan design changes.

The two dental plan options currently administered by VUMPI are also recommended to continue to be offered in 2019 with no plan design changes.

Expanded Dependent Enrollment Tiers

Under current Conference-sponsored health plan provisions clergy may enroll in the health plans either as individuals or in family coverage. The family coverage tier is applicable to anyone other than the clergyperson, including a spouse and/or children. VUMPI is recommending an expansion of the enrollment tiers for active clergy to include the following enrollment categories:

- Clergyperson only
- Clergyperson + Spouse
- Clergyperson + Children
- Family

The recommendation to expand the dependent tiers is based on several factors, but is primarily driven by the anticipated reduction in the calculated family tier “premium equivalent” for the Conference-sponsored plans that will be used to test against the Cadillac tax thresholds. By reducing the plans’ family tier premium equivalents, projections indicate that VUMPI will be better positioned to avoid becoming subject to the Cadillac tax penalties.

■ Report 3: Virginia Conference-Sponsored Health Plans for Retired Clergy

VUMPI administers health plans for eligible retired clergy of the Virginia Conference. The eligibility requirements are based on the retiree’s years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference, as determined by VUMPI at the time of retirement. Plans made available to eligible retirees are coordinated with Medicare benefits, as described below:

Conference-sponsored health plan for pre-Medicare-eligible retirees

Retirees who are eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored retired clergy health plan but who are not yet eligible to enroll in Medicare may enroll in one of the self funded PPO plans administered by VUMPI. Pre-Medicare-eligible retirees may also enroll in the self funded dental insurance program made available to active clergy. Currently, pre-Medicare-eligible retirees who qualify for the Conference-sponsored health plan are able to enroll only in the PPO plan. Along with the adoption of the new health plans for 2019, VUMPI is recommending that Pre-Medicare-eligible retirees have the option of enrolling either in the PPO Core plan or the PPO Buy-Up plan. This provides an additional plan option for those retirees who would prefer a higher level of coverage. Both of the Conference-sponsored dental plans will continue to be made available to pre-Medicare-eligible retirees in 2019.

While VUMPI is recommending the expansion of the dependent enrollment tiers for active clergy in 2019, no such expansion is recommended for the Conference-sponsored retiree plans. Pre-Medicare-eligible retirees will continue to enroll either in individual or family coverage in 2019.

Conference-sponsored health plan for Medicare-eligible retirees

Retirees who are eligible to enroll in the Conference-sponsored retired clergy health plan and who are also enrolled in Medicare have two options for retiree medical coverage.

The first option is the Group Plan, which is a group Medicare Advantage plan created specifically for Virginia Conference retirees. The Group Plan integrates the retiree’s Medicare benefit and includes prescription drug coverage. The majority of the cost of the Group Plan is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the plans is funded by participant contributions, as described in Recommendation 4.

The second option made available to eligible retirees who are enrolled in Medicare is the Connector option. Under the Connector option, Medicare-eligible retirees are able to select any Medicare Supplement plan or Medicare Advantage plan, and any Part D prescription drug plan, offered by United Healthcare. The Conference will provide funding through a Retiree Reimbursement Account (“RRA”), and those funds can be used to partially or fully offset the cost of the coverage elected through the Connector. The RRA funding made available to retirees who elect coverage through the Connector option is funded through a Conference apportionment, as described in Recommendation 1. The remainder of the cost of the elected health plan coverage, if any, is paid by the retiree directly to United Healthcare. Qualifying Medicare-eligible retirees of the Virginia Conference will continue to enroll either in individual tier or family tier coverage in 2019.

■ Report 4: Pension Plan Structure

There are four components to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP):

- A. Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (Pre-82) for service and benefits accrued on and/or prior to December 31, 1981.
- B. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2006.
- C. Clergy Retirement Security Program - Defined Benefit Plan (CRSP-DB) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 2007.
- D. Clergy Retirement Security Program - Defined Contribution Plan (CRSP-DC) for service and benefits accrued on and/or after January 1, 2007.

Wespath refers to plans A – C above as defined benefit (“DB”) pension plans. That is, each year an eligible clergy member of the Virginia Conference served/serves and received/receives pension credit, the applicable plan will pay a certain benefit, or “defined” monthly income during retirement.

Wespath calculates each annual conference’s cost to provide these defined benefits. Wespath bills each annual conference the amount due. Each annual conference, or in our case, VUMPI, then in-turn bills and apportions our local churches for the cost of these plans.

Wespath has calculated the Virginia Conference’s 2019 required funding obligation associated with the Pre-82 pension pro-

gram's projected liability. That funding obligation is based on the Virginia Conference's total projected liability and asset values as of January 1, 2017. With positive investment market returns that led to growth in the value of the Virginia Conference's existing pension assets, the required 2019 Pre-82 funding obligation of \$1,796,790 is slightly lower than the 2018 Pre-82 funding obligation. As indicated in Recommendation 1 below, VUMPI is recommending a Pre-82 Pension Liability apportionment of \$750,000 in 2019. The difference between the apportionment and the actual funding obligation will be made up through Wespath's Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) premium redirection program, which was implemented in 2018 and will terminate at the end of 2019. Any additional funding needed to meet the 2019 Pre-82 funding obligation will be made up with VUMPI reserve funds under the financial reserve strategy adopted by the VUMPI Board of Directors in 2014.

The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) remains in a fully funded status. Accordingly, there is no funding obligation associated with the MPP in 2019. The Clergy Retirement Security Program's calculated funding obligation for the defined benefit component of the program is \$4,460,887 in 2019. VUMPI will obtain revenue to meet this funding obligation through the billing methodology detailed in Recommendation 7 below.

In addition to these defined benefit plans, annual conferences provide their clergy pension benefits from the CRSP-DC, a defined contribution ("DC") plan. Each year an eligible clergy member of the Virginia Conference serves and receives pension credit, the Virginia Conference determines how much pension contribution each clergy participant will receive in his/her pension account. VUMPI bills local churches for the required amount of pension contribution, then makes monthly contributions into the clergy CRSP-DC accounts.

■ Report 5: Welfare Plan Structure

The welfare plans made available to Virginia Conference clergy include the Comprehensive Protection Plan ("CPP") sponsored by Wespath, as well as supplemental benefits sponsored independently by VUMPI.

The CPP disability benefits are as follows:

- For Clergy disabled on or after Jan. 1, 2002, the CPP disability benefit equals 70 percent of Plan Compensation, with compensation capped at 200 percent of the DAC.
- For Clergy disabled prior to Jan. 1, 2002, they will continue to receive the same CPP disability benefit per the plan document in-force at the time their disability claim originated.

The following generally describes the death benefit amounts payable under the CPP to eligible participants and their beneficiaries:

Active Participant Death Benefits: payable upon the death of an eligible active CPP participant, as follows:

- Participant: \$50,000, payable in 12 monthly installments or one lump sum
- Spouse of active participant: 20% of DAC in the year of death
- Surviving spouse of active participant: 15% of DAC in the year of death
- Child of active participant: 10% of DAC in the year of death
- Annual surviving spouse annuity benefit of 20% of DAC, less the annuity benefit payable from CRSP and other Church-related sources
- Annual surviving child benefit of 10% of DAC, payable in 12 monthly installments (for those age 17 and younger; benefits are paid through the month in which the child attains age 18)
- Annual surviving child educational benefit up to 20% of DAC, payable in equal installments (for those age 18 through 24 and attending school full-time)

Retired Participant Death Benefits: to be eligible for death benefits in retirement, a clergyperson must have been covered in CPP for a specified number of years. The 2012 General Conference approved a change to the CPP program which increases the length of service requirement for retirees. Retirees with 25 or more years of enrollment in CPP are eligible for the death benefits in retirement, and the eligibility criteria for those with fewer than 25 years in CPP is phased in with one-year increments, as detailed in the table on the following page:

Retirement Year	CPP Enrollment Requirement for Death Benefit Eligibility
2013	6 of last 10 years
2014	7 of last 10 years
2015	8 of last 11 years
2016	9 of last 12 years
2017	10 of last 13 years
2018	11 of last 14 years
2019+	12 of last 15 years

The death benefit amounts associated with retired participants are detailed in the table below:

Plan Provision	Clergy Who Retired Before Jan. 1, 2013	Clergy Who Retire Jan. 1, 2013 or Later
Death of retired participant	30% of DAC in the year of death	\$20,400
Death of retiree's spouse	20% of DAC in the year of death	\$15,300
Death of retiree's surviving spouse	15% of DAC in the year of death	\$10,200
Death of retiree's child	10% of DAC in the year of death	\$8,160
Annual surviving child benefit, payable in 12 monthly installments	10% of DAC	10% of DAC
Annual surviving child educational benefit, payable in installments	20% of DAC	20% of DAC

The Conference Supplemental Death Benefit for active eligible clergy under episcopal appointment, and who are enrolled in CPP, is \$25,000. The Conference Supplemental Death Benefit is payable in addition to the CPP death benefit. During retirement, a \$5,000 Conference Supplemental Death Benefit will be payable to CPP participants, in addition to the CPP death benefit. The beneficiary will receive the Conference Supplemental Death Benefit payable in one lump sum. The Conference pays the entire cost of this Supplemental Death Benefit.

In combination, the CPP and Conference Supplemental Death Benefit provide total death benefits as follows:

- \$75,000 to beneficiaries of active clergy participants
- 30% of the DAC + \$5,000 (or \$25,400 for those retiring January 1, 2013 or later) to beneficiaries of retired clergy participants

Gift Benefit

VUMPI currently elects to provide a one time \$1,500 gift at the time of retirement or disability (once awarded disability benefits under the Comprehensive Protection Plan) to each clergyperson who has served at least ten years of service in a full-time Virginia Annual Conference episcopal appointment in the Virginia Conference with pension credit. Further, a gift to the family of each clergyperson meeting the eligibility criteria above who dies in active service is paid in the same amount as the gift to retired or disabled clergypersons.

VUMPI will obtain revenue to fund the above welfare plan benefits through the billing methodology detailed in Recommendation 7 below.

Report 6: Denominational Average Compensation

Several of the pension and welfare plans incorporate the Denominational Average Compensation ("DAC") into the formula for determining the plan benefit. The formula VUMPI uses for funding those plans relies on the DAC, as well.

As reported by Wespeth, the DAC is projected to increase from 2018 to 2019 as follows:

Denominational Average Compensation	
2018	\$70,202
2019	\$71,361



Section II: Recommendations for Annual Conference Approval

■ Recommendation 1: 2019 Pension and Health Plan Apportionment Recommendations

For 2019, VUMPI recommends total Clergy Benefit Apportionments of \$16,520,000. This is the fifth consecutive year in which VUMPI's recommended apportionments are either unchanged from or less than the preceding year's apportionments. The total clergy benefits apportionments amount includes funding for the Active Clergy Health Plan (which includes health care coverage for eligible clergy on medical leave and widowed spouses of active clergy), the Retired Clergy Health Plan and the Pre-82 pension. The apportionment total is allocated among these components as follows:

Clergy Benefits Apportionment Recommendations - 2019	
Active Clergy Health	\$ 9,710,000
Retired Clergy Health	6,060,000
Pension Liability Assessment – Pre-82	750,000
TOTAL CLERGY BENEFIT APPORTIONMENTS	\$ 16,520,000

VUMPI recommends the above Active Clergy Health and Retired Clergy Health apportionments as part of its broad strategy focused on maintaining adequate health plans for Virginia Conference active and retired clergy, while moderating the financial impact on local churches and individual participants to the extent possible.

In 2019 VUMPI will continue to bill Conference-responsible salary-paying-units not subject to apportionments (such as Extension Ministries) for employed clergy enrolling in the Conference-sponsored health plans. The amount billed will be \$11,664 (\$972 per month) for each eligible clergyperson, plus their applicable Participant Contributions for active clergy as noted in Recommendation 4: 2019 Participant Contribution Recommendations.

VUMPI has developed strategies associated with the Pre-82 Pension Liability apportionment that are intended to reduce the burden of that apportionment on Virginia Conference churches and also to minimize volatility in the amount of the apportionment. Two fundamental strategies support these goals. First, VUMPI initially established a strategy in which the Pre-82 Liability apportionment would be maintained at \$1 million each year until the apportionment could either be permanently reduced or eliminated. A second strategy involves the commitment of funds from VUMPI's financial reserve to offset amounts that would otherwise need to be obtained from Virginia Conference churches through apportionments. Following a detailed analysis of the remaining Pre-82 liability and the evaluation of multiple potential future investment market scenarios, these two complementary strategies have led VUMPI to recommend a reduction in the Pre-82 Liability apportionment from \$1 million in 2018 to \$750,000 in 2019. VUMPI anticipates maintaining the Pre-82 Liability apportionment at or below this level until a fully-funded Pre-82 Pension status is achieved.

■ Recommendation 2: 2019 Health Plan Designs

Medical and Dental Plans

As was summarized in Report 2, three new health plan designs are recommended for 2019. The recommended plans have been designed to provide a PPO Core health plan option, which is designed to be similar to the current Conference-sponsored PPO plan. Also offered is a PPO Buy-Up plan that offers a lower deductible and out of pocket cost limit, and a Health Savings Account plan option that includes Conference contributions to the HSA. HSA contributions will be prorated for plan participants enrolling in the HSA plan within a calendar year. Any HSA funds remaining at the end of the calendar year will roll over to the subsequent year and will remain under the enrollee's ownership. The recommended 2019 health benefit plan highlights are as follows:

	PPO Core	PPO Buy-Up	HSA
Individual Deductible	\$1,000	\$750	\$2,250
Family Deductible	\$2,500	\$1,875	\$4,500
HSA Funding	n/a	n/a	\$750/\$1,500
OOP Max (Individual)	\$6,500	\$4,500	\$5,500
OOP Max (Family)	\$13,000	\$9,000	\$11,000
Coinsurance	20%	20%	20%
Rx Cost	\$15/\$30/\$50	\$15/\$30/\$50	20% coinsurance

Currently the only plan made available to pre-Medicare-eligible retirees is the PPO plan. VUMPI recommends that both the PPO Core and PPO Buy-Up plans be made available to those retirees in 2019.

The current medical plan made available to clergy on medical leave with CPP benefits, and to surviving spouses and children of

clergy, will be unchanged in 2019.

The current dental plans will be unchanged in 2019. A Core Dental plan offering coverage for preventive and basic dental care will continue to be offered alongside a Major Dental plan that adds coverage for major restorative and orthodontic services.

Plans for Medicare-eligible Retirees

The plans for Medicare-eligible retirees, including the group Medicare Advantage plan and the individual Medicare Supplement plans offered through United Healthcare's Connector Option, will be unchanged in 2019.

■ Recommendation 3: New voluntary vision plan

VUMPI recommends the addition of a new fully-insured voluntary vision plan in 2019. This voluntary vision plan insured by Anthem provides coverage for a range of vision-related services and supplies. The plan utilizes Anthem's extensive EyeMed network, and annual in-network routine vision exams are covered with a \$10 copay. Standard plastic lenses are covered with a \$10 copay, and standard progressive lenses are covered with a \$50 copay. Benefits are also provided for lens options such as tinting, scratch-resistant coatings and polycarbonate lenses. The plan also offers a \$150 in-network allowance for eyeglass frames and elective contact lenses, with a discount for amounts over the \$150 allowance. Coverage is offered for one exam, and one set of eyeglass frames and eyeglass lenses (or contact lenses in lieu of eyeglass lenses) per year. As a voluntary insurance program, there will be no cost to the Virginia Conference or Conference churches in association with this plan. Participant premiums are detailed in Recommendation 4 below.

■ Recommendation 4: 2019 Participant Contribution Recommendations

VUMPI is recommending the following monthly participant contribution rates for the three new health plans which are recommended for 2019:

Active Clergy:

	Medical Plans			Dental Plans	
	PPO Core	PPO Buy-Up	HSA	Core	Major
Employee Only	\$102	\$120	\$85	\$13	\$34
Employee + Spouse	\$308	\$325	\$280	\$49	\$98
Employee + Child(ren)	\$312	\$331	\$286	\$51	\$100
Family	\$325	\$360	\$298	\$60	\$109

Note: active clergy have the opportunity to earn a \$15 reduction in their monthly contribution rate or \$30 reduction in Family contribution rate through participation in the Virginia Conference wellness program.

Clergy on Voluntary Leave, Sabbatical, or Retired Under ¶358.2.a (With Twenty Years of Service) or ¶358.3 (Prior to Age 62 With Fewer Than Thirty Years of Service):

	Medical Plans		Dental Plans	
	PPO Core	PPO Buy-Up	Core	Major
Clergyperson Only	\$642	\$702	\$31	\$60
Clergyperson + Spouse	\$1,429	\$1,504	\$51	\$124
Clergyperson + Child(ren)	\$1,548	\$1,629	\$53	\$126
Family	\$1,994	\$2,099	\$64	\$137

Clergy on Medical Leave with CPP Benefits & Under Age 65 Surviving Spouses of Clergy :

	Medical Plans	Dental Plans	
	PPO (\$500 deductible)	Core	Major
Clergyperson Only	\$112	\$13	\$34
Clergyperson + Spouse	\$171	\$49	\$98
Clergyperson + Child(ren)	\$174	\$51	\$100
Family	\$185	\$60	\$109

Retired Clergy Under Age 65 – Retired Under ¶358.1, ¶358.2b, ¶358.2c, or ¶358.3:

Qualifying retirees and/or spouses who are not yet eligible for Medicare will continue to have access to the Conference-sponsored health plans Administered by Anthem. As is currently the case, the enrollment options will remain retiree only or family, with family tier coverage offering the ability to cover children up to age 26. Beginning in 2019 retirees are recommended to have access to two health plan options, including the PPO Core and the PPO Buy-Up plan. Due to IRS restrictions on HSA contributions, the HSA plan will not be made available to retired clergy.

Years of Qualifying Virginia Conference Service	PPO Core		PPO Buy-up	
	Retiree Only	Family	Retiree Only	Family
10-14	\$701	\$1,600	\$772	\$1,760
15-19	\$568	\$1,295	\$625	\$1,425
20-24	\$434	\$991	\$478	\$1,090
25-29	\$301	\$686	\$331	\$754
30+	\$167	\$381	\$184	\$419

Years of Qualifying Virginia Conference Service	Dental Core		Dental Major	
	Retiree Only	Family	Retiree Only	Family
10-14	\$31	\$58	\$60	\$131
15-19	\$31	\$58	\$60	\$131
20-24	\$31	\$58	\$60	\$131
25-29	\$31	\$58	\$60	\$131
30+	\$31	\$58	\$60	\$131

Optional Voluntary Vision Benefit Plan for Clergy and Lay Employees Enrolled in a Conference-sponsored Anthem Medical Plan

Recommended monthly premium for the optional voluntary vision benefit plan described in Recommendation 3 above are as follows:

	Vision
Employee Only	\$8.34
Employee + Spouse	\$15.05
Employee + Child(ren)	\$15.05
Family	\$24.19

Retired Clergy Age 65 or Over – Retired Under ¶358.1, ¶358.2b, ¶358.2c, or ¶358.3

Under the Conference-sponsored medical plan for Medicare-eligible retirees of the Virginia Conference, there will continue to be two coverage options, as described below.

Group Plan Option: The group plan is a group Medicare Advantage plan. The group plan has a required participant contribution based on full time years of service in the Virginia Conference. The recommended 2019 participant contributions for the group plan coverage option are as follows:

Medicare-eligible Retirees - Monthly Personal Contributions		
Years of Service	Individual	Family
10-14	\$375	\$750
15-19	\$310	\$620
20-24	\$245	\$490
25-29	\$180	\$360
30+	\$115	\$230

Connector Option: The Connector option allows qualifying clergy to select any available Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage plan, and any Part D prescription drug plan, offered by United Healthcare. Retirees electing coverage through this option receive Retiree Reimbursement Account (“RRA”) funding, which can be used to offset the cost of the selected coverage. VUMPI recommends 2019 monthly RRA funding, which is unchanged from 2018, based on qualifying years of Virginia Conference service as follows:

Connector Option - Monthly RRA Funding		
Years of Service	Retiree Only	Retiree and Spouse
20-24	\$150	\$300
25-29	\$200	\$400
30+	\$250	\$500

The monthly RRA funding amounts will be prorated for qualifying retirees and/or spouses of qualifying retirees who gain Medicare eligibility or otherwise gain eligibility for retiree coverage within a calendar year. Any RRA funds remaining at the end of a calendar year will roll over into the subsequent year for use by the enrolled retiree and/or spouse for qualifying medical expenses.

General Virginia Conference Health Plan Information

For participants enrolled in the Anthem health plans, either as active clergy or as a retiree not yet eligible for Medicare, plan selections will be made during the open enrollment period in the fall of 2018. **Because new health plans are being offered in 2019, all eligible active and pre-Medicare-eligible retired clergy will be required to make plan selections during the open enrollment period. There will be no default plans for those who do not elect 2019 coverage options during the annual open enrollment period. VUMPI will send notifications regarding the open enrollment period to all active and retired clergy current participating in the Conference-sponsored health plans.**

■ Recommendation 5: Retiree Health Plan Eligibility

Virginia Conference clergy members earn a year of service towards his or her Total Years of VAUMC Service as indicated in Recommendation 4 above for each year that Virginia Annual Conference health plan eligibility is met.

Eligibility for the Conference-sponsored retiree medical plans currently requires a minimum of 10 consecutive years of full-time ministry in the Virginia Conference *immediately prior to retirement*. As such, Virginia Conference clergy on leave or in an Extension Ministry appointment could incur an interruption of the consecutive years of full time ministry required for retiree health plan eligibility. Since 2004 Conference rules have allowed clergy on approved leave or taking an Extension Ministry appointment to “freeze” their years of service until they retire or until they return to an appointment within the Virginia Conference by paying a Retiree Health Plan Monthly Access Fee, which is \$20 per month in 2018.

VUMPI has reviewed the current Conference-sponsored retiree health plan eligibility rules. In particular, the Retiree Health Plan Monthly Access Fee has been evaluated along with the requirement to have a minimum of ten consecutive years of full time ministry in the Virginia Conference immediately prior to retirement.

Following a detailed review, VUMPI has concluded that the retiree health plan eligibility rules can be modified to specify that the following years are to be counted towards determining eligibility for the Conference-sponsored retiree health plans for clergy retiring on or after January 1, 2019:

- All years of full-time ministry in Virginia Conference churches, plus
- All years of full-time ministry other than in appointment to Virginia Conference churches but with enrollment in the Virginia Conference-sponsored health plan

There will no longer be a requirement to have 10 consecutive years of full-time ministry immediately preceding retirement. With this change, the Retiree Health Plan Access Fee will no longer be required in 2019. VUMPI recommends the approval of these changes to the Conference-sponsored health plan eligibility rules, and notes that these changes are expected to result in much more clarity around the eligibility rules and no meaningful increase in the projected financial liability associated with the Conference-sponsored health plans.

■ Recommendation 6: 2019 Pre-82 Pension Past Service Rate

The Pre-82 pension provides a benefit to all eligible clergy who have served in the Virginia Conference prior to 1982. This program pays the greater of the following:

- An annual benefit equal to the Past Service Rate (PSR) times years of pre-1982 service, or
- An annuity amount based upon the participant's cash balance in his or her Defined Benefit Service Money Account

The Virginia Annual Conference establishes the PSR each year. For 2019, VUMPI recommends that the PSR be increased from \$565 to \$570.

■ Recommendation 7: 2019 CRSP/ CPP/ Supplemental Plan Funding Recommendations

Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

The 2019 CRSP Contribution from the local churches and/or salary-paying-units for each appointed eligible clergy member under episcopal appointment at that location shall be:

- For the Defined Contribution component of CRSP: Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service), times 3%.
- For the Defined Benefit component of CRSP: Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service, up to 135% of the Denominational Average Compensation ("DAC")) times 9%.

VUMPI will bill local churches and salary-paying units for the required monthly CRSP payments.

Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

The 2019 CPP contribution from the local churches and/or salary-paying-units for each appointed eligible full time clergy member under episcopal appointment at that location shall be:

Plan Compensation (base salary plus housing allowance or parsonage rate in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service, up to 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation) times 4.4%.

VUMPI will bill local churches and salary-paying units for the required monthly CPP payments.

If, for any reason, CPP contributions are more than 30 days in arrears, participation in the CPP is suspended. If contributions are more than six consecutive months in arrears, participation in the CPP is terminated. For terminated participants, readmission into the CPP requires payment of seven months of contributions and submission of a medical statement of good health.

Erroneously enrolled clergy who are ineligible to participate in the CPP have no right to benefits under the CPP. Eligible clergy who have not been properly enrolled in the CPP have no rights under the CPP until after proper enrollment.

■ Recommendation 8: 2019 Comprehensive Funding Plan

The 2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 1506.6 requires that each annual conference develop, adopt and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan shall be submitted annually to Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) for review and be approved annually by the annual conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from Wespath. This document is only a summary of the information contained in the actual signed funding plan and does not contain all the information required for a comprehensive view of the conference's benefit obligations. You may request the full contents of the 2019 comprehensive benefit funding plan from the VUMPI office.

CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PROGRAM (CRSP)

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve as clergy of The United Methodist Church. The program is designed to provide participants with one portion of their overall retirement benefits. CRSP replaced the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 2007, which had previously replaced the Pre-82 Plan for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982.

CRSP consists of both a defined benefit (DB) plan, which provides a monthly benefit at retirement based upon years of credited service to The United Methodist Church, and a defined contribution (DC) plan, which provides a retirement account balance established and funded by the annual conferences.

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP DB) annuities' total liability as of January 1, 2017, is \$(1,588,243,217), while total plan assets are \$1,700,835,563, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 107%. The Virginia Conference portion of the liability is 4.0763% and the 2019 contribution is \$4,460,887. Additionally, General Conference 2012 approved a change to CRSP that provides each annual conference the discretion to determine whether to cover three quarter and/or half time clergy. The Virginia Conference has elected to cover clergy serving 50%+ under CRSP effective January 1, 2019.

Effective January 1, 2014, the CRSP DC plan was reduced from a 3% to a 2% of plan compensation non matching contribution. Clergy can earn up to an additional 1% CRSP DC contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to UMPIP; therefore, if a participant contributes at least 1% of plan compensation to UMPIP, the individual will receive a contribution of 3% to CRSP DC. The 2019 CRSP DC contribution is anticipated to be \$1,510,671.

MINISTERIAL PENSION PLAN (MPP)

Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP), provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. MPP is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement plan. MPP requires that exactly 65% of the account balance must be annuitized when the funds are to be distributed. The remainder may be rolled over to UMPIP, another qualified plan or an IRA, or it may be paid in a lump sum.

The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities' total liability as of January 1, 2017 is \$(3,532,916,942), while total plan assets are \$3,701,460,997, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 105%. The required contribution for 2019 is \$0. The Virginia Conference's percentage of the total liability is 3.2953%. Future MPP annuitants have a total account balance of \$3,689,292,322 and the Virginia Conference's portion of that balance is \$135,333,756 or 3.67% of the total.

PRE-82 PLAN

Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Pre-82 Plan, provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church prior to 1982. The Pre-82 Plan was replaced by MPP effective January 1, 1982. If a clergyperson retires within the Conference (and does not terminate), the minimum benefit payable is based on two factors:

The number of years of service with pension credit is multiplied by the pension rate, and the product is the minimum annual benefit payable to those clergy eligible for Pre-82 Plan benefits. In certain situations, the benefit received from the Pre-82 plan may vary based on the applicability of what is referred to as Defined Benefit Service Money (DBSM), which is the defined contribution feature of the Pre-82 Plan. At the time that a participant retires, the DBSM account is converted to a life based benefit and, at that point, the clergy's benefit is the greater of the PSR or DBSM benefit. If the conference increases the PSR, the clergy's benefit is recalculated; but the DBSM based benefit does not change.

The 2019 PSR recommended to the Virginia Conference will be \$570, representing a 1% increase from the 2018 rate. The contingent annuitant percentage is recommended to remain at the 70% level.

ACTIVE HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM

The Virginia Conference sponsors a self funded health benefit program for full-time active clergy. The cost of the program for 2019 is anticipated to be approximately \$13,400,000, which will be funded primarily by apportionments and health plan participant contributions.

POST RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFIT PROGRAM (PRM)

The Virginia Conference currently sponsors a self funded health benefit program for pre-Medicare-eligible retirees and a Group Medicare Advantage plan for Medicare-eligible retirees, with optional RRA funding for the purchase of individual supplemental plans through a retiree medical exchange. The projected annual plan benefit cost for 2019, including health plan premiums, Retiree Reimbursement Account contributions and other plan expenses, is approximately \$7,250,000, which will be funded primarily by apportionments and health plan participant contributions.

COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides death, long term disability and other welfare benefits for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church and their families. It is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) "church plan" funded by plan sponsor insurance premiums. Generally, clergy are eligible to participate in CPP if they satisfy the eligibility requirements, including full time appointment with plan compensation of at least 25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). For 2019, Wespath will continue the CPP premium redirection program that was implemented in 2018.

UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP) FOR LAY AND CLERGY

The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) defined contribution retirement savings plan for clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Participants may make before tax, Roth and/or after tax contributions through payroll deductions. Participant contributions, various optional plan sponsor contributions and investment earnings comprise the individual's retirement account balance.

OTHER DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) OBLIGATIONS

VUMPI currently offers a supplemental life insurance benefit that supplements the CPP life insurance benefit. The estimated cost of this supplemental benefit for 2019 is \$300,000.

CONCLUSION

The 2019 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan and this summary document incorporates, to the best of our understanding, VUMPI's obligations and funding requirements of the benefits provided to the clergy and laity of the Virginia Conference.

■ Recommendation 9: 2019 Housing Allowance/Exclusion**Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled, or Former Clergypersons of the Virginia Conference**

The Virginia Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church ("Clergypersons");

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as an appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the "*Discipline*"), which includes all such payments from Wespath Benefits and Investments, during the period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from Wespath and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the *Discipline*, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such an active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergyperson's pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal (and, in most cases, state) income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2), and regulations thereunder, to the least of: (a) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (b) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (c) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. Each clergyperson or former clergyperson is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

– Ken Peterson, Chair

COMMON TABLE FOR CHURCH VITALITY

Since the Annual Conference's approval of **All Things New: Fruitful and Multiplying – The Virginia Conference** in 2008, Common Table has been guided by the goal of leadership development that results in planting new faith communities and helping existing congregations to grow where they have been sown as part of God's kingdom. The alignment of conference resources for the foci of ministries accountable to Common Table currently include:

FORMATION OF NEW FAITH COMMUNITIES

- Formation of 25 Anglo and 22 ethnic minority faith communities (37 are currently active)
- Developed metric for formation, accountability and continuing support of new faith communities
- Created coaching model for new faith community planters and stakeholders

RENEWAL OF EXISTING CONGREGATIONS

- 5 Talent Academy – over 300 churches participating from 2009 - present
- Large Church Training Events – over 30 churches participating
- Midsize Church Training Events – over 75 churches participating
- Small Church Training Events – over 50 churches participating
- How To Reach New People Workshops (purpose is to create a ministry of invitation) – from 2011 to 2017 involved 23 workshops and 255 churches —purpose is to create a culture of invitation
- Church Leadership Institute (purpose is to move from a culture of maintenance to a culture of fruitfulness) - from 2004-2016 trained 290 pastors
- Virginia Focus 2020 – Designed to provide training and coaching for pastors of Virginia Conference African American congregations

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Certification and training of 1,762 Virginia Conference Lay Servants
- Lay Servant Academy
 - 2017 Lay Servant Academy – 160 students from 29 different churches
 - 2018 Lay Servant Academy to be held in August
- Online training for lay servants – 251 students from 157 different churches
- Courses held in the districts and reported by Lay Servants – 60 Students from 44 churches
- Bishop's Convocation on Prayer
- Bishop's Convocation on Race and Reconciliation
- Goodson Academy for Preaching
- Conference Middle School Retreat
- Conference High School Retreat
- Regional training events for children's ministries
- Spiritual Leadership Inc. cohort for development of next generation ministries
- District Training Events

MISSION AND JUSTICE

- Initiatives of Hope:
 - Mozambique – focus on Lay Leadership Development
 - Brazil – Shade and Fresh Water at-risk children's ministry
 - Cambodia – church growth development; support for Methodist Mission in Cambodia to develop into an autonomous Methodist Church
- Native American Relations and Reconciliation: Supporting Native Peoples self-determination and tribal sustainability as well as building long term relationships between the UMC and native populations.
- Training for United Methodist Volunteers in Mission

- Two annual session of Camp Rainbow Connection
- Three annual sessions of All God’s Children Camps
- Disaster Recovery – Training, credentialing, and support for Early Response Teams and long term Disaster response teams.
- Mission Encounter – Annual mission education event in cooperation with United Methodist Women.
- UM Day at the Virginia General Assembly – Annual event providing opportunities for Virginia United Methodists to lobby and advocate on social issues before the General Assembly. Cooperative event between United Methodist Women and Conference Board of Church and Society
- Missionary Support – Support for international, US and local missionaries including US-2s and Church and Community Workers.
- Immigration Outreach Team – Providing resources for support of immigrant population and faith communities engaged in ministry with immigrants as well as advocacy for immigration reform.
- Mission Opportunities Booklet – Annual production of resource for use by faith communities and individuals covering all aspects of first and second mile giving.
- Bishop’s Convocation on Race and Reconciliation
- Ministry Accelerator Model for local church ministries receiving grants from the conference

CAMPUS MINISTRY

- Seven Wesley Foundations, five ecumenical campus ministries, and six chaplains at United Methodist educational institutions in the Virginia Conference
- Campus Ministry Institute
- Model for evaluation and support of campus ministries
- Property assessment of Wesley Foundation properties
- Spiritual Leadership, Inc. cohort of campus ministers to strengthen current campus ministries and envision future campus ministries

COMMUNICATION

- Oversee various conference communication tools (e-Advocate, *Advocate* magazine, Sunday Advocate, *Journal*, *Book of Reports*, etc.)
- Maintain conference website and other online communications (i.e., LaityNet, ClergyNet, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Videography

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Developed and maintains Virginia Conference Vital Congregations reporting system
- Developed and maintains Virginia Conference Charge Conference reporting system
- Provides data link between General Council on Finance and Administration and the Virginia Conference
- Oversight and maintenance of conference IT hardware and software
- Online resourcing of 5 Talent Academy

For a fuller description of ministries made possible through the program agencies and commissions of the Virginia Conference, you are invited to review the reports that are included as part of the fuller report of Common Table. As Virginia Conference congregations respond to Bishop Lewis’ call to develop an intentional discipleship plan by 2020, the ministries of agencies related to Common Table will seek to provide resources toward this goal.

During this conference year Pat Hickman retired, concluding 41 years of ministry as an administrative assistant for a variety of conference ministry areas. Common Table expresses appreciation for Pat’s years of ministry and for the ministry of all Connectional Ministries staff who provide leadership and support for the program and mission ministries of the Virginia Conference.

As part of its report to the annual conference, Common Table is recommending that, effective with the 2019 annual conference, resolutions no longer be included as part of the business of the Virginia Annual Conference. The rationale for this recommendation is that time spent on resolutions can be used more effectively to receive presentations and information on topics pertinent to the ministry and mission of The United Methodist Church, the annual conference or local church. These presentations may include differing opinions presented by persons who model holy conferencing. In setting the annual conference agenda, the bishop may consult with different conference agencies in determining the focus of the presentations. In place of resolutions, requests for inclusion of specific

topics to be included in the annual conference agenda shall be submitted to the Director of Connectional Ministries by the due date for the publication of the *Book of Reports*. In addition, an area designated by the annual conference planning committee shall be determined for receiving signatures for petitions.

There will still be opportunities for motions from the floor of the conference as part of annual conference sessions. The presentation of this motion will be included as part of the Rules Committee report during the Friday afternoon opening session.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Strike Conference Standing Rules Paragraph II.B.RESOLUTIONS in whole and replace with:
II.B. PRESENTATIONS
Requests for inclusion of presentations for the annual conference agenda shall be submitted to the Director of Connectional Ministries by the due date for the publication of the *Book of Reports*. The author or originating agency must be identified if other than the submitter(s) of the proposal.
- 2) Add a new sub-section II.C.PETITIONS:
“II.C PETITIONS
An area designated by the annual conference planning committee shall be determined for receiving signatures for petitions.
- 3) Approve the resolution by the Virginia Conference Commission on Archives and History regarding United Methodist Historic Site No. 7: William Watters Grave, McLean, Virginia, Heritage Landmark as found in the *Book of Reports*.
- 4) Approve the following recommendations by the following boards:
 - a) By the Board of Discipleship regarding the recommendation and endorsement of Gregory B. West as a General Evangelist according to the standards set by the General Board of Discipleship
 - b) By the Board of Discipleship regarding changes in the Standing Rules related to the structure of its board
 - c) By Missional Ministries regarding special offerings for Heart Havens, United Methodist Family Services of Virginia, and Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.
 - d) By Missional Ministries that the Relationship Agreements as presented to the Missional Connections Team of the Conference Missional Ministries Board between the Virginia Conference and Heart Havens, Inc.; United Methodist Family Services of Virginia; Pinnacle Living; Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation; and Wesley Housing Development Corporation, be continued

— Marc Brown, VAUMC Director of Connectional Ministries



*The following reports, from page 77 to page 113, fall under the umbrella of the
Common Table for Church Vitality.*

BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The United Methodist Book of Discipline (§629) specifies the purpose of the Conference Board of Church and Society. The Conference Board is to help the conference, districts and congregations employ our Social Principles to connect our faith communities to the world around us. This work is both individual and societal. We are called to invite faithful disciples of Christ to lead the church prayerfully into the world.

We have organized our board to follow the issues raised by our United Methodist Bishop’s letter: “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.” In this 2009 letter, UMC bishops raised virtually the same issues, as did Catholic Pope Francis in 2015, namely that the world is awash in 1. Violence, 2. Environmental Destruction, and 3. Poverty.

Following the need to address these three interconnected disasters, we have organized three work areas: 1. Peace and Non-Violence, 2. Caretakers of God’s Creation, and 3. Eradicating Poverty/Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries.

Social Principles Hearing:

On May 12, the conference board will hold a hearings in two locations (Northern Virginia and South Central) to consider the draft of the **Social Principles** re-write developed by the General Board of Church and Society for submission to the 2020 General Conference.

Peace with Justice Sunday:

The Conference Board promotes the Peace with Justice Sunday Special Offering, one of the six Church-wide offerings that The United Methodist General Conference asks of each local church. In 2017, only about 100 of our churches gave to this Special Of-

fering, but their giving has allowed the conference to fund key ministries within the conference. We expect the 2018 total will show more churches taking the offering. One half of the offering stays in the annual conference, the other half is used by the General Board.

We recently funded:

1. Scholarships for participants to join the Conference Board of Church and Society study trip to Israel and Palestine. We have now led two trips to Israel/Palestine to study peacemaking in the Holy Land.
2. The Center for Spirituality in Nature to work with UM churches in the Virginia Conference to establish Spirituality in Nature Groups (SINGs). A SING meets regularly to explore spiritual formation and ecological understanding through outdoor meetings and worship in the group's home area. Participants are encouraged to broaden their understanding of community to include all of God's Creation and to partner with racial and ethnic groups to do this work.

To aid in the development of these groups, the Center is currently writing a comprehensive handbook — *A Field Guide to Establishing a Spirituality in Nature Group*.

Caretakers of God's Creation:

The Board's Caretakers of God's Creation work area has begun a program of district workshops to help churches become "Green Churches". The Caretakers are also working to help congregations divest of stocks of thermal coal companies as required by the resolution voted on at conference in 2015. They are promoting Fossil Free Funds, a project of *As You Sow*, a corporate responsibility program (<http://fossilfreefunds.org/>). The fossilfreefunds.org tool makes it very easy to evaluate your portfolio for all kinds of fossil fuel investments. Caretakers also co-sponsored the National Caretakers of God's Creation Climate Justice Conference held at Mt. Olivet United Methodist Church in Arlington. Each year, Caretakers awards a conference church, the Green Church of the Year award. In the fall of 2018, Caretakers is implementing the conference resolution on fracking by holding hearings in the Northern Neck (Warsaw UMC-Sept.22), Giles County (Mt. Olivet UMC-Newport Nov. 10) and the Richmond Area (place and date to be determined).

Peace and Non-violence Work Area:

The Peace and Non-violence Work Area is giving continued leadership to persons interested in peace in the Middle East. The work area will again lead a trip to Palestine and Israel (November 2018). The Peace and Non-violence Work Area is also working to fight gun violence, care for immigrants and refugees and to promote care of veterans. The work area is proposing three resolutions to annual conference: 1. Compassionate Support for Members of the Armed Forces, Veterans and Their Families Suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress and Moral Injury, 2. Comprehensive Immigration Reform and 3. Study and Action on Gun Violence.

Eradicating Poverty:

The Eradicating Poverty Work Area is working on planning our program for mentoring youth based on the resolution passed at the 2016 annual conference. It also is exploring how to implement the Annual Conference resolution on implementing the banning the "box" which allows prospective employers to choose to not interview persons who have served their time for crimes and are now trying to become employed. We celebrate that the Virginia state government no longer discriminates in job applicants based on an employee's past criminal convictions, but many private employers still ask potential applicants to check the box saying whether they have any criminal convictions.

United Methodist Day at the General Assembly:

This year was the 26th anniversary United Methodist Day at the General Assembly. We partner with the Virginia Interfaith Center on Public Policy to hold the United Methodist Day at the General Assembly. Each year, United Methodist Day at the General Assembly is held on the first Thursday in February. We hold this event jointly with the United Methodist Women and the Conference Legislative Network. We look forward to Bishop Lewis helping to lead the event in future years.

— Jaydee Hanson, Lay Co-Chair & James Page, Clergy Co-Chair.

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

The mission of Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc. is to assist faith communities in communications and related technologies, empowering their mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In 2018, after 75 years of incorporated status, the Virginia Conference Board of Communication has dissolved Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc. seeing no need to maintain a separate incorporation apart from the Virginia Conference. This was not a decision that was taken lightly. The Board is very much committed to the future of Communications within the Conference and looks forward to the various ways we can grow our communication efforts in the coming months and years.

The Board of Communications continues to support the Virginia United Methodist *Advocate*, the official conference magazine published both in print and digital formats. The magazine strives to equip, connect and inform Virginia United Methodists by offering in-depth features on topics of interest to United Methodists, religious news from around the corner to around the world, weekly devotionals, tools to help equip congregations for ministry and much more. With the ever-changing communication climate,

we acknowledge that we are not reaching as large of an audience with the *Virginia Advocate* as we would like. The Board, in conjunction with Conference Communication Staff and members of the VA Conference, will begin to examine how we can reach more people so that we can more effectively carry out our mandate from the *Discipline* to “meet the communication, publication, multimedia, public and media relations, interpretation, and promotional needs of the annual conference.” (§ 646)

The Board of Communications recognizes the growth of volunteers and staff dedicated to communication efforts within our local churches. We will continue to help resource these individuals through our Local Church Communicators’ Facebook page. Members of the Board and the Conference Communications staff are also available to hold special trainings at District Training Events or for individual churches. Please contact the Conference Communications office for more information.

Our board also enjoys being able to support the operations of Annual Conference. We help to provide camera operators with appropriate training, help on the tech desk, provide daily Conference news updates and photography and staff our VA Conference Communications display where conference attendees can access communication resources as well as order Conference DVDs.

As I conclude almost 15 years on the Board of Communications and four years as president, I am thankful for everyone who has come alongside of me (especially members of our Executive Committee), grateful for the paths God has provided and guided, and excited for the future of Communications in the Virginia Conference!

Please join me in welcoming Jill Gaynor, a lay member of our annual conference who will serve as the Board’s next president.

–Keri L. B. Marston, outgoing President

BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

The Directing Board of the Board of Discipleship continues its work toward offering resources for the churches of the Annual Conference. Our Regional Directors will begin working closely with the Cabinet Clusters of District Superintendents and District Lay Leaders to determine the needs of the local churches throughout the Annual Conference. We have been working toward Best Practices information that can be available to any and all local churches about Discipleship, Fruitfulness, Growth, etc. We have been in contact with various groups to facilitate discussion about resources that can be used to promote and develop Discipleship and Growth particularly in small and mid-size churches especially in rural and urban ministries.

We will be contracting with Phil Maynard to develop coaches for Discipleship and Intentional Discipleship Planning in connection with the Alexandria and Arlington Districts in May. We also are continuing to work with the Cluster groups for the cabinet to discern and offer resources for church revitalization in cooperation with the Bishop’s Collaboration Teams.

Each year the Board of Discipleship awards one youth, one laity and one Clergy the Denman Evangelism award. Beginning this year the Board will be awarding a local congregation the One Matters award for recognition of turn around success in growth, professions of faith and fruitfulness.

Each year we endorse candidates to be a General Evangelist in the United Methodist Church and this year with great acknowledgment of his work we endorse Greg West (Chaplain of Wesleyan College) as a General Evangelist. We also participate in the Christian Education Sunday and use those funds for scholarship and grant requests for Education in our local churches, districts and conference. We work closely with the Office of Bishop by facilitating conference wide activities like the Bishop’s Convocation of Prayer and have offered assistance for the Conference Day of Prayer and Week of Prayer for the Praying Forward Campaign. Members of the Board continually work with the Conference Staff and Cabinet in areas of Discipleship and have participated in the Mid-Size and Small Church Initiatives.

– Donald Jamison, Chair

Conference Council On Youth Ministries (CCYM)

The past year for the Conference Council on Youth Ministries has been spent rebuilding, refocusing and relying on God’s hand to guide us in the right direction. Instead of having our normal fall meeting in September, we worked with *Living Your Strengths* by Don Clifton. This allowed us to evaluate our individual strengths and discern the best way to use our them to build God’s Kingdom. We conferenced over various types of electronic communication to discuss these strengths with youth and adults across our council. We also had the wonderful opportunity to partner with Warren Harper, Conference Lay Leader, through this process in order to receive his wisdom and guidance in making new intergenerational connections across the conference.

This year we have shifted our focus from event facilitation to leadership development and Youth Service Fund (YSF) opportunities. It is our hope that this will be continued in coming years to develop more young leaders of our youth and put to use the gifts that God has entrusted them with.

With the help of children, youth and adults across the conference, we have once again had a successful year of donations into the YSF (Youth Service Fund). We allocated \$13,000 in YSF grant money this year at our spring meeting in March, to benefit youth organizations working towards building disciples across the conference. We received over 15 applications and were extremely happy to distribute almost all of our funds. Our Conference was fortunate to gather money in a variety of ways through the support of local church initiatives, district fundraisers, collections at conference youth retreats and other opportunities.

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries is pleased to announce the election of our new Co-Chairs, Lizzie Lawrence and Chris Ganoë. The two are very excited to have the opportunity to lead the Conference Council on Youth Ministry in the coming year. In conclusion, we are happy to say that our year was full of discipleship and refocusing. We look forward to growing our

council membership and impact over the next year and also are optimistic of the future and plan to continue making disciples of Jesus Christ who WILL transform the world.

– Hannah Hale, Blake Mitchell, and Alison Malloy

Older Adult Council

The Older Adult Council is tasked with engaging and equipping local churches and districts with knowledge and skills for ministry to, for, by and with older adults within congregations and in the community at large. The Council works to provide growth in discipleship throughout life, appreciating the great resource our older adults are to the Body of Christ. The Council is currently working to increase intergenerational programming and hopes to encourage the sharing of the rich spiritual legacy of our older adults. As the tsunami of aging adults, now including the Baby Boomers, present churches with significantly changing physical, emotional and spiritual needs, the Council offers presentations on Spiritual Legacy, Liturgical Dance and Ways of Experiencing God. On a larger scale, Olde Time Revivals have been held regionally. Many older adults remember committing their lives to follow Jesus during a revival experience. In response to numerous requests, the Olde Time Revival provides an opportunity to renew faith and refresh that commitment. In April the Council joined the Beard Center on Aging of Lynchburg College in sponsoring the second Faithful Aging Conference held at Williamsburg UMC for 2018. Faithful Aging is one of the first statewide, faith-based, non-denominational, conferences on aging. Speakers included healthcare providers, ministers, an elder law attorney and other experts on issues faced by the aging population.

– Suzanne Spencer, Chair

Goodson Academy of Preaching

In her book, *And God Spoke to Abraham*, Fleming Rutledge writes, “The incarnate Word of God is a mighty sword put into your hand. Those who hear it will feel their chains cut off, their prison unlocked, their lungs filled with oxygen...”

The Goodson Academy of Preaching (GAP) exists for the purpose of encouraging excellence in preaching. Through the best use of the Scripture, and the best practices from homiletics today, we want to help preachers unlock the prison in which the people in our congregations, and sometimes ourselves, are locked.

A brief history: On the retirement of Bishop Kenneth Goodson (1972-1980), substantial funds were given to honor his passion for quality preaching. For over 35 years that money has funded scholarships, gifts, workshops, books and awards of many sorts. From 1999-2008 the Goodson Academy of Preaching held four-day workshops that included lectures from notable homileticians and small group preaching with peer feedback. This event was held at Blackstone (VUMAC).

In 2015 the Bishops’ Foundation, by then the “parent organization” of the Academy, sponsored a new program that featured Dr. Paul Scott Wilson, author of *The Four Pages of the Sermon*. In fall 2017 GAP offered “Stir Up the Gift: Fan Into Flame the Gift of God,” a one-day preaching experience led by Dr. Teresa Fry Brown of Candler.

In 2018 we are taking a different approach by supporting with scholarships those who attend the Festival of Homiletics in Washington, D.C., May 21-25. This nationally recognized event celebrates the gift of preaching with best known preachers and is a good opportunity for our preachers.

We are open to new ways of sharing the Gospel and connecting with a world that needs The Word proclaimed in powerful and effective ways. We are considering live streaming, peer preaching groups, website resources and one-day events. If you are reading this and are passionate about worship and preaching, we would love to hear your thoughts and ideas of how we might more effectively connect the Word with the People of God for the sake of the Gospel.

We are indebted to the Bishops’ Foundation for the renewal of the GAP in 2015, which has been our place for funding and accountability. GAP has now been merged into the Board of Discipleship. We look forward to this new relationship and to future possibilities.

In 2019 we are working on plans for a preaching event with Rev. Donald Davis, UM Elder from North Carolina who is best known as storyteller par excellence. The dates are: March 26-28. Mark your calendars for what we believe will be an extraordinary event.

Currently, the members are: Larry Buxton, Amanda Newman, David Rash (Chairperson), George Riggins and Tim Tate. We welcome as new members: Youtha Hardman-Cromwell, Marcia Huntsman, Jason Micheli, Derrick Parson and Greg West.

“May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in God’s sight.”

– David A. Rash

CONFERENCE MISSIONAL MINISTRIES BOARD

“Engaging, Connecting and Equipping Clergy and Laity of the Virginia Conference for God’s mission.”

The Missional Discipleship and Engagement Team includes the inter-related work of several Conference Committees: Disaster Response, Initiatives of Hope, Volunteers in Mission and Voices of Youth.

Disaster Response – led by *Rev. Bob Philcrantz, CDRC* continues to address the needs in Virginia.

Initiatives of Hope (IOH) team continues its mission to increase awareness of and generate increased participation in long term partnership-in-mission opportunities developed internationally, locally and nationally. Our overseas connections continue to be Brazil, Cambodia, and Mozambique. In addition, IOH has continued to build relationships with the Native American community here in Virginia and promote mission connections with other native peoples across the U.S.

Rev. David Vaughn chairs the **Brazilian Initiative**, which continues its primary focus on support for the Shade and Fresh Water ministry of the Methodist Church of Brazil, which provides a unique ministry to at-risk Children in many locations across the country. They will celebrate their 19th year in October and a delegation from Virginia plans to attend. Juanita Csontos chairs the **Cambodia Initiative**. In January 2018 a team of three United Methodist Women led by Nancy Yarborough traveled to Cambodia for a month offering workshops on servanthood and discipleship with UMW groups in several locations in Cambodia as well as with clergywomen and clergy spouses. Plans are underway to send the first medical team to Cambodia in 2019. Our support for the Methodist Church in Cambodia and their move towards being a provisional conference of the UMC continues to be an inspiration for all Virginia United Methodists who experience God’s mission being lived out in Cambodia. **The Mozambique Initiative** continues to focus on providing support for lay leadership development as well as sending short-term mission teams to learn about “making disciples” from the rapidly growing UMC in Mozambique. Strengthening our support for Chicouque Hospital is also part of the plans for 2018-2019.

The IOH team congratulates and celebrates with the six Native tribes in Virginia! After a 30-year legal journey for state and federal recognition, the “Thomasina Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Bill” has become law! Recognizing the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation and the Nansemond Indian Tribe. These tribes were among the first to welcome European immigrants, and among the last to be recognized. Thank you for your prayers and support through the years!

Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM) coordinated by **Forrest White**, offered six team leader trainings with 105 trained; and two team leader recertification trainings with 18 trained during 2017. In December, we reduced the cost of team leader training from \$35 per person to no cost as the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) UMVIM no longer charges for its team leader handbook. We now ask individuals to make a love offering to the host church to cover the cost of lunch and refreshments. Recertification training remains at no cost to participants. We had 104 UMVIM teams from Virginia Conference Churches as well as teams from Ferrum College, Shenandoah University and Randolph-Macon Academy (each with a VIM trained team leader) serve in one of the three areas affected by the February 2016 tornado outbreak or in the Hampton Roads area affected by Hurricane Matthew, where the Conference had Long Term Recovery ministry.

Thanks to funding through the Bishop’s Offering at Annual Conference, we now offer scholarships to churches seeking to send UMVIM teams.

The Facebook page, (www.facebook.com/VirginiaUMVIM) continues to be a place for inspiration, information and connection. Team leaders are invited to share the specifics about their trip: i.e. church or district sending the team, location and ministry project particulars by emailing the conference UMVIM Coordinator who will post to the Facebook page. Others are invited to pray for the team and those they will be serving. Teams looking for additional information are invited to recruit via the Facebook page.

Voices of Youth (VOY), coordinated by **Ryan Brown**, has as its mission statement: “Fill your mind with truth, your heart with love, your life with service.” We are a group of youth and adults who have a passion for music and mission and combine those two gifts into a unique service experience.

The Missional Connections Team includes the work of mission contexts and relationships; mission education, interpretation and resources; and health and relief connections.

Mrs. Anne Klotz, Missionary Itineration Coordinator, has facilitated connections and visits for many missionaries with their covenant churches during the past year.

Mission Encounter is a cooperative school offered by the Conference Missional Ministries Board and the United Methodist Women to help us understand God’s work in our world and our involvement as United Methodists. Mission Encounter 2018 will be offered July 27-29 at the 4H Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake.

Conference Committee on Mission Personnel, (CCMP), chaired by **Kip Robinson**, guides and mentors interested persons through the application and discernment process for mission service. Applicants can access the Personnel Information Form (PIF–Application for Missionary Service) and other application materials from the Virginia Conference web site under Ministries - Center for Justice and Missional Excellence - Committee on Mission Personnel (CCMP) - Related Documentation. **All completed application materials should be sent to the Virginia Conference Committee on Mission Personnel, The Virginia Conference Center for Justice and Missional Excellence, P. O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058. DO NOT send to the General Board of Global Ministries.**

Advance Specials 2018-2019

INTERNATIONAL

Mozambique: Chicuque Rural Hospital, Advance #09734A
 Congo: North Katanga Wings of the Morning, Advance #08597A
 Liberia: Ganta United Methodist Hospital, Advance #15080N
 Cambodia: Mission Initiative, Advance #00230A
 Cambodia: Street Children Ministry, Advance #14921A
 Macedonia: Macedonia in Mission Together, Advance #00220A
 Brazil: Ministry with Children, Shade and Fresh Water Project, Advance #11580A
 Israel: Bethlehem Bible College, Advance #12017A
 Eurasia: Eurasia Mission Initiative, Ukraine, Moldova, Advance #14053A
 Sierra Leone: Child Rescue Program, Advance #14377A
 Sudan: Sudan Development, Advance #184385
 Global: Anti-Human Trafficking, Advance #333615
 Global: Sustainable Agriculture, Advance #982188
 Mexico: Give Ye Them To Eat, Advance #07629A
 Sierra Leone Water and Development Ministry, Advance #181000
 Vietnam Mission Initiative, Advance #14932A

NATIONAL

Mississippi: Choctaw United Methodist Mission, Advance #761544
 District of Columbia: Christ House, Advance #381215
 Kentucky: Red Bird Mission, Inc., Beverly, Advance #773726
 Kentucky: Henderson Settlement, Frakes, Advance #773365
 South Dakota: Tree of Life Ministry, Advance #123615
 Tennessee: Jubilee Project, Inc., Sneedville, Advance #781350
 USA: Justice for Our Neighbors Immigration Ministry, Advance #901285
 USA: Volunteers in Mission, Southeastern Jurisdiction, Advance #901875
 USA: Society of St. Andrew, Advance #801600
 USA: Response and Recovery to Natural Disaster, Advance #901670

VIRGINIA

Agape Christian Children's Community Center, Inc, #5020
 Caretakers of God's Creation, #5016
 Crossroads Mission Center – New for 2017
 Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries of Virginia, #5029
 ESL and Immigrant Ministries Childcare Support, #5036
 GRACE Ministries of The United Methodist Church, #5035
 Heart Havens, #6442
 Henry Fork Service Center, #5008
 Highland Support Project – New for 2017
 Journey Community Center – New for 2017
 Just Neighbors Ministry, Advance #803002
 Park View Community Mission, #5019
 Pathways Virginia Advance #5045
 Proclaiming Grace Outreach – New for 2017
 Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, #5043

Teens Opposing Poverty, Inc. (TOPS), #5010
 Tuesday's Table, #5024
 Una Familia – New for 2017
 United Methodist Community Outreach Program of Roanoke, #5004
 Virginia Conference Disaster Response and Recovery, #5037
 Wesley Community Center, #5025

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Relationship Agreements as presented to the Missional Connections Team of the Conference Missional Ministries Board between the Virginia Conference and Heart Havens, Inc.; United Methodist Family Services of Virginia; Pinnacle Living.; Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation; and Wesley Housing Development Corporation, be continued.

– *Verónica Barrell, CMMB Chair*

Partnership Reports

Heart Havens

Throughout 2016, Heart Havens continued its mission of empowering adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. The people we support participated in all sorts of wonderful things during the year, including Special Olympics, community theater, Venture Scouts and so much more. We are so thankful for the support we receive from our VAUMC friends; you make this empowerment possible!

We continued to operate group homes across the Conference in 2016. However, after much prayer and deliberation, we found it necessary to close the Morrison home in Newport News. The gentlemen who lived in that home had reached the point of needing more intensive medical supports than Heart Havens could provide, and needed to move to a higher level of care. Because of the changes to the Medicaid waiver program, we were unable to fill the vacancies in the home as the other gentlemen moved out.

Heart Havens was born out of listening; it was listening to the needs and desires of people with a developmental disability and their families that led to each of our group homes. We've never stopped listening to our stakeholders, and what we're learning now is that families are looking for more individualized means of support. To this end, Heart Havens is in the process of establishing programs for in-home services and supported apartments. These programs are absolutely in keeping with our mission of empowerment; Heart Havens has always been about people, not houses.

We continued to strengthen our connections with congregations and small groups throughout the Conference. We were pleased to share our message of empowerment at over 50 different churches, small groups and events. Additionally, we welcomed many volunteers from local churches. These volunteers blessed us by raking leaves, painting or simply having fellowship with the people we support. The theme for Heart Havens Month 2016 was "A Place at the Table," and was themed around Communion and celebrating the fact that all God's children have a place at the Communion table. For the first time, we provided many worship resources, and these were well received.

We were proud to honor Jim Green from the Winchester District as our 2016 Brian Manwiller "In HIS Grip" Award winner. Jim was unable to join us at Annual Conference, so we took the award to him and held a reception at our Saratoga home in Winchester in Jim's honor. Jim was a tireless advocate for Heart Havens from the very beginning and was very active with the Winchester District UMM in planning fundraisers for Heart Havens.

With your continued support, Heart Havens can continue to empower people with a developmental disability to live vibrant, happy lives with as much independence as possible. We invite you as the church to continue to advocate for Heart Havens and for people with a developmental disability. After all, we're all part of the body of Christ!

– *Jennifer Boyden, Chief Executive Officer*

Pinnacle Living

As an organization, the year since the 2017 Annual Conference has been one of great change for Pinnacle Living including: our transition to the Pinnacle Living name from Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc.; updated community brands; new statements of Mission, Vision and Values; new Strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions Steps; and, most importantly, our continued evolution in culture from institution to home.

A few of our significant accomplishments during the past year include:

- Our first successful transitions from traditional health care models to resident centered neighborhoods at our Hermitage communities. The Hermitage Richmond, our oldest community, is leading the way in this work.
- Physical renovations which will add to the transformation to a household model at the Lydia Roper Home.
- Completion of construction and opening of our first Pinnacle Living memory support and health services households at WindsorMeade Williamsburg.

- Ongoing expansion and renovations at Cedarfield.

Pinnacle Living and our communities have also worked diligently to strengthen our community partnerships. Leaders in local churches from all of our Virginia Conference districts have been engaged in conversation as to how to enhance ministries and outreach to older adults. For the second year, Pinnacle Living worked in collaboration with the Beard Center on Aging at Lynchburg College to sponsor the statewide Faithful Aging Conference. Our residents continue to benefit from the talents and gifts of volunteers who offer a variety of service from friendly visits to event coordination. Residents and team members have worked together to support activities to benefit the greater community, from opening their doors for meetings of local civic groups to providing internships and workforce training for students seeking to enter health care professions. Each community has an updated website and new Facebook presence.

Pinnacle Living is grateful for each local church that supports the Samaritan Program. This benevolent assistance has been given in Pinnacle Living communities since the year the organization was founded. During 2017, we were privileged to recognize the following *Samaritan Award Churches*, the congregations across the Virginia Annual Conference with the highest level of giving to the Samaritan Program.

- Reveille (Richmond District)
- Trinity (Richmond District)
- Beulah (Richmond District)
- Christ (Eastern Shore)
- Fairmount (Richmond District)
- Westover Hills (Richmond District)
- Community (Elizabeth River District)
- St. Luke's (York River District)
- Shady Grove – Mechanicsville (Richmond District)
- Beverley Hills (Alexandria District)
- Markham (Winchester District)
- Monumental (Elizabeth River District)

In 2017, Pinnacle Living was honored to recognize two local congregations with Innkeeper Awards. The award offers appreciation to congregations of the Annual Conference for exemplary support of the mission of Pinnacle Living with older adults. Local Community Guilds select the churches based upon both the financial stewardship and volunteer service of members of the congregation.

- Grace (Roanoke District)
- Chamberlayne Heights (Richmond District)

In September of 2018, we will recognize the 70th anniversary of the founding of Pinnacle Living. We invite all Virginia Conference United Methodists to join us on the afternoon of Sunday, September 30, between 1:00 – 4:00 PM as we celebrate our connection in mission and ministry with older adults at our Hermitage Richmond community. This journey began with the purchase of 1600 Westwood Avenue, then known as the Methodist Home for the Aged, in 1948. It continues today with Pinnacle Living's seven outstanding communities focused on our shared mission: *Enriching Life's Journey*. This Mission Statement reflects everything Pinnacle Living achieves and strives for as we continuously work to improve the services we deliver to nearly 1,300 residents.

Rev. Dr. Bernard Via, our first administrator was consistent in ascribing the existence of the organization to "faith, hard work and prayer." Thank you.

– Christopher P. Henderson, President and CEO

– Martha Stokes, Director of Church and Community Relations

United Methodist Family Services of Virginia (UMFS)

For 118 years, United Methodist Family Services has had a legacy of empowering children and families. From the Virginia Conference Orphanage of 1900, to the Virginia Methodist Children's Home of the 1950's, to the present day state-wide agency bringing hope and healing to the whole family, UMFS has partnered with churches and church members to live out our mission. Today we are unwavering champions for high-risk children and families across Virginia, collaborating with communities to help them reach their full potential by providing foster care and adoption services, residential treatment services, and schools for kids with special needs.

In 2017 we served 3,368 high-risk children across the state through regional centers in Richmond, Northern Virginia,

Tidewater, Fredericksburg, South Hill, Farmville and Lynchburg; residential treatment centers in Richmond and Centreville; and schools in Richmond and Edinburg. While many of our programs are focused on children, we strive to support the entire family, helping us touch the lives of 16,034 high-risk children and families in 177 communities in Virginia. We are dedicated to creating a world where caring, opportunity and generosity are passed on from generation to generation, empowering all children to contribute to society as engaged citizens.

Since 1900, the churches of the Virginia Conference have partnered with us as advocates for high-risk children and families. Our most recent initiative in collaboration with local churches is a partnership with The Open Table. The Open Table is a national movement to transform poverty through community by bringing to ether local church volunteers that make a year-long commitment to act - through relationship - as a team of life specialists, encouragers, and advocates. The Table works together with an individual or family in poverty to set goals, foster accountability, and implement a plan to create change. Plans are underway to extend this partnership with The Open Table beyond Richmond in the coming year.

Churches across the state partner with us by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families, serving as mentors and tutors, providing transportation for children and families, providing much-needed financial support, and donating countless gifts-in-kind. Our church partners, Child Champion Councils and the UMFS Auxiliary are a critical resource to the children and families we serve. They are tireless advocates for our ministry throughout the Conference. Our relationship with the United Methodist Church is vital for us to achieve our mission.

A 10-year master plan to replace buildings constructed in the 1950's will transform the Richmond campus on Broad Street to serve more children and families, and address the changing needs of the children and families in our communities.

We are grateful for the support of the Virginia Conference and for your partnership with us as unwavering champions for high-risk children and families. It is because of your support that we are able to help children and families reach their full potential.

– Ken Huntsman, Chair, UMFS Board of Directors

– Greg Peters, President and CEO

Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation

The Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation is a covenant partner with the Virginia Annual Conference with the mission to offer affordable housing to the disabled, moderate income and senior population. The goal of VUMHDC is to build or purchase at least one new facility a year.

The Housing Corporation is the full owner of 18 projects and a partial owner of another 17 affordable housing efforts. In total, VUMHDC has over 2,400 apartment units across the conference with an approximate land value of \$80,000,000. This achievement was reached without receiving a dime from the annual conference for construction, maintenance, or ongoing support. VUMHDC is funded entirely through HUD grants, tax credits, community partnerships, and revitalization money. Annual financial records are filed with the Conference Treasurer's office.

We wish to honor one of our founding board members, the Honorable Willard Douglas. After his 42 years of active participation, Judge Douglas retired from the board this year. Judge Douglas served the board of directors in many capacities, as an officer, legal advisor, consultant and a consistent, faithful presence. His thoughtful insights and wise wisdom made it a privilege to serve with him. The board wishes to express our thanks to Judge Douglas for his many years of leadership and direction.

The Housing Development Corporation continues under the able leadership of Lawrence B. ("Larry") Dickenson, a lay member of Greene Memorial UMC in Roanoke. This year the board has been moving with gusto as VUMHDC enters into this new phase of service. We have seen a very productive 43rd year of service. We are also unclear what effects changes in the leadership in Washington, D.C. will bring to our relationship with federal funding sources. Though Larry's leadership, we are bringing in qualified consultants to help us prepare for upcoming changes in the tax code and federal regulations, and funding streams for building new projects.

In this conference year, we upgraded an existing facility, made plans for expansion of another project, refinanced two projects to lower interest rates, continued in a partnership with the James River District facility in construction of an affordable housing project which will hold a new church start and shepherd existing projects following the mission of VUMHDC and in our relationship with the Virginia Annual Conference.

– James G. O'Quinn, Vice President

Wesley Housing Development Corporation

Wesley Housing's mission is to preserve, develop, own and operate affordable housing and sustain quality communities for low- and moderate-income families and individuals who might otherwise face homelessness. Since 1974, for over four decades, we have served over 25,000 residents in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. We currently manage 21 properties (more than 2,450 residents) in Alexandria, Arlington, Manassas, Fairfax County and the District of Columbia. We also manage four Community Resource Centers (CRCs) and five special needs Resident Services Centers that offer a full range of crucially needed programs and services to support children, adults, seniors, those with chronic disease as well as those with disabilities to regain their dignity and renew their lives.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Wexford Manor Apartments (Falls Church/Fairfax County): Critically needed renovations were made to this 74-unit community with Phase I interior renovations completed in January and Phase II in October. The exterior work finished completed in Fall of 2017, including the expansion of the on-site Community Resource Center (CRC) and tech lab.
- The Fallstead at Lewinsville Center, formerly Lewinsville Senior Residences (McLean): Wesley Housing is constructing 83 new units of affordable, independent housing for low-income seniors, replacing outdated units. Demolition is complete, and construction has begun. The new property is scheduled to be completed in July 2018.
- Culpepper Garden (Arlington): Wesley Housing was selected to lead the preservation and renovation of the 204 affordable unit senior community. The project includes upgrades to the community space, apartments, and extensive grounds. We will close the financing to acquire the property in April 2018 and start the renovation shortly thereafter.
- Brookland Place Apartments (Washington, D.C.): Wesley Housing acquired the 80-unit property last year and will close on the financing to being renovation in March 2018.
- American Red Cross Building/Trenton Street House (Arlington): Wesley Housing has accumulated land that will be developed into a mixed-income, mixed-tenure community featuring 19 market-rate townhomes and 115 affordable rental apartments. Construction of the project is pending the approval of AHIF funding.
- The Arden (Huntington/Fairfax County): The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) to make loans totaling \$7.4 million to Wesley Housing for the construction of two buildings consisting of a total of 126 units of affordable housing to be known collectively as “The Arden” in the Mount Vernon District.
- Fairlington (Alexandria): Fairlington Presbyterian Church approved the sale of an excess parking lot to Wesley Housing for the development of 75-81 new affordable, high-quality units. We are currently in the beginning stages of planning with the City of Alexandria and community and securing financing.

RESIDENT SERVICES & VOLUNTEERS

- Housing Stability Initiative: Every month, adults take advantage of housing stability and eviction prevention programs such as crisis intervention, referrals to community resources, financial literacy, household budgeting, resume building and job search assistance, computer training, and certification courses. For the calendar year ending December 31, 2017, residents accessed our services more than 28,750 times, 2,450 residents accessed housing stability, 230 evictions were prevented, and 41 residents received new or better employment.
- Volunteers: Throughout 2017, we have had 180 volunteers help with food security initiatives, after school programs, adult education including ESOL, health and fitness, school supplies and summer camp.

– Shelley S. Murphy, President/CEO

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES

Greetings from your campus ministries. Throughout this report you’re invited to enjoy the glory sightings of mission and transformation taking place in our campus ministries. But first, I want to thank you and your congregations for your faithful support of the evangelism, care, mission and discipleship happening all the time on our campuses across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our process for ministry is very simply the three “E’s.” We invite students to **EXPLORE** through events like Virginia Tech’s Life-Sized Game Night where students actually become the game pieces on the board. Next comes **ENGAGE**. After beginning the process of building relationships, our students are invited to engage through worship, Bible study and small groups. Finally, we **EMBODY**. To embody Christ to the world takes as many forms as there are followers, but some examples are the various ways our campus ministries facilitate students helping other students who wrestle with food insecurity like at Rise’s Free Food Club as well as mission trips during Spring Break or hosting and staffing retreats for youth groups from local congregations.

Each year Virginia sends students to seminary out of our campus ministries. Each year we welcome back graduates committing themselves to God’s work on the earth. We celebrate returning a host of faithful Christ followers, lay and clergy alike, to our local churches and into God’s wide mission field. Brothers and sisters, these are the fruits of your faithfulness to God and of the Holy Spirit moving in and through our campuses.

Please join me in praying that God will continue to do the hard and holy work of campus ministry. Please join me in praying for our staff and students. And if you have a campus ministry nearby, pick up the phone or send an email. Ask how you can be part of the tremendous work God is doing in Higher Education across the Virginia Conference.

– Rob Lough, Chair

Longwood & Hampden-Sydney Wesley Foundation

The Wesley Foundation is a full-time campus ministry program, active in many ministry settings. Our weekly Tuesday Night Dinner and Worship is a very popular ministry and has grown considerably this year. Students are invited to enjoy a home-cooked meal prepared by local churches and may stay for the Worship that follows. The worship time is designed to be contemporary and interactive. There is time in our Tuesday night schedule for small group discussion and prayer. Here are some of the feelings of students that attend the Wesley Campus Ministry. Just this year a second year approach the campus ministry after our weekly worship. It was her first visit to our ministry. Kayla said, “this was the community she had looking for.” She was excited to make this a regular part of time a Longwood. Also this semester we had a student approach the campus minister that been attending our minister for her three years at Longwood. Madi, told the campus minister that “something has changed and her faith was now alive and real to her.” These are just a few of the encounter that seem to take place on a regular bases. We also have weekly student-led Bible studies and men’s and women’s small groups that meet on campus. On Hampden-Sydney’s campus we have a late-night men’s bible study led by the campus minister. Praise and worship are important parts of our community and come in a variety of forms and settings. There are many opportunities for service and mission work (Habitat for Humanity, annual mission trips, Faces Food bank, and other local outreach). Our Student Center is a comfortable, air-condition setting where one may pray & study, laugh & love, play & grow. The Wesley Foundation is a place for “good clean fun,” individual pastoral care, conversation and spiritual direction. Our students often provide “people resources” for local churches with their service, musical talents, and even their fellowship. They also assist with local District and Conference youth events as well as participate in worship in area churches when invited. All this is made possible by generous District support, a strong Local Board of Directors, a core of Student leaders and a vital partnership with the Campus Ministry Team at Farmville UMC.

The Wesley Foundation Student Center is a busy place! Along with regular Wesley events, various campus, church and community groups use our facilities for their meeting needs. For the last several years the Wesley Foundation student center has been the location of the AA/NA Christmas and New Year Marathon. Members of the AA/NA community gather over a 24-hour period on Christmas and New Year for mutual support and encouragement. We house the District Office, a Prayer Chapel, a game room, a great living room with big screen TV/DVD, and a large kitchen with plenty of coffee and other light refreshments. This year we have taken advantage of the several resources of Longwood University. The Longwood Design Lab has worked on the design of a new logo for our campus ministry. We have also been working with the Longwood Small Business Center to use our logo in the branding of our ministry to provide a consistent image across the board. Within the office, we have hired a part-time office assistant to help with financial accounts, data entry, social media and connections with students, and coordination of events. We also have a new venture with an internship through the Business Department. The internship will be focused mainly on property management. It will involve after-hours availability for residents, developing work orders for apartment maintenance, overview and work on the current leases, maintenance of a building use calendar, maintenance schedule for the facilities, and over-all knowledge of the property and its function. It is a great opportunity to build another bridge between Wesley and the local college campus.

All of these things exemplify the reasons students come each week excited about sharing the love of God and learning together. They are not only welcomed into our building, which certainly is “a place to belong,” but they are ready and capable of going out and spreading God’s love to those on campus and in the community around them.

We are opening a student food pantry this year. It will meet the needs of the growing population of food insecure college students. We also finish our 30,000 meals with Rise Against Hunger. Wesley Campus ministry is “a place to belong” where students can “Live authentically, Grow spiritually, and Love fully.

Tidewater Wesley Foundation – IGNITE

Over the course of the last year, it feels like the moment finally arrived. In the last year, we have watched as God has used IGNITE to reach more people than ever before. Our food pantry, IGNITE Pantry, has distributed over 3,000 meals in the last 12 months. Over 400 unique students have participated in our various volunteer opportunities. And we have officially become ODU’s largest campus ministry, reaching more students than any other student organization at a school with over 25,000 students and 350 student organization. But these are all just numbers. Even more amazing has been the ways in which lives have been transformed, struggles overcome, and life courses redirected. Students struggling with anxiety and depression have found comfort and community. Individuals whose lives were consumed by alcohol have found a new purpose and direction. And those who did not know the gospel have become disciples of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, though, the best way to communicate such stories is to share one from a person who lived it:

I was feeling like I was failing at school and like I was being abandoned by my friends when I found IGNITE. Through my internship, and later my job, I found ways to connect with God when I hadn’t ever had him in my life before. In my year working for IGNITE, I have been able to find friends that care about my wellbeing and have been able to develop meaningful relationships with them. I feel like I have improved as a person overall and I can see that in the way that I speak to others and treat myself. I started going to worship and bible study as work, but I soon found a community of people that genuinely wanted to be there and support each other. I have found peace in going to worship and I have learned to turn to God with my struggles and pain through bible study.

IGNITE has helped change my life in these ways, but I think the most important thing that it has done for me is to help me realize my own self-worth. I have struggled with feeling inadequate for as long as I can remember, but I feel encouraged every

day that I come into work. My grades have gone up significantly, I've found better ways to deal with my problems, I've found ways to grow in my relationship with God, I am able to truly love who I am, and I credit that to IGNITE. (McKayla Winder, class of 2018)!"Working at IGNITE has changed my life in ways I never expected. When I first started working here, I was afraid to share many aspects of my personal life at work. However, one day, in the midst of extreme anxiety and depression, a co-worker at IGNITE asked me how I was doing. The simple fact that they cared enough to ask, especially when I was in such a dark place, compelled me to share. What I appreciated so much was that, instead of giving me advice on how to fix it, the person asked "what do you need from me to help you feel better?" This has always been a very difficult question to answer because I never truly knew what I needed. Over these past months, though, I have realized what I needed was a group of individuals that wanted to be there for me. I felt the love of being part of family that reminds me of home. IGNITE is a place where I can be around people my age who help me understand that the pain is temporary, as well as how vital is to have a relationship with God. (Karen Flores, class of 2018)

The University of Virginia Wesley Foundation

Last year, I told you our theme for the year could be expressed as Love Your Neighbor. This year, we decided to greet new students in August with treat bags and info on Wesley, as we usually do, and we added in some new Wesley stickers, including one with our website and #LoveYourNeighbor printed on it. When we made those plans and ordered our stickers, we had no idea that white supremacists and Nazis would be meeting in the streets of Charlottesville to terrorize and intimidate us a mere two weeks before classes began in August. It was an ominous start to the academic year and this next year of loving our neighbors.

As it turns out, we had been working for more than two years to bring culinary anthropologist Michael Twitty to Charlottesville and the University grounds in March 2018 for a series of encounters and conversations called "An Open Table: Culinary Historian Michael Twitty on Southern Food and Race." Twitty is an African American, gay, Jewish convert who uses food to focus on exploring and expanding the narrative (historical, cultural, religious) and reconciling, around the table. As Twitty writes in his book *The Cooking Gene*: "I dare to believe all Southerners are a family. We are not merely Native, European and African. We are Middle Eastern and South Asian and East Asian and Latin American, now. We are a dysfunctional family, but we are a family. We are unwitting inheritors of a story with many sins that bears the fruit of the possibility of tens times the redemption. One way is with reconnection with the culinary culture of the enslaved, our common ancestors, and restoring their names on the roots of the Southern tree and the table those roots support." As Charlottesville attempts to heal and as UVA attempts to take fuller stock of its past use of slave labor and the uncomfortable contrasts between founder Thomas Jefferson's beautiful ideals and his lived relationships, our invitation to Twitty seemed to fall in exactly the right time.

Part of that rightness is reflected in the grace of his invitation to see one another as family. These are the community and university co-sponsors we partnered with to host Twitty:

- Black College Women at UVA
- Black Student Alliance at UVA
- LGBTQ Student Services at UVA
- Minority Rights Coalition at UVA
- Queer Student Union at UVA
- St. Paul's Memorial Church/Koinonia
- The Brody Jewish Center – Hillel at UVA
- The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies
- The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at UVA
- The JUEL Project (Jefferson's University—Early Life Project, 1819-1870)
- The Virginia Festival of the Book
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- UKirk Presbyterian Campus Ministry
- University Arboretum and Landscape Committee
- UVA Department of Religious Studies
- UVA Department of American Studies
- UVA Office of African-American Affairs Luther P. Jackson Black Cultural Center
- UVA Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity
- Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church
- Westminster Presbyterian Church

Part of what we want to say – with the event and with our partnerships to support it – is that these groups and people belong together. These are our neighbors. If the list causes you (or students here) to do a double-take, we've accomplished part of our goal. We want to say this – we belong to one another – not just with this timely event but with our whole ministry. We choose love over fear. We choose the Way of Jesus, especially when we are scared and when our neighbors are harassed and intimidated.

With your help and God's, we will keep making this choice and making disciples in the process. Especially at a place like UVA – and especially in this year – we recognize how much of the past is not past, how the Church must be vocal and engaged in the broader community, and how our lives must reflect (not avoid) the struggle.

It's been an extraordinary year so I haven't talked here about the ordinary weekly routines of campus ministry, but "like" us on Facebook to see what else we are up to throughout the year. We love sharing how God is moving in the lives of students and – through them – in the life of this university. Thank you for sending us to be in mission and ministry, to be disciples who feast at an open Table and offer to share the meal with our neighbors.

Virginia Commonwealth University Wesley Foundation – The Pace Center

This past year, as The Pace Center works to relaunch its ministry at Virginia Commonwealth University, we decided to focus our attention on listening to where God is already at work on campus. We didn't even get to the first day of school before we saw God's Glory at work in vibrant and exciting ways. On Move-In Day, we spoke with over 150 students about their dreams and perceived challenges for the upcoming school year. This experience, along with other interactions on campus, led Pace to develop a Food Collaboration Ministry comprised of students and campus leaders interested in increasing access to more diverse and healthy food on campus. After months of discernment, The Pace Center, RamPantry (the campus food pantry), and a group of seven student organizations representing West Africa, Bangladesh, Sudan, Japan, Guatemala, Alpha Fraternity, and the Student Government Association joined together to host a Multi-Cultural Thanksgiving. While over 60 attendees ate food from around the world, cooked by the students themselves, people stood up and shared what makes their culture unique and beautiful. Forty-five percent of students at VCU experience food insecurity. God's Glory was on full display as students worked to address the issue – not with an attitude of scarcity – but instead with an attitude of abundance and celebration. The Multi-Cultural Thanksgiving allowed students to celebrate who they were, where they came from, and not focus on what they didn't have. Thanks to the generous support of individuals, churches and the Board of Higher Education, Pace was able to provide a welcoming space, funds for food, and a spirit of openness and partnership.

Virginia State University Wesley Foundation – FLOW

Our Glory Sighting for the 2017-2018 year took place on January 15, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The FLOW Wesley Foundation partnered with the Ettrick United Methodist Church to continue volunteer work renovating the basement of the church. We were blessed to have 18 students present to volunteer on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, along with members and friends of the church, to remove: two large refrigerators, two range units, ceiling debris from water damage, other refuse and paint from the floor. Participants gathered for a fellowship breakfast in the upper level of the church before giving two hours of dedication to the cause!

This project was the latest in a series of volunteer efforts offered by Virginia State (VSU) students over the past two and a half years. The partnership that exists amongst the church and the university has been a blessing in the restoration of space and has even secured the pro bono support of the GCA Services Group, the company contracted to maintain the building and grounds at Virginia State. The result of this connection has saved the Ettrick United Methodist Church and the James River District more than \$62,000, which was the amount of an estimate given to the church by a waterproofing company to complete the job. As of the date of this outreach initiative, we have nearly completed all phases of the total project and look forward to closing out this project within the next 12 months!

There were a number of special components of this project that added to the glory witnessed! The team captain for the day was Mr. James Barber, a Virginia State University graduate student and member of Ettrick UMC! The First Lady of Virginia State University, Dr. Ahkinyala Cobb-Addullah and her son, Mikaili were amongst the volunteers. Also in attendance was Mr. Charles Epps, owner of the local business Appomattox Drugs, affectionately known in the community as "the Mayor" of Ettrick. Pastor Bob Lamb, the pastor of Ettrick UMC, was also on hand to volunteer with the students and shared a powerful testimony about the progress that he has witnessed in America during his 80 years of life in the area of civil rights. He rejoiced in the multi-ethnic and intergenerational gathering and gave glory to God for all of us being able to work so harmoniously together to benefit the Kingdom of God!

Virginia Tech Wesley Foundation

This past year Wesley finished a long five to ten-year visioning process for the ministry of Wesley. Fundamentally we believe that what we have here at Wesley needs to be experienced by more of our campus. Our vision is one that will continue to be fluid and dynamic in order to be flexible to the needs of the community around us. However, as we move forward as a ministry we want to focus on these five main areas: **Spiritual Growth, Inclusivity, Outreach (Evangelism), Mission (Service), and Leadership Development.**

We understand that the top priority for the values of our ministry are Love, Grace, and Spiritual Growth, which will always guide and be reflected in our vision. We identified many attainable goals and strategies that will enable us to carry out our vision for Wesley. With that being said, Wesley continues to be a vital, authentic, and vibrant presence on the Virginia Tech campus. Our students live out their faith in such meaningful ways and are leaders throughout campus as well. Being student-led, it is always refreshing to see how dedicated they are to being followers of Jesus while living that out through leading our ministry in worship, fellowship, discipleship, missions and outreach.

Living into our new vision, students have already tripled our number of Communities of Grace, keeping a higher attendance in worship, and provide more opportunities for prayer and study. Two hundred and nine Manna Ministries (our food pantry for college

students) is open three days a week and we see about 10 students each day. We continue to tutor Middle School and High School students at Blacksburg UMC's Fun143 program at a local trailer park.

But one thing that has been such a glory sighting for us are the youth retreats we lead each year. Once again, we led the Roanoke District Youth Retreat held at Wesley for over 115 youth and the Fusion Youth Retreat Lynchburg, Danville and Farmville Districts) for over 175 youth held at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center. These retreats provide opportunities for our students to lead youth in worship, fellowship, and discipleship, while teaching youth about the benefits of campus ministry once they are in college. At each retreat this year we had youth come up to our students who gave testimonies in worship and tell them how much the students changed their lives knowing that they aren't alone in what they are feeling and struggling with and realizing God's transformative work in their lives. At the end of our retreats we took \$1000 (in ones and fives) that we received for the retreats and dumped it on the floor asking the youth to come get the money and go do God's justice in the world. The overwhelming response by the youth was, "why do you trust us with this?" Our response, "because you are trustworthy and we know that you will transform lives in the name of Jesus Christ." We have already heard many stories from youth leaders and youth of how they are going to use the money to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

William and Mary Wesley Foundation

This year has been another amazing year of mission and ministry at Wesley. The numbers of students, their passionate commitment to following Jesus, as well as our mission and ministry, are all strong. Our campus ministry community continues to lead the way, as our vision statement says, "Through following Jesus, we embrace God's radical hospitality towards all." As students have expressed it, "Wesley is a place where everyone is accepted, and everyone is celebrated." "The people at Wesley welcomed me in an honest and genuine way that I hadn't felt before, even in other religious settings."

Our new Leadership Team is Sarah Grace Frary, President; Lucia Butler, Devotions; Hannah Cooper, Communications; and Ailish Bova, Fellowship. This group of dedicated, passionate students leads the way in the focus and direction to our entire ministry. This spring semester, our theme is "Community and Calling," as we focus on who we are created to be, and how we partner together with God and one another to create a community that empowers us to live out our calling, individually and together. Our Bible Study, as well as our Faith and Fellowship events, has the same themes.

Students are coordinating our partnerships with local churches in mission and ministry, as our connections with Williamsburg UMC and Wellspring continue to be strong. Nothing exemplifies this better than the exam break that we have at the end of each semester, led by the Williamsburg UMC United Methodist Men. We have over 250 students coming to the Wesley House to share in over 450 cookies, hot chocolate, water, coffee, and lemonade. In addition, we have folks from the community bring eight to ten dogs to help relieve the stress of finals. We are continuing our partnership with Williamsburg UMC in their respite and homeless shelter ministries, as well as their community kitchen.

Wesley has also begun a new initiative this year. We are partnering with Williamsburg UMC, the William and Mary Office of Community Engagement, churches, and nonprofits to provide meals to local students during the summer who no longer benefit from the breakfast and lunch provided by the local schools during the school year.

Our partnerships with other campus ministries and student groups in events, service, mission, and ministry continue to grow. Already this year, Wesley has partnered with the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist and Episcopal campus ministries, as well as the Muslim Student Association. Furthermore, Wesley continues meet the very real needs of students in crisis on campus with regards to housing, food, counseling, and more. Wesley continues each semester to coordinate a service day at Shalom Farms, and this year we are volunteering at Occohannock on the Bay for a weekend of service as well.

It continues to be a joy and a privilege to serve with the students and board of The Wesley Foundation, as the students actively follow Jesus and embody God's radical hospitality for persons on campus, locally, regionally and beyond.

RISE-Harrisonburg

My name is Sarandon Smith, and I am the Director of College Outreach at RISE UMC Faith Community. I came to RISE when I moved to Harrisonburg in the fall of 2016, as a Junior transfer student to Bridgewater College. At RISE, I found a church atmosphere I had never experienced before. I discovered a community that is incredibly warm, welcoming, bold, authentic, unapologetically inclusive, joyful and engaged with their community. The true vulnerability I found at RISE kept me coming back, and I ultimately stepped into a leadership role in March of 2017. Over the past year or so, my efforts as Director of College Outreach have been focused on growth through relationship building with local college students.

We began hosting monthly dinner we call "Free Food Club" and have consistently seen new faces and growing numbers. On a regular basis, we also have gathered small to medium sized groups of students for events like taco nights, birthday celebrations, pumpkin parties, "friendsgiving" and more. We've gone hiking, have consumed countless cups of coffee and have shared the joys and sorrows of life. The *quality* of the relationships that have been formed through this and other groups has been remarkable. A true measure of success was when RISE students started connecting with each other outside of facilitated events, and forming their own relationships with each other. In short, we have grown in numbers, but most importantly, we've witnessed significant growth in the number of transformational relationships formed throughout the past year.

On a larger scale, RISE has had a presence in the Harrisonburg college community though events like the JMU Block Party, our

Mac and Cheese Off, and our annual Rise Against Hunger event on JMU's campus in March, where we hope to attract over 300 students to pack 20,00 meals. The Mac and Cheese Off is an epic, community-wide mac and cheese cook off competition meant to benefit RISE's ministries, and it was awesome to see 300 college students come and participate in the fun! The event definitely enabled us to connect with new students in a positive, joyful way.

Our RISE Band continues to attract quite a few new students, and it has grown to the point where it has needed to split into two "sub-bands." Not only are they remarkable musicians, this band has become a source of remarkable support for its members. We celebrate the fact that RISE students continue to attend worship regularly, and we see new faces almost every week. Students serve as worship leaders on an ongoing basis.

Finally, we must mention our beautiful newly-renovated mission center at 60 West Market Street. After seven years of living as nomads, we finally have a "home base," and this newfound stability is enabling us to start dreaming and asking, "What's next for RISE?" We have formed a Strategic Thinking Team that will meet for the next few months and develop a strategic growth plan for RISE as it begins its next chapter. Obviously, new and exciting ideas for College Ministry will be a part of this overarching conversation. We are extremely grateful for the support of the Virginia Annual Conference, which made our dream of a beautiful new space a reality. You are a gift, Virginia Annual Conference!

Over the past year I have found incredible enjoyment with my work with RISE. Being part of such a vibrant community of students and non-students alike has compelled me to work further to mend God's creation together. I look forward to watching and participating in the future of RISE College Ministry!

Christopher Newport University – United Campus Ministries

This past year of 2017 has been one of growth for UCM. We have seen two new student leaders arise and both have taken on starting small groups. On a weekly basis now UCM generally reaches 10+ just through new small groups. We are especially proud of our new women's group that is student run and growing rapidly. UCM's focus for this past year has been outreach which is a part of the larger goal of reaching more students to impact their lives for Christ, whether it be by small group, or service. Our most fruitful way of reaching students has been our Coffee & Cocoa weekly event. This event happens every Tuesday and Wednesday in the middle of CNU's campus where we give out freshly made coffee and hot chocolate to students for free. It is our way of building into the community and we have seen the Lord's hand over it thus far with one student coming to the Lord through it and many more exploring faith with us.

Something we are very proud of has been the fruit that the Lord has blessed us with. We are seeing not just more student involvement but a diversity in our students which is starting to reflect more of our campus as a whole. Along with this we have seen firsthand the growth in our students from head knowledge of who Jesus is to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in them. UCM students have more than once gone onto their campus and openly prayed for their friends and classmates. We have seen miraculous things happen because of confidence and trust in the Lord. Students have been healed both physically and spiritually, others have become stronger and more outgoing in their faith. There is a true sense of community among our students in which you can clearly see the Spirit moving, it is powerful.

Service is something all Christians are called to and our students love to serve so we have been finding ways for them to help serve their local community. We have students participating in a shoe drive to help a local non-profit. We also have them coming out to large events like our Potato drop that will feed our local population in need. Overall we are just blessed by the Lord with what fruit he has given us, with students coming to know the Lord for the first time to others growing exponentially in their faith, we are seeing great movement from the Lord on the campus of Christopher Newport.

Community College Ministries of Southwest Virginia

Community College Ministries is your campus ministry with community colleges in southwestern and central Virginia where over 50,000 students deal with faith, family, classes and careers every single day! Colleges in the Virginia Conference include Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, Dabney Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge, Central Virginia Community College in Lynchburg, Danville Community College in Danville, New River Community College in Dublin, and Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville. Denominational partners are the Presbyterian Church USA and the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. Community College Ministries sponsors Alliance for Excellence involving hundreds of students in a partnership of community colleges with African American congregations! Launched with support from the GBGM EMLC and the United Methodist Self-Development Fund in 1986, Alliance for Excellence (www.allianceforexcellence.org) sponsors fellowships, seminars, opportunities for students to participate in gospel choirs, and scholarships. Patrick Henry Community College has sponsored a virtual mission program in which students provide tutoring overseas via the Internet. For the ninth annual gathering in 2018, Community College Ministries (www.facebook.com/communitycollegeministries) will sponsor the "Rally in the Valley" bringing community college students of faith together from across the entire Commonwealth! The rally is organized in cooperation with the Blue Ridge Christian Fellowship under the leadership of Jim Wright and is held each year in April. CCM launched a global service program in 1989 called Peacework (www.peacework.org) where student groups serve overseas in poverty housing, education, gardens, health, and other community partnerships. 2018 brings a new challenge and opportunity, a joint effort with United Methodist Family Services and the Open Table (<http://umfstheopentableconference.org>) to provide

a growing support network among community college students who come out of foster care and face sometimes overwhelming challenges in this transition. We urge you to join that network in many communities in Virginia. Your campus minister is the Rev. Steve Darr (steve@peacework.org). The office is at 620 N. Main St., Blacksburg, VA 24060 and the phone is (540) 230-8581. Sandy Saunders of Danville Community College is board president. Alliance staff members are Jean Wilson in Martinsville, Cheryl Hilton in Roanoke, and Jamesia Harrison in Lynchburg. We welcome your involvement in this exciting ministry with community colleges!

George Mason University – Arise Campus Ministry

This past year Arise (United Campus Ministry of Northern Virginia) has experienced several glory sightings. Several students have felt called to stand up in worship and share transformational stories about God's love. We celebrate the United Methodist churches and other ecumenical congregations who have supported Arise through their financial resources and prayers in 2017. We also celebrate the close to 200 people who joined Arise and St. Matthews UMC for our Rise Against Hunger event during the university's Homelessness and Hunger Action Week. We also celebrated the work of our vision team and board members as they named the values for our ministry and helped rebrand our ministry. We also celebrate all the new students we have seen come and be a part of our Life-groups; it truly has been amazing.

One such story about one of our new students really has motivated our leadership team and myself. I did ask for her permission to share her story. I saw a flyer on campus for a new Bible Study trying to form. I reached out to the student to see who they were and learn more about the Bible Study. We agreed to meet for coffee and chat more. Upon meeting we began to discuss her story. She was a student who started a Bible Study because she didn't feel like there was any group on campus that would allow her to be authentic. After we were talking for a while, the student asked about our community. I took the opportunity to tell her about Arise. The fact that we believe in Jesus and thus welcome all, share God's universal love and want to live out our faith on campus and in the community. I shared that we value authenticity and that she can be who she is while exploring her faith. Through this conversation, and I am sure my stumbling over myself, the Holy Spirit spoke to both of us. The student became choked up and said she had been looking for a faith community like us since she arrived at George Mason. This was clearly a God moment. I felt emotional and knew that the Holy Spirit had invited us into this conversation. I believe she was called to become a part of our community, and the Spirit encouraged me by her story and the ways God was already calling her as a future leader to disciple others. It was an amazing moment where God reminded me that God was in charge of this ministry and would provide leaders for the vision the community discerned. It was a reminder of how much I owe our past students, ministry directors, board members and partners who had the same dream and reminded me how blessed I am to build on their foundation of faithful witness. I look forward to the ways God will continue to lead others into our community and the ways we respond to God's grace and the Holy Spirit's leading.

Norfolk State University – Wesley-Westminster Foundation

The Wesley-Westminster Foundation (WWF) at Norfolk State University (NSU) continues to be the largest and most active campus ministry at NSU. WWF Campus Ministry is an ecumenical ministry of the United Methodist and Presbyterian Churches seeking to impact the College, the Community, and the Current Culture with Christian Principles, Open Hearts and Open Minds. It is our mission to provide a safe place to explore and to experience one's faith, while offering a respectful and non-threatening environment of love, service to others and learning.

This year the students of WWF have participated in every school sponsored event for organizations including Homecoming, Spirit Fest, Open House, Faith Fairs, a Walk for Women, Freshman Convocation, the Community Breakfast, Bae Day and various other events too numerous to mention. As Director, I was asked to offer prayer at the 100th Commencement, Invocation at the Alumni Annual Recognition Dinner as well as offer grace for the Community Breakfast where Bakari Sellars was our guest speaker. In addition, I was invited to participate and chair the speaker's bureau for the Faith Partners Network and was a sponsored player in this year's Charity Basketball Game for Clergy. As Director of WWF, I was requested to offer the prayer and closing for Freshman Convocation and to host worship for NSU's Labor Day Classic Weekend. Yearly, the school invites WWF to host the Annual Family Weekend Worship service and this year was no different. We provided the music, a guest preacher, welcomed the parents and introduced Campus Ministry to persons who joined us for worship. Worship is always concluded with a family Brunch on campus.

Our on-campus advisor, Ms. Wanda Boone has been a tremendous help in assuring that our planned activities are approved and hosted on campus. We have hosted several Open Mic Nights, Worship Services and a Black History Evening of Excellence. Our Annual Fundraiser was a success. We presented a Benefit Concert at Shiloh Baptist Church located directly across from the campus. Because of the grant from the Elizabeth River District Missions we were able to replace our upstairs windows at our Campus House. In addition, we had our house exterior painted and continued further renovations and repairs.

We have been busy offering various ministry opportunities for both students and those in the community. Missionaries from India spent seven days with us sharing with the students as well as sharing in different congregational contexts. An International Peacemaker from the Philippines was our guest and spoke to us about the many hardships experienced in his country. As always our Back to School Cookout was a huge success. Additionally, #Lunchbag where we fix bag lunches and distribute them in several locations where people hang out in the community was equally successful. Our Bible Studies, Small Groups, Choir and Game Nights are just a few other ways we seek to provide ministry opportunities. We continue to offer food, fellowship and friendship to

our students. Many involved in campus ministry are strong academically but continue to struggle financially. It is our prayer that in the future we may be able to offer scholarships and or employment opportunities to some of our students to help alleviate the great strain of their financial burden to attend college.

University of Mary Washington – Campus Christian Community

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve with the Campus Christian Community this year and see all of the ways that God has been working in the students of Mary Washington. One place where I have seen this occur is in the student leadership team. They have come together and started to trust in their own leadership abilities taking on new tasks and developing new programs. Mental health has been a big struggle for students, in our ministry and for students across our university and others. Recognizing this and wanting to be better equipped to handle this struggle for themselves and their friends, our leadership team organized a wellness week. They found instructors for yoga/meditation, time for prayer, time to play with dogs, and brought in a mental health professional for our main program to discuss self-care and how suicide prevention. Throughout this larger moment of glory, there were many smaller moments. Advertising for time to play with the dogs we had partnered with the SPCA to bring to campus, one student who had never been involved with anything with our ministry before came running into the building. Through conversation with her, she shared some of her struggles and having a place offer something like this was exactly what she needed in the exact moment she needed it. During our larger program, the speaker encouraged students to participate in an interactive way. Students began to share different ways that they had struggled and others offered some things that they have found to be helpful. It was a beautiful moment of shared struggle and a moment of hope. The conversation then turned to how having a community like the CCC where struggles can be shared, hope gained, and prayers offered together was an important part of their self-care as well. The students shared how they needed to live into the idea that they are wonderfully made creations of God and truly see themselves as God's children. The week went so well that the students now want to repeat some of the activities during the stressful time of finals at the end of this semester.

BOARD OF LAITY

The Board of Laity continues in 2018 to create a culture of call by engaging, equipping and empowering laity to effectively partner with each other and our clergy to live out God's call upon our lives.

A team of the board for Engaging (Holistic Stewardship) continues to develop a culture of call for all laity focusing on prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness identifying networking and learning opportunities for District Lay Leaders and Local Church Lay Leaders, establishing and giving oversight to various means of communication between members of the Board of Laity (i.e. e-mail groups, articles for the *Advocate* and other print communications, website) and developing and offering communications alternatives for meetings of teams.

Equipping (Leadership Excellence): This team is responsible for developing and offering training to new District Lay Leaders overseeing Lay Servant/Speaking Ministries, developing resources for District and Local Church Lay Leaders and resourcing Local Church Leadership Development and Nominations Committees.

It is also responsible for empowering advocates for the laity and promoting Laity Sunday, encouraging the presence of the District Lay Leaders, Associate District Lay Leaders, or other laity involved in District ministries at all local church Charge Conferences and the assessment of needs of District and Local Church Lay Leaders in order to better support their service.

Lay Servant Ministries, led by David Bailey have had a year of fruitful ministry. New On Demand studies continue and are fruitful for hundreds of lay servants. We continue to expand our ministry with Certified Lay Ministers through the certification process as directed.

The Lay Servant Academy led by Beth Christian and her dedicated team created a weekend of learning and fellowship at 4H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. Unfortunately an untimely winter storm knocked out power at the facility and the event was canceled for March 2018. We are struggling to reschedule in August 2018. This event will be advertised as we solidify arrangements.

We have celebrated the leadership of four District Lay Leaders whose terms have ended on the Board. Bob Forrest, Rodney Bussard, Debbie Dietrich and Brenda Brooks have greatly enhanced their respective district ministries. We thank them all. There are servants among us always. We are saying a formal goodbye to David Bailey who was our Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries. We also say goodbye one more time to Beth Christian who stayed on in 2017/18 to arrange our Lay Servant Academy. In addition we have celebrated new faces joining the board. We welcome Gary Morris, Roanoke Co-Lay Leader; Marquette Mitchell, Harrisonburg Co-Lay Leader; Terry Bain, Rappahannock River District Lay Leader; and Martha Murray, Charlottesville District Lay Leader.

We thank Rev. Danny Kesner, for being our Cabinet representative. We thank Rev. Mark Ogren our conference staff representative for guidance and support. Thanks to Cindy Ingroff, administrative assistant for invaluable assistance and gifted wisdom always.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis challenged us last June with a vision for our conference — A Disciple of Christ is a Lifelong learner who Influences others to Serve. We are just beginning to live into these words. The winter of 2018 saw Chat and Chew 2.0, in four

unique settings for conversation and listening regarding the Commission on a Way Forward's shared information. We celebrate our conversations to the glory of God.

I continue to partner with Bishop Lewis as we lead together in our respective service to Christ our Lord.

– Warren R. Harper, Conference Lay Leader

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The Virginia UM Men's key initiatives in 2017 were to move our annual spiritual weekend to Randolph-Macon College; embark on a Younger Men's Ministry along with the Southeast Jurisdiction and continue to accomplish the goals we established in 2016. In 2018 we will be emphasizing the importance of service and discipleship in fulfilling the Conference vision of disciples who are life-long learners influencing others to serve. A radically transformed spiritual weekend as well as increased efforts to boldly involve and mentor younger men will be our focus.

Vision: *Men Building God's Kingdom led by the Holy Spirit through Christian Fellowship*

Values: Service, Excitement (passion), Teamwork

2018-2020 Goals (summary)

Prepare (disciple) men for service and leadership; Reach new men and their families; Connect with other Conference agencies and boards: Preventing Domestic Violence initiative jointly w/ UMW; Holy Spirit led Christian Fellowship: Wesleyan Transformational Small Groups (class meetings) at all fellowships (new goal for 2018-20), Bible studies, Men's Spiritual Weekend; Younger Men's Ministry: Mentoring new Christians

MINISTRIES

Men's Spiritual Advance: A radically transformed spiritual weekend in the fall of 2018 will follow the model of the S.C. Conference. Our two-day family weekend (Oct 26, 27), will be in a vacation location hosted by Baylake UMC in Virginia Beach and will have multiple speakers and workshops (Bishop James Swanson and apologist Greg Koukl). Spouses are welcome with special rates for couples, pastors and early-birds.

Wesleyan Building Brothers (WBB): Leadership training continues throughout Virginia and WBB graduates will be undertaking the task of developing mentors for both new and young Christians. Advocate David Bean and his team will be establishing mentor qualification criteria, developing training requirements, and conducting pilot mentor training at the fellowship level over the next two years, so we may address generational gaps in our churches.

Men's Ministry: Three certified Men's Ministry Specialists (Todd Hoar, Johnnie Draughon and David Bean) are engaged in training and support activities offering *Understanding Men's Ministry* and other courses around the Conference.

Young Men's Ministry: In coordination with the SEJ Conference we have established this ministry to explore ways to integrate and grow participation by late Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials and Gen Zs.

Scouting: We serve over 16,000 youth with over 9,000 adult volunteer leaders. Scouting is a key element to our strategy to reach new people since half of scouting families do not have church homes. Since over half of our churches are small congregations with fewer than fifty members, our focus is on helping churches grow through scouting. 2017 was a banner year for Scouting in the Virginia Conference and all signs are for an even greater 2018. We had a significant presence at the 2017 Annual Conference in Hampton with five Scouts staffing a table in the exhibit hall and participating in the Laity session. Conference Ministry of Scouting Coordinator Bill Chaffin was selected to serve on the staff of the UMC Scouting presence at the 2017 National BSA Jamboree in West Virginia. Bishop Lewis will participate in a series of four Bishop's Dinners in 2018 to support Scouting Ministry throughout the Conference.

Cleaning Buckets to UMCOR: In 2017, under the leadership of Scott Dillard of the Harrisonburg District, we successfully integrated logistics support with District level emergency response volunteers for collecting and transporting buckets to UMCOR warehouses. With your help during last year's hurricane season, we provided relief to Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Rebranding: We are developing a new icon and brand reflecting our values of service, excitement and teamwork in making disciples and building God's kingdom.

Prayer Advocacy: Our vision is to: *Pray Daily to God on behalf of the World Wide Church*. Our goal is to advocate prayer as Holy Dialog with God that needs to occur daily in each man's life leading to pursuit, engagement and faith in action. We have five District Prayer Advocates and one alternate. We continue to support the Upper Room monetarily and with distribution of materials for the Prayer Center through our Conference prayer Advocate, Todd Hoar.

Heart Havens : The UMM, through our advocate David Campbell, support the intellectually disabled through fund raising, community events involving residents, and providing volunteer maintenance and repair to group homes.

Camp Rainbow Connection: This is a week-long respite camp held once in July and once in August for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ron Rumsey is our advocate.

Prison Ministries: UMM provides volunteer support to: Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry (DBOM) which provides the thirty-two week Disciple Series to prisoners (Gene Mims, advocate); Good News Jail Ministry serving inmates in Virginia's County and City Jails; Kairos which provides an Emmaus Walk experience for inmates of Virginia's Correctional Institutions; and GraceInside, a ministry supporting Prison Chaplains.

Hunger Relief: Wade Mays with The Society of St. Andrew and the help of our UMM volunteers will have provided an estimated 1.2 million servings of food through July of 2018.

All God's Children: In 2018 Virginia will have three different summer camps with 30 kids each week. Bill Crosley is our advocate for this ministry which serves the children of incarcerated adults.

The Beacon: Our monthly e-newsletter has been awarded industry citations based on its strong readership from clergy, laity and subscribers outside the conference. The Beacon is the envy of other Conference UMM boards, providing insightful articles, timely news items and promoting UMM sponsored events. Our editor, Larry Burian, deserves the credit!

– Andrew Kissell, President

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women (UMW) is the women's mission organization of The United Methodist Church, putting faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth in the United States and internationally. We are a creative, supportive community of women organized around the Purpose, which is "to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ" and "to expand concepts of mission by participation in the global ministries of the church."

Throughout our nearly 150-year history, UMW and its predecessor organizations brought women together in small groups to grow in faith, learn about their own needs and potential, learn about others, and organize and raise funds so that we could reach out to marginalized neighbors in our local communities and around the world.

"The Power of Bold" was the theme when over 80 Virginia UMW traveled to Columbus, OH for the UMW Assembly May 18-20, 2018. What a great time was had as thousands of United Methodist Women joined together to hear powerful speaker and workshop leaders and worship together. When women unite bold and courageous actions happen!

United Methodist Women offers several opportunities to grow spiritually to women by attending retreats. Each spring a UMW Spiritual Life Retreat is held that brings together 150-175 women from all over the conference. On April 20-22, 2018 the retreat theme was "Finding Peace through the Psalms" with the Rev. Dr. Teresa Smith as the retreat leader. The event was held at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg.

The second opportunity for spiritual growth is for the young women of our conference. Held in September each year is our Young Women's Retreat and is always a great opportunity for young women between the ages of 18-40 to come together for worship, music, sharing, and crafts around a theme. The event's date is September 14-15, 2018 at the Blessings Lodge at Camp Overlook in the beautiful mountains of the Shenandoah Valley. The retreat leader will be Rev. Joanna Dietz, Minister of Mission at Braddock Street UMC on the Winchester District.

One of our Church's best kept secrets is its Mission Encounter Event held each summer. This is an event shared by Virginia United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women and is for everyone - clergy, laity, youth and children. The dates for the event for 2018 are July 27-29 at Smith Mountain Lake 4H Center. Our website www.vaumw.com has registration forms.

UMW Annual Meeting in October is always a time for celebration. It will be held at Chestnut Memorial UMC on October 27. Our national UMW President, Shannon Priddy, will be our speaker.

United Methodist Women around the Virginia Conference are always looking for women to join us in our work and mission! If you are not a member, we would love to have you!

– Mary Jane Rawley, President

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Church Development Team (CCDT) has been working hard to fulfill its mission to assist in creating New Faith Communities and supporting the work of vitality in existing churches under the All Things New Plan. Below you will find CCDT's activities toward this work.

The Five Talent Academy continues to offer training opportunities related to worship, financial stewardship, discipleship, evangelism and ministry with the poor. In March, Tom Berlin presented "Defying Gravity – Breaking Free of a Culture of More." In October, Jacob Armstrong presented "How to Structure Your Church for Evangelism." Both presentations were offered at 10 sites throughout the conference.

The Equipping Planter team directs the invitation, discernment and training of planters of new faith communities for the Virginia Conference. Those who are interested in planting engage in a process of discernment as to each person's gifts for this unique ministry. The first stage is the Church Leadership Institute, which is held annually each fall. We had 38 participants this past October. Some who attend this event decide that they wish to explore this call more deeply. These prepare a self-reflective paper and are interviewed by members of our Church Development Team. Summaries of these interviews are given to the cabinet, to help inform their appointment of planters of new faith communities. Once appointed, church planters attend a boot camp during the spring of

their appointment and coaches are assigned to help guide their ministry.

The New Faith Community subgroup of the CDT continues to help create a culture of excellence, fruitfulness and vitality in the area of new faith community development in our conference. This year we have continued to resource and encourage recently initiated new faith communities, local churches, district Boards of Mission and their equivalents, the Cabinet and others in our conference to live out the “All Things New” strategy through the planting of new faith communities. In addition to resourcing our conference in the area of new faith community development, the New Faith Community subgroup also receives, reviews and makes recommendations to the CDT and the Common Table regarding funding for new faith community development proposals. This year we received multiple proposals that were reviewed and given careful consideration. We remain prayerful and excited about the future of new faith community development within our conference. In July of 2017, five new communities were started – Ghana Wesley (second site), Gainesville (second site), Arlington Commons, Christ Church On-line, Floris On-line. The CDT has partnered with Worship and Praise and Virginia 2020 in renewal projects.

To further support growth and renewal in existing churches, CDT has partnered with four districts to offer Next Level Innovations, a three and a half year investment in church change and leadership development.

The Church Development Team partners with the Large, Medium and Small Church leadership teams. These teams offer training events both for pastors who have just moved (Just in Time trainings) as well as training for clergy and laity in order to increase vitality.

We would like to thank Mark Ogren, Ellen Heatwole and Pat Hickman for their efforts that help make All Things New in the Virginia Conference.

– *Melissa Dunlap, Chair*

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The Commission on Disabilities (COD) continues to meet three times annually. We continue to improve ways we can be advocates for the disabled in the Virginia Conference.

In 2017 we approved three grants totaling \$2,100 for churches and organizations to improve accessibility. This is an increase over previous years as we have promoted this opportunity more.

Annual Conference: As always, members of COD walked/rolled around prior to the start of the conference. We identified several areas of concern, the primary being the cable run in front of the stage that resulted in two falls during the conference. It was too late to correct this problem when it was identified. The AC Committee, particularly Bryan Siegle, has been all ears in hearing our concerns and appreciates our input. This year, we will walk/roll around on Thursday.

Our primary focus continues to be education and we continue to search for new ways to enlighten the members of the conference about accessibility and how to interact with disabled persons and incorporate them into the church community as equal partners. Improvements have been made to our literature and we are working on a video to increase awareness.

We requested the annual conference theme be “Inclusivity” and would encompass all aspects of being inclusive as Christian’s and the different organizations that work to ensure this. Understandably, the Bishop has chosen a different theme, so the video will wait for next year.

We look forward to sharing a program for ramp building to empower churches to build their own ramps, where they have capable people.

– *Shaun Smith, Chairperson*

COMMISSION ON ETHNIC MINORITY CONCERNS AND ADVOCACY

The Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy (CEMCA) has completed the second year of its restructuring process. As a commission, we decided that we would not just use our words, but be compelled to Christian action. Our commission serves to be the prophetic voice for the full and equal participation of all ethnic and racial constituents into the total life and mission of the Virginia Conference. We are honored to have partnered with Bishop Lewis, the General Commission on Race and Religion (GCORR) as well as other Jurisdictional caucuses and conference agencies to accomplish our goals this year. This year our work focused on education, strategic planning, advocacy and accompaniment to hold into account God’s church at all levels (conference, district and local). We believe that our commission can stimulate individual and group agency that will move the Virginia Conference forward in more inclusive, ethnically-diverse, and racially-just ways.

We represent the following constituencies at the conference level:

- African-American Ministries
- Hispanic-Latino Ministries/ VAUMC Hispanic Clergy Caucus
- Immigration Task Force/Work Group
- Asian-American Ministries
- Native American Ministries
- Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), Inc.

- VA FOCUS 2020
- Methodists Associated for the Cause of the Hispanic-American (MARCHA), National/South-Eastern Jurisdictional (SEJ) Hispanic-Latino Caucus

This year we saw many areas of growth in our constituencies and our commission. As a commission we finalized our logo and began updating our website to provide better resources, educational materials and constituent-focused information. We are utilizing social media with #CEMCAVAUMC and are exploring other media tools to more effectively communicate. We hope to partner with summer interns to continue to be more inclusive in this expansion of our work.

Upon request of Bishop Lewis, we partnered with GCORR to host the Bishop's Convocation on Race and Reconciliation in April at Annandale UMC. This convocation challenged all of us to open the conversation about racial positioning and individual bias in the wake of the events in Charlottesville and our country this past year. In addition, CEMCA leadership participated in GCORR's "Facing the Future 2018" and the National Council of Church's "Unite to End Racism" events.

In our annual conference the newly-formed VAUMC Hispanic Clergy Caucus began its work. The Hispanic Clergy Caucus has been developing new ministry models and has had its first member elected to the Cabinet. By partnering with the Bishop's Immigration Task force and the SEJ Hispanic-Latino Caucus, the Bishop's Convocation on Immigration was held in May. In addition, the SEJ H/L Caucus will host MARCHA's national gathering in Charlotte in August 2018.

At the national level, we celebrated with our Native American brothers and sisters the federal recognition of their tribes by the signing of the *Thomasiana Jordan Bill*. It recognizes the Chicahominy, Eastern Chicahominy, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, Monacan and Nansemond, while extending rights to Mataponi and the Pamunkey Tribes as well. Now, our work will begin to support these tribes and their efforts to strengthen their ministries throughout the United Methodist connection.

In the upcoming year, our CEMCA district representatives will be the point of contact as we take the learning from these events back to our local contexts. We will continue to partner with the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) for conference monitoring efforts at both annual conference and at district events.

With the help of each member of the annual conference, guidance by the Holy Spirit, and by the healing love that can only come from Christ our Savior, we look forward to continuing our partnerships in educating and resourcing our conference in each district and through the local church, in this divine work of reknitting the fabric that racial injustices and prejudices have torn.

– Lori Valentine de Segovia & Gary Miller, co-chairs

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) encourages participation of women in the full life of The United Methodist church. To further this mission, COSROW collects data on the participation of women, minorities, youth and young adults and persons with disabilities in the leadership roles of the church. Data collection continues at Annual Conference 2018.

Data collection at Annual Conference 2017 continues to suggest women are encouraged to participate, yet we still have work to do. During the planned worship services, men and women are both involved at a relatively equal rate. This modeling of women in leadership has a massive impact, encouraging our congregants to recognize women have an important and active role in the church.

Further challenges remain in the plenary and business portions of the annual conference. Women's level of active participation continues to be lower than men's level of active participation. Likewise, the same pattern emerges for racial and ethnic minority participation compared to that of those of Caucasian descent, and youth and young adults relative to adults.

We who serve the Virginia Conference still have work to do. We encourage women, racial and ethnic minorities, young people and persons with disabilities to be active stakeholders in the life of the United Methodist church. Our churches must welcome all God's children in the leadership of their churches. This includes, but is not limited to, welcoming women as pastors in all churches in the Virginia Conference, encouraging women to be lead pastors in large membership churches, and encouraging women to serve as leaders in committees, such as Finance and Trustees. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, young people, and persons with disabilities have gifts and talents. They make significant contributions to the life of the church. Any artificial limits on these persons deny the church body the blessings that God has bestowed on this Conference.

Embrace 2018 is coming! COSROW is working with a task force to sponsor a two-day Transformational Event for all clergywomen in the Virginia Annual Conference. Embrace 2018 will be held September 25-26, 2018, at the Virginia Crossings Conference Center in Glen Allen. "Inspired by Ruth, embracing then journeying with Naomi in a foreign land, and envisioned by Bishop Lewis to gather all the clergywomen together to be encouraged and transformed, the retreat promises to be a place of inspiration, hope, and healing." Scholarships are available.

At Annual Conference 2017, COSROW held a "For Such a Time as This" listening post, which was attended by over 50 women. The purpose was to share women's experiences in the church in our current political climate. We also worked at Annual Conference to educate and raise awareness of the amendments to our constitution in favor of inclusivity.

Like us on Facebook for news, events, and updates at "Commission on the Status and Role of Women – VA United Methodist Conference."

– Mary Dadisman, Clergy Chair



*The following four reports are from agencies that have been awarded
Conference Benevolence Grants:*

GRACEINSIDE (FORMERLY CHAPLAIN SERVICE PRISON MINISTRY OF VIRGINIA)

Grace is a gift you share over and over again. Within Virginia’s prisons, your impact is more powerful than ever before! Your hand of grace is extending to our incarcerated brothers and sisters to help heal deeply broken lives. Through grace, we are fulfilling Jesus’ mandate to “*visit those in prison*” by funding “prison pastors” or “missionaries” to this “mission field in our own back yards” – the state prisons. There is no ambiguity in Jesus Christ’s perspective on prison ministry. As our Lord suffered on the cross, the thief at His side repented and asked, “*Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom! And He said to him, today you shall be with Me in paradise*” (Luke 23:39-43 NASB). From His great throne, the Risen Christ proclaims, “*I was in prison and you came to me,*” and declares that any believer who ministers to “*the least of these*” does so to the Lord Himself (Matthew 25:36c, 40 NASB). These words of cosmic significance are the foundation on which the ministry of GraceInside is built.

GraceInside (formerly Chaplain Service Prison Ministry of Virginia, Inc.) has been assigning chaplains to Virginia’s state prisons since 1920. Only in Virginia (because of our state constitution’s strong emphasis on the separation of church and state) are the prison chaplains not state employees. They are not compensated with taxpayer dollars and receive no state benefits (such as healthcare or retirement). We were founded 98 years ago by seven Protestant Christian denominations (including and led by the Virginia Conference of the The United Methodist Church) in order to pool their resources to hire and compensate chaplains for the state prisons – i.e. to become the “prison ministry arm” of each of these denominations. Our heart’s desire – both then and now – is to lead incarcerated men and women to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Our Mission Statement helps us to carry out this objective: “*To provide chaplains in all of Virginia’s state adult and juvenile prison facilities.*” We are the only official agency that is set up to provide these “prison pastors,” and we continue to rely on our founders and denominational partners, like the VAUMC, in order to accomplish this challenging mission to this immense mission field. Currently we minister to a population of 30,000 offenders with 32 chaplains serving in 35 state prisons. As members of our GraceInside family, you ensure that those in prison have the opportunity to attend worship, participate in spiritually-based classes (Bible studies, grief groups, baptism classes, etc.) and spend one-on-one time with a chaplain. In the words of one ex-offender: “*I survived because of you. You brought me to Jesus. You brought me a new and REAL life.*”

Because of your generosity, GraceInside increased our impact by adding more ministry service hours for the chaplains. Consequently, more men and women moved toward healing. We’ve come to see that the more grace you give away, the more grace there is! Thousands of incarcerated men and women had the opportunity to interact with a chaplain because of YOUR support and care. As many as 14,000 inmates are released each year back into our communities. You make the prisons and our Commonwealth a safer place in which to live and work.

The American Correctional Association says that there should be a full-time chaplain for every 500 inmates, warranting almost THREE full-time chaplains for the larger prisons!) Our goal is to find support for our chaplains to minister *full-time* so that more lives can experience the gift of grace. Currently, six major facilities need full-time chaplains - right now! Men and women are waiting to hear that they matter to God.

It starts with one heart in prison, impacted by grace...overflowing to others...to families...to neighborhoods...to churches...to communities...to our Commonwealth. One heart changed because YOU believe in the value of GraceInside.

Together, lives are changed forever – every single day. THANK YOU!

– J. Randy Myers, President

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW

Over the last 39 years, the Virginia Conference has been a critical partner in the work of the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA). In that time, you’ve helped SoSA grow from a home-based intentional Christian community to a nation-wide gleaning and food recovery network that has engaged more than a half million volunteers in simple hands-on service to feed hungry neighbors. Thank you for being part of this ministry from its inception, for sharing with us a vision for a world without hunger, in which faith and stewardship meet God’s abundance—and good food is shared with people in greatest need every day.

In 2017, 340 congregations of the Virginia Conference provided financial support to the Society of St. Andrew. 53 congregations and more than 2,700 Virginia United Methodists took part in “crop drops” or field gleaning. A potato drop, partially funded by a grant from the Virginia United Methodist Foundation, engaged Annual Conference attendees from every district in service to feed hungry people in the Hampton Roads area.

Through the Virginia Gleaning Network, the Potato & Produce Project, and SoSA’s Harvest of Hope mission work-camp program in 2017, 275 feeding agencies (soup kitchens, shelters, emergency food assistance programs, food pantries, and large food banks) across the state received more than 3,710,400 pounds of nourishing food to share with their clients—providing more than 11.1 million servings of health and hope to our hungry brothers and sisters. The Seed Potato Project (a “hand up” endeavor that provides seed potatoes to poor, land-owning Appalachian families) shared an additional 4 million servings of good food with hungry Virginians. All this is work made possible because you care.

Nationwide, 28.5 million pounds of food (85.5 million servings) reached millions of hungry Americans in 2017 through the work of the Society of St. Andrew, through crops donated by more than 900 farmers/producers and through the gleaning and volunteer efforts of 36,850+ individuals. The Board of Directors has instituted an ambitious strategic plan, calling for nearly doubling that quantity of food shared over the next three years. We are actively working to build the capacity in both funding and partnerships with farmers and feeding agencies, to expand into new areas over the next few years. United Methodist congregations across the United States will be integral to SoSA's growth, and the Virginia Conference has paved the way for relationships that now extend across the continent.

We're grateful for all the Virginia Conference congregations that join with SoSA through its spiritual life programs, including seasonal devotional materials, Vacation Bible School curriculum, and Bible studies. In 2017, 24 VAUMC congregations participated in SoSA's "Abundance Orchard" VBS; 254 congregations used SoSA's Advent devotional resources and 267 congregations utilized SoSA's Lenten devotions or Good Friday Fast programs.

SoSA's mission fields are just that, fields and orchards. The need for volunteers throughout the year is great, and the opportunities are plentiful. Congregations that partner with SoSA have found the partnerships transformative, spurring deeper faith, greater support for local missions, and an abiding concern for those our Savior called "the least of these."

– Lynette Johnson, Executive Director

VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Peace and Grace to you on the occasion of the 2018 gathering of the Virginia Annual Conference UMC. May God bless you and guide you as you gather together.

*"At a time like this, when a large part of the world is in turmoil, the work of a council of churches becomes more significant than ever."
The Rev Henry Lee Robison, Jr, 1st Executive Secretary VCC 1945*

These words of **Rev. Henry Robison** seem even more prophetic today as we face challenges on all fronts. The year 2016 was dominated by a very rancorous political campaign and election. With the nation evenly split and passion running high it has created a very tumultuous season that continues after tragic events in Charlottesville in 2017. Your Council has been visible since the very beginning in seeking reconciliation between, people of all walks of like, all faith traditions as we are all children of God.

We continue to face difficult economic times as we adjust to the significant drop in funding of recent years. The council remains strong, albeit on very fragile financial footing, and is seeking ways to respond during these exciting yet chaotic times.

At our Annual Meeting in 2016 our council president, the **Rev. Dr. John Myers**, of the Eastern Association, Southern Conference, UCC called for a strategic planning retreat in September of 2017 to articulate the mission and vision of the Council in this new century and to prepare for a transition of leadership in 2018. Dr. John Vest led the council leadership in a two day gathering and preparation for our time of transition. The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton, our sixth general minister, will be retiring June 1, 2018, after faithfully guiding the council for 18 years to the day. The Rev. Larry Thompson chairs the search committee looking for our seventh person to lead the council forward in our 75th Anniversary year.

The Council continues to work closely with our **Armenian Orthodox** brothers and sister assisting in the introduction of their new priest Rev. Fr. Tatev Terteryan. Over the course of the year we have worked with the **Virginia Synod ELCA** and **Bishop Mauney** in efforts to reduce childhood hunger within the Commonwealth. Recently we participated in the installation of **Bishop Robert Humphrey** in the Virginia Synod who follows in the footsteps of Bishop Mauney. The Council continues to support **LARCUM**, the **National Workshop on Christian Unity**, and **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, as well as other expressions of ecumenism within the Commonwealth. We have also begun work on a legacy project with the 2019 Commission and Virginia Union University regarding the evolution of the faith of African Americans 1619-2019, with the anticipation of a conference in March 2019 and the publication of a book shortly thereafter. We also play an enlarging role in **Interfaith Dialogues**, including our long-standing dialogue in Richmond involving five of our judicatory executives, and includes, three Rabbis, and two Imams.

We continue to stand with our **Native American** brothers and sisters of the six Virginia Tribes and celebrate the culmination of our twenty year journey seeking federal recognition. Our partnership with the **VICPP** and the **Virginia Catholic Conference** helps give voice to our shared concerns for justice on the floor of the General Assembly. Our **Rural Family Development Program** continues to serve children in Caroline County through the Head Start Program.

Jesus prayed "that all may be one so that the world may believe" (John 17). The Apostle Paul reminds us we may not all look alike, but we need each other, and together we comprise one body. When we come together through the Virginia Council of Churches, we provide a common voice that becomes believable in the midst of turmoil and change, that the Lord God is one.

– Jonathan M. Barton, General Minister

VIRGINIA INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY (VICPP)

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) continues to be blessed by its partnership with the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. VICPP works to bring people of all faiths together to be a witness to the General Assembly and advocate economic and racial justice throughout the Commonwealth. Highlights of our work during the past year include:

- **Advocating healthcare expansion.** VICPP continues to be Virginia’s leading faith-based grassroots advocacy organization supporting healthcare expansion. The results of the November election put Medicaid expansion back on the table, and the Center worked hard to amplify religious voices in support of those who are “in the coverage gap,” low-wage workers who don’t qualify for Medicaid or afford coverage on the open market. We want Virginia’s General Assembly to develop a plan for expanding healthcare access to these 400,000 Virginians by tapping the federal dollars that are already available and have been working hard to make that happen, creating toolkits, bulletin inserts and other congregational resources.
- **Stopping and deterring wage theft.** VICPP worked throughout 2017 to develop a platform of simple reforms to stop and deter wage theft in Virginia. Strong patrons were identified and encouraged to introduce wage theft reform bills. Sen. Wagner (R-Virginia Beach), Del. Habeeb (R-Salem) and Del. Krizek (D-Alexandria) introduced the reform bills. All three bills are still “in process” as this report is being written. If approved, the bills would remove some of the Jim Crow-era language excluding every category of work that was historically held by African Americans (“ticket-takers”, “shoe-shine boys” and so forth), require employers to provide a paystub, protect workers against retaliation for filing a complaint and allow the state Department of Labor and Industries to investigate and recover wages for all workers in a workplace, not just the one person who filed a complaint.
- **Creating a Living Wage Certification program.** Our Richmond chapter is partnering the Mayor’s Office of Community Wealth Building to develop a “Living Wage Certification” program, which was officially launched on March 22. The program identifies, honors and promotes business that pay living wages to their employees. Affiliates in Charlottesville and Alexandria are creating programs as well.
- **Standing with and protecting immigrants and minority religions.** VICPP expanded its work to create circles of protection for immigrants, Muslims and Jews, and continues to oppose legislation that would make Virginia less welcoming to all marginalized people. VICPP supported the creation of Rapid Response Networks and helped organize the Central Virginia Sanctuary Network. (VICPP encourages people in northern Virginia to support the DMV Sanctuary Network.)
- **Reforming Virginia’s criminal justice system.** During the 2017 General Assembly, VICPP was one of the leading organizations advocating a reform measure to allow people who had lost their drivers’ licenses because they owed court fines or fees (essentially poor people) to get on a payment plan or do community service to pay off the fines and keep their licenses during the process. This year, during the 2018 General Assembly, VICPP is supporting and even better bill to stop suspensions altogether for non-driving related fines and fees. VICPP is also advocating raising the felony threshold from \$200 to at least \$500.
- **Responding to hate.** VICPP played an important role in getting religious leaders to Charlottesville on Aug. 11-12 to counter the white supremacy rallies. The religious community played many important roles during this tragic weekend and learned some hard lessons. VICPP was most grateful for the hospitality and refuge provided by First United Methodist Church of Charlottesville.
- **Deepening ties with congregations through Faith Advocacy Partners.** VICPP has created a “Faith Advocacy Partners” program to strengthen ties with congregations. Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church (Richmond) and Mount Olivet United Methodist Church (Arlington) became Faith Advocacy Partners in 2017. If you feel your church would like to more fully partner with the work of the Virginia Interfaith Center, visit www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/partners.
- **Tapping volunteers “witnesses” at the Capitol.** VICPP had a team of volunteers to be Witnesses at the Capitol during the 2017 legislative season and is using volunteers again in 2018. These volunteers, including United Methodists, meet with legislators, speak in committee hearings and offer a presence from the faith community.
- **Expanding chapters and affiliates.** VICPP now has eight chapter or affiliates around the Commonwealth, including new groups in Harrisonburg and Charlottesville.
- **Celebrating the work.** In December VICPP held its annual awards gala. Among the honorees was retired State Sen. Henry Marsh III, with a life achievement award, and young DACA organizer Rodrigo Velasquez from George Mason University. Consider coming to the event, tentatively set for Dec. 13, 2018, sponsoring the event or having your congregation buy a table.
- **Drawing in new advocates.** VICPP’s Day for All People annual lobby day on Jan. 23 attracted record numbers, in part because Virginia’s new Governor, Dr. Ralph Northam, was one of our speakers. Plan to come to next year’s Day for All People during the General Assembly session.
- **Supporting UMC advocacy.** VICPP has helped staff the United Methodist Day at the General Assembly for many years. In addition, VICPP staff have spoken at United Methodist Women programs and local United Methodist congregations about

the work and advocacy. The Executive Director spoke at a Church and Society gathering during 2017 Annual Conference and also the MFSA dinner.

If you would like to get involved personally, as a congregation or in your community with VICPP and its issues, please visit our website at www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org. If you have specific questions and requests, email Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

– Kim Bobo, Executive Director



CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Chairpersons:

Marc Brown, *Director of Connectional Ministries*

Warren Harper, *Conference Lay Leader*

Monitors:

R. Shaun Smith, *Commission on Disabilities*

Mary Dadisman, *COSROW*

Gary Miller, *CEMCA*

District Representatives:

James River – Jim O’Quinn

Arlington – Ellen LaCroix Fillette

Alexandria – Burton Robinson
Lynchburg – Jennifer Moore
Charlottesville – Charles Winner
Danville – *vacant*
Eastern Shore – Tampa Miller
Elizabeth River – Jamie Beck
Farmville – Joan Tipton
Harrisonburg – Sandy Biller

Rappahannock River – Brad Phillips

Richmond – Lisa Sykes

Roanoke – N.L. Bishop

Staunton – Beth Christian

Winchester – Andy Brock

York River District – Angie Hoe

NOMINATIONS

Director of Connectional Ministries

Marc Brown

Common Table for Church Vitality

Bishop’s Nominee:

Sandi Blackwell

CLDDT Nominee:

Ashley Roth

Board of Church and Society

Lay:

Emma Samson

Clergy:
Eduardo Carrillo
Shayne Estes
Jung Pyo Hong
Deborah Porras
Jason Stanley

Church Development Team

Randy Duncan

Rachel Gilmore

Board of Discipleship

Lisa Ann Barbery

Robin BeMiller

Don Jamison

Kathy Gochenour

Youth Council

Juli Odell

Young Adult Council

Jacob Montague

Older Adult Council

Louise Miller

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries

Rob Lough
Bill Pike
John Wright

Missional Ministries Board

Clergy:
Robert Gochenour
Kendra Grimes

Lay:
Ann Klotz

Commission on Archives and History

Clergy:
W. James Athearn,
Paul A. Beigley, Jr.
Michael Browder
Carlton D. Casey
Robert T. Casey
Raymond H. Edmonds, Jr.
William R. Freeman
H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr.
James M. John
Alexander B. Joyner
Margaret T. Kutz
Barbara D. Lewis
John T. Martin, Jr.
Samuel E. NeSmith
John C. Price
C. Edward Pruitt
Lee B. Sheaffer

James Sprouse
Elizabeth W. Taylor
Rudolph E. Tucker, Jr.
Walter A. Whitehurst
J. Brooke Willson
Elizabeth A.S. Wright
Gary A. Ziegler

Laity:
Mary Ashton Athearn
Thelma Crowder
Grace Deane
Betty Duley
Jesse Fanshaw, III
Nina Frederick
Queen Green
Ann Keeling
Audrey Lewis

Myra P. Lindsey
Stephen Mansfield
Marianne Martin
David Meyer
Margaret Mock
Catherine Morgan
Brenda NeSmith
William A. Olson
Laurie Preston
Leona Salter
JoEllen Fulk Smith
William Stead
Craig Swain
Betty Whitehurst
Kathi Hughes Wise

[*Italics – new to position*]

Virginia United Methodist Communications, Inc.

Clergy:
Larry Davies
Eileen Gilmer

Lay:
Helen Smith

Commission on Disabilities

Clergy:
Margaret Packard
Young Sung Ryu
Barry Throckmorton

Lay:
Judy Diggs
Cheryl Nester

Equitable Compensation Commission

Clergy:
Wilhelmina Sumpter

Lay:
Bernard Carpenter

Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy

Clergy:
James Harrison
Maggie Hasselbach
Garland Hines
Seungsun Joo
Steven Snodgrass

Lay:
Lori Valentine de Segovia
Tianna Durbin
Carol Ann Redmon

At Large:
Karen Bragg

Council on Finance and Administration

Clergy:
Linda Lowe

Lay:
Jim Cole
Malcolm White

United Methodist Foundation

Brandon Gilmore
Bobbie Henley
Pat McGucking
Hal Miller
Justin White

Board of Ordained Ministry

Charles Bates
Lyndsie Blakely
JaeHaeng Choi

Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Clergy:

Mary Dadisman

Conference Trustees

Clergy:

Clyde Nelson

Lay:

Walter Beals
Kathleen Lutman

Society of St. Andrew

Cooper Davidson
Shawn Kiger
Cliff Steger

Randolph College

Kathleen S. Graves
Robert S. Roberson
Henry George White

Randolph-Macon College

Sabra L. Klein
Hunter Leemon
Thomas Millner
D. Calloway Whitehead, III

Virginia Wesleyan University

J. Tim Bailey
William W. Granger III
Ronald M. Kramer
Robin D. Ray
Louis R. Ryan
Alan H. Shaw



BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Virginia Conference of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) continues to function as the credentialing group for persons responding to God's call as pastors, and deacons. These disciples of Jesus Christ attend interviews in late January for full membership as an elder, deacon, or associate member, and in late February for a three-year provisional member journey on the elder or deacon tracks. These interview sessions are probably the most visible and conferred aspects of the BOM. Also, various workgroups within the BOM, perform other essential responsibilities that enable these persons to become effective clergy and certified lay professionals in the areas of call, development and collegial support.

Here are just a few glimpses into some of the other workgroups and their significant efforts:

The Grants and Loans Committee, in 2017, awarded \$10,000 through the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry), \$4,000 in Service Loans, \$55,900 in Pell Grants, \$20,530 in Individual Scholarship Funds, and \$2,600 in Clinical Pastoral Education Funds for a total of \$93,029.

The Provisional Membership Team walked with clergy who are on the way toward ordination and full membership by providing mentors and mentoring groups. Two residency events presented speakers who excel in fields of theology, the practice of ministry and spiritual development, and opportunities to explore innovative and faithful expressions of the church.

The Licensing School met at the end of May with valuable instruction from teachers and leaders over the long Memorial Day weekend at Virginia Wesleyan University to train local pastors and provisional members for licensed ministry commencing July 1. A Facebook group page was created a few years ago where Licensing School classes, each session, stay in touch with one another for support and encouragement. The dean and other conference staff members attended semi-quadrennial conferences for Licensing School deans.

The Clergy Effectiveness Team focused on work for clergy that increases effectiveness, and well-being through funding for intensive continuing educational work. This past year, the Virginia Clergy Leadership Program was re-imagined through the launch of the third cohort guiding participants to the transformational power of God in their lives and the practice of ministry. Under a 2016 General Conference directive, the eight-year cycle of assessment for those who are members in full connection should launch in spring 2019. The Aldersgate Experience in Virginia will invite clergy, in phases, to engage in a spiritual discernment process every eight years to keep their ministry and souls refreshed and vital.

The Ethics Committee, for the 2016-2020 quadrennium, introduced a new clergy ethics training event called "The Minister as Moral Theologian," led by Dr. Sondra Wheeler, longtime professor of Christian ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary. This event goes beyond the mere "good behavior" of clergy by examining deeper ethical aspects of the role of a ministry leader in a changing world.

The Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Committee chair and **BOM** registrar attended The General Commission on Religion and Race's third national conference, "Facing the Future 2018 – In the Midst of the Storm," in May. It featured biblical and theological frameworks, peer-to-peer learning, and networking to minister to the cultural divisions in our nation and churches.

What else occurred through the BOM? Encouraging and funding for the Orders of Elders, Deacons, and the Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors; interviewing United Methodists and persons from other denominations who desire to transfer and serve in the Virginia Conference; supporting clergy seeking retirement; giving assistance to clergy on medical leave; examining requests of individuals for appointments beyond the church; visiting Virginia students and others interested in serving in Virginia at eight seminaries; promoting this summer the Calling 21 Intern Program by connecting college students with local church ministries, and the Youth Theology Institutes for high school students exploring who they are and what they are called to do in the world through Shennadoah University and Randolph-Macon College.

I want to thank each BOM board member for their diligent commitment to the ministry and principles of the BOM, and to the Center for Clergy Excellence (Meredith McNabb, Director, Lindsey Baynham, Associate Director, and Kristen Dowdy Seibert, Executive Assistant) for their tireless efforts and support of the clergy of the Virginia Annual Conference.

– John R. Hall Sr., Chair

COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

The Committee on Episcopacy is responsible for the review and evaluation of the resident bishop as required by the *Book of Discipline*. A process for this review has been created by the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy and is used in every episcopal area in our Jurisdiction. We meet with the bishop three to four times a year to engage in conversation around this process and to hear Bishop Lewis reflect on issues in the Annual Conference and the larger connection. Bishop Lewis continues to broadly engage the Annual Conference through a variety of settings where she is able to interact with clergy and laity. We are grateful for her leadership and her work with the cabinet for the good of the conference. We are also grateful for the approval of delegates to the Virginia Annual Conference Session that enabled the Episcopal Residence Committee and Conference Board of Trustees to secure a new residence that is closer to the conference office in a more populated area convenient to essential services.

– Tom Berlin, Chair

CONFERENCE TRUSTEES

The Virginia Conference Board of Trustees held their two regularly scheduled meetings in September and March. In addition, further communication via conference calls during the Conference year were also held to follow-up on other issues, including the new Episcopal residence and VUMAC.

In addition to our normal work dealing with the real property of closed and abandoned churches, the Board continued its involvement with the VUMAC property by having three members of the Trustees on the VUMAC Board. That process has involved extended meetings and conference calls throughout the year to assist in the handling and resolution of VUMAC issues, as well as, the review and study of multiple proposals received during the past year. It is our sincere hope that, as of this year's Annual Conference, the sale of the Blackstone property will be complete.

The Board was also involved with issues pertaining to the Episcopal residence. Kathy Lutman served as the Board's representative to the Episcopal Residence Committee (ERC) for the search and approval of a new bishop residence. This action followed a recommendation to the 2017 Annual Conference by ERC for the acquisition of a new bishop residence and the sale of the existing residence. Following concurrence by the Conference, significant time was spent by the ERC implementing the approved recommendation. The ERC, with representation of Board of Trustees, reviewed several houses in the area that met Committee requirements and settled on the new residence for the Bishop. It was purchased for \$480,000, an amount that was below the authorization level approved by the 2017 Annual Conference. The existing residence was sold for \$475,000. All actions and approvals on the sale and purchase of both residences were completed in September 2017 and the Bishop moved into the new residence in October.

As reported at last year's Annual Conference, Benham Black, our attorney and counsel on both Board of Trustees and Annual Conference matters, retired after many years of support for the Board, and a new firm, LeClair Ryan, was selected to represent the Board of Trustees going forward. The firm, and, in particular, Andrew White and Katja Hill, has integrated well into the total work of the Board, providing expert counsel to us in our current and ongoing work. We again thank Benham for his long-time service to the Board.

During the past year, we were very saddened by the sudden loss of one of our Board members, Leigh Drewry. Leigh served the Board well for a number of years. He was a unique individual, who married his legal expertise with a sincere devotion to his church. He will be greatly missed. I am thankful for the dedication of all the members of our Board as we work to meet the important tasks set out for the Board by the Conference and the *Discipline*. I am especially thankful for the continued leadership of our Vice President, Kathy Lutman, who has stepped in many times over the past year, when I was unavailable, to help me in the many tasks of our Board.

– Carl Moravitz, President

THE BISHOPS' FOUNDATION

The Bishops' Foundation provides for leadership development of both laity and clergy in the areas of evangelism, spiritual formation, preaching and congregational leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit. The foundation is led by a board of directors (five clergy and four laity) nominated by the Cabinet. Endowment funds are invested with the Virginia UM Foundation. In 2014, the foundation was dissolved as a corporation and now a board reporting to the annual conference.

During the past year, the foundation endorsed the move of the Goodson Preaching Academy to be an entity of the Board of Discipleship and the Common Table.

As an event-sponsoring or co-sponsoring organization that supports the training of both laity and clergy, the foundation supported the Goodson Preaching Academy in 2017 and remains interested in supporting conference ministry programming that fosters opportunities for young adult laity and clergy to help the church in reaching all generations. Grant application forms can be found on the conference website under the "The Bishops' Foundation" tab on the Connectional Ministries page.

– Kevin W. Bruny, Co-Chair

UNITED METHODIST-RELATED SCHOOLS

Ferrum College

Since my arrival on January 1, 2018, as the 12th President of Ferrum College, I have been delighted to experience firsthand the warmth and hospitality of the Ferrum campus community. There is no place I would rather be than with our talented faculty, dedicated staff, and energetic and curious students. I have enjoyed walking across our beautiful campus imagining the courage and faith of the Methodist women who brought educational opportunities to students in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We are grateful for their dedication to this work and for their continued support and devotion to Ferrum College.

The best education happens in colleges like Ferrum where faculty ask hard questions and address important social issues, where students are creative and passionate about making a difference, and where faith teaches us how to invest our lives – heart, soul, mind and strength — in healing the world. We want our students, from all walks of life, to be empowered to discover their potential, achieve their goals and make a difference in their communities.

If you follow me on social media (@Ferrum_Prez), you know I am having a great time learning all I can about Ferrum College and our region. My explorations include visiting with our Panther family at home and across the Commonwealth, attending academic and athletic events, and spending time with our students.

The Ferrum College experience is rich with opportunities for internships, experiential learning, international and domestic travel, scholars programs, personal growth, and service to the community. We have many co-curricular activities ranging from student clubs and organizations to NCAA Division III athletic teams for men and women (including women's wrestling, an equestrian program, and cheerleading). Our *Ferrum Outdoors* program allows students to explore our mountains and parks, lakes, and rivers. We have popular national franchises such as Papa John's, Subway, and Starbucks, and our on-campus YMCA welcomes both the College and the community, with membership available at no cost to our students. Ferrum College is blessed in many ways, and we are grateful for the support we receive from our alumni, friends, foundations, The United Methodist Church, and the Virginia Annual Conference.

Over Spring Break Rev. Dr. Jan C. Nicholson Angle, Dean of the Chapel, offered a study abroad opportunity for religion majors. Ms. Alexis Hatcher, a junior, and Rev. Dr. Nicholson Angle traveled to Israel joining Bishop Sharma D. Lewis and a group from The Virginia Conference for an Educational Opportunity tour. Participants experienced a different culture while exploring the rich historical, cultural, and theological heritage that has impacted the Abrahamic faiths. Ms. Hatcher offered a PowerPoint presentation both pre- and post tour to interested students and faculty.

Also during Spring Break, Mr. Chris Burnley, Vice President for Business and Finance, accompanied a group of 15 students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, to the Texas Gulf Coast to repair homes damaged by Hurricane Harvey. Students worked to install insulation, drywall, flooring, finish carpentry, cabinetry, and painting. While rebuilding homes, the most important aspect of what they did was provide emotional and spiritual support and to share the love of Christ through their service.

This year's Wright Lecture featured Dr. Charles Page, formerly of the Jerusalem Institute. Dr. Page was a personal friend of Buddy Wright and traveled together with him on archeological digs in Israel. Dr. Page offered a lecture in Vaughn Chapel on archeological excavation in the Holy Land. The lecture was well attended by students, faculty, staff and guests. A luncheon and discussion followed allowing students to further engage Dr. Page on a more personal level regarding his life's work.

Please join us when you are in the area and take a walk with me across our beautiful campus. Ferrum College is a dynamic institution with a mission that will continue to guide our efforts as we press forward into an exciting new future.

– David L. Johns, President

Randolph College

With a liberal arts education as the foundation and through strong programs in the creative arts, the sciences, and sustainability, among others, Randolph College students leave our community ready to make a difference in the world. At the core of this educational experience is our outstanding faculty, who have been hard at work developing ways to enhance the educational experience we provide our students. In the last year, the faculty has introduced a new general education curriculum, re-instated a computer science minor, and developed our second graduate program, a low-residency M.F.A. in creative writing. Additionally, the College has created exciting new programs in career development and new support initiatives for students who find the rigor of our curriculum challenging.

2017 was another strong year for the College. Enrollment remained approximately 700 students. After 10 years of co-education and our name change, the College is starting to develop name recognition in the marketplace demonstrated by inquiries and applications to the College growing by more than double.

We continue to make improvements to our campus. We now have an updated electrical grid and have completed year two of a three year project to add two satellite boilers to each building in order to eventually close our central boiler. Generous donors have contributed over \$7 million to these \$7.59 million infrastructure improvements. We opened our new admission welcome center, located in a renovated historic home just outside the main campus. It is a beautiful combination of historic elements with modern décor that sets exactly the right tone as we welcome prospective students and their families to campus. Finally, we are in the initial stages of developing plans for a renovation and potential addition to our Martin Science Building. Science education has always been strong at the College, and to remain at the forefront, we know we need to have first-class facilities.

U.S. News and World Report, *Forbes*, *The Princeton Review*, and *The Washington Monthly*, among other ranking guides, continue to name Randolph a "best college." We are delighted to provide this quality education at an affordable cost, many times lower than the cost of a public university. This is made possible through the generous institutional grants the College provides to students, totaling over \$15.3 million last year. Randolph remains steadfast in its desire to provide an outstanding, affordable education.

We are grateful for the work our college chaplain, Rev. Jennifer Moore, is doing to strengthen the opportunities for spiritual development of our students, which is only made possible through your support. Our weekly campus worship service is beginning to blossom, in addition to a number of other successful programs. We remain thankful for the strong relationship that exists between the College and the Conference. We value greatly the leadership of Rev. John Peters and the connection he provides between Randolph and the Conference. Most of all, we thank the members of the Conference for their ongoing support of Randolph College. Your contributions help us to fulfill our mission of preparing students to engage the world critically and creatively, live and work honorably, and experience life abundantly.

–Bradley W. Bateman, President

Randolph-Macon Academy

There are times in life when you must take a step back and pause, so that you can adequately reflect on your blessings and the amazing work God has done. We are in such a place at Randolph-Macon Academy. During our 125th Anniversary year, we have experienced exciting growth while honoring our heritage as a college-prep school, our traditions as a military school, and our roots in The United Methodist Church.

We have developed a new brand identity, with a tagline that summarizes all we are and all we aspire to be: The Power of Rise. This tagline speaks to the history of R-MA, as God continuously guided us through financial challenges, difficult decisions, and social changes over the past 125 years. It speaks to the desire of our current faculty and staff to rise up and continuously work to become better educators, better coaches, and better mentors. It speaks to our students, who are navigating a new world where technology changes daily and we must teach them to think critically, collaboratively and creatively, not just memorize information, and to rise to each new challenge. And it speaks to our future, as we embrace new teaching philosophies, grow our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) and flight programs, and challenge our students in new ways.

We have already made great leaps forward in our academic program. We added a drone component to our flight program, and built a new innovation lab at our Middle School. It is a classroom that is always active, promoting cross-curriculum projects, and we plan to add one to our Upper School within the next year. Science teacher Nick Bongio received a grant from Toshiba to apply towards his new Biotechnology class, and one of our Air Force Junior ROTC instructors, MSgt Stephen Pederson, recently obtained his ham radio license, enabling him to bring a ham radio club back to R-MA. We welcomed Tess Hegedus, Ph.D., from High Point University, as our new Dean, Instructional Leadership and Innovation, and our former Academic Dean, Jonathan Ezell, is now our Vice President. I expect these leadership changes to help propel our Academy forward.

Throughout this year, we have continued to support our students' spiritual growth. Weekly chapel continues to be a requirement, and many have chosen to take advantage of voluntary small group opportunities as well. Now in the third year of offering confirmation classes, we have 14 enrolled in the UMC class and another six in the Catholic classes. We have 40 students engaged in small group studies and more than a dozen involved in leadership roles and praise team. We also have seven staff members faithfully participating in a Bible study.

Our students are actively engaged in the community; in fact, on September 11th, in honor of our 125th Anniversary, our entire student body went into Warren and Frederick Counties, cleaning gardens, painting, raking, weeding, clearing trails, writing letters to our soldiers overseas—it was an amazing day. The students enjoyed it so much that they are planning a similar event for this spring. On top of this, in October, 11 students and three adults participated in a mission trip in conjunction with the Virginia Conference United Methodist Volunteer in Mission Disaster Recovery. They traveled to Virginia Beach, where they worked on two houses that had been damaged by Hurricane Matthew.

I am blessed to be at a place where God is at work. And all of us at Randolph-Macon Academy are blessed by your continued support and prayers. Thank you, and may God bless you all.

– Brigadier General David C. Wesley, USAF, Retired, President

Randolph-Macon College

Founded in 1830, Randolph-Macon College is a selective, co-educational, nationally ranked liberal arts college located in Ashland, Virginia, just minutes north of Richmond and 90 miles south of Washington, D.C. The college achieves its mission of “developing the minds and character of each student” by balancing rigorous academics in 54 areas of study with individualized attention between our exceptional faculty and students. The student-faculty ratio is 12:1 and the average class size is 16 students. The college has an outstanding reputation for academics, national and international internships, study abroad programs and undergraduate research opportunities.

Now in our 188th year, the college is larger and more diverse than at any time in history, having experienced a significant growth in our student body in recent years. The 2017-2018 academic year opened with more than 1,440 students from 24 states and 19 countries. Of these students, 45.9% are male and 54.1% are female. In addition, 20% are minorities, and many are Presidential Scholars, R-MC's signature scholarship that recognizes students who demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement and leadership.

Our outstanding faculty has been recognized for its achievements on countless fronts, including superior teaching, research, and mentorship, creating personalized education for students both inside and outside of the classroom.

The Edge Career Center is focused on preparing our students for careers and post-graduate success. Faculty serve as mentors and offer important advising, linking valuable liberal arts education with important career and post-graduate success strategies and life skills. *The Edge* focuses on providing students with tools that build a competitive advantage in career and post-graduate environments. The success of this program is reflected in the college's tagline, *Building Extraordinary Futures*.

The Edge also offers Boot Camp, a signature two-day, off-campus immersion program where students learn to identify their career passions, tell their story and hone their interview and communication skills to prepare for success after college. The weekend is devoted to helping students develop their own elevator speech and “brand,” learn how to communicate with confidence, and identify their strengths and capabilities—all with the help of world-class speakers, interviewers and mentors, including R-MC alumni.

R-MC's January Term (J-term) is a four-week session in which students can study abroad and immerse themselves in other cultures, conduct a regional, national or international internship, or take an on-campus course in a specific area of interest. In Janu-

ary 2018, 1323 students participated in J-term. January Term internships provide unique opportunities, and this year, 127 students interned across the country and around the world. Our students experienced internships at organizations as diverse as hospitals, churches, a naval station, non-profits, the General Assembly, and the Sierra Club.

In addition, 162 students participated in study/travel courses during J-term 2018, traveling to a variety of locations including Spain, Austria, Tanzania, Cuba, England, Guatemala, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Israel.

One of the flagship programs at Randolph-Macon is the Schapiro Undergraduate Research Fellowship program (SURF), an endowment to support scholarly undergraduate research by students in all disciplines. SURF allows students the opportunity to conduct original research, under the guidance of a faculty member, and to be paid a stipend. Many students present their findings at academic and professional conferences both nationally and internationally. Now in its 22nd year, SURF has funded research opportunities for over 630 students.

R-MC offers a Four-Year Degree Guarantee, which pledges in writing that freshmen who meet all necessary requirements will graduate within four calendar years. If not, Randolph-Macon will waive tuition costs for R-MC courses needed to complete the degree.

Last year, the college celebrated its 50th anniversary of desegregation by highlighting the events that led to this historical moment and honoring the pioneers who led efforts to achieve equality at the college. R-MC continues to integrate the value of diversity into the fabric of campus life. Through a wide range of student organizations and multicultural programs, Randolph-Macon seeks to build a community that upholds the inherent worth of individuals in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and civility.

In 2015, R-MC completed its enormously successful *Building Extraordinary* campaign with over \$125 million raised from 12,129 alumni and friends. In 2017, 37.5% of our alumni gave back to the college, making us 16th in the country in alumni loyalty. The college has experienced a campus renaissance, with over \$80 million spent on new and renovated facilities in recent years.

In 2017, R-MC's new science building, Macon F. Brock, Jr. Hall, was completed. This three-story, 30,000-square-foot facility, with state-of-the-art teaching laboratories, plus classrooms and faculty offices, houses the biology, environmental science/geology, and chemistry departments. Additionally, a new Keeble Observatory was constructed in 2017.

The A. Purnell Bailey Pre-Ministerial Scholarship Program was established in 2004 to support students who express an interest in ordained ministry in the Christian tradition. Students awarded this scholarship receive half-tuition for the first two years and full tuition for the junior and senior years. Fourteen students were awarded this highly competitive scholarship in 2017-18. The program includes weekly mentoring, two internships in ministry settings, and support selecting and applying to theology school. R-MC recently received a grant to create a Leadership in Ministry experience much like our existing Career Boot Camp program. Pre-ministerial students will have four experiences off campus (including visits to Candler School of Theology, Duke Divinity School, and Wesley Theological Seminary) to help in their professional development as they prepare for ministry.

Summer 2017 marked the beginning of two new summer programs for high school students offered at Randolph-Macon. *Paths to Science* invited rising sophomore Hispanic girls to campus July 23-28 to meet scientists and explore STEM related activities. *Convergence* was an 11-day event (June 22-July 2) in which high school students explored the many ways that faith and science come together. *Convergence* also included faculty lectures and hands-on experiences on the James River and at Shalom Farms.

Student outreach through community service continues to be an important aspect of a Randolph-Macon College education. In 2016-17, R-MC students collectively amassed more than 17,000 volunteer hours and donated \$47,075 to various causes. Students in Fraternity and Sorority Life contributed more than 10,049 hours of collective service to the community and donated nearly \$27,683 to various organizations and philanthropies. In addition, \$14,000 was raised and donated to the American Cancer Society from the annual Relay for Life. The Students Engaged in Responsible Volunteer Experiences (SERVE) program, in the Office of Student Life, is an integral part of Randolph-Macon College.

R-MC coordinates dynamic opportunities for service and service-learning to help students explore the root causes and contexts of social needs through connections with the greater community. Students are actively engaged with groups such as Habitat for Humanity and the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. There are two signature events each year, The Big Event in the fall and Macon a Difference Day in April. These campus-wide community-service initiatives bring together the college's clubs, organizations and academic and administrative departments to volunteer their time and energy for environmental projects and other needs in the surrounding communities.

At Randolph-Macon College, students bond with their peers, faculty mentors and alumni to build meaningful relationships that last a lifetime.

– Alan B. Rashkind, Chairman

Shenandoah University

Shenandoah University's mission is to educate and inspire individuals to be critical, reflective thinkers; lifelong learners; and ethical, compassionate citizens who are committed to making responsible contributions within a community, nation and the world. This year, through our first session of the Youth Theology Institute, we have reached high school students from Virginia, the mid-Atlantic and Northeastern parts of our nation. Additionally, we have extended our hands into multiple countries as we have provided medical needs, natural disaster relief, and will even provide music lessons! We are committed to our community, our nation and the world.

This time last year, we had accepted twenty students into our first ever Youth Theology Institute. The students spent a week at Shenandoah University and a week studying at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C while earning three college cred-

its for their academic work and their congregational justice projects. Shenandoah's institute is funded through a \$600,000 four-year grant from the Lilly Endowment. The students explored what it means to be a Christian in a pluralistic world and explored God's call to the urban and rural settings. If you would like to nominate a dedicated high school student, or you are a dedicated high school student that would like to apply, please do so at su.edu/youththeology.

Shenandoah University and Wesley Theological Seminary have continued to establish their relationship, not only through the Youth Theology Institute, but in initiating a 3+3 Program that benefits our students and our churches. The 3+3 program is a fast-track agreement that will allow Shenandoah University undergraduate students to forgo their senior year and pursue their Master of Divinity degree one year sooner and one year with less tuition debt. This program offers a streamlined approach for those who feel a call to leading the church and faith-based non-profits from both a clergy and lay perspective, and will begin this fall.

This year has also been a significant year for our students serving on mission trips. During Spring Break 2017, a team of Nursing students, faculty, and a Spiritual Life staff member traveled to Brazil to learn and serve people living in the Amazon River Basin on the John Wesley Medical Boat. Through the trip, students, with the assistance of Brazilian doctors, offered underserved communities basic medical care, while learning about a new culture and way of living. This was our fourth time taking a group of Nursing students to Brazil in partnership with the United Methodist Church. We are currently planning our fifth trip for March 2019.

During its annual May trip to Leon, Nicaragua, the Shenandoah University Medical Mission Team served under-resourced families living in the mountains of Leon and Matagalpa. Graduate students and faculty in Physician Assistant studies, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Pharmacy serve in one of three rural clinics run by El Ayudante, a Christian mission organization. They gained clinical experience by providing medical care for people who are typically underserved. This is our largest mission trip every year with nearly 50 people in service.

Over winter break, Spiritual Life took students for a week of serving and rebuilding the Virginia Beach area that has been affected by Hurricane Matthew. We worked with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) doing various construction projects. Prior to this trip, Shenandoah also put together over 30 flood buckets for the United Methodist Committee on Relief to go to places like Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and other locations that were greatly affected by hurricanes this year.

This March, the Office of Spiritual Life is partnering with the Conservatory to offer a Global Experiential Learning (GEL) trip for Music Therapy students to Xela, Guatemala. During this time, students will teach music lessons to Mayan children in Guatemalan Highlands. This trip is done in partnership with the Highland Support Project, which works to empower and support local indigenous communities.

This summer, four Shenandoah University graduates will begin their seminary education, all at United Methodist seminaries (Wesley, Drew, and Candler). Three of them will be on full-tuition scholarships. These four strong, creative women will help lead our Church into a new environment in the world.

In January, Shenandoah University opened a brand new facility called the James R. Wilkins, Jr. Athletics and Events Center. With a capacity of nearly 5,000 people, we are exploring opportunities to engage our community through large-scale regional events. As we continue to value our relationship with the Virginia Annual Conference, I hope you will dream about what events we can hold on our campus in Winchester that might reach others as we "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" and share those ideas with our Dean of Spiritual Life, Rev. Dr. Justin Allen.

Finally, we are sad to see Rev. Tommy Herndon and Rev. Larry Thompson rotate off of the Board of Trustees, but wish them well in retirement. We are excited to welcome Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez, a Shenandoah University alum, and Rev. Dr. Steven Summers to our Board of Trustees as the new district superintendents for the Harrisonburg and Winchester districts.

It is our privilege to work with the Virginia Annual Conference and our seminary colleagues to educate and inspire leaders for tomorrow's church and world.

– Tracy Fitzsimmons, *President*

Virginia Wesleyan College

Virginia Wesleyan University is experiencing an exciting period of transformation and growth. In fact, in a recent editorial piece, higher education consultants from Chicago-based Dwyer Education Strategies described the last two years at Virginia Wesleyan as the most amazing transformational story they've seen in American higher education in the past 13 years.

In summer 2017, Virginia Wesleyan transitioned from a college to a university. As part of that, two new graduate programs were added—an online Master of Business Administration and a Master of Arts in Education—as well as new online degree-completion programs at the undergraduate level.

The academic year began with two prominent additions that have created a "national niche" for Virginia Wesleyan in the natural sciences. First, the University opened its new Greer Environmental Sciences Center, a 44,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility featuring indoor and outdoor classrooms and teaching and research laboratories. The center was LEED Gold Certified by the U.S. Green Building Council this winter, an impressive honor that accompanies Virginia Wesleyan's "2018 Conservationist of the Year" award from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and its advancement to the top-tier Model Level in the Elizabeth River Project's River Star Business program.

Launched in coordination with the GESC, the Batten Honors College of Virginia Wesleyan University aims to educate impactful global citizens through an environmental focus, an international study-away experience, and leadership training and development. This highly selective program annually offers 20 full-tuition scholarships and 20 two-thirds tuition scholarships.

Virginia Wesleyan formed the new Wesleyan Engaged: Center for Civic Leadership and Service Learning in December 2017 and welcomed Dr. Brian Kurisky as its director. The new center builds on the University's strong foundation of student volunteerism and shapes, expands, and directs service learning opportunities, neighborhood partnerships, and interfaith dialogue. These efforts are supported by the Birdsong Community Services Endowment Fund, established in 1995 to provide support for Virginia Wesleyan's acclaimed community services program.

The Westminster/Wesleyan Lifelong Learning Institute was also established this academic year, bringing courses taught by Virginia Wesleyan faculty to the senior-living campus of Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay. Several courses are taught each semester, with roughly half on faith-related topics. The partnership allows Westminster-Canterbury's members to stay challenged and energized as they continue their path of education and growth, and it gives Virginia Wesleyan opportunities to share the talents and leadership of its faculty, students and community.

The University raised funds to offer full scholarships for two visiting students from the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao for the spring 2018 semester. The partnership "promises to aid the recovery in Puerto Rico, to build new and durable alliances between our two regions, and, most importantly, to ensure that young people in Puerto Rico have the opportunity to continue their education," said Mavel Velasco, Professor of Hispanic Studies at VWU.

Each spring, in partnership with the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church, Virginia Wesleyan University hosts a workshop for UMC pastors that yields continuing education units. The 2018 Robert F. Boyd Institute will feature Dr. Tod Bolsinger, Vice President and Chief of Leadership Formation at Fuller Theological Seminary, who will share insight and lessons on leadership in a changing world. The Boyd Institute complements a variety of programs offered by the University's Center for Sacred Music, Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, and Marlin Ministries.

Construction is underway for Virginia Wesleyan's new Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center, scheduled for completion in early 2019. This new facility, coupled with planned expansion of the existing Fine Arts Building, will enhance Virginia Wesleyan's fine and performing arts offerings and showcase the prominence of its arts program to the community.

A new addition to campus is the Frank Blocker Youth Center, a cooperative facility functioning as a laboratory school for VWU's teacher-education students and Tidewater Collegiate Academy during the academic year, and in the summer months by the local YMCA Camp Red Feather.

Construction was also completed last fall on the new 400-meter, eight-lane Betty S. Rogers Track and Field Center, and men's and women's swimming took to the pool for their first season in the Natatorium in the Jane P. Batten Student Center. The Marlins baseball team is playing on the newly-renovated Kenneth R. Perry Field, and, as a result of a recent gift to athletics, Virginia Wesleyan's 2017 NCAA Division III National Softball Championship team will be playing next season's games at Broyles Field in TowneBank Park on campus.

Before us are some of the most promising years in our story. We look outward, yes, and also inward—to the liberal arts, the foundation of our mission, and to our United Methodist heritage, the inspiration for our founding. We look into the minds and hearts of our students, who in turn look to us for guidance and assurance. As we prepare to educate these coming generations who will take their place in a world quite different from that Virginia Wesleyan's origins in 1961, we invite your continued faith in our plans and your active support of our progress. There is much to celebrate!

— *Scott D. Miller, President*

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED MINISTERS AND SPOUSES (ARMS)

ARMS is an association of retired clergy, spouses, and surviving spouses in the Virginia Conference that promotes fellowship, encouragement, support, learning, and sharing. ARMS provide a voice for retirees by facilitating vital connections with each other and the church. All retired clergy, spouses, and surviving spouses are members of ARMS.

The ARMS Board meets four times a year to plan events for our members. Four times a year we publish our newsletter, TO ARMS. Through our newsletter and the conference Retiree Net, we seek to keep our membership informed subjects that impact retired clergy and their family. We have a close working relationship with VUMPI that allows us to get information about health insurance and retirement issues. Together we also plan the annual Retirees Banquet that welcomes that year's new retirees and spouses to ARMS.

The main ARMS event has traditionally been an annual fall retreat. The keynote speaker for our 2017 retreat was Rev. Larry Jent. His stories and witness were enjoyed by everyone. Rev. James Lavender also shared some wonderfully amusing stories with us. The last two years out retreat has been held at Eagle Eryie and they have been wonderful. Our fall retreat this year will be held on October 10-11 and is the process of being planned. We want to invite you to put it on your calendar now. We will send out more information as it is available.

We look forward to another great year serving the members of ARMS

— *Paul & Martha Phillips, Co-presidents*

PREACHERS' RELIEF SOCIETY

In the 148 years since it was first chartered the Preachers' Relief Society has sought to aid clergy families facing fiscal emergencies by providing them with financial grants. While we have not made a thorough search of all the records from past years, we believe that it is unlikely that a year has gone by when the Society has not had multiple requests for assistance and made multiple grants until 2017. This was a year when no requests were made and no grants given. We congratulate the clergy and their families on

their money management skills and rejoice in their good fortune.

In spite of the 2017 record we expect there will be calls for assistance in the future. If in need, clergy, retired and active, their widows and widowers should apply for help through their district superintendents. The Preachers' Relief Society gives each requests careful consideration and does what it feels appropriate to ameliorate the crisis. As far as the Preachers' Relief Society is concerned the grants are confidential. The recipients, of course, are free to disclose whatever they wish.

Our current financial advisor is Ben Riggan of Scott and Stringfellow. Anyone wishing to contribute to the work of the Society may contact him at briggan@bbtscotstringfellow.com or may contact our treasurer, the Reverend Robert F. Cofield, Jr. at bcofield1@hotmail.com.

The current directors of the Society are: Robert T. Casey, president; Edward Lilly, vice-president; James R. Bergdoll, secretary; Robert F. Cofield, Jr., treasurer; Robert N. Baker, III; Sallye Bowen; Katherine Kidwell; James S. Matthews and Harold E. White, Sr.

– Robert T. Casey, President

RETIRED CLERGY HOUSING CORPORATION

In 2017, the Retired Clergy Housing Corporation (RCHC) marked 85 years of serving the Virginia Annual Conference clergy who need support with housing following retirement. Wow, what a history and legacy of help and assistance!!

Currently, RCHC owns 20 properties located across our conference – Hampton, Mechanicsville, Chesterfield, Danville, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Raphine, Staunton, Winchester, Bridgewater, and Prince George. All of our homes are occupied. In the past year, two properties, in Raphine and Edinburg were sold.

Since June 2015, we have engaged Pinnacle Living, formerly known as Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc., to assist with the financial and day-to-day management of our corporation. This has gone very smoothly. The Admissions Committee has been actively working on guidelines for admission and has endorsed the use of HUD financial criteria for qualification. This means that someone who's annual income is less than \$52,700 a year can apply for admission. The committee is also looking at other qualifications of the term "needy" as is currently used in our by-laws, broadening our opportunity to serve our retirees beyond financial consideration.

For the past few years, we have not received adequate funds to cover the cost of our expenses and have had to draw from savings. The Board of Directors has endorsed a sliding scale payment program which will affect future residents. The Board will be exploring other avenues to strengthen our financial position so that we can serve our retired clergy in need well into the future.

The annual Covenant of Gratitude drive is one way we help support our budget. We ask individuals to donate \$1 per commissioned Provisional Elder and Deacon. Please consider joining our Covenant of Gratitude family! Your donation helps subsidize basic operations and unexpected repairs. On an average, our yearly budget is approximately \$175,000, and the payments we receive from our residents does not meet the financial need. **We receive no funds from the conference for the important work we do.** Please, consider joining us in supporting our retired clergy.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you in advance for any assistance you are able to give this wonderful ministry. What an honor and privilege it is to talk with the families we serve and hear comments like: "You will never know what this opportunity means to us. Without RCHC, we just don't know what we would have done!" Our clergy have given themselves to the service of God and what an honor to now help support them with housing.

– Charles Wickham, Chairperson

THE UNITED METHODIST CREDIT UNION

Our goal is to be a primary resource for encouraging sound stewardship principles and helping United Methodist churches, individuals and institutions. Our objective is to help our members "to earn all they can and save all they can so they can give all they can" as servants of Christ in the world.

We are a full service financial institution and we operate solely to serve the financial needs of our member owners. Our all volunteer board of directors is comprised of a cross section of lay and clergy. We help our members by providing quality financial products and services, including savings and checking accounts, loans, Visa rewards credit cards, online services and resources to assist our members with personal financial management. We offer SnapLoan, an educational line of credit for college students that comes with an interest rate discount for students attending a United Methodist affiliated college or seminary school. We have partnered with several conference churches to establish Jubilee Assistance Funds; a program that assists churches with short term loans to help their church members who may be experiencing a financial emergency. We recently partnered with a financial services firm that can assist our members with college planning/529s, annuities, long term care and saving for retirement.

Our church loan program helps conference churches with the refinance of current loans, loans for parsonages, renovations, and vans and buses. We also offer project loans (up to \$50,000 unsecured) and Visa rewards credit cards for church business.

John Wesley was among the first to organize financial cooperatives among the faithful in the Methodist movement and it is in the spirit of Wesley that in 1952 a group of Virginia pastors pooled their resources to help each other and established our credit union. As we celebrate 66 years of service in 2018, our membership has grown to include United Methodist churches, church members, clergy, organizations, agencies and institutions in the conferences of North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Baltimore-Washington (*churches and organizations only*).

– Alvin J. Horton, Chair of the Board

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATORS OF THE UNITED METHODIST CONNECTIONAL STRUCTURE (PAUMCS)

The purpose of the Professional Administrators of The United Methodist Connectional Structure (PAUMCS)* is to provide a supportive base for the unity and fellowship of its members in order to provide individual growth, professional development, continuous education and spiritual enrichment. PAUMCS promotes and encourages the training and support of United Methodist church administrators, secretaries and other church staff; serves as an advocate for emerging concerns that affect church administrators, secretaries and other church staff; encourages and assists in the establishment of chapters of church administrators, secretaries and other church staff, within or across jurisdictional and annual conference boundaries, and assists in coordinating the program and work of these chapters.

Legislation was adopted at the 1988 General Conference which states that the General Conference of Finance and Administration (GCFA) has the authority and responsibility to provide guidance and consultation for continuing education of church secretaries, including establishment of professional standards, training and certification programs and to provide assistance to PAUMCS (*2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶807.18).

The Virginia Chapter of PAUMCS sponsors two meetings during the year: a one-day fall training event and an all-day spring retreat event. Members are persons presently or previously, full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer, engaged in administrative work in any local church or agency of The United Methodist Church.

Highlights of Virginia PAUMCS activities in 2017-2018 include a six-page mailing sent to the administrative staff of the 1,200 charges of the Virginia Conference and the fall “Experience Your Conference Connection” event held in October. This gathering featured David Domnisse, Conference Treasurer and Statistician, who led our workshop covering the annual statistical data required by the General Church.

Our spring training/retreat event, “Get Away From It All,” will be held at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center in mid-May. Our presenter is Martha Stokes, Director of Church and Community Relations for Pinnacle Living, formerly Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. Martha will share her reflections on the experience of the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences and expectations for the called General Conference, February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. Attendees also value the networking and spiritual component of this time together.

If you have administrative staff in your church, either paid or volunteer, we encourage you to help them become a part of Virginia PAUMCS for their professional growth, to the benefit of your church!

* *Name change made during 2016 PAUMCS National Conference.*

– Sandra S. Fulcher, President

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Much of the time and energy of the Conference Historical Society during the past year has been directed toward preparations for hosting the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society (SEJHS) for their annual meeting, which will take place at the Williamsburg UMC, July 17-20. The theme for the event is “Religious Liberty in the Historic Advance of Virginia Methodism”. Video messages from Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, lectures, panels, and tours will provide an overview of the advance of Methodism from Colonial times to the present, including a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Uniting Conference of 1968, which brought the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Central Jurisdiction and the Methodist Church into a union known as The United Methodist Church. The highlight of that evening will be remarks from retired Bishop Peter Weaver, followed by a concert featuring a quartet from The Brethren, a professional men’s chorus from northern Virginia.

An outstanding group of lecturers and panelists will tell the story of Methodism’s growth in the Commonwealth of Virginia over the course of nearly 250 years, with emphasis on the Colonial era, the Shenandoah Valley, the Chesapeake Islands and the union which formed the UMC. There will be tours of the churches of Colonial Williamsburg, including ringing the *Freedom Bell* at the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg (recently rung by President Obama at the opening of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African-American History and Culture), Historic Jamestowne, and encounters with historical interpreters, designed to help experience an earlier era. One unit of continuing education credit is being offered to those who attend the entire event.

The VCHS extends its deep condolences to the family of the late Rev. Myrtle Frances Hatcher, who as a Trustee of the Conference Historical Society served as Chair of the 2018 SEJHS Annual Meeting Steering Committee. Her love, guidance and commitment to this effort will be remembered through the dedication of this gathering to her memory.

Other significant accomplishments of the VCHS include:

- Approval of a resolution from the William Watters Foundation, seeking Conference and General Commission on Archives and History certification of the William Watters burial site as a “Registered Methodist Historical Site”.
- Installment of a historical marker at Mt. Zion Church in Leesburg, recognizing the church as the oldest continuing African-American congregation in Virginia, tracing its origins to Old Stone Church, founded in 1766.
- Growth of the Patti Russell Endowment, which supports the salary of the Conference Archivist, to over \$335,000.00.
- Recognition of the importance of increasing and maintaining Conference and Endowment financial support for the Archives to meet the demands of both present and future in properly maintaining Conference records and to provide resources to local

churches in maintaining and further developing local church histories and assisting other institutions or individuals in the work of historical preservation and interpretation.

- Publication of *Heritage*, now in its 45th year, telling the stories of Virginia United Methodist history. The Fall 2017 issue celebrated the 150th anniversary of Mt. Zion UMC, the African-American descendent of the Old Stone Church in Leesburg, and it discussed the 1963 integration of Fredericksburg Methodist Church, the first all-white Methodist church in the VA Conference to desegregate. The Spring 2018 issue features the Rev. Lee Sheaffer's remembrances of his time in the clergy of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the 1968 merger, as well as an article about Joseph Mastin and his advocating of eugenics.
- Coming events: The Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, July 17-20, 2018; registration information can be found on the Conference website under the Conference Historical Society. The Fall meeting of the VCHS will take place at Shady Grove UMC, Mechanicsville, 10 a.m., October 6. The speaker will be Dr. Dale Patterson from the General Commission on Archives and History.

The following person is presented to the Annual Conference for election as clergy and lay trustees of the Conference Historical Society, 2018-19:

– *John T. Martin Jr., President*

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation

Over the past year, the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (OBCF) has further developed its strategic plans for two of the properties entrusted its care. The first is the old Randolph-Macon College/Boydton Institute site in Boydton. Our focus is two-fold, including preservation of the property and acquiring necessary funding and sources to accomplish the project within the next several years. We are seeking to determine what part(s) of the main building, which served as a dormitory, classrooms, and administrative offices, can or should be preserved, and we are seeking to restore the adjacent headmaster's house, a structure that could be used for a learning center/library and/or caretaker residence. Our leadership team for this project is in the process of developing relationships with granting organizations, foundations, and major donors. A plan is being developed for the utilization of the physical property with consideration of how best to interpret the significant history of both the original site of R-MC, the oldest Methodist College in America, and the Boydton Institute, which later occupied these same facilities, serving African-American students for half a century in the years following the Civil War. These two schools had a significant impact on the education of whites and blacks for over 100 critical years in our nation's history, providing leaders in many fields, including higher education and the civil rights movement.

The second project is "Canaan," the name given by the Rev. Edward Dromgoole to his home, which served as a meeting place for early Methodists, including Bishop Francis Asbury, for many years. The Board of Supervisors of Brunswick County approved our "concept" for a retreat center and gave us a conditional permit to move forward with a plan to develop a rustic campground and assembly building that would accommodate about forty people for educational purposes. A leadership team for this project is in place. Steps are being taken to shore up the foundation of the home and to prevent further deterioration. An archeological dig was conducted by the College of William and Mary, assisting in the identification of structures on the site and the recovery of artifacts. One such structure is a "spinning house," which with restoration could become a museum and visitor orientation center.

The third project is maintenance and interpretation of the Ebenezer Academy site, the first Methodist school in America, located near Warfield. The site is complete and open to the public. Signage along Boydton Plank Road, Route 1, marks the entrance.

We are grateful for the progress being made by the OBCF, but much help is needed from United Methodists across the Conference. Financial gifts, on-site volunteers, and researchers are welcome to join in these efforts to preserve and interpret these vital aspects of the origins of Methodism in Virginia.

– *Jim Mott, President*

The Old Stone Church Foundation

The Old Stone Church Foundation was established by the Virginia Conference Historical Society in 1974 to be responsible for the care and preservation of Methodism's Old Stone Church Site in Leesburg, the first Methodist owned property in America. Members of the foundation help support this mission and we continue to be grateful for those who maintain their membership in the foundation year after year.

Our pillar church (Mt Zion UMC) celebrated its 150th anniversary in October and installed a "Historical Marker" in early March 2018 citing it as the oldest continuing black congregation in the state of Virginia.

– *Charles Williams, President*

William Watters Foundation

The William Watters Foundation was established by the Virginia Conference Historical Society in 1996 to protect and preserve the small Adams-Wren-Watters cemetery in McLean, Virginia. William Watters, the first American-born itinerant Methodist minister and his wife are buried there. The cemetery, a circular plot, 90 feet in diameter and one-quarter acre in area, is located at 6430 Linway Terrace (off Old Dominion Drive), McLean, Virginia. It has been registered as the United Methodist Historic Site No. 7 since 1970.

Myra Lindsey prepared a resolution, which was approved by the executive committee of the Virginia Conference Historical Society (also known as the Virginia Commission on Archives and History, or VCAH), and submitted to Common Table seeking Annual Conference endorsement that the United Methodist Historic Site No. 7: William Watters Grave, McLean, Virginia be designated a Heritage Landmark.

According to the *Book of Discipline* (2016, Paragraph 1712.b), “Heritage Landmarks of the United Methodist Church are buildings, locations, or structures that are specifically related to significant events, developments, or personalities in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents. They must have distinctive historic interest and value for the denomination as a whole, as contrasted with local or regional historic significance.”

We feel the William Watters gravesite qualifies for this status because the Rev. Mr. Watters, the first American-born Methodist itinerant preacher, went to great lengths to keep the American Methodist movement alive and operational during the Revolutionary War, a time when Methodist ministers were often suspected of being British loyalists. Without his efforts, it is possible the United Methodist Church would not exist today. Myra is currently preparing the application and supporting documents necessary for requesting Heritage Landmark status, which must be submitted to the General Commission on Archives and History by June 30, 2018, for General Conference action in 2020.

We are presently assembling a display table for the 2018 SEJ Historical Society Annual Meeting, being held in Williamsburg, Virginia, July 17-20, and sponsored by the Virginia Conference Historical Society. The table will tell, in word, artifacts and photos, about William Watters’ life and of the mission of the William Watters Foundation.

For additional information write to:

The William Watters Foundation, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd, McLean, VA 22101

– E. Jean Balcom, President

THE VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION

“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction;
whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

–Galatians 6:8-10

Seeds sitting by themselves in a bag produce nothing. Seeds held in a pod or cased in their native wrapper produce nothing. Seeds will never flower or be fruitful on their own. The purpose for seeds is not ornamental.

Seeds need to be sown in soil or in a field – where they can germinate and multiply to grow new crops. Sowing took the form of scattering in Bible times. Today we have big equipment that can be deliberate to sow seeds evenly and efficiently across a field.

If you sow a little seed, you will reap a little harvest – because it has to be there in seed form before it can show up in harvest form. Any farmer knows that.

Being generous in sowing gives us an opportunity to have a generous harvest that can bless others. Living. Giving. Sharing. Saving. Stewarding. These are all ways that we can sow the seeds of our lives – to prepare for a harvest that can impact others. Our perspective is never neutral, and often shaped by events around us.

- Giving back to the community can extend the hands of Christ and edify believers by ‘adding nutrients to the soil of our community.’
- Building an endowment can sow seeds from one generation’s generosity to impact coming generations by planning and connecting our lives with eternity.
- Creating a scholarship fund can sow seeds to provide training in equipping next generations to carry forth the message of Christ.
- Allocating excess funds to create grants to resource strategic ministry initiatives, or to serve the needy and feed the hungry both now and later ... to minister hope and healing as a lasting legacy!

Over the past year, the Virginia United Methodist Foundation served more than 350 churches across the Conference in creating ministries for the future. Seeds have been sown selflessly to fulfill our mission statement: **Stewarding Potential to build His kingdom!** Our vision is focused on an eternal harvest while we create lasting ministries through strategic planning, gifts and grants

to support ministry expansion, continuing education to equip leaders as stewards, capital campaigns and effective stewardship to energize generosity. Our commitment is to live out our Core Values with a vision for relevant ministry that leaves a lasting legacy for generations to come.

I am grateful for each fund – large and small – and each church relationship – urban or rural – where we serve as a fiduciary and assist in fulfilling their mission and vision. Sow seeds widely and expect God to bring the harvest! Capture the potential for an eternal impact!

Current Foundation Relationships	Number	Value
Local church-related accounts	231	\$44,919,603
Individual Endowments	89	8,311,438
District and Agency funds	65	11,967,422
Charitable Gift Annuities	45	805,629
Foundation-controlled Funds	5	636,019
Total	435	\$66,640,111

– Board of Directors, Virginia United Methodist Foundation

Virginia United Methodist Development Company, LLC

Stewarding Potential to Build His Kingdom

Seeds sown can grow and multiply! Churches planted and ministries expanded can also grow and multiply.

Helping church leadership discern how to manage short-term assets and prepare for long-term loans is like sowing seeds for a future harvest. At the core of managing time-based deposits is the need for liquidity and often an aversion to risk and volatility. By contrast, a church loan for a major capital expansion is often a long-term commitment based on envisioning its mission and ministry 10-20 years into the future. Both require clear vision on potential and purpose for both investment and expansion. It's all about balancing perspective!

Over the past year, the Virginia United Methodist Development Company, LLC, has expanded its reach with loans to more than 35 churches across the Conference and impacted more than 26,000 Methodists. Thanks to 512 churches, agencies and individuals who have become investors in the Development Company, we have been able to make a difference by helping them with church extension loan financing. These churches are now saving more than \$650,000 in debt service and, thereby, increasing their operational cash flow to enable them to expand their local ministry outreach!

Our impact can be seen with:

- Helping a church think and plan through a capital campaign for a major renovation and building expansion.
- A re-finance loan for a church whose loan interest rate was the highest in the conference and was impeding their ability to maintain their budget or pay apportionments.
- Equipping a church in the Alexandria District to launch a comprehensive strategy for donor engagement to cover expanded ministry and reduce debt on their new building.
- Three different churches who needed a combo loan to re-finance a previous loan while planning for facility expansion or capital upgrades.
- Assisting a church in the Richmond District with financing their building expansion after initiating a capital campaign to reach their growing community

These are just a few of the examples of how your investments enable the Development Company to fulfill its mission: **Stewarding Potential to build His kingdom!** As a connectional ministry, our goal is to help local churches become effective stewards of the resources entrusted – both building and budget – and re-envision their impact in mission and ministry in their local community. Each loan has a unique story of connecting with their community and impacting lives as the hands and feet of Christ.

The Development Fund is a registered Offering with the Commonwealth of Virginia. Although investments are not insured, they are safeguarded through strict investment and lending policies, healthy collateral coverage on its loans and strong oversight by its board and competent staff. The Development Company offers construction loans with terms up to one year. Permanent loans with terms of five years and amortization up to 30 years are also available. Our purpose is to enable United Methodist investors to fund

church capital improvement loans. Deposits continue to grow though not sufficient to meet the loan demand. Our continuing prayer for the coming year is increased participation in the deposits to help meet the loan demand! Thereby, our motto: **United Methodists Investing to Impact Virginia!**

In 2017, the Development Company realized another year of significant growth in investments and loans. As of December 31:

Total Assets	\$30,448,563
Total Outstanding Loans	\$27,344,310
Loan Commitments for future	\$12,750,000
Loan to Collateral Value	33.52%

Our focused perspective remains: Strengthening the local church to expand ministry in its community through effective planning and ongoing consultation as we manage assets and provide support to fulfill its enduring local mission!

– Board of Directors, Virginia United Methodist Foundation



RESOLUTIONS

*Resolutions and Petitions are ordered alphabetically by title.
This does not indicate the order in which they will be considered.*

RESOLUTION 1

Affirm Unity in Christ

WHEREAS, the 2019 called General Conference of the United Methodist Church will be considering proposed changes to the *Book of Discipline* to address United Methodists’ differing understandings regarding sexual identity and practice,

WHEREAS, unity of the followers of Jesus is a value of our Lord Jesus Christ, (John 17:20-21)

WHEREAS, our unity is found, not in common ground on a particular issue, but in our baptism and relationship with God through Jesus Christ, (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

WHEREAS, the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, encouraged Christians to “be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion” (John Wesley’s sermon, “Catholic Spirit”)

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church urges the 2019 General Conference to affirm unity in Christ in the midst of our diversity, to challenge in love all that divides, and to offer to all people God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ that transforms the world. We urge and we pray that the 2019 General Conference will resist schism and express openness to diverse perspectives in matters of sexual identity and practice. We urge all faithful United Methodists to pray for a way forward that nurtures an inclusive, evangelical, and faithful Church.

– Submitted by

*Rev. Lauren Lobenhofer, Rev. Mochel Morris, Rev. Beth Givens, Rev. Kirk Nave,
Rev. Tim Ward, Shirley Cauffman, Rev. Denise Honeycutt, Carolyn Woodrum,
Angie Williams, Rev. Sarah Locke*



RESOLUTION 2

Commendation and Encouragement post Charlottesville August 2017

WHEREAS, the experience of terrorism at the hands of white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the KKK during a rally in Charlottesville in 2017 has prompted many persons to want to join in the efforts to fight racism;

WHEREAS, the sin of racism is not only a problem in Charlottesville; it is in our own communities;

WHEREAS, our Social Principles state “we recognize racism as sin and affirm ultimate and temporal worth of all persons.”

WHEREAS, the United States continues to become more ethnically and racially diverse;

WHEREAS, our General Commission on Religion and Race offers excellent resources for ministry and education;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference commends the clergy, spiritual leaders and faith communities of the Charlottesville area for their ministry in combating racism and white supremacy through their advocacy, educational efforts direct action and the offering of safe space for marchers during the events of August 2017 by sending a copy of this resolution to the Clergy Collective of Charlottesville, Congregate Charlottesville, and First United Methodist Church of Charlottesville;

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference encourage each local congregation to engage in the work of personal repentance, social transformation and embracing the other over the coming year through study and action regarding racism and white supremacy, and join with other community groups (like the NAACP) to advance racial justice and reconciliation;

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference encourages the Virginia Conference Historical Society and the Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy to educate the Virginia Conference about the history of racism in the Conference, as well as efforts to aimed at racial justice and reconciliation, through the Virginia Advocate and other publications of the Conference.

– Submitted by Virginia Conference Board of Church & Society



RESOLUTION 3

Compassionate Support for Members of the Armed Forces, Veterans and Their Families Suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress and Moral Injury

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church acknowledges; “When persons choose to serve in the armed forces, we support their right to adequate care for injuries suffered, and advocate for sufficient resources to meet their physical and mental health needs, both during and after their service. We are aware that we can become guilty both by military action and by conscientious objection, and that we all are dependent on God’s forgiveness.” (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 164 I) and

Those who have served in the armed forces, particularly those who have served in combat and their families, have experienced degrees of alienation due to well-meaning or unwitting actions of congregations and clergy, separating them from connection with the faith community, and

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church profess the struggles for human dignity and social reform are in response to “God’s demand for love, mercy, and justice in the light of the Kingdom.” (¶ 102), as well as, the Nurture and Mission of the Church, emphasizes “the nurturing and serving function of Christian fellowship in the Church” through a personal experience of conviction, nourished by a community faith. (¶ 102) and

We believe that suicide is not the way a human life should end, furthermore, a Christian perspective on suicide begins with an affirmation of faith that nothing, including suicide, separates us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). Therefore, we deplore the condemnation of people who complete suicide, and we consider unjust the stigma that so often falls on surviving family and friends. (¶ 161 N) and

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs, in January of 2014, estimated that, at that time, 22 US veterans per day were taking their own lives. Jan Kemp, Veterans Affairs National Mental Health Director for Suicide Prevention concluded that the rate of veteran’s suicides “are astronomically high and climbing”. and

In recent years there has been a spike among service members and veterans in the occurrence of Post-Traumatic Stress, in the past referred to as shell shock, battle fatigue or combat stress, stemming from experiences of severe trauma or life-threatening events. Understanding that, it is normal for the mind and body to react after such events, but this normal response becomes harmful when individuals feel trapped in a cycle of anxiety, anger or shame, disconnecting from relationships of family and community, and

Moral injuries which may stem from direct participation in acts of combat, such as killing or harming others, or indirect acts, such as witnessing death or dying, failing to prevent immoral acts of others, or giving or receiving orders that are perceived as gross moral violations, it is important to consider mental health symptoms and moral injury as separate manifestations of combat trauma. Furthermore, moral injury is not explicitly addressed in the evidence-based treatments for PTSD currently supported by the Veterans Administration, and

It is the responsibility of all who seek the Reign and Kinship of Christ to preserve the dignity of all persons without regard to religion, race, nationality, or gender, and seek to enhance the quality of life in the entire community of humankind thus fulfilling an obligation to God (Matthew 25:31-40).

THEREFORE, *be it resolved*, that the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church will appoint a core group, of six to eight individuals, who shall network with established veterans organizations in order to discern the requirements and resources for implementing training courses to teach qualified lay and clergy in techniques of engaging service members, veterans and their families in an atmosphere of compassionate and productive dialogue. Furthermore, this core group will be tasked with securing any further funding necessary to produce training materials.

Be it further resolved, that the Virginia Conference, encourage, endorse and strive to provide/identify and/or develop resources to encourage local congregations in providing open, safe and welcoming spaces for active duty service members, veterans and their families, to share their stories and find sanctuary within the faith community, without condemnation, judgment or the obligation of contribution or confession of faith.

Be it further resolved, that the Virginia Conference commits itself to strengthening clergy and spiritual leaders in their pastoral ministry to members of the armed forces, veterans and their families, by providing additional training for clergy and lay leadership in cultivating and inaugurating care groups focused on spiritual formation and healing for those suffering with post-traumatic stress

and moral injury, through God's forgiving grace.

– Submitted by Virginia Conference Board of Church & Society



RESOLUTION 4

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The United Methodist Social Principles (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 162.H III. Social Community) state that we recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and the struggles of those who are immigrants and refugees, and to advocate for justice for all; and

The Kingdom of God is made up of persons from every tribe, tongue, nation, and language (Revelation 7:9); and

Our ancestors in faith were sojourners and aliens in the land of Egypt (Exodus 1:1-14; 1 Chronicles 16:19; Acts 7:6); and

Our Immigrant and Refugee ancestors were welcomed to this land by many of the Natives already dwelling in the land; and

Our Lord Jesus Christ lived His childhood years as an immigrant and refugee (Matthew 2:13-23); and

The Scriptures call us to show compassion and justice for the sojourner and alien among us (Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 10:18-19; Psalm 94:6; Jeremiah 7:6; Ezekiel 22:29; Zechariah 7:10); and

The Great Commission compels us to take the Gospel to the nations (Matthew 28:18-20), and the Great Commandment compels us to love our neighbor as self (Mark 12:30-31); and

The Gospel reminds us that our response to the most vulnerable among us is a response to Jesus Himself (Matthew 25:40); and

The Bible denounces the exploitation of workers and the mistreatment of the poor (Isaiah 3:15; Amos 4:1; James 5:4); and

Approximately 12 to 15 million undocumented immigrants live and work within our borders; and

War, conflict and persecution have displaced more than 65 million people worldwide, the highest number ever recorded, and forced 22.5 million of these people to flee to other countries as refugees, and

Individuals and hard-working families are being separated, and thus detrimental to society, and as Christians we highly value the importance of families being together; and

The relative invisibility of the immigrant and refugee population can lead to detrimental consequences in terms of health, education, and well-being, especially of children; and

Many of these persons, desiring a better future for themselves and their families, are fleeing brutal economic and political situations; and

Recent government actions are reducing the scope and effectiveness of federal immigration and refugee programs,

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church urges the U.S. Congress to pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Be it further resolved, that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church urges the Administration and U.S. Congress to recognize our Nation's historic leadership in welcoming and supporting refugees, restore refugee admissions to previous levels, and strengthen the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

Be it further resolved, that a copy of this resolution shall be delivered to the President of the United States, U.S. Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.

Be it further resolved, that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church encourages congregations to engage in educational efforts on issues of immigration and refugees, and engage in advocacy with Federal, and State, and local Legislators.

Be it further resolved, that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church urges congregations to become Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Communities. *

Be it further resolved, that we pray for our churches to demonstrate the reconciliation of the Kingdom both in the verbal witness of our Gospel and in the visible character of our congregations.

**“Immigrant Welcoming Communities” from the General Board of Church of Society provides guidance to congregations. Available at: www.umcjustice.org/documents/38.*

– Submitted by the Board of Church and Society



RESOLUTION 5

Endorse and Commend Cville2Jtown: A Pilgrimage of Transformation

WHEREAS, scripture teaches us “God created humanity in God’s own image, in the divine image God created them” (Gen. 1:27, CEB); and

WHEREAS, the core identity of God’s Chosen People lay recognition of their deliverance by God’s merciful hand, as Moses exhorted them to “Remember... that you came out of Egypt, out of the place you were slaves,” (Ex. 13:33, CEB); and

WHEREAS, Christ’s Church continues to live into its identity as the people of God, delivered from sin into the truth that “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.5:26-28, CEB); and

WHEREAS, our *Social Principles* teach us “Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others;”¹ and exhort us not only to recognize “racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons,” but to “commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access;”² and

WHEREAS, racism as prejudice sanctioned by institutional power upholding structures of white supremacy first decimated the indigenous American Indians, then enslaved people of African descent, and continues to this day, ingrained in our political, economic, and judicial systems and our culture; and

WHEREAS, the *2016 Book of Resolutions* recognizes how “the concepts of race and racism were created explicitly to ensure the subjugation of peoples the Europeans believed to be inferior” and how “the myth of European superiority persisted—and persists—in every institution in American life.” (Resolution #3371, *2016 Book of Resolutions*, (adopted 1980 and readopted 2000, 2008, 2016)); and

WHEREAS, the *2016 Book of Resolutions* challenges “all persons, whatever their racial or ethnic heritage, to work together to restore the broken body of Christ” (Resolution #3376, *2016 Book of Resolutions*, (adopted 2000, amended and readopted 2008, 2016))³; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the white supremacy that continues to poison our national life erupted in Charlottesville, Virginia in a series of public statements, blog posts, podcasts, press releases, rallies, torch-lit demonstrations, and acts of violent intimidation and aggression by ardent racists, anti-Semites, and white nationalists who collectively identified their efforts as “Unite the Right;”⁴ and

WHEREAS, this campaign of white supremacist intimidation began with a nighttime tiki-torch rally in Emancipation Park on May 13th, included a KKK rally in Justice Park on July 8th, culminated in a sustained assault on Charlottesville over the weekend of August 11-12th, and has continued with sporadic protests, demonstrations, acts of vandalism, and threats of violence to the present day⁵; and

WHEREAS, the toxic climate of white supremacy is not localized to the city of Charlottesville but has been focused and become visible there as a symptom of the sin that clings close to our entire nation; and

WHEREAS, leaders and people of faith in Charlottesville offered an instrumental witness of opposition to white supremacy by organizing community conversations, prayer meetings, marches, services of worship, training for non-violent direct action, representation at city meetings, first aid, pastoral care, financial assistance, support of local anti-racist activists, and other acts of prophetic resistance to white supremacy noted within their community, across the country, and around the world;⁶ and

WHEREAS, the theme of this 236th Annual Conference Session, “Servant Leaders Making a Difference,” invites us to be faithful stewards of God’s grace by employing our gifts in acts of humble service and loving witness (1 Peter 4:10); and,

WHEREAS, the Bishop’s Convocation on Race and Reconciliation has sought to empower Virginia United Methodists to become “life-long learning disciples,” able to “conduct difficult conversations... related to issues of racial division, justice, and God’s call to ministries of reconciliation and peace;” and,

WHEREAS, United Methodist clergy together with others in the Charlottesville Clergy Collective are organizing *Cville2Jamestown: A Pilgrimage of Transformation* under the leadership of The Rev. Dr. Jan Rivero, with the purpose of understanding and bearing witness to the history of our country’s racial and ethnic injustice, building partnerships of reconciliation, and beginning to envision a healed and just future; and

WHEREAS, this interfaith pilgrimage will span October 6th - 14th, 2018 and offer opportunities for education, reflection, prayer, and community building amongst all people; and

1 *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church 2017-2020*, ¶162 (Kindle Locations 567-568). The United Methodist Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

2 *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church 2017-2020* (Kindle Locations 574-576). The United Methodist Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

3 United Methodist Church. *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2016* (Kindle Locations 6500-6503). The United Methodist Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

4 Andrew Katz, ed, “Unrest In Virginia: Clashes Over A Show Of White Nationalism In Charlottesville Turn Deadly.” Photo Essay, *TIME Magazine*, August 2017, accessed 02 March 2018, <http://time.com/charlottesville-white-nationalist-rally-clashes/>

5 Hunton & Williams, “Independent Review of the 2017 Protest Events in Charlottesville, Virginia,” accessed 01 Dec 2017, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c869fb_a573de9ad4f04b0491b927ca9d48252c.pdf

6 Jonathan Blitzer, “How Church Leaders in Charlottesville Prepared for White Supremacists,” *The New Yorker*, 15 Aug 2017, accessed 20 Aug 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-church-leaders-in-charlottesville-prepared-for-white-supremacists>

WHEREAS, the pilgrimage will begin at the Jefferson School African-American Heritage Center in Charlottesville with walk to Monticello to visit the African American burial grounds and receive the names of the 607 persons enslaved on the Monticello plantation; *and*

WHEREAS, the week following will be framed by cultural and educational events held in and around Charlottesville celebrating African-American contributions to our shared national heritage; *and*

WHEREAS, on Saturday, October 13th, a bus will deliver participants to Richmond to walk the Slave Trail and close the day in worship; *and*

WHEREAS, Sunday, October 14th, the walk will proceed to Jamestown, carrying the names received at Monticello, passing plantations on the way to the site of the arrival of the first ship carrying enslaved people, and hearing stories of lives defined by the injustice of racism and the legacy of the betrayal of indigenous people; *and*

WHEREAS, along the way sacred texts will call participants to repentance and they will pray for reconciliation;

THEREFORE, *be it resolved* by this 236th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church endorse the witness of Cville2Jtown: A Pilgrimage of Transformation (www.cville2jtown.com) and commend local churches and individuals to observe this pilgrimage physically or symbolically with their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness.

—Submitted by Robert Lewis on behalf of Methodist Federation for Social Action



RESOLUTION 6

Gracious Accommodation Virginia Annual Conference

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has experienced increasing polarization over theological and ethical issues, leading to parts of the church no longer finding themselves able to comply with United Methodist polity and discipline; *and*,

WHEREAS, persons of sincere faith and Christian commitment within the church are led by the convictions of conscience to significantly divergent beliefs and actions regarding the church's ministry to and with LGBTQ persons and their families; *and*,

WHEREAS, these divergent beliefs and actions appear to be irreconcilable with each other, to the point that the 2016 General Conference requested the Council of Bishops to appoint a Commission on a Way Forward to develop proposals to end the conflict within our church and provide a way forward that would refocus the church on discipleship and mission; *and*,

WHEREAS, any plan that is proposed by the Commission and the Council is likely to have provisions that offend the deeply held beliefs of some of our members, meaning that such plans need to provide for a fair and gracious accommodation for conscience; *and*,

WHEREAS, the Commission and the Council have both urged the church to act out of a "heart of peace" rather than a "heart of war," giving grace and exercising Christ-like humility in the way that we engage with one another; *and*,

WHEREAS, a significant part of giving grace is to offer fair treatment to our church's congregations and members, treating others as we would like to be treated (Matthew 7:12), not coercing their consciences or penalizing them for sincerely and deeply held Christian understandings on either side of the divide over LGBTQ ministry; *and*,

WHEREAS, "all properties of United Methodist local churches . . . are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the *Discipline*" (§ 2501.1); *and*,

WHEREAS, it is patently unfair to require congregations who cannot in good conscience abide by the decision of the 2019 General Conference to compromise their consciences in order to remain in The United Methodist Church or surrender their buildings in order to be faithful to their Christian understanding, nor is it fair to expect members who have invested decades of loving gifts of time, service, and finances to build their local congregation to walk away from that building or pay a high cost in order to remain true to their consciences;

THEREFORE, *be it resolved*, that the Virginia Annual Conference strongly urges that any plan passed by the 2019 General Conference have within it the provision of a fair and gracious exit path for congregations who cannot in good conscience abide by the stance of the church regarding LGBTQ ministry, as determined by the 2019 General Conference. Such an exit path should allow congregations to leave the denomination with their buildings and assets, assuming their own liabilities, but without demanding payments to the conference that could impact the congregations' ministry. "Though we can't think alike, may we not love alike?" said John Wesley. Can we not bless one another in pursuing the various paths of ministry we believe God is laying before us?

The secretary of the annual conference shall send this resolution to all of the active bishops of the church and each of the heads of General Conference delegations, to be shared with the members of their delegations.

— Submitted by Rev. Thomas R. Barnard, Karen Bossieux, Rev. John A. Bright, Brenda Hudson, Rev. R. Bruce Johnson, Mary Jones, Becky Livermon, Rev. Norman L. Ramsey, III, Rev. Dr. H. O. Tom Thomas



RESOLUTION 7

Study and Action on Gun Violence

In 2016 the General Conference of the United Methodist passed a resolution (§ 162) titled “Our Call to End Gun Violence.” It began with this theological rationale

Jesus’ call to his followers to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) is tied to intimate relationship with God, and echoes God’s dreams for peace for all of creation as expressed in Micah 4:1-4:

“In days to come, / the mountain of the LORD’s house / shall be established as the highest of the mountains, / and shall be raised up above the hills. / Peoples shall stream to it, / and many nations shall come and say: / ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, / to the house of the God of Jacob; / that he may teach us his ways / and that we may walk in his paths.’ / For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, / and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. / He shall judge between many peoples, / and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; / they shall beat their swords into plowshares, / and their spears into pruning hooks; / nation shall not lift up sword against nation, / neither shall they learn war any more; / but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, / and no one shall make them afraid; / for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” (NRSV).

Micah’s prophetic dream points to a time when all peoples will journey to God’s presence so God “may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths” (4:2). Micah describes God as the final judge and the nations will travel to God’s presence out of their desire to live in peace without violence and bloodshed.

The stunning imagery of Micah’s dream is the transformation of weapons into instruments of harvesting food that occurs after the judgments are handed down to the nations. The transformation is not complete until the nations participate in their own transformation. The work that went into creating the weapons will be matched by the human effort it will take to transform those weapons into peaceful instruments. God does not collect or hide the weapons from the nations, nor does God transform the weapons outside of human effort. The text states that the nations themselves, “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”¹

The resolution, “Our Call to End Gun Violence,” provides informative links, offers guidance for congregations and for pastoral care, and calls for specific legislation to prevent or reduce gun violence. Furthermore, the resolution encourages United Methodist churches to frame conversations theologically by utilizing resources such as the three session study “Kingdom Dreams, Violent Realities: Reflections on Gun Violence from Micah 4:1-4”² produced by the General Board of Church and Society.

The state of Virginia has been the site of many incidents of gun violence, including the 2007 shooting (or massacre) at Virginia Tech that took 32 lives and wounded 17. Despite this history of gun violence, Virginia “generally has some of the [most permissive] gun restriction laws in the country.”³

Presently, the laws of Virginia only permit the cities of: Alexandria, Chesapeake, Fairfax, Falls Church, Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond, and Virginia Beach and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Henrico, Loudoun, and Prince William and to ban guns at permitted events. Other cities and counties do not have this right making them vulnerable to the same kind of dangerous confrontations that occurred in Charlottesville in August of 2017. The same protections should be an option for every city and county.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church encourages and invites congregations, Sunday schools, small groups, UMW and UMM groups, and districts to use the 2016 resolution, “Our Call to End Gun Violence,” as a basis for study, reflection, and action in response to the gun violence that plagues our commonwealth and nation.

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church supports legislation that would allow localities in Virginia to decide whether or not to ban guns from permitted events on public property.

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church opposes efforts to repeal the state ban on guns and other dangerous weapons in places of worship. This is consistent with General Conference resolution adopted in 2000 and readopted in 2008 that resolves: “Therefore, every United Methodist church is officially declared a weapon-free zone.”

Be it further resolved that the Virginia Conference Board of Church and Society work with Bishop Sharma D. Lewis to send letters to each Virginia delegate, senator, the Lt. Governor and the Governor reflecting the convictions expressed in the two preceding paragraphs.

– Submitted by the Board of Church and Society

¹ *Book of Resolutions: Our Call to End Gun Violence.* <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/gun-violence> (Accessed February 21, 2018)

² “Kingdom Dreams, Violent Realities: Reflections on Gun Violence from Micah 4:1-4” <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/resource-kingdom-dreams-violent-realities-bible-study> (Accessed February 21, 2018)

³ Leslie Shapiro, Sahil Chinoy, and Aaron Williams. “How strictly are guns regulated where you live?” https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/national/assault-weapons-laws/?utm_ updated Feb. 20, 2018, (Accessed Feb. 21, 2018)



RESOLUTION 8

United Methodist Historic Site No. 7: William Watters Grave, McLean, Virginia, Heritage Landmark

WHEREAS, William “Billy” Watters was born in Maryland in October 16, 1751, converted to Methodism in 1771, and began his ministry in 1772 when he accompanied Robert Williams on a preaching journey to Norfolk, Virginia.

WHEREAS, Watters became the first American-born Methodist itinerant preacher when he was appointed to the New Jersey Circuit at the first American Methodist Conference in Philadelphia in 1773. The Rev. Mr. Watters served circuits in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey during his career in the Methodist itineracy.

WHEREAS, William Watters took an oath of allegiance to America at a time when most Methodist preachers were suspected of having British loyalties.

WHEREAS, The Rev. Mr. Watters performed a pivotal role in keeping the rapidly-growing Methodist movement together during the Revolutionary War. Because all British-born itinerants had left the country or stopped preaching, with Frances Asbury having gone into seclusion in Delaware, Watters presided at the 1778 conference in Leesburg, Virginia, the first American Methodist preacher to do so. Furthermore, he became an effective mediator between Francis Asbury and the American preachers during the war, helping to avert a schism over unordained preachers performing the sacraments of communion and baptism, and developing a case for Asbury’s authority in the beginnings of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

WHEREAS, Watters located to a farm in current-day McLean, Virginia in 1783, taking appointments again 1801-1806 in Alexandria, Georgetown and Washington, DC, then locating a final time. He served as a local preacher until his death on March 29, 1827. He was buried in the Adams-Watters-Wren Cemetery in McLean.

WHEREAS, The General Commission on Archives and History designated William Watters’ gravesite as Historic Site No. 7 on June 11, 1969.

Rationale: William Watters remained faithful to God, faithful to the Methodist movement and faithful to his country. It is clear the Rev. Mr. Watters’ efforts helped preserve American Methodism during the Revolutionary War; his good works are one reason the United Methodist Church exists today. We are all direct heirs of all that the Rev. Mr. William Watters worked so devotedly to preserve and to help perpetuate through his ministry during the early years of our country.

THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the United Methodist Historic Site No. 7: William Watters Grave, McLean, Virginia, endorsed by the Virginia Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History and named a United Methodist Historic Site by the Virginia Annual Conference and the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church on June 11, 1969, is worthy to be designated a United Methodist Heritage Landmark (Paragraph 1712.b *United Methodist Book of Discipline*, 2016), and by the adoption of this resolution is endorsed by the Virginia Annual Conference as such and will therefore be sent to the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church for consideration as a Heritage Landmark pursuant to the 2020 General Conference.

– Submitted by the Virginia Conference Historical Society